

PRESS RELEASE

Disarmament: no high hopes at G8 summit

NGOs call on German Chancellor Merkel to assume responsibility/seize the initiative and launch a debate on landmines and cluster munitions.

Landmine.de ist ein Aktionsbündnis von Bayerischer Landesverband des Katholischen Deutschen Frauenbundes e. V. (KDFB), Brot für die Welt, Christoffel Blindenmission, Deutsche Kommission Justitia et Pax, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, Deutscher Caritasverband, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe, EIRENE-International, Handicap International, Kindernothilfe, medico international, Misereor, OXFAM-Deutschland, Pax Christi, Solidaritätsdienst International (SODI), terre des hommes, UNICEF-Deutschland

(Berlin/Rostock – 4.6.2007) As the G8 summit is drawing nearer, there is no sign that the issue of disarmament will be on the agenda of the event, which will see the Heads of States of the United States, Canada, Japan, Great-Britain, France, Italy, Germany and Russia come together from the 6th to the 8th of June 2007. The 17 German NGOs coalesced in **Action Group Landmine.de** urge German Chancellor Merkel to take the occasion of the G8 summit – and the German EU Council Presidency - to broach the issue of landmines and cluster munitions.

“The Chancellor must include disarmament in the G8 talks”, urges Thomas Gebauer from medico international, “because the biggest landmine and cluster munition users and producers will be sitting around the table. And if Germany is serious about making an appeal for global responsibility in the framework of its G8 Presidency, this leitmotif should also apply to disarmament”, adds Gebauer.

So far, cluster munitions have been used by at least 13 countries - including 5 of the G8 states - and in 25 countries and regions. Russia and the United States categorically refuse an outright ban on cluster munitions. As for Germany, Great Britain, Japan and France, they want to exclude specific types of cluster munitions from the scope of the instrument and speak in favour of so-called “alternative” cluster munitions – such as those using kinetic and microwave energy -, to which bans would then not apply.

“The G8 states are likely to stockpile over 2 billion cluster munitions and much more than 50 million landmines, which means that they bear the bulk of the responsibility”, points out Thomas Küchenmeister from Action Group Landmine.de. “Over 90% of all cluster munition exports come from G8 states and almost 75% of all cluster munitions ever produced have been done so by these countries”, underlines Küchenmeister.

In the run-up to the G8 summit, Action Group Landmine.de has identified 140 exports of cluster munitions, among which only 12 come from non-G8 states. And among the 250 different types of cluster munitions identified, which were or will be produced, about 180 are from G8 countries.

„In the meantime, about 400 million people are directly affected by the consequences of cluster munition use”, says François de Keersmaecker, referring to the *Circles of Impact* study published recently by his organisation *Handicap International*. The report says at least 13,000 people are known to have been injured or killed by cluster munitions, while experts estimate the actual number to be over 100,000. And parallel to that, mine action funding from G8 and EU countries has shown a marked downward trend since 2005.

Action Group Landmine.de calls on the participants to the G8 summit to support the universalization of the Ottawa convention and the “Oslo process” towards a comprehensive ban on cluster munitions and to reallocate more funds to victim assistance.

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