



Press release

## Cluster Munition Monitor 2018

### States must commit to eradicate cluster munitions

Montreal, 30 August 2018 Released today, [the 2018 Cluster Munition Monitor report](#) reveals new attacks involving cluster munitions in 2017 in Syria and Yemen. HI deplores the fact that, last year, at least 289 people were killed or injured by these weapons in a total of eight countries and two territories. While this figure is lower than in 2016, it remains unacceptable. 99% of these casualties were civilians. The conference of State Parties to the Oslo Convention, which bans the use of cluster munitions, is due to take place on 3-5 September in Geneva: HI is calling on States to enforce international law and put pressure on belligerent parties to end the use of this indiscriminate weapon. Whereas 120 States have already signed up, there is an urgent need for others to accede to the Convention, whose aim is to eliminate this barbaric weapon.

- [The 2018 Cluster Munition Monitor report](#) assesses the implementation of the Oslo Convention which bans the use, production, transfer and storage of cluster munitions, for the period from January to December 2017. The report also covers 2018 (through to August) where information is available.
- In 2017, cluster bombs continued to kill and injure civilians: the Monitor recorded **289 new cluster munition casualties in 2017** - caused either by use of these weapons or as a result of cluster munition remnants; **99% of these casualties were civilians**. Even though this figure is **significantly down on 2016** (971 casualties identified), it remains a major cause for concern. On the one hand, these numbers are almost certainly underestimated and on the other, this reduction comes in the wake of several years marked by particularly heavy casualties linked to cluster munition use in Syria: 36 attacks were recorded in Syria between July 2017 and June 2018, compared with 238 attacks between August 2016 and July 2017. Despite this relative lull in warfare, 65% of the new casualties recorded in 2017 were in Syria.
- Since the second half of 2012, cluster munitions have been repeatedly used in Syria: at least **600 cluster bomb attacks** occurred between July 2012 and July 2017, **resulting in 77% of the casualties recorded worldwide**. Yemen suffered the second highest number of casualties from cluster bomb attacks in 2017 (26). Because up to 40% of these weapons do not explode on impact, sub-munitions remain as hazardous as anti-personnel landmines.
- In 2017, casualties from unexploded cluster munition remnants were recorded in eight countries and two territories: Cambodia, Iraq, Laos, Lebanon, Serbia, Syria, Vietnam and Yemen, together with Nagorno-Karabakh and Western Sahara. A third of the accidents recorded in 2017 were in Laos (32 casualties), the country most heavily polluted by sub-munitions in the world. **62% of the casualties of cluster munition remnants are children**.
- **Quote 1:** "HI is calling on belligerent parties to immediately end the use of cluster munitions. It also calls on states to put pressure on countries that use cluster munitions to end this practice."

Any new use of these weapons should be strongly and systematically condemned. We must adopt a zero-tolerance approach to these barbaric weapons. Our field observations have shown just how dangerous they are for civilians in both the short and long-term.”

- **Quote 2:** “War must be governed by rules and the Oslo Convention is part of that. Every effort must be made to enforce the Convention and end the use of this barbaric weapon in conflict situations. States must defend and apply the Oslo Convention, along with the Ottawa Mine Ban Convention and other provisions under International Humanitarian Law.”
- **Quote 3:** “The Oslo Convention has made great strides in protecting civilians against the scourge of cluster munitions: every year, existing stockpiles are destroyed and significant areas of contaminated land are cleared, while these weapons are increasingly stigmatised. However, it is unacceptable that several hundred civilians continue to fall victim to these weapons each year. States that have not yet signed the Oslo Convention must do so urgently, to confirm its status as an undisputed international standard and eradicate these barbaric weapons once and for all.”
- Since the Convention came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2010, **35 State Parties have destroyed 1.4 million cluster munition stockpiles, i.e. a total of 175 million sub-munitions.** This represents 99% of all cluster munitions declared by States Parties.
- In 2017, **93 square kilometres of land** (twice the size of the Luxembourg capital) **were cleared and 153,000 sub-munitions were made safe and destroyed.** In total, **26 states and three regions remain contaminated by sub-munition remnants** worldwide.

**Cluster bombs** are weapons containing several hundred mini-bombs called cluster munitions. Designed to be scattered over large areas, **they inevitably fall in civilian neighbourhoods. Up to 40% do not explode on impact.** Like anti-personnel mines, they can be triggered by the slightest contact, **killing and maiming people during and after conflicts.** As they make no distinction between civilians, civilian property and military targets, cluster bombs violate the rules of international humanitarian law.

**The Oslo Convention**, which bans the use, storage, transfer and production and sale of cluster munitions, was opened for signature in December 2008. Currently, 120 countries are signatories to this convention.

#### **About Humanity & Inclusion**

HI is an independent international aid organisation. It has been working in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster for 30 years. Working alongside people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, our action and testimony are focused on responding to their essential needs, improving their living conditions and promoting respect for their dignity and basic rights. Since it was founded in 1982, Humanity & Inclusion (formerly Handicap International) has set up development programmes in more than 60 countries and intervenes in numerous emergency situations. There are eight national associations within the network (Germany, Belgium, Canada, United States, France, Luxembourg, UK and Switzerland), working tirelessly to mobilise resources, co-manage projects and increase the impact of the organisation’s principles and actions. HI is one of six founding organisations of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), co-recipient of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize and winner of the Conrad N. Hilton Award in 2011. HI takes action and campaigns in places where “living in dignity” is no easy task.”