

CMC - Opening Statement (Mr. Raed Mokaed, Video Message)

*Convention on Cluster Munitions 12th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva
10 September 2024*

Across this world...

Wars have begun and ended...

Many lands were occupied...

Armies retreated...

Lives were lost...

Children were killed...

Mothers and fathers were broken... Families were torn apart...

But the witness that still reminds us of the ugliness of these wars is cluster bombs.

Cluster bombs, which over the years have proven that the ones who suffer from them are innocent civilians, despite what the manufacturing and using countries claim—that these weapons are necessary for their security.

We in the Cluster Munition Coalition worked hard and we traveled to all corners of the earth, shedding tears after witnessing many tragedies of the wounded and disabled, not to mention those who died from this weapon through no fault of their own.

We held many meetings to advocate for the Convention on Cluster Munitions because of the blind devastation this weapon inflicts on innocent civilians.

And now, we see a country announcing it has withdrawn from the convention. And we know that there are other countries that have returned to manufacturing, transferring, acquiring, and using this weapon. No matter what the impact on people's lives.

I am speaking to you today because I am the father of one of the victims, the martyr child, Ahmad Moukalad, who was killed by an Israeli cluster bomb on his fifth birthday, while celebrating in a park.

I have experienced the loss of my child for no reason. I have witnessed my homeland Lebanon suffer from the ravages of consecutive wars, the worst being the use of cluster bombs by Israel. They spread these bombs over wide areas of non-military locations - farmlands, schools, trees, rivers, roads - not to mention other countries that still suffer (Afghanistan, Laos, Vietnam, and many more whose innocent victims we all know well).

Since my loss, I have been working with partners, including the Cluster Munition Coalition, to bring an end to the use of cluster munitions.

To all countries and nations

Hasn't humanity across the world suffered enough?

Haven't you done enough to harm and continue to harm humans?

Haven't you shed enough innocent blood worldwide?

Haven't you had enough experiments with all kinds of cluster bombs ?

You, who now seek to undermine and let down the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Haven't you had enough?

To Lithuania and any country considering undermining the convention, I say... Don't you care about contributing to the protection of civilians around the world?

Write in the pages of your country's history that you were among those who signed and supported the banning of this weapon, not among those who withdrew, for the safety and security of humanity.

In conclusion, the decision-making countries of the world must work harder and harder to reach more agreements for the sake of humanity, regardless of color, race, religion, or nationality.

And to my friends and colleagues in the Cluster Munition Coalition, I say, we will not stop calling on the world to join and fully implement the convention for the safety and security of all humanity.

In the end, Tomorrow, our children and grandchildren will read that we made every effort to ensure the protection and security of humanity.

Thank you.