

ICBL-CMC Outrage at Russia Targeting of Civilians and Ongoing Cluster Bomb Use; States Must Condemn Use and Join International Ban Treaty

(Geneva, 15 March) – The International Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC) condemns in the strongest possible manner the disregard for civilian life and widespread use of banned cluster munitions by Russian forces in the Ukraine conflict, in clear violation of international humanitarian law and what may constitute a [war crime](#).

“We are outraged by the ongoing targeting of civilian populated areas and use of cluster munitions by Russian forces in Ukraine,” said ICBL-CMC Director, Hector Guerra. “These actions are in flagrant disregard for international humanitarian norms protecting civilian life. The International community of states committed to peace and the rule of law—and particularly States Parties to the [Convention on Cluster Munitions](#)—have a responsibility to speak up and unconditionally condemn these actions and demand an immediate halt to all use of cluster munitions.”

To date, some 15 states have condemned use of banned cluster bombs in the conflict,¹ as well as condemnations by the [President of the Convention on Cluster Munitions](#), NATO Secretary-General, [UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#), [Amnesty International](#), the Cluster Munition Coalition and global members including Humanity & Inclusion, [Human Rights Watch](#), [Mines Action Canada](#), Mines Advisory Group, Norwegian People’s Aid, PAX, and the [United States Cluster Munition Coalition](#) among others). The [United States](#), which has not signed onto the international ban on the weapon, has also expressed alarm at Russia’s use of cluster munitions.

Cluster munitions use by Russia in the conflict and resulting civilian death and injury has been widely documented by ICBL-CMC member Human Rights Watch, and the international media. This follows the humanitarian disaster stemming from similar use of the weapon in Syria since 2012, by Syria government and Russian forces.

A total of 123 states have signed onto the Convention on Cluster Munitions banning production and use of the weapon and providing assistance to survivors and victims. Cluster munitions are indiscriminate weapons that overwhelmingly kill and injure civilians, and leave a deadly legacy of contamination threatening lives and hindering recovery for years to come.

According to [Cluster Munition Monitor 2021](#), in 2020 cluster munitions killed or injured at least 360, all civilians (for casualties whose status was known). Children represented 44% of all cluster munitions casualties, with an average age of 11 years old.

ICBL-CMC calls for an immediate halt to use of the internationally banned weapon, guarantees for the protection of civilians, and respect for international humanitarian law and the international norm banning use of cluster munitions and landmines.

¹ Condemnations of Russia’s Use of Cluster Munitions in Ukraine (*As of 10 March 2022*): Austria, Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, France, Guatemala, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

“We are gravely concerned for humanitarian workers caught in the conflict, including staff from demining organizations”, said Hector Guerra.

Russia remains outside of the Mine Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Ukraine has not joined the Convention on Cluster Munitions, though it is a State Party to the Mine Ban Treaty.

ICBL-CMC works for a world free of landmines, cluster munitions, and other explosive remnants of war, where all lives are protected. A world where contaminated land is cleared and returned to local populations for productive use and where the needs of affected communities and survivors are met and their human rights guaranteed.

End

Find out more on how you can [support ICBL-CMC efforts](#) to assist communities impacted by cluster munitions and landmines and help to eliminate the suffering caused by these weapons.

Background information on cluster munitions use in Ukraine:

Human Rights Watch press release: “Ukraine: Cluster Munitions Launched Into Kharkiv Neighborhoods”, 4 March 2022: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/04/ukraine-cluster-munitions-launched-kharkiv-neighborhoods>

ICBL-CMC statement on the use of cluster munitions in Ukraine, 26 February 2022: <http://stopclustermunitions.org/en-gb/media/news/2022/icbl-cmc-condemns-russia-cluster-bomb-use-and-civilian-harm-in-ukraine-conflict.aspx>

Human Rights Watch press release: “Ukraine: Russian Cluster Munition Hits Hospital”, 25 February 2022: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/02/25/ukraine-russian-cluster-munition-hits-hospital>

USCBL-USCMC Strongly Condemns Continued Use of Cluster Munitions in Ukraine <http://www.noclusterbombs.org/news/2022/03/09/uscbl-uscmc-strongly-condemns-continued-use-of-cluster-munitions-in-ukraine/>

Ukraine: Cluster munitions kill child and two other civilians taking shelter at a preschool <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/02/ukraine-cluster-munitions-kill-child-and-two-other-civilians-taking-shelter-at-a-preschool/>

Background information on global cluster munition situation

Cluster Munition Monitor 2021 (ICBL-CMC: September 2021): <http://www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2021/cluster-munition-monitor-2021.aspx>

