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Statement by HI Advocacy Director Anne Héry on Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) reporting that civilian fatalities caused by explosive weapons increased by 122% globally in 2023.

"The fellow partner organization, Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), reported on January 8 that civilian fatalities caused by explosive weapons increased by 122% globally in 2023, according to English-language media sources. Incidents caused by explosive weapons rose by 69%. Seventy-six percent of explosive violence incidents were recorded in populated areas, and 90% of the people harmed in these areas were civilians. With 12,551 civilian casualties, Operation Swords of Iron in Gaza accounted for 37% of all civilian casualties globally in 2023. Conflicts in Ukraine, Sudan, Myanmar, and Syria also showed very high levels of harm from explosive weapons in 2023. These staggering figures should prompt states to make every effort to promote and implement the political declaration against bombing in urban areas that they adopted on November 18, 2022, in Dublin: The first conference to discuss its implementation will take place next April in Oslo. It must be an opportunity for signatory states to take concrete steps to reduce civilian harm caused by bombing and shelling of towns and cities."