



Nonviolence International Southeast Asia
Statement on the Third Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Victim Assistance
Agenda Item 9(e)

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Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic

Statement delivered by Fred Lubang, Regional Representative

President,

Victim assistance begins with a simple question: Who is a victim?

Victims are not mouths to feed, they are our shared obligation.

A victim is more than a person who survived an explosion with an injury. Article 2 of the Convention gives us a broad and important answer. Cluster munition victims include all people who have been killed or who have suffered physical or psychological injury, economic loss, social exclusion, or serious harm to their rights. The definition includes people directly harmed, as well as their affected families and communities.

The Convention also recognizes those who were killed. Of course, assistance can no longer be given directly to a person after death. But the responsibility does not end when a life ends. Assistance must reach the family and community left behind.

When a mother, father, child, or other family member is killed, a family may lose an income, a caregiver, and its sense of security. Families may face funeral costs, debt, grief, trauma, interrupted schooling, and years of economic hardship.

“Those who died” gives us an opportunity to make this part of victim assistance clearer.

States should report separately:

How many people were killed?

How many affected families were identified and consulted?

How many of these families received psychological care, social protection, livelihood assistance, educational support, compensation, or other help based on their needs?

How many are still waiting?

Those who were killed must be counted with dignity. The assistance provided to their affected families and communities must be followed and measured.

For survivors, assistance is often needed throughout life. Medical care may end while pain

continues. A wheelchair may be provided but cannot be repaired. A child may survive but never return to school. A farmer may receive treatment but lose the land and livelihood that supported the family.

Survivors and affected families should not receive only the crumbs left after institutions, experts, and projects have taken the larger share. They should help decide what assistance means, how resources are used, and how success is measured.

A decolonial approach asks us to redistribute decision-making power, direct more resources to survivor-led and locally rooted organizations, and recognize lived experience as real knowledge.

We must continue counting services delivered. But we should also ask every survivor and affected family:

How are you?

How has your life changed?

Can you study, work, travel, participate, and live with dignity?

Did the assistance restore choices and opportunities, or did it simply meet a project target?

Victim assistance should not be unintentional - it succeeds when survivors, families, and communities receive the whole support they need.

Thank you.