

Cluster Munition Coalition Statement – Compliance
Geneva, 7 April 2014

Thank you Mr Coordinator,

On the whole compliance with the treaty continues to be consistently good. There have been no allegations of use, production, or transfer by States Parties or signatories, significant progress has been made in destruction of stockpiles and on clearing contaminated land; and States Parties are working diligently to implement the Convention's provisions on victim assistance.

States Parties have been working to promote universalization of the convention, in accordance with Article 21, although more could and should be done. In the run up to the First Review Conference it is imperative that States Parties champion the cause of encouraging and helping other countries to ratify and accede to this treaty.

The primary concerns on compliance revolve around national implementation laws enacted or drafted by some States Parties and signatories that are not in keeping with the spirit—and in some cases with the letter--of the Convention.

We also regret the fact that 20 States Parties are late in submitting their initial Article 7 report, which is not just a legal requirement, but an important tool for determining which convention obligations will apply to them. We encourage all States Parties which have not yet done so to quickly submit their initial reports as well as their annual updates which are due by the end of April.

Most seriously, CMC is deeply concerned by continuing use of cluster munitions by Syrian government forces and the resulting toll of civilian casualties including women and children. We have also been disturbed by the reports of new use of cluster munitions in South Sudan in late 2013, though all actors involved in the conflict have denied using them. The CMC calls on all states to encourage those involved in the recent fighting, including Ugandan government forces, to conduct an investigation into who was responsible for the use and to take all necessary steps to prevent further use.

In both Syria and South Sudan, we are concerned about the increasing burden of cluster munition contamination and the potential scale of post-conflict casualties as this notoriously unreliable weapon leaves a trail of unexploded submunitions following the attacks. Any user of cluster munitions is putting civilians' lives at risk, and the CMC strongly condemns such acts. We have called on both Syria and Sudan to immediately halt use, clear contaminated land, and join the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

About 150 states have already condemned Syria's cluster munition use, including dozens of states outside the convention. Norway and Zambia have made strong statements condemning the use of cluster munitions in South Sudan.

Each incident of use of cluster munitions in recent years has been met with widespread international condemnation, some from states not yet party. Most of the known or alleged users of these weapons have denied use. Such reactions are testament to the powerful stigma that has been created against the use of cluster munitions.

We call on all states to condemn these incidents of new use, and we thank those that have already done so. Each country that speaks out adds strength to the international norm rejecting cluster munitions established by this lifesaving convention.

Details of the recent incidents of use are available on the Cluster Munition Coalition website and in the Cluster Munition Monitor. You can find the Human Rights Watch briefing on Syria on the table outside the room.

Thank you.