

Say No to Cluster Munitions...

Thanks to unprecedented international mobilization, over 150 countries have now turned the ban on landmines into a new global norm. Recent conflicts in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq have, however, highlighted another threat to civilian populations in post-war situations: explosive remnants of war and, in particular, cluster munitions.

What is a cluster bomb?

Cluster munitions have been used over the last 60 years in about 17 countries including Vietnam, Cambodia, Iraq, Kosovo and Afghanistan. Grouped by the dozen or even hundreds in various containers, cluster munitions are intended to explode either on impact or by some pre-set trigger mechanism. These munitions spread their contents over a large field, with a **radius of up to 600 metres**. Cluster bombs can carry up to 200 bomblets, each the size of a soft drink's can.

When the bomblets explode they project hundreds of shrapnel fragments, capable of killing or severely injuring anyone close to the blast. Unlike landmines, which are designed to maim rather than kill, cluster bombs contain more explosive power and metal fragmentation, making them more likely to kill and cause multiple casualties. However 5% to 30% of them fail to explode and therefore remain on the ground, acting to all intents and purposes as a landmine.

Why are cluster munitions so dangerous?

The annual number of casualties has been estimated at somewhere between 15,000 and 20,000 – or **one victim every 30 minutes**.

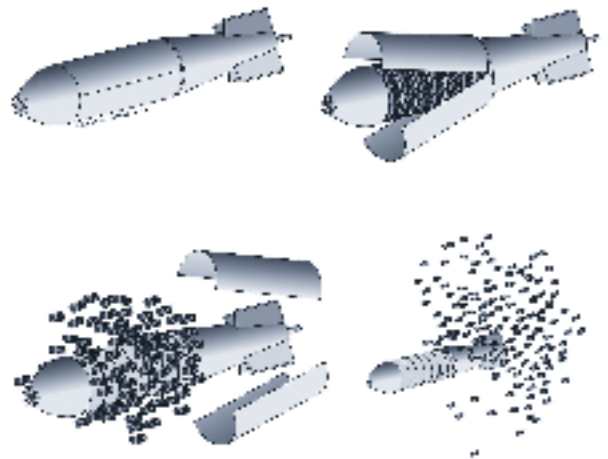
In many countries, accidents occur when people attempt to move unexploded cluster bombs out of economic necessity, curiosity or social

responsibility. Civilians have to clear land for farming and housing or to prevent children from playing with them. In poor communities, it is common for civilians to salvage military debris like cluster munitions for their saleable scrap metal. Their interesting shape, size, and sometimes, bright colour make cluster bombs especially attractive to children. In most contaminated countries, **the majority of victims are children**.

The fragments of exploding submunition travel at high velocity. When they strike people pressure waves within the body are set up, which do horrific damage to soft tissue and organs. Even a single fragment can rupture the spleen. If a victim survives the accident, they may suffer from various injuries including loss of limbs, burns, ruptured eardrums, and blindness. Cluster bombs also have psychological, social and economical consequences for the victims and their families. Injured and disabled, the victim cannot play an active role in the society,



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may not be able to get married, have children or find a job, especially in rural traditional areas.

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What does international law have to say?

International law states that operations carried out in wartime must never be deliberately aimed at the civilian population. Weapons must be used with discrimination and be proportional to the perceived threat; military objectives alone can be subjected to bombardment.

The use of cluster munitions is governed by the 1980 UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). On 28 November 2003, the 92 States Parties to CCW adopted Protocol V, requiring parties to an armed conflict to clear up any explosive remnants which, after the end of hostilities, continue to threaten civilians, peacekeeping forces and humanitarian personnel. Protocol V will not come into force until it has been ratified by 20 States. So far, only Sweden has done so.

The international "Cluster Munition Coalition" campaign

Leading on from the Ottawa Landmine Treaty, Handicap International was involved in setting up the international CMC (Cluster Munition Coalition) campaign, officially launched on 13 November 2003 in The Hague by a group of international charities. To date, 115 organisations are part of the coalition.

The campaign launched a three-point appeal to governments:

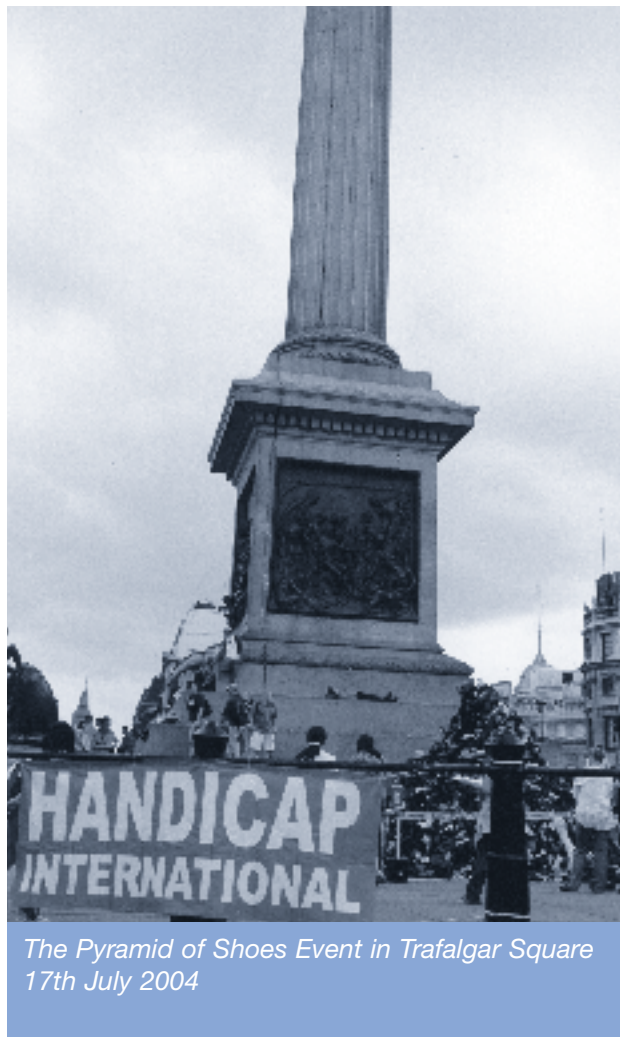
- a ban on the use, production and transfer of cluster munitions, so long as the humanitarian problems caused

by these weapons have not been solved

- increased aid to communities and individuals affected by unexploded cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war
- recognition of the responsibility of the users of cluster munitions and other munitions that turn into explosive remnants of war, with regard to clearance, signposting, risk awareness, information and help to victims.

Handicap international's commitment against cluster munitions

Handicap International has projects in many countries affected by landmines and cluster bombs. Every day, our teams are confronted with victims of these weapons. We support their inclusion into society through counselling, community activity, artificial limb fitting and physiotherapy. However, our activities will have no long-term impact if we do not try to eradicate causes of disability. To achieve that, Handicap International lobbies governments regarding the use of cluster bombs, as the risks for civilians are not acceptable. Whilst we will always provide support to victims, we know that



*The Pyramid of Shoes Event in Trafalgar Square
17th July 2004*

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preventing such accidents is the way forward.

A series of actions, such as pressuring governments and raising public awareness, are being undertaken. On the 17th July, Handicap International UK organised its second Pyramid of

CHRONOLOGY- AFGHANISTAN

Prolonged support for the population

Despite the many conflicts and the violence met with in the region, Handicap International has continued to provide assistance to the Afghan population for nearly 20 years.



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1985-1989: Helping refugees

With the arrival of Soviet troops, many Afghans took refuge in Pakistan. In agreement with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, we opened a prosthetics workshop, then a rehabilitation centre in Quetta, in the West of Pakistan. We also trained Afghan and Pakistani physiotherapists. A mobile team intervened in the refugee camps and in 1988 a physiotherapy service was created.

1989-1996: At risk

The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan allowed Handicap International to open a prosthetics workshop and a physiotherapy service in Herat and to prepare for the return of refugees. Activities were put on hold following a tragic ambush in which one expatriate and five members of the local team were killed. Several months later, the programme was resumed with local personnel only.



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Shoes in Trafalgar Square. During this event, each shoe brought by the public symbolized the lives and limbs lost as a consequence of cluster munitions.

Patrick Vieira lent his support to the campaign by sending a pair of shoes to be added to the Pyramid of Shoes.

"I am terribly shocked by the images of injured children in Kosovo and Iraq and the horrific damage caused by cluster bombs" he admits. "With Handicap International, I want to call on governments to ensure that the needs of innocent civilians are properly addressed. Please show your support to the Campaign by signing the petition."

On the day, all sorts of fantastic free activities for kids and parents were provided. Educational games, music and street performances led children to understand the situation of countries affected by cluster bombs in a very lively and suitable way. Professional bomb clearance experts from Kosovo carried out demonstrations in a reconstructed mine field and explained to the public their daily work in mine clearance projects.

On this great day, Handicap International UK received **2,600 signatures**, adding to the thousands of signatures already received throughout the world.

You too can sign the petition against cluster munitions on our website: www.handicap-international.org.uk

FOCUS : WAHID'S STORY

Wahid, 12 years old, lives near Baghdad. His neighbourhood was bombed, and many unexploded cluster munitions can still be found there. In June 2003, he was out walking with his 9 year old brother, when their eye was caught by a strange metal object. Wahid took hold of it and the cluster bomb went off. His right hand was blown off and his body was riddled with fragments – some of which are still lodged in his left knee and ankle, and in his skull. His little brother got metal shrapnel in both legs. Their parents have had to sell most of their belongings to meet medical costs."



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Cluster Munitions: The Facts

- 20 million cluster munitions dropped during the 1991 Gulf War.
- 1,600 dead and 2,500 wounded by cluster munitions in Iraq and Kuwait since 1993.
- 1.8 to 2 million cluster munitions dropped on Iraq in 2003.
- 33 States producing cluster munitions (including Germany, France, China, North Korea, USA, Russia, and Turkey).
- 58 States possessing cluster munitions (including South Africa, Algeria, Japan, Pakistan, and Russia).

1996-1998: Renewed tension

We opened an orthopaedic centre in Kandahar and launched a mine risk education project. The coming of the Taliban to power provoked a civil war that forced us once again to leave the country in 1998. We entrusted the management of the centre in Kandahar to our partner Afghan Guardian until 2001.



2001-2003: Towards reconstruction

Despite American bombing, we continued our initiative and started landmine clearance activities at the request of MAPA, the United Nations Programme for Afghanistan. As soon as the situation allowed, we opened a new office in Kabul. A project providing assistance to disabled people was set up and we also rebuilt a new physiotherapy centre in Heart.



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2004: Inclusion of disabled people

In March, a community centre managed by people with disabilities opened in Kabul. In this centre, disabled people provide advice to other disabled people in their search for employment. At the same time we launched a project to promote sport, in particular football, with the financial assistance of FIFA (international football's governing body). The creation of a structure dedicated to disabled people, within the Afghan football federation, is planned.



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CASE STUDY

When Cambodians clear landmines in Mozambique

Preventing the causes of disabilities and fighting against social exclusion are two aspects of our mission. This is illustrated by Tempest, a brushwood clearing machine, made in Cambodia by one of our partners, which our teams of bomb disposal experts use in Mozambique today.

Each year, 1,000 accidents due to landmines or other unexploded munitions occur in Mozambique. Over 10 years after the peace treaties, the needs in mine clearance remain important, but the methods of intervention have evolved. "60% of mined ground in Mozambique have areas less than 15,000 square metres. To deal with these small areas and to intervene quickly, our teams need easy to handle, solid and fast equipment", says Gilbert Hascoët, programme director.

A high performance machine

Our mine disposal experts are now equipped with a machine called Tempest, which is capable of clearing bush from



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200 to 800 square metres per hour. This machine can move over bumpy terrain, go around obstacles, such as houses and is remote controlled. Moreover, its armour plating limits the risks of damage in case of explosions. "A mine disposal expert spends 70% of his time clearing the ground manually. With Tempest, not only do we get security, but also speed up the performance of the task" underlines

Mr Hascoët. We proceed in three stages: firstly, the Tempest cleans the polluted ground, then the specially trained dogs find the dangerous devices, and finally the disposal experts concentrate on the most delicate part of the work: unearthing the device to neutralize it

Exemplary conditions of production

Beyond the technical qualities of Tempest, its conditions of development and production also illustrate our will to promote the work

of disabled people and the exchange between disadvantaged countries. Indeed, these machines are assembled in Cambodia. In the production sites, our partner DTW gives greater importance to the employment of disabled people. A successful transfer of technology has occurred since 12 Tempest are now operating in the world.

Handicap International Cluster Bomb Appeal

All donations will be gratefully received, however £30 provides an artificial limb customised to a child's need and £60 can help clear a field of cluster bombs.

I enclose a donation of: £ payable to Handicap International UK

Title: First Name: Surname:

Address:

Postcode

Telephone: Email Address:

I would like to give by: Cheque / CAF voucher / Postal order made out to Handicap International UK

Credit or debit card: Visa / Mastercard / CharityCard / Switch / Solo / JCB (Please delete as appropriate)

Credit card number:

Valid from: MM/YY Expiry date: MM/YY Issue number: (Switch/Solo only)

Signature: Date: DD/MM/YY

The information you give will only be used by Handicap International and not passed on to third parties.

Please use **BLOCK CAPITALS** and return to Handicap International UK, Waterman House, 101-107 Chertsey Road, Woking, Surrey, GU21 5BW.

Gift Aid helps your donation go further by 28p for every pound. And it doesn't cost you a thing! I want the enclosed donation of:

£

and all future donations to be classed as Gift Aid.

To qualify for Gift Aid, what you pay in income or capital gains tax must at least equal the amount we claim in the tax year.

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