

International Campaign to Ban Landmines  
Australian Network Inc.

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Ninth Meeting of State Parties

Government representatives from countries around the world, including Australia, will again meet in November to discuss the global landmine problem. During the five day conference delegates will consider issues of stockpile destruction, monitoring of landmine action and land clearance. Decisions taken at these conferences can have significant implications for the future of many people living with the threat of landmines and are of great importance in the fight for a landmine free world

During the conference many non-government organizations will take the opportunity to attend unofficial meetings and to interact with government representatives, continuing the fight against this indiscriminate and inhumane weapon.

The Australian Network will be represented by Mark Zirnsak, our National Coordinator, and also by our NSW coordinator John Heathers.

Convention Against Cluster Munitions.

After more than a year and half of international negotiations and with the Convention on Cluster Munitions Treaty opening for signature in Oslo on December the world moves one step closer to formally outlawing the use of cluster munitions that cause “unacceptable harm to civilians.”

In Dublin in May representatives of 107 governments indicated their interest in signing the treaty. For the past several months much campaigning has been done around the world to convince governments to make good on this commitment and to sign the treaty.

You can show your support for the treaty and encourage the Australian government to sign in Oslo by writing polite letters to:

**1) The Hon Joel Fitzgibbon, Federal Minister for Defence**

House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Email: [J.Fitzgibbon.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:J.Fitzgibbon.MP@aph.gov.au)  
Salutation: Dear Minister

**2) The Hon. Stephen Smith, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs**

House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Salutation: Dear Minister

**CLUSTER BOMB TOUR BUS TAKES ON EASTERN EUROPE  
10,000 kilometre expedition begins.****What is the Ban Bus Campaign?**

An eight-week campaign trail through Europe to convince all governments to sign a groundbreaking treaty banning cluster bombs in Oslo on December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008. Beginning in Serbia and ending at the signing ceremony in Norway, the Ban Bus will rally public support for the treaty and turn the eyes of the world on governments who are resisting putting pen to paper and curbing ending the suffering of millions.

“We have found that many governments are willing to listen to their populations on this issue, some that wouldn’t support the ban initially are now supporters purely because of public pressure and this trip will show people they can very easily help save innocent lives,” says Ban Bus co-founder, John Rodsted.

John’s partner on this trip, Mette Eliseussen, has also seen the effects of these weapons on the ground. She said “At one stage while I was working in Afghanistan we were seeing 50 explosions of unexploded ordnance a day, and 70 percent of the victims were children.”

Using sound, film and photo recording equipment, the Ban Bus will be recording its journey, collecting stories and generating a media storm in a bid to get every government to do the right thing and sign the treaty.

Campaigners in the Bus will include:

- John Rodsted: Photographer and film maker with twenty years experience documenting cluster bombs worldwide
- Mette Eliseussen: Journalist and founder of Save the Children Afghanistan .
- Daniel Barty: Award-winning Journalist and campaigner who has worked with survivors in Asia.
- Branislav Kaptanovic: Serbian cluster bomb survivor and Cluster Munition Coalition spokesperson
- Gordana Milenkovic: International Committee of the Red Cross

For more information go to:<http://www.stopclustermunitions.org/> or <http://thebanbus.org/>

**New Smarter Bombs**

In an article in the New Scientist Paul Marks has revealed that the US Air Force is seeking to develop “smarter cluster bombs” with submunitions capable of locking onto targets and chasing them for some minutes.

Existing “smart” cluster bombs use technology which allows them to detect targets such as trucks, with a limited range. In the case of the proposed new “smarter” bomblets however, losing a target while tracking it would not necessarily be the end of the matter- they would be able to lock back on again. This brings with it the worry that they might then lock on to the wrong vehicle.

Noel Sharkey, a specialist in the ethics of autonomous weapons at the University of Sheffield in the UK believes that one significant problem with a weapon of this type would be its inability to differentiate between military and civilian vehicles if the target moved into a crowded area.

The Convention Against Cluster Munitions permits cluster weapons of certain sizes and with a limited number of submunitions as long as they can accurately detect targets and self destruct if they miss. At this stage it is not clear if these weapons would breach the Convention, which the US has declined to sign.

## US Acts as Rogue State on Cluster Munitions

On 19 June the US Secretary of Defence announced a new policy on cluster munitions, which “recognizes the need to minimize the unintended harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure associated with unexploded ordnance from cluster munitions, consistent with the obligation to minimize the collateral effects resulting from the use of force in pursuit of legitimate military objectives.”

However the US Department of Defence has stated that “Cluster munitions are legitimate weapons with clear military utility” and that a blanket elimination of cluster munitions was “unacceptable”. The new policy allows for US forces to continue to use inaccurate cluster munitions with high rates of live ‘duds’ until the end of 2018, provided the use is approved by the Combatant Commander.

After 2018, US forces will only be permitted to use cluster munitions that result in less than 1% ‘duds’ across a range of intended operational environments.

Prior to 2018 the US Department of Defence may export cluster munitions that have a greater than a 1% dud rate provided that the country receiving them agrees not to use the munitions after 2018. Currently Congress has a one year ban on all exports of cluster munitions.

The US announcement flies in the face of the view of the majority of the world’s nations who negotiated a ban on almost all existing cluster munitions in Dublin in May. The new treaty, the *Convention on Cluster Munitions* was negotiated by 107 countries, including Australia.

The Australian Network to Ban Landmines, and with the support of its members, has been campaigning since 2003 for a ban on cluster munitions. Supporters have written letters to governments, visited MPs, signed petitions and signed postcards calling for a new treaty to ban the worst types of cluster munitions.

“The US is acting as a rogue state in rejecting this treaty and saying it will continue to use even the worst types of cluster munitions for another decade”, said Dr Mark Zirnsak, the National Coordinator of the Australian Network to Ban Landmines.

## INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Sofia Regional Conference on the Convention on Cluster Munitions, 18 – 19 September 2008

The Sofia Conference was the first of a series of regional meetings designed to increase awareness and promote the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). Eleven States from the region attended: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia (FRY), Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Turkey. Donor and core group state representatives from Austria, France, Ireland, Norway also participated, along with representatives from UNDP, UNMAS, ICRC, Bulgarian Red Cross, Council of the European Union, NAMSA, and CMC campaigners from 15 countries including 7 countries in the region. The Conference provided participants with a positive, informal atmosphere and succeeded in focusing governments’ attention on the importance and timely issue of preparing national policies to sign, ratify, and implement the CCM.

During the Conference, Albania, Bulgaria, and Croatia publicly announced that they will sign the CCM in Oslo in December and Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia both made positive statements about their commitment to the Oslo Process. Other states confirmed privately that they will sign in Oslo. Greece, Romania and Turkey did not make any indication during the Conference that they would sign in Oslo.

### MOMENTUM BUILDS AS CLUSTER BOMB BAN SIGNING APPROACHES

More than two dozen African governments announce their intent to sign the treaty on 3 December 2008

Representatives from 42 African governments recently met at a two-day conference in Kampala to discuss Cluster Munitions. Twenty Eight of these (Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Republic of Congo, DR Congo, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles; Uganda, Togo and Zambia) announced, most for the first time, their intent to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions:

The Conference issued a “Kampala Action Plan” expressing support for a series of strong actions relating to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

“I now realize that victims are not alone in their fight to ban cluster munitions,” said Ethiopian cluster munition survivor Ms. Aynalem Zenebe. “We thank those African countries that have publicly announced their support and hope they keep their promise to sign the Convention this December.” When she was seven years old Ms Zenebe lost her right leg below the knee on 5 June 1998 when a school near her home in Mekele was hit by a cluster bomb strike. With the support of humanitarian NGO Handicap International, Ms Zenebe has spoken out for the first time in Kampala.

The Kampala Conference is the second in a series of regional meetings held to build support for the Convention on Cluster Munitions. States from the Balkans and South Eastern Europe met in Sofia, Bulgaria from 18-19 September. Further regional meetings are scheduled to be held in Laos (20-22 October) and Ecuador (6-7 November).

For more information go to: Cluster Munition Coalition website - [www.stopclustermunitions.org](http://www.stopclustermunitions.org) or Kampala Action Plan - <http://www.clustermunitionskampala.ug/>

### Leading Disarmament Campaigners Support the Convention Banning Cluster Munitions

Two leading disarmament campaigners from the Pacific are calling on governments and civil society throughout the region to sign and ratify the new Convention Against Cluster Munitions.

Ema Tagicakibau from the Suva-based Pacific Concerns Resource Centre and Andonia Piau-Lynch from the national coordinator of the Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association Vanuatu issued their call at a public talk convened in Auckland recently. The campaigners were in New Zealand for the annual Pacific Civil Society Forum meeting.

Their talk began with a candlelit commemoration to remember the victims of the 2006 cluster bombing of South Lebanon. Tagicakibau and Piau-Lynch, who have both played crucial roles in the Oslo Process lit a candle that was passed around the participants who observed a minute's silence.

Vigils were also held in other New Zealand cities.

For more information on the NZ cluster munitions campaign go to either: <http://www.stopclusterbombs.org.nz/> or [www.banclusterbombs.org.nz](http://www.banclusterbombs.org.nz) or contact :Mary Wareham Senior Advisor, Arms Division Human Rights Watch: [wareham@hrw.org](mailto:wareham@hrw.org)



Pacific campaigners Ms. Andonia Piau-Lynch (Vanuatu) and Ms. Ema Tagicakibau (Fiji) began the candlelit vigil.