

Ban Cluster Munitions

End the production, transfer, stockpiling, and use of cluster bombs!

For more than 40 years, cluster bombs have killed and wounded innocent people, causing untold suffering, loss and hardship for thousands in more than 20 countries across the planet. These weapons cause death and injury to civilians during attacks and for years afterwards because of the lethal contamination that they cause. Cluster bombs hamper post-conflict rebuilding and rehabilitation and the dangerous work of cluster bomb clearance absorbs funds that could be spent on other urgent humanitarian needs. Without determined action, the civilian harm caused by these weapons both during and after conflict will continue to grow.

As part of the worldwide “Cluster Munitions Coalition” Religions for Peace calls for the end of the production, transfer, stockpiling, and use of cluster bombs.

European Council of Religious Leaders (ECRL) gives priority to the fight against cluster bombs

ECRL’s Moderator, Bishop Gunnar Stålsett underlines that ECRL/Religions for Peace gives priority to the fight against cluster bombs.

– Cluster bombs are weapons of mass destruction with frightening long term effects. Cluster bombs keep large groups of people in poverty and agony because they cannot cultivate their fields or move freely in their local communities. Cluster bombs make children’s play deadly. It is important that churches and other religious communities work for the prohibition of cluster bombs. No self-defence strategy can be based upon these unethical weapons, he says.

The Cluster Munitions Process

The Cluster Munitions Process was launched in February 2007, when a group of 46 states agreed to the Oslo Declaration, committing themselves to:

“Conclude by 2008 a legally binding international instrument that prohibits the use and stockpiling of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians and secure adequate provision of care and rehabilitation to survivors and clearance of contaminated areas”.

The movement has grown quickly, and there is the hope that a comprehensive ban on cluster bombs may be signed in Oslo in December of this year.

You may read more about the Cluster Munitions Process [here](#).

Religious Leaders appeal to ban cluster bombs

One key action in this campaign was focused on 19 April, which was the Global Day of Action to Ban Cluster Bombs. The London based Cluster Munitions Coalition, a network of two hundred civil society groups, including non-governmental organizations, religious communities, and professional associations, was demonstrating the broad support of civil society, and *Religions for Peace* has been working to bring the voices of religious leaders from around the world to bear on this issue.

More than 60 senior religious leaders from *Religions for Peace* have signed an international appeal by faith leaders to ban cluster bombs.

2008 May 19 – 30, Dublin: Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions –

On Monday 19 May the Dublin Diplomatic Conference on cluster munitions opened in the Irish capital. The purpose of the two weeks conference is for governments to negotiate and adopt the Cluster Munitions Convention. This is an historic opportunity to develop a treaty that will ban cluster munitions and provide assistance to affected communities. Over 100 governments attend the Dublin Conference together with 300 campaigners from around the globe, some of whom are survivors of cluster bomb incidents.

ECRL co-moderator HE Dr Mustafa Ceric, Grand Mufti of Bosnia-Herzegovina, was part of an international and interreligious delegation organised by *Religions for Peace* which attended the first two days of the meeting. Bosnia-Herzegovina is among the countries affected by cluster munitions.

2008 October, Sarajevo: European Faith Leaders Conference on Cluster Munitions

Leaders of Europe's major religions, representing all parts of our continent, together with representatives from non-governmental organisations and supported by members of the diplomatic community met in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, on 29 and 30 October 2008 to address the burning issue of cluster munitions and to express our support for the process to ban these weapons. The conference was co-sponsored by ECRL, *Religions for Peace* and Handicap International.

2008 December, Oslo: Convention on Cluster Munitions Signing Conference

Heads of State, Foreign Ministers and senior government representatives from over 100 countries were gathered in Oslo to sign the worldwide ban on the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster bombs. This is the most significant humanitarian and disarmament treaty of the decade.

A *Religions for Peace* delegation was present during the signing conference in Oslo. The conference was opened with a Christian Service in the Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity in Oslo where greetings from representatives from other faith communities also were given.

- The Cluster Munitions Coalition has posted a number of photos, as well as a YouTube video on their website: www.stopclustermunitions.org.
- Other photos are available at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/clustermunitioncoalition/sets/> and <http://www.flickr.com/photos/anzclusters/sets>

2009 – The Way Forward

Ratification – The Main Priority

Four governments have already ratified the Convention. Twenty-six must now do so in order for the Convention to take effect and begin saving lives.

Signature

Twenty-six governments adopted the Convention in Dublin May 2008, but did not sign it in Oslo in December 2008.