

Fact Sheet

Campaign the Singapore Government to Stop Producing Cluster Bombs

The Singapore government, through its government linked company, Singapore Technologies Kinetics Ltd (ST Kinetics), manufactures, stockpiles and publicly advertises two types of cluster ammunitions for sale (Cluster Munition Coalition 2008) .

They are the '155mm DPICM artillery projectiles (containing 63 or 49 grenades) equipped with electro- mechanical self-destruct fuzes with an advertised dud rate of 3 percent' and 'a 120mm mortar bomb which delivers 25 DPICM grenades' (Singapore Technologies Engineering n.d., cited in Cluster Munition Coalition, 2008).

As world governmental representatives converged in Dublin on the 19th May to seek an agreement on banning cluster bombs, the absence of major producers such as United States, China and Russia have seriously undermined these efforts (Gergely 2008) . The U.N. Development Programme claimed that 'cluster munitions have caused more than 13,000 confirmed injuries and deaths around the world, the vast majority of them in Laos, Vietnam and Afghanistan' (Gergely 2008).

In a brief online scan of Singapore's two major newspapers, TODAY and Straits Times, dating 16 to 20 May, both well- read media in the country, have remained silent over this issue. The online blogosphere has also been muted on Singapore's role in possessing such bombs.

Singapore has also not attended the international conferences held in Oslo, Lima, Vienna, and Wellington which seeks to prohibit the use of cluster bombs. As of April 2008,

Singapore remains not having subscribed to the Wellington Declaration which 'affirms the country's "objective of concluding the negotiation of such an instrument prohibiting cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians'. The declaration is a prerequisite to full participation in the conference in Dublin (Cluster Munition Coalition 2008).

Cluster munitions can cause excessive harm to civilians even when the conflict has been over for it 'can remain a threat for decades'. It is primarily a weapon which contains 'multiple explosive submunitions' which are 'dropped from aircraft or fired from the ground and designed to break open in midair, releasing the submunitions and saturating an area that can be the size of several football fields. Anybody within that area, be they military or civilian, is very likely to be killed or seriously injured'. Those that are not exploded, and most of them don't, 'are left on the ground and, like landmines, remain a fatal threat'. As such, people are prevented from using 'their land and access schools and hospitals'. Cluster munitions have been used since the Second World War and most recently in Lebanon in 2006 (Cluster Munition Coalition Ireland 2008).

Given that the world-wide trend is towards banning cluster bombs; and that the Singapore government has remained steadfastly committed to manufacturing and selling such munitions, Singaporeans should be duly concerned about these weapons being used against innocent civilians.

What then, can Singaporeans do, given that the media has not reported on this issue?

They can:

1. act as citizen journalists by highlighting this issue in their website or blog.

2. sign and forward the petition which is to campaign on the ban at Dublin at
< <http://www.stopclusterbombs.ie/petition> >.
3. Execute a nation-wide campaign to pressurise the government into entering into negotiations with the aim to ban cluster bombs.
4. Write to their MPs and urge them to field questions about this issue during Question Time in Parliament; or to the Opposition, appealing them to take up this cause.
5. Tell everyone you know about Singapore's involvement as a producer of cluster munitions and its detrimental effects.

Works Cited

Cluster Munition Coalition 2008, *Cluster Munitions in the Asia-Pacific Region*, Human Rights Watch, regional fact sheet, accessed 20 May 2008, < <http://www.hrw.org/pub/2008/arms/CMC.ClusterMunitions.Asia-Pacific.2008.pdf> >

Gergely, A 2008, 'UN calls for cluster bomb ban at global gathering', *Reuters News*, 20 May, accessed 20 May 2008, < <http://africa.reuters.com/top/news/usnBAN024091.html> >.

Cluster Munitions Coalition Ireland 2008, *What are Cluster Bombs?*, accessed 20 May 2008, < <http://www.stopclusterbombs.ie/problem> >