



**UNIDIR**

# **Addressing Improvised Explosive Devices**

**Options and Opportunities  
to Better Utilize  
UN Processes and Actors**

## **Acknowledgements**

Financial support for this project was received from the Government of France. UNIDIR would also like to thank the Government of Switzerland for its contribution to the meeting “The International Community and IEDs: building coordinated processes and responses”, organized by UNIDIR and the Graduate Institute of International and Developmental Studies, on 8–9 June 2015.

The initial research for and drafting of this study was undertaken by Marc Finaud.

Additional support for this project was offered by Elena Finckh and Hardy Giezendanner.

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

AOAV	Action on Armed Violence
CASA	Coordinating Action on Small Arms (UN)
CCW	Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
C-IED	Counter-Improvised Explosive Device
COE	Centre of Excellence
CTC	Counter-Terrorism Committee (UN)
CTITF	Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (UN)
DFS	Department of Field Support (UN)
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN)
DSS	Department for Safety and Security (UN)
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
ERW	Explosive Remnant of War
IATG	International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (UN)
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IEDD	Improvised Explosive Device Disposal
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IRAM	Improvised Rocket Assisted Mortar
ISACS	International Small Arms Control Standards
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
PSSM	Physical Security and Stockpile Management
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UNODA	United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
WCO	World Customs Organization

## Executive Summary

The threat of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) is a serious global problem. IEDs impact security, safety, stability, humanitarian and peace operations, and sustainable development in communities around the world. Addressing IEDs is a multifaceted challenge—with both security and humanitarian dimensions—and one which States and the UN have a common interest to seek effective responses.

An international response to IEDs requires the attention and commitment of a variety of stakeholders—from governments and militaries, to humanitarian, operational and other specialized agencies, to industry and to research organizations and advocacy groups. Addressing IEDs requires not only a diverse community of practitioners, but also a variety of different processes and approaches. The question is how to get the most out of these processes, build upon them, strengthen them and address gaps.

While recognizing the primary role of States in addressing the threat of IEDs, this paper explores how the UN system as a whole can more effectively contribute. The paper addresses the following questions:

- How can UN processes and actors play a stronger or more active role in addressing IEDs?
- Is greater coordination within the UN necessary to achieve this?
- How could the UN better support national, regional and international efforts to address IEDs, and where could the UN show greater leadership as a globally representative institution?

Initial surveying of the IED issue within the UN framework suggests three main potential areas where the UN system's processes and actors could play a more active role to address the threat of IEDs and reduce their impact:

- Sharing and consolidating knowledge, raising awareness and stigmatizing IED use against civilians;
- Supporting the strengthening of national efforts to reduce the IED threat; and
- Empowering and better utilizing the UN framework for a more coherent approach to addressing IEDs.

The UN has an important role to play in addressing both the security and humanitarian impacts of IEDs. Its unique position as a global institution cannot be overemphasized. A coordination framework or mechanism within the UN system would bring together the relevant processes and actors—including in peacekeeping, counter-terrorism, humanitarian relief, IHL, human rights, disarmament, research and others—in order to strengthen knowledge of and linkages between these entities and their IED-related activities. Such a mechanism would be essential to the development of a more coherent UN strategy.

Through utilizing existing avenues and exploring new approaches, greater cooperation among all relevant stakeholders could result in multiplier effects, pooling of resources, enlargement of participation, and enhanced effectiveness. Thus active UN support for and participation in addressing IEDs should be encouraged.

## Preface

The use of IEDs is an increasing threat. Their impact on domestic security, confidence in public institutions, humanitarian response, peace and stability operations, and regional stability, and their links to terrorist and criminal networks all illustrate that addressing IEDs is a multifaceted challenge to which States have a common interest to seek effective responses.

IEDs pose a particular challenge to the arms control and security community—they are an explosive tool of violence that can be made with commercial, dual-use or industrial materials and are used predominantly by irregular forces. This means that our traditional set of tools and processes are not necessarily the most adapted to addressing the problem.

An international response to IEDs requires the attention and commitment of a variety of stakeholders—from governments and militaries, to humanitarian, operational and other specialized agencies, to industry and to research organizations and advocacy groups. Addressing IEDs requires not only a diverse community of practitioners, but also a variety of different processes and approaches. The question before us is how to get the most out of these processes, build upon them, strengthen them and to address remaining gaps.

In spring this year, UNIDIR started considering how the international community might approach and address IEDs in a more coordinated and effective manner. A few months later we convened a cross-disciplinary, two-day workshop of experts and practitioners in cooperation with the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies to consider how the international community might build better coordinated processes and responses.<sup>1</sup> Two conclusions from the workshop are particularly relevant. First, there are a wide range of initiatives currently undertaken to address IEDs—however, they are often contained in “silos” with little cross-fertilization between different sectors. Secondly, it is difficult to meaningfully consider what role UN processes and actors should play internationally on this issue if that is not yet clear within the UN itself.

This paper focuses on the major UN actors and processes that address IEDs. It presents an initial overview of the issue of IEDs, including the scale and impact of the problem, the relevant legal frameworks, which UN processes and actors are addressing IEDs, and how could they be better leveraged.

We are witnessing growing international momentum to tackle the IED issue. For example, in September, INTERPOL, the Australian Federal Police and the Australian Department of Defence hosted an inaugural International Counter-IED Leaders’ Forum to gather key representatives from government, law enforcement and military services to promote strategic cooperation to address the growing threat presented by IEDs. Just as this paper was completed, the First Committee of the General Assembly adopted its first ever resolution on IEDs. These initiatives demonstrate that the international community is keen to do more—and see a need to work together more effectively—to address IEDs.

The First Committee resolution requests the United Nations Secretary-General to develop a report on IEDs for the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the General Assembly and provide “building blocks and recommendations for ways forward” for consideration. UNIDIR hopes that this initial “tour

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the expert meeting “The International Community and IEDs: building coordinated processes and responses”, organized by UNIDIR and the Graduate Institute of International and Developmental Studies, 8–9 June 2015, available at <http://www.unidir.org/files/medias/pdfs/the-international-community-and-ieds-building-coordinated-processes-and-responses-eng-0-627.pdf>

d’horizon”, identifying a variety of options for ways forward, will generate both discussion and new ideas among governments, the UN family and other stakeholders on how we, as a global community, can effectively address this threat.

Jarmo Sareva  
Director  
UNIDIR  
11 November 2015





## Section I. The Impact and Scale of the IED Problem<sup>2</sup>

*“The increasing use of improvised explosive devices in today’s conflicts is another worrisome trend, and I call on parties to conflict to desist from the use of such weapons and methods.”<sup>3</sup>*

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

3 August 2015

***Improvised Explosive Device:*** *A device placed or fabricated in an improvised manner incorporating explosive material, destructive, lethal, noxious, incendiary, pyrotechnic materials or chemicals designed to destroy, disfigure, distract or harass. They may incorporate military stores, but are normally devised from non-military components.*

United Nations International Ammunition Technical Guidelines

Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) threaten security, stability, humanitarian operations, and sustainable development in communities around the world. It is estimated that, since 2011, some 58 countries on the five continents have been affected to some extent by the use of IEDs.<sup>4</sup>

IEDs are widely employed in conflict situations mainly characterized by asymmetry (such as insurgencies, rebellions, or armed violence against government or foreign forces) where the main perpetrators are either organized armed groups or individual non-state actors.

Many factors contribute to the fact that the scale and impact of IED attacks are growing. Increasing numbers of IED attacks are in urban, populated areas. IED users nimbly adapt to counter-IED (C-IED) measures or technologies. IEDs are increasingly sophisticated yet remain easily accessible and affordable. Indeed in order to produce IEDs, most components are either commercially available (like electronic components or chemical fertilizers) or easily accessible due to smuggling, criminal networks, corruption, or poor arms and ammunition stockpile management.<sup>5</sup> Increasingly, armed groups utilizing IEDs are linked to regional and international networks, share knowledge on the means and methods to manufacture explosive devices, exploit vulnerabilities in C-IED operations, and glorify the effects of attacks.

### The Impacts of IED Use

The threat of IED attacks is a global problem. In recent years IEDs have become a common weapon of choice for armed non-state actors. IEDs pose a serious and urgent threat to all people (including

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<sup>2</sup> This document builds upon the expert meeting “The International Community and IEDs: building coordinated processes and responses”, organized by UNIDIR and the Graduate Institute of International and Developmental Studies, 8–9 June 2015.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, *Assistance in Mine Action*, A/70/207, para. 75, 3 August 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Jane Hunter and Robert Perkins, “Explosive States: Monitoring Explosive Violence in 2014”, *Action on Armed Violence*, 2015, <https://aoav.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/AOAV-Explosive-States-monitoring-explosive-violence-in-2014.pdf>, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> As an example of how poor stockpile management contributes to the IED problem, according to US sources some over 300 tons of conventional explosives were looted from the Al Qaqaa military installation in Iraq in 2003 and 2004. See, for example, James Glanz et al., “Huge Cache of Explosives Vanished from Site in Iraq”, *New York Times*, October 25, 2004, and Michael Hammerschlag, “An Ounce of Prevention: Looted Hopes in Iraq”, *Hammernews*, 2005, <http://hammernews3.tk/lootedhopes.htm>

civilians, state security forces, peacekeepers and humanitarian workers) and infrastructures, undermining efforts to establish security, stability, and socio-economic development.

The **impact on security and stability** in affected States and regions is profound. IED attacks directly weaken military or security forces and undermine their ability to perform their tasks. IEDs are used to reduce the freedom of movement and action of forces; security forces must increase their level of protection, which makes interaction with the local population more difficult and reduces the ability to acquire useful intelligence. Ultimately, when governments and security forces are seen as unable to protect civilians from IED use, confidence in and support for the government and security forces is eroded.

The **humanitarian impact** is equally significant. In addition to civilian casualties, IEDs instil fear and insecurity in the population. The use of IEDs can disrupt humanitarian relief, impede trade, affect livelihoods, and destroy infrastructure and developmental gains—all of which in turn can create social unrest or further destabilization.

Generally speaking, the impact of IEDs can be categorized as:

- ‘Primary’ impacts: blast, fragmentation, burn or other injuries and casualties;
- ‘Secondary’ impacts: shattering glass, collapsing buildings, etc.; and
- ‘Tertiary’ impacts: disrupted lives and livelihoods, contaminated water sources, displacement, health issues, disruption of delivery of humanitarian programmes, etc.<sup>6</sup>

Given that the international community has committed to the Sustainable Development Goals, these tertiary impacts of IEDs should not be underestimated. In many countries, those injured by IEDs are unable to receive the emergency or specialist medical treatment, rehabilitation and psychosocial support they need; school attendance can be interrupted due to safety concerns or infrastructure damage; and economic livelihoods are compromised in areas where IED attacks have occurred.

A particularly insidious tertiary impact of IED use is that humanitarian actors often interrupt, relocate or cancel their programmes in areas where IEDs are prevalent, thus removing a critical source of assistance and relief. Those who remain may have reduced access to certain areas, which not only limits their capacity to deliver assistance but may also contribute to being perceived as biased in their work. Humanitarian actors are also likely to be more vulnerable than security forces, because in many cases they do not enjoy military protection, carry protective equipment or possess adequate expertise on explosives.<sup>7</sup> Lastly, fewer resources may be allocated to these efforts as donors reconsider funding activities in areas considered too insecure or unstable.

The humanitarian impact of IEDs also includes the consequences of IED use against United Nations peacekeeping forces and special political missions. By preventing peacekeepers and humanitarian actors from fulfilling the tasks that they are mandated to achieve, IED use undermines the political objectives and operational effectiveness of the United Nations. By preventing peacekeepers to move freely within the country and engage with the population or community leaders, IEDs constitute a major impediment to peacekeeping and peacebuilding. “The use of IEDs also impacts the effectiveness of mandate implementation, especially as it relates to protection of civilians and security sector reform, as well as longer-term efforts to support national political dialogues and re-

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<sup>6</sup> Chatham House, “The Humanitarian Impact of Improvised Explosive Devices”, 18 September 2014, <http://www.chathamhouse.org/event/ieds-humanitarian-impact>, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 4–5.

build societies affected by conflict.”<sup>8</sup> Peacekeepers and other UN personnel are physically under threat as they undertake their missions. For this reason the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has specifically identified better protection from IEDs as a necessity in current and future peacekeeping operations.<sup>9</sup>

## The Scale of the Problem

IEDs are increasingly widespread and have become a problem of global scale that affected at least 36 countries in 2014.<sup>10</sup> Among the most affected countries in recent years are Afghanistan, India, Iraq, Lebanon, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, Syria, Thailand and Yemen.<sup>11</sup>

Civilians are particularly harmed by IEDs. Data collected by Action on Armed Violence (AOAV)<sup>12</sup> indicates that over 70,000 IED-related casualties between 2011–2014 were civilians, thus 82% of total IED-related casualties (85% in 2014). Data indicates that IEDs cause more civilian casualties than any other explosive weapon.<sup>13</sup>

AOAV reported the highest IED-related civilian casualties in Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan and Syria in 2014. Iraq has been by far the most affected country, accounting for 43% of the total civilian casualties in 2013 and 32% in 2014. Even though civilian casualties dropped in other countries such as India, Lebanon and Pakistan, numbers significantly rose in China, Egypt, Nigeria and Yemen.

