

Take Action

How to Challenge Nuclear Weapons Investments

This report provides the basis for coordinated campaigning to discourage financial institutions from investing in nuclear weapons companies. Taking action can involve meeting with bank representatives, organizing protests outside their headquarters or branches, raising public awareness, finding allies and promoting boycotts.

Meeting with Financial Institutions

Face-to-face meetings with representatives of financial institutions provide individuals and organizations with an opportunity to outline why investing in nuclear weapons companies is unethical, and why divestment is in the best interests of financial institutions from a commercial point of view.

People with funds invested in financial institutions that support the nuclear weapons industry should make it clear that, unless the institutions are prepared to change their policies and practices, they will move their funds to a more ethical alternative.

WHAT RESPONSES TO EXPECT

ICAN has contacted each of the financial institutions identified in this report as being involved in financing nuclear weapons companies. While some indicated that they were moving towards adopting policies against financing nuclear weapons, others presented various arguments justifying their investments:

- **Insignificant Investments:** Some banks claimed that their investments in nuclear weapons companies were insignificant, either as a proportion of their own overall investments, or as a proportion of the total outstanding shares or bonds of the companies. For example, Swiss Reinsurance Company, which invests in General Dynamics and Honeywell International, stated that its “holdings in these two companies represent only 0.02% of our overall investments” and “constitute an insignificant

fraction of the outstanding shares and bonds issued by these companies”.³⁶² However, Swiss Re’s bondholdings in the two companies are worth US\$82 million – hardly insignificant.

- **Not a Nuclear Weapons Company:** Some banks disputed the fact that the companies in question were indeed nuclear weapons companies, either because they do not work on nuclear warheads or because nuclear weapons work is only a small proportion of their overall enterprise. For example, Swisscanto said it did not classify either Rolls-Royce or Safran as producers of nuclear weapons, and therefore “we do not consider ourselves as involved in the financing of nuclear weapons producers”.³⁶³ Yet the companies play an integral role in the modernization of British and French nuclear forces, respectively.
- **Legitimate Industry:** Some financial institutions claimed that their investments were legitimate because nuclear weapons are legitimate. British financial institution Lloyds TSB stated: “Whilst the UK government remains committed to maintaining its nuclear deterrent, and considers this vital to our national security, we must continue to provide the essential finance to the companies that make this deterrent possible. Should the UK government stance on this issue change at any future point, then clearly we would seek to adapt our policies appropriately.”³⁶⁴ Here it is important to emphasize the illegality of nuclear weapons and their catastrophic humanitarian effects.

- **Indirect Financing:** One financial institution, the European Investment Bank, stated that its loans to nuclear weapons companies had been used only for specific projects that were unrelated to nuclear weapons: “The European Investment Bank does not fund companies in general but only specific projects, which might have a variety of companies involved in their construction. The EIB monitors its loans to ensure that they are only used for these agreed purposes.”³⁶⁵ While this situation is preferable to providing funding for general purposes, the funding of specific projects still frees up the company’s other capital for nuclear weapons work.
- **Index Funds:** Some financial institutions have argued that they cannot exclude nuclear weapons producers from their investments because their investments follow an index. (An index fund is a collective investment scheme that aims to replicate the movements of an index of a specific financial market.) Although it may be more difficult to divest in this situation, it is certainly not impossible. In the cluster munitions divestment campaign, for example, many banks chose to divest even when they had invested only through an index. The same standard should apply for nuclear weapons.
- **Fiduciary Duty:** Some pension funds, such as the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan, asserted that divestment is inconsistent with their fiduciary duties to maximize profits. This assumes that an unconstrained portfolio is more likely to have a higher rate of return. However, there are strong financial reasons to divest from nuclear weapons producers (in addition to the legal and ethical considerations). Investing in the nuclear weapons industry is inherently risky due to the chances of major accidents occurring at nuclear weapons facilities. Further, funding nuclear weapons companies can damage an institution’s reputation, which will likely affect its profits.
- **Protests at Banks:** Handing out pamphlets to bank customers as they enter branch offices or use automated teller machines will alert them to the unethical way in which their funds are being used, and encourage them to consider transferring to a more socially responsible bank. Youth campaigners from the Norwegian Red Cross have used this tactic to persuade banks in their country to divest. Street theatre or flashmobs could also be used in a similar way.
- **Letter-Writing and Petitions:** It is important that banks and other financial institutions are made aware that both the general public and their own customers disapprove of their investments in nuclear weapons producers. Writing letters to the chief executive officer, chief financial officer or chairperson can help to achieve this objective. Collecting petition signatures outside bank branches can also be effective.
- **Events and Endorsers:** Financial institutions often purchase naming rights for major events such as sporting tournaments. These events provide campaigners with a unique opportunity to raise public awareness about the institutions’ investments in nuclear arms makers, either through protests or media interviews. Banks also often use celebrity spokespeople to enhance their brand image. These individuals can be encouraged (through Twitter, for example) to take a stand against the investments.
- **Shareholder Activism:** Campaigners may choose to purchase shares in financial institutions, or obtain proxy voting rights from existing shareholders, in order to influence their investment decisions. Shareholders are generally entitled to ask questions of senior executives at annual general meetings, and may also have the right to put forward resolutions suggesting that the financial institutions divest from nuclear weapons companies. Shareholders’ meetings provide an important forum for raising awareness among this key target audience.

