CLUSTER BAN NEWS

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Open Letter from Jody Williams

Today Jody Williams, 1997 Nobel Peace Laureate, released an open letter to all delegates attending the Dublin Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions. Williams is co-founder of the Nobel Women's Initiative (NWI), a group of six Nobel laureates (Shirin Ebadi of Iran, Wangari Maathai of Kenya, Rigoberta Menchú Tum of Guatemala, and Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan Maguire of Ireland) established in January 2006, to advocate for a democratic world free of violence. Williams commended delegates on the strong draft treaty text, especially the language on survivor assistance, but also expressed concerns over certain provisions in the treaty language. The letter is available in full on the NWI website, www.nobelwomensinitiative.org, and some extracts follow...

"1) The prohibition on assistance: ...Some...states...insist that "protecting" their soldiers includes allowing them to be able to intentionally participate in the planning and execution of joint military operations using cluster munitions… Not only is this morally reprehensible, it would set a horrific precedent.

…the language prohibiting assistance to states outside the convention has no impact whatsoever on peacekeeping operations. Nor will it inhibit humanitarian relief operations, despite recent outrageous U.S. claims.

'Hosting' states not party to the treaty: This language …

(Continued on page 4)

Campaigners protested U.S. interference in the Oslo Process outside of the U.S. Embassy in Dublin on Friday, 23 May.

www.stopclustermunitions.org

Inside this issue:

Key Question	2
Lessons Learned on Human Security	2
Development Struggles	3
Banning Through the Weekend…cont	3
Announcements	4
Lessons Learned on Human Security...cont	4
Open Letter...cont	4

Banning Cluster Bombs Through the Weekend

Yesterday, more then 150 campaigners against cluster munitions gathered in front of the Garden of Remembrance on Parnell Street in Dublin to kick-off a "Make it Happen" march and festival.

Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) campaigners were energized and hard at work on Sunday pushing for a ban on cluster munitions. Waving banners and signs calling for a treaty outlawing cluster munitions, the crowd danced its way through the heart of Dublin Following the lively beats of a drum band. Like a pied piper, the march attracted more and more people along its path. The destination of the march was the Academy, a concert venue on Middle Abbey Street, where a poetry and music festival was organized to gather public support for a clusters ban. With musical performance by a.o. Aortal, Scream Blue Murmur, The Deadly Sins, and The Mighty Stef, the festival provided campaigners and Dubliners with some relaxation and entertainment.

At a rally before the march, Senator David Norris, a political and human rights activist who was among Sunday's campaigners, expressed his great appreciation of the Ban Advocates who made their way to Dublin, "The victims of cluster munitions who are among us today, are the most essential people in this campaign. They didn't lose their spirit. No, on the contrary, they give a face to the humanitarian impact of these brutal and filthy weapons."

The Ban Advocates is a group of campaigners organ-

(Continued on page 3)

Key Question:
What parallels do you see between the Ottawa and Oslo Processes?

The Mine Ban Treaty set the standard. For the first time victim assistance was included in a disarmament treaty. **The cluster munition treaty is building off those standards.** It is an incredible step forward for victim assistance. *—Ken Rutherford, Survivor Corps (USA)*

I remember the magic of 1997 in Oslo when courageous, visionary diplomats worked closely with civil society to deliver a gift to humanity with the Mine Ban Treaty. It was called a new way of conducting international diplomacy. We need to seize this historic opportunity in Dublin to do so again and deliver a comprehensive ban on cluster munitions, saving lives and limbs for future generations. Be courageous! Be visionary! *—Susan B. Walker, International Campaign to Ban Landmines (Switzerland)*

Through the Ottawa Process, **civil society and governments strengthened their ability and willingness to work together constructively**. What we see here in Dublin is a reflection of this ability. I now know how to address my government, and they know I will back each of their small steps to enhance human security. *—Purna Shova Chitrakar, Ban Landmines Campaign Nepal*

