



Cluster Munition

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Why in News?

United States (US) has made the decision to provide [cluster munitions to Ukraine](#) as part of a new military aid package worth up to USD 800 million.

- This move has raised concerns about civilian casualties, with calls from the [United Nations to avoid using such weapons](#).

What is a Cluster Munition?

▪ About:

- A cluster munition is a form of **air-dropped or ground-launched explosive weapon** that releases or ejects smaller submunitions, commonly known as **bomblets**, over a wide area.
- They are designed to **kill personnel and destroy vehicles**, runways, power lines, or other targets.
- Some cluster munitions can also **disperse chemical or [biological agents](#), land mines, or leaflets**.

▪ Challenges:

- Cluster munitions **can indiscriminately harm civilians and civilian objects, violating international humanitarian law**.
 - They have a **high failure rate**, leaving behind unexploded ordnance that poses ongoing danger.
- Additionally, **they contaminate vast areas for extended periods**, rendering them unfit for human use and burdening healthcare and economies in affected nations.

▪ Past Use:

- During the **Afghanistan War in 2001**, the US considered cluster bombs significant.
 - US last used cluster bombs during the **battle with Iraq in 2003**
- In the Syrian civil war, Russian-supplied Syrian government troops frequently deployed cluster munitions.
- Israel utilized cluster bombs in civilian areas in south Lebanon, notably during the **2006 war with Hezbollah**.
- The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen faced criticism for employing cluster bombs in their conflict with the **Houthi rebels**.

▪ Convention on Cluster Munitions:

- [Convention on Cluster Munitions](#) **outlaws the use, production, transfer, and stockpiling of these weapons** due to their indiscriminate and long-lasting effects on civilian populations.
- It was adopted in **Dublin by 107 States on 30 May 2008** and signed in Oslo on 3 December 2008.
 - The Convention became binding international law when it entered into force on **1 August 2010**.
- To date, **a total of 123 States have joined the Convention: 111 States Parties and 12 Signatories**.

- The convention remains unsigned by several nations, including **India, the United States, Russia, Ukraine, Pakistan and Israel.**

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