

PRESS RELEASE

Cluster Munition Monitor 2022

Embargoed until 10am CEST, 25 August 2022

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Progress in eliminating cluster munitions overshadowed by devastating human toll from widespread use in Ukraine

Geneva, 25 August 2022 – A new annual report issued today by the [Cluster Munition Coalition \(CMC\)](#) documents the extensive use of cluster munitions by Russia since its invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, causing hundreds of civilian casualties and damaging homes, hospitals, and schools. [Cluster Munition Monitor 2022](#) also shows how states and mine action operators are working together to eliminate cluster munitions and address their long-lasting impact globally.

“Russia’s extensive use of internationally banned cluster munitions in Ukraine demonstrates a blatant disregard for human life, humanitarian principles, and legal norms,” said Mary Wareham, Ban Policy Editor of *Cluster Munition Monitor 2022* and Human Rights Watch (HRW) Arms Advocacy Director. “Unequivocally condemning ongoing use of cluster munitions in Ukraine is crucial to strengthen the stigma against these weapons and bring an end to the threat they pose.”

So far this year, hundreds of cluster munition attacks by Russian forces in Ukraine have been documented, reported, or are alleged to have occurred. Ukrainian forces appear to also have used the weapon several times in the ongoing conflict. Neither Russia nor Ukraine have joined the convention, which has 110 States Parties and 13 signatories.

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. The 2008 treaty banning cluster munitions comprehensively prohibits the weapon, requires destruction of stockpiles, clearance of areas contaminated by cluster munition remnants, and the provision of risk education and assistance for victims.

The 100-page report comes as States Parties to the convention are gearing up for their annual meeting, taking place from 30 August to 2 September at the United Nations, in Geneva. The CMC urges Russia to immediately put an end to these indiscriminate attacks and calls on all signatories to take steps to renounce the weapon and join the convention without delay.

Globally, *Cluster Munition Monitor 2022* identified at least 149 new cluster munition remnant casualties in 2021. This was the first time in a decade that no new casualties from cluster munition attacks were reported in the year prior to the publication. This also marked a sharp decline from the annual totals in 2020 (360 casualties) and 2019 (317 casualties). However, the actual global casualty total is likely greater due to challenges with casualty recording.

The significant reduction in the number of casualties observed in 2021 has been overshadowed by the devastating number of cluster munition attacks during Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Preliminary data indicates at least 689 civilian casualties reported during cluster munition attacks for the first half of 2022. This would represent a 300% increase compared to the 2021 global total. The indicative numbers for Ukraine begin to echo the high casualty rates seen during the years of the greatest attacks in Syria.

Civilians remain the primary victims of cluster munitions at the time of the attacks and after conflict has ended, with children particularly at risk. In 2021, civilians accounted for nearly all casualties (97% of whose status was recorded); while the number of child casualties was harrowing, with 90 killed and injured and an average age of 10 years old.

“Appallingly, children made up two-thirds of all the victims of cluster munition remnants recorded in this year’s report. Clearly, these weapons should never be used, anywhere, by anyone,” said Loren Persi, Impact editor of *Cluster Munition Monitor 2022*. “It is a terrible reminder of the dire need for rapid clearance of contaminated areas, age-appropriate education on the risks of unexploded bomblets, and greater dedicated support to the victims and their families.”

The socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic also appears to have increased risks, with people forced to engage in unsafe and dangerous practices to supplement diminishing livelihoods, such as working in contaminated areas or collecting scrap metal and explosives remains. Insufficient funding continues to be cited as one of the main obstacles to progress in clearing land and providing adequate assistance to survivors and affected communities. In particular, peer-to-peer support was among the most needed and least supported activities, according to the report.

Amid this challenging context, there have been some positive developments in implementing the convention with mine action operations returning to near-normal in many countries. In 2021, States Parties reported clearing at least 61km² of contaminated land, resulting in the destruction of some 81,000 submunitions, both similar to clearance results in the previous year.

To date, 37 States Parties have completed the destruction of 99% of the total global cluster munition stocks. During 2021 through mid-2022, States Parties Bulgaria, Peru, and Slovakia destroyed 1,658 cluster munitions and 46,733 submunitions.

Risk education remains a critical component of the response to the persistent dangers posed by cluster munition remnants and protect affected communities. Dissemination of life-saving messages continued in conflict-affected regions, targeting those most under threat. The war in Ukraine has seen emergency responders and clearance operators increase their use of digital communications, distribute awareness-raising materials in metro and train stations, and provide in-person risk education in shelters.

Other findings from *Cluster Munition Monitor 2022* include:

- There have been no reports or allegations of new use of cluster munitions by any State Party since the convention’s adoption in 2008.
- Syria had the highest annual casualties of any country. However, the number of casualties recorded in Syria decreased, with 2021 seeing its lowest annual recorded total since 2012. The last reported cluster munition use in Syria was in March 2021, but attacks could have gone unrecorded.

- At least 26 countries and three other areas remain contaminated by unexploded submunitions.
- Globally, 12 countries have completed clearance of cluster munition-contaminated land. No state completed cluster munition clearance in the past year.

Ends.

More Information

About the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor (The 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 2022 is released in advance of the Convention on Cluster Munitions Tenth Meeting of States Parties taking place from 30 August to 2 September. The 13th annual edition provides a global overview of efforts 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 2021 with information included up to August 2022 where possible.

www.the-monitor.org | www.icblcmc.org | [@MineMonitor](https://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. As of 1 August 2022, 123 countries have joined the convention.

Contact

Marion LODDO (she/her)

Monitor Editorial Manager – ICBL-CMC

Mobile/WhatsApp +41 78 677 4040

monitor2@icblcmc.org

Timezone: Geneva, Switzerland (CEST/UTC+2)