

## 36 Organizations Urge US to Stop Purchase of Cluster Munitions

We write in opposition to the United States' [reported](#) \$210 million purchase of cluster munitions from Tomer, a company owned by the Israeli government. When used in populated areas, cluster munitions violate international humanitarian law because they cannot distinguish between civilians and combatants. This acquisition runs counter to the international norm established in the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which recognizes the unacceptable risk cluster munitions pose to civilians and imposes a categorical ban on their sale, use, transfer, and stockpiling. More than 100 states have ratified the treaty. The United States should join them, but instead, its decision to expand its cluster munitions arsenal puts it dramatically out of step with civilian protection practices and the international consensus against these weapons.

Cluster munitions inherently present [severe, foreseeable dangers](#) to civilians, and are accordingly among the most harmful weapons types for civilians. Civilians [accounted](#) for 93% of casualties from cluster munitions in 2023, where the status was recorded. Cluster munitions disperse submunitions across broad areas, making it exceedingly difficult to confine their impact to lawful military targets. Cluster munitions used in areas populated by civilians typically violate international humanitarian law due to their indiscriminate, wide-area scope.

Many submunitions also [fail to detonate](#) on impact, leaving behind unstable, unexploded ordnance that can contaminate communities and disproportionately harm civilians—especially children—long after hostilities cease. In 2022, 71% of [recorded casualties](#) from cluster munition remnants were children.

The cluster munitions that the US military has purchased [contain](#) nine submunitions each, which in turn have approximately 1,200 tungsten fragments. While it is unknown if this exact model has been used in Gaza, similar models have resulted in grievous civilian harm, with [children disproportionately](#) losing their lives or limbs as a result.

This newly reported purchase raises serious concern that the US intends to renew its transfers or use of cluster munitions, continuing backsliding that began with US transfers to Ukraine in 2023 after Russia's full-scale invasion. The United States has not [used](#) cluster munitions in its own military operations since 2009, and a longstanding US law [prohibits](#) US transfers of cluster munitions abroad. With growing recognition of cluster munitions' catastrophic consequences for civilians, no US company has [produced](#) these weapons in a decade. Cluster munitions are [recognized](#) as a relic of the Cold War particularly given the availability of more reliable, precise weapons.

Recognizing the harms of cluster munitions to civilians, [111 states](#)—including most NATO members—have prohibited cluster munitions pursuant to the [Convention on Cluster Munitions](#). We urge the United States to align itself with international consensus and refrain from the sale,

use, transfer, and stockpiling of these weapons. Doing so would also be consistent with the United States' endorsement of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA).

We urge members of Congress to take immediate action to oppose this purchase and prevent the transfer of cluster munitions, which pose well-documented and lasting risks to civilian populations.

Signed:

American Friends Service Committee  
Amnesty International USA  
Arms Control Association  
Campaign Against Arms Trade  
Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)  
Center for International Policy  
Cluster Munition Coalition  
Conflict and Environment Observatory  
DAWN  
Demand Progress  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Heidi Kuhn Global Peace Foundation  
Human Rights Watch  
Humanity & Inclusion  
IMEU Policy Project  
Just Foreign Policy  
Legacies of War  
MADRE  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.  
MPower Change Action Fund  
Nonviolent Peaceforce  
Pax Christi USA  
Peace Action  
Peace Direct  
Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Presbyterian Church (USA), Office of Public Witness  
Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft  
RootsAction  
Saferworld USA

The Alliance for Diplomacy and Justice

The Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society

United Church of Christ

West Virginia Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Bombs

Win Without War