

# **Strengthening Education in Nepal for Disarmament**

**19 January 2023**

**Session 2. Humanitarian Consequences of the Use of Weapons**



**United  
Nations**

**Office for  
Disarmament Affairs**



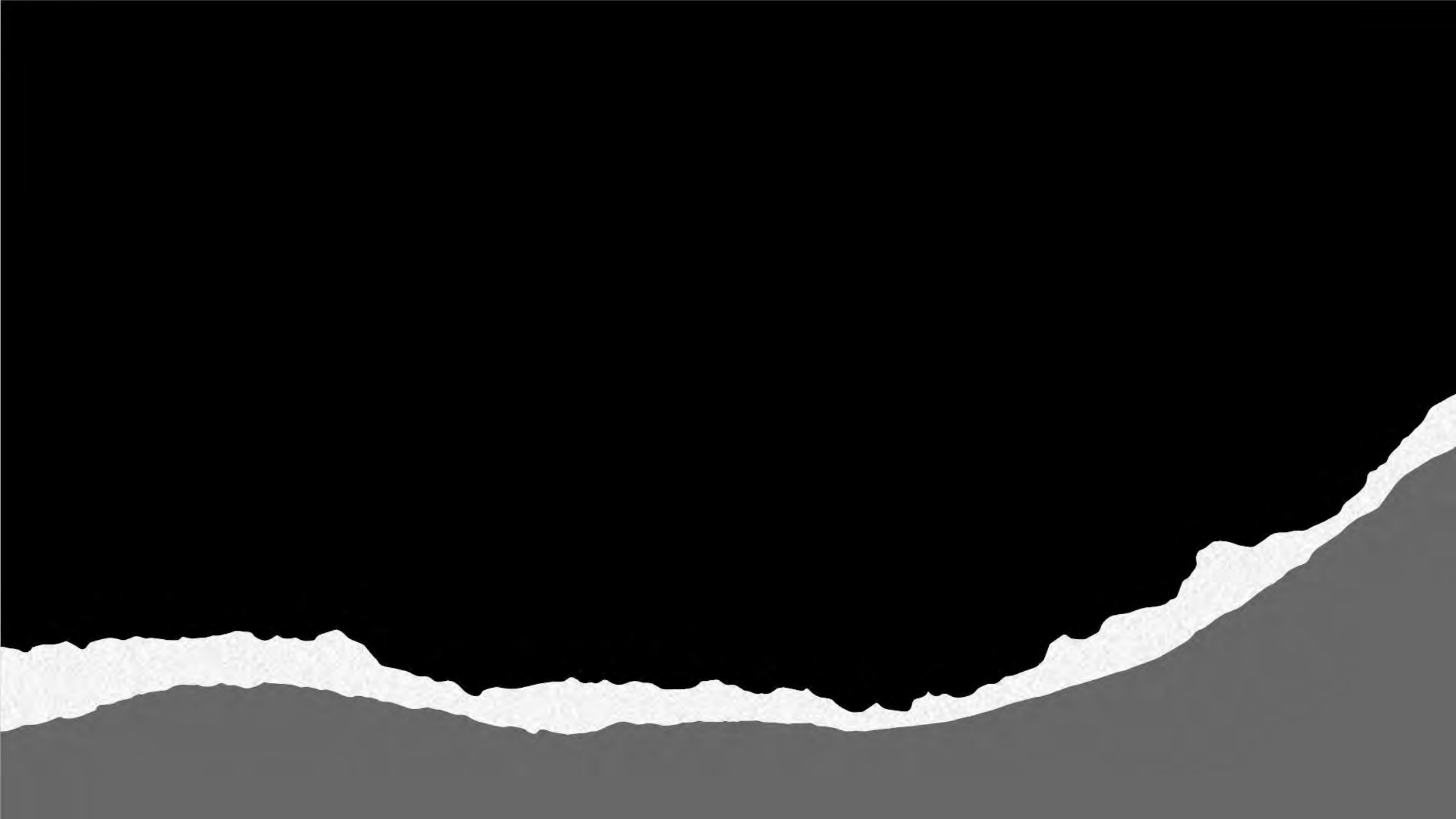
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- Humanitarian consequences
- Legislation and Instruments





“[...] atomic explosive weapons, radioactive material weapons, lethal chemical and biological weapons, and any weapons developed in the future which might have characteristics comparable in destructive effect to those of the atomic bomb or other weapons mentioned above.”

-United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/32/84-B, 1977



# Nuclear Weapons



## Definition

- A nuclear weapon is a device that uses a nuclear reaction to create an explosion, giving off four types of energy: a blast wave, intense light, heat, and radiation.
- Nuclear weapons can be in the form of bombs or missiles.



## Why is it important to us?

- Cause great destruction, death, and injury and have a wide area of impact.
- Devastating consequences to adjacent and far-reaching area
- Consequences last to degrade the lives and livelihoods of current and future generations.



## Historical use

- Nuclear weapons have been used twice in warfare—in the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945
- Over 2,000 nuclear tests have been conducted to date.

# Chemical Weapons



## CWC Definition

- Any toxic chemicals and their precursors\* which through its chemical action on life processes can cause death, temporary incapacitation or permanent harm to humans or animals.

\*Precursors are chemicals that are used for the production of toxic chemicals



## Why is it important to us?

- They inflict damage when inhaled, absorbed through the skin, or ingested in food or drink.
- It brings about enormous and irreversible psychological consequences, whereas it became more and more militarily ineffective > Humanitarian law that prohibits any kind of indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks.
- Chemical agents become weapons when they are placed into artillery shells, land mines, aerial bombs, missile warheads, mortar shells, grenades, spray tanks, or any other means of delivering the agents to designated targets.



## Historical use

- With the start of World War I, both sides of the conflict used poisonous gas to inflict agonizing suffering and to cause significant battlefield casualties. Weapons used include choking agents, blister agents, blood agents, nerve agents, tear gas, etc.
- In 2014, the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria concluded the use of chlorine was systematic and widespread.

# Biological Weapons



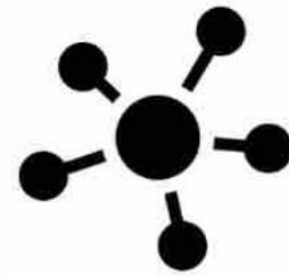
## BWC definition

- 1) Microbial or other biological agents, or toxins whatever their origin or method of production, of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes;
- 2) Weapons, equipment or means of delivery designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.



## Why is it important to us?

- Inflict damage on humans as well as livestock and crops
- Devastating consequences
- Deadly and highly contagious
- Can spread rapidly across borders



## Examples

### ■ Bacteria

Ex. Anthrax

- Contact or inhalation
- Very resistant

### ■ Virus

Ex. Smallpox

- Incubation: 10-12 days
- Highly contagious

### ■ Toxins

Ex. Botulinum toxin

- Not transmissible

# Humanitarian Consequences s of Use



Photo  
credit:  
ICAN.co  
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: BBC



# Hiroshima and Nagasaki



Nuclear Weapons

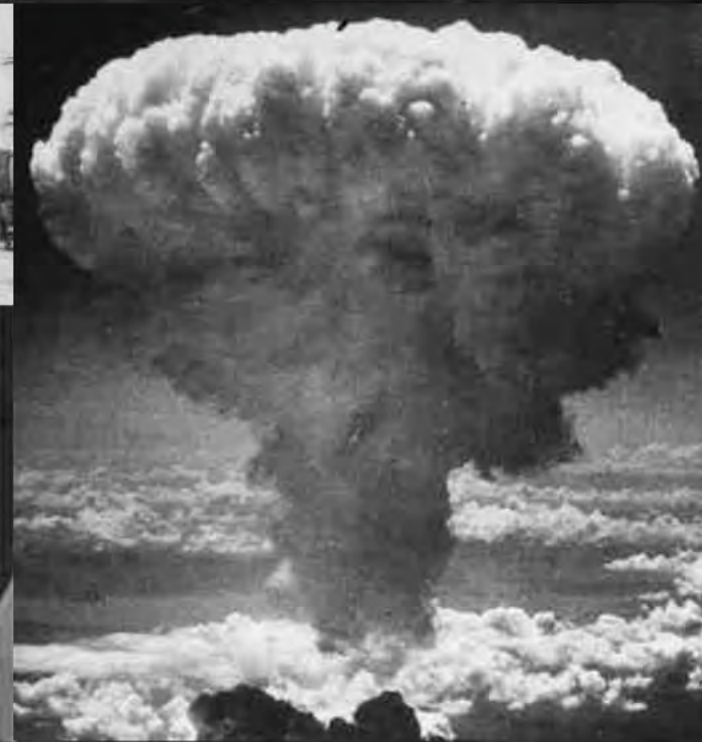


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# WHAT IF: NUCLEAR ATTACK





# Chemical Weapons



# Biological Weapons



Toxins



Virus

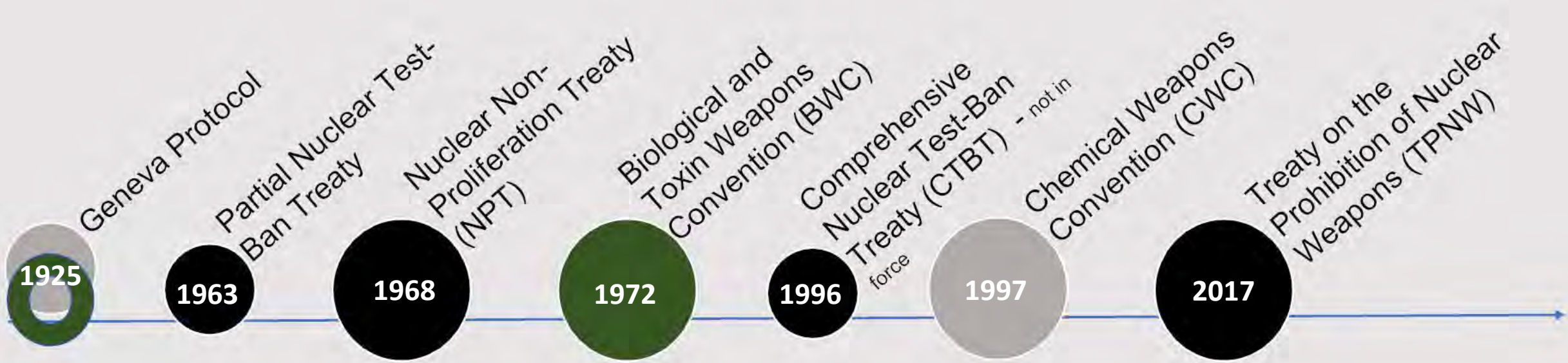


Bacteria



International instruments aim to ban the development and use of chemical and biological weapons, prevent nuclear proliferation and testing, and promote progress in nuclear disarmament.







# **Conventional Weapons**

**Conventional Weapons encompass a wide range of equipment, not limited to:**

**Armored combat vehicles, helicopters & aircraft**

**Warships**

**Landmines**

**Cluster Munitions**

**Ammunition**

**Artillery**

**Conventional weapons are the most common type of armament globally and historically the most used in conflict.**

# Landmine



Landmines are cheap explosive weapons that became popular in WW2. They are often made out of plastic, metal, wooden or ceramic cases.



Anti-personnel landmines are victim-activated weapons. They are inherently indiscriminate and designed to maim rather than kill.



They often lie active for months or years after conflicts have ended causing civilian victims, including children.