IEDs are truly a global phenomenon—no region has been spared. From the well-known and documented incidents in Afghanistan and Iraq, to those in Nigeria, Nepal and India, to Chechnya, Colombia and Northern Ireland, IEDs have played a significant role in nearly every insurgency, civil conflict, and terrorist attack in the past decades.

Obtaining comprehensive data on the scale of the problem is a major and critical challenge, based primarily on three factors. First, for reasons of security, governments and organizations working to counter IEDs are reluctant to be highly transparent about relevant data. Too much transparency, they argue, could threaten troops; jeopardize on-going operations, investigations and criminal prosecutions; hinder the dismantlement of IED-related networks; or inadvertently spread technical knowledge about IEDs that could be utilized by those wishing to construct or use them.

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<sup>8</sup> Lisa Sharland, “Counter-IED Technology in UN Peacekeeping – Expanding Capacity and Mitigating Risk”, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, April 2015, p. 2, <https://s3.amazonaws.com/ipi-pdf-document-store/observatory/technology-IED.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> United Nations, “Secretary-General’s Remarks at Summit on UN Peacekeeping”, New York, 26 September 2014, <http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=8060>

<sup>10</sup> Out of 58 countries and territories where explosive violence was reported. See Jane Hunter and Robert Perkins, “Explosive States: Monitoring Explosive Violence in 2014”, Action on Armed Violence, 2015, <https://aoav.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/AOAV-Explosive-States-monitoring-explosive-violence-in-2014.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> The numbers are based on AOAV reports from 2011–2013. Small Arms Survey, “Countering Improvised Explosive Devices”, *Research Notes*, No. 46, Oct. 2014, [http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/H-Research\\_Notes/SAS-Research-Note-46.pdf](http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/H-Research_Notes/SAS-Research-Note-46.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Action on Armed Violence seeks to reduce the incidence and impact of IEDs through strengthening existing measures regulating the transfer and traffic of materials used for the manufacture of IEDs, increasing stigmatization of their use and improving victim assistance. Its **Monitoring Project**, launched in October 2010, uses English-language media reports to capture information on who has been killed and injured by incidents of explosive violence. See <https://aoav.org.uk/explosiveviolence/>

<sup>13</sup> According to AOAV, between 2011–2014 63% of the civilian casualties caused by explosive weapons were IED related, 52% in 2014. See also Rob Perkins, “Four years of harm: Explosive Weapons Monitor 2011–2014”, Action on Armed Violence, 14 September 2015, <https://aoav.org.uk/2015/four-years-of-harm-impact-of-explosive-weapons-2011-2014/>

Second, in the absence of data from governmental sources, there is reliance on non-governmental data, including that produced by civil society organizations and the media.<sup>14</sup> Despite great efforts in challenging and dangerous circumstances, this data cannot help but be incomplete. Incidents in remote areas are likely not reported or documented, journalists and researchers may have limited access to zones of intense conflict,<sup>15</sup> and surveys of open sources such as media accounts are limited due to factors such as language accessibility. In addition, there is a critical lack of resources for collecting, processing and analysing the information and data that is available.

Third, casualty, injury and incident data is not always disaggregated by explosive ordnance type.

For these reasons, in all likelihood the existing data on IEDs underestimates their global impact. Poor understanding of the scale of the problem, due in part to lack of comprehensive data from an internationally acceptable<sup>16</sup> source, is perhaps one of the reasons why it has been a challenge for the international community to adopt a more comprehensive and coordinated response to addressing IEDs thus far.

### **A more active role for UN processes and actors?**

As IED use has both security and humanitarian impacts, a wide range of specialized actors, activities and responses are needed to address this threat. While recognizing the primary role of governments, military forces, intelligence and law enforcement in combating the threat of IEDs, this paper seeks to explore how the UN system as a whole can more effectively contribute to addressing IEDs.

“The UN offers a diversity of mandates, approaches and skills, which constitute a tremendous wealth of opportunities to counter the IED threat in close partnership with ‘expert’ countries and affected ones, as well as with partner Organizations.”<sup>17</sup> In seizing these opportunities, how can UN processes and actors and actors play a stronger or more active role in addressing IEDs? Is greater coordination within the UN necessary to achieve this? And as the United Nations system is one actor among many addressing IEDs, how could the UN better support national, regional and international efforts to address IEDs, and where could the UN show greater leadership as a globally representative institution?

This paper is an initial survey of the IED issue within the UN framework and suggests areas where the UN system’s processes and actors could play a more active role to address the threat of IEDs and reduce their impact. There is the challenge, when undertaking such an endeavour, of deciding where to draw the boundaries. IEDs are a multidimensional and complex issue. How broad do we cast the net when considering relevant UN processes and actors? For this initial effort, we have focused primarily on the UN’s own disarmament and international security machinery, processes and actors. The paper aims to encourage all States to consider how to better leverage existing processes and actors as well as perhaps establish new ones.

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<sup>14</sup> For a sense of the variety of organizations collecting IED data and their unique methodologies, see Jane Hunter, *Tracking IED Harm – Monitoring Improvised Explosive Device Use and Why We Need the Data*, Action on Armed Violence, 2014, pp. 8–20.

<sup>15</sup> See also Jeremy Binnie and Joanna Wright (principal authors), “Infernal Machines: Improvised Explosive Devices” in *Small Arms Survey 2013*, 2014, pp. 219–248, see particularly p. 226.

<sup>16</sup> Some governments are reluctant to accept data from civil society organizations.

<sup>17</sup> “United Nations Overview of the Improvised Explosive Device Situation and Reflections of a Coherent Response”, statement delivered by the Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service at the International Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Leaders’ Forum, on 3 September 2015, available at <http://www.mineaction.org/sites/default/files/documents/20150903%20C-IED%20Conference.pdf>

Resolution A/C.1/70/L.36\* adopted by consensus at the First Committee on 6 November 2015 requests the Secretary-General to develop a report on IEDs for the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the General Assembly and provide “building blocks and recommendations for ways forward” for consideration. UNIDIR hopes that this initial “tour d’horizon”, with options for ways forward, will generate both discussion and new ideas among governments, the UN family and other stakeholders on how we, as a global community, can effectively address this threat.



## Section II. IEDs: An Overview

This section presents an overview of the various IED types, targets, means of delivery, components and trigger mechanisms.

An IED can take many forms and be activated in a variety of ways. Although there is no internationally agreed definition<sup>18</sup> of Improvised Explosive Devices, the *Glossary of Terms, Definitions and Abbreviations* of the **United Nations International Ammunition Technical Guidelines** (IATG) defines an IED as: *A device placed or fabricated in an improvised manner incorporating explosive material, destructive, lethal, noxious, incendiary, pyrotechnic materials or chemicals designed to destroy, disfigure, distract or harass. They may incorporate military stores, but are normally devised from non-military components.*<sup>19</sup> While not the specific focus of this study, other types of improvised devices could include chemical, biological, radiological, incendiary or even nuclear elements.<sup>20</sup> In addition, the term “improvised” can be misleading in the sense that some IED users and networks have quite sophisticated production capabilities.<sup>21</sup>

Armed non-state actors typically use IEDs in asymmetric conflicts. In addition to causing death and physical destruction, IEDs may be used by armed groups as tools to consolidate power, claim territorial control, put pressure on governments to obtain advantages, or to terrorize the civilian population.

While IEDs are generally perceived as a “weapon of choice” of non-state actors, IEDs have also been used by government forces in situations of civil war, insurgency or domestic unrest. Recently this is the case for barrel bombs (or “flying IEDs”) made of recycled metal containers and filled with explosives as well as possibly shrapnel, oil or chemicals and dropped from a helicopter on populated areas.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Many national militaries and other organizations have their own definition of IEDs. For example, a slightly different definition for IEDs is given in the United States Department of Defense *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*: “A weapon that is fabricated or emplaced in an unconventional manner incorporating destructive, lethal, noxious, pyrotechnic, or incendiary chemicals designed to kill, destroy, incapacitate, harass, deny mobility, or distract.” See United States Department of Defense, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, JP 1-02, March 2015, p. 114.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations, International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG), *Glossary of Terms, Definitions and Abbreviations*, Document 01.40:2011(E), 2011. This definition is nearly identical to that used by NATO.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, William Finegan, “A Failure to Communicate,” *CBRNe World*, Winter 2006, pp. 9–12, [http://web.archive.org/web/20070921192813/http://www.cbrneworld.com/images/CBRNe\\_WORLD.pdf](http://web.archive.org/web/20070921192813/http://www.cbrneworld.com/images/CBRNe_WORLD.pdf); and North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Chemical Improvised Explosive Devices: Responding to the Threat”, 30 May 2014; and United States Department of Homeland Security, *Improvised Nuclear Device Response and Recovery – Communicating in the Immediate Aftermath*, June 2013, p. 25.

<sup>21</sup> For example, in Libya, ISIS has built up large-scale local manufacture of IEDs. Most of the material used for such manufacture comes from abandoned ordnance from the 2011 civil war as well as unexploded ordnance from the NATO bombing campaign. See for example Tom Wyke, “Inside the IED Workshop of ISIS in Libya: Brutal Terror Group Show off Deadly Arsenal of Lethal Roadside Bombs and Homemade Rockets”, *Daily Mail*, 26 May 2015; James Hall, “The Challenges of Explosive Remnants of War in an Insurgent Libya”, *International Affairs Review*, 14 July 2014.

<sup>22</sup> In one of the rare cases of IED use by state actors against non-state combatants and civilian populations, the Syrian Air Force has been accused of dropping barrels filled with high explosives, oil, and shrapnel from helicopters onto cities and other largely civilian targets. See, for example, Aljazeera, “Syria Barrel Bomb Attacks Kill 75 in Aleppo,” 31 May 2015. This phenomenon is recognized in, for example, UN Security Council Resolution 2139 (2014) of 21 February 2014, which demanded that that indiscriminate use of barrel bombs against civilians cease immediately. AOAV reports use of such IEDs by Iraqi regular forces in 2014 (causing 126 casualties) but mostly by Syrian state forces (in 40% of all aerial attacks in 2014 as compared with 20% in 2013). See Jane Hunter and Robert Perkins, “Explosive States: Monitoring Explosive Violence in 2014”, Action on Armed Violence, 2015, <https://aoav.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/AOAV-Explosive-States-monitoring-explosive-violence-in-2014.pdf>, p. 22. See also Carol J. Williams, “‘Barrel Bomb’ Use in Syria Said to Escalate Despite U.N. Ban”, *Los Angeles Times*, 30 July 2014.

Both humans and objects can be the **target of IEDs**:

- **Security forces**: whether military, police or private.
- **Civilians**: the pattern of IED use in many conflict situations is increasingly in populated areas where civilians congregate, such as markets, shopping centres, demonstrations or religious sites.
- **Vehicles** and other goods: a common type of IED is the roadside bomb that detonates when a military or civilian vehicle drives near it or over it. The target may be the vehicle itself, for example, in order to disrupt transport or delivery of military, humanitarian or civilian goods, or the occupants of the vehicle.
- **Infrastructure**: many structures can be either directly targeted or suffer collateral damage:
  - Civilian or military buildings.
  - Transport networks: roads, bridges, tunnels, railways, etc.
  - Supply networks: water reserves or supply lines, electric power lines, oil or gas pipelines, etc.
  - Communications networks: telephone lines, radio transmitters, etc.

Due to the diversity of targets, a variety of **delivery means** are possible. The most common ones include:

- **Vehicle**: (Vehicle-Borne IEDs) car bombs can carry large quantities of explosives and additional shrapnel, increasing damage to people and property. Their use can be combined with suicide attacks, or be remotely activated.<sup>23</sup>
- **Person**: the technique known as suicide bombing is used by individuals concealing an explosive device (for example in the form of a vest or belt), and detonating it in order to kill others and themselves.
- **Building**: houses can be mined or rigged with IEDs and are sometimes augmented with containers filled with natural gas or gasoline; they explode and the structure collapses when the targets penetrate the building or walk nearby.
- **Animal**: explosives have been strapped to live animals such as horses or donkeys as well as concealed in the carcasses of animals, for example on the side of the road.<sup>24</sup>
- **Rocket or air-dropped object**: Rocket-propelled IEDs, also called Improvised Rocket-Assisted Mortars (IRAM), can be made from a propane tank packed with explosives and powered by a 107 mm rocket.<sup>25</sup> “Barrel bombs”, barrels filled with explosives and dropped from helicopters, are also sometimes called “flying IEDs”.
- **Boat**: boats can also be laden with explosives to attack naval targets as in the case of the suicide attack against the *USS Cole* in Yemen in 2000 or against American and British patrol boats in Iraq from 2003 to 2007.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> For example in Iraq armoured trucks loaded with explosives have been used by the ISIS against military and civilian installations. See, for example, Jean-Pierre Perrin, “L’Etat islamique mène le blitzkrieg automobile”, *Libération*, 12 June 2015.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, “‘Horse Bomb’ hits Colombia Town”, *BBC News*, 11 September 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3098746.stm>; and “Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) – Iraq”, *GlobalSecurity.org*, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/ied-iraq.htm>

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Ernesto Londoño, “U.S. Troops in Iraq Face A Powerful New Weapon: Use of Rocket-Propelled Bombs Spreads”, *Washington Post*, 10 July 2008.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Jean-Pierre Steinhoffer, “Irak: les pertes de la Coalition par EEI”, *Le Casoar*, January 2007; as well as *BBC News*, “Iraq Boat Attack Personnel Named”, 14 November 2006.



