



DEADLY LEGACY

Petition to Ban Cluster Bombs

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To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives assembled in Parliament

The petition of certain citizens of Australia draws to the attention of the House:

That unexploded cluster submunitions disproportionately kill and maim civilians, including a high percentage of children, delay relief efforts in post-conflict countries as well as disrupting long-term development, and continue to kill and maim long after they are deployed and the conflict has ended. We note that Australia does not possess cluster munitions and does not use them.

Your petitioners therefore ask the House to:

- Legislate a ban on the production, transfer, stockpiling and use of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians.
- Pass a motion supporting the Oslo Declaration committing Australia to working towards an international treaty that would ban the production, transfer, stockpiling and use of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians globally.

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Return to: Australian Network to Ban Landmines, 130 Little Collins St, Melbourne 3000.

CLUSTER MUNITIONS

A deadly legacy from Laos to Lebanon



From the first time they were used extensively in conflict to their most recent use, cluster munitions continue to kill and injure a much greater proportion of civilians than soldiers. Cluster submunitions that were showered down on Laos during the Vietnam War in the 1970s continue to injure and kill on average one person every two days. Since the end of the 34-day war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006, over 200 people have been injured and over 30 killed by unexploded cluster submunitions deployed during the conflict. From Laos to Lebanon, the deadly legacy cluster munitions leave behind can only be prevented by countries not using them.

- Up to 30% of those injured are children (under 18yrs)
- The UN Mine Action Coordination Centre office in Kosovo reported that the dud rate for all types of cluster bombs was 8%-11%, though deminers quote up to 30%.
- Cluster munitions are considered one of the most dangerous munitions post-conflict. They are just as dangerous, insidious and lethal as anti-personnel landmines.

Cluster bomblets pose a particular danger to civilians compared to other weapon systems because

- the broad area of effect they have,
- lack of accuracy
- the number of explosive 'duds' left behind.

Many of the bomblets do not explode on impact and lie around until triggered when touched, killing and maiming for years after a conflict ends. The volatility of armed cluster bomblet 'duds' makes them more dangerous than many other types of unexploded ordnance (UXO).

The high failure rates of cluster munitions, combined with the large volume of submunitions able to be delivered over a short period of time, leads to particularly severe contamination of a wide area, with contamination both on the surface and underground. The National Demining Office in Lebanon estimated following the 2006 conflict that throughout South Lebanon over one million unexploded cluster munitions contaminate a total of 34 million m²

DEFINITION

Cluster munitions are munitions (bombs, artillery shells and rockets) that contain two or more submunitions, but more usually in the hundreds, that break open on deployment to rain down the submunitions over a wide area.

MORE INFORMATION

Visit <http://australia.icbl.org> or call Kerry Clarke on (03) 9251 5277

The ADF and cluster munitions

Australia does not possess cluster munitions and the Australian Defence Forces do not use cluster munitions. However, Australian forces have been part of conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq in which Australia's allies have extensively used cluster munitions with devastating humanitarian impacts.

Disrupting Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development

Where unexploded cluster submunitions litter the land, their presence, or suspected presence prevents the use and rehabilitation of infrastructure and resources, including housing, water and irrigations systems, paths and roads, schools, clinics, markets, and religious centres such as temples and churches. They have a severe effect on development, exacerbating poverty by restricting agricultural land, community resources, and preventing commercial activities resuming.



Wafea holding a picture of her son who was killed by a submunition after recent conflict had ended in Southern Lebanon, September 2006
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