Action Ideas

If financial institutions are unpersuaded by ethical arguments, campaigners should demonstrate to them the risks of refusing to divest from the nuclear weapons industry. The following actions will help to raise public awareness about the financial support provided by particular institutions to this grossly unethical industry:

When banks, pension funds and other financial institutions express a clear unwillingness to divest from nuclear weapons producers, individuals should take their money elsewhere, and encourage others to do the same. If a sufficient number of people boycott a particular financial institution, it may reconsider its support for this illegitimate industry.

Engaging the Media

Campaigners can use the media – television, newspapers, radio, magazines, newsletters and blogs – to publicize which financial institutions are investing in nuclear weapons companies. Here are some ideas for getting the message out widely:

- **Press Releases:** Press releases are a useful way to share new research, advise the media of important developments or promote actions.
- **Spokespeople:** Finding effective spokespersons who are knowledgeable about nuclear weapons as well as financial issues is important.
- **Opinion Pieces:** Many newspapers and online news sites publish opinion articles from guest writers. These could provide a useful outlet.
- **Social Media:** Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter can also be used to raise awareness about and build support for divestment.

Finding Allies

Divestment campaigns benefit from having a strong coalition of organizations determined to achieve specific results. Bringing key stakeholders on board significantly increases the chances of success. For example, enlisting the support of teachers' unions would assist efforts to persuade a teachers' pension plan to divest from nuclear weapons companies.

Campaigning should seek to involve a diverse range of environmental, social justice, international development and human rights groups. Having strong allies in the financial world is also a major advantage, as they can help to explain to financial institutions why divestment is important not only from an ethical standpoint, but also for commercial reasons.

Celebrity endorsers can help to raise the profile of divestment campaigns, and attract large numbers of people to the cause. Parliamentarians and mayors can use official avenues to pursue divestment.

BOX 14

Case Study: The Norwegian Divestment Experience

Pia A. Gaarder heads the ethics and business section of the Norwegian chapter of the *Future in Our Hands*. Here she describes the campaign for the Norwegian government to divest from nuclear weapons stocks.

ICAN: How have you promoted nuclear divestment in Norway?

Pia Gaarder (PG): In 1995 my organization, Future in Our Hands, initiated a project to scrutinize private and public Norwegian investments in developing countries, as well as export and import ethics – or the lack thereof. In 1999 we started to look into the investment portfolio of the Norwegian Government Pension Fund (SPU),* with a focus on its investments in weapon-producing companies.

In 2001 the Socialist Left Party – an opposition party in the Norwegian parliament at that time – disclosed that the SPU owned shares in a producer of landmines. The Norwegian government had been one of the leading actors in the process that led to the signing of the Landmine Convention in 1997, and the fact that the SPU – a fund owned and managed by the government – invested in the production of these weapons was a shock and an eye-opener to many.

ICAN: What was the government's response to this revelation?

PG: The SPU withdrew its investments from landmine production and the Ministry of Finance established the International Law Council. This body was assigned the task of scrutinizing and monitoring the investments of the SPU in order to ensure that they were in line with Norway's international legal obligations.

However, when in 2002, after months of research, we could demonstrate that the SPU, through its investments in Lockheed Martin and Honeywell, was financially involved in the production of nuclear weapons, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs dismissed our claim by arguing that nuclear weapons were not in conflict with international law.

We allied ourselves with a leading Norwegian newspaper and some key politicians in the Norwegian parliament. Pushed by a wave of attention and negative publicity, the government finally had to give in.

The Norwegian parliament decided to establish a committee assigned with the task of exploring the ethical guidelines for the SPU, which led to the establishment of the Ethical Council in 2004. Consequently, SPU

decided to divest from producers of both nuclear weapons and cluster munitions, although there were no international conventions banning these weapons.

ICAN: What lessons did you learn from this experience?

PG: In our view, our divestment campaign demonstrates the potential of this kind of campaigning – if done accurately and with a critical eye to details and references. The government needs the investments of the SPU to be perceived as legitimate in the eyes of the Norwegian population. When they are not, as was clearly demonstrated in 2002, it became politically impossible for the government not to divest, or in this case not to start the process that made divestment possible.

For private actors it is probably not only a question of reputation, but also a question of market shares. If they offer people a fund portfolio that, for ethical reasons, people are reluctant to buy, they will lose out to other financial institutions.

For more information, visit:
www.framtiden.no

* Known as Norwegian Petroleum Fund until 2006.

BOX 15

Take Action: What Parliamentarians Can Do

Alyn Ware is the global coordinator of *Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament* – a network of more than 800 legislators in 80 countries committed to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. Here he describes the role that lawmakers can play in promoting nuclear weapons divestment.

ICAN: How have parliamentarians promoted divestment from nuclear weapons companies?

Alyn Ware (AW): In Norway and New Zealand, parliamentarians were instrumental in moving public funds to divest from corporations involved in the manufacture of nuclear weapons. In 2004 the Norwegian government pension fund, following pressure from parliamentarians, media and non-governmental organizations, established ethical guidelines for its investments and appointed an advisory council on ethics to make recommendations on implementation of these guidelines.

In 2005 the advisory council discussed and came out with a recommendation regarding nuclear weapons production. Following this, the pension fund excluded the following companies from its investment portfolio and divested from shares in them due to their production of nuclear-weapons-related components: BAE Systems, Boeing, EADS, Finmeccanica, Honeywell International, Northrop Grumman, Safran and United Technologies.

Other nuclear-weapons-related corporations such as Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics and Alliant Techsystems had already been excluded due to their involvement in the production of anti-personnel landmines or cluster munitions.

In New Zealand, the minister responsible for the Accident Compensation Fund directed the fund to divest from nuclear weapons corporations after being approached by the New Zealand section of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, which had been inspired by the Norwegian example. A coalition of members of parliament and non-governmental organizations also moved the Government Superannuation Fund to divest from such corporations.

ICAN: Politicians are asked to support many different causes. Why should they care about nuclear disarmament?

AW: As long as nuclear weapons are maintained under policies of nuclear deterrence – that is, the threat to use them against other states – there is a risk that they could be used by accident, miscalculation or design.

The disaster of Fukushima indicates that even when we have the best technical controls in place, unforeseen events or combinations of events can lead to a disaster. Any disaster with nuclear weapons would cause catastrophic and unprecedented devastation.



The continuing possession of nuclear weapons by some states is a recipe for proliferation. It stimulates other states to acquire them and means that there are bomb-making materials, or actual bombs, susceptible to theft by terrorist organizations. In addition, the US\$100 billion spent annually on nuclear weapons is sorely needed for economic and social development and to invest in renewable energies to combat climate change.

ICAN: Aside from promoting divestment, what other practical things can parliamentarians do to help abolish nuclear weapons?

AW: Members of parliament in nuclear-weapon states can advocate

in their legislatures for a reduction in spending on nuclear weapons, an immediate change in nuclear weapons doctrines to rule out any first use of nuclear weapons and affirm the norm of non-use, and a committed programme to develop verification technologies and mechanisms to support nuclear disarmament.

