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### Norwegian People's Aid Weapons Policy

Norwegian People's Aid

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# Weapons Policy

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January 2015



Norwegian People's Aid

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# CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	3
<b>Antipersonnel mines</b>	4
<b>Antivehicle mines</b>	6
<b>Cluster munitions</b>	8
<b>Explosive weapons in populated areas</b>	10
<b>Dangerous and insecure ammunition storage areas</b>	12
<b>Surplus weapons and ammunition</b>	14
<b>Toxic remnants of war</b>	16
<b>Incendiary weapons</b>	18
<b>Chemical and biological weapons</b>	20
<b>Nuclear weapons</b>	22
<b>Armed drones and autonomous weapons</b>	24
<b>Casualty recording</b>	26
<b>The arms trade</b>	28
<b>Abbreviations</b>	30

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Copyright 2015 by Norwegian People's Aid  
Cover photo: A picture taken in Beit Lahia in the Northern Gaza Strip on 17 January 2009 shows civilians running to safety during a strike with white phosphorus munitions. AFP PHOTO/MOHAMMED ABED  
Design: Oktan Oslo

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# INTRODUCTION

This document provides an overview of the policies established by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) on selected weapons-related issues. It outlines the platform on which NPA bases its advocacy for stronger protection for civilians and the environment from the effects of weapons and methods of warfare and of law enforcement.

Operations and advocacy are two sides of the same coin for NPA. Just as the removal of mines and cluster munition remnants from the ground saves lives, so too has our work to move states to negotiate, adopt, adhere to, and implement the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Treaty (MBT) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). The MBT and the CCM are milestones in international humanitarian disarmament law.

Because weapons technology is in constant and rapid evolution, international law governing the choice of means and methods of warfare or of law enforcement must also be further developed. New limits must be imposed on the design, production, transfer, or use of new weapons and methods to protect civilians from indiscriminate and inhumane effects and ensure that the general rules and principles of international humanitarian law as well as human rights law are upheld. This may include negotiation and adoption of new humanitarian disarmament instruments containing weapon-specific prohibitions.

As a field-based organization working in conflict areas and specializing in operations that address weapons and ammunition, NPA has proven that it is well placed to contribute to processes to develop and strengthen international policies, rules, and norms to better protect civilians and the environment from unacceptable harm. Building on the experience of our contributions to the global movements that successfully banned antipersonnel mines and cluster munitions, NPA will continue to have a strong voice on other unresolved or emerging weapons-related issues that call for an international response.

Some of the weapons issues for which an NPA policy is set out in this document are threats that NPA works to address on a daily basis through our operations and advocacy. Others are issues where NPA currently is involved to a lesser or less continuous degree; where we stand ready to act if the weapons in question are used in an area where we implement operations; or where we only support the efforts of other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) but have found it beneficial to clearly formulate NPA's views. Additional issues of concern other than those mentioned in this document may be taken up where a pressing need is identified and where NPA can make a difference.

On the basis of this policy, the collective advocacy efforts of NPA's head office and our external offices will be tailored to promote greater understanding of specific weapons-related challenges and concrete steps that can be taken to address them, and to influence policy and practice within the UN and other institutions and ultimately within states.

In practical terms, NPA will:

**1. Provide field-based research and analysis:**

Where we can, NPA will observe, research, document, and analyse the impact of specific weapons and methods of warfare and of law enforcement on civilians and the environment.

**2. Communicate field realities:**

On the basis of our research, documentation, and analysis, NPA will bring field realities to the attention of policy-makers by publishing reports and reaching out to media. This focus on field realities has so often been the first step towards stigmatizing particular weapons and stimulating changes in practice, policy, and law.

**3. Strengthen national approaches:**

Stricter international policies, rules, and norms are often built on stronger approaches adopted at a national level, and NPA will work to ensure that Norway always adopts the highest standards of policy and practice on weapons-related issues. Similarly, we will always work to influence the host governments in countries where we operate to strengthen their national policies and practices.

**4. Participate in multilateral forums:**

We will work to develop stricter international policies, rules, and norms through active engagement in multilateral forums where weapons-related issues are addressed, and by promoting the establishment of new forums if this is required in order to make meaningful progress.

**5. Work in civil society coalitions:**

NPA will continue to place great emphasis on building and participating in relevant global civil society coalitions as the most effective way to achieve change. Our experience as part of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) illustrates that coalitions of NGOs working in strategic partnerships with committed governments and international organizations can transform the international agenda on weapons or methods of warfare and of law enforcement.

**6. Enable universalization, implementation, and completion:**

Through operations and advocacy, NPA will be an enabler and catalyst to help turn the lifesaving potential of existing humanitarian disarmament treaties into reality. We will lobby governments of states not yet party to relevant humanitarian disarmament treaties, motivating them to accede and adhere. We will work on the ground and in partnership with national authorities in affected states to motivate and assist them to faithfully and effectively implement and complete their obligations under these instruments within the applicable deadlines. We will also promote effective and efficient implementation of international cooperation and assistance mechanisms provided for in the treaties.



# ANTIPERSONNEL MINES



Antipersonnel mine in Angola.  
© SCANPIX PHOTO, Mike Kolöffel

## What is the problem?

Antipersonnel landmines are explosive devices designed to be detonated by the presence, proximity, or contact of a person. They do not discriminate between combatants and civilians. Antipersonnel landmines have been used by most armed forces in the world, and for decades they have claimed victims around the globe on a daily basis. In addition, emplaced landmines deprive families and communities of land that could be put to productive use such as agriculture. They maintain a sense of insecurity long after conflicts end, delay peace processes, and impede development.

## What is the current situation?

The Antipersonnel Mine Ban Treaty (MBT), which was adopted in 1997 and entered into force in 1999, is a milestone achievement in the field of humanitarian disarmament. It prohibits the use, production, transfer, and stockpiling of antipersonnel mines. It also requires that each State Party clear antipersonnel mine contamination on its territory within ten years (Article 5), and destroy stockpiles within four years (Article 4). Support for victims of antipersonnel mines is also required by the treaty.

