

EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE  
SPECIAL TARGETS

FCS STRATEGY

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7500

# CLUSTER MUNITIONS AND OTHER UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE (UXO)

## Key Points to Make:

- The UK dropped 66 air-delivered cluster bombs (mainly around Baghdad) on troops and armour targets in the open. Their use was fully in compliance with all the requirements of international law.
- In addition, some 2,000 artillery-delivered L20 extended range bomblet shells (ERBS) were used (mainly targets around Basra), which have secondary fuses that ensure far fewer unexploded bomblets are left behind than with older generation cluster bombs. 100,000
- We are providing information to clearance organisations on munitions used and locations so that clearance of all types of unexploded ordnance that might pose a risk to civilians can be achieved quickly and effectively.

## Defensive lines

- Humanitarian clearance is not usually carried out by military personnel unless it coincides with a military mission; appropriate UN or civilian contractors are better qualified for this task.
- Potential use of cluster bombs in urban areas. Strict adherence to international law means that munitions other than cluster bombs may be more appropriate in urban or populated areas as cluster bombs engage targets that cover an area. However, a decision on which type of munition to use has to take into account the circumstances at the time of an attack.
- Cluster munitions are not the same as anti-personnel landmines and are not covered by any weapon-specific conventions, including the Ottawa Convention. Anti-personnel mines are defined, by the Ottawa Convention, as mines 'designed to be exploded by the presence, proximity or contact of a person'. Cluster bomblets are designed to explode on impact with the target. No plans to change our existing policy on cluster munitions.

## Previous lessons:

- The speed of provision of information to assist rapid clearance of UXO was criticised in Kosovo. New procedures have been put in place since then.
- The comparative ineffectiveness of BL755 against modern armour was demonstrated in Kosovo; the number of roles it's used for have been reduced.

## Key Facts and Figures:

16%

AIR

X

- BL755 (and its variant RBL755, which is designed to be dropped from higher altitude) contains 147 bomblets of which about 6% fail under test conditions (there are credible reports of higher failure rates in operations, depending on terrain).
- L20 ERBS is fired from the AS90 self-propelled gun and has 49 bomblets. It has a secondary fuse that should ensure that no more than 1-2% remain unexploded (this will need to be verified from experience in Iraq)

## Background:

Cluster bombs are criticised for two reasons: (i) that they are aimed at an area target; and (ii) that they leave large numbers of unexploded bomblets that are sensitive and lethal.

MOTHER WILL NOT THREATEN US

GH - NOT INDISCRIMINATE  
- TARGETED ON DEFENCE AREA

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