Parliamentarians in states covered by extended nuclear deterrence – Australia, Japan, South Korea and the NATO states – can call for a parliamentary review of such security policies and an examination of non-nuclear security mechanisms at national, regional and global levels to abandon, or phase out, reliance on extended nuclear deterrence.

Parliamentarians in non-nuclear-weapon states can adopt legislation prohibiting and criminalizing nuclear weapons, similar to legislation adopted in Austria, Mongolia, New Zealand and the Philippines, and prohibiting public investment in corporations making nuclear weapons and their components or delivery vehicles, as has been done in Norway and New Zealand.

Parliamentarians in regions not covered by nuclear-weapon-free zones – such as Europe, North-East Asia, the Middle East and the Arctic (circumpolar nations) – can initiate inquiries, hold parliamentary discussions and adopt resolutions on establishing such zones in their region.

Parliamentarians in any parliament can hold events – film screenings, debates, receptions, award ceremonies – on the incompatibility of nuclear weapons with international humanitarian law, morality and cooperative security; endorse international parliamentary appeals (such as those calling for a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone and the immediate de-alerting of nuclear weapons); adopt resolutions supporting key initiatives such as the UN Secretary-General's five-point proposal for nuclear disarmament or the proposed nuclear weapons convention; and call for parliamentary hearings on developing the legal, technical, institutional and political framework for the global abolition of nuclear weapons.

For more information, visit www.pnnd.org

BOX 16

Take Action: What Mayors Can Do

*Over five thousand cities have joined Mayors for Peace to build momentum for a nuclear abolition. **Aaron Tovish**, coordinator of the network's 2020 Vision Campaign, outlines how mayors can get involved in divestment.*

ICAN: What motivates mayors to join the Mayors for Peace network?

Aaron Tovish (AT): Nuclear weapons are “good” for only one thing: annihilating cities. For mayors who strive to provide security and promote prosperity of cities, being against nuclear weapons is a no-brainer. They have heard the deterrence arguments, but they simply cannot support a “security” policy that consists of holding cities hostage.

ICAN: Are mayors concerned that money is being spent on nuclear weapons instead of communities?

AT: Absolutely. The US Conference of Mayors adopted a very strong resolution on this in 2011. Why is so much “loving care” lavished on nuclear weapons, when cities are in depression? In the non-nuclear world, there is an awareness that aid crucial to meeting the Millennium Development Goals also goes lacking because of these skewed priorities.

ICAN: Are any of your members involved in nuclear divestment?

AT: Yes, I would venture to say that wherever there's a city involved in

divestment, it's a member of Mayors for Peace. But a lot of our members are not yet involved. The 2020 Vision Campaign will be encouraging cities to hold poster exhibitions in 2012 and 2013 which, among other things, will increase awareness of this area.

ICAN: What links might cities have to nuclear weapons companies?

AT: I would guess that most cities are completely unaware of the links. After all, these links are rarely advertised. The first challenge is to raise awareness about these hidden links. I am hoping that ICAN can help us with this.

Visit: www.mayorsforpeace.org

BOX 17

Take Action: What Religious Groups Can Do

*Religious groups have a long tradition of advocacy against war and weapons. **Jonathan Frerichs**, a programme executive at the World Council of Churches, explains how these groups can get involved in nuclear weapons divestment work.*

ICAN: Are religious groups actively promoting nuclear disarmament?

Jonathan Frerichs (JF): Yes, many are active in a variety of ways. For example, Buddhist groups in Japan and North-East Asia have kept the abolition flame of hope burning brightly in response to the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Among Christians, there are churches taking positions against nuclear weapons, educating their members, speaking out in public and talking to governments. Some are working at the parish level, some nationally and some internationally.

The groups that have been advocating against nuclear weapons the longest are the Roman Catholic Church, the World Council of Churches and peace churches like Mennonites and Quakers. Others have taken up the issue more recently, including the groups known as Evangelicals.

The most advocacy activity takes place in countries that have some connection to nuclear weapons – as possessors, allies of possessors, places where nuclear arms are stationed, countries where nuclear weapons have been tested, or countries that produce uranium. There are also many places where churches are not active on nuclear issues.

Some of these same dynamics would help explain where other religions are involved, as in the Buddhist case. The picture should also include opposition to nuclear power plants. We are seeing some cases where this is the reason why youth are becoming involved.

ICAN: How can religious groups promote divestment from nuclear weapon producers?

JF: In one sense, the research, outreach, advocacy and persistence that divestment requires is no different for religious groups than for others in civil society. In another sense, there are religious groups with a lot of experience in pursuing the work of divestment as an expression of their faith. Also, divestment is an advocacy strategy that in some cases has become a collaborative effort among

groups from different faiths.

Some religious communities are the kind of “constituency” that may be mobilized in a coherent and committed fashion that can support divestment actions. The strongest examples I am aware of are among Catholic orders – sisters and nuns – who combine solidarity and tenacity with a commitment to pursuing justice. Certain church groups choose to hold shares, rather than divest, in order to engage with the company in question.

In the World Council of Churches, member churches from different regions agreed to divest from companies doing business in South Africa during the apartheid era. When it comes to nuclear weapons producers, mainline US member churches generally have avoided investing their institutional funds as part of their commitment not to support arms manufacturers. This is a longstanding practice.

A huge and largely unmet challenge, however, would be to go beyond church headquarters and make the case for nuclear divestment with local congregations and individual church members.

For more information, visit www.oikoumene.org

Further Research

The information on nuclear weapons investments provided in this report is by no means comprehensive. Further research is needed for a more complete picture of the global financing of nuclear weapons companies. Such research could examine more closely the financial institutions of a certain country, target investors in a particular nuclear weapons company, or look at a specific type of investor, such as universities.

Ethical investment groups with expertise in this area may be available to assist with research. At the very least, they will be in a position to advise how to obtain information about a company's share- and bondholdings, loans and so on. The following investors, for example, deserve further attention:

- **Sovereign Wealth Funds:** These are of particular interest because they invest taxpayers' money and their investment decisions are often subject to government oversight processes. Concerned citizens can pressure their elected representatives to take a stand in favour of divestment from nuclear weapons companies. In many countries, information about the investments of publicly owned funds can be obtained through freedom of information laws. Public funds may exist at the national, state and municipal levels.
- **Universities:** Public universities in many countries have large endowments, which they invest in various ways, including on the stock exchange. University students – who often pay fees for their education, and are the major stakeholders in universities – have a legitimate interest in knowing precisely how these funds are invested. Information about a university's investments could be obtained through freedom of information laws or the university's governing body, which most likely includes a student representative. Students should initiate campaigns encouraging their universities to divest from nuclear weapons stocks.
- **Pension Funds:** In many countries, people can choose how their pension is invested. Some pension funds exclude companies involved in unethical enterprises, including the manufacture of nuclear weapons, while others do not. Research into the investment policies and practices of pension funds would help people to make an informed decision about which fund they participate in.

USING FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAWS

Freedom of information laws exist in roughly 85 countries. They guarantee access to documents and data held by the state, subject to certain exemptions. Where access to the documents is deemed in the public interest, fees are typically waived. Freedom of information laws can be used to find out whether government pension funds or statutory bodies such as universities invest in nuclear weapons companies.

In May 2011, for example, ICAN campaigners in Australia used freedom of information laws to discover that a major government fund, the Future Fund, had equities worth A\$135.4 million in 15 companies that produce nuclear weapons for the United States, the United Kingdom, France and India.³⁶⁶ The freedom of information request sought documents providing details of the fund's investments in a list of nuclear weapons companies.

It may also be possible to use parliamentary processes to obtain information about how governments invest their funds. For example, depending on how a particular legislature operates, campaigners could approach supportive politicians to ask questions of ministers.

RESEARCHING FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

The details of a financial institution's investments are not always publicly available. It is particularly difficult to obtain information on a company if it is not listed on a stock exchange. Companies argue that keeping their investment strategies secret is necessary in order to maintain commercial competitiveness.

In some countries, however, financial institutions are required by law to publish details of investments over a certain threshold. Stock exchange filings are also available. In addition, many financial institutions publish sustainability reports, which sometimes contain information on whether they invest in the arms industry, but such policies should not necessarily be taken at face value, as this report shows.

