



Jesuit Refugee Service Asia Pacific

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Dear Friends,

Greetings of Peace. On several occasions this year JRS celebrated the achievement of another mile-stone. February 16, 2010 was indeed good news of great joy when 30 countries ratified the cluster munitions Treaty. This means the Treaty (Convention of Cluster Munitions) will enter into force on 1st August 2010 as a binding International Law.

On February 17, in different parts of Cambodia, JRS gathered friends to release 104/30 balloons and pigeons. On February 19, 2010 JRS and friends in Thailand gathered in a simple event to remember this day with banners and 30 balloons. On March 22-25 Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and the Cluster Munition Coalition worked together on several workshops in Jakarta which included meetings to promote Indonesia's ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

We would like to continue this celebration while promoting the universalisation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions to increase signatures and ratification to the Convention in the lead-up to the entry into force (1 August 2010).

Please promote this event among your friends, communities, work place or religious circles so that together we can make it happen! The attached information is provided for your use, dissemination. Please free to translate into your respective language/s and circulate to as many people as possible.

In our region, countries affected by these bombs are Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. The US dropped approximately 80,000 cluster munitions, containing 26 million submunitions, on Cambodia between 1969 and 1973. In Laos, over 414,000 cluster bombs, containing at least 260 million submunitions, were dropped between 1965 and 1973. About one third of these submunitions failed to explode and go on killing today—about 11,000 people have been killed or injured with more than 30 percent of them children; and over 296,000 cluster munitions, containing nearly 97 million submunitions, were dropped in Vietnam between 1965 and 1975.

Cluster bombs continue to cause widespread harm killing and injuring civilians long after a conflict has ended. People disabled or those who suffer the death/injuries of loved ones undergo economic hardships, psychological trauma, horrible memories and social exclusion. About 60% of cluster bomb casualties are injured while undertaking their daily normal activities. These bombs remain in the heart as well as the land. Life-giving land for farmers and playing fields for children are turned into fields of death and destruction by cluster bombs/landmines/other explosives. Post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction become costly.

This is a good opportunity for us all to concretely express **our global moral solidarity** so that all nations will fully support the complete ban on the use of cluster bombs, stop production and transfer, and destroy the remaining stockpiles. Through the signature and ratifications of this Treaty, governments will legally commit to clear contaminated land and provide assistance to victims and affected communities.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

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Bernard Hyacinth Arputhasamy SJ
Regional Director

For further information, please contact Ms Sermisiri (Chompoo) Ingavaniya, Coordinator of JRS Ban Landmine Project sermsiri@jrs.or.th or landmine@jrs.or.th