More than 80% of all states in the world are States Parties to the MBT. It also has a great normative effect on those states that are not yet party to it. Thanks to the treaty, landmine use has dramatically dropped, as has global production and trade. Additionally, tens of millions of antipersonnel mines have been destroyed, large areas of contaminated land have been cleared and returned to communities for safe use, and the number of new recorded casualties has significantly reduced since the 1990s.

More than 30 states and other areas have completed clearance of antipersonnel mines on their territories since the MBT entered into force. Landmines are nevertheless still a threat in almost 60 states and other areas. NPA remains concerned over areas where the clearance of mine contamination is slow and over the number of states seeking to extend their Article 5 deadlines to complete their clearance obligations. The good news is that for the majority of affected states and other areas, completion of clearance can be accomplished in a matter of just a few years if up-to-date land release methodologies are applied and the requisite political will is mobilized.

## What is NPA's call?

NPA calls on all states and stakeholders to ensure full implementation of the MBT, and more specifically of the treaty's clearance obligations. Strong political will is the key to reach this objective. Concretely, this means that NPA calls for the following:

- All states should ratify/accede to the MBT if not already a State Party.
- Contaminated states should establish an ambitious plan for completion of their clearance obligations under Article 5 of the treaty; secure resources; and build necessary institutions and capacities for timely implementation.
- Contaminated states should establish policies and laws that enable the application of sound land release methodology as a major opportunity for improved efficiency and more expedient treaty compliance.
- Donor states should provide sustained, or for some countries, increased levels of funding for landmine survey and clearance, while making clear calls on recipient governments to facilitate the application of good land release methodology. As more and more of the countries with light and medium contamination are ticked off the list, sustained levels of funding will ensure that all countries can reach completion.

## What does NPA do?

NPA's advocacy in support of the above call is an integral and continuous component of all of our mine clearance operations. NPA also pursues a regional approach, carrying out advocacy in neighbouring states where there is no NPA presence. Such regional advocacy can often be done from existing operations with minimal additional effort.

On a global level, NPA's advocacy on landmines takes place in partnership with likeminded operational NGOs and as an active member of the governance board of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) ([www.icbl.org](http://www.icbl.org)), the global civil society coalition working for a world free of antipersonnel landmines. NPA is also a key contributor of research and analysis to the Landmine Monitor, the de facto monitoring regime for the implementation of the MBT.



Finally, NPA participates in relevant forums that aim to enhance the quality and coordination of mine action, such as the Meetings of States Parties to the MBT and the annual International Meeting of Mine Action National Programme Directors and UN Advisors.



# ANTIVEHICLE MINES



A vehicle from the organization Handicap International which was destroyed by an antivehicle mine in Afghanistan in 2003.  
Photo © Handicap International.

## What is the problem?

An antivehicle mine is a type of landmine designed to damage or destroy vehicles including tanks and armoured fighting vehicles. Compared to antipersonnel mines, antivehicle mines typically have a much larger explosive charge, and a fuze designed to be triggered only by heavier objects. They strike civilian and military vehicles alike (and some can kill civilians on foot). Because of the large explosive force they exert and because vehicles are often carrying large numbers of people, antivehicle mine explosions frequently kill and injure many people in a single incident. In some contexts, antivehicle mine contamination on road networks has had a major impact on the delivery of post-conflict assistance and has cost significant amounts of money to address. From 1999 through the end of 2010, the Landmine Monitor recorded more than 5,000 casualties from antivehicle mines<sup>1</sup>.

## What is the current situation?

Antivehicle mines are not covered under the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Treaty (MBT) and are only weakly regulated under Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Although CCW States Parties have spent many years debating technical fixes to address the issue of harm caused by antivehicle mines (such as requiring a 'minimum metal content' to aid detection, and having limits on the active life of mines that are scattered outside of marked areas) they have not been able to come to an agreement. Calls have been made for the issue of antivehicle mines (also called "mines other than antipersonnel mines" or MOTAPM) to be addressed again in the CCW, but there is little indication that renewed discussions would produce fruitful outcomes.

## What is NPA's call?

NPA calls on all states and armed actors to renounce the use of antivehicle mines and to destroy all stockpiled antivehicle mines.

Given the history of these weapons of causing civilian casualties and obstructing humanitarian assistance, NPA believes antivehicle mines should be banned on the same terms as antipersonnel mines.

## What does NPA do?

If emplaced or stockpiled antivehicle mines are encountered in NPA's operations, we will do everything in our power to convince the responsible authorities to allow for their removal and destruction.

NPA will research, document, and analyse the impact of antivehicle mines on civilians and bring field realities to the attention of policy-makers.

NPA will continue to make the case for antivehicle mines to be banned under international law because of their impact on civilians. We will look for windows of opportunity to generate the requisite political will among states to take effective action and make international progress on this agenda.



# CLUSTER MUNITIONS



A cluster bomb unit containing more than 600 submunitions, that was dropped by Israeli warplanes during the 34-day long Hezbollah-Israeli war, sits in a field in the southern village of Ouazaiyeh, Lebanon, Thursday, 9 November 2006.  
© AP Photo/Mohammed Zaatari

## What is the problem?

Cluster munitions, also known as cluster bombs, are weapons containing tens or hundreds of smaller explosive submunitions. Cluster munitions are area-effect weapons which spread their submunitions over areas that can be as large as several football fields in size, killing and injuring civilians and combatants indiscriminately. Like landmines, unexploded submunitions can also remain a fatal threat to anyone in the area for decades after a conflict ends. Cluster bombs have killed and injured thousands of civilians during their history of use and continue to cause new casualties today.

