



Speaking Peace to Power

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International Law

It has been agonizing for Minnesotans to realize that, while the U.S. is castigating Russia for using cluster bombs and land mines in its horrific war against Ukraine, the U.S. has not actually signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions or the Mine Ban Treaty. In addition, while demanding war crimes investigation and prosecution, the U.S. is not a member of the International Criminal Court.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions came into force on 1 August 2010, marking a major step towards ridding the world of these submunitions, which can kill and maim decades after being unleashed. These bombs are dropped from the air or fired from the ground and designed to break open in mid-air, releasing the submunitions over an area that can be the size of several football fields. This means they cannot discriminate between civilians and soldiers. Many of the submunitions fail to explode on impact and remain a threat to lives and livelihoods for decades after a conflict. In 2020, children represented 44% of all cluster munitions casualties, with an average age of 11 years old.

A total of 123 states have signed onto the Convention on Cluster Munitions banning production and use of these weapons and providing assistance to survivors and victims. The U.S. should sign this Convention.

Similarly, antipersonnel landmines are explosive devices designed to injure or kill people. They can lie dormant for years and even decades under, on, or near the ground until a person or animal triggers their detonating mechanism.

The 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction is the international agreement that bans antipersonnel landmines. It is usually referred to as the Ottawa Convention or the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty. The Convention is signed by 133 States, and has 164 States parties. The U.S. is not one of them.

On 10 December 2019, resolution 74/61 titled "[Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction](#)" was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations by a recorded vote of 161 in favor to none against, with 19 abstentions, one of which was the U.S.

We ask you to rectify this hypocrisy and push for ratification of both of these agreements.

In addition, the failure of the United States to recognize the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) makes it much harder for us to demand that all those responsible be held accountable for any war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as the crime of aggression. Representative Omar has introduced a resolution, H. Res. 1058, which states that the U.S. should become a full member of the ICC. We ask that you co-sponsor this resolution.