

The Cluster Munition Coalition is led by a Governance Board of:

Action On Armed Violence, Asociación para Políticas Públicas-APP,
Cambodia Campaign to Ban Landmines, Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas, DanChurchAid,
Handicap International, Human Rights Watch, ICBL Georgian Committee, IPPNW,
Mines Action Canada, Nepal Campaign to Ban Landmines, Norwegian People's Aid, Protection



H.E. Mr. Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin
President
Staraya pl. 42
103132 Moscow
Russian Federation

Geneva, 1 October 2015

Re: Air strikes in the Syrian Arab Republic

Excellency,

The Cluster Munition Coalition, a group of non-governmental organizations in 100 countries working to end the suffering caused by cluster munitions, requests that the armed forces of the Russian Federation refrain from using any cluster munitions in the military action in the Syrian Arab Republic, which began on 30 September.

Cluster munitions have been banned under the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions, on the basis of the unacceptable harm they cause to civilians both at the time of attack and in the longer term. Strikes have an indiscriminate large footprint and leave behind unexploded submunitions that fail to function as designed and remain a fatal threat long after use. While the Russian Federation is not party to the Convention, it must respect the principles of International Humanitarian Law. Weapons banned under this Convention are indiscriminate and have a disproportionate impact on civilians: any use of these weapons under any circumstances is unacceptable.

The Cluster Munition Coalition has sent letters to Syria in this regard, including in July 2012 and October 2013, and warned the United States of America against cluster munition use in Syria in 2013 and 2015.

Given the globally recognized emerging norm against the weapon, the use of cluster munitions has a considerable political cost on the international scene. The Russian Federation voted in favor of several UN Security Council resolutions that expressed concern at recent cluster munition use, including the UNSC Resolution of June 2015 regarding evidence of cluster munition use in Sudan. At the UN General Assembly (UNGA) First Committee on Disarmament and International Security in October 2014, the Russian Federation expressed concern at the use of cluster munitions against civilians in Ukraine.

We therefore call on the Russian Federation to accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and, until then, to abide by the intent of the convention by not using cluster munitions under any circumstances.

Thank you for the actions you will take on this issue. We are available to discuss the matter further with representatives of the Russian Federation at the Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, and we will communicate with the Permanent Mission to this effect in the coming days.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Megan Burke", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Megan Burke
Director

cc. H.E. Mr. Alexey Borodavkin, Ambassador and Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations in Geneva
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