

BAN ADVOCATES ENGAGEMENT IN **OSLO PROCESS**

Oslo process has been organized in order to ban cluster munition and it was started by Norwegian government in Oslo in February, 2007.

From the very beginning, the coalition of non-governmental organizations engaged in fight against cluster munition and spreading world-wide, has taken part in Oslo process. One of them is Handicap International of Belgium and they made the project named Ban Advocates.

Ban Advocates consisted of people from several endangered countries like Afganistan, Iraq, Ethiopia, Liban, Vietnam, Serbia etc, which were stricken by cluster munition. One group of Ban Advocates was a group from Serbia which was founded during Belgrade conference with Dejan Dikic, Sladjan Vuckovic, Danijel Ivic and myself as members.

One of our aims was to show people around the world (using media or some other manifestations) how dangerous cluster bombs are and what terrible consequences this weapon leaves behind. In order to make all of you realize this, I have to say that, according to the official data, victims are civilians in more than 95 per cent of cases, while the army which was the primary target, suffers the least damage.

Our second aim was a lot more complex and that is to lobby or find some other way to influence the countries which opposed our efforts to ban cluster munition because they have extremely big amounts of this weapon in their storages. Those countries were not willing to place a ban on the cluster munition, except if there was a clause about five to fifteen years moratorium during which period those bombs would be allowed to use. For us who fought that, this was completely unacceptable. The following scenario would have been possible-creating a new war in future, those countries would compete to throw as many cluster bombs as possible in order to empty their storages. Doing that, they would create even bigger chaos in the World because it would lead to a drastic increase of civilian victims. That was completely unacceptable for us.

We were present at big international conferences which were started in Oslo, Norway in February, 2007, and they were continued in Lima, Peru in May, 2007; in Vienna, Austria in December 2007, Wellington, New Zealand in February, 2008; in Dublin, Ireland in May, 2008 and the last conference which will be held in Oslo in December this year.

In the meantime, some regional conferences were attended by countries from those regions, plus some countries which were endangered by cluster munition (Belgrade in October, 2007; Brussels, Belgium in October, 2007 and Sophia, Bulgaria in October, 2008).

I have to add that we have visited all the countries which were against this treaty. We have had direct conversations with the Government, Ministry or members of parliaments where we put effort to change their attitudes which had been highly negative up to that moment. The final result is the adoption of treaty by 107 countries at the conference in Dublin. It shows how much success we had in the end.

Countries which we visited for negotiations are Holland- the Hague in June,2007; Japan-Tokyo in April, 2008 and I believe that the same kind of conversations will be done in Poland-Warsaw in November this year.

Our contribution was great. Most of us performed in the negotiations from the position of the hurt. Some of us performed as experts who worked on cluster bombs (like Sladjan Vuckovic and myself).

The attitudes of the countries opposing the treaty of cluster bombs did not have substantial grounds and could not prove their thesis because we always had good counter arguments.

The attendance of Ban Advocates at these conferences contributed to having one very strong regulation in this treaty and that is help for the victims , their families and communities. That was the first time in history that this kind of treaty has had a regulation " help for the victims". This is why we can say that this is one of the most comprehensive treaties ever made.

Our future role in this proces is to supervise the implementation of this treaty and all its parts.

I have to add that Serbia and our Ministry have been very active at all of these conferences. We received public praise from most of the countries.

Our internal cooperation at these conferences was at very high level. All the remarks about the drafts of texts and about negotiations which were not in our favour, our Ministry demonstrated brilliantly at public debates at conferences, so I can direct all the praise for a greatly done job to the Ministry of Serbia.

I would also like to thank Norway for extremely great support to Ban Advocates at all conferences.

At the very end, I would like to make a very important remark and that is: we, Ban Advocates do this work with a great enthusiasm. This is probably because we were hurt by this weapon and we get no material gain. Absolutely none of us has any financial gain and we do this with all our hearts and great desire to put an end to cluster bombs once and for all.

Thank you !