

Speech of Mrs. Randa Berry
2nd Meeting of States Parties to the 2008 Convention on Cluster
Munitions

September 13, 2011

H.E. Dr. Adnan Mansour, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Excellencies,
Representatives of States Parties to the 2008 Convention on Cluster
Munitions,
Heads of associated UN Organizations, Bodies and Programs to the
Convention,
Representatives of international NGOs,
Activists and personalities participating in this international humanitarian
manifestation,
Survivors and mine and cluster bombs affected people
Journalists and media representatives
Honourable audience

We are a people who believe in the destiny of God, and believe that death is predestined. Yet, we also believe that man was created to live a respectable life established by divine and earthly laws. We believe as well, that no person, and no nation has the right to determine the fate of others in a way that befits interests and contradicts principles, ethics and regulations agreed on under the ceiling of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It was the right of martyr Ahmad Moukalled, who was only four year old when he died, to be with us today; but a cluster bomb disguised as a toy tore his body to fragments when he was celebrating his fifth birthday in an area near his house in the region of Toul, Nabatiye. It was the right of tens of children who died in the fields and playgrounds of the towns of Eastern and Western Zawtar, Sulatinyeh, Ramia, Blida, Yohmor, Arnoun, Mutasawiri and Qlaile, to live their daily lives according to their dreams, however, the brains that are defined as “smart” brains are only spiteful brains which chose to draw for those children and hundreds of farmers dreams that materialized the real image of a set values and ethics upon which the brains that produce and use mines and cluster bombs, operate. Brains that have lost the minimum respect of human rights regulations.

Honourable conferees,

Nearly 2 millions of cluster bombs were planted by Israel throughout 185 towns and villages of South Lebanon during the last two days of the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon namely after the issue of Resolution 1701, in an average of one cluster bomb for every two citizens, an average which parallels the population of Lebanon on a geographic area that represents mostly a quarter of the Lebanese Republic's area.

The watchwords: "Don't approach..... Don't touch.... Danger cluster bombs", have become the guide to enter villages, fields and farms; hence, if what is required is to transform the south of Lebanon to a minefield, then this area and its people are subjected to be victims of this unprecedented massacre in modern history. And I name it a massacre because all its legal elements are fulfilled in regard to the perpetrators and the victims.

The above-mentioned fact is surely not a good point in the record of humanity and ethics of states that masters the industry of death of which cluster bombs is its main tools, it is also a slap in the face of states that claim themselves as sponsors and protectors of human rights and peoples' rights to self-determination. It also points to the double standard policy of these states by considering Israel an exempt to which law does not apply and which can ignore the international resolutions.

Dear conferees,

You are present today in a geographic region of this world. You are hosted by a country with a civilization of more than 7 thousand years. This country was home to the first school in history. From its seas emerged the letter. From its old coastal cities in Tyr, Sidon, Byblos and Beirut democracy developed with its original concepts and standards. You are hosted today in the land that witnessed the first miracle of Jesus Christ in Tyr, in the country of which Pope said: "Lebanon is more than a country, it is a message."

Were Lebanon punished and his people and children still being punished according to this pattern of systematic murder through cluster bombs

because it represents all these factors and holds this entire cultural, human and historical heritage? Shouldn't a country as important as Lebanon have an international and humanitarian care and attention, contrary to what we have witnessed of deaths and murders since more than 60 years, represented by the wars of Israel on earth, human kind and heritage in Lebanon? The suffering of the Lebanese people with cluster munitions cannot be separated from the sufferings of the people of Laos, Iraq, Afghan or any region in the world, from wars and invasions. All of them have the same concern, whether pain, wounds, and repercussions. This leads to a waste of powers and potentials, mainly huge spaces of lands out of investment, in addition to the psychological, financial and moral repercussions on individuals and families affected by cluster munitions.

The real way to put an end to this suffering is that what we call the international community to set a unified equal standard on the view towards the peoples of the World. Those who die in Somalia have the right to access food security. The thousands of people who were murdered by the chemical and bacterial weapons have the right to live. Those who died because of cluster munitions everywhere and the millions of people who are waiting to get rid of the fear of death due to these bombs which have not been cleared from the targeted places or which can be possibly used by some greedy countries in more than a region of the world, all of them have the right to be away from this danger and from threat. They have the right to live in freedom, dignity and security.

The shortest way to accomplish these goals is:

- 1st: To make all countries with no exceptions, adhere to the Cluster Munitions Convention, mainly the big industrial ones.
- 2nd: To encourage the producing countries to destroy their stockpiles and to morally and legally comply with regulations aimed at prohibiting the production or selling or use of cluster munitions in any country or conflict in the world.
- 3rd: To urge long term producing countries to become the main financing parties in demining and clearing of cluster munitions projects.
- 4th: To highlight the key role of the media in the awareness campaign regarding the use and repercussions of cluster munitions on the human level.

5th: To raise a worldwide awareness regarding cluster munitions by addressing all components of the civil society and NGOs, in order to exert pressures on producing countries to stop the production.

6th: To urge the United Nations to establish a National Day for the Victims.

7th: To create a compensation fund for the damage sustained by the cluster munitions regarding persons and properties.

8th: To establish an international club or organization for the wounded and survivors, that would follow up their legal and human rights at the specialized international courts.

Dear Conferees,
Honorable Audience,

We look forward to this conference which was able in a record time after 2006 summer aggression, and upon Norway initiative under the “Oslo Agreement” which led to this Convention in Ireland in 2008, we look forward to the ending of this matter and to the phase where we can close together one of Hell’s doors, which is yearly harvesting the life of thousands of innocent civilians, of peoples who deserve to live a good and respected life, people who deserve the right to dream, to grow up in a safe and secure environment.

Finally, I renew my thanks on behalf of the Lebanese Welfare Association for the Handicapped, on behalf of the Forum of the Civil Associations in the South and on behalf of the mines and cluster munitions survivors club to all the States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and international organizations for choosing Lebanon as a venue to host this conference, hoping to meet next time and all our aspirations and common goals would be realized, and all the sufferings of this immoral crime would be alleviated.

Long live Lebanon