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Reviewing the Record

Resources on Incendiary Weapons from Human Rights Watch and the International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School

June 2024

The following publications, produced by Human Rights Watch and the International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School (IHRC) over the past 15 years, examine the issue of incendiary weapons in depth. Approaching the topic from a variety of angles, these reports, Q&As, and factsheets raise awareness of the horrific harm the weapons cause and make the case that existing international law should be strengthened. The publications also provide annual updates on the use of incendiary weapons and the evolution of government positions.

*The publications below were co-produced by Human Rights Watch and IHRC, except those indicated by an *, which were published by Human Rights Watch alone.*

[*Lebanon: Israel's White Phosphorus Use Risks Civilian Harm](#) (June 2024)

This 8-page report highlights the widespread use of white phosphorus in south Lebanon and emphasizes the urgent need for stricter international regulations on incendiary weapons to better protect civilians and civilian infrastructure.

[*Israel: White Phosphorus Used in Gaza, Lebanon](#) (October 2023)

This 4-page press release documents the use of white phosphorus by Israeli forces in Gaza and Lebanon. The munitions were airburst over densely populated areas of Gaza City in violation of international humanitarian law.

[*Q&A on Israel's Use of White Phosphorus in Gaza and Lebanon](#) (October 2023)

This 4-page Q&A accompanies Human Rights Watch's press release determining that Israeli forces used white phosphorus in Lebanon and Gaza in October 2023. The Q&A defines white phosphorus, details its harm, and outlines its status under international law.

[Incendiary Weapons: Recent Developments and Use](#) (November 2023)

This updated, 12-page factsheet outlines the shortcomings of Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol III; provides recommendations for states on ways to address the shortcomings; details the humanitarian cost of incendiary weapons; documents recent use in Ukraine, Syria, Gaza, and Lebanon; and summarizes country statements on incendiary weapons at the 2021-2022 CCW meetings. It also quotes references to Protocol III in CCW documents.

[Unchecked Harm: The Need for Global Action on Incendiary Weapons](#) (November 2022)

This 18-page report recounts states' positions on incendiary weapons, calls upon CCW states parties to call for consultations at the CCW annual meeting, and provides information on incendiary weapon use in Ukraine.

[*Q&A: Incendiary Weapons in Ukraine](#) (March 2022)

This 4-page Q&A defines incendiary weapons, describes the harm they cause, outlines recent use in Ukraine and beyond, and discusses the shortcomings of Protocol III and how to strengthen it.

[Incendiary Weapons: Call for Action and Human Cost](#) (February 2021)

This 2-page factsheet on incendiary weapons outlines the shortcomings of Protocol III, actions for states to strengthen protections, and the human cost of these weapons systems.

["They Burn Through Everything:" The Human Cost of Incendiary Weapons and the Limits of International Law](#) (November 2020)

This 45-page report details the immediate injuries and lasting physical, psychological, and socioeconomic harm of incendiary weapons, including white phosphorus, used by parties to recent conflicts. The report also calls on countries to strengthen Protocol III.

[Standing Firm against Incendiary Weapons](#) (November 2019)

This 9-page report calls on CCW states parties to take concrete action to address the harm caused by incendiary weapons and reassess Protocol III at the 2021 CCW Review Conference.

[Myths and Realities About Incendiary Weapons](#) (November 2018)

This 13-page publication rebuts common myths about incendiary weapons and the law that regulates them, while calling upon states to dedicate additional time in 2019 to further discuss incendiary weapons and to close Protocol III's loopholes.

[An Overdue Review: Addressing Incendiary Weapons in the Contemporary Context](#) (November 2017)

This 30-page report examines how the outdated regulations of Protocol III reflect concerns about incendiary weapons use at the time of the protocol's negotiation. It argues that the law must evolve to respond to a changed military and political landscape.

[Time to Act against Incendiary Weapons](#) (December 2016)

This 32-page report highlights the urgency of action at the CCW's Fifth Review Conference and calls on states to set aside time to revisit Protocol III.

[From Condemnation to Concrete Action: A Five-Year Review of Incendiary Weapons](#) (November 2015)

This 27-page report analyzes the past five years of the incendiary weapons debate. It also discusses recent use of incendiary weapons in Syria and Ukraine, allegations of use in Libya and Yemen, and the evolution of national views on Protocol III.

[Incendiary Weapons: Recent Use and Growing Opposition](#) (November 2014)

This 16-page report details the latest harm caused by incendiary weapons in Syria and Ukraine while showing the influence of growing stigma on the practice of states, including Israel.

[*Syria's Use of Incendiary Weapons](#) (November 2013)

This 25-page report documents incendiary weapons use in Syria and the resulting civilian harm.

[Incendiary Weapons: Government Positions and Practices](#) (April 2012)

This 22-page report analyzes government statements on Protocol III and provides evidence of the use, production, and stockpiling of incendiary weapons, including white phosphorous.

[Q&A on Incendiary Weapons and CCW Protocol III](#) (November 2011)

This 3-page Q&A defines incendiary weapons, describes the harms they cause, lays out the shortcomings of Protocol III, and offers ways to strengthen the law.

[Strengthening the Humanitarian Protections of Protocol on Incendiary Weapons](#) (August 2011)

This 17-page report urges state parties to discuss Protocol III at the CCW's Fourth Review Conference and proposes specific amendments to close its loopholes. The report argues that a blanket prohibition of incendiary munitions would most effectively protect civilians.

[The Human Suffering Caused by Incendiary Munitions](#) (March 2011)

This 16-page report details the horrific harms caused by incendiary weapons, including napalm and white phosphorous, and provides a history of use since states adopted Protocol III.

[The Need to Re-Visit Protocol III on Incendiary Weapons](#) (November 2010)

This 10-page report introduces the inadequacies of Protocol III and calls on states parties to revisit the protocol. It also examines how the US reservation has exacerbated the protocol's shortcomings and hindered its ability to build norms.

[*Rain of Fire: Israel's Unlawful Use of White Phosphorus in Gaza](#) (March 2009)

This 71-page report, based on an in-depth field investigation, documents Israel's use of white phosphorus during its 2009 military operations in Gaza.