

In partnership with:



CLUSTER BOMBS: LANDMINES BY ANOTHER NAME

Campaign for the banning of cluster bombs

Participate in the campaign by sending today your postcards to decision-makers

With the support of:

Agir ensemble pour les droits de l'Homme > Appel des cent pour la paix > ATTAC (Association pour la taxation des transactions financières pour l'aide aux citoyens) > CANVA (Coordination de l'action non-violente de l'arche) > CRID (Centre de recherche et d'information pour le développement) > Femmes solidaires > FGTE - CFDT > Frères des Hommes > GREF (Groupement des retraités éducateurs sans frontières) > Greenpeace > La vie nouvelle > Ligue des droits de l'Homme > Madera > MAN (Mouvement pour une alternative non-violente) > Mouvement de l'objection de conscience > Mouvement de la paix > MDPL (Mouvement pour le désarmement, la paix et la liberté) > Pax Christi > RITIMO (Réseau des centres de documentation pour le développement et la solidarité internationale) > Secours catholique - Caritas France > Service civil international - branche française > Survie > Témoins > Union syndicale Solidaires

In association with:

contrôlez les armes
Plate-forme française

WHY THIS CAMPAIGN?

While an international awareness without precedent (thanks to the campaign against mines) has allowed the entry into force of a treaty banning antipersonnel mines¹, recent conflicts have demonstrated that today, another plague threatens civilian populations: cluster munitions. In effect, during the last three major conflicts: the Kosovo war (1999), the military intervention in Afghanistan (2001-2002), and the war in Iraq (2003-2004), thousands of cluster munitions were discharged. Dispersed at the risk of their drop, these weapons are responsible for a veritable bloodshed among civilians, as much during as after the conflict, when those that did not explode on impact are transformed into veritable antipersonnel mines.

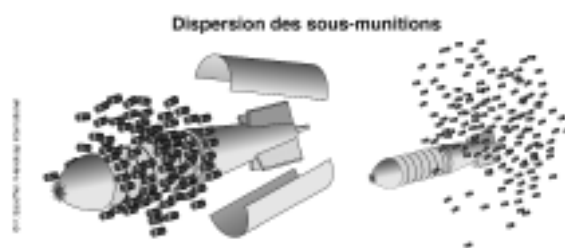
But, according to international humanitarian law², the operations lead during wars must never intentionally target civilians. The means employed must be utilised in a discriminate manner (that is to say in distinguishing civilians from military targets) and must not be disproportionate to the identified threat.

Although the humanitarian dangers of cluster munitions are largely recognised, no regulation has been put in place. Yet discussions are on course in a number of international forums, notably within the United Nations. France and the European Union have their role to play in going further and respecting international laws. Whereas military forces have persisted in utilising cluster bombs in their interventions, and companies continue to produce them, it is urgent to mobilise and to incite states to ban the production, use and transfer of these weapons.

CLUSTER MUNITIONS BOMBS: A DOUBLE THREAT FOR CIVILIANS

A principal container is dropped from an aircraft or launched by land. It opens in the air and ejects between a dozen and several hundred sub-munitions or 'bomblets' (grenades...). They are dispersed across a large zone to explode, in principle, on impact. By nature, these weapons represent a double menace for civilians. They are capable of covering a very large surface, going from several soccer fields to several hundred hectares³. How can governments guaranty that the civilian populations won't be injured? In addition, 5 to 30% of sub-munitions do not explode on impact; they rest on the ground and are thus transformed into veritable antipersonnel mines, susceptible to explosion at the slightest contact. This failure rate is known to armies and, even seems to be taken into account in military strategies.

For example⁴, during the war against Iraq (2003-2004), 13,000 bombs containing close to 2 million cluster munitions were dropped by the Anglo-American coalition. If one considers the failure rate of 5%, there would remain on the ground more than 90,000 cluster munitions ready to explode.



FLOATING THE LAW

The lack of target precision of cluster munitions constitutes a direct danger to the civilian populations and is shown to be contrary to the principle of discrimination posed by the Geneva conventions⁵. In so far as they are disseminated over a large surface, it is impossible to make a distinction between military targets and civilian infrastructures. As for cluster munitions that do not explode on impact, not only can they kill and mutilate civilians at the slightest contact, but there are equally grave socio-economic consequences on the populations living in zones contaminated by their presence. Cluster munitions impede, for a long time after the conflict, access to infrastructure (schools, routes, etc.), to vital points (wells, ponds...) and can impede cultivation of land in countries where agriculture is critical to the survival of communities. Finally, these communities sometimes take the short-sighted risk of trying to recover the materials the bomb is composed of (scrap iron, etc).

Between March and June of 1999, NATO⁶ had dropped, in Yugoslavia, 1,765 bombs containing more than 295,000 cluster munitions. These munitions caused the death of nearly 150 civilians in this period, comprising between 18 and 30% of the civilian victims in the conflict (Even though cluster bombs represented just 7% of the bombs used).

1. International campaign to ban landmines: www.icbl.org/.

2. Cf. note n°5.

3. According to a study lead by Human Rights Watch: *Cluster munitions: towards a global solution*, January 2004 (cf. bibliography).

4. Cf. note n°3.

5. The four Geneva conventions of 1949 and their two additional protocols governing international humanitarian Law: they set the rules to respect in situations of armed conflict.

6. Cf. note n°3.

DISCUSSIONS THAT LEAD NOWHERE...

Other types of weapons, like antipersonnel mines⁷ have already been made the object of banning treaties, for humanitarian reasons. But, in that which concerns cluster bombs, not a thing has budged. Yet, since 1976, certain countries⁸ have demanded prohibition of their use. Recently, the Australian Senate, the parliaments of Denmark and Norway, and at the end of 2004, the European parliament, have all highlighted the danger represented by these weapons. The German parliament and the Italian senate are, in their turn, considering the problem. In France, a bill of law⁹ has been tabled, but for the moment, has not been examined. Within the UN convention on certain conventional weapons¹⁰, the nations admitted to recognising their unacceptable humanitarian consequences. Despite all this, they have not, to this day, made the urgent decisions that are imposed, regardless of the sensitisation efforts of NGOs.¹¹ It is urgent to achieve banning of the production, use and transfer of cluster munitions systems by adoption of an international convention and, in the meantime, to establish exemplary national regulations.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF COMPANIES

Companies must equally engage themselves in stopping the production and exportation of cluster munitions. The opacity surrounding the arms trade is all the more flagrant concerning these disparaged bombs. The information on "cluster munitions systems"¹² supplied by armies is very succinct; nations often claim, highly and loudly, that they will finish by abandoning their use, which is officially already in decline. Yet French companies, like those of Europe, continue to propose a wide range of bombs and cluster munitions in their catalogues. Furthermore, the French armament industry has been strongly restructured and europeanised these past years and it is difficult to identify all the companies concerned. Nevertheless, in France, three principle armament companies are implicated in the fabrication and commercialisation of cluster munitions: Giat Industries, Thales (in particular via Thomson-Brand Armament) and EADS (notably via Matra-Armament, MBDA and Alkan)¹³.

Some examples of French fabrication of cluster munitions systems, "in service in multiple armies", therefore exported by France¹⁴:

- *The system MLRS¹⁵, European program under US licence, co-produced by Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom: rocket system containing 644 cluster munitions.*
- *The Belouga bomb, officially removed from service in France, but of which 70% of models produced by Matra were exported...*
- *Cluster munitions rockets of TDA in service in the armed forces of 55 western countries.*
- *Cluster munitions lance-grenades Alkan 530 which, for example, equip the combat air planes of the Argentinean air force.*

7. Just like incendiary weapons, blinding laser weapons, resounded to by specific protocols concluded in the framework of the 1980 UN convention on certain conventional weapons.

8. Acting from: Algeria, Austria, Egypt, Lebanon, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Norway, Sudan, Switzerland, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

9. Law proposal #1821 has been presented by M. Rochebloine on 09/22/2004 to the French National Assembly.

10. The 1980 UN convention on the prohibition or limitation of the employment of certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects (cf. bibliography).

11. The CMC has participated in discussions within the UN for several years and alerts governments of the disastrous consequences of cluster munitions.

12. The expression "cluster munitions systems" takes equally into account launching systems, the components (powder, guidance electronics, mechanisms of auto-destruction or deactivation...) or also production chains.

13. Cf. the study realised by the Observatoire des transferts d'armements/CDRPC in April 2005 (www.obsarm.org).

14. Cf. note n°13.

15. Or "Stalin's Organ".

OBJECTIVES OF THE CAMPAIGN

The aim of the campaign is to ban the production, use and transfers of cluster munitions.

To attain this objective, we shall be asking:

The President of the Council of the European Union:

- > **To ban the production, use and transfers of cluster munitions bombs;**
- > **To open negotiations on an international agreement to ban cluster munitions bombs;**
- > **To ensure that EU troops won't use cluster munitions during their military interventions.**

The President of the Republic:

- > **To ban the production, use and transfers of cluster munitions bombs;**
- > **To support the adoption of an international agreement on the problem;**
- > **To see that stockpiles of cluster munitions are destroyed.**

French MPs:

- > **To support any initiatives aiming at banning the production, use and transfers of cluster bombs.**

DIRECTIONS FOR USE

1. Sign the postcards and get them signed by relatives then send them to the President of the Council of the European Union as well as the French President of the Republic and to your MP.

2. Return the detachable coupon to Agir ici so that we can have the participation rate at disposal during meetings with decision-makers and so that we can inform you about the results of the campaign.

3. Order campaign documents and distribute them around you : friends, fellow workers, associations, media of your region, etc.

