

QUICK FACTS

The Convention on Cluster Munitions

A total of 108 countries have signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Thirty-eight countries that have used, produced, exported, or stockpiled cluster munitions have signed, thereby committing to never engage in those activities again.

After achieving the required 30 ratifications in February 2010, the convention entered into force on 1 August 2010, becoming binding international law.

As of 1 October 2010, a total of 42 signatories had ratified the convention. Ratifying countries become States Parties fully bound by all the convention's provisions.

Use

Cluster munitions have been used during armed conflict in 39 countries and disputed territories since the end of World War II. At least 18 government armed forces have used cluster munitions.

Since the convention was opened for signature in December 2008, there has been only one serious allegation of use. Amnesty International reported that the United States appeared to have used at least one cruise missile with submunitions to attack an alleged al-Qaeda training camp in Yemen in December 2009.

Stockpiling

The Monitor estimates that prior to the start of the global effort to ban cluster munitions, 86 countries stockpiled millions of cluster munitions containing more than one billion submunitions.

Currently, 74 nations have stockpiles. Of those, 27 have signed and/or ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Seventeen states that have signed and/or ratified have provided information about the size of their stockpile. Together they possessed at least 1.1 million cluster munitions with at least 146 million submunitions before beginning destruction activities.

Stockpile Destruction and Retention

Four States Parties (Belgium, Moldova, Norway, and Spain) and two signatories (Colombia and Portugal) have already completed destruction of their stockpiles. Collectively, they destroyed about 176,000 cluster munitions with more than 13.8 million submunitions. Signatories Afghanistan and Angola reported in 2010 that cluster munition stocks were destroyed in recent years during weapons disposal programs.

Austria and Montenegro expect to finish stockpile destruction in 2010. Two of the biggest stockpilers, Germany and the United Kingdom, have destroyed significant portions of stocks. At least another eight countries are in the process of destroying stocks.

Although the convention permits the retention of some cluster munitions and submunitions for training and development purposes, most stockpilers thus far have chosen not to retain any.

Belgium, France, and Spain have indicated they each intend to keep hundreds of cluster munitions and more than 20,000 submunitions.

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Production and Transfer

Fifteen former producers of cluster munitions have signed and/or ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions, thereby forswearing any future production.

Seventeen countries still produce cluster munitions, or reserve the right to produce in the future.

There were no reported transfers of cluster munitions in 2009 or the first half of 2010, other than inert components transferred from South Korea to Pakistan.

States not party Singapore and the US have instituted a moratorium on exports of cluster munitions.

Interpretive Issues

There are some divergent views on the scope of the prohibition on assistance with prohibited acts, especially regarding its application during joint military operations with states not party that may still use cluster munitions. Most states that have expressed a view have indicated that, even during joint operations, any intentional or deliberate assistance is prohibited.

Most states that have expressed a view have indicated that the transit of cluster munitions by a state not party across the territory of a State Party is prohibited.

Financial institutions and investors have taken action to stop investment in cluster munition production in Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, and elsewhere. Many states have expressed the view that investment in cluster munition production is prohibited.

Casualties

Cluster munition casualties have been recorded in at least 27 states and three areas affected by cluster munitions. Of the 27 states, six are States Parties and nine are signatories.

There were 16,816 cluster munition casualties confirmed globally as of the end of 2009. Many casualties have gone unrecorded and it is likely that the actual number of casualties is at least 58,000–85,000.

There were 100 confirmed cluster munition casualties in nine countries and one area in 2009, including 33 in Lao PDR. It is likely the actual number is considerably higher.

Contamination

At least 23 states and three other areas are believed to be currently contaminated with cluster munition remnants. Thirteen or more additional states may still have a small level of contamination.

The most heavily affected countries include Lao PDR, Vietnam, Iraq, and Cambodia. Others with a serious problem include Lebanon and Serbia, as well as the disputed areas of Nagorno-Karabakh and Western Sahara.

Southeast Asia is the region with the most cluster munition contamination, followed by Europe.

Of the 42 states that have ratified the convention, at least five are believed to be contaminated.

Clearance

In 2009, there was clearance of unexploded submunitions or some form of survey of the problem in just 14 countries and three other areas. In many cases, these activities were very limited.

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Of the nine countries with no reported survey or clearance activities related to unexploded submunitions in 2009, two are States Parties and four are signatories.

At least 38 km² of land was cleared of cluster munition remnants in 2009, with more than 55,156 unexploded submunitions destroyed.

States Parties Albania and Zambia announced completion of their clearance programs in November 2009 and May 2010, respectively.

Victim Assistance

All of the 27 states with cluster munition survivors have an assistance program already in place. However, nearly every state with cluster munition survivors faces significant challenges providing care to affected individuals, families, and communities. Many states lack economic inclusion and psychosocial support, and access to services in rural areas is insufficient.

Support for Mine Action

Only a relatively small number of states reported funding specifically related to cluster munitions. Seven states reported a combined total of US\$13.2 million, spent on universalization, preparations for the First Meeting of States Parties (including via the Cluster Munitions Trust Fund for Lao PDR), clearance, victim assistance, stockpile destruction, and advocacy.

Many others spent funds, particularly for universalization and destruction of their own stocks, but did not report amounts. Funding for clearance in Lao PDR, Lebanon, and Vietnam was largely utilized for clearance of unexploded submunitions.

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