

Cluster Bomb Treaty – A Strong Result for Civil Society!

A comprehensive cluster munitions convention was signed in Dublin on May 30th, 2008. The united voices of civil society had a resounding effect at the Treaty Convention in Dublin. Thank you for joining the call on our Government to play a stronger role at the Convention.

Some outright successes include no transition periods - ensuring the munitions ban applies as soon as the ink dries – and a narrow window of eight years for disarmament. Testament to the effective lobbying of civil society, the treaty requires parties to fund projects to clear up unexploded bombs and support the families and communities of cluster-victims.

Irish Foreign Minister Micheal Martin, who unveiled the final version of the treaty, said all 111 participating nations including Australia, made "a real contribution to international humanitarian law." He said it "is a very strong and ambitious text which nevertheless was able to win consensus among all delegations."

The final Definition for cluster bombs - one of the most contentious issues at the convention – is quite strong. It includes all cluster bombs containing more than 10 bomblets. While this definition excludes new Australian 'SMARt 155' bombs it will effectively ban **every cluster bomb that's ever been used in combat!**

The actual terms of the ban are quite comprehensive: A signatory nation "undertakes never under any circumstances to use cluster munitions" nor "develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer to anyone, directly or indirectly, cluster munitions." While an exception exists for party nations to "engage in military cooperation and operations" with non-party states (those who have not signed and still use cluster munitions, like the US), it remains quite limited. Australia will not be able to knowingly assist in the use of cluster weapons by non-party Allies nor potentially harbour the Bombs on their soil (like at US military bases in Australia).

All in all, over a hundred nations came together and drafted a treaty to ban these atrocious bombs. While this important step concludes in Dublin, all eyes will now turn to Oslo, Norway for the actual signing of the treaty. GetUp will be watching to ensure Australia's commitment carries through to the very end.

GETUP LTD
ABN: 99 114 027 986

PO Box A105
Sydney South, NSW, 1235
Phone: 02 9264 4037
Fax: 02 9283 1371
info@getup.org.au
www.getup.org.au