

Thursday 13 December 2001

19. Cluster bombs

B5-0765, 0775, 0782 and 0789/2001

European Parliament resolution on cluster bombs

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the 1980 UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW),
 - having regard to international humanitarian law,
 - having regard to the forthcoming second review conference of the Convention to be held in Geneva from 10 to 21 December 2001, welcoming the recent confirmation by the EU General Affairs Council of its commitment to the Convention on Conventional Weapons,
- A. whereas over the past 35 years unexploded cluster bomb submunitions killed and maimed people in conflict and post-conflict regions,
- B. whereas people in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Lebanon, Sudan, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kuwait, Russia/Chechnya, Yugoslavia/Kosovo and Afghanistan can testify that their fields, villages and cities are not accessible because of the existence of cluster bombs and other unexploded submunitions,
- C. recalling Article 35 of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I) of 8 June 1977, which states in paragraph 2: 'It is prohibited to employ weapons, projectiles and material and methods of warfare of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering',
- D. whereas nearly half of all the 500 persons involved in mine and unexploded ordnances (UXO) accidents in Kosovo have suffered as a result of unexploded cluster bomb submunitions,
- E. whereas since the end of the war in Laos (1973), over 11 000 persons, 30 % of them children, have been killed or injured by UXO,
- F. whereas the use of cluster bombs is an obstacle to the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes because of the risk of becoming involved in submunitions accidents,
- G. whereas the use of cluster bombs, in addition to resulting in the loss of human life, especially among the civilian population, represents a serious obstacle to the social and economic recovery of affected countries,
- H. recalling that cluster bombs are extremely dangerous and difficult to clear and therefore constitute a long-term problem for post-conflict reconstruction and development,
- I. whereas the use of cluster bombs puts the staff of humanitarian aid agencies and UN peacekeeping forces at a high risk of becoming involved in accidents,
- J. extremely concerned at the difficulty in accurately targeting cluster bombs during conflict, the high proportion of cluster bomblets which are found to have failed to detonate on impact, and the wide area coverage of the bomblets, all of which means they pose a serious long-term threat to the civilian populations,

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1. Calls upon the CCW States Parties to declare an immediate moratorium until an international agreement has been negotiated on the regulation, restriction or banning of the use, production, and transfer of cluster munitions under the CCW, including air-dropped cluster munitions and submunitions delivered by missiles, rockets, and artillery projectiles;
2. Underlines the responsibility of users of cluster munition systems for the cleaning of affected areas;
3. Recommends that CCW Review Conference establish a group of government experts to examine the issue of explosive remnants of war, and in particular the problems caused by cluster bomb submunitions both during and after an armed conflict; experts from mine-clearance and other relevant organisations should be permitted to participate in the group's work;
4. Urges all states possessing and/or using cluster munitions to undertake other measures, such as improving the reliability of fusing mechanisms by way of dual-event fuses and incorporating self-destruct or self-neutralising mechanisms into munitions, in order to reduce the threat that these weapons pose to civilian populations;
5. Urges all states not party to the Convention to become so, and states parties to the CCW Convention who have not already signed up to the amended Protocol II and/or Protocol IV to do so as soon as possible;
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the governments of the Member States, the UN Secretary-General, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and all States Parties to the Convention.

20. Human rights: Women in Afghanistan

B5-0763, 0766, 0776, 0784, 0790 and 0802/2001

European Parliament resolution on women in Afghanistan

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Afghanistan and, in particular, on the situation of Afghan women and the Declaration of the Afghan Women's Summit held in Brussels on 4/5 December 2001,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to the measures taken by the Afghanistan Support Group in Bonn on 5/6 December 2001 for the coordination of the humanitarian and development efforts for Afghanistan,
- A. stressing that the Taliban regime has perpetrated the most deliberate form of violation of women's rights in recent history, imposing an apartheid based on sex that has denied women's identity itself,
 - B. whereas there are almost 5 million Afghan refugees abroad, mostly in Pakistan and Iran; whereas the majority of these refugees are women and children,
 - C. having regard to the high mortality rate among women and children,
 - D. whereas it is estimated that less than 5 % of Afghan women can read and write, while the literacy rate for girls reaching school age during the period of Taliban rule is substantially lower, standing at approximately 1 to 2 %,