



## **STATEMENT ON THE SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS ACROSS LEBANON AND SYRIA**

The IHL Centre expresses its grave concern regarding the recent widespread simultaneous explosions across Lebanon and in Syria and their impact on the civilian population. In light of these events, we remind all conflicting parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL), particularly the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precautions in attack.

It is imperative that parties to a conflict maintain a clear distinction between civilians and combatants at all times. Direct attacks against civilians or civilian objects are strictly prohibited under IHL, this protection is fundamental to safeguarding those who do not participate in the hostilities. Indiscriminate attacks which could not be directed at a specific military target and would strike military targets and civilians or civilian objects without distinction are prohibited under IHL. In limited circumstances civilians lose their protection if they directly participate in hostilities. In such cases, they may be lawfully targeted, but only for the duration of their involvement in hostilities.

The principle of proportionality, which in accordance with IHL is also binding on all parties to the conflict, requires that any military action must not result in excessive civilian harm in relation to the anticipated military advantage. This necessitates a careful assessment of potential incidental harm to civilians when targeting legitimate military objectives. It requires all parties to take feasible precautions to protect civilians from the effects of hostilities. This includes conducting thorough assessments before attacks to ensure they do not lead to disproportionate civilian casualties or damage, warning civilians of potential danger whenever possible, and selecting means and methods of warfare that reduce civilian suffering.

We also emphasize that the use of means and methods of warfare that cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering is strictly prohibited.

Moreover, we remind all parties that operations aimed at spreading terror among the civilian population, including indiscriminate and widespread shelling or the regular bombardment of cities, are strictly prohibited under IHL.

Simultaneously targeting thousands of individuals - without knowing their exact presence, location, or surroundings at the time of the attack - constitutes a clear violation of the above IHL rules.

The IHL Centre calls upon all parties involved in the conflict to adhere strictly to their IHL obligations. The protection of civilians must remain a priority, and compliance with IHL is essential for reducing suffering and preserving human dignity during armed conflict.