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## Ten-Year Progress in Eliminating Cluster Bombs, Clouded by Ongoing Use, as States Parties Meet for Convention Review Conference

(Geneva, 25 November 2020): Ten years after its entry into force, the global treaty banning cluster munitions is having a significant impact in eliminating these weapons, assisting affected countries, and building a powerful stigma against cluster bombs; but new use in several non-signatory states continues to claim civilian lives at the time of attack and for years after, according to a 10-year monitoring report released today by the Cluster Muniton Coalition (CMC).

“I cheered 10 years ago in Oslo when we banned cluster munitions. Now we have 110 States Parties committed to ending the death and destruction caused by these weapons. I want to cheer again when heavily cluster muniton affected Cambodia and Vietnam join the convention,” said Denise Coghlan, CMC governance board member and Cambodia-based activist.

The report notes that implementation of the stockpile destruction obligation has been a remarkable success. Since its adoption in 2008, a collective total of 1.5 million cluster munitions containing more than 178 million submunitions have been destroyed. This represents the destruction of 99% of the total global cluster munitions stocks declared by States Parties.

Switzerland, which presides over the upcoming Second Review Conference of the treaty, was the last State Party to complete stockpile destruction, in March 2019.

However, since July 2012, there have been at least 686 cluster muniton attacks in Syria, which has not joined the treaty and is the only country to have experienced continuous use of the weapons since then. No State Party has used cluster munitions since the convention was adopted, the report found.

*Cluster Muniton Monitor 2020* also documents use of the weapon in non-signatory Libya during 2019. In October of this year, cluster muniton use by both Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was reported and confirmed after the publication went to print.

“The sustained use of banned cluster munitions in Syria and new use in Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh is unacceptable. It is imperative that states that have joined this convention speak out to condemn the civilian death toll and the threat to lives and livelihoods from new cluster remnant contamination,” said Marion Loddo, final editor of *Cluster Muniton Monitor 2020* and Monitor editorial manager.

This year’s report comes out on the opening day of the first part of the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, where participants will assess the state of the global norm, progress and challenges towards universal adherence to and implementation of the convention, and set the direction for the next five years. The format of the conference was recently adjusted due to COVID-19 related restrictions, with the first part held virtually and the second part set to take place in February 2021.

## **Unacceptable Harm**

During the 10-year review period covered by *Cluster Munition Monitor 2020*, at least 4,315 cluster munition casualties were identified in 20 countries and other areas. Notably, more than 80% of the global casualties were recorded in Syria, while children accounted for 40% of all casualties.

Disturbingly, a total of 286 new cluster munition casualties were recorded in 2019 alone, with the highest number recorded in Syria, with 232 casualties. The real number of new casualties is likely to be much higher as many remain unrecorded. Globally civilians represented 99% of all recorded casualties in 2019, where the status was recorded. This is consistent with statistics on cluster munition casualties for all-time due to the indiscriminate nature of the weapon.

In 2019, casualties from cluster munition attacks and remnants left behind were reported in the following countries and other areas: Afghanistan, Iraq, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Libya, Serbia, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen, as well as Nagorno-Karabakh and Western Sahara.

The past year also saw an increased focus on risk education due to the dramatic rise in casualties recorded. *Cluster Munition Monitor 2020* found the majority of cluster munition contaminated States Parties have some form of provision of risk education, although only Lao PDR has directed risk education predominantly to address the risk behaviors associated with cluster munition remnants.

### **Efforts to eliminate cluster munitions remnants deadly legacy and to provide much-needed assistance**

*Cluster Munition Monitor 2020* reports a total of 26 countries and other areas contaminated by cluster munition remnants, including 10 States Parties to the convention. Over the past decade, six State Parties have completed clearance of areas contaminated by cluster munition remnants, most recently Croatia and Montenegro in July 2020. In 2019 alone, at least 82km<sup>2</sup> of contaminated land was cleared by States Parties resulting in the destruction of more than 96,500 cluster munition remnants; both increases from 2018.

Some assistance to victims existed in all the relevant States Parties and work to improve rehabilitation programs for survivors was reported in several countries. However, funding shortages have been affecting the implementation of victim assistance and services were significantly lacking to ensure access to work, employment, and decent livelihoods. Many existing assistance providers receiving earmarked funding saw already unpredictable resources diminishing in recent years according to the report.

“Victim assistance is not only an obligation of the convention, it is a human rights issue that demands appropriate attention and resources, involvement of survivors and affected communities, and should be integrated into national systems to ensure those rights are guaranteed” said Mirsad Tokić, victim assistance expert and landmine survivor from Croatia. “

**### Ends ###**

## **About the Monitor:**

This eleventh annual Cluster Munition Monitor report has been prepared by the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) for dissemination prior to the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions held virtually from 25–27 November 2020. 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 ICBL-CMC member organization: DanChurchAid, Danish Demining Group, Human Rights Watch, Humanity & Inclusion, and Mines Action Canada.

Using the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions as its principal frame of reference, the report reviews developments over the past 10 years up to September 2020 where possible. It covers global trends in ban policy, documents cluster munition contamination and casualties, as well as developments and challenges in addressing the impact of this weapon through clearance, risk education, and efforts to guarantee the rights and meet the needs of cluster munitions victims. These findings are drawn from updated country profiles published online.

## **About the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions**

The Convention on Cluster Munitions was the first humanitarian disarmament treaty to make the provision of assistance to the victims of a specific weapon a formal obligation for all States Parties with victims and continues to set the highest standards for victim assistance. It 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 risk reduction education and assistance for victims of the weapons.

## **Links:**

- **Cluster Munition Monitor 2020 landing page**, including major findings, ban policy and impact chapters, new maps, and infographics – [bit.ly/ClusterMunitionMonitor2020](https://bit.ly/ClusterMunitionMonitor2020)
- **Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC)** – [www.stopclustermunitions.org](http://www.stopclustermunitions.org)
- **Convention on Cluster Munitions** – [www.clusterconvention.org](http://www.clusterconvention.org)
- **Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor on Twitter** – [twitter.com/MineMonitor](https://twitter.com/MineMonitor)
- **CMC on Facebook** – [facebook.com/banclusterbombs](https://facebook.com/banclusterbombs)
- **CMC on Twitter** – [twitter.com/banclusterbombs](https://twitter.com/banclusterbombs)
- **CMC YouTube** – [youtube.com/user/CMCInternational](https://youtube.com/user/CMCInternational)
- **Cluster Munition Monitor 2020 on Flickr** – [bit.ly/CMM2020Flickr](https://bit.ly/CMM2020Flickr)

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