



www.stopclusterbombs.org.nz

The Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition (ANZCMC) and Campaign Against Landmines (CALM) are governed jointly by a working group comprised of the following groups:

Amnesty International Aotearoa NZ
Caritas Aotearoa NZ
Christian World Service
Engineers for Social Responsibility NZ
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War NZ
National Council of Women NZ
National Consultative Committee on Disarmament
Oxfam NZ
Peace Movement Aotearoa
Soroptimist International NZ
United Nations Association NZ
United Nations Youth Association NZ
UNICEF NZ
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Aotearoa

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NEW ZEALAND
www.calm.org.nz

21 October 2011

Lieutenant General Richard Rhys Jones
Chief of New Zealand Defence Force
Defence House
2-12 Aitken Street
Thorndon
Wellington 6011

Dear Lieutenant General Jones,

I am writing on behalf of the New Zealand Campaign Against Landmines (CALM) and the Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition (ANZCMC), civil society campaigns that work in support of the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty and 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions respectively. We work to ensure that New Zealand continues to play a strong leadership role in ensuring universalisation and full implementation of these international treaties through its political leadership, aid donations, diplomatic resources, defence contributions, and other means of support.

We understand that earlier this month, New Zealand informed the UN that it was terminating its long-standing contributions of New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) military personnel to serve as seconded staff in the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in New York. As a small state with limited resources New Zealand has never been a major donor of mine action funding, but these in-kind contributions of NZDF personnel have helped cement our niche as a much-respected leader in the field of mine action. CALM and the ANZCMC strongly urge NZDF and the New Zealand government to reconsider this decision, which we find deeply disappointing.

Since 1995, New Zealand has provided NZDF personnel to UNMAS to support UN efforts to coordinate and ensure the clearance and destruction of landmines, cluster munition remnants, and explosive remnants of war in dozens of affected countries. The UNMAS contribution of NZDF personnel is an integral component of the New Zealand's government support for mine action, which encompasses survey, clearance, risk awareness, stockpile destruction, and advocacy in support of the bans on landmines and cluster bombs.

In coordination with UNMAS, New Zealand has also contributed NZDF personnel to assist nations including Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Cambodia to establish capacity to tackle landmines, cluster munition remnants, and explosive remnants of war. Most recently, two NZDF Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams cleared cluster munition remnants and unexploded submunitions in south Lebanon in 2007-2008.

Over the past sixteen years, a total of eight NZDF personnel have provided support to UNMAS, each serving for a period of approximately two years: Col. Tony Hill, Maj. John Flanagan, Col. Hemi Morete, Lt. Col. Martin Donoghue, Lt. Col. Todd Hart, Maj. Peter Grey, Maj. Anthony Blythen, and Maj. Justin Putze.

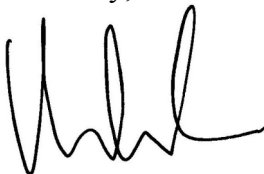
Maj. John Flanagan (retired) is perhaps the most well-known NZDF officer to have served with UNMAS. Following his NZDF experience assisting to establish mine action centers in Cambodia and elsewhere, Flanagan was deployed to UNMAS where he supported efforts to secure the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, which not only prohibits antipersonnel mines but establishes a framework for the delivery of mine action. Following NATO air strikes (including cluster munitions) and landmine use by then-Yugoslavia in Kosovo, Flanagan work with the UN's Sérgio de Mello to establish a swift mine action response that saved countless lives. In 2001, Flanagan received the New Zealand Order of Merit for his military service, including his leading role in mine action. Flanagan retired from NZDF in 2003 to return to UNMAS, where he served as deputy director until 2008.

Over the past two decades, significant progress has been made in reducing the threat posed by landmines, cluster munition remnants, and explosive remnants of war in many of the most mine-affected states, but this work is far from over. Use of landmines and cluster munitions, while rare, still occurs, most recently in Libya. In August 2011, Pacific Islands Forum leaders for the first time acknowledged the need to tackle unexploded ordnance (UXO) in the Pacific, describing this problem as a "long neglected issue."

We understand that government resource constraints are the principal reason behind New Zealand's withdrawal of support from UNMAS, but would welcome a fuller explanation. We recognize that these are difficult financial times for all, but urge NZDF to reconsider its decision on the UNMAS contribution as mine action is a vital humanitarian activity that requires dedicated support. If New Zealand is serious about retaining and expanding its role as a respected and valuable UN member state (including by securing a seat on the UN Security Council), then we should demonstrate our continued commitment to mine action.

We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Wareham', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mary Wareham, Coordinator
New Zealand Campaign Against Landmines
Aotearoa New Zealand Cluster Munition Coalition

CC:

- Hon. Dr. Wayne Mapp, Minister of Defence
- Hon. Murray McCully, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Ambassador Jim McLay, Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations