

UK calls for the end of cluster munitions use around the world

Actor and UN Ambassador Daniel Craig and FCO Minister Graham Stuart MP will today call for the end of cluster munition use around the world at an international conference chaired by the UK.

Cluster bombs continue to kill and maim civilians in conflicts around the world, including Syria, Libya and Ukraine, often leaving their victims with life-changing injuries. Unexploded munitions continue to threaten the lives of civilians for years afterwards, hampering post-conflict reconstruction and development.

The UK currently holds the Presidency of the Convention on Cluster Munitions of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, an international agreement ratified by 110 countries to end the use of these devastating weapons. This conference will bring together the international community and civil society organisations to work together to rid the world of these weapons, educate communities on the dangers associated with their use and support survivors and their families.

Alongside the Minister, Daniel Craig will open the conference with a video message in his capacity as the United Nations Global Advocate for the Elimination of Mines and Explosive Hazards.

Daniel Craig will say:

Civilians all too often pay the price when these brutal weapons are used. In my work with the United Nations Mine Action Service, I have seen how long after conflicts, damage caused by cluster munitions persists.

Unbelievably we are still seeing use of cluster munitions today, most recently in Ukraine.

Countries that still use and produce cluster munitions need to stop doing so, they are barbaric weapons used mainly on civilian populations to spread fear and anxiety. It is up to us to do the hard work, to do what we can to support each other and help civilians recover from the devastating impact of these weapons.

Graham Stuart, FCO Minister responsible for Counter-Proliferation, is expected to say:

Too many innocent civilians have lost their lives to these weapons of war. Under our Presidency, the UK has driven forward work to eliminate them altogether.

Every step taken under this Convention, makes the world a safer place – but too many states still refuse to give up cluster munitions. We will continue to speak out against these murderous weapons – as we did in March when we condemned their use in the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine.

We did so on behalf of the parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Since the Convention was founded 14 years ago, 110 State Parties have ratified it, 13 States have signed up to its objectives but not yet ratified, and 35 states have cleared their stockpiles of cluster munitions.

The UK is a leading supporter of mine action, and continues to invest heavily in clearance of cluster munitions, anti-personnel mines, and other explosive remnants of war around the world. In June 2022, the UK announced a budget of up to £100million for the third phase of its Global Mine Action Programme tackling the lethal legacy of these weapons.