
07-01102

Towards a global ban on the use of Depleted Uranium Weapons Statement of Pax Christi International

Pax Christi International expresses its grave concern in relation to the threat that uranium weapons pose to human health and the environment. It therefore calls on all governments to follow Belgium's example and ban the use and manufacture of uranium weapons in their territories.

There is growing consensus among civil society groups, scientists and some military organisations that the health risks from depleted uranium have been seriously underestimated. Since 2001, the European Parliament has made repeated calls for a moratorium to be introduced on the use of uranium weapons. More recently, these calls have been strengthened into demands for an outright ban. In March 2007, Belgium became the first country in the world to ban uranium "inert ammunitions and armour plates". Acknowledging the Precautionary Principle, Belgian deputies thus prohibited the manufacture, use, storage, sale, acquisition, supply and transit of these conventional weapon systems.

We call on other governments to follow this example and ban the use and manufacture of uranium weapons in their territories.

At the same time, we reiterate our support to the campaign of the International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons (ICBUW), seeking to introduce a new depleted uranium resolution to the UN General Assembly, and propagating a Draft Convention explicitly banning uranium weapons.

We also recall the importance of protecting and assisting civilians living in contaminated areas, irrespective of these areas being war sites or testing sites. More information may be found on

www.bandedepleteduranium.org, www.motherearth.org/du

Brussels, 9 November 2007

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Secretary General