The Permanent Mission of Austria in partnership with the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW) cordially invites First Committee delegates to a side event on

“Protecting civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas”

Wednesday, 22 October 2014, from 13.15 to 14.30hrs,
Conference Room A (CB) of the United Nations Headquarters, New York

Every year, bombardment and shelling of towns, cities and villages results in high numbers of civilian deaths and injuries, damage to vital civilian infrastructure and forced displacement. The recent crises in Gaza, Ukraine and Syria have provided further tragic examples of this predictable pattern of severe harm. The use of explosive weapons in populated areas is increasingly recognised as a key concern for the international community.

Drawing on recent examples, this event aims to provide delegates with an understanding of the humanitarian harm caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas – and the potential for action to prevent that harm.

PAX will present its new report “Unacceptable Risk”, which finds that the legal rules, as applied in practice, do not provide sufficient protection to civilians against the effects of explosive weapons, and in particular that additional restraints on the use of weapons with wide-area effects could help to reduce harm to civilians. The event will also provide perspectives on how such additional restraints might be brought about at the national and the international level.

Speakers include:

- Steve Goose, Human Rights Watch – *The harm caused by explosive weapons in recent conflicts*
- Maya Brehm, PAX – “Unacceptable Risk”, *a report looking at policy and practice in the use of explosive weapons in populated areas through the lens of three cases before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)*
- Richard Moyes, Article 36 – *Opportunities to prevent harm from the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects*

Moderation: Ambassador Thomas Hajnoczi, Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations in Geneva