

Statement on Stockpile Destruction and Retention

Intersessional Meetings, Convention on Cluster Munitions, 7-8 April 2025

Thank you, Chair,

During 2024, we celebrated as the last States Parties with stockpiled cluster munitions—Bulgaria, Peru, Slovakia, and South Africa—completed the destruction of those stocks, fulfilling a crucial obligation under the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Thanks to their actions, 100% of declared stocks of cluster munitions once held by States Parties have now been destroyed. Collectively, States Parties have destroyed nearly 1.5 million cluster munitions and 179 million submunitions, a major achievement that demonstrates the positive and preventive impact of the convention.

Yet the work to eradicate stockpiled cluster munitions is not yet over.

Cyprus and Indonesia have signed the convention, but not yet ratified. They are known to possess stocks of cluster munitions. We urge them to ratify the convention without delay and take steps taken to destroy their stockpiled cluster munitions.

Most states that have not signed or ratified the convention stockpile cluster munitions. Several of them have transferred and/or used their stockpiled cluster munitions recently, most notably Russia, Ukraine, and the United States. We condemn those actions, which put civilian lives at risk and undermine the norm against these weapons.

We remind all States Parties of the need to oppose any transit of cluster munitions across their territory, airspace, or waters.

Mr. President, ten States Parties have retained live cluster munitions for research and training purposes, as permitted under Article 3 of the convention.

Germany possesses the highest number of retained cluster munitions, followed by Switzerland. In its updated transparency report for 2023, provided in November 2024, Switzerland clarified that it has retained 28 cluster munitions and 1,299 submunitions for the development of counter-measures and development and training in detection, clearance or destruction techniques. It destroyed EOD training during 2023.

The Netherlands is the only State Party to have provided an Article 7 report covering 2024. It shows that it did not consume or destroy any of the 1,854 submunitions that it has retained during that period. Indeed, the last time The Netherlands consumed retained its cluster munitions was in 2020.

Of rest of the States Parties with retained stocks, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon, Spain and Sweden also did not consume any of their retained cluster munitions during 2023. Bulgaria, Denmark, and France consumed one cluster munition and 63 submunitions between them.

Annual updated transparency reports are due at the end of this month. We urge all States Parties with retained stocks to turn them in so that they can be fully reflected in the Cluster Munition Monitor 2025 report this September.

We also seek clarification from South Africa as to whether it is retaining cluster munitions for training and research purposes, as this was not clear in its transparency reports.

Given the need to uplift the Convention on Cluster Munitions at a time when humanitarian disarmament norms are coming under threat, we urge the ten States Parties retaining cluster munitions to revisit their decision to retain and destroy their retained stocks by the convention's Fourth Review Conference in 2026.

Most States Parties that initially retained cluster munitions for training have either eliminated them entirely since making their first declarations in transparency reports or reduced their stocks significantly and not replenished them. This shows that the initial amounts retained were clearly not the "minimum number absolutely necessary" for the permitted purposes under the convention.

Thank you.