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Dear Tim Barnett MP,

The International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons (ICBUW) is committed to achieving a ban on the use of all conventional weapon systems containing uranium, including so-called 'depleted' uranium (DU) munitions. We now have 96 member organizations from 26 countries worldwide.

ICBUW calls for an immediate ban on the use of uranium weapons. We also require the clean-up of contaminated sites, medical assessment, treatment and compensation of the victims; independent investigation and long-term monitoring of affected populations and the environment. We call on governments to disclose locations and quantities of uranium weapons used in conflict. We call for the comprehensive prohibition of the production, possession, testing, export and sale of uranium weapons. To ban uranium weapons internationally in an explicit way, we promote a Draft Convention.

DU is 'nuclear waste' produced from the enrichment process. Uranium's high density, combined with its pyrophoric nature, results in a high-energy kinetic weapon that can punch and burn through armor plating. Striking a hard target, DU munitions create extremely high temperatures of more than 3000°C and the uranium immediately burns and vaporizes into an aerosol, which is easily diffused in the environment over the battlefield, and can be re-suspended by the winds, spreading over civilian areas, sometimes even crossing international borders. Therefore, not only military personnel but also civilians may inhale the fine DU particles and internalize them in their bodies. The contamination also continues after the cessation of hostilities for decades and centuries. Taking these aspects of DU weapon into account, we consider that DU weapons are illegal under binding international humanitarian, human rights and environmental law and it is one of **the inhumane weapons of 'indiscriminate destruction'**.

There is a considerable amount of basic scientific evidence that suggests deleterious effects on human health from inhaled DU particles through both radiological action and chemical toxicity. Therefore, many scientists have warned that the issue of DU weapons should also be discussed seriously, based on the **'precautionary principle'**

The United Nations Human Rights Sub-Committee has condemned DU weapons, like nuclear, chemical and cluster munitions, as weapons of indiscriminate destruction [in 1996, 1997 and 2002]. In 2006, the European Parliament called for an outright ban on the use of DU weapons, building on three previous calls for a moratorium [2001, 2003 and 2005].

On 22nd March of last year, and after a unanimous vote in parliament, Belgium became the first country in the world to introduce a domestic ban on their manufacture, use, storage, sale, acquisition, supply and transit of DU weapons. We really hope that New Zealand will also follow Belgium's example. We believe that it would promote in addition the process of the regional and international ban of DU weapons. On December the 5th of last year, the United Nations General Assembly passed, by a landslide, a resolution on "Effects of the use of armaments and ammunitions containing depleted uranium", taking into consideration the

“potential harmful effects” of the use of DU weapons on human health and the environment. We truly appreciate the support from New Zealand that voted for the resolution. We would expect that the New Zealand government will make a good report to reflect the results of the most recent scientific research, which shows the harmful effect of DU fine particles produced by DU weapons on human health and the environment.

We really respect and appreciate New Zealand’s leading role on nuclear disarmament as well as the process to ban cluster munitions. We strongly wish that your country would also become a leader in the movement to ban another ***inhumane weapon of ‘indiscriminate destruction’; DU weapons.***

For and on behalf of the ICBUW Steering Committee.

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Member of the Steering Committee and science team of ICBUW

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