## What is the current situation?

The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), which was adopted in 2008 and entered into force in 2010, prohibits the use, production, transfer, and stockpiling of cluster munitions. It requires States Parties to clear cluster munition remnants on their territory within ten years (Article 4) and destroy stockpiles within eight years (Article 3), as well as to provide assistance to victims (Article 5).

The CCM has rapidly gained momentum and has built a strong norm against the use of cluster munitions. Sadly, however, cluster munitions still continue to be used, mainly by a small handful of states not party to the convention. Cluster munitions were used in 2014 in South Sudan and Ukraine, and the Syrian government's on-going use of cluster munitions since mid-2012 has left a devastating civilian casualty toll in its wake.

By the end of 2014, 24 states and three other areas were contaminated by cluster munition remnants. The good news is that most of these can clear their territory in less than five years with political will, the latest land release methodology, and adequate international support. There are only a few cases where clearance should take longer.

The States Parties to the CCM are showing an impressive commitment to rapidly implement the convention's Article 3 obligation to destroy their stockpiles of cluster munitions. By 2014, more than 85 million submunitions, or 60% of all States Parties' reported stocks, had already been destroyed. All of the states that have joined the CCM thus far should be able to complete stockpile destruction well in advance of the convention's eight-year deadline. Not a single one should need to request an extension of this deadline.

## What is NPA's call?

NPA calls on all states and stakeholders to ensure full implementation of the CCM, and more specifically of the clearance and destruction obligations of the convention's Articles 4 and 3 respectively. Strong political will is the key to reach this objective. Concretely, NPA calls for the following:

- All states should ratify/accede to the CCM if not already a State Party.
- Contaminated states should establish an ambitious plan for completion of their clearance obligations under Article 4 of the convention; secure resources; and build necessary institutions and capacities for timely implementation.
- Contaminated states should establish policies and laws that enable the application of sound land release methodology as a major opportunity for improved efficiency and more expedient treaty compliance.
- Stockpiling states should establish an ambitious plan for completion of their stockpile destruction obligations under Article 3 of the convention; secure resources; and build necessary institutions and capacities for timely implementation.
- Donor states should provide sustained, or for some countries, increased levels of funding for cluster munition survey and clearance, while making clear demands on recipient governments to facilitate the application of good land release methodology. As more and more of the countries with light and medium contamination are ticked off the list, sustained levels of funding will ensure that all countries can reach completion.
- Donor states should make assistance for cluster munition stockpile destruction as systematic as other types of mine action assistance, and develop programmes for the provision of such aid to countries that require assistance in destroying their stockpiles of cluster munitions.

## What does NPA do?

NPA's advocacy in support of the above call is an integral and continuous component of all of our cluster munition clearance and stockpile destruction operations. NPA also pursues a regional approach, carrying out advocacy in neighbouring countries where there is no NPA presence. Such regional advocacy can often be done from existing operations with minimal additional effort.

On a global level, NPA's advocacy on cluster munitions takes place in partnership with likeminded operational NGOs and as an active member of the governance board of the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) ([www.stopclustermunitions.org](http://www.stopclustermunitions.org)), the international civil society campaign working to eradicate cluster munitions, prevent further casualties from these weapons, and to put an end for all time to the suffering they cause. NPA is also a key contributor of research and analysis to the Cluster Munition Monitor, the de facto monitoring regime for the implementation of the CCM.



Finally, NPA participates in relevant forums that aim to enhance the quality, impact, and coordination of mine action and cluster munition clearance, such as the Meetings of States Parties to the CCM and the annual International Meeting of Mine Action National Programme Directors and UN Advisors.



# EXPLOSIVE WEAPONS IN POPULATED AREAS



A man carries a young girl who was injured in a reported barrel-bomb attack by government forces on June 3, 2014 in Kallaseh district in the northern city of Aleppo, Syria.  
©AFP PHOTO/BARAA AL-HALABI

## What is the problem?

Explosive weapons kill, injure, damage, and destroy using blast and fragmentation from the detonation of explosives. These weapons include explosive ordnance such as mortars, rockets, artillery shells, and aircraft bombs, as well as improvised explosive devices. When used in populated areas, these weapons are often indiscriminate in their impacts and can inflict severe and long-term suffering on civilians. Each year, tens of thousands of civilians are killed or injured by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, sometimes abbreviated as EWIPA. Still more civilians are affected by damage to vital infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, housing, and water and sanitation systems. It is estimated that 93% of the casualties from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas in 2013 were civilians<sup>2</sup>.

## What is the current situation?

The international community is galvanising for action on this issue. The UN Secretary-General, a range of UN organizations, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have highlighted the serious threat to civilians posed by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and have urged for immediate action to address their impacts. A growing number of governments have also recognized the unacceptable humanitarian harm caused by explosive weapons in populated areas and the challenges this poses for the protection of civilians.

## What is NPA's call?

NPA endorses the call of the International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW), which reads as follows:

*The International Network on Explosive Weapons calls for immediate action to prevent human suffering from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. States and other actors should:*

- Acknowledge that use of explosive weapons in populated areas tends to cause severe harm to individuals and communities and furthers suffering by damaging vital infrastructure;
- Strive to avoid such harm and suffering in any situation, review and strengthen national policies and practices on use of explosive weapons and gather and make available relevant data;
- Work for full realisation of the rights of victims and survivors;
- Develop stronger international standards, including certain prohibitions and restrictions on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

## What does NPA do?

NPA is a founding member of INEW ([www.inew.org](http://www.inew.org)) and a member of the INEW Strategy Group, and thus works at the core of international NGO coalition efforts to stigmatize the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and promote the development of stronger international standards.



**International  
Network on  
Explosive Weapons**

In cases of use of explosive weapons in populated areas where NPA is implementing operations, NPA will seek to research, document, and analyse the impact on civilians and bring field realities to the attention of media and policy-makers.

