



ICRC

**Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the
Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain
Conventional Weapons which may be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious
or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW)**

21-23 November 2018

**Statement of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) under
Agenda item 9 'Protocol III'**

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

The ICRC has repeatedly expressed grave concern about the high risks to civilians when incendiary weapons, and weapons with incidental incendiary effects such as white phosphorous munitions, are used in populated areas.

Our concerns are based on the severe burn injuries caused by such weapons, the lack of expertise and experience of many medical facilities in treating them, and the long-term disabilities and suffering that victims of these weapons typically face.

As has been seen in recent conflicts, the fires started by these weapons when used in populated areas can quickly spread to civilian structures, with often devastating consequences.

As the only international humanitarian law (IHL) treaty regulating the use of incendiary weapons, Protocol III supplements rules of customary IHL expressly governing the use of incendiary weapons, and the general rules of IHL on the conduct of hostilities, which apply to all weapons used in armed conflict. Protocol III prohibits the use of air-delivered incendiary weapons against any military objective located in a concentration of civilians. It also restricts the use of ground-delivered incendiary weapons and the use of incendiary weapons against forests and plant cover.

The ICRC calls on all High Contracting Parties that have not yet done so to accede to the Protocol without delay.

The ICRC has welcomed that some armed forces have imposed restrictions on the use of weapons that have incidental incendiary effects in or near populated areas.

We continue to call on High Contracting Parties, including those not yet bound by Protocol III, to report on their national policies and operational practice with regard to the use of incendiary weapons, and of weapons with incidental incendiary effects, to help to inform discussions in the CCW regarding compliance with Protocol III, rules of customary IHL applicable to incendiary weapons, and the general rules of IHL on the conduct of hostilities.

We thank those HCPs that have shared such policies and practices.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.