THE AMPLITUDE OF THE TRAGEDY

- 34 countries (including France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom, but also Russia and the United States...) produce¹⁶ at least 210 models of cluster bombs
- 57 countries today stock¹⁷ cluster munitions: 5 African countries, 5 American countries, 7 in Asia, 22 European states (including France), 7 countries of the former USSR and 11 countries in the Middle East.
- At least 11 states (including France) have already used¹⁸ cluster munitions in 16 countries (Afghanistan, Albania, Saudi Arabia, Bosnia, Cambodia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kosovo, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Sudan, Chad, Chechnya, Vietnam).

Mahmoud is 29 years old. He is married and father to two young children. His quarter of Baghdad had been the target of bombardments during the last war and the danger of cluster munitions there is omnipresent. One can find hundreds of them. The accidents are numerous and often involve children. Mahmoud did not want to watch with his arms crossed. Although well aware of the danger, he decided to pick up the cluster munitions in order to collect them in a small pile and indicated them by covering them with a flag. One day, Mahmoud tripped while holding a sub-munition. The device exploded and tore off his hand.

*Testimony gathered in Baghdad, Iraq,
By the team of Handicap International, in July 2003.*

CIVIL SOCIETY MOBILISES IN THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH

Faced with the inaction of governments and the danger that these weapons represent, the NGOs that, a few years ago, succeeded in obtaining the adoption of the Ottawa treaty against landmines created, in November 2003, the world Coalition on cluster munitions (CMC)¹⁹. This coalition launched a call for the cease of the use of these weapons and it is today supported by more than 150 organisations in about 50 countries. It is in line with this global action that this present campaign is launched.

THE PYRAMIDS OF SHOES

Handicap International, already mobilised for numerous years in the fight against antipersonnel mines, is pursuing its fight against cluster munitions, the consequences of which are just as disastrous for the civil populations.

A key proponent of this mobilisation, the pyramids of shoes, will be organised the following October 8th in nearly 40 cities in France. To come show your solidarity with the victims of these devices and to show the decision-makers your will as a citizen to put an end to these weapons, meet at the pyramid closest to you!

To learn more: www.handicap-international.org/.

16. According to a study by Human Rights Watch of April 7th 2005: *World-wide production and export of cluster munitions* (cf. bibliography).

17. Cf. note n°3.

18. Cf. note n°3.

19. Cluster Munitions Coalition (CMC): www.stopclustermunitions.org/.

Bibliography

- Handicap International Brochure: *Cluster munition systems*, August 2003, download at: www.handicapinternational.org/esperanza/site/onglet4/chapitre1/uxo.asp/.
- Human Rights Watch: *Off Target: The Conduct of the War and Civilian Casualties in Iraq*. Summary and recommendations, 2003. www.hrw.org/reports/2003/usa1203/usa1203_sumrecs.pdf/.
- International Committee of the Red Cross: *Cluster bombs and landmines in Kosovo: explosive remnants of war*, 2001. [http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/p0780/\\$File/ICRC_002_0780.PDF!Open/](http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/p0780/$File/ICRC_002_0780.PDF!Open/).
- Human Rights Watch Study: *Cluster munitions: toward a global solution*, January 2004. <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k4/12.htm/>.
- UN Convention on certain conventional weapons: <http://disarmament.un.org:8080/ccw/>.
- Geneva conventions: www.icrc.org/web/fre/sitefreà.nsf/htmlall/genevaconventions/.
- Human Rights Watch Study: *Worldwide production and export of cluster munitions*, April 7, 2005. <http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/arms/cluster0405/>.

Contacts

- Agir ici: www.agirici.org/.
- CMC (World Coalition against cluster munitions): www.stopclustermunitions.org/.
- Control arms: www.controlarms.org/ The French platform "control arms" is composed of: Agir ici, Amnesty international, the CCFD, CANVA, Justice et Paix, LDH, Médecins du monde, l'Observatoire des transferts d'armements, Pax Christi, le réseau Foi et Justice, and le Secours catholique.
- Handicap International: www.soumunitions.org and www.handicap-international.org/.
- Observatoire des transferts d'armements: www.obsarm.org/.

TAKE ACTION!

Today, 2.4 billion people live with less than 2 dollars a day. Over 1 billion do not have access to drinking water. 840 million suffer from hunger. Meanwhile, 120 people monopolize over 474 billion dollars.

**Do you find this revolting?
So do we. To fight injustices effectively,
Agir ici commits itself to:**

- > Inform and mobilise citizens.
- > Pressure decision-makers.
- > Propose concrete solutions.

Together we can build a solidarity and more equitable world. Join us. Now.

www.agirici.org

Agir ici is an observer member of the Oxfam International confederation.

Summary

Cluster munitions: a double threat	2
A double responsibility	3
A international mobilisation	4

Diffused by:

