

Norwegian People's Aid condemns Thailand's use of cluster munitions in its border conflict with Cambodia in February of this year. □ Close-up of artillery-delivered M42/M46 DPICM submunition found in April 2011 in Cambodia. (c) Stéphane De Greef, Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor.

- Cluster munitions are a dreadful weapon that have considerable impact on civilians. Every year, thousands of civilians are killed and maimed by cluster munitions that have been left behind by war. We have been working actively for a ban on cluster munitions and condemn all use of these weapons, says Per Nergaard, head of the Norwegian People's Aid Mine Division.

Following two independent investigations, the Cluster Munition Coalition, CMC, has concluded that Thailand used cluster munitions in February this year in its border conflict with Cambodia. Both military and civilian targets were hit. This is the first time the use of cluster munitions has been registered after the international ban came into force on 1st August 2010.

- The approximately 5,000 villagers of San Chey in Cambodia are now exposed to the danger of unexploded cluster munitions following the air strikes. Thailand must now release information to make it possible to clear the areas and make it safe for people to return, says Atle Karlsen, the Norwegian People's Aid representative to CMC.

According to CMC, the cluster munitions dropped in Cambodia have already taken two lives while two other persons have lost arms and a further five have been injured.

The convention against cluster munitions which came into force on 1st August 2010, forbids the use, production, stockpiling and sale of cluster munitions. Under the agreement, signatory states are obliged to destroy their own stocks, clear land where bombs have been left and provide assistance to victims and affected areas. Of the 108 countries which have signed up to the convention, 55 have already ratified it through domestic legislation. Neither Thailand nor Cambodia have signed the international agreement against cluster munitions.

Norwegian People's Aid has been clearing mines and other explosives in Cambodia since 1992.

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