

## Statement on Cluster Munitions



*Delivered by Erin Hunt on behalf of the Cluster Muniton Coalition  
80<sup>th</sup> Session of the First Committee on Disarmament and International Security – civil society segment  
New York City, October 2024*

---

Thank you, Chairperson.

I speak on behalf of the Cluster Muniton Coalition, a global civil society network working for a world free of cluster munitions.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions remains the only international framework for effective eradication of this abhorrent and indiscriminate weapon. It has established a powerful global norm that stigmatizes cluster munitions through the strict prohibition of their use, production, stockpiling, and transfer.

The Convention continues to stand strong, with 112 States Parties and 12 signatories. This year, we were pleased to welcome Vanuatu as its newest member. We urge all other states — particularly those that signed the Convention more than 15 years ago — to complete their ratification process without further delay, ahead of next year’s Review Conference, to be hosted by Laos.

Since its entry into force in 2010, the Convention has achieved remarkable progress on the ground. States Parties have destroyed all cluster munitions once held in their stockpiles — totaling nearly 180 million submunitions. Eleven previously affected countries have cleared all contaminated land, while others continue their determined efforts toward that goal. States Parties are also diligently implementing the Convention’s robust provisions on risk education and victim assistance.

However, these extraordinary achievements have been in recent years overshadowed by the continued use and transfers of cluster munitions, as well as by one State’s decision to withdraw from the Convention.

As reported by the Cluster Muniton Monitor, cluster munitions continue to be used extensively in Ukraine by both Russia and Ukraine. New use has also been recorded in Myanmar and Syria, and Thailand appeared to have used cluster munitions during its border conflict with Cambodia this summer.

Civilians continue to represent the vast majority of victims, with children disproportionately affected — accounting for 42 percent of all casualties from cluster muniton remnants in 2024. For the third consecutive year Ukraine recorded globally the highest number of casualties.

Given the grave and long-lasting humanitarian consequences these weapons inflict — both now and for decades to come — it has been deeply disheartening to witness Ukraine’s use of cluster munitions, enabled by transfers from the United States last year.

All use of cluster munitions, by anyone and under any circumstances, must be unequivocally condemned and halted immediately, along with any actions that could lead to further use — including their transfer and production.

This year the Convention faced an unprecedented, unconscionable development : Lithuania’s decision to withdraw from the Convention. This withdrawal, which took effect in March, marks the first-ever withdrawal from a humanitarian disarmament treaty.

The Cluster Munition Coalition condemns Lithuania’s short-sighted decision and urges it to reconsider. We call on Lithuania to refrain from any acquisition or production of these prohibited weapons. Having witnessed the ripple effects of one State’s actions on the resolve of others in other fora, we appeal to all States Parties to remain steadfastly committed to the Convention and to their legal obligations at all times. This Convention as any other humanitarian disarmament treaty must never be treated as a fair-weather commitment. Civilian lives and limbs are at stake.

As efforts toward universalization are more critical now than ever, we once again call on those still outside the Convention to take immediate steps to join, and thereby strengthen the protection of civilians. This includes enacting moratoria on the production, transfer, and use of cluster munitions — particularly in ongoing conflicts.

As a first and vital step, we urge all states to vote in favor of the annual UN General Assembly resolution on the Convention this year, and to encourage others to do the same.

Thank you.