



Treaty Status

Ratifications in January:
1 (Montenegro)

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International News

Montenegro is 27th country to ratify cluster bomb ban

Montenegro's ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 25 January places it among the first 30 states that will trigger the Convention's entry into force. Currently, 104 countries have signed and Montenegro is the 27th to ratify.

The 2008 Convention comprehensively bans the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions, sets strict deadlines for clearance of contaminated land and destruction of stockpiles of the weapon, and includes groundbreaking provisions for assistance to victims and affected communities.

Montenegro is not known to have used or produced cluster munitions, but it inherited a stockpile of 353 BL-755 cluster bombs upon the dissolution of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro.

As a country recently affected by cluster munitions, Montenegro has highlighted the Convention's strong emphasis on victim assistance and clearance of contaminated land. All of its neighbours in south-eastern Europe – many of which also suffer from cluster bomb contamination – have now signed or ratified, with the exception of Greece and Serbia.

Feature Story Workshop empowers Lao cluster bomb survivors to advocate for ban treaty's humanitarian provisions

At first, Phonesavath ("Phong") was uneasy about sharing his experiences with the group of strangers – he felt sad and hopeless, and he wanted to go home. But gradually, as the week wore on, he began to open up and told the group how his life had changed drastically two years earlier, when, at age 15, a cluster bomblet explosion blinded him and destroyed both of his arms.

Phong is one of eight cluster bomb survivors from around Lao PDR who made the long trip to their country's capital, Vientiane – some of them for the first time – to participate in a weeklong workshop in January to train them how to become Ban Advocates and speak about the impact of cluster bombs on their lives.

An initiative of Handicap International Belgium, the Ban Advocates include courageous men and women from many countries who draw on their own experiences as cluster bomb survivors to illustrate the unacceptable civilian harm caused by the weapon, and use their collective voice to campaign for the universalisation and implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. They have been key spokespeople for the Convention on the national, regional and international levels at all stages of the Oslo Process.

The first of its kind in Lao PDR, the Ban Advocates group will play an important role in the run-up to another significant first, when the Lao government hosts the First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention in mid-November 2010.



Participants at the Lao Ban Advocates training in Vientiane.
Photo Credit: Ban Advocates <http://blog.banadvocates.org/>

Vientiane is a highly symbolic venue for this First Meeting of States Parties. Lao PDR is the most heavily bombed country, per capita, in the world, with 14 out of 17 provinces affected by unexploded ordnance (UXO) left over from a "Secret War" waged by the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. From 1964 to 1973, the US led more than 580,000 bombing missions – equating to a mission every eight minutes, 24 hours a day, over nine years – dropping more than 2 million tons of bombs and blanketing the countryside with some 270 million submunitions. Lao's neighbouring states Cambodia and Vietnam also have widespread cluster munition contamination, and together they have the unenviable statistic of being the world's most cluster-bombed region.

Known locally as “bombies,” unexploded cluster submunitions are ubiquitous in Lao PDR and continue to claim around 300 new victims per year, nearly four decades after the armed conflict ended. A recent nationwide survey recorded 50,136 UXO casualties between 1963 and 2008, 40 percent of which happened after the bombing ceased.

Dr. Maligna Sayavong, director of the National Regulatory authority for UXO/Mine Action in Lao PDR (NRA), attended the opening of the Vientiane Ban Advocates workshop, where he praised the survivors for their participation and spoke of their important role in urging additional states to sign and ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Stéphanie Castanié of Handicapped International Belgium, who oversaw the Vientiane training workshop, said the week was a very positive experience, which formed the foundations for a motivated group of Lao Ban Advocates who will work to promote the strongest possible humanitarian outcome of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

“For sure, the voices of communities affected by cluster munitions will be heard, especially during the First Meeting of the States Parties, taking place in the state most heavily affected by cluster munitions,” Castanié said.

According to Castanié, one of the week’s resounding successes was seeing how the survivors developed bonds and began working more closely together as they shared their personal accounts of how cluster bombs have impacted



Participants at the Lao Ban Advocates training in Vientiane. Photo Credit: Ban Advocates <http://blog.banadvocates.org/>

their lives and livelihoods. Facilitators from Handicap International Belgium and experienced Ban Advocates from Cambodia and Vietnam helped the new Lao group to feel comfortable about – and even empowered by – speaking about their experiences in public.

Before parting ways after their Vientiane workshop, the new Lao Ban Advocates shared a traditional *baci* ceremony, which is said to bestow well-being and good fortune on its participants and their undertakings – welcome blessings for the group as they continue their campaigning work, endowed with a new sense of hope about what can be achieved at the First Meeting of States Parties in November.

Campaign and Country Updates

Andorra: Maria-Josep Parés from Moviment per la Pau met with Andorra’s head of government, Mr. Jaume Bartumeu to talk about the CCM. Mr. Bartumeu expressed that he would raise the issue at a government meeting on 13 January. Since the parliament is not in session in January and February, he expressed that he hoped that joining the CCM could be one of the first issues to tackle in March.

Contact: *Maria-Josep Parés, Moviment per la Pau:*
mariajosep@movimentperlau.org

Cambodia: Tun Channareth (Reth), an ICBL Ambassador, travelled to Lao PDR to train Ban Advocates and Song Kosal is soon travelling to Canada to participate in the Mines Action Canada disinvestment event. The Cambodian campaign briefed 24 journalists visiting from the University of Brisbane. The Reflection Centre hosted guests from 17 different nationalities at an event which focused on the importance of getting their countries to sign the CCM. Survivors from Battambang and

Kompong Thom hosted young people from Korea on the issue of cluster munitions. The Cambodian government is currently investigating whether some Chinese weapons come under the category of cluster munitions. Contact: *Denise Coghlan, Cambodia CBL:*
denisecoghlan@yahoo.com.au

France: Campaigners are working on the draft implementation bill that was presented by the Ministry of Defense in December – they are proposing a series of amendments, in particular one that would explicitly prohibit investments in cluster munitions producers. Their proposals were presented to the Ministries of Defense, Foreign Affairs and Finance, to the National Consultation Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH), to the National Commission on antipersonnel landmines (CNEMA), and to several parliamentarians. The government aims at adopting the bill before summer. Contact: *Marion Libertucci, Handicap International,*
mllibertucci@handicap-international.org

Guatemala: Campaigners in Guatemala lobbied on to promote ratification of the CCM at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Convention was presented to the Commission of Foreign Affairs in November 2009 where the law was given the number 41-23. The Commission on Foreign Affairs has now started the process of studying the Convention. Campaigners will continue to lobby on the CCM with parliamentarians
Contact: *María Eugenia Villareal, CMC Guatemala:*
vilareal.maria@gmail.com

India: The National Conference of the International Network of Engineers & Scientists for Global Responsibility (INES) on the "Role of Scientists & Engineers Towards Social Responsibility in Developing Countries" was arranged jointly by the Indian Institute for Peace, Disarmament & Environmental Protection, the Indian Campaign to Ban Landmines & Cluster Munitions and the International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) War on 17 January 2010 in Nagpur, India. Eighty-

two participants from all over India attended the conference. Participants included various high-ranking scientists, engineers, researchers, policy makers, intellectuals, bureaucrats, legal experts, scientists, social workers and young scientists. A number of participants spoke on the issue of landmines and cluster munitions. A full report of the meeting is available.

Contact: *Balkrishna Kurvey, Indian CBL: ijpdep_ngp@sancharnet.in*

Iraq: Representatives from IADO (Iraqi Alliance for Disability) met with Dr. Salah Abdull Razaq, the Governor of Baghdad, on 7 January 2010.



