

Annex 106

Georgia: Russian Cluster Bombs Kill Civilians

Stop Using Weapon Banned by 107 Nations

Human Rights Watch researchers have uncovered evidence that Russian aircraft dropped cluster bombs in populated areas in Georgia, killing at least 11 civilians and injuring dozens, Human Rights Watch said today. Human Rights Watch called upon Russia to immediately stop using cluster bombs, weapons so dangerous to civilians that more than 100 nations have agreed to ban their use.

“Cluster bombs are indiscriminate killers that most nations have agreed to outlaw,” said Marc Garlasco, senior military analyst at Human Rights Watch. “Russia’s use of this weapon is not only deadly to civilians, but also an insult to international efforts to avoid a global humanitarian disaster of the kind caused by landmines.”

Human Rights Watch said Russian aircraft dropped RBK-250 cluster bombs, each containing 30 PTAB 2.5M submunitions, on the town of Ruisi in the Kareli district of Georgia on August 12, 2008. Three civilians were killed and five wounded in the attack. On the same day, a cluster strike in the center of the town of Gori killed at least eight civilians and injured dozens, Human Rights Watch said. Dutch journalist Stan Storimans was among the dead. Israeli journalist Zadok Yehezkeli was seriously wounded and evacuated to Israel for treatment after surgery in Tbilisi. An armored vehicle from the Reuters news agency was perforated with shrapnel from the attack.

Human Rights Watch researchers interviewed numerous victims, doctors, and military personnel in Georgia. They examined photos of craters and video footage of the August 12 attack on Gori. Human Rights Watch has also seen a photo of the submunition carrier assembly and nose cone of an RBK-250 bomb in Gori. The Gori video showed more than two dozen simultaneous explosions during the attack, which is characteristic of cluster bombs. Two persons wounded in Gori described multiple simultaneous explosions at the time of the attack. Craters in Gori were also consistent with a cluster strike.

Doctors at the two main hospitals in Tbilisi described numerous injuries to civilians hurt in the attack on Gori they believed were consistent with cluster bombs. Human Rights Watch researchers saw a submunition fragment extracted from one victim’s head.

Human Rights Watch also called on Georgia, which is known to have RBK-500 cluster bombs in its stockpiles, to join the international move to ban the use of cluster munitions and publicly to undertake not to use such weapons in this conflict.

<http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2008/08/14/georgi19625.htm>