



**Convention on Cluster Munitions
13th Meeting of States Parties
Intersessional Meetings**

**Item 3(j,i): Challenges and concerns raised in
developments in the context of the Convention
and Humanitarian Disarmament at large:
Emerging challenges to the norm prohibiting
cluster munitions**

8 April 2025

Thank you to the coordinators for leading this critical discussion.

It is clear that the international humanitarian disarmament regime is under significant strain.

Lithuania's withdrawal from the Convention on Cluster Munitions is deeply regrettable. Moreover, five States Parties from Europe are now actively considering withdrawal from the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. If these proposals are formalised, there will, in all likelihood, be considerable negative impacts for the Convention, for humanitarian disarmament more broadly, and for civilians.

We reiterate the rationale behind the adoption of these Conventions: the weapons they prohibit have indiscriminate effects, and their short- and long-term humanitarian and economic consequences outweigh any potential military utility.

The Conventions prohibiting anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions were adopted to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by specific indiscriminate weapons, and they have made a significant, real-world difference. Remaining steadfast supporters of the Convention during this time is critical for both the international rules-based system, and for the protection of civilians.

As a global community, we adopted these instruments during times of relative peace, to protect civilians both during and after conflict. It is troubling to see States Parties walk back on these obligations in response to the risk of conflict. This is exactly the time when we should be redoubling our efforts to uphold and maintain them.

Any withdrawal sends an unhelpful signal about the legitimacy of these indiscriminate weapons. We need to reinforce the stigma against cluster munitions and anti-personnel

mines: decades of research show the pattern of harm they cause far outweighs any military benefit. More modern and effective defensive alternatives to these weapons exist, which should enable us to consign these weapons to history.

Let me be clear, New Zealand continues to condemn unequivocally Russia's illegal full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and we acknowledge the significant security concerns Russia's war has raised. We must continue to support Ukraine's self-defence. This includes standing up for international law and the rules-based system. Russia's continued disrespect for international law makes it an outlier, and its extensive use of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions has been a humanitarian, ecological, and economic catastrophe.

New Zealand will continue to work closely with States Parties, States not yet Party, civil society, the ICRC, and other international organisations to chart a course towards fully universalised humanitarian disarmament treaties. A world without these indiscriminate weapons is both possible and necessary.

New Zealand remains committed to our shared goal of ridding the world of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, and putting an end, once and for all, to the suffering they cause.

Thank you.