



Introducing the Toxic Remnants of War Project

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Background



- TRW Project aims to document the range and humanitarian and environmental impact of toxic materials released during military activities.
- Founding partners: IKV Pax Christi and ICBUW.
- Funded by the Norwegian MFA.
- Research hub www.toxicremnantsofwar.info launched April 2012.

Initial objectives



- First year focused on examining scope, initial research, identifying expertise, promoting concept, building partnerships.
- TRW Legal Project running in parallel to examine potential legal mechanisms for reducing use of toxics and managing their legacy.
- Focus on research over advocacy.

Why now?



- Concern over impact of conflict on civilian health.
- Heightened civilian and military awareness of toxics regulation.
- Improve balance between response to toxic versus explosive hazards.
- Improvements in analytical toxicology.
- Potential for strengthening legal frameworks.

Why us?



- Developing precautionary framework around DU:
 - A known hazard: an unpredictable risk.
 - Bioavailability and environmental behaviour.
 - Unpredictable use in conflict.
 - State capacity for monitoring and management.
 - Barriers to post-conflict civilian health research.
 - Role of the precautionary principle?
 - Poorly catered for by existing IHL.
- Are these factors applicable to other materials or practices?

Examples



➤ Fallujah, Iraq:

US deny using DU in second assault, no records for earlier fighting.

Reports of major disturbance in reproductive health.

Urgent need for environmental assessment for potential risk factors.

➤ Salto di Quirra, Sardinia:

Testing range for missiles and rockets, health problems reported in local population.

Exhumed bodies tested positive for thorium and cerium. Source MAG-THOR alloys in weapons? E.g. MILAN anti-tank missile.

Possible outputs?



➤ Before conflict:

Improve identification, regulation and replacement of substances of concern?

➤ During conflict:

Controls on how and where specific materials are used to reduce civilian exposure?

Control targeting of industrial sites?

➤ After conflict:

Strengthen state obligations for technical and financial assistance for toxics management and remediation?

Next steps?



- Examine applicability of existing legal frameworks.
- Explore potential scope.
- Develop evidence base.
- Promote TRW concept to states and civil society.



Thank you

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