

Cluster Munition Monitor 2010

SAMPLE ARTICLE

SWIFT IMPLEMENTATION OF CLUSTER MUNITION BAN SAVES LIVES

A report released by Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor shows that the Convention on Cluster Munitions—a legally-binding treaty banning the weapon which entered into force on 1 August 2010—is effective in saving civilian lives.

Seven states that have joined the convention have already completed destruction of their stockpiles of cluster munitions, well before their deadlines, destroying more than 13.8 million submunitions contained in 176,000 cluster munitions. At least eleven other countries are currently destroying their stocks.

The convention obliges States Parties to end use, production, and transfer of cluster munitions immediately, destroy stockpiled cluster munitions within eight years of joining, clear land contaminated by cluster munitions within 10 years, and assist the victims of these weapons.

Among the 108 countries that have signed the convention are 38 former users, producers, exporters, or stockpilers of the weapon. Of these signatories, 42 have now ratified the convention, and 10 have already enacted national legislation to implement the convention.

Over the past six decades cluster munitions have been used in 39 countries and areas by at least 18 governments. Since the convention was opened for signature in December 2008, there has only been one serious allegation of cluster munition use, by the United States on an alleged al-Qaeda training camp in Yemen in December 2009. The US government has yet to confirm or deny this charge, and neither the US nor Yemen has joined the convention.

At least 38km² of land, an area roughly the size of Chiang Mai, Thailand was cleared of cluster munition remnants in 2009, with more than 55,156 unexploded submunitions destroyed. States Parties Albania and Zambia have announced the completion of their clearance programs. Clearing contaminated land will prevent thousands of casualties. However, according to the Monitor's Stuart Casey-Maslen, "While mine action programs exist in almost all cluster-munition-affected states and areas, their scope and productivity must increase to release land more quickly and save lives."

Cluster munition contamination remains in at least 23 states, including 14 that have joined the convention, as well as three disputed areas. The most-affected regions are Southeast Asia and Europe, while the countries and areas with the most contamination include Lao PDR, Vietnam, Iraq, Cambodia, Lebanon, Serbia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Western Sahara.

In 2009, there were 100 new confirmed cluster munition casualties in nine states and one area; half occurred in just two states, Lao PDR and Lebanon, both of which have joined the convention.

As of the end of 2009, 16,816 cluster munition casualties had been recorded in at least 27 states and three areas, including 15 states that have joined the convention. Due to underreporting, the actual number of cluster munition casualties might be as high as 85,000 worldwide. According to the Monitor's Katleen Maes, "There is a need for swift and efficient aid to victims. The convention provides ground-breaking provisions for victim assistance and if states fulfill their obligations these can significantly improve the lives of survivors, their families, and communities."

A total of US\$13.2 million in funding related to cluster munitions was reported by seven states in 2009, including \$4.15 million via the Cluster Munitions Trust Fund for Lao PDR.

This is the first *Cluster Munition Monitor* report, the sister publication to the *Landmine Monitor* report, which has been issued annually since 1999.