



ICRC



**ICRC-IFRC Joint Statement on Universalization  
Convention on Cluster Munitions, 3rd Review Conference  
14-18 September 2026  
Universalizing the Convention**

This statement is delivered on behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), which is composed of 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. It is delivered by representatives of the Norwegian Red Cross and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr President,

As the world's largest humanitarian network, our staff and volunteers know too well the devastating and long-lasting impact of cluster munitions. These weapons kill and injure mostly civilians, far too often children, and render entire communities unsafe. Homes, fields, and roads are contaminated, destroying livelihoods, hindering recovery, and preventing people from returning home after a conflict ends. They also make the response of our staff and volunteers to affected populations difficult and dangerous.

By establishing a global norm prohibiting these weapons, the Cluster Munitions Convention has saved countless lives and prevented immense suffering. Thanks to the commitment of all States Parties, since the coming into force of the Convention, 42 States Parties have destroyed their declared stockpiles, amounting to nearly 180 million sub-munitions.

According to the Cluster Munitions Monitor, in 2025 alone, States Parties released 114 square kilometres of hazardous land through clearance, technical survey, and non-technical survey - representing a 15% increase compared to 2024.

Every remnant removed is a life saved and a livelihood secured. Most importantly, these achievements have established an important norm against the use of cluster munitions, sending a clear message that these horrific weapons have no place in today's world.

Through the implementation of this landmark treaty, we have progressively moved away from an era of widespread use of cluster munitions.

Mr President,

States must preserve and protect existing treaties and the norms they embody. The very last thing that States should do in times of insecurity and conflict is to abandon disarmament treaties. We deeply regret that one State Party has withdrawn from the Convention.

This is a step backward that risks eroding life-saving protections and weakens decades of global efforts to eradicate these inhumane weapons. These disarmament treaties, rooted in

international humanitarian law, are meant to be a bulwark precisely for the most challenging times, a crucial safeguard to ensure that humanity prevails in armed conflict.

At a time when discussions about possible withdrawal or reduced commitment to humanitarian disarmament treaties continue to surface, it is particularly important that States Parties reaffirm their commitment to this Convention and the norms it embodies.

Mr President,

In this regard, we are heartened that the universality of the Convention has been further strengthened since the second Review Conference, as we welcomed South Sudan, Nigeria and Vanuatu to the Convention. This demonstrates significant commitment from States across regions - but this momentum cannot stop here. The promise of a world free from cluster munitions can only be fulfilled through universal ratification of and adherence to the Convention. We therefore continue to call on all the States not yet party to join the Convention without delay.

In line with the proposed actions under the Vientiane Capital Action Plan, we urge all States Parties, the Presidency, and the informal universalization coordination group, to promote the Convention and the norms it embodies through global and regional advocacy, bilateral dialogue with non-States Parties, and by condemning any use of cluster munitions anywhere, by any actor, under any circumstances.

Mr President,

The Convention on Cluster Munitions is not only about banning a weapon. It is also about responding to the suffering caused by this weapon. The humanitarian, legal and moral case for all States to join this Convention remains as strong as ever. So too does the obligation on every State Party to uphold and promote it.

International humanitarian law exists for the darkest days of armed conflict. It is precisely in times like these that IHL, including this Convention, matters most. Because it saves lives.

Let us work together to expand the Convention's reach. To strengthen its impact. And to achieve a world free of cluster munitions — a world where civilians are no longer threatened by these unacceptable weapons.