"Haven't cluster munitions caused enough suffering in my country? How many more dead, and injured, must there be, to make someone sign the treaty? How can it be possible that, my country is not part of the movement like the other 96 countries that have signed"

Mr. Branislav Kapetanovic,
Spokesperson for the Cluster Munition Coalition, former deminer and Serbian cluster munition survivor

President of Serbia
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29 May 2009

Dear President,

I am writing to urge Serbia to sign the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions.

This international treaty comprehensively prohibits cluster munitions, requires destruction of stockpiled cluster munitions within eight years and clearance of contaminated land within 10 years, and recognises the rights of individuals and communities affected by the weapon to receive assistance. Since December 2008, a total of 96 governments have signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions including stockpilers, former users and producers of the weapon, as well as affected countries from every region of the world.

Serbia hosted a crucial meeting of affected countries during the process to create the Convention on Cluster Munitions, where Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic expressed Serbia's strong desire for "a treaty that would eliminate, or at the very least, prohibit the use of, cluster munitions." Serbian officials and cluster munition survivors, including CMC Spokesperson Branislav Kapetanovic, played an active role in the process to establish the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the negotiations of the treaty in May 2008.

Serbia has everything to gain from joining the Convention and nothing to lose. As an affected country Serbia should benefit from the Convention's provisions on international cooperation and assistance to clear land contaminated by cluster munitions, help victims of the weapon, and destroy its stockpile of cluster munitions. It is widely accepted that its humanitarian impact far outweighs any military utility the weapon had in the past. The stigma established by the global ban means Serbia can no longer use cluster munitions without facing a public and political backlash.

I therefore urge Serbia to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions at the United Nations in New York where it is now open for signature.

Every country wishing to prevent further suffering from the horrors of cluster munitions should join the Convention on Cluster Munitions, This instrument is crucial to ensure the stigmatisation of cluster munitions to make sure this weapon is never used again.

Yours sincerely,

C.c.

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