Explosive weapons in populated areas:
How does it affect development?

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Presentation outline

- three places affected by the use of EWIPA
- deficits linked to the human rights based Sustainable Development Goals
- some concluding remarks
The five-month bombardment of Marawi took a heavy toll on infrastructure and private property in the city centre where the battle was concentrated. At one point, over 200,000 of the civilian population evacuated to neighboring cities and towns.
More than 86% of the population is now living in poverty due to the crisis, with an increased rate of 57% unemployment. Total economic losses are estimated at more than 202 billion dollars. The country lost nearly four decades of human development.
Muang Khoun was once the royal seat of the minor kingdom Xieng Khuang, renowned in the sixteenth century for its 62 opulent stupas.

Nearly a decade of bombing during the Second Indochina War left little of the kingdom’s temples. The town was abandoned. All that remains is a Buddha image towering over ruined columns of brick at Wat Phia Wat, and That Dam, both of which bear the scars of the events that ended Xieng Khuang’s centuries of rich history.
Habitat and public infrastructure – Marawi

SDG 9 and 11 but also 3, 7 and 16

- The battle left the city in ruins with 95% of the structures within the 4 square kilometres (1.5 sq mi) of the main battle area to be heavily damaged or completely collapsed.
- 3,152 buildings were completely destroyed and 2,145 buildings were partially to heavily damaged.
- Authorities say at least 2.7 million tons of debris – along with dozens of unexploded bombs dropped during the battles – must still be cleared before rebuilding can begin.
SDG 9 and 11 but also 3, 7 and 16

A recent development has been the construction of berms designed to protect properties and people in cleared sectors from the blasting work undertaken in neighbouring areas.
Denied education in Syria

SDG 4 but also 5 and 16

- In 2018, an estimated 13.1 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance.
- Children and youth comprise more than half of the displaced, as well as half of those in need of humanitarian assistance.
- 5.8 million children and youth from pre-school to secondary-age are in need of education assistance.
- Direct attacks on schools have resulted in more than one in three schools either damaged, destroyed or used as shelter and driven approximately 150,000 education personnel including teachers out of education systems.
Economic loss in Lao PDR

SDG 8, but also 1, 2, 10 and 16

- 20% of all bombs were dropped within one kilometre of villages
- 25% of all populated areas in Laos are contaminated by UXO
- 39% of accidents happen in developed areas (center of village and roads)
- 41 out of the 46 poorest districts in Laos suffer from UXO contamination
- 36% of recorded accidents happened in agricultural areas and grazing land - the livelihoods of the population at large.
History has produced an evidence base of situations in which the means or method of warfare, have had colossal consequences to civilian population, their rights, lives and livelihoods.

The rule of proportionality – in which the objective of the military target – must be weighed against the humanitarian and development consequences is there to safeguard that this does not occur.

Additional safeguards: human rights and the Sustainable Development Agenda

The focus of these discussions must therefore be less on the size, characteristics and capability of the weapon itself and rather on the ability to determine the consequences of the damage caused, extended into the lifecycle of affected populations and the political accountability to the promise of sustainable development with the prospects of decent livelihoods and the common public goods.

If development counts, this definition of proportionality show that the use of EWIPA rarely has pass the scrutiny of IHL.