In addition to our work at the international level as part of INEW, NPA is committed to implement operations on the ground to help reduce and prevent the use of and suffering from explosive weapons in populated areas. Consequently, NPA has established a new Arms Management and Destruction Pillar, alongside our Mine Action Pillar. Through arms management and destruction operations, NPA will help limit the general presence and availability of weapons and ammunition, thus lowering the potential for the use of explosive weapons in populated areas as well as other armed violence. As an integral component of these arms management and destruction operations, NPA carries out advocacy seeking to stigmatize the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, as well as on the need to address dangerous and insecure ammunition storage areas and destroy surpluses of weapons and ammunition. See pages 12-15 for NPA's policy on the latter two issues, which are both closely interlinked with that of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

NPA has also started developing practical preventative measures to help civilians protect themselves when explosive weapons are being used. When conflict in a populated area is expected, good media coverage of the need for such conflict preparedness and protection initiatives also has the potential to help stigmatize and even prevent the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

<sup>2</sup> Action on Armed Violence, "Explosive Violence Monitor 2013 – 'Explosive Events'," November 2014.



# DANGEROUS AND INSECURE AMMUNITION STORAGE AREAS



Thousands of people had to flee for their lives when a series of powerful explosions took place at a military ammunition depot in the Venezuelan city of Maracay, 30 January 2011.  
© Scanpix/Reuters/Gerard Aponte)

## What is the problem?

Around the globe, and particularly in countries with weaker economies, dangerous and insecure ammunition storage areas (ASAs) pose an increasing humanitarian problem. ASAs with large quantities of ageing and unstable munitions, together with inadequate guarding and physical security and poor stockpile management, are disasters waiting to happen. The Small Arms Survey recorded more than 500 incidents in 100 countries of so-called unplanned explosions at munitions sites (UEMS) between 1979 and 2013<sup>3</sup>. In many cases, urban development has meant that ASAs that were once in isolated locations are now located in or in close proximity to heavily populated areas. Every year, thousands of civilians are killed, injured, made homeless, or forced to flee because of UEMS. The impacts of UEMS can be drastic, such as seen following the explosion of a stockpile depot located in a densely populated neighbourhood of Brazzaville, Republic of Congo in 2012, which killed nearly 300 people, injured over 2,000 others, and displaced over 100,000.

In addition to the explosive risk they pose, poorly secured ASAs can result in weapons and ammunition being illegally sold, stolen, or otherwise diverted, further fuelling armed violence and providing a prominent source material for the fabrication of improvised explosive devices.

## What is the current situation?

Both in international weapons-related frameworks and operationally on the ground, insufficient attention is being paid to the highly preventable civilian suffering which every year is caused by dangerous and insecure ASAs. A range of organizations and funding schemes exist that focus on small arms and light weapons and ammunition. Medium and larger calibre explosive ordnance, bulk explosives and other hazardous contents in ASAs, however, can pose even greater risks to civilians, yet they are not receiving the same amount of attention.

## What is NPA's call?

NPA calls on all states and non-state armed groups to prevent UEMS and diversion of weapons and ammunition by acting on their responsibility to ensure adequate physical security and management of ASAs.

NPA also calls on donor states to make available increased resources for assistance to states that require support to responsibly address dangerous and insecure ASAs, including military-to-military support as well as through NGOs.

## What does NPA do?

NPA's advocacy in support of the above call is an integral and continuous component of all of NPA's arms management and destruction operations.

In cases of UEMS in areas where NPA is implementing operations, NPA will seek to not only respond operationally but also research, document, and analyse the impact on civilians and bring this information to the attention of media and policy-makers.

On the global level, NPA will work with other interested and capable partners like Mines Advisory Group and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs to build this humanitarian agenda, increase awareness of the role that NGO providers can play, and to mobilize political will and resources among states for destruction of surpluses as a way of protecting civilians from weapons-related risks.



# SURPLUS WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION



A rebel surveys ammunition in a Qaddafi government ammunition depot, outside of Zintan, Libya, 2011.  
© Bryan Denton/Corbis

## What is the problem?

Many armed forces fail to destroy surplus<sup>4</sup> military weapons and ammunition. Instead they choose to sell or give away stocks that they do not need, or to retain them indefinitely. This leads to heightened levels of explosive risk at ammunition storage areas (ASAs), more diversion and proliferation of weapons and ammunition, and the perpetuation of armed violence, including the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Many factors contribute to the global build-up of ageing and excess weapons and ammunition. These can include a lack of awareness, transparency, or trust; the absence of national policies on the issue; a lack of training and capacity in armed forces; and insufficient donor resources.

## What is the current situation?

Destruction of degraded or obsolete munitions is a routine component of good ammunition management. In order to effectively reduce the global build-up of surpluses of military weapons and ammunition, however, a more focused effort is required. NPA is convinced that there is considerable scope to motivate armed forces to actively and systematically choose to reduce their surpluses by destruction. Increased awareness and political will is an essential element. In NPA's view, the ongoing failure to destroy surpluses of military weapons and ammunition should be recognized as a humanitarian problem, and the need to speed up destruction of surpluses should be higher on global and national political agendas as a way of protecting civilians from weapons-related risks.

## What is NPA's call?

NPA calls on all states and non-state armed groups to reduce surplus stocks of weapons and ammunition by destruction. In particular, NPA calls for destruction of surpluses of explosive weapons.

NPA also calls on donor states to make available increased resources for assistance to states that require support in destroying surpluses of military weapons and ammunition, including military-to-military support as well as through NGOs.

## What does NPA do?

NPA's advocacy in support of the above call is an integral and continuous component of all of NPA's arms management and destruction operations. In assisting states or non-state armed groups with arms management and destruction, NPA always actively strives to motivate them to take a critical look at what ammunition stocks they actually require for their current force structure, and to present knowledgeable and convincing arguments why it is in their own interest to destroy any surpluses.

