



## United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

### Group of Experts on **Amended Protocol II** to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

#### Statement on Improvised Explosive Devices

Geneva, 7 April 2016

*Delivered by Mr. Bruno Donat, Chief, Geneva office, UNMAS*

Mr. Coordinator and Mr. Co-Coordinator,

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA), comprising United Nations<sup>1</sup> entities involved in mine action.

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are increasingly a weapon of choice of armed non-state actors throughout the world. They are widespread and have become a problem of global scale. IEDs damage critical infrastructure and inflict death, injury and suffering on civilian populations. Recent data from the United Nations Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism indicates that national authorities have made improvements in information management from 2014 to 2015. This is the case in both capacity (demonstrated through the capacity assessment) and in the numbers of national authorities that collect and maintain casualty data including incidents caused by IEDs. Civilian casualties of IEDs exceed non-civilian casualties by a ratio of two to three<sup>2</sup>.

IEDs have been used to kill, maim and spread terror among entire communities, and hamper the development of fragile economies. As signalled in the Secretary-General report on Children and Armed Conflict, in 2014, in Afghanistan and Iraq only, IED attacks killed or injured almost one thousand children in schools, hospitals, market places and other populated areas.

Recent attacks throughout the world demonstrate that no country is free from the devastating effects of IEDs and that nowadays everyone is a potential target of these weapons. Therefore, the United Nations calls the international community to address this issue collectively and effectively. The devastation caused by IEDs must be considered as a priority for the international agenda.

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<sup>1</sup> The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) / United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) (Chair), UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) (Observer status), and the World Bank (Observer status).

<sup>2</sup> Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism for the UN Strategy for Mine Action 2013-2018: Report from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of data Collection, November 2015, p. 5.



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In his report<sup>3</sup> on Assistance in Mine Action, the Secretary-General noted that “the increasing use of improvised explosive devices [...] is a worrisome trend”.

The 2015 General Assembly resolution<sup>4</sup> on assistance in mine action recognised the specific “humanitarian threat posed by improvised explosive devices following conflict” and urged all the States, as well as the United Nations, to support affected States upon request by providing “necessary information and technical, financial and material assistance to locate, remove, destroy and otherwise render ineffective minefields, mines, improvised explosive devices, booby traps, other devices and explosive remnants of war, in accordance with international law, as soon as possible”.

In addition, the General Assembly adopted last year its first resolution<sup>5</sup> on “Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices”. This resolution requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations to prepare a report on the use of IEDs, acknowledging existing efforts and seeking the views of Member States for the development of recommendations for the way forward for consideration by the General Assembly.

The United Nations is increasingly called upon to assist peace operations, humanitarian operators and national authorities to mitigate the threat of IEDs. IEDs have become increasingly prevalent in the aftermath of conflict resulting in an inability for displaced persons to return to their homes.

In Iraq, UNMAS is planning assistance to the government in the context of the heavy IED contamination in areas re-taken by ISIL<sup>6</sup>, including on emergency clearance and capacity-building. In Somalia and Mali, UNMAS provides capacity-building, which includes training and advice to peace operations and national security forces.

In Chad, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria and Syria, among others, UNICEF contributes to protecting civilians from the effects of IEDs, through integrated programmes that include mine/ERW risk education, victim assistance and injury surveillance.

The United Nations looks forward to the initial assessment of the responses received to the questionnaire on national counter-IED frameworks and congratulates High Contracting Parties that have participated in this exercise.

In addition, the United Nations invites all High Contracting Parties to share their information and data, because being a worldwide issue, the threat posed by IEDs must be addressed globally.

Thank you.

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<sup>3</sup> A/70/207.

<sup>4</sup> A/RES/70/80.

<sup>5</sup> A/RES/70/46.

<sup>6</sup> Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant