Prohibits or restricts the use of conventional weapons which are considered excessively injurious or whose effects are indiscriminate. The Convention provides a framework, while its Protocols set out the specific prohibitions, restrictions and other provisions.
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 Article I: Extended the application of the Convention and its Protocols to situations of non-international armed conflicts.

Amended Protocol II - Mines, Bobby-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-destructing mines outside fenced, monitored and marked areas. Seeks to limit the indiscriminate damage caused by landmines and requires State parties to take all.

Protocol III - Incendiary Weapons: Prohibits the use of weapons 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): Addresses 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 victim assistance.
Background of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)

During the 1970s, there was increasing awareness among the international community that new technologies were leading to weapons that were not always compatible with international humanitarian law. In response to these concerns the International Committee of the Red Cross convened a Conference of Government Experts on Weapons that may Cause Unnecessary Suffering or have Indiscriminate Effects from 24 September to 18 October 1974 in Lucerne, Switzerland. The issues addressed by the conference were: discussion and analysis of proposed legal criteria, incendiary weapons, small-caliber projectiles, blast and fragmentation weapons, delayed-action and treacherous weapons and other categories and new weapons.

Such work led to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 32/152 (19 December 1977), which called for the convening of a Conference “with a view to reaching agreements on prohibitions or restrictions of the use of specific conventional weapons, including those which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effective, taking into account humanitarian and military considerations, and on the question of a system of periodic review of this matter for consideration of further proposals.” The Conference was convened in 1979 and resulted in the CCW and its Protocols I, II and III being adopted on 10 October 1980. The CCW and Protocols I, II and III entered into force in December 1983.

Based upon and reflecting basic humanitarian principles, the CCW aims to:

- protect civilians against the effects of hostilities;
- reinforces the principle that the right of the parties to an armed conflict to choose methods and means of warfare is not unlimited;
- prohibits weapons that make no distinction between civilians and combatants or cause unnecessary suffering of superfluous injury; and
- reinforces the “Martens Clause”, which is that the civilian population and the combatants shall at all times remain under the protection and the authority of the principles of international law derived from established custom, from the principles of humanity and from the dictates of public conscience.
**Facts on the CCW and its Protocols:**

- The CCW is one of the very few instruments of international humanitarian law, which seeks to regulate the conduct of non-state actors. This was an important development as most armed conflicts are not international.
- As the CCW is primarily an international humanitarian law instrument and focuses on the restrictions or prohibitions on the use of weapons considered inhumane, it has led to the establishment of customary international law.
- 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 number of casualties 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 focusing on how to best address the use of IEDs.

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**Joining the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons**

The benefits of joining the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) are:

- By joining the CCW, all countries make an important contribution to protecting civilians from the worse effects of conventional weapons.
- The CCW is a framework convention with five protocols, which address different weapons from blinding laser beams to landmines to explosive remnants of war. States Parties can respond to new developments in weapons technology and challenges in armed conflicts by negotiating such protocols. Only by being a State Party can countries participate in and influence the future development of international humanitarian law.
- Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War does not regulate or prohibit a weapon. Instead it focuses on the clearance of explosive remnants, preventive measures for the protection of civilians, technical measures to reduce the occurrence of explosive remnants, victim assistance and comprehensive provisions on cooperation and assistance.
• CCW States Parties increasingly recognize that cooperation and assistance is essential to ensuring that all States can fulfill their obligations. The CCW serves as a forum for cooperation and assistance.

• The CCW takes a pragmatic approach by focusing on both reducing the humanitarian harm caused by conventional weapons and recognizing that States have security interests. Also, the CCW recognizes that carrying out tasks such as the clearance of landmines and explosive remnants of war is resource intensive and therefore, takes a flexible approach to these matters.

• The CCW provides the opportunity to exchange experiences with the major military powers, those countries to the forefront of humanitarian action, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), independent experts and non-governmental organisations.

How to become a party to the Convention?

The procedures for joining the CCW are set out in Article 4 of the Convention. To become a party to the Convention the State concerned shall formally declare its consent to be bound by the CCW in accordance with its constitutional arrangements for adherence to an international agreement. These constitutional arrangements generally require domestic action by the national parliament. Once the domestic requirements have been completed, an instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval must be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his capacity as the Convention's depositary.

In order to become a party to the CCW, a State must join at least two of its Protocols. In instrument of ratification accession, acceptance or approval of the Convention, the State must clearly notify the Depositary which two or more Protocols it is consenting to be bound by. Any Protocol by which a State Party is bound forms an integral part of the Convention for that Party.

In accordance with Article 4, paragraph 4 of the Convention, a State may notify the Depositary of its consent to be bound by any annexed Protocol by which it is not already bound.

Pursuant to Article 8, paragraph 1 (b), amendments to the Convention may be adopted only by the States Parties to the CCW and amendments to a specific Protocol may be adopted only by the States Parties which are bound by that Protocol.

For more information, please contact Treaty Section, Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, e-mail: treaty@un.org
Model of Instrument of Adherence

For non-party States

Model instrument of accession
to the
1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

WHEREAS 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 (with Protocols I, II and III) was adopted at Geneva on 10 October 1980,


NOW THEREFORE I, [name and title of the Head of State, Head of Government or Minister of Foreign affairs], declare that the Government of ______, having considered the abovementioned Convention, its Protocols and Amendment, accedes to the Convention and to the Amendment to the Convention, and consents to be bound by [Protocols I, II as amended on 3 May 1996, III, IV, V]* as well as undertakes faithfully to perform and carry out the stipulations therein contained.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have signed this instrument of accession and consent to be bound at _____ on _____.

[signature + seal]

*States must consent to be bound by at least 2 of the Protocols.
Are there meetings for the CCW?

All CCW States parties meet annually at the Meeting of the States Parties to review the status and operation of the Convention.

Both Amended Protocol II and Protocol V have established their own expert meetings and annual conferences to consider specific issues and progressing universalization and implementation. The discussions of the expert meetings are facilitated by coordinators who then report to the annual Conferences. The expert meetings normally take place in the first half of the year and the conferences during November.

Both meetings and conferences held under the CCW take place in Geneva. They are open to all States Parties to the Convention. The signatories to the Convention as well as all other States are invited to participate as observers. The Meetings are open to the relevant international and non-governmental organizations which may also participate as observers.

CCW Sponsorship Programme

The goals of the Sponsorship Programme are:

(i) to strengthen the implementation of the Convention and its annexed Protocols;
(ii) to promote universal observance of the norms and principles enshrined in the Convention and its annexed Protocols;
(iii) to support the universalization of the Convention and its annexed Protocols;
and
(iv) to enhance the cooperation, the exchange of information and the consultations among the States Parties on issues related to the Convention and its annexed Protocols.

The Sponsorship Programme is intended to support the participation of the representatives of States Parties, especially from ERW-affected and mine-affected countries that have limited resources, to participate in the CCW-related activities. Priority, in this case, is accorded to States, which, according to the United Nations, are the least developed countries.

The Sponsorship Programme is financed by voluntary contributions.

If an official or technical expert wishes to be sponsored to represent his or her government at a CCW conference or meeting, then he or she must:

- Submit a written request addressed to the 'Coordinator of the Steering Committee' via the CCW Implementation Support Unit. This can be sent by e-mail to: ccw@unog.ch or fax to: +41 22 917 0034.
• The request should indicate specifically for whom sponsorship is being requested, confirm that the person is an official from a government agency or ministry that has responsibility for conventional weapons (including knowledge and experience on conventional weapons and disarmament) and is able to make a presentation on his or her government’s status of ratification, implementation or reporting on the Convention and its annexed Protocols.
• The written request must be received by the CCW Implementation Support Unit six weeks in advance of the CCW meeting or conference.
• All requests for sponsorship must be considered and approved by the Sponsorship Programme's Steering Committee and then the candidates will be informed of the outcomes.

The CCW Implementation Support Unit

The functions of the CCW Implementation Support Unit are to:

• Provide Secretariat services for all CCW meetings;
• Facilitate communications among States Parties and international organizations;
• Support States with the implementation of the CCW and its protocols;
• Assist the United Nations Secretary General to discharge his responsibilities pursuant to the CCW and its protocols; and
• Fulfill all other tasks as mandated by the States parties to the CCW and its protocols.

If you require further information or assistance on joining the CCW and its Protocols then the CCW Implementation Support Unit can assist you. Contact details for the members of the Unit are the following:

• Mr. Bantan Nugroho, Head of the ISU, telephone +41 22 917 1151, E-mail: bnugroho@unog.ch
• Ms Hine-Wai Loose, Political Affairs Officer, telephone +41 22 917 1203, E-mail: hloose@unog.ch

You may also contact the CCW ISU at this E-mail address: ccw@unog.ch