Representatives from IADO meet with Dr. Abdull Razaq. Photo Credit: Moaffak Alkhfaji

The meeting covered the rights and needs of persons with disabilities with regard to the Iraqi Constitution as well as international treaties such as the MBT and the CCM. Dr. Salah Abdull Razaq agreed on the importance of these issues and committed to keep in touch via his office. On 29 January, Moaffak Alkhfaji met with the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Iraq, where the CCM was discussed. Contact: *Moaffak Alkhfaji, IADO: Moaffak61@yahoo.com*

Sweden: Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons member Olle Thorell (MP Sweden) submitted a formal question to the Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs on the Swedish ratification process, which is now behind its initial schedule. Thorell asked the Minister what his intended actions were in order for Sweden to quickly ratify the Convention, but the Minister did not lay out a timeline for ratification. The debate was held in the Swedish Parliament on 19 January. Upon Thorell's request, the secretariat of the Forum had drafted a background paper with information and suggested arguments for Thorell to use during the session. Contact: *Teresa Dybäck, Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons: dybeck@parlforum.org*

UK: Dr. Brian Walker of Religions for Peace UK created an online petition <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/ClusterBombBan/> that has been signed by Bhai Sahib Mohinder Sing, Ibrahim Mogra and Jehangir Sarosh, all members of the European Council of Religious Leaders (ECRL) network. They have also co-signed a letter to the UK government urging that they speed up the ratification process. Religions for Peace is trying to get similar letters out to Bulgaria, Switzerland, and BiH from religious leaders. Contact: *Allison Pytlak, Religions for Peace: apytlak@religionsforpeace.org*

Disinvestment campaign: On 1 February 2010 the CMC released a campaign update on the CMC "Stop Explosive Investments" campaign. The update includes information on: the campaign launch; bank meetings and reactions; legislation and parliamentary initiatives; media highlights; and other related information. To download the full document, visit: <http://www.stopexplosiveinvestments.org/news/6/59/Disinvestment-Campaign-Update>
Contact: *Kimberly Brown, CMC Staff: Kimberly@stopclustermunitions.org*

Take Action

Achieving the 30th Ratification

Currently, a total of 27 countries have already ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions – a fast pace for an international treaty. Three more ratifications are needed to reach 30 and trigger the Convention's entry into force (EIF) six months later.

The Office of Disarmament Affairs (ODA) is working closely with the UN Treaty Office, UNDP, CMC and country missions in New York to organise an event in New York tentatively scheduled for 17 February 2010 for signatories to collectively deposit their instruments of ratification and trigger entry into force.

Your help is needed to help the Convention achieve its 30th ratification!

Take Action!

Campaigners are encouraged to undertake actions to:

1. Contact states that have signed, but not yet ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions and urge them to ratify as soon as possible or at the collective deposit event at the United Nations on 17 February 2010.
2. Issue a press release when the 30th ratification is deposited. The CMC is preparing a template release that will be circulated shortly, which can be adapted and translated for use by campaigners.
3. Use this occasion to commend those who have joined and highlight the need for further signatures and ratification of the Convention. Take an action – write a letter; schedule a lobby visit; do something creative – to draw attention to the need for further action to universalise the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Contact: *Laura Cheeseman, CMC Staff: Laura@stopclustermunitions.org*

Media

Media update

January was primarily a planning period on the media front, with no signatures or ratifications taking place until the end of the month, and no major external events or meetings in the international CMC calendar. But, with the 30th ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions just around the corner, there has been plenty of preparatory work under way.

It was a productive month in terms of firming up the 2010 media strategy (which will be made available shortly), as well as establishing good working relationships both within and outside of the coalition. As the result of collaboration with Amelie Chayer of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, we will soon be offering campaigners a joint ICBL/CMC media toolkit for use in media outreach, which will include sections on both traditional media outlets and new media (e.g. social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, as well as photo and video sites such as Flickr and YouTube).