There are a wide variety of IED designs, however it is generally accepted that **main components** of a IED include a: **Switch, Power source, Initiator, Compartment and Explosive (SPICE)**.

- A **Switch** (or trigger or activator) using: pressure, time delay, movement, remote/radio control, or electric control.
- A **Power source**: usually a battery connected to an electrical circuit.
- An **Initiator** or fuse: initiates the detonation of the main charge; it can be of home-made, industrial or military origin.
- A **Compartment**: the container holding the main charge can be as diverse as a suitcase, a carcass, a bag, or a toy. It may be given a special shape to become a penetrator of an armoured vehicle, or be filled with fragmentation-generating items such as nails, bolts or metal scrap to increase lethality.
- An **Explosive**: the charge can be made from **home-made** explosives (e.g. from fertilisers containing nitrates), **military** explosives (such as ammunition diverted from storage or transport, or materials recovered from Explosive Remnants of War, ERW, or Unexploded Ordnance, UXO), or **civilian** explosives (such as dynamite, TNT or black powder).

The three main types of **trigger mechanisms** are:

- **Victim-Operated IEDs** are designed to detonate after contact with a victim who could not detect their presence or mistook them for innocuous everyday objects. These include Under-Vehicle IEDs and improvised landmines. They can be triggered via a spring-loaded release; push, pull or tilt switching methods; trip-wire; or pressure plate.
- **Command-Operated IEDs**: the most common types include:
  - **Command Wire-Operated IEDs**, controlled by wire usually by the closure of an electrical circuit. It affords the user complete control over the device up to the moment of ignition, yet is more difficult for the user to conceal;
  - **Radio- or Remote-Controlled IEDs**, controlled by electromagnetic pulse or radio link. These can be triggered by various mechanisms including car alarms, wireless door bells, cell phones, pagers and encrypted radios;
  - **Infrared-Controlled IEDs**: triggered when a light beam is crossed by a person or object. Infrared is considered more difficult to jam than radio-controlled IEDs.
- **Time-Operated IEDs** are designed to give the people who planted the device enough time to vacate the area before detonation, thus avoiding possible capture or harm. Types of time-operated IEDs include:<sup>27</sup>
  - **“Igniferous”**: slow burning items (for example cigarettes) connected to a detonator;
  - **Chemical**: device using a chemical reaction to detonate a larger charge;
  - **Mechanical**: timers such as a watch alarm clock;
  - **Electronic**: timers that provide longer and more accurate delays, such as digital watches, cell phones or electronic timers.

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<sup>27</sup> See for example, United States Marine Corps, *Small-Unit Leaders' Guide to Counterinsurgency*, June 2006, pp. 127–128.



### Section III. Instruments of Relevance to IEDs

When used in situations of armed conflict, use of IEDs is governed by **International Humanitarian Law (IHL)**<sup>28</sup>—which applies to all means and methods of warfare. Despite the fundamental importance of IHL in protecting civilians in times of armed conflict, whether international or non-international, this body of law does not apply to situations that are not considered as armed conflict such as disturbances, criminal violence, riots, even insurgencies up to a certain level of armed violence. One needs to keep in mind that, as distinct from IHL, applicable only in armed conflict, **human rights law**, and particularly international human rights law, applies in all situations at all times both in peaceful situations and in armed conflict.<sup>29</sup>

The only existing legal instrument that explicitly mentions IEDs is the **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II**.

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 was adopted on 10 October 1980 and entered into force on 2 December 1983.<sup>30</sup> Its purpose is to prohibit or restrict the use in armed conflict of specific types of weapons that are considered to cause unnecessary or unjustifiable suffering to combatants or to affect civilians indiscriminately. It consists in a framework convention with general provisions and a series of protocols addressing specific weapons. The Convention was amended on 21 December 2001 by making it possible for states parties to apply the whole Convention not only to international armed conflicts but also to non-international armed conflict.

**Additional Protocol II** on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices was adopted at the same time as the Convention in 1980. Protocol II was amended on 3 May 1996 and the Amended Protocol entered into force on 3 December 1998. The amendment extended the scope of application of the Protocol from international armed conflicts to non-international armed conflict in accordance with Article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions, and defined the various categories of mines whose use was restricted.

**Amended Protocol II** is the most relevant instrument to IEDs and the only legally binding one explicitly mentioning them. Due to the diversity in their composition, several provisions of the Protocol are particularly relevant:

Article 2 (4) on booby-traps: “any device or material which is designed, constructed or adapted to kill or injure, and which functions unexpectedly when a person disturbs or approaches an apparently harmless object or performs an apparently safe act.”

Article 2 (5) on “other devices”: “manually emplaced munitions and devices including **improvised explosive devices** designed to kill, injure or damage and which are actuated manually, by remote control or automatically after a lapse of time.”

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<sup>28</sup> For an overview on IHL, see ICRC, “What is International Humanitarian Law”, [https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/what\\_is\\_ihl.pdf](https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/what_is_ihl.pdf); see additional ICRC references in the section Selected Resources.

<sup>29</sup> United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *International Legal Protection of Human Rights in Armed Conflict*, New York-Geneva, 2011.

<sup>30</sup> Full text of the Convention and its protocols available at [http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/\(httpPages\)/4F0DEF093B4860B4C1257180004B1B30?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/(httpPages)/4F0DEF093B4860B4C1257180004B1B30?OpenDocument)

Article 3 (General Restrictions): in substance, it is prohibited for all parties<sup>31</sup> to a conflict to use “devices that are designed or of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering”, “against the civilian population as such or against individual civilians or civilian objects” or in an “indiscriminate” manner; moreover, “[a]ll feasible precautions shall be taken to protect civilians from the effects [such] other devices.”

Article 7 (Prohibitions of Use): it is prohibited to use “devices that are attached to or associated with: internationally recognized protective emblems, corpses or graves, medical facilities or transportation; object intended for children, food or beverage; objects of a religious character; historic monuments, works of art or places of worship, animals or their carcasses;” “in any city, town, village or other area containing a similar concentration of civilians in which combat between ground forces is not taking place or does not appear to be imminent, unless: a) Such weapons are placed on or in close vicinity of a military objective, or b) Measures are taken to protect civilians from their effects, for example the posting of warning sentries or the issuing of warnings.”

Also of relevance is **Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War**, adopted in 2003, which was the first agreement to address UXO and Abandoned Explosive Ordnance. The Technical Annex of Protocol V contains “best practices” on recording, storage and release of information on UXO and Abandoned Explosive Ordnance; Warnings, risk education, marking, fencing and monitoring; and preventative measures. It is implemented on a voluntary basis.

Despite the adoption in 2010 of an *Accelerated Plan of Action on Universalization of the Convention and its Annexed Protocols*,<sup>32</sup> the CCW lacks universal adherence. There are currently 121 States that are party to the original CCW, only 82 States also party to Amended Article I of the CCW,<sup>33</sup> and 102 states party to Amended Protocol II. Among the non-states parties are a fairly large number of States that have been or are still affected by conflict whether inter-state or internal (see Annex II), including some of the most IED affected countries.

Some experts suggest a range of other instruments may have relevance to IEDs, including the **Anti-Personnel Landmine Ban Convention**,<sup>34</sup> the **Convention on Cluster Munitions**,<sup>35</sup> the **Rome Statute**,<sup>36</sup> the **International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings**,<sup>37</sup> the **Chemical**<sup>38</sup> and **Biological**<sup>39</sup> **Weapons Conventions**, and **UN Security Council resolution 1540**.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>32</sup> See <http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/%28httpPages%29/7EDE18BCB181741AC12572A6002E7710?OpenDocument>

<sup>33</sup> Amended Article I of the CCW makes it applicable not only to situations of international armed conflict, but also to all cases of partial or total occupation, non-international armed conflict, as well as “armed conflicts in which peoples are fighting against colonial domination and alien occupation and against racist regimes in the exercise of their right of self-determination”.

<sup>34</sup> Full text of the Convention available at <http://www.apminebanconvention.org/overview-and-convention-text/>

<sup>35</sup> See [http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/\(httpPages\)/F27A2B84309E0C5AC12574F70036F176?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/(httpPages)/F27A2B84309E0C5AC12574F70036F176?OpenDocument).

<sup>36</sup> International Criminal Court, *Rome Statute*, document A/CONF.183/9 of 17 July 1998, Article 8.

<sup>37</sup> Full text of the Convention available at <http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/laws.html>

<sup>38</sup> In recent years, there have been reported cases of use of IEDs filled with toxic chemicals such as chlorine, in particular in Afghanistan and Iraq<sup>38</sup> as well as Syria. See, for example, Robert Johnston, “Chemical Weapon Terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan”, 5 April 2015, <http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/terrorism/wmdterrorism-1.html>; and Tom Batchelor, “ISIS Targets Civilians with Chemical Weapon Attack in Iraq and Syria,” *Express*, 20 July 2015. Full text of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction available at <http://disarmament.un.org/treaties/t/cwc/text>

<sup>39</sup> “Each State Party to this Convention undertakes never in any circumstances to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain: ... (2) Weapons, equipment or means of delivery designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.” Full text of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction available at <http://disarmament.un.org/treaties/t/bwc/text>

## Section IV. Existing Processes and Actors—an Initial Survey

Because the problem posed by IEDs is not new, especially for national armed forces and international peacekeeping forces, several governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have accumulated significant experience. This overview of initiatives and expertise is by no means exhaustive but rather illustrates the rich network of processes and actors that the international community has at its disposal to address various facets of the IED problem.

### The United Nations System

Several processes and actors of the UN system have already taken direct or indirect measures to prevent IED use, mitigate its impact on civilians, peacekeeping forces and humanitarian workers, and contribute to dismantling networks or armed groups producing or using IEDs.

#### *UN Processes*

##### *The UN General Assembly*

One method of advancing issues on peace and security within the UN framework is through a First Committee<sup>41</sup> generated General Assembly mandate. First Committee resolutions are often utilized by States to call for further examination of issues to be undertaken by a body or authority (for example the UN Secretary-General, or a panel or group of governmental experts), which may yield findings and recommendation on the way forward. A General Assembly process has the advantage of promoting participation by all States.

In 2015, at the 70th Session of the General Assembly, Afghanistan, France and Australia put forward a **First Committee** resolution on IEDs. The resolution outlines 17 action items for States to consider in addressing the issue of IEDs. The resolution:

- urges States to put in place national controls against the production, sale, supply, purchase, transfer and storage of precursor components and materials that could be used to make IEDs, and encourages them to establish national C-IED policies;
- encourages States to share information and good practices on countering IEDs;
- encourages States to participate in ongoing discussions within existing global processes, including the CCW, and to utilize existing guidelines, such as the IATGs;
- urges States to comply to relevant UN resolutions related to IEDs; and
- and requests the UN Secretary-General to develop a report on the issue of IEDs, seeking the views of Member States and to provide in his report “initial building blocks and

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<sup>40</sup> As a consequence of this resolution adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, all States, even those not party to international arms control, disarmament or non-proliferation agreements, are under the obligation to legislate and act to prevent any access of non-state actors to nuclear, biological or chemical materials. As noted in Section II, these materials could be used in an improvised device. United Nations, Security Council, Resolution 1540 (2004), Document S/RES/1540/2004, 28 April 2004.

<sup>41</sup> The First Committee of the UN General Assembly deals with disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace that affect the international community, and seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime, see [www.un.org/en/ga/first/index.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/ga/first/index.shtml)

recommendations” for ways forward for consideration at the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly.<sup>42</sup>

While this is the first time there has been a resolution tabled in First Committee on IEDs, IEDs have been addressed for several years through biennial resolutions on assistance to mine action, within the **Fourth Committee** (“Special Political and Decolonization Committee”). For instance, UN General Assembly resolution 68/72 adopted on 16 December 2013 stressed “the pressing need to urge non-state actors to halt immediately and unconditionally new deployments of mines, improvised explosive devices and other associated explosive devices.”<sup>43</sup> A new Fourth Committee resolution on assistance to mine action<sup>44</sup> is expected to be adopted during the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly. This biennial resolution also takes note of the **Report of the Secretary-General on Assistance in Mine Action**, which mentions cases of use of IEDs, especially against UN peacekeepers and humanitarian workers, as well as contains recommendations for improved cooperation between the UN and Member States.<sup>45</sup>

### ***The UN Security Council***

Several subsidiary bodies established by the UN Security Council have been dealing directly or indirectly with IEDs.

