

Convention Might Have Banned Cluster Munitions, but Allegations of Use by Non-States-Parties Persist, Says Secretary-General

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Following is UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's message, as delivered by Virginia Gamba, Director of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, to the fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, held in San Jose, Costa Rica, 2-5 September:

I am pleased to greet the fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. I thank the host, Costa Rica, for its long-standing leadership on disarmament and non-proliferation and for signing the Convention on the day it opened for signature in December 2008.

I fully support your efforts to implement the Convention, which bans weapons that are designed to cause maximum damage and suffering, and are inherently indiscriminate. Even when they fail to explode, they contaminate land, hindering economic and social development for years and posing a constant threat to civilians.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions may have banned their use, development, production, acquisition, stockpiling and transfer. Still, instances and allegations of their use by States that are not party to the Convention continue, including in South Sudan and Syria. The carnage caused by cluster munitions in Syria is a direct violation to the basic rules of international humanitarian law governing the conduct of hostilities.

I call again for an immediate end to the use of cluster munitions.

We have made progress since the Convention was first agreed. Today, there are 84 States parties and 108 State signatories. I call on those States that have done so to adhere to the Convention. There is also much work to be done in destroying stockpiles, clearing contaminated land and providing assistance to victims.

You have my firm support and the commitment of the United Nations in all that you are doing to make the world safe from the horror of cluster munitions. I wish you every success in your vital work.

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