There was a surge in media interest this month on cluster munition contamination in Southeast Asia, driven largely by a visiting delegation of US veterans who visited with survivors of cluster bombs in Quang Tri province. The CMC has been working with a freelancer who was in Quang Tri at the same time to interview cluster bomb survivors for a series of multimedia slideshows that will be finished in the coming months. In the build-up to the 1MSP in neighbouring Lao PDR, these stories will be increasingly important. *Contact: Conor Fortune, CMC staff, conor@stopclustermunitions.org*

Media highlights of the month

Europa Press (Spain), 7 January 2010-02-02
Una nueva publicación de la Universidad de Deusto aborda la prohibición de las bombas de racimo
<http://www.europapress.es/euskadi/noticia-nueva-publicacion-universidad-deusto-aborda-prohibicion-bombas-racimo-20100107121829.html>

The Ottawa Citizen (Canada), 4 January 2010
Joining the fight against cluster bombs
<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/Joining+fight+against+cluster+bombs/2403135/story.html>

Thanh Nien News (Vietnam), 8 January 2010-02-02
American veterans return to scene of crime
<http://www.thanhniennews.com/society/?catid=3&newsid=54548>

El Mundo (Spain), 10 January 2010
Los últimos combatientes: la Guerra de Vietnam acabó en 1975 pero ellos siguen luchando
<http://www.elmundo.es/suplementos/cronica/2010/743/1263078004.html>

The Morning Star (UK), 11 January 2010
Stop the funding of deadly weapons
<http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/index.php/news/content/view/full/85438>

Now Lebanon, 16 January 2010
Berri gives US security advisor cluster bomb maps
<http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=138808>

NewMatilda.com (Australia), 18 January 2010
Sorry, we're sending your money to the arms dealers
<http://newmatilda.com/2010/01/18/sorry-were-sending-your-money-arms-dealers>

Associated Press/*New York Times*, 18 January 2010
US Vets Return to See Grim Legacy of Vietnam War

http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2010/01/18/world/AP-AS-Vietnam-US-Back-to-the-Battlefield.html?_r=1

Financial Times, 19 January 2010
Norway fund shuns tobacco companies
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/9ef17b66-052a-11df-a85e-00144feabdc0.html>

IRIN, 21 January 2010
Vietnam: Life-threatening landmine scavenging on the increase
<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87822>

Change.org War and Peace blog, 22 January 2010
Superkit for opposing landmines and cluster bombs
http://war.change.org/blog/view/superkit_for_opposing_landmines_and_cluster_bombs

Global Pulse Journal (USA), 24 January 2010
Banning cluster munitions: what will it take?
<http://www.globalpulsejournal.com/blog/index.php/2010/01/24/banning-cluster-munitions-what-will-it-take/>

Europa Press (Spain), 23 January 2010
Crónica Vietnam: El Gobierno asegura que gran parte del país sigue plagada de explosivos estadounidenses sin detonar
<http://www.europapress.es/internacional/noticia-cronica-vietnam-gobierno-asegura-gran-parte-pais-sigue-plagada-explosivos-estadounidenses-detonar-20100123113531.html>

The Economist, 28 January 2010
The calibration of destruction: Smaller, cleverer and more accurate munitions are changing warfare
http://www.economist.com/sciencetechnology/displayStory.cfm?story_id=15391218

Arlington Connection (USA), 28 January 2010
Returning to a different Vietnam: retired general leads humanitarian delegation
<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/article.asp?article=337183&paper=60&cat=104>

Upcoming Events

March 2010

- 1 11th anniversary of the entry into force of the Mine Ban Treaty
- 26-28 (TBC) Regional meeting on Convention on Cluster Munitions in Pretoria, South Africa/ UN Mine Action Programme Directors meeting

April 2010

- 12-16 CCW group of governmental experts on cluster munitions and disinvestment report update in Geneva, Switzerland

June 2010

- (TBC) Global Preparatory Meeting on the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Santiago, Chile

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