**The Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC)** was established by resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005).<sup>46</sup> Resolution 1373 was adopted after the 11 September 2001 attacks under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Because it encompasses all terrorist acts, it has a scope much broader than the specific use of IEDs for terrorist purposes. It makes it legally binding for all States to: “[c]riminalize the financing of terrorism;... [d]eny all forms of financial support for terrorist groups; [s]uppress the provision of safe haven, sustenance or support for terrorists;... [c]ooperate with other governments in the investigation, detection, arrest, extradition and prosecution of those involved in [terrorist] acts; and [c]riminalize active and passive assistance for terrorism in domestic law and bring violators to justice.”

The **Country Reports** that Member States provide to the UN on a regular basis offer a great deal of useful information on States’ counter-terrorism policies and in particular on IED use and measures taken to address that threat. Reports dated from 2001 through 2006 are available on the website of the CTC;<sup>47</sup> however, a decision was made not make public subsequent reports, which now require special permission to be accessed. This highlights the international community’s dilemma to find a balance between promoting transparency and information sharing as a means to foster cooperation among States, and preserving confidentiality to avoid giving any involuntary assistance to terrorist or violent non-state actors through inadvertent knowledge transfer.

The Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida (also known as the **Al-Qaida/Taliban Sanctions Committee**): adopted under Chapter VII of

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<sup>42</sup> See A/C.1/70/L.36\*.

<sup>43</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, Document A/68/72, preamble, 16 December 2013.

<sup>44</sup> See A/C.4/70/L.8, adopted by consensus in 4<sup>th</sup> Committee on 16 October 2015, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/312/37/PDF/N1531237.pdf?OpenElement>

<sup>45</sup> Most recent reports include United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, *Assistance in Mine Action*, A/70/207, 3 August 2015 (in particular paras 4, 13, 40, 41, 54, 69 and 75); and United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, *Assistance in Mine Action*, A/68/305, 9 August 2013 (in particular paras. 10, 14, 22, 33, 34, 62, 70, 96, and 103).

<sup>46</sup> See <http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/>

<sup>47</sup> See <http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/resources/countryreports.html>

the UN Charter, those resolutions and subsequent ones require all States to take measures (such as assets freeze, travel ban and arms embargo) in connection with any individual or entity associated with Al-Qaida and the Taliban, as designated by the Committee. The Committee has published narratives of reasons for putting individuals and organizations on the sanctions lists, and those reasons have included production and use of IEDs.<sup>48</sup> As an advisory body to the Committee, the **Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team**, composed of independent experts, regularly publishes reports on IED use and recommends prevention measures.<sup>49</sup>

In a similar vein, Security Council resolution 1566 (2004) established another **Working Group** to examine “practical measures to be imposed upon individuals, groups or entities involved in or associated with **terrorist activities**, other than those designated by the Al-Qaida/Taliban Sanctions Committee”.<sup>50</sup>

The **High-Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations** was established on 31 October 2014 by the Secretary-General to make a comprehensive assessment of the State of UN peace operations today and the needs of the future. Its 2015 report recommended that “[t]he Secretariat should assist Member States in updating their training on the “new basics” required of peacekeepers in more challenging settings”, including C-IED training.<sup>51</sup>

The **Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations**: established in 2001, this body aims at improving cooperation between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries. In recent meetings, it has addressed several aspects of the impact of IEDs on peacekeeping operations and possible recommendations for action, for instance on 23 March 2015 on “Safety and Security of UN Peacekeepers: Asymmetric Threats.”<sup>52</sup>

The **1540 (2004) Committee**<sup>53</sup> focuses on denying access of non-states actors to weapons of mass destruction and related materials. The emphasis on capacity-building, development of appropriate controls, legislation and management of materials, while focused on WMD cannot help but have a spill-over effect on controls over IED materials—particularly chemicals. Reports on measures taken by Member States are available on line<sup>54</sup> as well as National Implementation Plans,<sup>55</sup> reports on Experience Shared, Lessons Learned, and Effective Practices,<sup>56</sup> and a Legislative Database.<sup>57</sup>

### ***The CCW Amended Protocol II Group of Experts***

The Tenth Annual Conference of the States Parties to Amended Protocol II held in 2008 established an open-ended informal **Group of Experts on Improvised Explosive Devices under Amended Protocol II** that has been meeting annually since 2009.<sup>58</sup> Extensive work has been undertaken on

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<sup>48</sup> See <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/narrative.shtml>

<sup>49</sup> See for example, United Nations, Security Council, *Fifteenth Report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2161 (2014) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities*, Document S/2014/41, 23 January 2014, para 44–50.

<sup>50</sup> See United Nations, Security Council, *Report of the Security Council Working Group established pursuant to resolution 1566 (2004)*, Document S/2010/683, 31 December 2010.

<sup>51</sup> United Nations, Security Council and General Assembly, Document A/70/95–S/2015/446, para 231, 17 June 2015.

<sup>52</sup> See <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/wgpk/meetings.htm>

<sup>53</sup> See <https://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/>

<sup>54</sup> See <http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/national-implementation/national-reports.shtml>

<sup>55</sup> See <http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/national-implementation/national-action-plans.shtml>

<sup>56</sup> See <http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/experiences.shtml>

<sup>57</sup> See <http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/national-implementation/legislative-database/general-information.shtml>

<sup>58</sup> See the documents related to the work of the CCW Group of Experts at [www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/\(httpPages\)/39340DE9A9659E5CC1257CF400344B35?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/(httpPages)/39340DE9A9659E5CC1257CF400344B35?OpenDocument)

how to address the challenges posed by IEDs. The Group has broadly focused its efforts on enhancing information exchange on various aspects of IEDs (including by civil society organizations and research institutions and by representatives of some affected countries), as well as on compiling best practices and developing possible guidelines to respond to the threat of IEDs. Concretely, in the past five years of work, the Group has examined the possibility of information exchange between States—with the view to explore the development of best practice guidelines—on measures to:

- prevent the diversion of commercial grade explosives for use in IEDs;
- prevent the diversion of commercially available detonators and other non-explosive materials for use in IEDs;
- to reduce the risk of military munitions stocks, ERW, or commercial explosive stocks being used for IEDs;
- raise public awareness and/or promote risk education campaigns; and
- to enhance information sharing on detection and countermeasure techniques.

In facilitating the exchange of information, a **one-time, voluntary questionnaire** on national C-IED frameworks was considered and endorsed by the Group in 2014. The Group also reiterated in 2014 its 2013 recommendation to explore the possibility of an **information exchange database, portal or platform** as a voluntary tool to improve information sharing.

One outcome of the Group's work consists of a **Compilation of Existing Guidelines, Best Practices and Other Recommendations** Aiming at Addressing the Diversion or Illicit Use of Materials that Can Be Used for IEDs.<sup>59</sup> With a view to preparing High Contracting Parties for the **2016 CCW Review Conference**, in March 2015 the Coordinator and Co-Coordinator of the Group of Experts put forward a **food for thought paper**,<sup>60</sup> suggesting possible future work within the framework of the CCW.

## **UN Actors**

### ***The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS)***

Responsible for providing political and executive direction for UN peacekeeping operations, DPKO has been active in addressing the scourge of IED use as a consequence of the threat they pose to peacekeepers and achievement of mission objectives. DFS provides dedicated support to peacekeeping missions and political missions. An internal **Uniformed Capabilities Steering Group**, co-chaired by DPKO and DFS, provides support in identifying the capabilities, needs and training requirements for UN missions and their personnel to protect themselves against the threat of IEDs and to deliver their mandates. This includes assessments of existing capabilities and gaps in UN peacekeeping.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Maintained by the Implementation Support Unit on an ongoing basis. The draft compilation was first circulated on 5 April 2012. Document available at:

[www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/55E574B550D10D00C1257A78006B2196/\\$file/IEDs+Compilation.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/55E574B550D10D00C1257A78006B2196/$file/IEDs+Compilation.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> See Erwan Roche and Igor Moldovan, *2016 CCW Review Conference and the way ahead on IEDs: Food-for-Thought Paper*, available at

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/DAB42B6A412ECE29C1257E00002C0737/\\$file/IED+Coordinators+Letter\\_The+Way+Ahead\\_5Mar2015.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/DAB42B6A412ECE29C1257E00002C0737/$file/IED+Coordinators+Letter_The+Way+Ahead_5Mar2015.pdf)

<sup>61</sup> See UN DPKO/DFS, "Uniformed Capabilities Required for UN Peacekeeping: Current Gaps, Commitments to Enable More Rapid Deployment, and other Capability Requirements",



In 2014 an independent **Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in UN Peacekeeping**<sup>62</sup> delivered its final report to the Under-Secretaries-General for DPKO and the DFS to enhance peacekeepers' mobility, mitigate risk and increase awareness of the IED threat amongst UN personnel. The report highlights the severe impact of IEDs on a mission's mobility and its operational scope. The report includes a number of specific recommendations to address IED threats, for example, specific security measures, availability of special equipment to detect IEDs, as well as identification of 'historical' hot spots where fixed or tethered surveillance platforms might be necessary to ensure surveillance capability.

The **UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS)** is administratively a component DPKO. It was established at the time of the adoption of the Anti-personnel Landmine Ban Convention in 1997 to serve as the United Nations focal point for mine action.<sup>63</sup>

Over the years, UNMAS has developed expertise and experience in detection, removal and destruction of IEDs, as well as post-blast analyses. According to the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, UNMAS has reported some 5,000 IED events across the various UN missions and programmes in 2013 alone.<sup>64</sup> It has been active in assisting affected countries with respect to national IED awareness and disposal training, as well as emergency responses when IEDs threaten public safety and State security forces.<sup>65</sup> The IED Disposal (IEDD) support provided by UNMAS has now become an integral part of existing mine action programmes in a number of affected countries. In particular, in recent years UNMAS has:<sup>66</sup>

- Cleared nearly 600 remnant IEDs;
- Trained over 800 humanitarian workers and NGO personnel and nearly 1,500 peacekeepers on IED awareness, recognition, and reporting;
- Coordinated IED risk awareness training<sup>67</sup> for 155,000 at-risk civilians; and
- Supported capacity-building efforts by the African Union through the mentorship of 14 IEDD teams within the African Union Mission in Somalia.<sup>68</sup>

UNMAS has assisted the **UN Department for Safety and Security (DSS)** in adding a section on IEDs to the UN Security Management System Security Policy Manual. UNMAS is also currently tasked with the development of C-IED guidelines applicable to both civilians and uniformed UN personnel. The development of such guidelines is conducted in collaboration with relevant entities within the UN system, including DPKO, DFS, DSS, and the Department of Political Affairs.<sup>69</sup> Additionally, UNMAS provides support to the **Office for Military Affairs**, which leads the UN work on mission-specific matters such as capabilities and IED survivability.<sup>70</sup>

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<https://cc.unlb.org/Uniformed%20Capability%20Requirement%20Paper/UN%20PK%20Capability%20Requirements%20Paper%20-%20Rev%2024%20Aug%202015.pdf>

<sup>62</sup> See the Final Report at <http://www.performancepeacekeeping.org/>, in particular pp. 6, 45–46.

<sup>63</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, Resolution A/RES/53/26, 31 December 1998.

<sup>64</sup> United Nations, Security Council, *Fifteenth Report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2161 (2014) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities*, Document S/2014/41, 23 January 2014, para 45.

<sup>65</sup> See <http://www.mineaction.org/issues/improvised-explosive-devices>

<sup>66</sup> See <http://www.mineaction.org/issues/improvised-explosive-devices>

<sup>67</sup> The distance-learning course on "Landmine and Explosive Remnant of War Safety" also covers IEDs. Course available at <http://1155627.sites.myregisteredsite.com/lsp/unmas/>

<sup>68</sup> See "AU Marks Mine Action Day", 4 April 2015, <http://amisom-au.org/2015/04/au-marks-mine-action-day/>

<sup>69</sup> Remarks by Mr Bruno Donat, Chief, Geneva Office, UNMAS, at Meeting of Experts on Amended Protocol II to the CCW – IEDs, 9 April 2015.

<sup>70</sup> See UNMAS, UN Overview of the IEDs situation and reflection of a coherent response, <http://www.mineaction.org/sites/default/files/documents/20150903%20C-IED%20Conference.pdf>

At the operational level UNMAS deploys advisers to UN peacekeeping and political missions, including on intelligence and mission planning. At the tactical level, it trains soldiers on awareness, post-blast investigation, analytics, and ordnance disposal.

UNMAS coordinates the **UN Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action**, which develops or revises policies and strategies, sets priorities among UN players and shares information. It also chairs the **Steering Committee on Mine Action**, which brings together UN mine-action, non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the **mine-action coordination centres** in affected countries where UNMAS orchestrates the work of local and international mine-action service providers.

### ***The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)***

OCHA is responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent response to emergencies. Through the **Protection of Civilian reports**, OCHA has highlighted the impact of the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects, including IEDs, in populated areas.<sup>71</sup> OCHA has convened several expert consultations on explosive weapons and is compiling examples of good practices regarding the use of explosive weapons (practices that “seek to minimize the impact of military operations on civilians in ways that go beyond the minimum requirements of IHL”).<sup>72</sup>

### ***The Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)***

As a result of a 2008 resolution of the General Assembly,<sup>73</sup> and as part of the UN SaferGuard Programme,<sup>74</sup> UNODA developed the **International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATGs)**,<sup>75</sup> which offer national authorities in charge of conventional ammunition stockpile management a frame of reference to achieve effective levels of safety and security. The value of the IATGs to addressing the threat of IEDs has been recognized by States, both in the First Committee of the General Assembly,<sup>76</sup> as well as by the informal Group of Experts under Amended Protocol II.<sup>77</sup>

The IATGs were drafted by a Technical Review Panel consisting of specialists from a geographically balanced group of States, under the guidance of UNODA’s Conventional Arms Branch. This Branch also leads the Guidelines outreach programme, coordinates its implementation and capacity-building initiatives, including training courses, and any future review process.

Regularly updated, based on sound and accepted explosive science, the IATGs recommend an integrated risk and quality management system, and allow for a progressive improvement in safety and security in line with available resources. One of the aims of this framework and related

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<sup>71</sup> The concept of “explosive weapons in populated areas” encompasses more than just IEDs, because it includes industrially produced weapons, such as aircraft bombs, artillery shells, missile and rocket warheads, or mortar bombs, used by both regular State and armed non-state actors, and it is also more restricted because it does not include weapon use in less populated environments such as rural areas. See OCHA Policy Sheet, “Protecting Civilians from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas”, June 2015, <https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/EWIPA%20factsheet%202020June2015.pdf>

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>73</sup> United Nations, “Problems Arising from the Accumulation of Conventional Ammunition Stockpiles in Surplus”, A/RES/63/61 of 2 December 2008.

<sup>74</sup> See <http://www.un.org/disarmament/un-safeguard/>

<sup>75</sup> United Nations, Office for Disarmament Affairs, International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, available at <http://www.un.org/disarmament/un-safeguard/guide-lines/>

<sup>76</sup> See A/C.1/70/L.36, para 11.

<sup>77</sup> See CCW/AP.II/CONF.12/3/Rev.1, Section: Recommendation, point (c), 2011.

capacity-building activities is to reduce the risk that ammunition and explosives are diverted from regular security forces to illicit markets or organizations for use in IEDs. The IATGs provides useful guidelines for States in preventing the proliferation of materials that could be used to design a IED, offering detailed guidance over the full life-cycle management of ammunition, including transport, marking and packaging of ammunition, classification of items deemed “attractive to criminals and terrorist organizations”, principles of counter-diversion, safe and secure stockpile management, as well as disposal.<sup>78</sup>

UNODA and the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** co-chair the **UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA)**, an inter-agency coordinating mechanism with over 20 UN entities. By utilizing its wealth of expertise and networks within the UN system, CASA has helped to frame the UN’s approach to small arms control, assisted States in the implementation of relevant small arms control instruments, and has initiated the development of international standards (known as the **International Small Arms Control Standards**, or ISACS) to ensure consistency among UN entities in provision of guidance to Member States. While small arms and light weapons are distinct from IEDs, the illicit proliferation or diversion of ammunition and explosives that are used for light weapons are of concern in the context of materials that could be utilized for IEDs.

### ***The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)***

UNODC is mandated to assist Member States in their struggle against illicit drugs, crime and terrorism. In particular, the **Terrorism Prevention Branch** has been the key UN entity providing legal counter-terrorism technical assistance to Member States especially through adherence to and implementation of the universal legal framework against terrorism, crime prevention and criminal justice, rule of law, drug control, responses to transnational organized crime, money-laundering, corruption and related international cooperation in criminal matters. As an example, UNODC has been training officials and practitioners in Afghanistan on strengthening criminal justice mechanisms to counter IEDs. This included advice on how to effectively prevent, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate terrorist offences involving IEDs within the applicable international legal framework. The programme also increased the capacity of national authorities on countering the financing of terrorism and IEDs, the treatment of victims of IEDs, and good practices for countering IEDs, as well as inter-agency collaboration to reduce the risks of diversion of explosives and their precursors for terrorist purposes.<sup>79</sup>

Although the use of IEDs has dramatically increased in the last decade, one of the earliest yet still relevant guidelines on ways and means to restrict access to explosives can be found in a 2002 study based on the **United Nations Survey on Crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems** conducted annually by UNODC.<sup>80</sup> Because some of the same chemicals used in the manufacture of narcotics are also used for explosives, UNODC has strongly urged some countries, especially in South Asia, to adopt **Voluntary Codes of Conduct** for the chemical trade and industry based on the model code that it had designed to support the implementation of the 1988 United

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<sup>78</sup> See UNODA, SaferGuard Programme at <http://www.un.org/disarmament/un-safeguard/>

<sup>79</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, “Strengthening Criminal Justice Mechanisms to Counter IEDs in Afghanistan”, June 2015, [http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/terrorism/latest-news/issi\\_afg\\_june-2015.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/terrorism/latest-news/issi_afg_june-2015.html)

<sup>80</sup> United Nations, Economic and Social Council, Report of the Secretary-General: “Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Explosives by Criminals and their Use for Criminal Purposes”, Document E/CN.15/2002/9/Add.1, 23 January 2002.

Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.<sup>81</sup> In this regard, UNODC is also a partner of the programme **Global Shield** initiated by the World Customs Organization (described below).

### ***United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)***

In June 2015, UNIDIR and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies convened an international expert roundtable<sup>82</sup> with a range of policymakers and practitioners—including participants from governments, international organizations, NGOs, and academia—to consider how the international community might build coordinated processes and responses to IEDs. The objective was to lead an informal discussion to consider and elaborate scenarios for future international action to address IEDs.

UNIDIR is currently working with UNODA to develop a package of tools that facilitates the use of the IATGs by field practitioners in fragile settings (the **International Small Arms and Ammunition Guidance Platform** project).<sup>83</sup> This set of tools, scheduled to be launched by the end of 2016, will support practitioners' efforts to manage their ammunition safely and securely to prevent diversion and illicit proliferation.

Starting in 2010, UNIDIR's work on **explosive weapons** helped to build discourse among multilateral practitioners stigmatizing the use of explosive weapons in populated areas in order to enhance the protection of civilians, as well as deepen the understanding of the normative aspects of explosive weapons management by States. This work supported efforts aimed at preventing and reducing civilian harm from this type of armed violence, at improving the protection of civilians during armed conflict, including women, children and other especially vulnerable groups, and at strengthening applicable legal frameworks.<sup>84</sup>

### ***UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF)***

Established in 2005, CTITF's mandate is to strengthen coordination of the counter-terrorism efforts of the UN system. The **United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy**<sup>85</sup> commits States to "improve border and customs controls in order to prevent and detect the movement of terrorists and prevent and detect the illicit traffic in, inter alia, small arms and light weapons, conventional ammunition and explosives, and nuclear, chemical, biological or radiological weapons and materials, while recognizing that States may require assistance to that effect". The Strategy is reviewed biennially, most recently in 2014,<sup>86</sup> which allows new threats and priorities to be incorporated into the strategy. Within the CTITF Office, the **UN Counter-Terrorism Centre** was established in 2011. The Centre implements projects in support of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

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<sup>81</sup> See in particular United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Adoption of Voluntary Code of Conduct for Chemical Industry: A Milestone in the Control of Precursor Trafficking in Pakistan", [https://www.unodc.org/pakistan/en/adoption-of-voluntary-code-of-conduct-for-chemical-industry\\_a-milestone-in-the-control-of-precursor-trafficking-in-pakistan.html](https://www.unodc.org/pakistan/en/adoption-of-voluntary-code-of-conduct-for-chemical-industry_a-milestone-in-the-control-of-precursor-trafficking-in-pakistan.html)

<sup>82</sup> See UNIDIR, "The International Community and IEDs: Building Coordinated Processes and Responses", Roundtable 8-9 June 2015, <http://www.unidir.org/files/medias/pdfs/the-international-community-and-ieds-building-coordinated-processes-and-responses-eng-0-627.pdf>

<sup>83</sup> See <http://www.unidir.org/programmes/process-and-practice/international-small-arms-and-ammunition-guidance-platform-isap>.

<sup>84</sup> Briefing papers on explosive weapons are available for download from the UNIDIR website, as well as the full text of Maya Brehm, *Protecting Civilians from the Effects of Explosive Weapons: An Analysis of International Legal and Policy Standards*, UNIDIR, 2012.

<sup>85</sup> A/RES/60/288, 20 September 2006, section II, para. 13.

<sup>86</sup> A/RES/68/276, 24 June 2014.

## Select international actors of particular relevance

### *International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)*

Established in 1863 as an impartial, neutral and independent organization, the ICRC works to ensure humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence. The ICRC has a fundamental role in promoting and strengthening IHL.

### **INTERPOL**

INTERPOL is the world's largest international police organization, with 190 member countries. Its role is to provide police around the world with technical and operational support to help meet the growing challenges of fighting crime.

INTERPOL has several targeted programmes to support the efforts of member countries to deter, detect and disrupt the use of chemicals and explosives in terrorist incidents via:<sup>87</sup>

- *Operational Support*: addressing chemical risk, chemical smuggling and illicit trafficking of explosives and their precursors.
- *Information and Intelligence*: encouraging the exchange of chemical and explosive-related information and intelligence with its partners; conducting threat assessments; and offering technical expertise to support investigations.
- *Prevention*: working with law enforcement, first responders, health and environmental authorities, policy-makers, government officials, and industry representatives to develop awareness and early warning capacity.
- *Incident Response*: deploying INTERPOL Incident Response Teams following disasters or incidents.

In addition, on 2–4 September 2015, INTERPOL partnered with the Federal Government of Australia to organize the **International Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Leaders' Forum** in Canberra.<sup>88</sup> This event gathered 300 key representatives from government, law enforcement and military services from some 70 countries and international organizations including the United Nations, NATO, the African Union and the International Bomb Data Centre.<sup>89</sup> The Forum aimed to bridge the information gap between the law enforcement and military communities of member countries, as well as develop a platform to enable ongoing cooperation and support information sharing. The Forum supported the creation of a "**Global Alliance**" to unite and focus efforts in combating the IED threat. Under this umbrella, a coalition of willing partners will develop a coordinated international effort based on four interconnecting pillars: component controls, capacity-building, public awareness, and information sharing. The Global Alliance will also encourage participating countries

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<sup>87</sup> See INTERPOL, "Chemical and Explosives Terrorism", Fact Sheet COM/FS/2015-08/PST-06.

<sup>88</sup> See <http://www.interpol.int/en/News-and-media/News/2015/N2015-123>

<sup>89</sup> The **International Bomb Data Center Working Group** is a body of bomb data centres and government agencies that focus on technical intelligence on explosives. The IBDC facilitates information sharing on incidents and trends. It also serves to facilitate exchange on best practices between governmental and business entities. See *FBI National Press Office*, "FBI Hosts 16<sup>th</sup> Annual International Bomb Data Center Working Group Conference", 14 September 2015, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/fbi-hosts-16th-annual-international-bomb-data-center-working-group-conference>. See also *PRNewswire*, "ATF, International Bomb Data Partners Share Unique Explosives Communications Portal: Twenty-five Countries to Collaborate in New Anti-Terrorism Effort", 1 August 2007, <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/atf-international-bomb-data-partners-share-unique-explosives-communications-portal-57773662.html>

to adopt a ‘whole-of-government’ approach to focus law enforcement, military and diplomatic channels towards an international response to reduce the IED threat and save lives.<sup>90</sup>

### ***North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)***

As military forces from NATO countries were increasingly confronted with the use of IEDs in international peace support operations, in 2010, NATO developed a **C-IED Action Plan**<sup>91</sup> with three pillars:

- *Defeating the device*: looking at how to detect and neutralize IEDs;
- *Attacking the network*: exploiting the IEDs as a source of information; undertaking efforts to identify and disrupt the networks emplacing, building and procuring IEDs;
- *Preparing the forces*: training soldiers for an IED environment, developing technology to prevent IED attacks and protect soldiers and civilians.

NATO’s C-IED Action Plan acts as an umbrella for the coordination of the various actors involved in C-IED at all levels, from strategic to tactical. It includes information sharing, closer cooperation with other international organizations and law enforcement agencies. It also includes specialized training for troops deployed to affected areas and improving equipment used to detect IEDs and protect troops. The Action Plan was revised in 2013 to institutionalize C-IED in the NATO Command and Force structures and to support national efforts. A **NATO C-IED Task Force** coordinates efforts across NATO Headquarters, Strategic Commands and other NATO bodies.

The **C-IED Centre of Excellence** (C-IED COE) in Spain,<sup>92</sup> established in 2010, concentrates on collecting and sharing lessons learned, as well as researching explosively formed projectiles, which allow insurgents to hit and destroy both light and heavy armoured vehicles at low cost and with poorly designed penetrators. For its part, the **EOD Centre of Excellence** in Slovakia,<sup>93</sup> established in 2011, focuses on activities, technologies and procedures for IED “Render-Safe” operations in line with the explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) initiative. Additional projects focus on route clearance, building a NATO C-IED information-management tool, and conducting table-top and live exercises to train troops in a high-threat IED environment.

### ***World Customs Organization (WCO)***

The WCO is an independent intergovernmental body whose mission is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of customs administrations. Today, the WCO represents 180 customs administrations across the globe that collectively process approximately 98% of world trade. Because many components used to manufacture IEDs are commercially available including through international trade, the WCO has been active in promoting cooperation in trade regulations and customs control targeting the most sensitive goods.

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), “Countering Improvised Explosive Devices”, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_72809.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_72809.htm)

<sup>92</sup> See <http://www.coec-ied.es/>. The current States sponsoring the C-IED COE are Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain and United States, with Turkey in the process of joining as a sponsoring nations and Sweden as an additional contributing partner.

<sup>93</sup> See <https://www.eodcoe.org/en/>. The EOD Centre of Excellence, established by Slovakia, is sponsored by the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Poland, and Romania.

In particular, the WCO has partnered with INTERPOL and UNODC in launching **Programme Global Shield** aiming at prevention of smuggling and illicit diversion of precursor chemicals that could be used to build IEDs. Started in 2010, it allows Customs Administrations from more than 90 countries to share information on 14 precursor chemicals used for IEDs.<sup>94</sup> Its activities include technical assistance, information and intelligence sharing, and training. Regular information on seizures of precursor chemicals are detailed in the annual **Illicit Trade Report**.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> See World Customs Organization, <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/key-issues/programme-global-shield.aspx>

<sup>95</sup> See World Customs Organization, 2013 Illicit Trade Report, [http://www.wcoomd.org/en/~/~ /media/WCO/Public/Global/PDF/Topics/Enforcement%20and%20Compliance/Activities%20and%20Programmes/Illicit%20Trade%20Report%202012/ILLICIT%202013%20-%20EN\\_LR2.ashx](http://www.wcoomd.org/en/~/~ /media/WCO/Public/Global/PDF/Topics/Enforcement%20and%20Compliance/Activities%20and%20Programmes/Illicit%20Trade%20Report%202012/ILLICIT%202013%20-%20EN_LR2.ashx)





## Section V. Options and Opportunities to Better Utilize UN Processes and Actors

There are at least three areas where existing UN processes and actors could be better leveraged on the IED issue to promote immediate benefits:

- Sharing and consolidating knowledge, raising awareness and stigmatizing IED use against civilians;
- Supporting the strengthening of national efforts to reduce the IED threat; and
- Empowering and better utilizing the UN framework for a more coherent approach to addressing IEDs.

### Sharing and consolidating knowledge, raising awareness and stigmatizing IED use against civilians

#### *Sharing and consolidating knowledge*

Various stakeholders, including States, international organizations and NGOs, already collect a wide range of data related to IEDs, including for monitoring and assessing IED impact on civilians, evidence for prosecution, research for improving detection, and intelligence for dismantlement of criminal and terrorist networks.

It is widely accepted that better data is necessary in order to develop relevant, practical and effective responses to the IED phenomenon. For example, a 2015 case study<sup>96</sup> of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) demonstrated the crucial nature of the collection of data, and how it can be used to engage with both State and non-state actors in efforts to limit the impact of IEDs. Indeed, based on the data collected, UNAMA was able to implement its own C-IED policy and assist the Afghan government in investigating and prosecuting cases of IED use.<sup>97</sup>

Better organizing the data available on IEDs, pooling information and analysis resources and making it accessible to stakeholders helps to build the evidence base necessary to operationalize appropriate responses.<sup>98</sup> As noted by the organizers of the Global Alliance, “Sharing appropriate information, both within countries and with other nations, will in some cases require a shift in thinking from need to know, to need to share.”<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Jane Hunter, *Tracking IED Harm—Monitoring Improvised Explosive Device Use and Why We Need the Data*, Action on Armed Violence, 2014, pp. 21–31.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 21–31.

<sup>98</sup> The international community has significant experience with building information management tools in related areas, such as the **Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA)**, run by the **Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining**, which provides the mine action community with a comprehensive information management package, and includes IEDs within its ordnance classification system. Before building a new information management system or tool, existing tools should be examined in order to avoid duplication but also to learn from their successes and the challenges they have faced in their development and maintenance. For more information about IMSMA, see <http://www.gichd.org/mine-action-topics/management-of-mine-action-programmes/information-management-imsma/#.Veg-ZdLzq70>

<sup>99</sup> Australian Federal Police Assistant Commissioner Julian Slater quoted in International Leaders’ Forum backs creation of Global Alliance to combat IED threat <http://www.interpol.int/en/News-and-media/News/2015/N2015-123>

The informal Group of Experts in the Amended Protocol II in the CCW, for example, has suggested exploring the feasibility of a **global database, portal or platform** to improve the sharing of unclassified information, as well as **development or compilation of best practices and guidelines** on addressing various aspects of IEDs. Similarly, one of the aims of the “Global Alliance to Counter Improvised Explosive Devices” was to establish a “**global knowledge bank**” on IEDs.<sup>100</sup>

However, there are significant challenges to initiating information sharing on IEDs: the necessity for governments or organizations engaged in investigations for prosecution or dismantlement of IED-related networks to keep information confidential<sup>101</sup> as well as the lack of resources and/or technical knowledge for collecting, processing and analysing information and data on IEDs from diverse languages and sources.

Information sharing **partnership between States and international organizations** already exist, such as **Project Watchmaker**, thus it is important that new initiatives do not duplicate existing efforts. Beyond surveying what information is already available, stakeholders must further reflect on **what type of information** should be collected and shared; **for what purpose** the information should be used; **who will have access** to the information; and **where** should such information be hosted. In addition, stakeholders would need to standardize the metrics used as well as the types or categories of information.<sup>102</sup>

The United Nations and its specialized agencies have significant experience in data collection. As an initial step, the UN system could consider how the individual agencies of the UN family, with their presence in affected areas, could harmonize their own data metrics in relation to IEDs to facilitate consolidation and eventual sharing system-wide.

### ***Raising awareness***

The United Nations could be better used as a platform for raising global awareness about the IED threat and its impact in several ways.

**Adopting General Assembly resolutions: First Committee** resolutions would integrate the issue of IEDs into a broader discussion on peace and security, enabling the arms control and disarmament community to consider the destabilizing impact of IEDs and contribute to preventing and reducing the threat of such devices. In addition, given its universal participation, through a consensus First Committee resolution, States have an opportunity to agree on steps to reduce the impact of IEDs and encourage actions to reduce the threat.

Such an initiative was launched by Afghanistan at the First Committee in 2015. The resolution promotes greater action *inter alia* by: highlighting the global nature of the IED threat; stressing the need for international information exchange, sharing of good practices and regional cooperation; and requesting the UN Secretary-General to prepare a report on the global scourge of IEDs with recommendations to the General Assembly, to be considered at the 71<sup>st</sup> Session in 2016. In years to

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<sup>100</sup> INTERPOL, “International Leaders’ Forum backs creation of Global Alliance to combat IED threat”, 4 September 2015.

<sup>101</sup> There are ways to reconcile the legitimate concern to protect sensitive information with the need for information sharing, as the UN Security Council sanctions or counter-terrorism committees as well as INTERPOL’s Watchmaker Programme have demonstrated.

<sup>102</sup> See Report of the expert meeting “The International Community and IEDs: building coordinated processes and responses”, organized by UNIDIR and the Graduate Institute of International and Developmental Studies, 8–9 June 2015, available at <http://www.unidir.org/files/medias/pdfs/the-international-community-and-ieds-building-coordinated-processes-and-responses-eng-0-627.pdf>

come, widening the sponsorship of the resolution would demonstrate States' commitment and support to addressing the issue of IEDs.

Within **Fourth Committee**, as in past years, a draft resolution on Assistance on Mine Action has been tabled with references to addressing IEDs. In addition to recognizing the humanitarian threat posed by IEDs,<sup>103</sup> the resolution: "Urges all States, in particular those that have the capacity to do so, as well as the United Nations system and other relevant organizations and institutions involved in mine action, to support mine-affected States, upon request and as appropriate, by providing: Necessary information and technical, financial and material assistance to locate, remove,[and] destroy ... improvised explosive devices ... in accordance with international law, as soon as possible".<sup>104</sup>

The resolution, once adopted by the General Assembly, will enable relevant entities in the UN system to take a more active roles in addressing the threat of IEDs.

**Encouraging greater Security Council engagement:** The Security Council could be utilized for greater visibility and information exchange through its **thematic meetings or debates**. Earlier this year, the meeting "Safety and Security of UN Peacekeepers: Asymmetric Threats"<sup>105</sup> offered such an opportunity. Meetings such as these are valuable, perhaps underutilized, venues for information exchange and raising the profile of an issue.

**Utilizing existing fora:** The **2016 CCW Review Conference** offers an opportunity for High Contracting Parties to take several actions to increase their engagement on IED issues.<sup>106</sup> Specific actions that could be considered include a **consensus declaration** or a **joint statement** that acknowledges the importance of the issue, recalls the relevant work undertaken in CCW, reaffirms national commitments, and draws attention to the importance of addressing this threat at the international level. The informal Group of Experts could be given a mandate to develop a **collection of good practices and lessons learned**.

**Reports of the Secretary-General:** Report submitted by the UN Secretary-General to the Security Council and the General Assembly already play a critical role for increasing awareness of the threat posed by IEDs globally. In addition to **country specific reports** with references to use and threat of IEDs,<sup>107</sup> the Secretary-General has submitted to the Security Council **thematic reports** that raise the awareness of the threat and impact of IEDs, including in his recent **report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict**<sup>108</sup> (noting the devastating impact of the use of IED on civilians and infrastructure in Iraq, Mali, and Somalia), as well as in his **report on Small Arms**<sup>109</sup> (recognizing the increasing threat of IEDs globally and how improving the control over conventional ammunition could reduce the risk related to IEDs). In 2015, the Secretary-General submitted a **report on Assistance in Mine**

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<sup>103</sup> See preamble, A/C.4/70/L.8.

<sup>104</sup> See OP3, (d), A/C.4/70/L.8

<sup>105</sup> See: <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/wgpk/meetings.htm>

<sup>106</sup> Detailed in Erwan Roche and Igor Moldovan, *2016 CCW Review Conference and the way ahead on IEDs: Food-for-Thought Paper*, CCW Amended Protocol II Group of Experts Geneva 1-2 April 2014, available at [http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/DAB42B6A412ECE29C1257E00002C0737/\\$file/IED+Coordinators+Letter\\_The+Way+Ahead\\_5Mar2015.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/DAB42B6A412ECE29C1257E00002C0737/$file/IED+Coordinators+Letter_The+Way+Ahead_5Mar2015.pdf)

<sup>107</sup> These include, for example, Secretary-General reports on Libya, Mali and Somalia. See S/2015/732, S/2015/702, and S/2015/624.

<sup>108</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, S/2015/453 of 18 June, [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/453](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/453)

<sup>109</sup> See UNSG report on Small Arms, S/2015/289.

**Action,**<sup>110</sup> which calls on all parties to conflicts to desist from the use of IEDs and recognizes the major impact IEDs have on various peace and humanitarian operations in the field.<sup>111</sup>

### ***Stigmatizing IED use against civilians***

While awareness raising at the international level is a necessary and valuable endeavour, in many ways it is a “top down” activity. It is on the ground in difficult circumstances where stigmatization of IEDs is most needed. Many civil society organizations advocate greater stigmatization of the use of IEDs against civilians or non-combatants, which violates IHL or international human rights law. This could have a constraining impact especially on armed groups that seek some form of recognition or support among local communities or even credibility as a State alternative.

While international voices stigmatizing IED use may “trickle down” to affected communities, specific actions are also required in local communities that are targeted by armed groups. Discreet engagement with some armed groups carried out by humanitarian organizations such as the ICRC or the civil society organization Geneva Call<sup>112</sup> may be effective in convincing some armed groups that, like in the case of anti-personnel landmines, most victims of IEDs are innocents from the same community as the armed groups and that their cause is harmed by the indiscriminate use of such weapons.

Some have offered the view that it seems abnormal that IEDs are singled out for particular attention and criticism as a category by States while industrially produced explosive ordnance produces the same or similar effects on civilians. It is noteworthy, then, that use of explosive weapons in populated areas—including but not limited to IEDs—is of increasingly acute concern for the international community. The United Nations Secretary-General has repeatedly stated his concern about the impacts of use of explosive weapons on civilians based on evidence from a range of recent conflicts.<sup>113</sup> Building upon this, a broadening group of States, international organizations and civil society groups have called for user restraint of explosive weapons with wide area effect—a call that extends to all users of explosive weapons, not only States.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, in view of the asymmetry of many contemporary armed conflicts between State and non-state forces, it would seem unlikely that non-state armed groups will take steps to reduce the risk of harm to civilian populations from IEDs without similar standards being seen to be applied by State regular armed forces to their explosive weapons.

### **Supporting the strengthening of national efforts to reduce the IED threat**

States have the primary responsibility for IED threat reduction and prevention measures, which necessarily include national military, law enforcement and intelligence activities. These activities

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<sup>110</sup> United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, *Assistance in Mine Action*, A/70/207, para. 75, 3 August 2015.

<sup>111</sup> Similar concerns on humanitarian workers and UN personnel are expressed in his report to the General Assembly on Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of UN personnel, A/68/489, 27 September 2013.

<sup>112</sup> Geneva Call promotes respect by armed non-state actors for international humanitarian norms in armed conflict and other situations of violence, in particular those related to the protection of civilians. The key tool of engagement that Geneva Call uses is known as a **Deed of Commitment**, in which armed non-state actors undertake to respect specific international humanitarian norms.

<sup>113</sup> See the *Reports of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict*.

<sup>114</sup> See Austrian Federal Ministry for European Integration and Foreign Affairs, *Preventing harm from explosive weapons in populated areas: International expert meeting, Vienna, September 21 and 22, 2015: Co-Chairs' Summary*, Vienna, October 2015.

include, but are not limited to, information and intelligence sharing, protecting potential targets, training and capacity-building, and ultimately defeating IED networks.

Due to the complexity and multidimensional nature of the IED threat, an **all-of-government approach** or strategy at the national level is appropriate to coordinate the various relevant actors from the security sector (military, police, justice, customs, intelligence), including its oversight actors (parliament, civil society organizations, media), and public actors (finance, health, social welfare, education), and should be extended to the private sector (chemical industry and trade, farmers, lawyers, etc.). While many countries already have taken such an approach, others require assistance to do so.

Concretely, States could—among other activities—consider some of the following options to strengthen national efforts to reduce the threat of IEDs.

**Better manage access to commercial explosives and dual-use chemical precursors:** A number of commercially available explosives used by mining companies or other industries manufacturing pyrotechnics can provide a source of materials for IEDs if they are not regulated, stored or managed effectively. While many States already have established regulatory frameworks commercial explosives, others have not yet done so. Thus there is an opportunity for all States to put in place or review their national regulations and accountability mechanisms to ensure appropriate management of these items.

Further, some commercially available dual-use precursors (such as ammonium nitrate, potassium chlorate, or hydrogen peroxide) can be easily transformed for manufacturing IEDs. States have the opportunity to ensure that their regulatory frameworks include all relevant stages, from fabrication to sale, transfer (including across borders) and use of such dual-use materials.<sup>115</sup> The model monitoring system offered by the WCO's **Global Shield** programme could form the basis of international dialogue to ensure monitoring of sensitive chemical precursors as well as detonators, blasting caps and detonating cords. Similarly, there is room for expanding the INTERPOL **CHASE Programme** to counter the international smuggling of chemicals used to manufacture chemical and explosive devices by increasing the capacity of police, customs, border forces, immigration and security agencies to work collaboratively.

A **Code of Conduct** could be considered for industries that produce or trade in listed chemical precursors, explosives, detonators or sensitive elements in order to reduce the risk of diversion to illicit uses.<sup>116</sup>

Information exchange on existing regulation, procedures and practices to control access to commercial explosives and dual-use materials is one of the recommendations made by the informal Group of Experts under the Amended Protocol II of the CCW. In this regard, States could consider utilizing the CCW as a forum to continue such technical dialogue and exchange of information. CCW **Protocol V**, despite its limited membership, could also be better utilized for **sharing lessons learned** and **operational good practices**. Further efforts for **universalization** of Protocol V should be made to ensure that UXO and abandoned ordnance are cleared rapidly. Consolidation of lessons learned and good practices on regulatory procedures has practical merits, as the United Nations can

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<sup>115</sup> While compounded by the sensitivities surrounding controls on dual-use materials, international cooperation on strengthening border controls is critical to address IEDs. For example, more than 70% of the IEDs used in Afghanistan are made with Calcium Ammonium Nitrate produced in two factories in Pakistan, and in 2012 alone, 444 tons of IED material were seized on the Afghan side of the border, but large amounts still manage to cross the border into Afghanistan. See Mujib Mashal, "Afghanistan's IED Complex: Inside the Taliban Bombmaking Industry", *Time*, 2 January 2013.

<sup>116</sup> See section on efforts of UNODC and WCC's Global Shield.

support the development of **model laws** to assisting States in their effort to build capacity on legislative frameworks, as well as to enhance their understanding of regulatory requirements.<sup>117</sup>

One area where the UN system could be better utilized by States is on **strengthening full life-cycle management of military ammunition and explosives**. Diversion<sup>118</sup> of poorly secured or abandoned military explosives, recycling of unexploded ordnance or explosive remnants of war, and/or main charges and boosters from conventional ammunition, such as artillery shells and mortar bombs, can provide materials for IEDs. On-going international efforts to **improve stockpile management** and **secure abandoned stockpiles** need to be stepped up. In this regard, States should be encouraged to apply the **International Ammunition Technical Guidelines**. To support the practical application of the IATGs, the UN has established the **UN Safeguard Programme**,<sup>119</sup> and specifically the **IATG Implementation Support Toolkit**,<sup>120</sup> which provides various tools and training materials that aim to support States in their effort to improve the full life-cycle management of ammunition.

### **Empowering and utilizing the UN framework for more coherent approach to addressing IEDs**

As an organization, the United Nations faces two imperatives in relation to addressing IEDs. The UN has a role and responsibility to ensure safe, secure and consistent delivery of its mandate on humanitarian and peace operations, including protection of UN personnel, in the midst of growing threat of IEDs globally. In addition, mindful of the significant humanitarian and security impact IEDs have on States and communities, UN has a role to help States themselves respond to the threat of IEDs. Different actors and processes address these two imperatives to differing degrees. If the UN is to ultimately have an effective approach to IEDs, these two approaches will need to be brought together coherently.<sup>121</sup>

There is a clear opportunity for the UN to establish or to designate an **inter-agency coordinating body on the issue on IEDs**. Such coordinating bodies within the UN system are not new, as demonstrated by existing relevant groups or mechanisms, such as the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, the Coordinating Action on Small Arms, the Inter-Agency Working Group on Sanctions and the Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, to name a few. Such bodies have been instrumental not only to develop UN strategies on specific thematic issues, which ensures a coordinated and consistent approach and response by all UN entities, but also to inform, legitimate and motivate collection action within the UN and at the global, regional and national levels. While various coordination and guidance efforts are being

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<sup>117</sup> For example, UNODC has developed a model law to support States in their effort to put in place adequate regulatory framework to combat the illicit manufacturing and trafficking in firearms, their parts, component and ammunition. See [https://www.unodc.org/documents/legal-tools/Model\\_Law\\_Firearms\\_Final.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/legal-tools/Model_Law_Firearms_Final.pdf)

<sup>118</sup> Combatting diversion is a critical part of addressing IEDs. One innovative tool to do so is the **iTrace Global Weapon Reporting System**, a European Union-funded project run by **Conflict Armament Research**, which provides policy makers with precise, verified information on transfers of diverted conventional weapons and ammunition. The system automatically quantifies diversion risks and profiles the sources of diversion nationally, regionally and globally. This data may serve for preventing diversion of ammunition or other equipment potentially used for IEDs. CAR has been recently active in researching the deployment and manufacture of IEDs by the 'Islamic State' which it considers "being done on an industrial scale and in an unprecedented fashion" in Iraq and Syria. See <http://www.conflictarm.com/itrace/>; see also Jude Abeler, "The Homemade Weapons of ISIS", *The Daily Caller*, 4 July 2015.

<sup>119</sup> See UN SaferGuard Programme, <http://www.un.org/disarmament/un-safeguard/>

<sup>120</sup> <http://www.un.org/disarmament/un-safeguard/toolkit/>

<sup>121</sup> A clear argument in favour of a "whole of system" approach is contained within "United Nations Overview of the Improvised Explosive Device Situation and Reflections of a Coherent Response", statement delivered by the Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service at the International Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Leaders' Forum, on 3 September 2015, available at <http://www.mineaction.org/sites/default/files/documents/20150903%20C-IED%20Conference.pdf>

undertaken internally by numerous UN entities, most notably by UNMAS, a system-wide coordination mechanism would be a critical starting point to bringing together these two roles of the UN in addressing the threat of IEDs.

In a parallel process, there are various options and methods that may be considered by States and the UN to strengthen efforts to address the threat of IEDs.

Were a coordinating body to be established, the Secretary-General might consider appointing a **Special Representative, Envoy or Advisor** to promote awareness and mainstreaming of the IED issue both within the UN system and further afield. The advantage of such a single, high-level figure reporting to the Secretary-General, and working closely with the coordinating body, would be to ensure a **whole-of-system approach** and liaison, in the name of the UN system, with external partners.

A **Security Council resolution** would demonstrate the high level of shared concern about the issue and understanding of the fate of the most affected States. A Security Council resolution would be the natural result of the work already achieved within the Council's various subsidiary bodies, particularly in the areas of peacekeeping and counter-terrorism. It would have the advantage of raising even higher the degree of visibility of the IED issue, which would certainly demonstrate how seriously the situation of the most affected countries is taken. Rather than touching on practical measures for C-IED action, which may be politically difficult for Council Members to agree on, such a resolution could form the political umbrella under which more detailed and coordinated measures could be eventually be considered.

A resolution could, for example,

- recall the mandate on IEDs that it already provided to the Monitoring Team of the Council's 1267 Committee to assess IED threats, identify illicit supply chain and target the facilitators;<sup>122</sup>
- reaffirm the international legal norms applicable by all parties in times of international and non-international armed conflict as well as in other cases of armed violence;
- call on relevant authorities to implement or strengthen regulations aimed at controlling access to sensitive materials likely to be used for IEDs;
- encourage Member States and inter-governmental as well as non-governmental organizations to cooperate with each other in researching, countering, and prosecuting IED use with a view to reducing obstacles to peacekeeping missions and humanitarian action as well as preserving civilian lives; and
- establish an **informal experts group** on IEDs.<sup>123</sup>

Further, to support the implementation of such a resolution, the UN together with States could explore development of practical tools aimed at organizing information about implementation efforts to facilitate technical assistance and to enable meaningful dialogue among States, such as was done via the creation of the **1540 Matrix**.

As highlighted in the 2009 **Comprehensive Review of the Status of Implementation of Resolution 1540** (2004),<sup>124</sup> some States still require assistance in order to comply with their obligations and

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<sup>122</sup> See UN Security Council resolutions 2160 (on Taliban), 2161 (on Al-Qaeda and affiliates) and 2178 (on foreign terrorist fighters).

<sup>123</sup> This could be modelled on Security Council resolution 2242 (2015) on women, peace and security. That resolution notes the Council's intention to "convene meetings of relevant Security Council experts as part of an Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security to facilitate a more systematic approach to Women, Peace and Security within its own work and enable greater oversight and coordination of implementation efforts."

implement all elements of resolution 1540. The Comprehensive Review scheduled for 2016 is an excellent opportunity for States to consider how to strengthen and support the development or review of domestic legislation on physical protection, border controls, and export of sensitive materials—all of which could have an overall positive secondary benefit of strengthening controls on IED components and their movement.

In recognition of the cross-cutting nature of the IED issue, a **joint ad hoc meeting of the First and Fourth Committees** could be considered, similar to the joint meeting<sup>125</sup> held during the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly on outer space security and sustainability.

In view of the work being carried out within the CCW framework, renewed efforts could be made to **encourage CCW non-signatories—and in particular IED-affected States—to accede to the Convention**. In addition, as a practical measure, within CCW a **network of national focal points** on IEDs could be established and extended to non-signatories. While most of the working papers and written contributions presented to the Group of Experts are publicly available,<sup>126</sup> the value of these would be enhanced through **more systematic compilation and analysis** in order to assist States in adapting and improving their policies.

Efforts could also be undertaken by States and the UN to strengthen existing international guidelines related to IEDs, such as the **review of the IATGs** to ensure that guidance remains up to date and relevant, as well as to explore **development of new technical guidelines**, as recommended by the informal Group of Experts. Technical guidelines could provide practical guidance to States on preventative measures to address IEDs, including in the areas of industry and trade regulations, export control, ammunition stockpile management, etc. Such an endeavour could build upon the existing work of the CCW Group of Experts. The existing **Compilation of Existing Guidelines, Best Practices and Recommendations** could serve as a basis for discussions on draft guidelines. Elevating these guidelines to the General Assembly would broaden their accessibility and utility, particularly to IED-affected countries that not parties to the CCW.

