



MEDIA ADVISORY

States to adopt new international Declaration to protect civilians from use of explosive weapons in populated areas

- A new international *Declaration on the Protection of Civilians from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas* opens for states to endorse it at a conference in Dublin on 18 November 2022.
- The use of explosive weapons in populated areas is the leading cause of civilian casualties in contemporary armed conflicts, and the Declaration is the first formal international recognition that this must be addressed urgently and directly.
- INEW calls on all states to endorse the Declaration which aims to reduce civilian harm and strengthen the protection of civilians, by imposing limits on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, and by assisting victims and affected communities during and after conflict.
- On the eve of the Adoption Conference, activists and survivors of armed conflict gather at Global Civil Society Forum in Dublin after a decade-long campaign for this new international agreement which will now be signed onto and implemented by states.

KEY MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

THE CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

Thursday 17 November 2022, 11.00 - 16.00

At the *Richmond Education and Event Centre, 1 North Brunswick Street Smithfield, Dublin, Ireland*

Activists gather at a Global Civil Society Forum in Dublin featuring recent civilian survivors of armed conflict. The forum, hosted by the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW) and Dóchas, involves states, international NGOs, civil society representatives including people who have lived through bombing and shelling in conflict affected areas such as Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Ethiopia, and Pakistan. The Forum takes place in advance of the signing of a major new international agreement to protect civilians from explosive weapons in populated areas, led by the Irish Government.

The event will look at the civilian and humanitarian problems caused by explosive weapons and will discuss what should happen after the agreed political declaration is signed at Dublin Castle. A key aim is to ensure that the political declaration is the beginning of a long-term, committed and effective process of work to keep civilians safer in armed conflict, and to see limits imposed on the use of explosive weapons in populated cities, towns and other populated areas due to the risk of harm to civilians.

Speakers at the forum include Nujeen Mustafa a Syrian survivor of armed conflict and activist who fled her homeland aged 16 (author of the book “A girl from Aleppo”) and Dr Hamza Al-Kateab a doctor who ran one of the last functioning hospitals in Aleppo and who featured in award-winning film “For Sama”.

12.00 ‘Bombed Out School’ installation & photo opportunity

An opportunity to take a photo of the uniquely constructed replica of a ‘Bombed out School’ installation by Save the Children and INEW will take centre-stage inside the Richmond Centre, with key spokespersons Nujeen Mustafa, a Syrian survivor of armed conflict and activist who fled her homeland aged 16; and Dr. Zahed ‘Hamza’ Al-Kateab, an emergency doctor who ran one of the last functioning hospitals in Aleppo, Syria and who features in the BAFTA award-winning film “For Sama” by Waad Al-Kateab.

13.00 – 13.15 ‘Protection of Civilians Medal’ to Irish Civil Servants

The medal for the protection of civilians is awarded by Humanity & Inclusion (HI) on behalf of INEW in recognition of extraordinary contributions to the protection of civilians in armed conflicts. It honours people who have strived to help those affected by the use of explosive weapons in armed conflicts and address the harm caused to them. This award being given for the first time, will be awarded to Michael Gaffey (now Head of Irish Aid and former Ambassador to the UN in Geneva) and Jamie Walsh (Deputy Ambassador to the UN in Geneva) who led the diplomatic process in Geneva to develop a new international Declaration on the Protection of Civilians from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas.

THE MEMORIAL TO THE UNKNOWN CIVILIAN CEREMONY

Friday 18 November 2022 at 09:45 - 10:15

At the Garden of Dublin Castle, Dame Street Dublin, Ireland

A ceremony of the *Memorial to the Unknown Civilian* is being organised as an expression of indignation over the devastating impacts of recent conflicts, and as a tribute to the many civilian victims of bombing in populated areas, those who are otherwise just a number among all civilian casualty figures.

Amb. Eamonn Mac Aodha, Head of Mission to the UN in Geneva; Manuel Patrouillard, General Director of Humanity and Inclusion; representative of ICRC (tbc) and Nujeen Mustafa a Syrian activist, disability and refugees rights advocate who fled bombing in her hometown of Aleppo, will be present at the ceremony and place a wreath on the Monument. Parliamentarians from different countries, representatives of states and civil society organisations that will attend the conference and will hold a minute of silence to pay tribute to all civilian casualties of armed conflicts around the world.

A press photographer from Maxwell will be present and can provide images. Contact Brian Purcell, +353 87 9678921, brian@bpcommunications.ie

ADOPTION CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECLARATION TO PROTECT CIVILIANS FROM THE USE OF EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

18 November 2022 at 09:30 - 18:00 at the *Dublin Castle, Dame Street Dublin, Ireland*

The Irish Foreign Ministry will host the high-level endorsing conference, which will see states formally endorse the Declaration on the Protection of Civilians from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. The Conference will be opened by:

- Minister Simon Coveney, T.D. Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence of Ireland
- Izumi Nakamitsu, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs
- Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- Nujeen Mustafa, a Syrian survivor of armed conflict and activist
- Laura Boillot, Coordinator of the International Network on Explosive Weapons

More than 60 countries are expected to formally endorse the Declaration at the Conference in Dublin, including major users and countries affected by armed conflict, with some States sending Foreign and Deputy Foreign Ministers.

The Declaration was agreed at a conference at the United Nations in Geneva on 17 June 2022, through a diplomatic process led by the Government of Ireland. The Declaration marks the culmination of almost three years of negotiations.

The final text of the Declaration can be found [here](#).

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LINKS

Declaration text: "[*Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences arising from the use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas*](#)", www.dfa.ie/EWIPA

Read INEW's [Q&A on the issue and the political declaration here](#). Access [other INEW resources here](#), www.inew.org

INEW media kit: <https://www.inew.org/media-centre/>

MEDIA REGISTRATION

Media/Press accreditation to the formal conference must be registered separately via email to the **Press.Registrations@dfa.ie** with their name and details of their media outlet no later than 5pm on Wednesday, 16 November. Please note that accreditation is not finalised until confirmed by the DFA Communications Unit.