

ICBL-CMC Appalled by Reports of Potential US Transfer of Banned Cluster Munitions to Ukraine

(Geneva, 19 December) – The International Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC) is gravely concerned about the potential transfer of banned cluster munitions by the United States to Ukraine as reported by [CNN](#) on 8 December. The potential transfer of the munitions, prohibited under the [2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions](#), has come to light amidst reports that Ukrainian officials have repeatedly requested cluster munitions to counter the Russian offensive.

The United States Government has thus far indicated that cluster munitions transfers to Ukraine would be unlikely due to national legislation prohibiting the transfer of cluster munitions with a greater than one percent unexploded ordnance rate. However, the government possesses an aging stockpile of just such weapons and has not yet rejected this option, which would violate the prohibition on the transfer of the weapon under the convention.

“Providing banned cluster munitions to Ukraine or any other country, is a flagrant rejection of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and a blatant disregard for civilian lives. Such a move risks exacerbating the existing humanitarian disaster in the country,” said Hector Guerra, Director of the ICBL-CMC.

Russia, Ukraine and the United States remain outside of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

In response to questions on the requests for the banned weapon, a Ukrainian official stated, “The [US] worry is about collateral damage. We are going to use them against Russian troops, not against the Russian population,” said the CNN report.

All States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions must react urgently to the prospect of further civilian harm from cluster munitions in the Ukraine conflict. Any support for the country should be contingent upon unconditional respect for international humanitarian law and repudiation of any use of indiscriminate weapons.

Since the beginning of its invasion of Ukraine in February, Russia has used cluster munitions extensively causing civilian deaths. Cluster munitions not only kill at time of impact, they also leave a lethal trail of unexploded ordnance threatening lives for years to come. On 13 December, ICBL-CMC member [HRW](#) documented alleged Russian cluster munition attacks and related civilian casualties in the city of Kherson. Ukrainian forces appear to have used them at least two times in the war according to the [Cluster Munition Monitor 2022](#) report.

ICBL-CMC calls for an immediate halt to use of the internationally banned weapon and urges Russia and Ukraine to join the Cluster Munition Convention as soon as possible to guarantee protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law.

ICBL-CMC works for a world free of landmines, cluster munitions, and other explosive remnants of war, where all lives are protected. A world where contaminated land is cleared and returned to local populations for productive use and where the needs of survivors, their families and affected communities are met and their human rights guaranteed.