

Ukraine Project of the International Coalition To Ban Uranium Weapons (ICBUW)

Outline

War destroys the environment – a relationship becoming more and more evident also in the war following Russia's invasion in Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The international community is aware of that relationship – as reflected, inter alia, in the International Law Commission (ILC) [Draft principles](#) on protection of the environment in relation to armed conflict. One part of this overall picture is the issue of weapons with catastrophic toxic effects and drastic consequences for the environment such as uranium weapons.

These weapons, or ammunitions, which contain depleted uranium (DU) are destroying human lives and damaging genetic material of future generations. A resolution on the issue just approved by the First Committee of the UN General Assembly with an overwhelming majority of member States contains important principles like a precautionary approach, transparency, and assistance to affected States. As further [stated](#) by ICBUW on the occasion of the UN Day against environmental destruction through war (November 6th), the organization will continue with its observation and denunciation of the use of DU weapons in the Ukrainian war as it did in previous ones.

Against this background, ICBUW has launched its Ukraine project aimed at collecting and evaluating information on the possible use of DU weaponry in the Ukrainian war. This will be done both by checking plus verifying existing data sources and by developing on-site investigation activity. As a prerequisite, the project relies on close cooperation and exchange with Ukrainian and other institutions, in particular within civil society.

One focus is on humanitarian demining for which mine action standards on the clearance of DU hazards ([Technical Note 09.30/02](#)) provide detailed guidance. The Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) in its Explosive Ordnance Guide for Ukraine [mentions](#) the case of the DU-projectile BM-32 used with Russian smoothbore tank guns. Altogether and as of yet, there is nearly no (other) information in relation to the possible use and left-over of DU weapons in the actual Ukrainian context.

This gives a certain need and *rationale* for the ICBUW Ukraine project directed at compiling data and advice for the sake of victim assistance and environmental remediation. It is an ongoing effort depending on financial and other support as well as on goodwill of people and organizations involved. It has to reach out to media and the public. The ultimate goal is to contribute to environmental peacebuilding after the end of this horrible war.