



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. The Dublin Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions, held in Ireland from 19–30 May this year and attended by 107 states, produced the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) to tackle this suffering. To enact real change on the ground, governments need to sign and ratify this treaty.

This is an opportunity where your leadership can help eliminate this weapon and save innocent lives. *Religions for Peace* asks that you engage and advocate with your government to sign the treaty at a ceremony in Oslo, Norway in December 2008. A minimum of thirty states must ratify the treaty for it to enter into force so it is important that as many countries as possible are present in Oslo.

Based on the importance of disarmament and security concerns to our mission, *Religions for Peace* has joined the global campaign to ban cluster bombs and is leading efforts to mobilize religious communities to address this issue.

Kindly find on the following pages, some materials that may be helpful in your advocacy:

- A sample advocacy letter to the government and guidelines for writing an op-ed
- Information on the People's Treaty campaign
- Background information on cluster munitions, the treaty and your government's position

This is an advocacy action organized in partnership with Pax Christi International and by the leadership of the *Religions for Peace* European Council of Religious Leaders.

If you have further questions about the position of your government on this issue, kindly contact Ms. Allison Pytlak, Cluster Munitions Project Coordinator at *Religions for Peace* at apytlak@wcrp.org.

We would be most grateful if you would add your voice to those calling for the protection of life and promotion of peace by encouraging your government to sign the most significant humanitarian and disarmament treaty of this decade.

FACT SHEET ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS

- Cluster munitions are large weapons containing dozens to hundreds of smaller submunitions, often called **bomblets**, within a larger container. They are dropped from the air or fired from the ground, at which point the container opens in the air and scatters the bomblets over a wide area – sometimes the size of 2-4 football fields.
- As so many of the submunitions fail to work properly, huge quantities are left on the ground and, **like landmines, remain a fatal threat to anyone in the area long after a conflict ends**. Over two dozen countries are affected by this weapon. Tens of thousands of civilians worldwide have been killed or injured by cluster bombs.
- Cluster bombs were first used in World War II by German and Soviet forces. During the 1970s, the USA used massive quantities of the weapon in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. More recently, cluster bombs were used extensively in the Gulf Wars, Chechnya, the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq and in Lebanon in 2006. Cluster munitions have also been used in a number of conflicts in Africa.
- This massive humanitarian problem has been a matter of concern to aid workers, researchers and affected governments for decades. However, it was not until after **clusters were used heavily in Lebanon during the summer of 2006** – resulting in more than 200 civilian casualties in the year following the ceasefire – that governments were compelled to attempt to secure a legally-binding international instrument tackling cluster munitions.
- In February 2007 the Oslo Declaration gained the support of forty-six countries committing to pass a legally binding treaty by 2008 that will **prohibit the use, transfer, and production of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians**.
- A treaty was negotiated during the Dublin Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions in May 2008 - the final stage in the “Oslo Process”. All of the participating governments, totaling 107, adopted the final treaty text. It will open for signature at a ceremony in Oslo in December 2008.
- The central provision of the Cluster Munitions Convention is the ban on the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions. This makes it illegal for every country that is party to the Convention to use cluster munitions or engage in any production or trade of the weapon. The Convention also stipulates clear deadlines for destroying existing stockpiles and clearance of contaminated areas.
- The Cluster Muniton Coalition (CMC) is an **international coalition working to protect civilians from the effects of cluster munitions**. The CMC has a membership of around 300 civil society organisations from more than 80 countries.

ADVOCACY LETTER TEMPLATE:
STATES THAT ADOPTED THE CCM

GOVERNMENT'S ADDRESS
DATE

Dear Minister NAME,

I am writing to congratulate COUNTRY for its adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) at the Dublin Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions on 30 May 2008 and to urge you to be among the first to join the Convention when it opens for signature in Oslo, Norway on 3 December 2008.

The CCM prohibits the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions and sets groundbreaking humanitarian obligations for victim assistance, clearance of contaminated land and destruction of stockpiles. You will have placed real humanitarian concerns ahead of hypothetical military situations or political priorities by endorsing a treaty that will have a profound and positive effect on the lives of countless individuals and communities.

