

## **IHLI Oral Intervention under Challenges and concerns raised in developments in the context of the Convention and Humanitarian Disarmament at large**

Thank you Mr President,

First and foremost, we would like to express our deep concern regarding Lithuania's decision to withdraw from the Convention on Cluster Munitions. This decision sets a painful precedent in the history of the convention and represents a significant setback in the international commitment to protecting civilians from these deadly weapons.

Cluster munitions continue to threaten the lives of innocent civilians and pose a direct threat to future generations, even after conflicts have ended. Furthermore, their increasing use in armed conflicts around the world undermines the commitment of States Parties to uphold the convention's provisions and impacts the potential for other countries to join the treaty. In this context, we must highlight that the Middle East and North Africa remains one of the regions most affected by the use of cluster munitions. In this regard, it is essential to note that many countries in the region have neither signed nor ratified the convention, despite the significant impact of these weapons in ongoing conflicts.

At the "International Humanitarian Law and Youth Initiative," we assert that the withdrawal of any state from the convention poses a serious threat to the progress made in the field of cluster munition disarmament and civilian protection, and has a profound impact on the future of upcoming generations.

In addition to these challenges, we are deeply concerned about the significant budget cuts that are increasingly affecting the implementation of operative actions under the Convention, particularly in the areas of victim assistance, stockpile destruction, and clearance operations. The global humanitarian landscape is facing severe reductions in funding for critical aid programs. This struggle for resources — amid shifting international priorities — threatens to undermine international cooperation and jeopardizes the Convention's core goals. It risks exacerbating humanitarian crises in conflict-affected regions, where timely and effective clearance and support for victims are most urgently needed.

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We firmly believe that youth play a pivotal role in raising awareness and encouraging states to fulfill their humanitarian commitments. As young people, it is our duty to continue advocating for the values represented by this convention.

Therefore, we call for enhanced cooperation between the States Parties, deepening the global commitment to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and strengthening the stigma against these deadly weapons. We also emphasize the necessity of intensifying efforts to restore confidence in the convention and continually reaffirm our commitment to humanitarian values while maintaining international peace and security.

IHLI believe that this session provides an important opportunity to remind everyone of the reasons that led to the establishment of the convention and the importance of maintaining its provisions that prohibit cluster munitions. We must have a collective commitment to support the convention and ensure that our efforts to combat this threat do not cease.

IHLI call for the collective efforts of both the international community and youth to strengthen the commitment to the convention and protect the lives of innocent civilians in conflict areas around the world.

Thank you.