
Convention on Cluster Munitions

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Item 10 (c) of the provisional agenda*

Operation and status of the Convention: consideration of matters pertaining to clearance and risk reduction in accordance with article 4

Declaration of compliance with article 4.1 (a) of the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Submitted by Norway

I. Declaration of compliance

1. The Kingdom of Norway hereby declares that as at 9 September 2013 it made every effort to identify all areas under its jurisdiction and control contaminated by remnants of cluster munitions, in accordance with article 4.1 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.
2. The Kingdom of Norway hereby declares that as at 9 September 2013 it cleared and destroyed all remnants of cluster munitions found in the areas mentioned in paragraph 1, in accordance with article 4.1.
3. By taking the action described in paragraphs 1 and 2, Norway has fulfilled its obligations under article 4.1 (a).

Location

4. The area contaminated by cluster munitions is part of the larger former Hjerkin shooting range, in the Dovre mountain area, Oppland County, on the mainland of Norway. The initial confirmed hazardous area, known as “HFK-sletta”, was used for test firing artillery-delivered cluster munitions (types DM 1383 and DM 1385) in the period 1986-2007. The area was the shape of a polygon and had an area of 617,300 m².

* CCM/MSP/2014/1.



Methods

5. The shooting range is in the process of being decommissioned, and the clearance of cluster munitions has been part of a larger explosive ordnance disposal operation conducted by the Norwegian defence forces. The area is to be handed over for civilian use no later than in 2020 and will then be classified as a national park. The Norwegian Defence Research Institute, an independent institution, has responsibility for controlling the quality of the clearance operations.

6. The area contaminated by cluster munitions has been cleared by a dedicated explosive detection dog unit comprising three dog handlers and eight dogs engaged in searching “boxes” of 10 m². In total, the clearance team has identified and destroyed two bomblets since the operation started in 2008.

7. Owing to the explosive ordnance disposal operation, there continue to be certain restrictions on civilian use of the former shooting range. These are communicated by both the Norwegian Defence Estates Agency (NDEA) and local authorities. NDEA organizes bus transport into areas open for hiking and hunting for tourists and hunters. The area that was contaminated by cluster munitions will be re-vegetated with native species in 2014 and will probably be open for full civilian use in 2015.

Contact information

8. The clearance operation is organized as a project implemented by NDEA, an administrative agency subordinate to the Ministry of Defence. The agency’s primary tasks relate to the planning, construction, administration, leasing and disposal by sale of defence estates and properties. NDEA publishes annual reports and occasional newsletters in Norwegian on the clearance operations, and data on the clearance of remnants of cluster munitions are included in these publications. Reports in Norwegian are available from www.forsvarsbygg.no/Nedlastningssenter/Hjerkinn-PRO/.

9. NDEA can be contacted at its postal address (Forsvarsbygg, Postboks 405 Sentrum, 0103 Oslo) or street address (Grev Wedels plass 5, 0105 Oslo), by telephone (+47 815 70 400), by fax (+47 23 09 78 03) or by e-mail (post@forsvarsbygg.no).

Residual risk

10. NDEA and the Norwegian Defence Research Institute have cooperated on assessing residual risk and on defining acceptable residual risk for the whole area under clearance. That work was not completed by August 2014; results from quality control procedures will inform the final decision prior to the handover of the entire former shooting range in 2020. The Institute published one report on residual risk and clearance methods for the area in 2012, available from <http://rapporter.ffi.no/rapporter/2012/00102.pdf>.

II. Action to be taken if areas unknown to have been contaminated by cluster munitions are identified after completion

11. In the event that areas unknown to have been contaminated by cluster munitions are identified after 2020, Norway will, as soon as possible, take action:

(a) To accurately identify the extent of the contaminated areas and destroy all cluster munitions found in those areas, using the most effective and efficient methods, including the ones described above;

(b) To ensure the effective exclusion of civilians from those areas until they are no longer contaminated;

(c) To report such contaminated areas in accordance with the obligations of Norway under article 7 of the Convention and to share any relevant information to the general public, stakeholders and States parties through other formal and informal means;

(d) To submit an additional declaration of compliance to States parties when those contaminated areas are identified and all remnants of cluster munitions in those areas have been cleared and destroyed.

Procedure for reporting sightings of possible explosive remnants of war, including remnants of cluster munitions

12. Norway has an unexploded ordnance disposal problem dating back to the Second World War. It is a low-risk problem that mainly causes delays and incurs extra costs on engineering and infrastructure projects in affected areas. To address the problem, there is a legal requirement and a standard procedure for reporting sightings of possible unexploded ordnance and for disarming and destroying such ordnance.

13. The standard procedure is to contact local police and report any sighting or suspected explosive contamination. The police assesses the situation and, if need be, secures the area and contacts either competent private sector actors or Norwegian defence engineers to take all action necessary to render the area safe. This will also be the procedure for reporting possible contamination by cluster munitions.

14. Since there is a large clearance operation taking place at Hjerkin, extra survey and clearance resources will be available in the area until handover in 2020.

15. In addition to reporting to the police for follow-up action, sightings of explosive remnants of war can be reported by using a database that tracks and maps ground contamination in Norway. The database tracks nine different categories of ground contamination, of which “explosives” is one. The database is not directly relevant for contamination by cluster munitions, however, since such contamination stems from organized and documented fire drills within the designated military shooting range. The database is available in Norwegian from <http://grunn.miljodirektoratet.no>.