The inclusion of NGOs in the Ottawa Process created a precedent: civil society was consulted and fully participated in the creation of the Mine Ban Treaty. Again in the Oslo Process, **civil society raises its voice, and even more importantly, it is being heard**. *—-Patricia Pak Poy, Australian Network to Ban Landmines*

In many ways it is history repeated, and we are dealing with the same implementation and compliance issues. For the ban on cluster munitions, like for the ban on landmines, **civil society monitoring will be crucial for ensuring compliance**. *—Mark Hiznay, Human Rights Watch (USA)*

Lessons Learned on Human Security

We live in a world today where the concept of human security is constantly growing and developing in strength. Views of security that are centered on states are being pushed to the sideline. In their place is a growing belief in human security, which places people and their rights at the center.

In 1974, nearly a decade after the world first heard of the devastating impact of cluster bomb use in North Vietnam, the International Committee of the Red Cross convened a meeting of government experts. Although facts were presented and arguments tabled, the meeting failed to secure a ban on these weapons. High on the list of reasons for this failure was that "the United States and other countries came with an attitude to torpedo the whole process," commented Virgil Wiebe of the Mennonite Central Committee.

Also absent from the process was a strong civil society movement demanding a ban. This was still a world where security was strongly the domain of states, and national security concepts prevailed over all else.

The end of the Cold War saw a changing world, and civil society developed a strong and active voice on the world stage. In *Banning Landmines*, a book launched at the Dublin Conference on Friday, 23 May, co-editor and Nobel Laureate Jody Williams states that "in considering the success, for example, of the movement to ban landmines, a fundamental element of its effective campaigning was setting the terms of the debate." The strength of civil society during the Ottawa Process to ban landmines determined the success of the Mine Ban Treaty. A few decades earlier the lack of this strength meant the loss of an opportunity to ban cluster bombs.

Now, the world has a second chance at banning these cluster bombs and improving the human security of people all around the world. Yet, in the current world environment the concept of human security is still strongly challenged by some

(Continued on page 4)

Development Struggles Against Clusters

Cluster munitions do not just cause human suffering through death and injury, but also by preventing development at an individual, community, and national level.

Cluster munition contamination exacerbates poverty by destroying livelihoods in addition to lives. A recent study conducted by Landmine Action in southern Lebanon projects that over 3,000 farmers were directly affected by unexploded cluster submunitions left on their land after Israel's use of cluster munitions during the summer of 2006. It is estimated that by the time clearance of these bomblets is completed, farmers will have lost around US$25 million in agricultural production because bomblets blocked access to land needed for growing olives, fruits, and other crops. In one of the poorest parts of Lebanon, cluster munition contamination has increased poverty levels and reduced food security.

Cluster munition contamination also has a negative impact on (levels of) gender equality. Injured women are less likely to receive medical care and may be abandoned by their husbands and stigmatised by society. When husbands are killed, women and their families become vulnerable to reduced levels of income and more restricted work opportunities. For example, a World Bank Poverty Assessment in Kosovo identified that female-headed households were twice as likely to fall into extreme poverty as other households. Children may be forced to stop their education due to a lack of money and the need to help support the family through paid and unpaid labor. This perpetuates a cycle of lost opportunity, lack of education, and underdevelopment.

Cluster munitions also increase the cost of development projects, as has been the case in Lao PDR. A study of infrastructure projects found that an additional US$20 million was needed to pay for the removal of cluster munitions and other unexploded ordnance before projects could be completed. In one road reconstruction project in Xieng Khouang province, ordnance removal resulted in increased project costs amounting to US$1.2 million. In another project, designed to provide power to over 33,000 rural households, the cost of ordnance removal was 5% of the total project cost.

At many levels, from that of individuals struggling to maintain and improve living standards to governments and non-governmental organisations implementing large-scale development projects, unexploded cluster munitions actively hinder the development process, exacerbate poverty, and increase levels of vulnerability.

