

STATEMENT OF YOSHIKAWA YUUMI
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
Dublin, Ireland, 18 November 2022

Your Excellency Mr. Simon COVENEY, Minister for Foreign Affairs
and Defence of Ireland,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure, to attend today's important ceremony, with
representatives of many states, to adopt the Political Declaration on
Explosive Weapons In Populated Areas, or EWIPA, a significant
achievement, of the international community. On behalf of the
Government of Japan, I would like to express my gratitude, to the
Government of Ireland, for taking initiative on this Declaration.

We are here today, to re-affirm the importance of civilian protection,
and compliance with international law, under the situation of armed
conflict. We share the concern about the civilian casualties, caused
by EWIPA. As various reports point out, the majority of EWIPA
victims are civilians, and there is an urgent need, to reduce harm to
them.

Regrettably, in today's severe security environment, we hear about
civilian casualties in armed conflicts every day. In this regard, I would
like to express my deepest condolences on the recent explosion in

Poland which has claimed victims, and would not have happened without Russia's aggression. Japan is closely monitoring the progress of the investigation. Furthermore, many civilians in various areas of Ukraine have been killed and injured by Russian aggression. We are deeply shocked with this situation, which we take very seriously. The killing of innocent civilians is a blatant violation of international humanitarian law, and Japan condemns the act in this strongest terms.

In such difficult situations, it is very important to adopt the Political Declaration on EWIPA, and demonstrate to the international community, our commitment to protecting civilians. International humanitarian law, provides a robust legal basis, for regulating the conduct of armed conflict, and is a foundation, for the protection of civilians, in the event of armed conflict, and it is even more important in the current, severe, security environment.

Instead of setting new legal norms, our Declaration, is about returning to the principles, of international humanitarian law, which have been developed, through many years of human endeavor. Based on those principles, our Declaration is to promote practical, and realistic measures to protect civilians. Japan, together with the other states, international organizations, and civil society, that have gathered at this very occasion, will continue to contribute to the international efforts, to mitigate harm to civilians.

This Declaration builds upon the shoulders, of the efforts and achievements of the international community, made in the areas of arms control, and disarmament, thus far. Japan has also been actively making its concerns known in this area, including the use of explosives in populated areas.

For example, Japan proposed, and facilitated the update of the Declaration on Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), as the chair of the conference, of CCW-Amended-Protocol-II, last year.

The Declaration on IEDs, calls to address the increasing use of IEDs, by non-state actors, in line with the latest situation, which is precisely, what the EWIPA Declaration, is seriously concerned about.

Japan has also contributed to anti-personnel mine action, and is addressing unexploded ordnance (UXO). We have provided continuous support, for clearance of landmines and UXOs; promoted regional and South-South cooperation, and extended comprehensive assistance, to victims of landmines and UXOs.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan will serve as a member of the UN Security Council, from 2023, for two years. Japan will also be the G7 Chair next year,

hosting the G7 Summit in Hiroshima. We will make, the utmost efforts in fulfilling these roles, and continue to actively contribute, to international peace and stability.

Finally, I would like to, once again, express my appreciation to states, international organizations, and civil society, for having finalized our Declaration. Together, with all of you, Japan renews its commitment to strengthen, the protection of civilians.

I thank you for your time, and your kind attention.