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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, Umma Trust, UN Association NZ, UN Youth Association NZ, UNICEF NZ, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Aotearoa

12 August 2009

President Mikhail Saakashvili
7 Igorgva Street
Tbilisi 0134
GEORGIA

Via Email Transmission: media@president.gov.ge

RE: Please Ban Cluster Munitions

Dear President Saakashvili:

Dear Ambassador Tatarinov:

I am writing on behalf of the Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition to urge the Russian Federation to renounce cluster bombs and sign the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions. We last wrote to you on 3 September 2008, but did not receive any reply.

This month, we have been holding activities to remember the victims of cluster munition attacks in Georgia (2008) and Lebanon (2006). The use of cluster munitions by both Russia and Georgia in the conflict over South Ossetia in August 2009 resulted in the deaths of at least 16 civilians and injured at least 54 more. One year on, unexploded cluster submunitions still continue to render tracts of farmland hazardous and pose a daily threat to local inhabitants.

Since last December, a total of 98 governments—including Australia and New Zealand—have renounced cluster bombs by signing the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions. This agreement prohibits cluster munitions, sets strict deadlines for the removal of cluster munition remnants and destruction of stockpiled cluster munitions, and includes groundbreaking humanitarian obligations for assistance to victims of cluster munitions.

We are disappointed that Georgia has not yet signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Signature would represent an important acknowledgment that this crucial agreement enhances the humanitarian protections afforded to civilians. We urge Georgia to sign the Convention without delay.

Yours Sincerely,

Mary Wareham
Coordinator, Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition