

Meeting of the High Contracting Parties (HCP)

Since 2002, all CCW High Contracting Parties (HCP) have met annually at the Meeting of the HCP, or every five years at the Review Conference, to:

- Review the **status** and **operation** of the Convention and its Protocols;
- Discuss its **implementation** and compliance and other issues related to international humanitarian law;
- Consider the work done by the **Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)** established in 2016.

Non-HCP, signatory States and relevant international and non-governmental organizations may participate as observers.

Why is the CCW important?

- The CCW facilitates the **development of international law**, through the negotiation and adoption of new protocols under Article 8 of the Convention;
- It is an important contribution to the **protection of civilians and combatants** from the worse effects of certain conventional weapons;
- It serves as a forum for **cooperation** and **assistance**.

Annual Conference on Amended Protocol II and the Meeting of Experts

Amended Protocol II has its own implementation structure consisting of **Annual Conferences** and a **Group of Experts** to consider the Protocol's implementation or a specific related issue.

HCP to Amended Protocol II have established a Group of Experts to consider issues such as national annual reports, the development of technologies to protect civilians against indiscriminate effects of mines, booby traps, and other devices, and issues related to improvised explosive devices.

Annual Conference on Protocol V and the Expert Group Meeting

Protocol V also established an implementation mechanism consisting of Annual Conferences and Meetings of Experts to discuss **specific challenges** of the **implementation** of the Protocol.

The First Annual Conference of HCP to Protocol V decided to introduce a *“mechanism for consultation and cooperation [...] consisting of informal meeting of experts”* to work on issues such as clearance, cooperation and assistance, generic preventive measures, reporting, requests for assistance, universalization, victim assistance, and any other relevant issue. HCP to Protocol V have mandated various Meetings of Experts since.

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CCW

The Convention on
**Certain Conventional
Weapons**

What is the CCW?

The 1980 **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) originated out of international concern over the humanitarian impact of armed conflict, with the objective of protecting civilians and combatants during and after active hostilities.

The Convention's purpose is to **ban or restrict the use of certain conventional weapons**, which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects in armed conflicts of an international and non-international nature. The CCW comprises a **framework Convention and five annexed Protocols**, each of which bans or restricts the use of various types of weapons, or minimizes the harm they cause, notably:

- I. Non-Detectable Fragments
- II. Mines, Booby Traps, and Other Devices
- III. Incendiary Weapons
- IV. Blinding Laser Weapons
- V. Explosive Remnants of War

What are the key obligations?

By ratifying the CCW, States commit to the:

Prohibition of the use of any weapon of which the primary effect is to injure by **fragments** that are not detectable in the human body by X-rays;



Prohibition and regulation of the use and transfer of non-detectable anti-personnel **mines, booby-traps**, and other devices;

Prohibition of, in all circumstances, making civilians the object of attack by **incendiary weapons**;



Prohibition of the use of **laser weapons** specifically designed to cause **permanent blindness** and the transfer of such weapons to any State or non-State entity;

Requirement of Parties to a conflict to take measures to reduce dangers posed by **explosive remnants of war**.



The Geneva based intergovernmental machinery

The implementation of the CCW and its Protocols is supported by a multilateral machinery composed of **several intergovernmental fora** that meet regularly to **consider the status and operation of the instruments**, as well as to **develop further norms**. This machinery consists of review conferences held every five years; annual meetings of the HCP to the CCW, Amended Protocol II and Protocol V; and annual expert meetings under these two protocols.

In addition, the Meeting of HCP establishes **Groups of Governmental Experts** with specific thematic mandates. Such meetings and conferences have mainly taken place in Geneva, with few exceptions. For example, the Group of Governmental Experts on LAWS convenes under the CCW.

The Implementation Support Unit

The CCW Implementation Support Unit (ISU) provides substantive and logistical support to the CCW bodies and their office holders. It facilitates communication among the HCP and, upon request, with international organizations. The ISU also contributes to the universalisation of the instruments.

Additional tasks include:

- Serving as a **focal point** for submission of **information** by and to the HCP related to the Convention and its annexed Protocols;
- Supporting the **HCP**, upon request, in the **implementation** of the CCW;
- Supporting the **CCW Sponsorship Programme**



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