

Global treaty to ban uranium weapons

European Parliament resolution of 22 May 2008 on (depleted) uranium weapons and their effect on human health and the environment – towards a global ban on the use of such weapons

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the harmful effects of the use of uranium (including depleted uranium) in conventional weapons,
 - having regard to the UN Secretary-General's speech on the occasion of the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict (6 November 2002),
 - having regard to UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/62/30, adopted on 5 December 2007, highlighting serious health concerns about the use of depleted uranium weapons,
 - having regard to Rule 108(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas (depleted) uranium has been widely used in modern warfare, both as ammunition against hardened targets in rural and urban environments and as hardened armoured protection against missile and artillery attacks,
- B. whereas, ever since its use by the allied forces in the first war against Iraq, there have been serious concerns about the radiological and chemical toxicity of the fine uranium particles produced when such weapons impact on hard targets; whereas concerns have also been expressed about the contamination of soil and groundwater by expended rounds that have missed their targets and their implications for civilian populations,
- C. whereas, despite the fact that scientific research has so far been unable to find conclusive evidence of harm, there are numerous testimonies as to the harmful and often deadly effects on both military personnel and civilians,
- D. whereas the last few years have seen great advances in terms of understanding the environmental and health hazards posed by depleted uranium, and whereas it is high time that this was reflected in international military standards, as they develop,
- E. whereas the use of depleted uranium in warfare runs counter to the basic rules and principles enshrined in written and customary international, humanitarian and environmental law,
1. Urges the Member States to adhere to paragraph 1 of the above-mentioned UN resolution and to submit a report with their views on the effects of the use of armaments and ammunition containing depleted uranium;
 2. Recommends that the EU High Representative include in the forthcoming revised version of the European Security Strategy the need to give serious thought to the future utility of unguided munitions, as well as cluster bombs, mines and other weapons of indiscriminate

effect, such as depleted uranium weapons;

3. Requests the Council and the Commission to commission scientific studies into the use of depleted uranium in all regions where European and international military and civilian personnel have been deployed;
4. Urges Member States, within the framework of future operations, not to use depleted uranium weapons in European Security and Defence Policy operations and not to deploy military and civilian personnel in regions where no guarantee can be given to the effect that depleted uranium has not been, or will not be, used;
5. Urges Member States, the Council and the Commission to provide full information to their military and civilian personnel on mission, as well as to their professional organisations, about the probability that depleted uranium has been or might be used in their region of operations, and to take sufficient protective measures;
6. Calls on the Member States, the Council and the Commission to establish an environmental inventory of depleted uranium-contaminated areas (including testing ranges) and to provide full support – including financial support – for projects that could assist victims and their relatives as well as for clean-up operations in the affected areas, should a negative effect on human health and the environment be confirmed;
7. Strongly reiterates its call on all Member States and NATO countries to impose a moratorium on the use of depleted uranium weapons and to redouble efforts towards a global ban, as well as systematically to halt production and procurement of this type of weaponry;
8. Calls on the Member States and the Council to take the lead in working – through the UN or through a 'coalition of the willing' – towards an international treaty establishing a ban on the development, production, stockpiling, transfer, testing and use of uranium weapons as well as the destruction or recycling of existing stocks, should there be conclusive scientific evidence of harm caused by such weapons;
9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, NATO and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the UN and the United Nations Environmental Programme, the European Organisation of Military Associations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the World Health Organization.