



Peace Movement Aotearoa

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Cluster bomb vigils + Pacific meeting

This mailing is to let you know about the Day of Action on 13 August to mark the second anniversary of the cluster bombing of South Lebanon. Below are three sections:

- 1) information about the Day of Action;
- 2) details of two events in Aotearoa New Zealand - a candlelit vigil in Wellington, and a commemoration in Auckland as part of the 'Pacific demilitarisation, disarmament and human security' public meeting; and
- 3) what you can do to mark the anniversary.

1) About the Day of Action, 13 August

Cluster munitions have been used by the United States and other armed forces since the 1970s, killing and maiming untold numbers of civilians in thirty-one countries including Afghanistan, Iraq, Laos, and Serbia. The use of cluster munitions was brought fully to international attention in July and August 2006, when the Israeli Defence Force fired an estimated 4 million cluster submunitions into south Lebanon, targeting many populated areas.

In dozens of towns and villages in Lebanon, cluster munitions containing submunitions with known high failure rates were used. Homes, gardens, fields, and public spaces - including a hospital - were left littered with hundreds of thousands, possibly up to one million unexploded submunitions. By their nature, these dangerous, volatile explosive devices cannot distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, and they continue to threaten lives and render land inaccessible. By January 2008, cluster munition 'duds' had caused at least 192 civilian casualties and killed or maimed 29 de-miners trying to deactivate them. ^[1]

The massive use of cluster bombs in Lebanon prompted an unprecedented multilateral response to prohibit this deadly weapon. The Oslo Process, a series of diplomatic meetings initiated at the start of 2007, raised awareness and built support for the creation of a new international treaty to ban cluster munitions and assist those affected by the weapon. The Convention on Cluster Munitions was successfully negotiated in Dublin, Ireland in May 2008. It will be opened for signature at the end of this year on 3 December, the International Day for People with Disabilities.

Candlelit vigils will be held in different parts of the world on 13 August to commemorate the second anniversary of the cluster bombing of south Lebanon - the theme of the vigils is ensuring that this tragedy is not forgotten and that cluster bombs are never used again.

2) 'Remember Lebanon: Ban Cluster Bombs' events

If you would like to organise a vigil in your town or city, see the 'what you can do' section below. Commemorative events in Wellington and Auckland are:

* **Wellington**, Wednesday, 13 August

'Remember Lebanon: Ban Cluster Bombs' - candlelit vigil from 5pm to 6pm at the Cenotaph (corner Lambton Quay and Bowen Street); organised by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Wellington), for more information contact email wilpf@xtra.co.nz

* **Auckland**, Wednesday, 13 August

'Pacific demilitarisation, disarmament and human security' meeting / 'Remember Lebanon: Ban Cluster Bombs' commemoration - with Ema Tagicakibau (Fiji) and Andonia Piau-Lynch (Vanuatu) speaking about demilitarisation, disarmament and human security issues in the Pacific.

Ema is Assistant Director of the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (the Secretariat of the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific, based in Suva) with a focus on Pacific demilitarisation and disarmament; and Andonia (Andy) is the National Coordinator of the Disability Promotion and Advocacy Association, the organisation which lobbied successfully for Vanuatu to ratify the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty and to become the first Pacific government to ratify the UN Disability Convention. Come along at 6.30pm for a shared meal, 7pm for 'Remember Lebanon: Ban Cluster Bombs' candlelit commemoration, and speakers - Peace Place, 22 Emily Place, Auckland Central. Ema and Andy are in Auckland courtesy of the Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition; meeting organised by Peace Movement Aotearoa and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Tamaki Makaurau), for more information contact email pma@xtra.co.nz or joanmac@pl.net

3) What you can do

If you would like to organise a candlelit vigil in your town or city to remember the victims of cluster bombs in Lebanon and other parts of the world, please contact Peace Movement Aotearoa email pma@xtra.co.nz and we will add the details to the web page at <http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/cmaug08.htm> - leaflets to hand out at vigils will be available later in the week on the Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition web site at <http://www.stopclusterbombs.org.nz/take-action> along with more information about other things you can do.

^[1] 'Flooding South Lebanon: Israel's Use of Cluster Munitions in Lebanon in July and August 2006', Human Rights Watch, February 2008 - <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/lebanon0208>

If you have received this information by post and would like more information about any of the above, please contact Peace Movement Aotearoa and we will send it to you.