On the global level, NPA will work with other interested and capable partners like Mines Advisory Group and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs to build this humanitarian agenda, increase awareness of the role that NGO providers can play, and to mobilize political will and resources among states for destruction of surpluses as a way of protecting civilians from weapons-related risks.

<sup>4</sup>By "surplus" NPA means the quantity of weapons and ammunition exceeding the requirements of the national stockpile, including those that are unserviceable, obsolete, or prohibited. See UN Safer Guard, "Policy development and advice," *International Ammunition Technical Guideline 01.30, First Edn*, 1 October 2011, p. 11.



# TOXIC REMNANTS OF WAR



A 30mm anti-armour projectile containing depleted uranium, used by NATO during the air-strikes on Bosnia in 1995, and later found in a former military factory in the suburb of Vogosca, near Sarajevo. TRW includes, but is not limited to, depleted uranium.  
© AP PHOTO/HIDAJET DELIC

## What is the problem?

While the impact of explosive remnants of war (ERW) is comparatively well documented, and increasingly well managed, less attention has been focused on toxic materials released during military activities. This is often referred to as military pollution, and has also been coined “toxic remnants of war” (TRW). The release of TRW can have detrimental impacts on the environment and human health and require substantial efforts to redress.

TRW can be defined as any toxic or radiological substance resulting from military activities that forms a hazard to humans and ecosystems<sup>5</sup>. TRW can for example be released because of deliberate targeting of industrial infrastructure such as oil tanks, which will catch fire and release highly toxic pollutants into the atmosphere. TRW also includes toxic residue from used munitions, such as tungsten, depleted uranium, and lead, as well as energetic materials (present in explosives such as RDX and TNT). Other examples of situations where TRW can be released are abandoned ammunition dumps, ageing munitions stockpiles, military scrap metal, and waste from bombed buildings, including during the disposal of all of the above. White phosphorous munitions and other incendiary weapons, as well as chemical and biological weapons, also create TRW when they are used.

## What is the current situation?

Around the world, a lack of accountability for the harm to the environment and public health because of TRW released during conflict and military activities undermines global efforts to help fragile countries recover from armed conflicts.

Beyond the broad imperative of preventing hazards to human and environmental health, the issue is also of particular importance to NPA and other field operators, whose staff are physically present in areas where TRW have been or could be released, both during our arms management and destruction operations and in our mine action operations. Areas with mine or cluster munition contamination in some instances overlap areas contaminated with depleted uranium or other TRW. Such cross-contamination not only makes clearance operations very difficult, but also potentially hazardous to our employees. Similarly, it is necessary for NPA to possess expertise on the toxic components of munitions that will be released during processes of destruction and how to mitigate this harm.

## What is NPA's call?

NPA endorses the call of the Toxic Remnants of War Network, which reads as follows:

*The Toxic Remnants of War Network (TRWN) calls for urgent action to prevent harm to human health and the environment from toxic materials released by military activities.*

*We call on states and other actors to:*

- Acknowledge that military practices and materials should not be exempted from standards and norms established to protect human and environmental health.
- Review policies and practices so as to minimise toxic remnants of war.
- Commit to rigorously assess and remedy environmental harm resulting from military activities, and strengthen obligations governing cooperation and assistance.
- Improve legal protection for civilians, military personnel and the environment from toxic remnants of war.

## What does NPA do?

NPA is a founding member of the Toxic Remnants of War Network (TRWN) ([www.trwn.org](http://www.trwn.org)), a new civil society network linking NGOs active in the fields of humanitarian disarmament, the environment, and public health, which seeks to minimise harm to civilians and the environment from military pollution and TRW. The TRWN and not least NPA as a field operator benefit greatly from the work of the research staff of the associated Toxic Remnants of War Project (TRWP) ([www.toxicremnantsofwar.info](http://www.toxicremnantsofwar.info)).



In addition to our work at the international level to help develop new norms and rules regarding TRW through the TRWN, NPA has embarked on a longer-term process to identify operational needs and develop operational responses to TRW. The knowledge we gain from this field-based work will support and feed into NPA's and the TRWN's policy, research, and advocacy on TRW.



# INCENDIARY WEAPONS



In this photo taken 10 June 2009, 8-year-old Razia is pushed in a wheelchair by her father Mohammed Aziz in the U.S. military hospital at Bagram Air Base, north of Kabul, Afghanistan. Associated Press reported that Razia was evacuated to the hospital after two WP shells hit her home in the Tagab Valley, during fighting between US, French and Afghan forces and Taliban militants. When the shells hit, smoke and fire filled the room. Two of Razia's sisters were killed, and Razia was engulfed in flames. During transport to the hospital, Razia slipped in and out of consciousness as her father poured water on her face to keep her awake. When she reached the operating room, the 8-year-old's skin was smoking from WP. The American military doctors watched in horror as the oxygen mask on the young Afghan girl's face started to melt, and flames leapt out when they attempted to scrape away the dead tissue. Razia underwent at least 15 surgeries before she was released from hospital.

© AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool

## What is the problem?

Incendiary weapons use heat and fire to kill and injure people or destroy objects. Napalm, widely used during the Vietnam War, is the most notorious incendiary substance, but more than 180 models of incendiary weapons currently exist. They cause particularly cruel injuries, such as severe and extensive burns which are difficult to treat, and can lead to slow and painful death or permanent scarring and disfigurement.

White phosphorus (WP), one type of incendiary weapon with especially egregious impacts, causes chemical and thermal burns, often down to the bone as it is highly soluble in fat. WP is also pyrophoric, meaning that it burns when exposed to oxygen, and as such can cause wounds which have been dressed and treated to re-ignite when exposed to air again.

WP munitions are in the arsenal of many nations and are generally used to create smokescreens and mark targets. In addition, armed forces have used WP munitions to “smoke out” enclosures such as armoured vehicles or buildings, forcing anyone inside to flee the smoke and fire into open areas where they can be more easily attacked with high explosive rounds. This type of use is controversial, even when applied to combatants, because of the nature of the injuries caused. Regardless of how they are used, weapons containing WP raise humanitarian concerns. Not only do they produce especially cruel injuries, but they also often have a broad area effect, which means they cannot be used in a way that discriminates between soldiers and civilians in populated areas<sup>6</sup>.