There has been a remarkable level of support for the ban on cluster munitions across all faith traditions. Multi-religious support for a ban on cluster munitions was demonstrated through a letter signed by 160 senior faith leaders representing the world's religions. This followed statements from other major religious organizations, such as the World Council of Churches and Pope Benedict XVI. By joining with those individuals that recognize the need to end the cruelty caused by cluster munitions, and by participating in the Oslo Process, GOVERNMENT has demonstrated a firm commitment to humanity.

I strongly urge GOVERNMENT to hold firm to the commitment made in Dublin by adding your signature to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in December 2008 and urge other states to do the same. You have a rare opportunity to eliminate a truly inhumane instrument of war and move fellow nations forward along a path towards peace.

Signed,

Name
Religious Affiliation
Title, Organization/Business
Street Address
City/State
Postal Code
Country

ADVOCACY LETTER TEMPLATE:
STATES THAT DID NOT ADOPT THE CCM

GOVERNMENT'S ADDRESS

DATE

Dear Minister NAME,

I am writing to urge you to join the new Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) when it opens for signature in Oslo, Norway on 3 December 2008.

Last May, when the 107 states gathered at the Dublin Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions unanimously adopted the Convention on Cluster Munitions, they took a bold and visionary step towards enhancing the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The CCM prohibits the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions and sets groundbreaking humanitarian obligations for victim assistance, clearance of contaminated land and destruction of stockpiles. Because of its wide-ranging practical implications, this new piece of international law will have a profound and positive effect on the lives of countless individuals and communities and prevent further lives from being shattered in the future. Simply put, this is the most significant humanitarian and disarmament treaty this decade.

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I strongly urge GOVERNMENT to make this commitment and add your signature to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in December 2008 and urge other states to do the same. You have a rare opportunity to eliminate a truly inhumane instrument of war and move fellow nations forward along a path towards peace.

Signed,

Name

Religious Affiliation

Title, Organization/Business

Street Address

City/State

Postal Code

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AN OP-ED

Instead of writing an advocacy letter to your government, you might consider sending an op-ed to a major publication. They help to raise public awareness of the cause or issue that you describe in your piece, mobilizing your constituents to support your goals. They are quite often read by decision makers and opinion leaders.

What is an op-ed? An op-ed, abbreviated from “opposite the editorial page”, is a column or guest essay published in the opinion section of a newspaper.

Guidelines:

- Make your argument immediately. Spend the rest of the op-ed making your case, or back-filling with the facts.
- Identify three or four points that support and defend your argument and formulate paragraphs around each.
- Near the end, clearly re-state your position and issue a call to action.
- Keep the length of the op-ed between 500 and 800 words. Go online and look at word limit guidelines or call the newspaper to find out the answer.
- Get a sense of what your paper’s opinion page editor looks for by carefully reading the op-ed page every day and identifying trends that will help you shape your piece.
- Use strong, active verbs and everyday language (no jargon!), short sentences, and concise paragraphs.

Example:

US Subverts the Cluster Bomb Ban – Jody Williams

http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2008/05/24/us_subverts_the_cluster_bomb_ban/

THE PEOPLE'S TREATY

“Cluster bombs cause predictable and unacceptable harm to civilians, both at the time of use and for many years after. It is my strong belief that these weapons are morally unacceptable.

I fully support the new international treaty on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, transfer, and production of cluster bombs.

*Through **their signature and ratification of this treaty**, governments will legally commit themselves not only to ban cluster bombs, but also to clear contaminated land and provide assistance to victims and affected communities.*

*Through **my signature** on the People's Treaty, I commit to work to ensure that governments live up to their obligations.”*

The People's Treaty is an initiative to engage the public and put pressure on governments to sign the new Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). Similar to a petition, it is a symbolic representation of the strong support of civil society to eliminate this weapon and the suffering it causes.

On the final day of the Dublin Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions, the 107 governments present adopted a newly negotiated treaty banning the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions. While this was happening inside the conference, ordinary citizens were simultaneously demonstrating their personal commitment by launching the People's Treaty.

When you add your signature to the People's Treaty, you join thousands of other people across the globe that are committed to ensuring the success of the CCM. It will be presented in Oslo in December 2008, when governments will reconvene to officially sign the treaty.

There are two ways to sign the treaty! As an individual citizen or as a community leader representing a congregation or organization. You can add your name by going to http://www.minesactioncanada.org/peoples_treaty. Your contact information will not be used or shared except to confirm your submission and as an endorsement of the People's Treaty.