

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



HRH King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud
Prime Minister
Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
Riyadh
Saudi Arabia

Geneva, 8 January 2016

Re: Cluster Munition in Residential Neighborhoods of Sanaa, Yemen

Your Royal Highness,

The Cluster Munition Coalition, a group of non-governmental organizations in 100 countries working to end the suffering caused by cluster munitions, is very concerned with evidence of cluster munition strikes in Sanaa, the capital of Yemen, on 6 January of this year. Detailed evidence has been collected of aerial attacks in two residential neighborhoods of the densely populated capital city with unconfirmed reports of a third attack in the al-Thiaba neighborhood. Evidence has been collected by Cluster Munition Coalition member, Human Rights Watch, and is published at: <http://bit.ly/1RbDqkz>. The UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights in Yemen has also collected photographic evidence of the remnants of the strikes in Hajjah Governorate.

Cluster munitions are banned under the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions. While Saudi Arabia is not yet 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. Other recent incidents of use have been broadly condemned, including by countries that are not yet parties to the Convention. Deliberate use in residential areas may constitute war crimes that must be investigated.

In 2013, in the context of use of cluster munitions by Syrian government forces, Saudi Arabia rightfully voted in favor of UNGA Resolution A/RES/67/262, condemning the use of cluster munitions. The same moral and ethical standard of rejection of cluster munitions should apply to military operations conducted by Saudi Arabia itself.

We call upon you to immediately cease using any and all types of cluster munitions. Saudi Arabia should assist Yemen in responding to the needs of the victims and clearance of recent use. We also invite you to take further steps towards joining the Convention without delay.

We thank you in advance for the actions you will take on this issue. We hope to discuss this matter, as well as the issues raised in our letter sent on 2 June and 5 May 2015, with representatives of the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia in Geneva. We will communicate with the Permanent Mission to this effect in the coming days.

Sincerely,

Megan Burke
Director

cc. H.E. Mr. Faisal Bin Hassan Trad, Ambassador and Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations, Geneva