



## **STATEMENT FROM ACTION ON ARMED VIOLENCE BY DR IAIN OVERTON**

Thank you, Minister Coveney,

Action on Armed Violence, a founding member of the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW), is so very pleased to join you, along with representatives of states, the United Nations and the ICRC, to this much welcomed signing.

For over a decade, AOAV has – on a daily basis – looked at global English language media reports so as to chart the use of explosive weapons worldwide. In 13 years, our monitor has recorded explosive violence incidents in some 129 countries and territories around the world. Of note, of those 80 countries whose signatures are present today, 57 have witnessed explosive violence in their own territories. Over two thirds of explosive violence incidents witnessed by the signatory countries present have been in populated areas, and in those incidents 87% of victims have been civilians: almost 25,000 people.

Globally, since AOAV started recording harm in 2010, we have recorded at least 103,000 civilians killed and 192,000 civilians injured. 92,000 of those killed and 178,000 of those injured were in populated areas. This is an under-recording – many deaths and injuries are never reported on. But at AOAV we set out to recognize patterns of harm and in so doing found that, year in and year, one salient fact emerged. One that everyone here present will have heard.

It was this: that when explosive weapons were used in populated areas, over 90% of those killed or injured were civilians. This was as true in 2010 as it was in 2021. 2022 may, with Ukraine, show even that terrible ratio has gotten worse. There, 98% of people reported killed or injured by explosive weapons in towns and cities are civilians. 98%.

In total, we have recorded 270,000 civilians killed and injured in populated areas. The worse affected countries were Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen and, now, Ukraine. There is clearly much work to be done to ensure that those countries and non-state actors behind such impact are encouraged to sign up to, or to respect this declaration.

As INEW has noted, this declaration is but a milestone: not the end. We hope those states signing this declaration today will commit themselves not just to refraining from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, but also to ensure that data on civilian harm from any such tragedies are promptly and publicly recorded and recognized. This would make the simple message even clearer: Stop. Bombing. Cities.

Thank you.