

CLUSTER BOMBS:

GET THEM MILIBANNED

Dear Rt Hon David Miliband,

I am writing to request your commitment to the protection of civilians from the effects of cluster munitions and the UK government's full support for the strongest possible treaty banning these weapons.

As part of the Oslo Process on cluster munitions, the next 12 months presents the UK with an important opportunity to strengthen the norms of international humanitarian law and to establish improved protection for civilians in times of conflict.

A treaty prohibiting cluster munitions would represent an historic achievement - not just in the protection afforded to civilians but also as a marker of states taking responsibility to ensure that protection.

Cluster munitions have killed and injured civilians repeatedly and consistently over the last 40 years. As well as causing civilian casualties at the time of attacks, these weapons also produce a landmine-like contamination that continues to kill and injure for decades afterwards.

Current UK policy places faith in solutions that have been demonstrated not to work. The UK's retention of its M85 cluster munitions (one of the types used by Israel in its notorious cluster bombing of Lebanon in 2006) is incompatible with claims of commitment either to humanitarian protection or evidence-based policy making. These weapons should be withdrawn from service immediately.

If the UK government takes the final steps to a policy that will genuinely protect civilians it will establish also a basis for leadership on this issue internationally.

The time to act is now.

Support the UK campaign to ban cluster bombs

Use this sheet as guidance to send a letter to the Foreign Secretary.

For more information on the UK campaign, contact Landmine Action: +44 (0)20 7820 0222.

For information on the international campaign to ban cluster bombs, visit the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) website at www.stopclusterbombs.org.