

ICBUW Statement on the war in Ukraine



1st of March 2022

The International Coalition To Ban Uranium Weapons (ICBUW) condemns strongly the Russian military invasion in Ukraine. The war of aggression waged by Putin-Russia is a clear and brutal violation of international law as stated by our sister organisation IALANA. Human losses on both sides cause severe humanitarian suffering.

Russian Tank destroyed in Chernyiv Region, Ukraine. Photo: Ministry of Defence Ukraine

As already seen the war led by Russia also extends to enormous environmental damage and risks for the Ukrainian population linked to the release of toxic substances. The consequences of this war may also include environmental and health threats due to the potential use of depleted uranium (DU) weapons and armor of the tanks attacking and being destroyed on the battlefield.

The use of DU creates a long-term health danger for civilians and the military alike, obstructs reconstruction through ravaged areas, spreads fear and its consequences are difficult and costly to remove. The use of DU ammunition with its consequences is contrary to applicable standards of International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights and Environmental Protection.

Russia is basing its attack on a great number of tanks operating on Ukraine territories, many of which (T-72, T-80 and T-90) carry a 2A46 125mm smoothbore cannon, allowing them to use 3VBM10; 3BM32 „Vant“, 3BM59 „Svinets-1“, 3BK21B and possibly also 3BM69 „Vacuum-1“ ammunition with depleted uranium sabot.

Deep modernization programs of T-80 tank series started in 2018 with plans of equipping the tank with depleted uranium rounds. According to the reports in Russian media, modernized T-80BVM were used during the military exercise prior to the invasion of Ukraine.

Even though information on Russian military equipment in general is limited and the fact, or the exact quantities of the DU ammunition used in the fighting remain unclear, DU should be considered a threat in this war.

Right now and later on the environmental and pollution incidents put people and the ecosystems at risk of acute and long-term harm in addition to the killing and wounding taking place. The military conflict will have disastrous consequences, with or without depleted uranium weapons being used. Anyway, the long-term effects of DU and other toxic substances should not be disregarded in this context.

We call on the parties to introduce an immediate ceasefire and to start again with consultations and negotiations. The killing of people and the disastrous destruction of the environment have to be stopped immediately. War crimes will never be tolerated.

The International Coalition To Ban Uranium Weapons – www.icbuw.eu

