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Lebanon: Cluster-bombs threaten civilian lives

Unexploded cluster bombs in south Lebanon - fired by Israel forces during the recent conflict - are threatening the lives of civilians, especially children. Numerous unexploded but still lethal bombs have been found in villages and even inside homes. Call on the Israeli government to immediately hand-over their maps to the UN to save Lebanese lives.

Following the conflict where an estimated 1,183 Lebanese people died – about one third of whom were children – Israeli cluster bombs are posing a terrifying threat to hundreds of thousands of civilians in post-conflict Lebanon. Children, such as six-year-old ‘Abbas Yusef Shibli, are particularly at risk. He picked up a cluster bomb while playing on 26 August, suffering multiple injuries for which he has so far undergone two blood transfusions.

Cluster munitions spread bomblets – small bombs - over a wide area, many of which do not explode on impact but remain live, and lethal. According to the UN Mine Action Coordination Center, more than 400 areas targeted in Israeli attacks are now contaminated with as many as 100,000 unexploded bomblets. Israeli forces carried out 90 per cent of their cluster bombs strikes in the last 72 hours of the 34-day conflict - when a ceasefire was in sight – according to a senior UN official.

Israel has so far failed to respond adequately to UN requests to hand over maps detailing the areas it targeted with cluster bombs. These are vital to assist bomb clearance and reduce the potential for further civilian casualties.

Call to action

Write to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and to the Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defence Force calling for the immediate hand-over of Israeli maps to the UN to reduce the risk of unexploded cluster-bombs to Lebanese civilians.

Sample letter

Dear Mr Peretz and Lieutenant-General Halutz,

I am writing to express concern that civilians in Lebanon, particularly children, are at risk of death or injury from cluster bombs fired by Israeli forces during the recent conflict.

I call on the Israeli authorities to take immediate action to hand over to the UN maps and other information detailing comprehensively and specifically the locations in Lebanon of cluster bombs and other unexploded ordnance were dropped, to enable the UN to coordinate the clearance of these devices.

Yours sincerely,

Target contact details

1)

Amir Peretz

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Salutation: Dear Minister

2)

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Nineteen-year-old Hussein Qaduh, a student in accounting at the Beirut Islamic Technical Institute, was severely injured by a cluster bomb on 28 August in the southern Lebanese village of Sultaniye as he walked along a path in the village next to a football field.