

Statement on Stockpile Destruction
9th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
2-4 September 2019



Under the Convention on Cluster Munitions, 35 States Parties have completed destruction of their stocks, collectively destroying nearly 1.5 million cluster munitions and more than 178 million submunitions. This represents 99% of all cluster munitions that States Parties have reported stockpiling. This stockpile destruction is one of the most visible examples of successful implementation of the ban convention.

We commend Botswana and Switzerland for completing the destruction of their stockpiled cluster munitions over the past year and in advance of the respective deadlines.

The Cluster Munition Coalition appreciates the updates we have heard today from Bulgaria, Peru, and South Africa in their ongoing work to destroy cluster munition stocks. We also see Slovakia is making considerable progress in destroying its cluster munitions.

However, it is now all good news. Guinea-Bissau missed its stockpile destruction deadline of 1 May 2019 and has been in violation of the convention since then. Moreover, Bulgaria has become the first State Party to request this ban convention extend its 1 October 2019 stockpile destruction deadline by another 18 months.

This has tarnished the until-now clean compliance record regarding implementation of the convention's stockpile destruction provisions.

Guinea-Bissau last participated in a meeting of the convention in 2015, when it attended the First Review Conference. It is nearly seven years late delivering its initial transparency report, required by Article 7 of the ban convention. We know that Guinea-Bissau possesses stocks of cluster munitions as it has [said several times](#) in the past that it would need financial and technical assistance to destroy them.

There is also evidence that Guinea [imported cluster munitions](#) in the past, before joining the convention. But it also has not provided a transparency report for the convention. This is essential to understand if it has stocks to destroy by its ban convention deadline, which is 1 April 2023.

It is important that signatories that possess cluster munitions, such as Indonesia and Nigeria, take steps to ratify and provide information on those stocks. Cyprus is the last European Union member state to have signed, but not yet ratified the convention, yet it still has not disclosed any information on its cluster munition stocks or efforts to destroy them.

It is essential that States Parties and signatories to the convention that need help to destroy their cluster munition stocks receive financial, technical, and other support.

Before concluding, it is necessary to highlight the fact that most States Parties have chosen not to retain any cluster munitions for demining training and research purposes, as permitted by the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Yet 13 States Parties are doing so.

We welcome the important announcement by the Netherlands today that it has destroyed three-quarters of the cluster munitions that it originally retained for research and training purposes. The Cluster Munition Coalition was pleased to see Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany and Spain all reduced the number of cluster munitions retained for these purposes during 2018.

This shows that the initial amounts retained by States Parties were likely too high and did not constitute the “minimum number absolutely necessary” for the permitted purposes, as required by the convention. In the view of the Cluster Munition Coalition, the number of cluster munitions that states should retain under the convention is zero.