Finally, a **new instrument focusing on IEDs** could eventually be considered. For example, a **Group of Governmental Experts** established by a First Committee resolution might recommend that States negotiate a comprehensive **Programme of Action**, similar to the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, for adoption by the UN General Assembly. Such an instrument, while not legally binding, could enable all Member States to agree on a set of actions to be undertaken at the international, regional and national levels, with a possible review processes to monitor progress, as well as technically focused meetings to deepen the knowledge on control requirements (similar to the Programme of Action's Meetings of Governmental Experts).

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<sup>124</sup> United Nations, Security Council, Comprehensive Review of the Status of Implementation of Resolution 1540 (2004), Document S/2010/52, 1 February 2010.

<sup>125</sup> Established pursuant to A/RES/69/38, paragraph 4.

<sup>126</sup> See <http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/%28httpPages%29/39340DE9A9659E5CC1257CF400344B35?OpenDocument>



## Section VI. Conclusions

It is indisputable that the UN has an important role to play in addressing both the security and humanitarian impacts of IEDs. Its unique position as a global institution cannot be overemphasized.

As there are already numerous UN processes and actors addressing IEDs, a more coordinated approach within the UN is the logical next step. Realistically, as a cross-cutting issue—with connections to entities concerned with peacekeeping, counter-terrorism, humanitarian relief, disarmament, crime and IHL—it will be challenging to bring this under a single coordinator. That said, a coordination framework or mechanism would bring together the relevant actors and processes regularly in order to strengthen knowledge of and linkages between these entities and their IED-related activities. Such a mechanism would be essential to the development of a more coherent UN strategy.

In addition to the primary role of national governments, a variety of international and regional actors are involved in prevention and protection activities; data collection; searching for and prosecuting individuals and groups responsible for IED violence; and reducing IED impacts on security forces and civilian populations. Specialized organizations and agencies have already taken the lead on specific technical issues within their mandates, such as addressing chemical controls, and are involving a broad group of stakeholders, including industry, who must be part of effective solutions to specific facets of the IED question.

Strict global coordination—that all governmental, regional, national, and non-governmental institutions active in this field should work under a single umbrella or within a single framework—seems unrealistic. Indeed their different legal status, memberships, mandates and competencies are too diverse for a sole framework to be acceptable to all or even desirable since it may lead to the situation of accepting “lowest common denominator” approaches.

However, there is the sense that the existing global patchwork of responses could have more impact if there was increased leadership and coordination at the international level. Greater cooperation among interested and relevant actors could result in multiplier effects, pooling of resources, enlargement of participation, and enhanced effectiveness. Thus active UN support for and participation in initiatives such as the Global Alliance should be encouraged.

In addition to the many options outlined in Section V, paragraph 16 of A/C.1/70/L.36\* requests the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States as he develops his report on the issue of IEDs. Member States may wish to consider expressing their views on:

- How an “all UN approach”, such as a UN Strategy for IED Action, is necessary or is simply greater information exchange within the existing UN framework sufficient?
- How existing UN processes, actors and tools, such as the UN SaferGuard programme, might be better leveraged and resourced to address IEDs.

As suggested by the Director of the UN Mine Action Service, “Member States’ support to the UN reflection is of critical importance. They would help define the specific areas where the Organization’s own intervention adds value; as well as where the Organization acting in close

cooperation together with Member States yields greater impact; and also clarify areas of C-IED work that sovereign Member States will continue to carry out individually.”<sup>127</sup>

As IEDs are a threat of global concern, all States should submit their national views in order to have the most robust and comprehensive report possible available for consideration at the 71<sup>st</sup> session of the General Assembly.

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<sup>127</sup> “United Nations Overview of the Improvised Explosive Device Situation and Reflections of a Coherent Response”, statement delivered by the Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service at the International Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Leaders’ Forum, on 3 September 2015, <http://www.mineaction.org/sites/default/files/documents/20150903%20C-IED%20Conference.pdf>

## **Annex I. Text of A/C.1/70/L.36\***

### **Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices**

*Adopted by consensus by the First Committee on 6 November 2015*

*The General Assembly,*

*Expressing grave concern over the devastation caused by the increasing use of improvised explosive devices by illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients, which has affected a large number of the world's countries and has resulted in thousands of casualties, both civilian and military,*

*Expressing concern at the serious harm that such improvised explosive device attacks have caused to United Nations staff and peacekeepers, and to humanitarian workers by threatening their lives, increasing the cost of their activities, limiting their freedom of movement and affecting their ability to deliver on their mandates,*

*Expressing concern also about the negative impact of these attacks on socioeconomic development, infrastructure and freedom of movement, and the security and stability of States, and thus underlining the need to address this issue in order to achieve relevant goals and targets under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,<sup>128</sup> in particular the target of Goal 16.1 to significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere,*

*Recognizing that the wide spectrum of materials that can be used for the manufacture of improvised explosive devices, including those sourced from the military and civilian industry, contributes to their diverse nature and their deployment methods, which thus requires an appropriate approach to the formulation of measures to counter them,*

*Noting the important role that States can play in working with business entities to develop effective strategies to counter the threat of improvised explosive devices,<sup>129</sup> including to prevent the adverse impact of the diversion of materials and the potential loss of revenue and risk to reputation,*

*Stressing the paramount need to prevent illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients from, and identify the networks that support them in, obtaining, handling, financing, storing, using or seeking access to all types of explosives, whether military or civilian, as well as other military or civilian materials and components that can be used to manufacture improvised explosive devices, including detonators, detonating cords and chemical components, while at the same time avoiding any undue restrictions on the legitimate use of those materials,*

*Stressing also the importance of securing conventional ammunition stockpiles in order to mitigate the risk of their diversion to illicit use as materials for improvised explosive devices,*

*Stressing further the importance of engagement by all Member States in a comprehensive and coordinated community of action to countering the global threat posed by improvised*

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<sup>128</sup> Resolution 70/1.

<sup>129</sup> See the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework (A/HRC/17/31).

explosive devices in the hands of illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients, taking into account national capacities,

*Noting* the discussions on the issue of improvised explosive devices by the informal group of experts under the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-traps and Other Devices as amended on 3 May 1996 (Amended Protocol II)<sup>130</sup> and on the technical annex of the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War (Protocol V)<sup>131</sup> 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,<sup>132</sup>

*Noting also* the multilateral efforts to counter improvised explosive devices of the Programme Global Shield, led by the World Customs Organization and assisted by the International Criminal Police Organization and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, to prevent the smuggling and illicit diversion of precursor chemicals that could be used to build improvised explosive devices, the network of regional and multilateral communities of action established by States to counter improvised explosive devices, the research on those devices being undertaken by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the work undertaken by the United Nations Mine Action Service to mitigate the threat posed by those devices to civilians, United Nations staff, peacekeepers, and humanitarian personnel, in particular in the field,

*Reaffirming* the inherent right of Member States to individual or collective self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. *Strongly urges* States to develop and implement, where appropriate, all necessary national measures to promote the exercise of vigilance by their nationals, persons subject to their jurisdiction and firms incorporated in their territory or subject to their jurisdiction that are involved in the production, sale, supply, purchase, transfer and storage of precursor components and materials that could be used to make improvised explosive devices;

2. *Strongly encourages* States, where appropriate, to develop and adopt their own national policy to counter improvised explosive devices that includes civilian-military cooperation, to strengthen their countermeasure capability to combat illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients in their use of improvised explosive devices, and notes that the policy could include measures to support international and regional efforts to prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate attacks using improvised explosive devices and their widespread consequences;

3. *Encourages* States to enhance, as appropriate, international and regional cooperation, including the sharing of information on good practices as appropriate and where relevant, in cooperation with the International Criminal Police Organization, in order to address the theft, diversion, loss and illicit use of materials for making improvised explosive devices, while ensuring the security of sensitive information shared;

4. *Encourages* States to also take measures to stem the transfer of knowledge of improvised explosive devices and their construction and use by illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients, as well as the illicit acquisition of components over the Internet;

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<sup>130</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2048, No. 22495.

<sup>131</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2399, No. 22495.

<sup>132</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1342, No. 22495.

5. *Also encourages* States to participate, in accordance with their obligations and commitments, in the ongoing work on improvised explosive devices by the informal group of experts under the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-traps and Other Devices as Amended on 3 May 1996 (Amended Protocol II) 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;

6. *Further encourages* States to participate, as appropriate, in a comprehensive and coordinated community of action to counter improvised explosive devices in accordance with their respective international obligations and commitments, and to consider supporting the Programme Global Shield, the Counter-improvised explosive device global alliance emanating from the inaugural International Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Leaders' Forum and other multilateral and regional efforts;

7. *Encourages* States, and international, regional and other organizations with relevant expertise and that are in a position to do so, to render technical, financial and material assistance to interested States upon their request aimed at strengthening the capacity of such States to counter the threat of improvised explosive devices, including through assistance for developing good practices for the protection of civilians from attacks by improvised explosive devices, and to provide appropriate assistance to the victims of such attacks;

8. *Also encourages* States to respond to the needs of today's peacekeepers to operate in new threat environments involving improvised explosive devices, including providing, in consultation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat, the appropriate training, capabilities, information and knowledge management and technology that is required to counter improvised explosive devices, and to ensure that adequate financial resources are allocated to meet such needs;

9. *Recognizes* that improvised explosive devices are used in terrorist activities, takes note of the work of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, and urges its further attention to the issue of improvised explosive devices in line with the mandates of its associated entities;

10. *Urges* Member States to fully comply with all relevant United Nations resolutions, including those related to the prevention of the use and access by terrorist groups of materials that can be used in the making of improvised explosive devices, such as Security Council resolutions 2160 (2014) of 17 June 2014, 2161 (2014) of 17 June 2014, 2199 (2015) of 12 February 2015 and 1373 (2001) of 28 September 2001;

11. *Stresses* the need for States to take appropriate measures to strengthen their own national ammunition stockpile management in order to prevent the diversion of materials for making improvised explosive devices to illicit markets, to illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients, and encourages the application of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines for the safer and more secure management of ammunition stockpiles, while also recognizing the importance of capacity-building in this regard;<sup>133</sup>

12. *Encourages* States and relevant international and regional organizations and non-governmental organizations to continue to build upon existing awareness and risk education campaigns regarding the urgent threat of improvised explosive devices;

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<sup>133</sup> The General Assembly, in its resolution 66/42, welcomed the completion of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines and the establishment of the "SaferGuard" knowledge resource management programme for the stockpile management of conventional ammunition.

13. *Also encourages* States and relevant international and regional organizations to engage, as appropriate, business entities in discussions and initiatives on countering improvised explosive devices, including on issues such as accountability for dual-use components, improving the regulation of explosive precursors, where possible and as appropriate, strengthening security for the transport of explosives and at explosive facilities, as well as enhancing the vetting procedures for personnel with access to explosives, while avoiding undue restrictions on the legitimate use of and access to such materials;

14. *Strongly encourages* States to share information on a voluntary basis on the diversion of commercial-grade explosives and commercially available detonators to the illicit trade, and transfers to illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients;

15. *Takes into account* the existing initiatives at the international, regional and national levels to counter improvised explosive devices, and encourages the engagement by States in an open and inclusive dialogue on steps forward to harmonize diverse ongoing efforts;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General, within existing resources, to prepare a report on the issue of improvised explosive devices in the light of the present resolution, acknowledging and taking into account existing efforts already being undertaken and seeking the views of Member States, and to provide in his report initial building blocks and recommendations for ways forward on this issue for consideration by the General Assembly at its seventy-first session;

17. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-first session, under the item entitled "General and complete disarmament", a sub-item entitled "Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices".

## Annex II. States not party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Source: United Nations – as of 30 August 2015

*States that are considered as having been in armed conflict since the CCW was opened for signature in 1981 or being still in armed conflict, whether international or non-international are in bold.*

<b>Algeria</b>	Ghana	Samoa
Andorra	Grenada	San Marino
<b>Angola</b>	Guinea	Sao Tome and Principe
<b>Armenia</b>	Guyana	Singapore
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	<b>Haiti</b>	Solomon Islands
Bahamas	<b>Indonesia</b>	<b>Somalia</b>
Bahrain	<b>Iran</b>	<b>South Sudan</b>
Barbados	Kenya	Suriname
Belize	Kiribati	Swaziland
Bhutan	<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	<b>Syria</b>
Botswana	<b>Lebanon</b>	Tanzania
Brunei Darussalam	<b>Libya</b>	<b>Thailand</b>
<b>Central African Republic</b>	Malawi	<b>Timor-Leste</b>
<b>Chad</b>	Malaysia	Tonga
Comoros	Marshall Islands	Trinidad and Tobago
Congo	Mauritania	Tuvalu
<b>Côte d'Ivoire</b>	Micronesia	Vanuatu
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	<b>Mozambique</b>	<b>Yemen</b>
<b>Democratic Republic of the Congo</b>	Myanmar	Zimbabwe
Dominica	Namibia	
Equatorial Guinea	<b>Nepal</b>	
<b>Eritrea</b>	Oman	
<b>Ethiopia</b>	Palau	
Fiji	Papua New Guinea	
Gambia	<b>Rwanda</b>	
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