

Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects

15 November 2024

English only

Geneva, 13-15 November 2024

Agenda item 7

General exchange of views

Working Paper*

Submitted by the State of Palestine

1. Although it has been forty-four years since the adoption CCW " and its protocols, the sixth Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people followed by the ongoing genocide in illegally occupied Gaza highlights the indiscriminate effects of excessively injurious weapons that continue to cause immense humanitarian suffering. Over a year ago, the illegal occupying forces began dropping the equivalent of three nuclear bombs' worth of explosives on the illegally occupied Gaza Strip, launching thousands of airstrikes on densely populated areas against unarmed civilians, resulting in the killing of more than 45,000 people, 72% of them women and children. The illegal occupying forces' bombardment of Gaza has also left behind nearly 39 million tons of rubble in a strip of land that does not exceed 41 kilometers in length, raising alarms about the vast number of unexploded bombs still buried under the debris.
2. Experts now consider this campaign the most intense and sustained urban bombardment in history. There are bodies in Gaza that seem to have evaporated or melted due to the use of Israeli explosive weapons. The use of such weapons, which create craters up to 9 meters deep in places like the Al-Mawasi refugee camp, raises critical questions: What kind of bomb creates such devastation? What is the nature of the illegal force using these bombs to attack refugee camps and tents filled with people who have been displaced for the third or fourth time, after suffering months of bombardment, massacres, hunger, and disease?
3. The illegal occupying forces have also used incendiary weapons (white phosphorus) in Gaza, resulting in injuries to civilians, destruction of civilian objects, and burning vast areas of agricultural land and forests, causing long-term environmental damage. This has been documented by the OHCHR latest report and many international organizations and NGOs, constituting a blatant violation of Protocol III of the Convention on the Prohibition of Certain Conventional Weapons and a severe breach of international law.
4. The targeting of densely populated areas and civilian objects, including hospitals, places of worship, Mosques, churches, the third oldest saint porphyrius church, refugee camps, and schools where civilians seek shelter, as well as United Nations facilities, including the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), highlights the adoption of double standards by states parties that support colonial occupation with advanced weapons and turn a blind eye to a people suffering under brutal colonial occupation for over 76 years.
5. The latest reports from UNCTAD, released in September 2024 regarding the enormous costs of the ongoing brutal aggression in Gaza from October 2023 to May 2024, show that by the end of April 2024, Israeli crimes had resulted in the complete or partial

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



destruction of more than two-thirds of buildings and infrastructure, leading to the accumulation of around 37 million tons of rubble. Clearing this rubble could take up to 14 years in an optimistic scenario. If the aggression had ended in April 2024, and debris were cleared at the same rate as in 2014, it could take around 30 years to remove it. Thus, the volume of unexploded ordnance left behind is unimaginable, and it remains unknown how many years it will take to safely clear it.

6. The continued international crimes and non-compliance with international law lie at the heart of the crisis facing humanitarian values and the global legal and institutional system. This tragic reality puts the credibility of the international community at stake, destroys the goals of global disarmament, security, and sustainable development, and increases the threats to international peace and security and our multilateral international system.

7. We demand that all states parties hold the illegal Israeli occupying power accountable for its international crimes by imposing an arms embargo and economic sanctions aimed at ending its illegal occupation of Palestine to ensure that future generations of the Palestinian people do not suffer the horrors of genocide again.
