

FACT SHEET

CONVENTION ON CERTAIN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

The Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions of the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects entered into force in 1983. It is more commonly known as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The purpose of the CCW is to ban or restrict the use of specific types of weapons that are considered to cause unnecessary suffering or which have indiscriminate effects.

The structure of the CCW regime

The CCW is an umbrella convention which provides the legal rules for joining the regime and its entry into force. It has Protocols that set out the specific prohibitions, restrictions and other provisions. This allows the CCW to respond to new challenges concerning conventional weapons as the States Parties can negotiate and add further protocols to the regime.

An amendment to Article 1 of the CCW extended the Convention and its Protocols' application to situations of non-international armed conflict.



The CCW's Protocols

When joining the CCW, States must join at least two of its five following Protocols:

- *Protocol I – Non-detectable Fragments*: Prohibits the use of any weapon designed to injure by fragments which cannot be detected in the human body by X-rays.
- *Amended Protocol II – Mines, Booby-traps and Other Devices*: Prohibits the use of non-detectable anti-personnel mines and their transfer, and prohibits the use of non-self destructing and non-self-deactivating mines outside fenced, monitored and marked areas. Seeks to limit the indiscriminate damage caused by landmines and requires States Parties to take all feasible precautions to protect civilians when using these weapons.
- *Protocol III – Incendiary Weapons*: Prohibits the use of weapons primarily designed to set fire to objects or cause burn injuries against civilians.
- *Protocol IV – Blinding Laser Weapons*: Prohibits the use and transfer of laser weapons designed to cause permanent blindness.
- *Protocol V – Explosive Remnants of War (ERW)*: Prevents and minimises the humanitarian impact of unexploded ordnance and abandoned explosive weapons. Includes provisions on clearance and destruction of ERW, measures for the protection of civilians, recording the use of explosive ordnance, international cooperation and assistance, and victim assistance.

“The Convention is one of our most important tools to guard against human suffering. In a rapidly changing world it must be kept fit for purpose.”

Secretary-General's remarks to the CCW Fifth Review Conference 2016

Lethal autonomous weapons

A unique and important character of the CCW is its ability to address emerging issues and the possibility for negotiating new protocols. A Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) will convene in 2017 to address the implications of emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS). The GGE will be chaired by Ambassador Amandeep Singh Gill of India. LAWS are generally considered to be weapons that would identify and attack a target without human intervention.

The CCW Implementation Support Unit

UNODA hosts the CCW Implementation Support Unit (ISU), its main tasks are to provide secretariat services for all CCW meetings, facilitate communications among States Parties and international organisations and support States with the implementation of the CCW and its Protocols. Established in 2011, the two-person ISU is located in UNODA's Geneva Branch.

Facts on the CCW and its Protocols

- As of 5 April 2017, 124 States have joined the CCW. Five States have signed but not yet ratified the Convention. There are 116 States parties to Protocol I, 103 to Amended Protocol II, 113 to Protocol III, 107 to Protocol IV and 92 to Protocol V.
- The CCW is one of the very few instruments of international humanitarian law which seeks to regulate the conduct of non-state actors.
- The adoption of Protocol IV on Blinding Laser Weapons in 1995 marked only the second time in history that States prohibited a weapon before its deployment on the battlefield.
- The explosive devices that cause the greatest contamination globally are explosive remnants of war (ERW). For this reason, Protocol V on ERW is one of the most important instruments under the CCW.
- The use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) has increased dramatically. States Parties to Amended Protocol II have been discussing how to address the humanitarian impact of the use of IEDs.
- The Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW will be held on 22-24 November 2017 and will be chaired by Ambassador Matthew Rowland of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

For more information: <http://www.unog.ch/ccw> **e-mail:** ccw@unog.ch