Cluster munitions
Cluster Munition Coalition

Background
2018 marks ten years since the Convention on Cluster Munitions was adopted and opened for signature. Sixty per cent of the world’s states have now formally committed to the goals of the Convention through their signature, ratification, or accession, while more than 70 per cent have demonstrated their support for its humanitarian goals through a 2017 UN General Assembly resolution. The Convention is widely acknowledged as the principal framework for the worldwide effort to eradicate cluster munitions and to prevent the suffering they cause.

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.

In recent years, over 150 states condemned the use of cluster munitions in the context of the conflict in Syria. Cluster munitions have been used extensively in the current conflicts in Syria, as well as in Yemen until February 2017.

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 stigmatised weapon.”

Current context
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 99 per cent 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. Twenty-six states are contaminated by cluster munition remnants and must ensure that they use efficient land release methodologies to address contamination.

In 2017 the UNGA resolution on the implementation of the Convention was passed with 142 votes in favour, two against, and 36 abstentions. Thirty-two non-signatories voted in favour, demonstrating their support for the humanitarian aims of the Convention.

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 that 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.

The 8th Meeting of States Parties (8MSP) to the Convention took place from 3-5 September 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Meeting condemned any use of cluster munitions by any actor, in conformity with Article 21 of the Convention. The Convention leadership for the coming year comprises Austria, Chile, Germany, Iraq, Ireland, Lao PDR, Panama, Peru, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Sri Lanka (President), Sweden, and Zambia.

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 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.

*Author: Amelie Chayer*