



Press release

Cluster Munition Monitor 2020

## “Recent uses of cluster munitions like in the Armenia-Azerbaijan war show that our fight to eradicate this weapon is far from over.”

Ottawa, 25 November 2020. Released today, the 2020 Cluster Munition Monitor report reveals that attacks involving cluster munitions continued to occur in Syria in 2019. The Monitor has recorded almost 700 cluster munition attacks in Syria since mid-2012. Globally in 2019, at least 286 people were killed or injured by cluster munition attacks and remnants in a total of 9 countries and two territories. Victims are always civilians, says the report.

Recent uses in the Armenia-Azerbaijan war (not registered in the Monitor 2020 covering year 2019) show that our fight to eradicate this weapon is far from over. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Review Conference of the Oslo Convention, which bans cluster munitions, is due to take place online on November 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>. HI is calling on all states to systematically condemn any use by any party to a conflict, under any circumstances of these barbaric weapons and is requesting all states not yet party to join this live-saving convention

### Quotes:

- **Quote 1:** “There is a reason why cluster munitions are banned: Cluster bombs explode in the air and send hundreds of small bomblets over an area the size of a football field. They are indiscriminate weapons. Plus, up to 40% of these bomblets fail to explode on impact, contaminating areas like landmines. Vast majority of victims are civilians..”
- **Quote 2:** “Cluster Munitions were recently used in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, which shows that our fight to eradicate this weapon is far from over. Any new uses should be condemned by States. Only by systematically condemning and stigmatising their use and calling on all states to join the treaty, will the international community be able to eventually eradicate the use of cluster munitions.”
- **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. State Parties have also made a lot of progress with respect to victim assistance, but the countries affected are still finding it difficult to fund necessary services for victims, who all too often live in extremely difficult conditions.”

## Major Findings

- The 2020 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 2019, with information included up to September 2020 where available.
- **Between July 2019 and July 2020, new uses of cluster munitions were reported in Syria and Libya:** At least 11 cluster munition attacks occurred in Syria between August 2019 and July 2020. **Since mid-2012, the Monitor has recorded at least 686 cluster munition attacks in the country.** In 2019, there were also several instances or allegations of cluster munition use in Libya.
- The Monitor recorded **286 new cluster munition casualties in 2019 globally** caused either by attacks using these weapons (**221**) or as a result of cluster munition remnants (**65**). It represents a sharp decline from 951 recorded in 2016, mainly due to a change in the Syrian conflict context.
- **Victims of cluster munitions are always civilians:** According to successive Monitor reports, 99% of cluster munition victims are civilians.
- **According to the Monitor, the majority of annual casualties in 2019 (80%) were recorded in Syria,** as has been the case since 2012: In Syria, **219 casualties of cluster munition attacks and 13 casualties of cluster munition remnants** were reported in this country in 2019, knowing that the actual figures are likely to be higher due to limited access and difficulties collecting data.
- Up to 40% of cluster munitions do not explode on impact when they are launched during an attack, but remain as active deadly device that can explode any time. In 2019, **casualties from such unexploded cluster munition remnants** were recorded in **9 countries and two territories:** Afghanistan, Iraq, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Libya, Serbia, South Sudan, Nagorno-Karabakh, Syria, Yemen and Western Sahara.
- In 2019, **Iraq had the highest recorded casualties due to cluster munition remnants (20).** Victims of **cluster munition remnants** were also recorded in Yemen (9) and Afghanistan (5). 40 years after the conflict, **casualties continue to be recorded in Lao PDR (5).** These figures highlight the dramatic consequences of using cluster munitions, which create long-term contamination by explosive remnants and a deadly threat for the population.
- Since the Convention came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2010, **35 State Parties have destroyed 1.5 million cluster munition stockpiles, i.e. a total of 178 million sub-munitions.** This represents 99% of all cluster munitions declared by State Parties.
- In total, **23 states and 3 regions remain contaminated by sub-munition remnants** worldwide.

## Recent uses by Azerbaijan and Armenia forces

- Recent uses by Azerbaijan and Armenia forces occurred in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. They were not registered in the Monitor 2020, which covers 2019. According to Human Rights Watch, Armenian forces either fired or supplied cluster munitions in an attack on

Barda city, reportedly killing at least 21 civilians and wounded at least another 70. The Azerbaijan army used cluster munitions in at least four separate incidents.

- These recent uses – and the ones registered in Syria and Libya by the Monitor 2020 – must incite more States to join the Oslo Convention that since 2010 bans the use, production, transfer and storage of cluster munitions. So far, 110 are States parties to the Convention and 13 signatories. Azerbaijan, Armenia and Syria did not sign the Convention yet, also countries like United States Russia and China continue to refuse to join it. The Oslo Convention must become a universal norm.

---

**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, production and sale of cluster munitions, was opened for signature in December 2008. Currently, 123 countries have joined the 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 almost 40 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."

For more information: [www.hi-canada.org](http://www.hi-canada.org)

Press contact:

Gabriel Perriau – [g.perriau@hi.org](mailto:g.perriau@hi.org)