Cluster munitions
Cluster Munition Coalition

Background
Sixty percent of the world's states have now formally committed to the goals of the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions through their signature, ratification, or accession, while more than 70% have demonstrated their support for its humanitarian goals through a 2016 UN General Assembly resolution.

The stigma against cluster munitions is strong, given the wide recognition that they are indiscriminate both at the time of use due to their vast area effect and long after use due to the explosive duds they leave behind. The vast majority of states that are still outside the Convention abide de facto by the ban on use and production of cluster munitions.

Current context
In recent years, over 150 states condemned the use of cluster munitions in the context of the conflict in Syria. Cluster munitions have also been used extensively in the current conflict in Yemen.

At the First Review Conference of the Convention, states parties set the objective of 130 member states by 2020. They pledged to ensure that cluster munitions “remain a stigmatized weapon.” States parties to the Convention include former major producers, users, and possessors of the weapon, as well as affected states, and states that have never owned or been affected by the weapon. Collectively, states parties have already destroyed 96% of their cluster munitions, ensuring those weapons can never claim a life or limb.

States are also taking steps to assess the needs of survivors of explosions, and to increase the participation of survivors in governmental decision-making that affects their lives. Some 26 states are contaminated by cluster munition remnants. By making good use of adequate land release methodologies, the majority of them should be in a position to become cluster munition-free within five years of the start of clearance operations.

In 2016 the UNGA resolution on the implementation of the Convention was passed with 141 votes in favour, two against, and 39 abstentions. Thirty-three non-signatories voted in favour, demonstrating their support for the humanitarian aims of the Convention.

The 7th Meeting of States Parties (7MSP) to the Convention took place from 4 to 6 September 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland. All states should join the Convention to strengthen the international rejection of this weapon—even those that do not possess cluster munitions. By joining, each state adds one more voice in favour of the ban, thus strengthening the body of international humanitarian law and demonstrating solidarity with affected countries and victims. Cluster munitions do not meet the criteria a responsible government should have for the weapons in...
its arsenal. States that own stockpiles, and past users, should prevent further civilian suffering by renouncing cluster munitions forever.

Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:
• Report on measures taken to implement the Dubrovnik Action Plan, including “discouraging, in every way possible” the use of cluster munitions;
• Condemn recent instances of use of cluster munitions;
• Vote in favour of the resolution on cluster munitions and encourage others, such as regional group members, to do so as well;
• Report on steps taken to join the Convention; and
• Engage bilaterally in discussions on the universalization or implementation of the Convention.

Beyond First Committee, states should:
• Follow-up with capital on steps taken to ratify or accede to the Convention;
• Request support on ratification or accession from the Implementation Support Unit, the Cluster Munition Coalition, UN agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, or the coordinators of the working group on universalization;
• Be persistent in speaking out against the use of cluster munitions; and
• Reach out to neighboring and partner states, encouraging them to join the Convention.

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