Development can be seen as a vision of a better society, in which basic needs are met and a certain level of human security is provided. For many thousands of people living in cluster munition contaminated countries, this vision is obscured by the presence of unexploded bomblets on their land for months, years, or even decades after the fighting has ended. *—Greg Crowther, Landmine Action*

Banning Cluster Bombs Through the Weekend

(Continued from page 1)

ized by Handicap International in Belgium from cluster affected communities and includes survivors of cluster munitions. Members of the team have been present at many of the Oslo Process meetings. The Dublin team consists of survivors from countries as diverse as Serbia, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Vietnam, and Ethiopia. "We know all too well what cluster munitions mean in reality and why their use must be prohibited," says Soraj Ghulam Habib, a survivor from Afghanistan. "We know all that because, together with other victims of cluster munitions, we have experienced the violence, exclusion, and poverty caused by those indiscriminate weapons."

Today marks the second and last week of the Dublin conference. CMC campaigners are hopeful yet cautious that this week's negotiations will result in a strong treaty against cluster munitions. Keeping in mind the diplomatic credo that nothing is agreed upon until everything is agreed upon, Bob Mtonga from CMC Zambia, summarized the starting point of the second week and Sunday's festival, "We've travelled geographical distances. We've travelled political distances. And here we stand united. We stand for humanity, and morality stands with us. We call upon states to unite and stand with us: No loopholes, no exceptions, and no delays." *—Roos Boer, Staff Writer*

Iraqi campaigners Ahmed Najem, and Moaffak al-Khafaji brought the cluster bomb ban message to the Ireland versus Serbia football match at Croke Park on Saturday, 24 May.

CLUSTER BAN NEWS

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Announcements

TODAY

Lunchtime Briefings: Ban Advocates Press Conference, 1-2pm, Ash Suite. Followed by briefing on the United States and the Oslo Process featuring US Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt)

TOMORROW

Lunchtime Talk: Disinvestment and a Cluster Munitions Treaty: Two Sides of the Same Coin? 1-2pm, Ash Suite. Facilitated by IKV-Pax Christi Netherlands

Lessons Learned...

(Continued from page 2)

states wanting to hold onto their view of security, centered on the nation state. The same threats to derail the process that were present in the 1970s are present today in Dublin. The role of civil society in setting the stage and ensuring that all governments that are part of the Oslo Process have the same end game is crucial.

By the end of this week, a strong civil society movement will ensure that another successful contribution is made to the instruments of protection for civilians, and that human security is a more achievable way of life for the citizens of this world. —*Jamila Homayun, Guest Writer*

This motif seeks to honor the 1958 peace symbol on its 50th anniversary by showing its continuing relevance and link to the current cluster bomb ban advocacy. Provided by the Philippine Campaign to Ban Landmines.

Open Letter to Delegates...

(Continued from page 1)

does not sound all that bad. But it is bad. The states wanting this language are all allies of the United States, and what they mean by "host" is language that will allow the United States to keep its stockpiles of cluster bombs in countries that are part of the Cluster Munitions Convention—and obviously, access, transport and use those stockpiles.

2) Transition periods: Some…states whose cluster munitions will be banned...are calling for transition periods… The call for transition periods to be able to use cluster bombs that are banned...is not a position that is worthy of support. States negotiating a prohibition on cluster munitions because of their humanitarian impact cannot argue that they must be able to use banned weapons for a decade or more. If a state feels the desperate need to continue to use banned weapons for a number of years, it simply should not sign the treaty until it is prepared to obey it.

3) Retaining cluster bombs for training: [L]anguage allowing states to retain tens of thousands of cluster munitions for "training" is questionable at best for nations who have come together to rid the world of cluster munitions. Clearance operators say that it is not necessary to retain cluster munitions for training.

In conclusion, all attempts to weaken or water down the treaty, or to cut deals based on dubious claims of military necessity, must be resisted. To ban cluster munitions they must be stigmatized. Weak and wishy-washy treaties are not particularly effective instruments for stigmatization."