Dear parliamentarian,

I am writing to ask for your support for an initiative aimed at providing better protection to civilians living through armed conflict. In doing so, we are writing to ask you to endorse an *International Parliamentary Appeal to prevent human suffering from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas*.

Armed conflicts are increasingly conducted among civilian populations and with weapon systems designed for open battlefields, presenting serious challenges to the protection of civilians in armed conflicts today. The use of explosive weapons in populated areas consistently causes high levels of civilian death and injury, and psychological distress, those with wide-area effects are a particular cause of concern. Furthermore, the bombing and shelling of towns and cities damages and destroys essential infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, housing, and water and sanitation systems affecting a large portion of population beyond those killed and injured in attacks, and is a key driver of displacement. Data shows that when explosive weapons are used in populated areas, approximately 91% of those reported killed and injured are likely to be civilians.

The UN Secretary-General has repeatedly called on states to *avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas* - a position also supported by the ICRC, and called on states to engage constructively in efforts to develop a political declaration to address this harm (see <http://www.inew.org/political-response/>). A growing number of states have recognised the humanitarian harm from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Negotiations must start this year to develop a political declaration aimed at addressing this urgent humanitarian problem.

We are writing to ask for your support for this initiative, by endorsing the Parliamentary Appeal.

[Attach the INEW briefing papers – About the Appeal and the Background briefing paper]