

PRESS RELEASE

Next President Can Swiftly Make World Safer from Landmines and Cluster Munitions.

(Washington, DC, October 26, 2020) Demanding a reversal of changes made in the past three years that have moved the United States further from support of international agreements banning antipersonnel mines and cluster munitions, the U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines - U.S. Cluster Munition Coalition (USCBL-USCMC) issued recommendations today for the president who will be elected next month.

"The United States is out of step with its allies and the broader global consensus to ban landmines and cluster munitions. The election provides an opportunity for whoever is President in 2021 to reset U.S. policy and finally join the Mine Ban Treaty and Convention on Cluster Munitions," said Jeff Meer, Steering Committee Chair for USCBL-USCMC and U.S. Executive Director of Humanity & Inclusion.

The recent flare up of fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh and international condemnation of the use of cluster munitions there has reminded the global community that these indiscriminate weapons are a danger to civilians and not yet weapons of the past. U.S. efforts to negotiate a resolution to the conflict would be aided if Washington could legitimately echo these concerns.

In 2017, the current administration reversed a policy that would have barred the use of most cluster munitions in the U.S. stockpile. The U.S. has not used cluster munitions in more than a decade.

Cluster munitions have been banned because of their widespread indiscriminate effect and long-lasting danger to civilians. Cluster munitions typically explode in the air and send dozens, even hundreds, of small bomblets over an area the size of a football field. These cluster submunitions often fail to explode on initial impact, leaving duds that act like landmines.

In the memorandum, the campaign also highlighted changes made this January to U.S. policy that would allow for use of victim-activated antipersonnel landmines anywhere in the world, instead of restricted to the Korean peninsula. The United States has not used antipersonnel landmines since 1991, excluding the use of a single munition in 2002. All other NATO allies and a total of 164 countries worldwide have agreed to universally forswear all antipersonnel mines under the Mine Ban Treaty.

Within the first 100 days of the next administration, the campaign recommends that the President take the following steps:

- **Ban the use, production, and transfer of antipersonnel landmines and cluster munitions.**

Immediately issue a policy commitment against using antipersonnel landmines and cluster munitions.

- **Accede to the Mine Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.** Declare America's intent to accede to the Mine Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.
- **Lay out an accelerated timeline for the destruction of stockpiled landmines and cluster munitions**
Provide concrete plans and mechanisms for public reporting on progress destroying the stockpiles of these indiscriminate weapons.

U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines-U.S. Cluster Munition Coalition

The U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines-U.S. Cluster Munition Coalition is the U.S. affiliate of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize winning International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the global Cluster Munition Coalition. The civil society coalition works to end the suffering caused by landmines and cluster munitions, which cause unacceptable harm to civilians both at their time of deployment and for decades after.

Media notes

Experts available from organizations, including Humanity & Inclusion, Human Rights Watch, Legacies of War:

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