WP munitions are regularly found in the field by NPA's mine action teams in a number of countries, especially in South East Asia. Their presence disturbs and slows down survey and clearance, particularly of cluster munition remnants. This happens because a shift to a specific “incendiary drill” is required when WP munitions are identified, as they in some cases still are dangerous to handle.

## What is the current situation?

Incendiary weapons continue to be used with civilian deaths and injuries as a result. The use of WP munitions on a UN school where civilians were sheltering in Gaza in January 2009 was a high-profile example of the problems associated with these weapons. (See cover photo.)

Current international law on incendiary weapons is inadequate. Protocol III of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) addresses incendiary weapons but only provides limited protection for civilians. It does not prohibit them (only regulates them) and it also defines these weapons so narrowly that it excludes those with “incidental” incendiary effects. According to Human Rights Watch, some governments, including the US, thus believe that WP munitions are not covered by Protocol III, even when used intentionally for incendiary effects. Human Rights Watch is also highly critical of the fact that the protocol prohibits attacks in populated areas with air-dropped incendiary weapons yet permits the same kinds of attacks with ground-launched models under certain circumstances.

Human Rights Watch and Harvard Law School's International Human Rights Clinic are working to get states to revisit Protocol III and agree on a mandate to amend its loopholes. International support for strengthening existing law on incendiary weapons is growing. Many States Parties to the CCW have stated that they are concerned about the offensive use of WP against civilians, and that they are willing to reopen the incendiary weapons issue. Because of the consensus-based working process of the CCW, no action has unfortunately yet been taken, and it is likely that a ban on incendiary weapons would need to be taken forward in a different forum.

## What is NPA's call?

NPA calls for a complete ban on the use of incendiary weapons in all circumstances, including a ban on WP munitions.

## What does NPA do?

If incendiary weapons are used in an area where NPA is implementing operations, NPA will seek to research, document, and analyse the impact on civilians and bring this evidence to the attention of media and policy-makers.

As and when the requisite political will can be mobilized to make international progress on this agenda, NPA will work with NGO partners such as Human Rights Watch and Article 36 to convince states of the unacceptability of this class of weapons.

<sup>6</sup> “Government Positions on Protocol III on Incendiary Weapons. Memorandum to Convention on Conventional Weapons Delegates”, Human Rights Watch and the Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic, November 2012 (updating April 2012 memorandum)



# CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS



The use of chemical weapons in Syria in August 2013 killed and injured thousands, including hundreds of children.  
© Erbin News/NurPhoto/Corbis/All Over Press

## What is the problem?

Chemical and biological weapons use chemical agents or biological agents such as viruses and bacteria to kill, incapacitate, and injure. They are classified as weapons of mass destruction for their capacity to kill and injure indiscriminately and in large numbers. The insidious and often invisible means through which they inflict harm through poisoning and spreading disease adds a particularly terrifying psychological element to the use of these weapons that has long been considered abhorrent by the international community.

## What is the current situation?

The use of chemical and biological weapons in warfare was banned by the international community after World War I under the 1925 Geneva Protocol, following large-scale use of chemical weapons. This ban was subsequently extended by the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention to also prohibit the development, production, stockpiling, and transfer of these weapons. Reinforcing the treaties prohibiting these weapons and the stigma against their use remains a serious imperative. The use of chemical weapons in Syria, including in Damascus in August 2013, was a stark reminder of the need to ensure that these weapons, and all weapons of mass destruction, must never be used again. This incident also cast a spotlight on the fact that considerable stockpiles of chemical weapons continue to be held by both the US and Russia, in violation of their treaty obligations.

Rapid developments in the fields of life sciences, chemical, and bio-technology have also increased the potential for scientific advancements to be misused to create even more deadly weapons through the manipulation of diseases and toxic agents. These risks are compounded by the relative ease with which chemical and biological weapons can be fabricated and delivered, including by non-state actors.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has also raised concerns about the interest among police, security, and armed forces in using toxic chemicals – primarily dangerous anaesthetic drugs – as law-enforcement weapons designed to render targets unconscious or otherwise severely incapacitated. These substances have been described as “incapacitating chemical agents,” and are separate from the “riot control agents” which are permitted under the Chemical Weapons Convention as a means for “law enforcement including domestic riot control purposes” only. Two international expert meetings convened by the ICRC in 2010 and 2012 established that using these weapons would endanger the life and health of those exposed, risk undermining international law prohibiting chemical weapons, and constitute a “slippery slope” towards the reintroduction of chemical weapons in armed conflict<sup>7</sup>.

## What is NPA's call?

NPA calls for renewed attention to be given to ensuring the complete destruction of all stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons and for total adherence to the international prohibitions against their use. To this end, vigilance against the misuse of advances in chemical and biological sciences is vitally important. NPA also supports the February 2013 ICRC appeal to all states to limit the use of toxic chemicals as weapons for law enforcement purposes to riot-control agents only.

NPA believes that stronger recognition and respect for the Chemical Weapons Convention and Biological Weapons Convention reinforces the commitment of the international community to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction categorically.

## What does NPA do?

Chemical and biological weapons are not an issue on which NPA is engaged on an ongoing basis. If development, production, stockpiling, transfer, or use of such weapons is discovered or suspected during an NPA operation, however, we will do everything in our power to call national and international attention to the issue and to ensure the destruction of any prohibited materials.

<sup>7</sup> ICRC, “Chemical and Biological Weapons: Overview,” 8 April 2013, [www.icrc.org/eng/war-and-law/weapons/chemical-biological-weapons/overview-chemical-biological-weapons.htm](http://www.icrc.org/eng/war-and-law/weapons/chemical-biological-weapons/overview-chemical-biological-weapons.htm)



# NUCLEAR WEAPONS



Russian nuclear Topol (aka SS-25) intercontinental ballistic missiles photographed in Yushkovo outside Moscow, 8 March 2008.  
© AFP/Dima Korotayev

## What is the problem?

Nuclear weapons are the most destructive, inhumane, and indiscriminate weapons on earth. There are more than 16,000 nuclear warheads in the world today, posing a constant threat to global security and human survival. Detonation of even a single nuclear weapon in a populated area, whether rural or urban, would almost certainly have catastrophic humanitarian consequences. In most conceivable cases it is not feasible to build a response capacity that would be able to address the humanitarian problems and the suffering that such an event would cause. Nuclear weapons have not been used in conflict since 1945, but many accidents, mishaps, and miscalculations involving nuclear weapons have come to light and continue to do so. In addition, there is the continuing risk of diversion of nuclear weapons to terrorist groups. So long as nuclear weapons continue to exist, there is an overhanging danger of their detonation.

## What is the current situation?

It is a paradox that these weapons of mass destruction have not already been made illegal in the same way as chemical and biological weapons. The nuclear-armed states have stifled all efforts to fulfil Article VI of the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which obliges States Parties to pursue in good faith, and bring to a conclusion, negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. Instead there is a tendency for the NPT to be used to justify a continuation of the status quo, where a handful of countries claim a right to continue holding nuclear weapons. There are now more nuclear-armed states than when the NPT was adopted. All are investing heavily in the modernization of their nuclear forces, with the apparent intention of retaining them for many decades to come. In doing so, they are moving away from their disarmament obligations.

The overwhelming majority of states which have renounced nuclear weapons, increasingly impatient with the excuses and stalling tactics of their nuclear-armed and nuclear-dependent neighbours, have started to show signs that they are ready to act on their own. The Humanitarian Initiative on Nuclear Weapons (HINW) was started with a conference in Norway in March 2013 and continued with follow-up conferences in Mexico (February 2014) and Vienna (December 2014). It is NPA's hope that HINW in the near future will lead to negotiations to put in place a treaty that makes it clear that these weapons, like the other weapons of mass destruction, are illegal and that those states that cling to them will be doing so outside the norms of international law.

## What is NPA's call?

NPA endorses the call of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which reads as follows:

*ICAN calls on states, international organisations, civil society organisations and other actors to:*

- Acknowledge that any use of nuclear weapons would cause catastrophic humanitarian and environmental harm.
- Acknowledge that there is a universal humanitarian imperative to ban nuclear weapons, even for states that do not possess them.
- Acknowledge that the nuclear-armed states have an obligation to eliminate their nuclear weapons completely.
- Take immediate action to support a multilateral process of negotiations for a treaty banning nuclear weapons.

## What does NPA do?

NPA is a member of ICAN ([www.icanw.org](http://www.icanw.org)) and also represented on ICAN's International Steering Group. We thus work at the core of the current international NGO efforts to mobilize people in all countries to inspire, persuade, and pressure their governments to initiate negotiations for a treaty banning nuclear weapons.



With Norway being a NATO member living under a “nuclear umbrella,” NPA places particular emphasis on putting pressure on the government of Norway to continue to be a leader within HINW and to work to create an international political foundation for a prohibition on nuclear weapons.

When international negotiations on a prohibition commence, all NPA country programmes will be called upon to motivate their host governments to support and participate in the process.



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# ARMED DRONES AND AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS



An armed MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aerial vehicle taxis down a runway in Afghanistan. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Brian Ferguson)  
© DoD/Corbis/All Over Press

## What is the problem?

Over the past decade the use of armed drones, or armed unmanned aerial vehicles, has increased dramatically in a growing number of countries around the world. While drones in themselves only provide a platform for the delivery of weapons, the way in which drones are being used is raising many difficult questions about the acceptability of the use of explosive force and respect for principles of international humanitarian law and human rights. From a humanitarian perspective, the extent to which weapons fired from drones are killing, injuring, and terrorizing civilians, causing communities to live under a persistent threat and fear of drone strikes, and fuelling conflicts by encouraging retributive violence is deeply troubling. These problems are further exacerbated by a widespread lack of transparency, accountability, and acknowledgement of casualties.

At the same time, there is growing concern that the use of unmanned aerial vehicles is only a first step towards the development of fully autonomous weapons, so-called “killer robots.” These weapons would cross a fundamental moral threshold by allowing machines to select and engage targets and make life or death decisions without any direct human control. The development and use of these weapons, where the human is taken ‘out-of-the-loop’ with respect to targeting and attack decisions on the battlefield, would represent a dramatic turning point in the conduct of warfare and raise serious humanitarian, legal, and ethical questions.

## What is the current situation?

Mounting evidence of significant numbers of civilian casualties from the use of drones has sparked international condemnation and calls for investigation and greater accountability. In recent years, UN Special Rapporteurs on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions and on human rights and counter-terrorism have issued reports raising serious concerns about the use of drones.

Fully fledged “killer robots” have yet to be used on the battlefield. However, there are concerns that the development of fully autonomous weapons could have devastating consequences and must be prevented before countries risk entering into arms races and significant investment, technological momentum, and acceptance into military doctrine makes it more likely they will be widely used on the battlefield.

## What is NPA's call?

NPA supports calls for greater protection for civilians from armed drones and greater transparency and accountability around their use. NPA also supports the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots' call for “a pre-emptive and comprehensive ban on the development, production, and use of fully autonomous weapons, also known as lethal autonomous robots.”

## What does NPA do?

NPA has opted to not work on the issue of armed drones and autonomous weapons, but welcomes the efforts of other organizations that are working on this new humanitarian agenda, including the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots ([www.stopkillerrobots.org](http://www.stopkillerrobots.org)).