Tens of millions are placed and still buried in over 60 countries many of them unmarked, unmapped and often left unrecorded



They are generally used to protect borders, camps and other strategic objects as well as restrict or channel the movement of enemy troops



Original purpose of anti-personnel landmines was to protect anti-tank and anti-vehicle mines from being removed by enemy forces.





# Humanitarian Consequences



1. The initial blast tears the foot apart, causing the foot and toes to peel away from the leg
2. The action of the blast forces dirt, mine fragments, bone and tissue to be driven deep up into what is remaining of the leg
3. The outer leg skin returns into place and hides the full extent of the damage

(photo credit: members.iinet.net.au)



Because this boy was injured by a landmine, there was no investigation and no-one will be brought to justice  
(photo credit: members.iinet.net.au)



Injured from landmine in Karen state, Myanmar (photo credit: Karen News)



# Cluster Munitions



A cluster munition is a form of air-dropped or ground-launched explosive weapon that releases or ejects smaller submunitions. Commonly, these are designed to kill personnel and destroy vehicles.

## Unreliable and Indiscriminate

Large number of unexploded submunitions often remain on the ground, liable to explode even years after active hostilities have ended

## Imprecise

A single strike can spread submunitions across a wide area

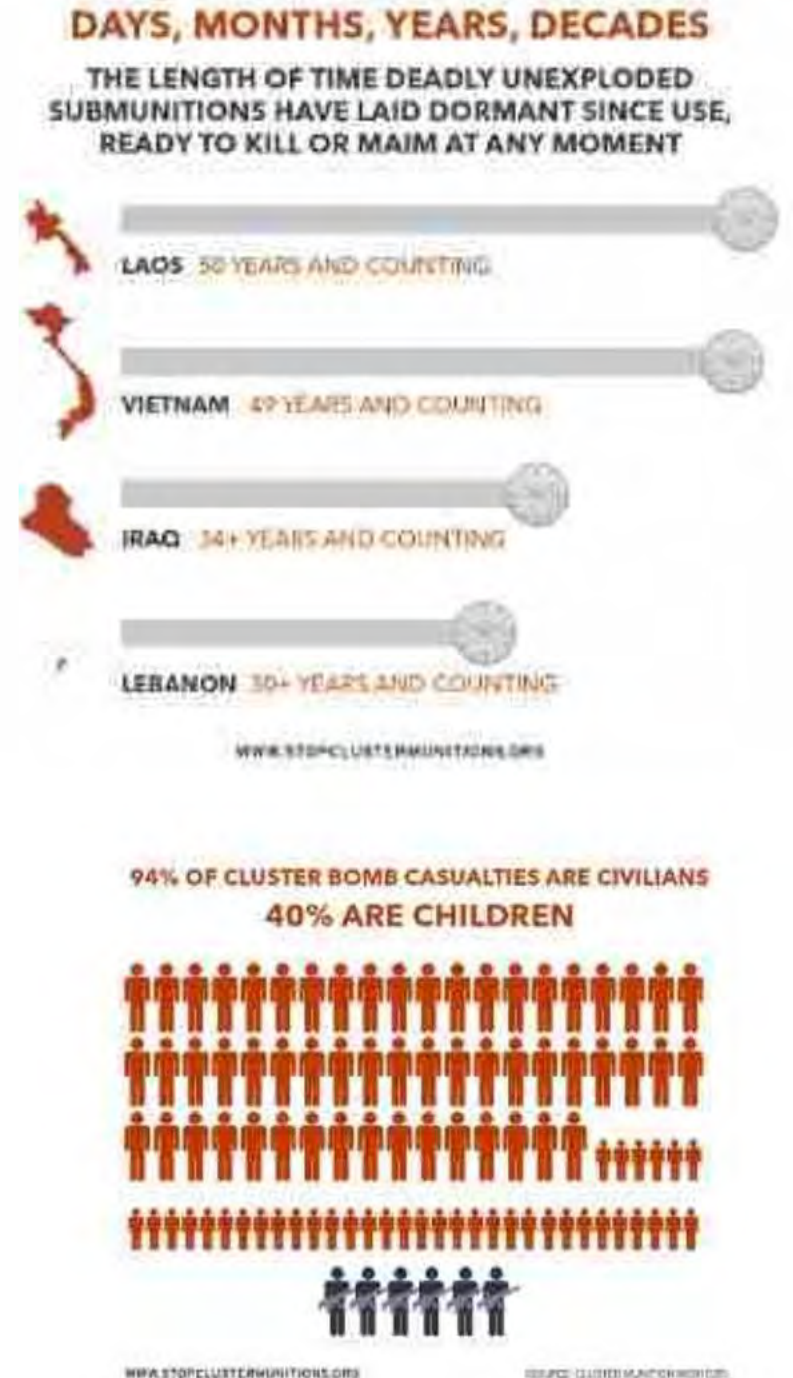


## Deadly

Cluster submunitions are usually designed to penetrate armor and thus contain even more explosive power and metal fragmentation than landmines.

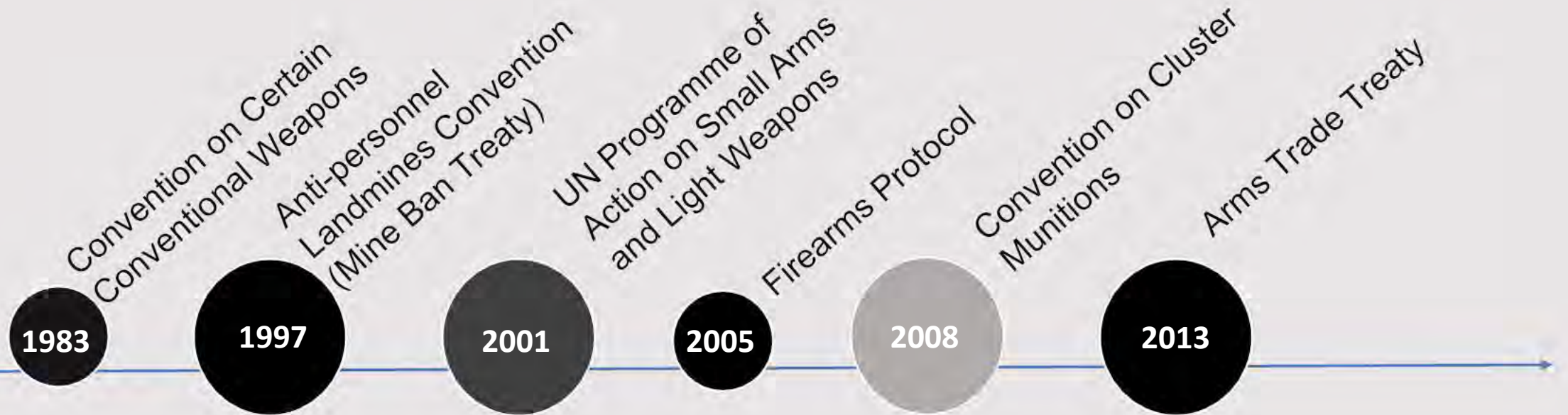
# Secret War in Laos

- From 1964 to 1973, over 2 million tons of ordnance were dropped over Laos in 580,000 bombing missions, making Laos the most heavily bombed country per capita in history. The bombings destroyed many villages and displaced hundreds of thousands of Lao civilians during the nine-year period.
- At least 270 million cluster bomblets were dropped as part of the bombing campaign; approximately 80 million failed to detonate, leaving Laos contaminated with vast quantities of unexploded ordnance
- Unexploded ordnance, including cluster bombs, have killed or maimed as many as 50,000 civilians in Laos since 1964 (and 20,000 since 1973, after the war ended). Over one hundred new casualties occur each year. About 60% of accidents result in death, and 40% of the victims are children. Boys are particularly at risk.





# Relevant Legislation and International Instruments



Thank you!  
Any  
questions?

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