

Contact:

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Aotearoa NZ CMC members:

Amnesty International Aotearoa NZ, Aotearoa Lawyers for Peace, Auckland University Students' Association, Campaign Against Landmines, Caritas Aotearoa NZ, Christian World Service, Development Resource Centre, Engineers for Social Responsibility NZ, 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 Foundation Disarmament and Security Centre, Peace Movement Aotearoa, Soroptimist International NZ, UN Association NZ, UN Youth Association NZ, UNICEF NZ, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Aotearoa



3 September 2008

President Mikhail Saakashvili
7 Ingorokva Street
Tbilisi 0105
GEORGIA

Via Fax Transmission: +995-32-98-72-62

RE: Georgia's Use of Cluster Munitions

Dear President Saakashvili:

I am writing on behalf of the Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition to express our deep dismay at Georgia's use of cluster munitions last month.

We understand that in a letter to Human Rights Watch, the Georgian Defense Ministry stated that the GRADLAR 160 multiple launch rocket system equipped with MK4 rockets with M85 submunitions was "used against Russian military equipment and armament marching from Roki tunnel to Dzara road [sic]." In defending its use of a banned weapon, Georgia stated that the cluster munitions "were never used against civilians, civilian targets and civilian populated or nearby areas."

Our coalition objects to *any* use of *any* type of cluster munition in *any* location because of the harm this weapon can cause to civilians during and after conflict. We're disturbed that Georgia used M85 submunitions because when this weapon was last used two years ago by Israel in Lebanon its failure rate of 10 percent or more left large numbers of dangerous "duds" which continue to threaten civilians to this day. We urge Georgian authorities to take urgent measures, including clearance and risk education programs, to protect civilians from unexploded ordnance left by cluster munitions and other weapons.

We call on Georgia to renounce cluster munitions and join the Convention on Cluster Munitions when it is opened for signature in Oslo, Norway on 3 December 2008. This Convention, adopted by 107 states on 30 May 2008, prohibits the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions and sets strict deadlines for the removal of

cluster munition remnants and destruction of stockpiled cluster munitions. It also includes groundbreaking humanitarian obligations for assistance to victims of cluster munitions.

Georgia's signature on the Convention on Cluster Munitions would represent an important acknowledgment that this crucial agreement enhances the humanitarian protections afforded to civilians.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mary Wareham', written in a cursive style.

Mary Wareham
Coordinator, Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition

CC:

- Mr. David Bakradze, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia
- Mr. Thomas Nash, Global Coordinator, Cluster Munition Coalition