

PRESS RELEASE

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New Report | Progress in eliminating cluster bombs, but civilian harm continues and use by a few non-signatories must be condemned

Geneva, 15 September 2021 -- Released today, [Cluster Munition Monitor 2021](#) shows how the global efforts to eliminate and stigmatize these weapons through the international ban treaty continue apace despite the dislocation and upheavals brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The report comes as States Parties to the convention prepare to gather for the [Second Review Conference](#), on 20–21 September, and where they will adopt a plan of action for the next four years.

“The denials of cluster munition attacks in Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh and their widespread condemnation shows how the prohibition on these weapons is gaining strength.” said Mary Wareham, Ban Policy editor of *Cluster Munition Monitor 2021* and Human Rights Watch (HRW) Arms Advocacy director. “All states should condemn any use of cluster munitions by any actor under any circumstances,” she added.

In 2020, the largest number of casualties resulting from cluster munition attacks was recorded in Azerbaijan (107). Neither Armenia nor Azerbaijan have joined the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which has 110 States Parties and 13 signatories. The [Cluster Munition Coalition \(CMC\)](#) urges non-signatories to take steps to renounce the weapon and join the convention without delay.

Globally, the Monitor recorded at least 360 new cluster munition casualties in 2020 caused either from cluster munition *attacks* (142) or due to *remnants* of these weapons (218). This represents a continued increase from the updated annual totals in 2019 (317 casualties) and 2018 (277 casualties). The real number of new casualties is likely to be much higher as many have gone unrecorded due to challenges with data collection.

Cluster Munition Monitor 2021 shows how civilians remain the primary victims of cluster munitions at the time of the attacks and after conflict has ended. In 2020, they accounted for all casualties whose status was recorded, while children represented nearly half (44%) of all casualties where the age was known.

“In the last year, cluster munition attacks killed and wounded civilians going about their everyday activities, and unexploded submunitions remain an enduring threat,” said Loren Persi, Impact editor of *Cluster Munition Monitor 2021*. “But, despite challenges, progress was reported in the work to clear and return land to communities, to provide focused risk education to those most under threat, and to deliver on the obligation of providing assistance to victims,” he added.

Launched from the ground or dropped from the air, cluster munitions consist of containers that open and disperse submunitions indiscriminately over a wide area. Many submunitions fail to detonate as intended leaving a trail of explosive remnants and submunitions that threaten lives and deny access to arable land, creating barriers to socio-economic development.

In 2020, victims of cluster munition remnants were recorded in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Iraq, Lao PDR, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen, as well as Nagorno-Karabakh. Globally, 26 countries and three other areas remain contaminated by submunition remnants.

The report also documents the progress made in saving lives and livelihoods during the past year despite additional challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stockpile destruction is one of the convention’s success stories as to date; a total of 36 States Parties have destroyed 99% of all cluster munitions stocks declared. In the last year alone, Bulgaria, Peru, and Slovakia destroyed a total of 2,273 cluster munitions and more than 52,000 submunitions. In addition, in 2020, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, and Slovakia destroyed their respective stocks of cluster munitions retained for research and training purposes. Only 10 States Parties now see a need to retain live cluster munitions for such permitted purposes.

In 2020, States Parties reported clearance of approximately 63km² of cluster munition contaminated land and the destruction of nearly 81,000 submunitions. During the year Croatia and Montenegro also joined the list of countries—12 to date—that have successfully completed clearance of their contaminated areas.

Risk education remains a fundamental part of the response to the dangers posed by cluster munition remnants and saves lives. The pandemic and related restrictions prompted operators to find alternatives to in-person outreach, and for disseminating life-saving information to affected communities, the report finds. Online messaging as well as use of TV and radio broadcasts provided innovative solutions which can be built on going forward.

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More Information

About the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor

The Monitor is the civil society initiative providing research and monitoring for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC).

Cluster Munition Monitor 2021 examines how states are working to implement and join the ban on cluster munitions, ensure clearance of cluster munition remnants, provide risk education, and assist victims of these indiscriminate weapons. The report focuses on calendar year 2020 with information included up to August 2021 where possible.

www.the-monitor.org | twitter.com/MineMonitor

About the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions

The convention comprehensively prohibits cluster munitions, requires destruction of stockpiles, clearance of contaminated areas, and the provision of risk reduction education and assistance for victims of the weapons. Currently 123 countries have joined the convention.

www.clusterconvention.org

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