



ICRC

Eleventh Meeting of States Parties of the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Geneva, 11 to 14 September 2023

International Committee of the Red Cross

Statement on Universalization

Thank you, Mr. President,

Let me on behalf of the ICRC commend the in-depth manner in which your Presidency has prepared this Meeting of States Parties, with wide-ranging consultations, and wish you every success in guiding our work.

The ICRC also wishes to commend you, Mr. President and the Universalization coordinators, Malawi and Spain, for your efforts over the last year to promote adherence to the Convention by non-party States. We warmly congratulate Nigeria for ratifying and South Sudan for acceding to the Convention, bringing the total number of States Parties to 112. We call on all states to have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the convention without delay and to renounce using, producing, transferring, and stockpiling cluster munitions.

Mr. President,

To achieve the Convention's fundamental humanitarian aim of a world free of cluster munitions, it is crucial to promote adherence to the Convention by all States and achieve a universal ban on cluster munitions.

In the meantime, cluster munitions are continuing to endanger the lives and limbs of people in many contexts today. Among them, civilians and children are disproportionately impacted. We wish to reiterate the statement made by our Vice President that any use of cluster munitions by any actor under any circumstances is unacceptable and must be unequivocally condemned. In the coming years, we urge States Parties to step up their efforts in a coordinated manner to further promote universal adherence to the Convention, and to promote the universal observance of the Convention's norms and objectives by all actors, including armed non-State actors.

The ICRC stands ready to continue to provide technical assistance to States in their ratification or accession processes, including in taking the necessary steps to ensure that domestic frameworks are compliant with the Convention's requirements and in discussing potential challenges or questions that States may have as they consider acceding to the Convention. The ICRC's Advisory Service on international humanitarian law (IHL) here in Geneva, our delegations in capitals around the world, as well as our delegation to the United Nations in New York offer their technical and legal assistance to States in support of this endeavour.

Based on its understanding of domestic ratification processes, the ICRC has developed a range of tools to support States in this respect, such as an updated [factsheet](#) explaining the Convention's requirements, a [ratification kit](#), and a [checklist](#) for national implementation. The ICRC acknowledges and welcomes steps taken by several States at the national level to enable their adherence to the Treaty.

The ICRC has continued over the last year to promote the Convention in a variety of ways, working together with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies towards this goal.

The ICRC has supported the work of the Presidency on universalization. We participated as expert speakers in universalization events organized by the Presidency and ISU in Baghdad, New York and Yaoundé and a universalization event organized by the United Kingdom for Commonwealth countries in London. The ICRC along with the Norwegian Red Cross also organized a virtual regional consultation with African States to reinvigorate the 2009 Movement Strategy on Landmines, Cluster Munitions and other explosive remnants of war (ERW).

We have included the Convention in the ICRC's regional and national events to promote universalization and implementation of IHL treaties. In November 2022, the ICRC organized a regional IHL conference for South Asian States in Kathmandu and discussed the universalization of the CCM in a dedicated session. Last week, the ICRC discussed the universalization of the treaty in regional events for Latin American states in Buenos Aires and is discussing it this week with ECOWAS states in Abuja. These universalization efforts are bearing fruit and we will continue them next year by placing this Convention on the agenda of a number of regional IHL events, including an event with the African Union in Addis Ababa.

Mr. President, we must all seize the momentum of this Eleventh Meeting of States Parties to increase our efforts in promoting the universal adherence to the Convention and the universal observance of the Convention's norms, with a view to achieving the goal of bringing about a world free of cluster munitions.

Thank you.