



LANDMINE & CLUSTER MUNITION MONITOR



The Monitor provides research and monitoring for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Cluster Munition Coalition.

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PRESS RELEASE

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Cluster munition attacks spike casualty toll as world shows steadfast resolve for humanitarian ban

(Geneva, 31 August 2017) – States are continuing to ratify and implement the international treaty prohibiting cluster munitions while new use of these notorious weapons in Syria and Yemen has caused even more civilian casualties, according to the annual monitoring report released today by the Cluster Munition Coalition at the United Nations (UN) in Geneva.

“Last year, cluster munition casualties doubled, and civilians accounted for nearly all of the victims. The only sure way to end this insidious menace is to have all states embrace and adhere to the international ban on these weapons,” said Jeff Abramson, coordinator of the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor initiative. “The humanitarian devastation caused by cluster munitions is particularly acute in Syria, where use has continued unabated since mid-2012.”

Cluster Munition Monitor 2017 identified at least 971 new cluster munition casualties globally in 2016, with 860 of these in Syria. This global number is certainly less than the actual total. Disturbingly, the number of casualties in 2016 is more than double the number recorded in 2015 (417), making it the second-highest annual figure since Cluster Munition Monitor reporting began in 2009 (highest was in 2013). When it was possible to identify their status, civilians made up 98% of casualties. Most of these casualties occurred during cluster munition attacks (837 in Syria and 20 in Yemen). Additionally, more than 100 people were known to have been killed or injured by previously unexploded cluster munition submunitions, the deadly landmine-like remnants left over from earlier attacks. In Lao PDR, all of the 51 new casualties in 2016 were the result of remnants from cluster munitions used in the 1960s and 1970s. In total, casualties were recorded in 10 countries in 2016, but new attacks causing casualties were recorded only in Syria and Yemen.

Since August 2016, two countries have ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions (Benin and Madagascar), bringing the total number of States Parties to 102. Another 17 states have signed but not yet ratified the convention. Last December, 141 states, including 32 non-signatories to the convention, adopted a key UN General Assembly resolution supporting the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

“Most countries in the world are now part of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and working hard to implement its disarmament obligations,” said Mary Wareham of Human Rights Watch, ban policy editor of *Cluster Munition Monitor 2017*. “The ongoing use of cluster munitions in Syria is an affront to that steady progress and must continue to be vigorously condemned without reservation.”

Syrian government forces have continued to use cluster munitions, with at least 238 cluster munition attacks recorded in opposition-held areas across the country between August 2016 and July 2017. Russia has participated in a joint military operation with Syrian forces since 30 September 2015. A Saudi Arabia-led coalition of states has used cluster munitions in Yemen, although the number of cluster munition attacks has declined following widespread international condemnation. None of these countries have signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Cluster munitions are fired by artillery and rockets or dropped by aircraft, and open in the air to release multiple smaller bomblets or submunitions over an area the size of a football field. Submunitions often fail to

explode on initial impact, leaving dangerous remnants that pose the same danger as landmines until cleared and destroyed. The Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force on 1 August 2010 and comprehensively prohibits cluster munitions, requires destruction of stockpiles within eight years, clearance of areas contaminated by cluster munition remnants within 10 years, and the provision of assistance for victims of the weapon.

Under the Convention on Cluster Munitions, 28 States Parties have completed the destruction of nearly 1.4 million stockpiled cluster munitions containing more than 175 million submunitions. This represents the destruction of 97% of all cluster munitions and 98% of all submunitions declared as stockpiled under the treaty. During 2016, three State Parties (Slovakia, Spain, and Switzerland) destroyed 56,171 cluster munitions and 2.8 million submunitions.

In 2016, operators surveyed and cleared at least 88 km² of contaminated land worldwide resulting in the destruction of at least 140,000 submunitions, both increases compared to the previous year. Mozambique announced the completion of clearance of its contaminated areas in December 2016.

“Efforts to grow the convention's membership continue to be central to stigmatize the use of these weapons and to bring an end to the threat they pose. Convention members have a better understanding of the location and scale of contamination, and will more readily share information about it, compared with states outside the convention,” said Amelie Chayer, acting director of the Cluster Munition Coalition.

At least 26 states remain contaminated by cluster munitions, including 12 States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Continued conflict and insecurity, particularly in Syria and Yemen, is hampering clearance of cluster munitions.

Countries with obligations to improve their assistance to cluster munition victims boosted their commitments to addressing victims' rights when they adopted a five-year action plan at the convention's First Review Conference in 2015. The 14 States Parties with cluster munition victims, and national victims' organizations, face serious challenges because resources made available for them do not measure up to the promise of adequate assistance.

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About the Monitor:

This eighth annual Cluster Munition Monitor report has been prepared by the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) for dissemination at the Seventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions at the UN in Geneva on 4–6 September 2017. It is the sister publication to the Landmine Monitor report, issued annually since 1999 by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor is coordinated by a committee of ICBL-CMC staff and representatives from CMC member organizations, Danish Deming Group, Handicap International, Human Rights Watch, and Mines Action Canada.

Using the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions as its principal frame of reference, the report focuses on activities in calendar year 2016 with information included into August 2017 where possible. It covers global trends in ban policy and practice, survey and clearance of cluster munition remnants, cluster munition casualties, and efforts to guarantee the rights and meet the needs of cluster munition victims. These findings are drawn from updated country profiles published online.

Links:

- **Cluster Munition Monitor 2017** and related documents, available 10am CEST, 31 August at: www.the-monitor.org/ and bit.ly/CMM17
- **Cluster Munition Coalition** - <http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/>
- **Convention on Cluster Munitions** - <http://www.clusterconvention.org/>
- **CMC Twitter** - <https://twitter.com/banclusterbombs>
- **Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor Twitter** - <https://twitter.com/MineMonitor>

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