



Press release

## **Humanity & Inclusion Canada calls on Canada to oppose the use and transfer of cluster munitions in Ukraine**

Montreal, July 7, 2023 - The United States announced today that it will transfer cluster munitions to Ukraine, a weapon that is banned by 123 countries who signed the Oslo Convention against this barbaric weapon. Cluster munitions do not discriminate between combatants and civilians. At least 149 civilians were killed or injured worldwide by this weapon in 2021, according to the 2022 Cluster Munition Monitor. As up to 40% of these weapons do not explode on impact, heavy contamination by cluster munition remnants poses a serious threat for the local population a long time after the combats.

“Cluster munitions are among the most harmful weapons for civilians,” explained Anne Delorme, Executive Director, Humanity & Inclusion Canada. “They are inherently indiscriminate and pose a grave risk to civilians as they can cause casualties long after the conflict has ended. For the past 40 years, HI has been working alongside victims and survivors of cluster munitions, in the same way we have been helping victims of landmines, which pose comparable problems.”

### **What are cluster munitions?**

Cluster munitions consist of a container filled with multiple bomblets. When fired, the cluster munition opens in mid-air, releasing and dispersing the bomblets over a wide area. Not all bomblets are designed to detonate on impact. Some have time-delay mechanisms which can be set for hours, days, or even months. This adds an additional hazard as when they detonate either after a pre-programmed time or through a self-destruct function, civilians can be injured or killed by the fragmentation. Cluster munitions are indiscriminate weapons due to their wide area effect and the potential for unexploded bomblets to remain dangerous long after conflicts have ended.

### **Victims of cluster munitions**

Cluster bombs kill and maim and cause psychological trauma. Civilians account for the vast majority of casualties, making up 90% of all casualties, and half of the people killed and injured are children. The use of cluster munitions must be condemned because of the nature of these weapons and the reckless risks they pose to civilians, both during and after combat.

“Canada has played a leading role in the adoption of the Ottawa Treaty banning anti-personnel mines, and is a signatory to the Oslo Convention,” said Anne Delorme. “It must now oppose the use of cluster munitions in Ukraine and ensure that other countries, including the United States, do not contribute to the irreversible damage they create by transferring these weapons there.”

### **About Humanity & Inclusion**

Humanity & Inclusion (formerly Handicap International) is an international solidarity organization that has been working for over 40 years with people with disabilities and populations affected by crises, conflicts, and disasters. HI designs a different future for the most vulnerable by meeting their basic needs, improving their living conditions, and promoting respect for their dignity and fundamental rights. The organization is present in nearly 60 countries where it carries out projects in inclusive education, rehabilitation, mines clearance and more.

Recognized for its advocacy work, HI is one of the six founding organizations of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), co-winner of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize and winner of the 2011 Conrad N. Hilton Award. HI also co-founded the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW), a coalition that launched the Campaign against Bombing in Populated Areas, which led to the adoption of an international agreement on November 18, 2022, by 83 States, including Canada.

SOURCE Humanity & Inclusion Canada

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