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United Nations Mine Action Service

2022 Amended Protocol II Group of Experts on mines, booby-traps and other devices to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

(20-21 July 2022)

Statement under agenda item 5 – The Threat of IED and New Types of IEDs

Delivered by Mr. Bruno Donat, Chief, Geneva Office, UNMAS

Mr. President,¹

As this is the first time that I am taking the floor, please allow me to commend you for your leadership and efforts as President-designate of the 24th Annual Conference of Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. I also have a special word of gratitude to our sister entity of the United Nations, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, for its efficient role as Implementation Support Unit of the Convention.

Mr. President,

UNMAS welcomes this meeting as an opportunity to share expertise and discuss lessons learned and remaining challenges in addressing the threat posed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs). We commend and support the two co-coordinators of France and Colombia in leading the work of High Contracting Parties on IEDs in the framework of this Protocol, and we thank the very informative and insightful panel that presented just now.

Distinguished Delegates,

IEDs pose a worldwide threat, affecting over 50 countries and territories on all populated continents.

¹ H. E. Ambassador Mr. Yuri Sterk of Bulgaria, President-designate of the 24th Annual Conference of Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.



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According to the findings of the United Nations Monitoring & Evaluation Mechanism for the year 2021, data collected in the countries and territories where the United Nations has a mine action presence shows that the percentage of deaths and injuries caused by mines and ERW (including mines AP-IN/VOIED) increased from 54% in 2020 to 72% in 2021. IEDs conversely caused less casualties in 2021 with the percentage of IED casualties dropping from 46% to 28% out of the total. In 2021 96% of IEDs were of an unknown type. Disaggregation of IED casualty data by sex and age remains a similar major challenge that mine action stakeholders must overcome to correctly understand and address the threat of IEDs.

Distinguished colleagues,

The users of IEDs have adapted the devices continuously, making it difficult to effectively prevent harm by defeating the device.

In Afghanistan, a new type of IED was recently found. This IED was designed using a 40kg gas cylinder full of homemade explosive. It was a projected IED, which had a 107mm rocket as a propellant and a tail like an aircraft bomb for direction. Other IEDs encountered in Afghanistan include a command operated IED based on a 500kg aircraft bomb, a directional fragmentation IED, IEDs with small bottles of acids acting as the switch, IEDs with plastic sandal pressure plates, packed 9V batteries, and an IED using motorcycle electrical wire for passing the electricity to detonators.

In Iraq, reports of tampering and removal of explosive components from clearance worksites might indicate the recycling of such materials into new devices. UNMAS has observed that IEDs manufactured by ISIL in Iraq bear close similarity across the previously occupied region. Crush-wire and high metallic content pressure plates of similar construction are found wherever



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ISIL occupied territory. A newly manufactured crush-wire was recovered from an IED attack against a clearance operator close to Mosul.

In Mali, an increase in the average IED charge size, from 6kg to 12kg, has been observed in northern areas of the country, and Victim Operated IEDs remain the more commonly used type - where the type is known. Continued improvements in investigation procedures, among other reasons, have decreased the number of non-investigated IEDs.

In Somalia, since 2018, the components used for trigger mechanisms have not changed significantly but the way in which these components are used in combination by Al Shabaab has evolved over time. UNMAS maintains a complete database of IED designs, comprising images and incident details. This information is shared internally, to inform counter-IED training efforts, and externally, with the Somali security forces, and other stakeholders involved in counter-IED training. Al Shabaab utilizes the same IED design in devices that cause incidents in Somalia and across the border into Kenya. Precursors and components used by Al Shabaab serve dual commercial purposes and can be easily imported via legitimate practices by extensive land and sea borders.

Distinguished Colleagues,

Mr. President,

UNMAS continues to share information on incidents and new types of IEDs with national authorities and implementing partners, including through the Mine Action Area of Responsibility, of which I am the global Coordinator, based here at the UNMAS Geneva office.



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Sharing information, updates, lessons learned, and challenges remains crucial in addressing the threat of IEDs. UNMAS calls on the international community to address IEDs collectively and as a priority for the international agenda and urges States that have not yet done so to join Amended Protocol II without delay.

Thank you.

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