

Cluster Munition Coalition Newsletter

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International News

Laos ratifies Convention on Cluster Munitions, DR Congo is 96th signatory

On 18 March 2009 the United Nations hosted a special event on the Convention on Cluster Munitions in New York which was attended by around 70 countries. At the event, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the country most affected by cluster bombs ratified the Convention and the Democratic Republic of Congo, also a country affected by cluster bombs, signed the treaty becoming the 96th government to join. Iraq announced that its Cabinet had approved signature of the Convention and that it would sign once steps have been completed. Austria and Mexico announced that they would deposit their ratification

instruments once final steps had been completed nationally. Numerous other countries indicated that the ratification process was underway and would be completed soon.

<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/calendar/?id=1412>

Thomas Nash, Coordinator of the CMC met with key

stakeholders in Vientiane on 30-31 March to begin early preparations for the First Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Meetings were held with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Regulatory Authority for UXO, international NGOs, UN Resident Coordinator and others.



Photos: Mary Wareham

Serbia urged to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions

On 10 March Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) launched the first ever country-wide survey of cluster munition contamination in Serbia. Ten years after the NATO bombing of Serbia, unexploded cluster munitions still represent a deadly threat to tens of thousands of people in the country. Emil Jeremic Regional Director of NPA in southeast Europe said at a press conference that "with the comprehensive survey Serbia now has a tool for solving the problems of cluster contamination in affected communities". Thomas Nash, Coordinator of the CMC, was also present at the event and urged Serbia to sign the Convention on

Cluster Munitions: "Serbia demonstrated leadership by supporting the ban early on in the movement to establish the treaty. Signature now would enable the government to follow through on its commitment to Serbian survivors of cluster bombs as well as with the international community." Dejan Dikic who suffered severe injuries from a

cluster bomb in 1999 stated "Serbia was a leader in the process especially on victim assistance. All the survivors in Serbia feel the same, we need support and the government is turning its back on us right when it has the perfect tool to give us the support we need."

<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/news/?id=1372>



Photo: NPA

Austria is 6th country to ratify the Convention

On 2 April, Austria became the 6th country to formally ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions by depositing its legal instrument at the United Nations in New York. After playing a key role in the development of the treaty and signing it in December in Oslo, the ratification shows the continued commitment of Austria to a world free of cluster bombs.



Photo: UN Treaty Section

In a press release Austria's Minister for Foreign Affairs Michael Spindelegger stated that Austria would destroy all its cluster munition stocks by the end of this year, and that the country would strongly promote entry into force and universalisation of the treaty. <http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/news/?id=1441>

Media Highlights of the Month

BBC News, 10 March 2009

"Funding fears for Lebanese de-mining"

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7934525.stm

Yahoo News Mexico, 11 March 2009

"Aprueba Senado Convención sobre Municiones en Racimo"

<http://mx.news.yahoo.com/s/11032009/7/mexico-aprueba-senado-convencion-municiones-racimo.html>

The Guardian, 13 March 2009

"Obama takes US closer to total ban on cluster bombs"

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/mar/13/us-national-security-obama-administration>

Daily Star Lebanon, 20 March 2009

"US donates \$1.5 million for removing ordnance as cluster bomb kills civilian"

http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_ID=1&article_ID=100211&categ_id=2

BBC News, 24 March 2009

"Scars of Nato bombing still pain Serbs"

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7960116.stm>

Daily Star Lebanon, 26 March 2009

"Female deminers make playgrounds, fields safe again"

http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=1&article_id=100370

Russia Today, 26 March 2009

"Russia claims proof Georgia used cluster weapons"

http://www.russiatoday.com/Top_News/2009-03-26/Russia_claims_proof_Georgia_used_cluster_weapons.html

Daily Star Lebanon, 30 March 2009

"Maimed 10-year-old angry at Israel over cluster bombs"

http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=1&article_id=100462

Campaign and Country Updates

Albania. The Kukes Association has been working closely with stakeholders in the Albanian Mine Action Centre and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to encourage the government to complete its domestic ratification of the Convention. Albania's parliament has approved ratification and the President is expected to sign the ratification instrument shortly before it will be deposited with the UN treaty section. *Jonuz Kola, Kukes Association, kukesi@albmail.com*

Argentina. On 19 March the Norwegian Embassy in Buenos Aires in association with Asociación para Políticas Públicas held a reception for Ban Bus organizers John Rodsted and Mette Eliseussen.

The Norwegian Ambassador gave a brief introduction on the Oslo Process, Maria Pia Devoto explained the significance of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and gave an update on signatures and ratifications, before John and Mette talked about their experiences while travelling through Europe promoting the treaty. The Ban Bus team distributed an information leaflet and presented a photo exhibition on their work on cluster munitions. The reception was attended by representatives of foreign governments, parliamentarians, representatives of the Security Committee, National Defense Committee and Foreign Affairs Committee of the Argentinean Parliament, NGOs and media. The

event was covered by TV, radio and print media.

Maria Pia Devoto, Asociación para Políticas Públicas, piadevoto@gmail.com, Mette Eliseussen, Ban Bus, mette@eliseussen.com



Austria. On 12 March the Austrian National Council (main legislative assembly) endorsed two motions to bring existing Austrian Federal Law on the Prohibition of Cluster Munitions in line with the Convention on Cluster Munitions. This enabled Austria to deposit its ratification instrument with the United Nations on 2 April becoming the 6th country to ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions. (See also *International News*)

Judith Majlath, CMC Austria,
judith.majlath@aon.at

Gambia. Gambia has started the ratification process for the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The government has forwarded the documents for ratification to the Cabinet.

Pamela Cole, West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP),
kehindecole@yahoo.com

Germany. In March 2009 Actiongroup Landmine.de lobbied all parliamentary secretaries of all parties to speed up the ratification process for the Convention on Cluster Munitions. On 2 April Andreas Weigel (SPD), a German member of parliament, informed Actiongroup Landmine.de that the 2nd and 3rd reading of the German legislation to ratify the Convention will happen on 23 April which would allow enough time to have the legislation adopted by the federal parliament and signed by the president before the International Conference on Article 3 which takes place in Berlin on 25 - 26 June 2009.

Thomas Küchenmeister, Actiongroup Landmine.de,
thomas.kuechenmeister@googlemail.com

The Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons in cooperation with the German Bundestag held a Regional Parliamentary Conference on 13 and 14 February 2009. One of the topics discussed was the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Over 30 parliamentarians from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Germany, Argentina, Mozambique, Tanzania, Haiti and the Democratic Republic of Congo attended the conference. In addition, Government representatives from Germany and Moldova as well as

representatives from NATO, the Assembly of the Western European Union (WEU), research institutes and civil society participated in the event.



At the end of the conference participants adopted the Berlin Declaration which encourages all nations to ratify, apply and transform the Convention on Cluster Munitions into national law.

<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/berlin-declaration-2009.pdf>

Teresa Dybeck, Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons,
dybeck@parforum.org

Guatemala. The Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs has informed campaigners in Guatemala that all documents are in place for the country to start its ratification process.

Maria Eugenia Villareal, ECPAT,
vilareal@c.net.gt

India. The Indian Campaign to Ban Landmines held a mine risk education workshop for students and adults in the village of Hindumalkot, close to the border between India and Pakistan.



Campaigners distributed information leaflets with the title "Danger: Do not touch" which include information on cluster munitions.

Balkrishna Kurvey, Indian Campaign to Ban Landmines,
iipdep_ngp@sancharnet.in

Iraq. Moaffak Al Khafaji of the Iraqi Handicapped Survivors Society continues to lobby the government to join the Convention. Iraq announced in New York on March 18 that the cabinet has approved signature and is completing the legal procedures to be able to do so in New York soon.

Moaffak Al Khafaji, Iraqi Handicapped Survivors Society,
moaffak61@yahoo.com

Japan. On 10 March the government of Japan approved a bill aimed at implementing the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The bill is now going through parliament along with a ratification bill for the Convention. Japan is expected to deposit its ratification sometime in the middle of this year, which would be very fast in relation to its ratification of other treaties.

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/news/20090311p2a00m0na008000c.html>

Nigeria. The IANSA Women's Network in collaboration with ICBL organised a multi-stakeholder roundtable on the 10 year anniversary of the Mine Ban Treaty where they also urged the Nigerian government to sign and ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions by the end of April 2009. The event was attended by 49 participants including representatives of the Nigerian Ministry of Defence, the Nigerian Police, the Ministry of the Environment, representatives of the Canadian High Commission, the Norwegian Embassy and the Embassy of Switzerland as well as media and civil society.





Mimidoo Achakpa has also been lobbying the Nigerian government to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions including through Nigeria's mission in New York following the government's announcement in Oslo, Norway that it would sign the Convention soon.

Mimidoo Achakpa, IANSA Women Network Nigeria,
iansawomennig@yahoo.co.uk

Spain. On 18 March the Spanish Ministry of Defence issued a press release announcing that Spain has destroyed all its cluster munition stocks. This makes Spain the first country to destroy its entire stockpile of cluster munitions since the Convention was opened for signature.

<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/destruccion-existencias.pdf>

Switzerland. On 17 March the Swiss National Council voted in favour of swift ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions by Switzerland. Handicap International Switzerland issued a press release urging the Swiss Federal Council to prohibit in the text of the ratification direct and indirect financing of the production of cluster munitions for individuals and companies.

Paul Vermeulen, Handicap International Switzerland, pvermeulen@handicap-international.ch

UK. Human Rights Watch presented Jawad Metni's *Remnants of a War* in association with the CMC at the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival on 20 and 22 March in London.

Remnants of a War takes an intimate look at the Lebanese people who were

hired to clear unexploded cluster munitions left after the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah.



<http://www.hrw.org/en/iff/remnants-war>
<http://www.remnantsfilm.com/>

US. On 11 March U.S. President Obama signed new legislation into law that makes permanent a ban on nearly all cluster bomb exports by the United States. The legislation states that cluster munitions can only be exported if they leave behind less than one percent of their submunitions as duds, and if the receiving country agrees that the weapon "will not be used where civilians are known to be present." The possibility of any munition reaching 99% reliability has been demonstrated to be extremely remote, impossible to measure and not sufficient anyway to prevent the area effect problems of indiscriminacy at the time of use. In practice the CMC believes that this export prohibition will thus cover all US cluster munitions except possibly the sensor-fuzed BLU108 munition. The United States should review its stance on joining the Convention on Cluster Munitions in light of this export ban legislation.

<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/news/?id=1393>

On 17 March, *Religions for Peace* and the Permanent Mission of Norway hosted a lunch event at the United Nations in New York. The lunch was open to representatives of states actively engaged in leading the Oslo Process as well as countries that have otherwise shown leadership within their region. Representatives of the CMC, UNDP and ICRC also attended the event. The aim was to develop a joint strategy for

advancing signature and ratification of the Convention, both within the United Nations community and through other channels. The discussion, facilitated by the Norwegian Ambassador Mona Juul, was positive and yielded some new ideas and opportunities for further action. *Religions for Peace* have also confirmed that they will convene a disarmament conference of high-level religious leaders from across Asia this summer in Nepal where cluster munitions will be discussed.

Allison Pytlak, Religions for Peace,
apytlak@wcrp.org

On Monday, 30 March the U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Bombs organised a national call-in day encouraging people to call their senators and ask them to support the Cluster Munitions Civilian Protection Act. This bill comes short of a total ban on cluster bombs but would bring U.S. policy closely in line with the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It would limit U.S. use of cluster bombs to those that have a 1 percent or lower dud rate. The call-in day generated over a thousand calls to key offices, helping to bring political attention to the issue.

