

**The Cluster Munition Coalition is led by a Governance Board of:**

Action On Armed Violence, Afghan Landmine Survivors Organisation, Asociación para Políticas Públicas-APP, Cambodia Campaign to Ban Landmines, Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas, DanChurchAid, Handicap International, Human Rights Watch, ICBL Georgian Committee, IKV Pax Christi, IPPNW, Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines, Mines Action Canada, Ban Landmines Campaign Nepal (NCBL), Norwegian People's Aid, Protection.



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**\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\***

**100 Countries Gather for Cluster Munition Ban Meeting Amid Backdrop of Ongoing Use in Syria**

(Lusaka, Zambia: 9 September 2013): This week over 100 governments are meeting in Lusaka, Zambia. They gather to discuss the Convention on Cluster Munitions at the Fourth Meeting of States Parties. The Cluster Munition Coalition asks them to join in a single voice condemning Syria's use of this devastating weapon.

Syrian government forces began using cluster munitions in 2012 and the use has continued into 2013, causing numerous civilian casualties, according to Cluster Munition Monitor 2013, the annual report of the Cluster Munition Coalition.

“Three years after becoming international law, this Convention is making a real impact in ridding the world of cluster munitions, but problems such as use of the weapon in Syria remain,” said Sarah Blakemore, Director of the Cluster Munition Coalition. “Ensuring more countries join the Convention on Cluster Munitions is an important means of strengthening the global stigma against use of this indiscriminate weapon. We call on all countries that have not yet joined the Convention to do so without delay.”

A total of 112 countries have already signed or acceded to the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions, which prohibits the use, production, transfer, and stockpiling of cluster munitions, and requires the clearance of cluster munition remnants within 10 years as well mandating assistance for victims. Of these countries, 83 are States Parties while the other 29 have signed but not yet ratified the Convention.

Representatives of governments, UN organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Cluster Munition Coalition, including cluster munition survivors from Ethiopia, Laos, Tajikistan and Vietnam, will attend the meeting, which will be opened Zambia's President Michael Chilufya Sata.

This is the first time the meeting will be held in Africa. Previous meetings of the Convention were held in Lao PDR, Lebanon, and Norway. Nearly all of the 49 states in Sub-Saharan Africa including Zambia have joined the Convention on Cluster Munitions, with the exception of Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Mauritius, South Sudan, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. Nineteen African countries have signed but not ratified the Convention. Cluster munitions have been used in several African countries, including in Angola, Chad, DR Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda, and Zambia.

States Parties are legally obliged to ensure victims are provided with adequate assistance, including those killed or injured as well as their families and affected communities. With Iraq's ratification this year, nearly three-quarters of cluster munition victims live in countries that have joined the Convention. Cluster munitions were used extensively in Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War and 2003 invasion, and it is estimated there have been between 5,500 and 8,000 casualties in the country (of an estimated 54,000 globally). Children account for one quarter of these.

“Most of the world's cluster munition survivors live in countries that have joined this Convention and are obliged to provide them with adequate assistance. Yet many victims are missing out. All cluster munition victims should have access to assistance,” said Aynalem Zenebe, a cluster munition survivor from Ethiopia and Ban Advocate with CMC member Handicap International.

Cluster Munition Coalition, 5th Floor, Epworth House, 25 City Road, London EC1Y 1AA, United Kingdom

States are also making solid progress in destroying weapon stockpiles and clearing their land, according to the Cluster Munition Monitor 2013. States Parties have destroyed some 70 per cent of their cluster munition stockpiles under the Convention and cleared nearly 78km<sup>2</sup> across 11 states and two other areas in 2012.

“The meeting in Lusaka is an opportunity for countries to end the suffering caused by cluster munitions by adding their voice to the growing tide of countries that condemn use of these weapons as indefensible morally and politically,” said Blakemore.

## **Ends**

### **Note to the Editor**

#### **112 Countries have joined the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/who-has-joined-the-ccm-140513.pdf>

#### **85 Countries have yet to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/jointhetreaty/>

#### **About cluster bombs:**

A cluster munition (or cluster bomb) is a weapon containing multiple, often hundreds, of small explosive submunitions or bomblets. Cluster munitions are dropped from the air or fired from the ground and are designed to break open in midair, releasing the submunitions over an area that can be the size of several football fields. This means they cannot discriminate between civilians and soldiers. Many of the submunitions fail to explode on impact and remain a threat to lives and livelihoods for decades after a conflict.

#### **About the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC):**

The Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) is an international coalition of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working in around 100 countries to eradicate cluster munitions, prevent further casualties from these weapons, and put an end for all time to the suffering they cause. The CMC works to change the policy and practice of governments and organisations towards these aims and raise awareness of the problem amongst the public.

For more information or to schedule interviews with Cluster Munition Coalition members contact:

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#### **Media Resources**

- **CMC Homepage** - <http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/>
- **CMC YouTube Channel** - [http://www.youtube.com/my\\_videos?o=U](http://www.youtube.com/my_videos?o=U)
- **Convention on Cluster Munitions** - <http://www.clusterconvention.org/>
- **CMC on Flickr** - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/clustermunitioncoalition/>
- **CMC Facebook** - <http://www.facebook.com/banclusterbombs?ref=hl>
- **CMC Twitter** - <https://twitter.com/banclusterbombs>
- **Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor:** For more facts on landmine and cluster munitions issues globally, and to view detailed country profiles, visit <http://www.the-monitor.org>