

BAN MINES NEWSLETTER

A Newsletter from Handicap International

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EDITORIAL

In December 1997 in Ottawa, 122 states banned antipersonnel mines, a weapon that in most cases kills and mutilates civilians. Following ratifications of the Mine Ban Treaty by Haiti and Cook Islands, the treaty now counts 150 States Parties. *Landmine Monitor Report 2005* shows progress but also remaining challenges (see page 2). One of the main challenges facing states is their response to the needs of the 300-400,000 survivors worldwide.

Nine years after Mine Ban Treaty negotiations, the problem of cluster munitions became a new priority for us. Recent reports indicate that 90% of cluster munition casualties are civilians. And problems associated with cluster munitions occur *during* as well as *after* use. While 21 countries are reported to be affected to date, about 4 billion submunitions appear to be stockpiled around the world, waiting to be used in the future. In response to these facts and to the horrifying stories that we receive on a regular basis, Handicap International decided to call for a ban on cluster munitions (see www.clusterbombs.org).

In response to our call, Belgian parliamentarians adopted legislation that bans cluster munitions. As more and more states recognize that the cluster munitions issue must be addressed (see page 3), the Norwegian government stated that it wants to work towards an international ban on cluster munitions, and is now developing a strategy to turn this aim into reality. In recent months, Handicap International collected about 220,000 signatures against cluster munitions. Public opinion and affected communities demonstrate a growing expectation that states rid the world of these weapons.

In 2006, our efforts shall therefore concentrate on the consolidation of the Mine Ban Treaty and on new initiatives to get rid of cluster munitions.

IN THIS ISSUE:

P 1

- Editorial

P 2

- "Use of Landmines and Number of Casualties Decrease, But Immense Challenges Remain," reports *Landmine Monitor*
- 150 States ratified the Mine Ban Treaty

P 3

- All over the world, progress and initiatives on cluster munitions

P 4

- Short News
- Calendar
- New Publications

**HANDICAP
INTERNATIONAL**

*Founding member of the ICBL,
Nobel Peace Prize Laureate*

“USE OF LANDMINES AND NUMBER OF CASUALTIES DECREASE, BUT IMMENSE CHALLENGES REMAIN,” REPORTS LANDMINE MONITOR

The *Landmine Monitor Report 2005* was released a few days before the Sixth meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty, held in Zagreb (Croatia). Release events took place all over the world and thematic launches were organized in Medellin (Colombia), Algiers (Algeria) and Zagreb (Croatia). The findings of the report are encouraging even if huge challenges remain.

Use of antipersonnel mines declined. Just three governments laid mines in 2005—**Myanmar, Nepal, and Russia**. Landmine Monitor removed two countries from its list of antipersonnel mine **producers—Egypt and Iraq**—following new statements by those countries. Once again, there was virtually no trade in antipersonnel mines throughout the world. Seventy-one States Parties have completed **stockpile destruction**, with **Algeria and Guinea-Bissau** the most recent. Together States Parties have destroyed 38.3 million antipersonnel mines. International **donors** provided \$399 million (about €332,5 million) to mine action in 2004. Well over 135 square kilometers of mine-affected land were **cleared** in 2004, and another 170 square kilometers were freed through battle area clearance. These operations destroyed about 140,000 antipersonnel mines, 50,000 antivehicle mines, and 3 million items of unexploded ordnance.

But immense challenges remain: there were new mine and UXO **casualties** reported in 58 countries, eight less than the previous year. The number of recorded new casualties around the world decreased to 6,521 in 2004, compared to 8,065 in 2003. However, due to significant underreporting in many countries (in particular Iraq) Landmine Monitor still estimates that there are 15,000 to 20,000 new mine and UXO casualties each year. Landmine Monitor counts **84 mine-affected countries**. An estimated 200,000 square kilometers of the world’s area is still contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance. At least seven of the 13 States Parties with mine clearance deadlines in 2009 are not on course to make the deadline. Mine action **funding** is benefiting too few countries, with almost half of 2004 funding going to just three countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, and Cambodia). The global **total of mine survivors continues to grow** steadily—now estimated at some 300,000 to 400,000—yet victim assistance funding has remained essentially stagnant for years, and has dropped sharply as a percentage of overall mine action funding. Landmine Monitor finds that **assistance to mine survivors was inadequate in 51 of the 58 countries** with new mine casualties. Forty-seven countries have not ratified or acceded to the Mine Ban Treaty, including some of the biggest producers and stockpilers of antipersonnel mines. Non-States Parties hold an estimated 160 million antipersonnel mines, including an estimated 110 million by China, 26.5 million by Russia and 10.4 million by the US.

The full *Landmine Monitor Report 2005* is available on www.icbl.org/lm/2005
For more information on the 6th Meeting of States Parties, see daily updates on www.icbl.org/6msp

150 STATES RATIFIED THE MINE BAN TREATY

The Cook Islands ratified the treaty on 16 March 2006.

Haiti ratified the treaty on 15 February 2006. The treaty will enter into force for Haiti on 1 August 2006. The United States and Cuba are now the only countries in the Americas outside of the treaty.

Ukraine ratified the treaty on 27 December 2005. The treaty will enter into force for Ukraine on 1 June 2006. Ukraine is the fifth member from the Commonwealth of Independent States, joining Belarus, Moldova, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

See: www.icbl.org/treaty/members and www.icbl.org/treaty/snp

ALL OVER THE WORLD, PROGRESS AND INITIATIVES ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS...

In **Australia**, the Senate passed a motion calling for a moratorium on the use of cluster munitions. In April 2003 Australia stated that it did not use cluster munitions. In **Austria**, a parliamentary resolution was tabled, calling for a moratorium on the use of cluster munitions and new international law on the weapon. In **Belgium**, a law has been adopted in the House of Representatives on 16 February 2006 banning cluster munitions. On 30 March 2006, the House of Representatives adopted a second law strengthening the prohibition through a more precise definition of cluster munitions. **Canada** announced in 2005 that it would be destroying its *Rockeye* cluster munitions and would be moving away from this weapon type in the future. Canada also noted that it would welcome focused discussions on cluster munitions within the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW). In 2005, **Denmark** called for negotiations on cluster munitions to begin immediately. The **European Parliament** adopted a resolution calling for a moratorium on use, production, stockpiling, transfer and export of cluster munitions in 2004 and adopted, on 19 January 2006, a resolution on disability and development, saying that it “supports fully, given the effects especially on child victims, the global battle to eradicate antipersonnel landmines and other related controversial weapon systems such as cluster sub-munitions.” In July 2005, the European Parliament called for a ban on investments in the production of cluster munitions.

In **France**, two bills have been introduced in parliament in order to ban cluster munitions. The government received more than 100 parliamentary questions concerning cluster munitions. The Senate initiated an enquiry that shall propose recommendations to the government. In **Germany**, discussions and consultations are ongoing regarding a resolution on cluster munitions to be tabled. On 8 March 2006, Germany proposed a definition of cluster munitions at the CCW. In 2005, the **Holy See** called for an immediate moratorium on the use of cluster munitions and for their elimination, noting that it would be insufficient and inadequate to limit reflection to the question of improving their quality. **Mexico** called for a moratorium on the use of cluster munitions and for them to be considered at the CCW Review Conference in 2006. In **New Zealand**, the government’s national disarmament advisory committee is currently considering cluster munitions with a view to recommending new policy. **Norway**, in addition to withdrawing *Rockeye* cluster munitions, decided not to purchase M26 rockets with sub-munitions for its MLRS system. After coming into office in 2005, Norway’s new government pledged to work towards an international ban on cluster bombs. In 2005, Norway called on States Parties to consider a more general prohibition on the use of cluster munitions in populated areas. On 6 March 2006, Norway congratulated Belgium on taking a strong position on cluster munitions and called for a legal instrument on cluster munitions. In **Sweden** two parties introduced a bill proposing a ban on cluster munitions. On 14 February seven parties took part in a seminar in parliament dedicated to the problem of cluster munitions; four parties expressed themselves in favor of a ban on cluster munitions. In November 2005 Sweden stated that the humanitarian hazards caused by cluster munitions cannot be ignored. In 2006 Sweden called for negotiations on cluster munitions at the CCW. In **Switzerland** a draft law banning cluster munitions was tabled in parliament in November 2005. In **Uruguay** a project has been introduced to parliament to ban cluster munitions.

“Cluster munitions raise serious concerns under a number of fundamental International Humanitarian Law rules. Their wide area effects (...) make them an immediate danger to civilians at the time of the attack. The large number of sub-munitions which fail to explode as intended extend the dangers to civilians and humanitarian organizations long after the end of active hostilities (...). The use of these weapons in armed conflicts over the last 30 years has left a consistent trail of civilian casualties.”
International Committee of the Red Cross, 28 July 2005.

“Cluster munitions (...) are in the arsenals of more than 70 countries; they often claim the lives of civilians; and they impede socio-economic development long after conflict has ended. (...) I urge you to place the range of issues related to cluster munitions on your 2006 agenda.” Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, to the Meeting of States Parties to the CCW, 24 November 2005.

“Belgium became the first nation to ban cluster munitions last month when its lower house joined its Senate in passing ban legislation. We congratulate Belgium on this bold, far-sighted and most welcome achievement and thank Belgium for its ground-breaking leadership. We believe that many states are ready to take significant steps to deal with cluster munitions—and they should do so immediately at the national level while international efforts continue.”
Human Rights Watch, 6 March 2006.

SHORT NEWS

U.S. Congress Blocks New Landmine Production

In a last minute decision at the end of 2005, the U.S. Congress has told the Pentagon not to begin production of any new landmines before studying the possible indiscriminate consequences for deploying this weapon. The U.S. has not produced any type of antipersonnel landmine since 1997. The issue will come up again once the study is submitted to Congress. ICBL, USCBL and Handicap International will continue to monitor the issue and oppose any new production of landmines.

See: www.uscbl.org/ and www.icbl.org/lm/2005/usa

Transfers of cluster munitions to Finland and Turkey

Finland has taken over two complete batteries of the Multiple Launch Rocket system (MLRS) from the Netherlands. In the United States, on 8 September 2005, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of a possible sale to Turkey of munitions, including cluster munitions as well as associated equipment and services. (Source: www.defense-aerospace.com)

CALENDAR

April

2-4: Landmine Monitor Global Research Meeting, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

4: International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.

May

5: Seminar on cluster munitions in Afghanistan, Stockholm, Sweden.

7: “Walk without legs” event, against landmines & cluster bombs, Poole, UK.

8-12: Intersessional Standing Committee Meetings, Geneva.

June

19-23: CCW Meetings, Geneva, Switzerland.

August

28/8-6/9: CCW Meetings, Geneva, Switzerland.

September

14: *Landmine Monitor Report 2006* Global Release.

18-22: 7MSP, Geneva.

November

6-17: CCW 3rd Review Conference, Geneva.

More information:

www.icbl.org/campaign/calendar

NEW PUBLICATIONS

GRIP Fact Sheets: GRIP (Groupe de Recherche et d'Information sur la Paix et la Sécurité) published two fact sheets (in French) on the production of cluster munitions in Belgium. See: <http://www.grip.be/bdg/g0994.html> and www.grip.be/bdg/g0995.html

Cluster munitions in Lebanon and Out of Balance: Two reports by Landmine Action examining the impact on civilians of cluster munition use in Lebanon and analyzing the UK government practices regarding cluster munitions. See: www.landmineaction.org

Providing appropriate assistance to the victims of explosive remnants of war: This report produced by Handicap International is part of UNIDIR's research on “Humanitarian Perspectives to Small Arms and Explosive Remnants of War.” See: www.unidir.org/pdf/4-HumanitarianForView25-11-05.pdf

Cluster Weapons: Necessity or Convenience? This report by Pax Christi Netherlands assesses 45 governments' perspectives on the military utility of cluster munitions. See: www.stopclustermunitions.org/files/PXC_cluster_weapons.pdf

HRW Cluster Munition Chart: Human Rights Watch has released an informational chart outlining international developments, as well as global use, production, stockpiling, and transfer of cluster munitions. The chart is now available on www.hrw.org/arms/pdfs/munitionChart.pdf

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