Lora Lumpe, Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) and US Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Bombs, lora@fcnl.org

Zambia. Campaigners in Zambia held a parliamentary briefing on the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 10 March. The briefing was targeted at Members of Parliament that sit on the National Committee against Anti-personnel Landmines (NCAL) which is also mandated to discuss cluster munitions. The chair of the NCAL, who is also Deputy Foreign Minister and alternate delegation leader for Oslo Process meetings, briefed parliamentarians on the signing conference in Oslo and the run-up to the event. CMC campaigner Bob Mtonga made an intervention on the need for Zambia to ratify the Convention quickly and appealed to parliamentarians to prepare the instrument of ratification without delay.

Bob Mtonga, ICBL Zambia,
Zambia@icbl.org

Take Action

1) Adapt and send a letter to your Minister of Foreign Affairs calling on your government to sign or ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions as soon as possible (if they haven't done so already).

<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/take-action/government/>

2) Send letters to parliamentarians asking that they encourage your government to sign and ratify the Convention (if they haven't done so already):

<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/take-action/mp/>

3) Arrange a briefing for key government officials and parliamentarians.

There is a range of materials to support briefings including the lobbying guides and practical information on how to sign and ratify the Convention, ratification and signature, briefing papers explaining what the treaty means, PowerPoint presentations and photo slide shows.

<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/campaign-resources/>

4) Sign the People's Treaty and promote the petition on your website, in newsletters and other publications.

<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/peoplestreaty>

New Campaign Resources

The CMC has updated and produced a new range of campaign materials to support the ratification and universalisation campaign:

Lobbying toolkit

- Next steps: CMC's campaigning objectives for 2009
- Template letters to governments calling on them to sign and ratify the Convention
- A guide on 'How to *Ratify* the Convention' and a guide on 'How to *Sign* the Convention'
- CMC briefing paper on the Convention on Cluster Munitions
- Talking points: arguments why governments should sign the Convention
- ICRC ratification toolkit with model ratification instrument and model law (for common law states)
- 9 cluster bomb fact sheets (1. *What is a cluster bomb?* 2. *What is the problem?* 3. *How big is the problem?* 4. *Cluster bombs and the world at a glance.* 5. *Timeline of cluster bomb use.* 6. *Types of cluster bombs in global stockpiles.* 7. *Who has banned cluster bombs?* 8. *Cluster bomb facts and stats.* 9. *About the Cluster Munition Coalition*)

<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/campaign-resources/lobbying/>

Parliamentary action kit

- Template letters to parliamentarians
- Examples of national legislation banning cluster munitions
- Parliamentary action to ban cluster munitions

<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/take-action/mp/>

Campaigning tools

- Take action campaign guide
- 'Unacceptable Harm: 40 years of cluster munitions' photo slideshow
- 'Taking action against cluster bombs' PowerPoint presentation + speaking notes
- 9 cluster bomb fact sheets
- Real life stories

<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/campaign-resources/campaigning/>

New leaflets, stickers, badges and posters coming soon!!

Upcoming Events

April 2009

- 14-17 April Final scheduled session of the Group of Governmental Experts on Cluster Munitions, Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), Geneva, Switzerland
- 22-24 April Experts meeting on Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War, Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), Geneva, Switzerland

May 2009

- 1 May Tipperary International Peace Convention 2009, Presentation of the Tipperary International Peace Prize to the Cluster Munition Coalition, Ireland
<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/news/?id=1103>
- 25-29 May Mine Ban Treaty Intersessional Standing Committees Meetings, Geneva, Switzerland
- 29 May Release of the HRW and Landmine Action Report: "Banning Cluster Munitions: Government Policy and Practice"
- 29 May-4 June CMC Global Week of Action
<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/gwoa2009>

June 2009

- 25-26 June Berlin Conference on Article 3 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (Stockpile Destruction), Germany

