

Contact:

Mary Wareham, ANZCMC Coordinator
200 Oriental Parade, Wellington
Tel. +64 (21) 996-905 or (04) 971-4688
wareham@hrw.org
www.stopclusterbombs.org.nz

Aotearoa NZ CMC members:

African Pacific Voices NZ * Amnesty International Aotearoa NZ * Aotearoa Lawyers for Peace * Auckland University Students' Association * Caritas Aotearoa NZ * Christian World Service * Disarmament and Security Centre (Peace Foundation) * Engineers for Social Responsibility NZ * Global Focus Aotearoa * International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War NZ * National Council of Women NZ * National Consultative Committee on Disarmament * Oxfam NZ * Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament NZ * Pax Christi Aotearoa-NZ * Peace Foundation NZ * Peace Movement Aotearoa * Soroptimist International NZ * Umma Trust * UN Association NZ * UN Youth Association NZ * UNICEF NZ * Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Aotearoa



4 November 2011

HE Mrs Victoria Treadell, High Commissioner
British High Commission
44 Hill Street
Wellington 6011

RE: Convention on Conventional Weapons cluster munitions work

Dear High Commissioner,

We are writing to express our strong concern at the United Kingdom's active support for the conclusion a protocol on cluster munitions at the Fourth Review Conference of the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW), which will be held in Geneva on 14-25 November 2011.

If agreed, the August 26, 2011 version of the draft protocol would result in dramatically weaker protections for civilians than the strong protections provided in the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions, which the UK has signed and ratified.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions absolutely bans the use, production, stockpiling, and transfer of cluster munitions, and requires clearance and victim assistance. By contrast, the draft CCW protocol seeks to allow these activities to continue and its positive obligations on stockpile destruction, clearance, victim assistance, and international cooperation and assistance are far less detailed and comprehensive than those provided in the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

In addition to potentially weakening the stigma against cluster munitions contained in the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the draft protocol runs contrary to the primary purpose of international humanitarian law, which is to minimize suffering in war. The adoption of far weaker standards would represent an unprecedented and dangerous step backwards for the development of international humanitarian law. It could also undermine the humanitarian objective of the Convention on Conventional Weapons, which seeks to minimize suffering from weapons that "may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects."

The costly decade of CCW deliberations on cluster munitions should be ended at the Fourth Review Conference and all states should accept that the Convention on Cluster Munitions is the most appropriate legal means to address cluster munitions and the harm they cause. We urge the UK to uphold its legal obligation to promote the Convention on Cluster Munitions and discourage any use of cluster munitions.

If the UK is sincere about wanting a “satisfactory” CCW outcome that makes a significant humanitarian contribution, it should not support the creation of a protocol that would permit continued use, production, and/or transfer of a banned weapon. We urge the UK to ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions and uphold its obligation to promote the Convention and discourage any use of cluster munitions.

We would be glad to meet to discuss this issue further with you. Please convey our message to the Government of the UK.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Wareham', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mary Wareham
Coordinator, Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition