

My name is Branislav Kapetanovic. I was working as a de-miner in the Yugoslav Army. My specialty were airplane delivered bombs, further more NATO cluster bombs.

During the war most of the time we were cleaning cluster bombs day and night , giving our best to prevent civilian casualties, because wide areas were covered with them. I worked on many locations: Ladjevci, Ponikve, Sjenica, Nis, Kraljevo and many others.

For the first time I saw cluster bomb in the vicinity of Kraljevo. Those were BLU-97 bombs. Since then I have been exclusively clearing them.

Most of the war, 45 days, I spent in Nis. Before me my colleague, who was working on the same task in Nis, had an accident while he was cleaning cluster bombs on Kopaonik. On that occasion he lost both his arms. Because in Nis there were no de-miners left, who were familiar with cluster bombs, I was assigned that task. I talk about Nis because in this city cluster bombs were dropped on civilian targets.

At the beginning I worked at the airport. Cluster bombs were being dropped everywhere in large quantities, and the unexploded cluster bomb on the runway and on the grass were laying at most one meter apart one from another. This is an indescribable; I couldn't imagine how long it would take us to clear them all.

Nevertheless, soon civilian objects in Nis were hit, the market, the city hospital plateau, the suburbs. On the 7 may 1999 there was an attack from which the city center suffered mostly. This scene was the most horrible that I have ever seen- dead were laying everywhere, wounded were being helped on the scene, houses and vehicles were burning, ambulance horns were echoing everywhere. The streets covered with cluster bombs were temporarily evacuated after the raid, to secure the area during clearance.

I would also like to mention Smaile near Kraljevo, where cluster bombs were also dropped on civilian objects. On that location there were several houses, and farms, and no military objects. Therefore there was no reason to consider this location as a potential target. After that the farm land for years stayed untouched, and nothing was produced there. The attack left the area covered with lots of unexploded cluster bombs, I and other de-miners after me had been cleaning them for years, but farmers still doubt that the fields are contaminated, and hesitate to plat and produce food here, so they don't earn any income.

After the accident, I continued fighting against cluster munitions, I had cleared cluster bombs and was lucky enough to survive the explosion. I was severely injured, lost both of my arms and my legs, my eye-sight and my hearing was badly damaged, I had blast injuries of lungs and head.

From humanitarian reasons I dedicated myself and shared my experience to support this initiative and struggle against this evil. Cluster bomb is the monstrosity of today's World; it doesn't select its victims and hinders the living and the development wherever dropped. The majority of cluster bomb casualties are civilians, in more than 90 % cases, and those who they were designed to kill suffer the least.

I expect that we will with joint forces achieve a final and comprehensive treaty that will totally ban the use of cluster munitions, and lead to destruction of all stocks of these weapons, regardless to its type, prohibit its transfer, and provide assistance to the survivors, their families and communities

I' m happy to see so many of you present here, and I hope that in the future even more countries will join in; that all of us together will reach the final and good solution.

Thank you