

Statement on the Use of Weapons and Arms Transfer to Parties to the Conflict in Yemen

WILPF has been following the situation in Yemen with great concern. As the High Commissioner states in his report on Yemen to this Council session,[1] the situation has deteriorated significantly in the past year.

Eighty per cent of the population is in urgent need of humanitarian assistance[2] and more than 2.5 million people have been displaced.[3] In such context, women and girls often suffer gravely and disproportionately due to forced displacement, sexual violence, trafficking, lack of access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health, and to victim and survivor assistance.[4]



Sanaa Yemen - December, 21, 2010. Photo: Helovi

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Hospitals, schools, markets, and houses have been targeted by explosive weapons. The large destructive radius of such weapons means that even the striking of military targets within a populated area has caused the destruction or damaging of civilian infrastructure, such as health and education facilities and houses.^[5]

Cluster munitions, which were banned in 2008 by a widely ratified treaty,[6] have been used by the Saudi-led coalition.[7] In one incident, in March 2016 the coalition used US-supplied cluster munitions to attack a marketplace, resulting in the death of at least 97 civilians, including 25 children.[8]

WILPF urges:

- the Saudi-led coalition to stop using cluster munitions;
- all parties to the conflict to stop using explosive weapons in populated areas;

- all States to heed the call of the High Commissioner “to refrain from encouraging or arming parties to the conflict”^[9] and stop all arms transfers or license agreements with all warring parties; and
- all States to condemn the targeting of hospitals, schools, markets, and houses by explosive weapons and to support the development of an international commitment to prevent such practices in the future.

We also urge the international community to:

- support interventions of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of combatants, including child combatants;
- focus all efforts on finding a peaceful solution to the conflict; and
- ensure meaningful participation of Yemeni women in the peace process as well as a gender-sensitive humanitarian aid to civilians suffering in Yemen.

[1] *Situation of human rights in Yemen*, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/33/38, 4 August 2016.

[2] *A spiralling conflict*, Amnesty International
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/09/yemen-the-forgotten-war/>

[3] *Situation of human rights in Yemen*, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/33/38, 4 August 2016, paragraph 67 and Annex A.

[4] *General Recommendation 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict, and post conflict situations*, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, paragraphs 34-81.

[5] Saudi-led coalition forces in Yemen are thought to be making extensive use of JDAM and Paveway guided aircraft bombs, which weigh between 500lbs and 2000lbs. The largest of these bombs is believed to have a lethal radius of up to 360m, and can cause injury and damage as far as 800m from the point of detonation. See *Wide Area Impact*, Action on Armed Violence, March 2016,
<https://aoav.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Wide-Area-Impact-explosive-weapons-in-populated-areas.pdf>, pp. 3-8.

[6] The Convention on Cluster Munitions,
<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/620?OpenDocument>

[7] See, for example, *Situation of human rights in Yemen*, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/33/38, 4 August 2016, paragraphs 33-36.

[8] *Yemen: US Bombs Used in Deadliest Market Strike*, Human Rights Watch, 7 April 2016,
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/04/07/yemen-us-bombs-used-deadliest-market-strike>.

[9] *Situation of human rights in Yemen*, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, A/HRC/33/38, paragraph 74 (c).