“When cities are bombed and shelled – whether by airstrikes, rockets, artillery or improvised explosive devices –

CIVILIANS OVERWHELMINGLY BEAR THE BRUNT”

Joint Appeal by the UN Secretary-General and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross on the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas
As of May 2019, the number of people suffering from the impact of war in cities: **50 million.**

As of February 2020, the number of internally displaced people across Iraq reached: **1.5 million.**

People in Aden, Yemen, who were left without clean water after intense fighting in August 2019: **200,000.**

When explosive weapons are used in populated areas, **90%** of causalities are civilians.

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1 Source: AOAV, 2019, available [here](#).
2 Source: UN, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2019/373, available [here](#).
3 Source: ICRC, 2019, available [here](#).
4 Source: ICRC, 2019, available [here](#).
“Armed conflict in cities kills and gravely wounds countless civilians, leaving many with life-long disabilities and psychological trauma.”

**WHEN** water or electricity is disrupted because supply lines have been blown up, providing healthcare becomes extremely difficult or impossible.

**WHEN** cities are bombed and shelled, healthcare is also hard-hit: medical personnel are killed and injured, ambulances can’t reach the wounded, and hospitals are irreparably damaged.

“For those who survive, life becomes unbearable – and they are often forced to flee.”
The United Nations Secretary-General and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross urge States and other stakeholders to:

- Develop a political declaration, appropriate limitations, common standards and operational policies in conformity with international humanitarian law.

- Strengthen the collection of data on civilian casualties, establish mechanisms to mitigate and investigate such harm, ensure accountability and draw lessons for future operations.

- Identify and share good practices for mitigating civilian harm, including restrictions and limitations on use of explosive weapon in populated areas.

- Employ strategies and tactics that take combat outside cities altogether and allow civilians to leave besieged areas.

- Adopt policies and practices that will enhance the protection of civilians, including to avoid the use of explosive weapons with a wide impact area due to the significant likelihood of indiscriminate effects.