If civilians are killed or injured because of the use of armed drones in an area where NPA is implementing operations, NPA will when possible seek to research, document, and analyse the impact on civilians and bring this information to the attention of relevant NGOs, media, and policy-makers.



# CASUALTY RECORDING



A Bosnian Muslim searches for the number of the coffin of a relative, who was one of the 175 newly identified victims from the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, in Potocari Memorial Center, near Srebrenica 10 July 2014. © REUTERS/Dado Ruvic.

## What is the problem?

Every day there are victims of armed violence whose deaths go unrecorded. This results in failures of accountability and makes it difficult to develop adequate and comprehensive responses to wider patterns and impacts of conflict and violence. Beyond the practical benefits that documenting casualties can bring towards understanding the ways and means through which the protection of civilians is failing, it should also be seen as a fundamental moral obligation to acknowledge and record each and every individual's violent death as a manifestation of the rights of victims to be recognized and accounted for.

## What is the current situation?

In 2009, more than 60 states pledged through the Oslo Commitments on Armed Violence to measure and monitor the impact of armed violence<sup>8</sup>. However, there is currently no explicit international obligation on states to record deaths from armed violence, despite such recording being a vital building block for recognizing the rights of victims, criminal justice responses, and efforts to limit such harm in the future. In many countries, the state's responsibility for such recording is taken for granted, yet when those states operate internationally (even in UN mandated military operations) they tend to shirk any responsibility to document the harm that is caused. In other countries state mechanisms are simply not yet adequate to meet this responsibility among their own populations.

## What is NPA's call?

NPA endorses the call of the Every Casualty Campaign, which reads as follows:

*The Every Casualty Campaign calls on states, in partnership with other actors, to recognise every casualty of armed violence by ensuring that all casualties are:*

- Promptly recorded.
- Correctly identified.
- Publicly acknowledged.

*By every casualty, we mean all men, women and children, whether civilian or combatant, directly killed in armed violence anywhere in the world.*

*By promptly recorded, we mean immediately when it is safe to do so.*

*By correctly identified, we mean that personal details such as their name, sex, and age be verifiably established.*

*And by publicly acknowledged, we mean that this information be made openly accessible to all, including the bereaved.*

*In fulfilling this call states and other actors should:*

- Uphold the rights and dignity of victims and others throughout the process;
- Ensure that the information produced is adequate and accessible as a basis for addressing the rights and needs of victims.
- Take all relevant actions at the national level.
- Work with others to develop an international framework for casualty recording.

## What does NPA do?

NPA is a member of the Every Casualty Campaign ([www.everycasualty.org](http://www.everycasualty.org)), a coalition of civil society organizations, founded in 2012, that works with states, civil society, casualty-recording practitioners, and international organizations to build recognition of this problem and promote concrete steps towards improved recording of casualties.



NPA's own advocacy on this issue is in large part focused on the government of Norway, encouraging it to 1) measure and monitor the impact of armed violence exercised by Norwegian armed forces and to publish related information; 2) review its policy and practice on casualty recording; and 3) acknowledge the need for casualty recording in public statements at relevant national and international forums.

<sup>8</sup> [www.osloconferencearmedviolence.no](http://www.osloconferencearmedviolence.no)



# THE ARMS TRADE



Arms manufacturers and dealers from across the globe met at a trade fair in Kielce, Poland in September 2014.  
© AFP PHOTO/JANEK SKARZYNSKI

## What is the problem?

Thousands of people are killed, injured, raped, or forced to flee their homes as a result of unregulated global arms trade. Without regulation, states and other actors are able to sell and purchase weapons with impunity even where there is a substantial risk that weapons will be used in violation of international humanitarian and human rights law, as well to facilitate gender-based violence and other negative impacts on development. The multi-billion dollar trade in arms has been a major source of fuelling conflicts, perpetuating poverty, and repeated human rights abuses, war crimes, and genocide.

## What is the current situation?

On 2 April 2013, the UN General Assembly adopted the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which aims to set high standards for the regulation of the global trade in conventional arms and help prevent weapons from being sold to human rights abusers and violators of international law. The treaty applies to a very wide range of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons, tanks and armoured combat vehicles, combat aircraft, warships, missiles and missile launchers, as well as ammunition and weapons parts and components. While considered imperfect by some, the ATT provides a baseline for the establishment of stronger controls on and regulation of the arms trade and the starting point for a new norm against which state practice will be measured. The ATT entered into force in December 2014.

## What is NPA's call?

NPA calls on all states to adhere to the ATT and to implement it stringently.

NPA urges all states to seize the opportunity presented by the ATT to change the arms trade and to halt the unconstrained flood of weapons and ammunition into the world's worst conflict zones.

## What does NPA do?

NPA promotes the ATT by using it as a platform for the mobilization of support and funding for operations and advocacy efforts related to arms management and destruction, which contribute to reduce the number of weapons and ammunition in circulation globally.

NPA has done some country-specific research and advocacy on arms trade related issues but is not actively engaged in advocacy on global arms trade issues in general.



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# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ASA</b>	ammunition storage area
<b>ATT</b>	Arms Trade Treaty
<b>CCM</b>	Convention on Cluster Munitions
<b>CCW</b>	Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
<b>CMC</b>	Cluster Munition Coalition
<b>HINW</b>	Humanitarian Initiative on Nuclear Weapons
<b>ICAN</b>	International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>ICBL</b>	International Campaign to Ban Landmines
<b>INEW</b>	International Network on Explosive Weapons
<b>MBT</b>	Antipersonnel Mine Ban Treaty
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>NPA</b>	Norwegian People's Aid
<b>NPT</b>	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
<b>TRW</b>	toxic remnants of war
<b>TRWN</b>	Toxic Remnants of War Network
<b>TRWP</b>	Toxic Remnants of War Project
<b>UEMS</b>	unplanned explosions in munitions sites
<b>WP</b>	white phosphorus



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