

HRC29: Statement on Syria

23 June 2015

The international community's inability to stop the war in Syria and the increased militarisation and proliferation of arms fostered a fertile ground for extremism. To deal with this devastating phenomenon, it is the causes, rather than the consequences, that must be tackled.

The extensive use of explosive weapons by the Assad regime to impose corporal punishment on entire communities continues to be the greatest threat to civilians and have unique impacts on women.

The Assad regime doubled the use of explosive weapons on populated areas in 2014; meanwhile, more Syrians are being killed in their homes than on the frontlines and half of the global casualty by explosive weapons in the world between 2011-2013 took place in Syria.

In terms of casualties, explosive weapons were behind 74% of the death of girls in Syria. Beyond that, the consistency of such attacks left women confined to their houses and sacrificed their rights to education, employment and freedom of movement.

At least 83 health facilities were targeted and destroyed in the past year. This deliberate destruction of infrastructure and health facilities entails devastating repercussions on women. The lack of access to reproductive health can be a death sentence, whereby 80% of maternal mortality could be prevented if only better access to health care was provided during pregnancy and childbirth.

We call the international community to take up their role to stop this deplorable war and to protect the civilians of Syria. This requires taking efforts beyond humanitarian assistance into solid and timely actions towards a political solution while posing an unwavering control of the export of arms to all warring parties in Syria.

The use of explosive weapons in populated areas occurs in many conflict zones in addition to Syria, such as Yemen, Ukraine, Iraq, and countless others. This is why in addition to confronting the bombing of towns and cities in each context we need to develop an international commitment to stop the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas.