

Petition Pack – Stop Bombing Civilians!

URGENT ACTION IS NEEDED TO PROTECT CIVILIANS

Three years ago Salam, 14, was so badly injured in a bombing near her home in Syria that both of her legs had to be amputated.

“My neighbourhood came under intense aerial bombardment. I was walking in the street when the bombs started falling with a deafening sound. I tried to take shelter, but a bomb fell a few metres away from us. I got hit by shrapnel.”

Salam now lives near Irbid, Jordan, with 10 family members, all crammed into two rooms. Every week Huda, one of our physiotherapists, visits Salem to ensure her prostheses still fit, before going through gruelling rehabilitation exercises. A typical rehabilitation session might include weight-lifting to strengthen her muscles and walking on uneven ground to improve balance, before ending with Salam’s favourite sport, football.



Salam with Huda, our physiotherapist.
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Many more children like Salam are at risk. Let’s take action and make our voices heard!

Explosive weapons in populated areas

Every year, tens of thousands of civilians are killed and injured by the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects (e.g. missiles, rockets, shells, aerial bombs and Improvised Explosive Devices) in populated areas.

In Syria alone, more than **2 million children are at risk**, living in areas highly affected by the use of explosive weapons.

These vicious weapons destroy lives - they cause serious injuries and amputations, leading to severe disabilities and deep psychological trauma. They destroy homes, schools, and hospitals. After a conflict, the unexploded weapons left behind are a danger to civilians and a barrier to reconstruction, plunging communities into further poverty.



Damage caused by bombing in Kobani, Syria.
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When explosive weapons are used in populated areas, a shocking **92% of victims are civilians**. The indiscriminate and excessive use of these weapons in populated areas is a violation of International Humanitarian Law. Urgent action is needed to protect civilians! Tragically **bombings kill 44 civilians every single day** on average and the numbers are increasing.

Please turn over to find out how you can campaign to stop explosive weapons destroying innocent lives like Salam’s.

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SUPPORT THE PETITION

We are calling on the UK and all States to commit to ending the use of explosive weapons with wide-area affects in populated areas. This is our opportunity to demonstrate that members of the public across the UK care about innocent civilians caught up in conflict and to demand better protection for them. Together we can achieve so much!

Tips for collecting signatures

Hold an event as part of the Forgotten 10 Challenge - a great opportunity to ask people to sign the petition. Petition sheets which you can photocopy and use to collect signatures are enclosed in every campaign kit.

Think about how you can get as many signatures as possible and the best time to collect them. Are you organising a Forgotten 10 Challenge event in a public place? Have petition sheets ready on your stand or attached to a display. If you're holding a meeting, film night or talk, remember to make an announcement about the petition at the start.

Be prepared by having lots of copies of the petition sheets, as well as pens and clipboards to make signing the petition easier. We can send pens and lend you some clipboards.



Rugby Soroptimists collecting signatures in 2016.
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On the day, remember that you are playing an important role and supporting a vital cause. Before you start approaching people, decide on a few short sentences to grab people's attention. Try to be as clear as possible.

For example: "Hi, please will you sign our petition to protect civilians from explosive weapons? Thousands of innocent civilians are killed and injured each year. We're gathering support as we call on the government to publicly commit to ending the use of explosive weapons in populated areas."

Let people know why their support matters. Try and remember one or two facts about the scale of the problem, such as:

- When explosive weapons are used in populated areas, 92% of victims are civilians.
- Nearly 32,000 civilians were killed or injured by explosive weapons in 2017.

You can find more statistics in the **factsheets** included in the campaign kit.

Remember to have fun. Invite your friends and club members to help you collect signatures. Why not challenge your club to see who can collect the most!

Return your petition sheets by 31st January 2019: Humanity & Inclusion, Forgotten 10 Challenge, 9 Rushworth Street, London SE1 0RB.

NEW FOR 2018: THIS YEAR WE ARE ALSO ASKING CLUBS TO WRITE TO THEIR MPs. REQUEST YOUR 'WRITE TO YOUR MP PACK' BY EMAILING CAMPAIGNS.UK@HI.ORG