



STATEMENT BY TURKEY

PROTECTING CIVILIANS IN URBAN WARFARE-TOWARDS A POLITICAL DECLARATION TO ADDRESS THE HUMANITARIAN HARM ARISING FROM THE USE OF EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS

18 NOVEMBER 2019

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr Ambassador,

I would also like to join others in thanking you for organizing this meeting today.

Civilians have always been the most vulnerable group in armed conflicts. As this has always been the case, with the changing nature of armed conflicts civilians are even more exposed to adverse effects of use of conventional weapons.

We have to include an additional reality to this picture. Today terrorism, which has no limits to intensify its acts, no rules to abide and no respect for human life strikes fear into civilians in different forms of attacks. Terrorists mostly use civilian concentrated areas as safe havens for their heinous acts and they serve distorted and fake information to international media.

Mr Ambassador,

Turkey shares the growing concerns over devastating impacts of armed conflicts on civilians and we join the others whom rightly identified that the goal should be increasing the compliance with the IHL, not instead creating new norms and principles. Therefore, we believe that elements of a potential political declaration should be in line with this understanding.

In any endeavour to minimize the adverse effects of armed conflicts on civilians, there is a need to make a clear distinction between non-state actors and terrorist groups.

“Non-state actor” is an ambiguous term, therefore, we are strongly against to any engagement with internationally recognized terrorist groups by misusing and exploiting the very nature of the term “non-state actor”.

Needless to say, terror organizations cannot be considered as a party to any armed conflicts. In this regard, any effort in relation to EWIPA should not open the way for terrorist groups to use populated areas as safe haven for their heinous actions.

In any further efforts in the context of the EWIPA, “role of non-state actors” should not be exploited. Engagement with such groups need vigilance and the consent of the relevant country.

That being said, as an initial remark, in general we are supportive of the France, Germany, UK joint paper and US technical compilation paper.

Thank you.