



Research Report

Cals Model United Nations 2017



“Creating pathways to new opportunities”

Forum: GA 1: Disarmament and International Security (DISEC)

Issue: Taking action to eliminate the use of cluster munition

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Introduction

Cluster bombs are weapons designed to target large surface areas and destroy vehicles, infrastructure and people. Anyone or anything in the targeted area is likely to be killed or severely injured. A large number submunitions (see definition of key terms) never explode and therefore become like mines. When children, who are most affected by unexploded submunitions, play in a previously targeted area there is a chance they step on these submunitions and die because of the following explosion.

There has been treaty restraining the use of cluster munitions since 2008. However the most prominent users of cluster munitions have not signed this treaty.

Definition of Key Terms

Cluster munitions/bombs:

A projectile, usually dropped from an airplane (can also be shot from the ground), that releases smaller explosives (known as submunitions or bomblets) to destroy targets in a large surface area. Projectiles can also release non-munitions such as leaflets.¹

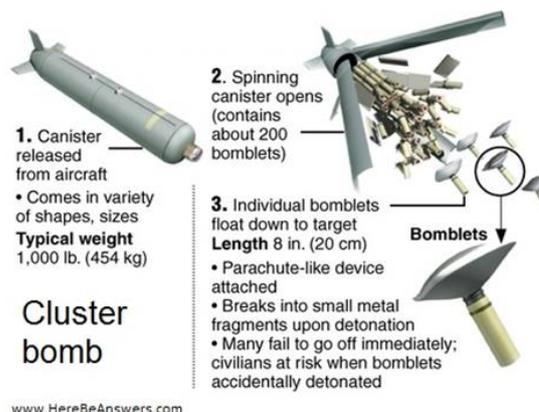


Figure 1²

¹ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Cluster+munitions>

² <http://www.herebeanswers.com/2012/07/what-is-difference-between-cluster-bomb-and-conventional-bomb.html>

Collateral damage:

Unwanted damage to objects or people that were not targeted. Usually in the context of civilian casualties.³

CCM:

The Convention on Cluster Munitions is treaty that sets a framework for the removal and prohibition of cluster munitions.

Contamination:

When submunitions don't explode when released, they contaminate the targeted area. Contaminated areas can be lethal to anyone entering it.

General Overview

Cluster munitions were originally designed for a Cold War scenario. Cluster munitions would be effective against large groups of tanks or other armored vehicles. Due to the fact that the Cold War never happened countries still had their stockpiles. These came into action in other military conflicts such as the Vietnam War, Gulf War and the Iraq War. Current use of cluster munitions is most prominent in the Yemeni and Syrian conflict. Due to the use of cluster bombs in more densely populated areas collateral damage is a serious problem. Over 2000 people have died in Syria⁴ because of the use of cluster munitions. Syria has not signed the CCM.

Because cluster munitions are an indiscriminate weapon they are prohibited under international humanitarian law.⁵ Cluster bombs release smaller bomblets to affect the desired large area, however, 10-40% of these bomblets never explode. These unexploded bomblets then behave like mines, when touched or triggered they explode often injuring or killing the person who touched the bomblet. Adults are more often than children aware of these risks which leads to a high percentage of casualties to be children. Organizations like the Human Rights Watch have asked for a solution of this so called "contamination".

Before the CCM there were already countries pleading for a ban on cluster munitions like weapons. This sentiment came from conflicts like the Vietnam War where numerous people died because of collateral damage. The CCM also provides countries with guidelines on how to destroy cluster munitions. The effect the CCM has had can be seen in countries like France and the UK who have together destroyed around 47,000,000 submunitions.

³ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/collateral+damage>

⁴ <http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/en-gb/the-treaty/treaty-status.aspx>

⁵ <http://www.weaponslaw.org/glossary/indiscriminate-weapon>

Major Parties Involved

CMC (Cluster Munitions Coalition):

“The Cluster Munition Coalition is a global civil society campaign working to eradicate cluster munitions, prevent further casualties and put an end to the suffering caused by these weapons.”⁶ (As stated on their website) The CMC has an observer status in CCM meetings and serves as a link between data, victims and countries.

Syria:

The Syrian air force has been using cluster munitions in its own country during the on-going revolution and civil war. These attacks have caused many civilian casualties and injuries. 162 states have condemned the use of cluster munitions in the context of the Syrian civil war.⁷

United States of America:

The USA has not signed the CCM and currently has a stockpile of cluster munitions. The USA has condemned the use of cluster munitions in Syria.⁸ Reports on the USA’s stockpile of cluster submunitions range from 626 million to 1 billion.⁹

Russian Federation:

According to Human Rights Watch reports,^{10,11} Russian made cluster munitions have also been found in Syria. The Russian government has denied the use of cluster munitions in Syria and has also not condemned the use cluster munitions in Syria. Russia has not signed the CCM and currently has a stockpile of cluster munitions.¹²



Timeline of Events

1943 Second World War - German and Soviet forces use early forms of cluster munitions.

1965-1975 Vietnam War - The USA drops large numbers of cluster bombs on Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. These bombings have made thousands of casualties and the remnants can still cause deaths and injuries today.

1973, 1975-1989 - Cluster munitions are used by Israel, Morocco and the Soviet Union against NSAG (non-state armed groups) and Syrian forces (by Israel).

1982 - The UK uses cluster munitions to target Argentinian troops in the Falkland Islands war.

⁶ <http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/en-gb/about-us.aspx>

⁷ <http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/en-gb/cluster-bombs/use-of-cluster-bombs/in-syria.aspx>

⁸ <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/wra/c25930.htm>

⁹ <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/arms/cluster0705/2.htm>

¹⁰ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/08/01/cluster-munitions-harm-syria-anniversary-ban>

¹¹ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/07/28/russia/syria-widespread-new-cluster-munition-use>

¹² <http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/en-gb/the-treaty/treaty-status.aspx>

1983 - The USA uses cluster bombs on multiple occasions in military operations.

1986-1987 - A French aircraft dropped cluster munitions on a Libyan airfield in Chad.

1991 - Saudi Arabian and US forces use cluster munitions against Iraqi troops.

1991 Gulf War- The US, UK and France make extensive use of cluster munitions.

1992-1995 - Yugoslavian forces and NSAG use cluster munitions during civil war. A NATO aircraft drops 2 cluster bombs.

1995 - Use of cluster munitions by NSAG in Croatia.

1996-1999 - Cluster munitions are used by the government of Sudan in South-Sudan.

1999 - More than a thousand cluster bombs were dropped by the UK, US and The Netherlands in Yugoslavia.

2001-2002 - US use of cluster bombs in Afghanistan.

2003 - US and UK utilise 13,000 cluster bombs in 3 weeks in Iraq.

2012-present - Extensive use of cluster munitions by the Syrian government and later Syrian-Russian coalition.

2014-2015 - During the Ukrainian conflict cluster munition was reported to have been used by both sides.

2015-2016 - Saudi Arabia has used cluster bombs in Yemen.



Previous attempts to solve the issue

CCM:

The CCM (Convention on Cluster Munitions) has been a framework for the removal of stockpiling cluster munitions, and stop countries from using cluster munitions.¹³ Its most important and first article reads:

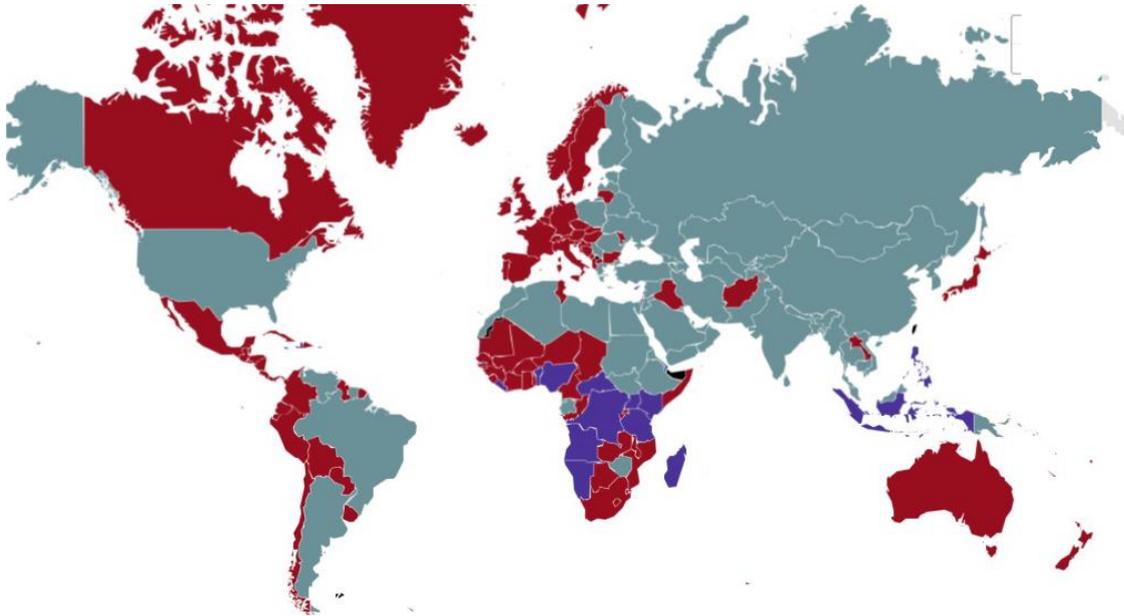
“Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances to:

- (a) Use cluster munitions;
- (b) Develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer to anyone, directly or indirectly, cluster munitions;
- (c) Assist, encourage or induce anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Convention.”¹⁴

¹³ <http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/media/1045/convention%E2%80%9393englishfinaltext.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/media/1045/convention%E2%80%9393englishfinaltext.pdf>

The CCM has 119 state parties of which 100 have ratified the treaty.



Possible Solutions

The utmost important reason for thinking of a way to eliminate cluster munitions is that the most important users, such as the USA, Russia and Syria, have not signed the CCM. To make it more interesting for these countries to destroy their stockpiles and halt the use of cluster munitions one could think of sanctions or alternatives to cluster munitions. It cannot be stressed enough that cluster bombs are prohibited weapons, yet their use is still widespread.

Useful Documents

<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/media/2333184/dubrovnik-action-plan.pdf>