UPDATING INFORMATION

The information in this report will need to be updated periodically. Which financial institutions are investing in nuclear weapons companies and the value of their investments are subject to change quickly.

In addition, the companies that are involved in nuclear weapons work will also change as existing contracts wind up and new contracts (or subcontracts) are awarded.

Conclusion

The nuclear weapons industry is the most illegitimate of all industries. It threatens the peace and security of people everywhere. Yet mainstream financial institutions across the world continue to invest in companies that are heavily involved in this grossly unethical industry. It is time for a global campaign to challenge the build-up and modernization of the world's most destructive weapons by pressuring financial institutions to divest. Such a campaign will be vital to the success of a total ban on these worst weapons of terror.

In today's globalized economy, many thousands of individuals and institutions are indirectly involved – in most cases, unwittingly – in the financing of nuclear weapons companies. Any person with a bank account or pension fund has the power to choose not to invest in nuclear arms producers, and can encourage friends, family members and colleagues to withdraw their money from banks that refuse to divest. Divestment is a mechanism with which we can harness the widespread and overwhelming public opposition to nuclear weapons to achieve tangible outcomes.

BOX 18

Case Study: The Boycott to End French Nuclear Testing

*French nuclear testing in the South Pacific was widely condemned, and resulted in a mass boycott of French products. **Helen Caldicott**, an Australian paediatrician and veteran anti-nuclear campaigner, describes the global movement that forced France to stop testing its nuclear arms.*

ICAN: How did the idea for a boycott of French products come about?

Helen Caldicott (HC): The idea spontaneously arose out of a very disturbed populace. It was the obvious thing to do. It wasn't orchestrated at all – it was like spontaneous combustion. People had an almost anaphylactic reaction to all things French. There were whole pages full of letters to the editor opposing the nuclear testing. They got more calls at the Adelaide Children's Hospital – where I was working – about French nuclear tests than they got about patients. There were demonstrations in the city streets involving hundreds of thousands of people.

ICAN: What did the boycott involve? What were people asked to do?

HC: People stopped buying French wine, French cheese and other French products. Postal workers wouldn't deliver French mail. It was full-on. The boycott was, at every level, a personal expression of how people felt. People were really angry with the French. Within nine months, 75 per cent of Australians opposed the French nuclear testing in the Pacific.

France conducts a nuclear test in French Polynesia in 1970.



ICAN: What role did you personally play in the campaign?

HC: I was involved in mobilizing Australians to oppose the French nuclear tests. In response to public pressure, the Australian and New Zealand governments took France to the International Court of Justice, and they were forced to test underground.

I remember visiting the French government in Paris and asking them why they were doing it, and they said that their bombs were perfectly safe. We said, "Why don't you blow them up in the Mediterranean?" Their faces turned bright white, and they said, "Mon Dieu, there are too many people living around the Mediterranean!"

For the first time in my life, I realized I was sitting next to wicked politicians who didn't give a damn

about kids in another part of the world getting leukaemia. At the time I was working as a paediatrician, so it was pretty profound. For me, this wasn't a political issue; it was a medical issue.

ICAN: Is now the right time for a global nuclear divestment campaign?

HC: A global campaign now on nuclear weapons divestment would tie in beautifully with the Occupy Wall Street movement. We need to go after the banks that are financing the companies manufacturing and modernizing nuclear weapons, and hit them hard. People are profiting from this deadly industry, and must be stopped. We need to focus on the vested interests that are preventing us from achieving disarmament.

BOX 19

Case Study: Divesting from Cluster Bomb Makers

*Has divestment helped to eliminate other categories of inherently inhumane weapons? **Roos Boer** – a policy adviser at the Dutch peace organization IKV Pax Christi and co-author of the first global report on cluster bomb investments – describes worldwide efforts to pressure banks and governments to divest from these large canister bombs, which disperse multiple smaller explosives.*

ICAN: What humanitarian harm do cluster munitions cause?

Roos Boer (RB): Used in more than 30 countries, cluster bombs have killed and injured tens of thousands of civilians and devastated the livelihoods of countless more. Over 380 million “bomblets” were used in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam in the 1970s. Many did not explode on impact and, functioning as de-facto landmines, are still killing people today.

ICAN: Is it illegal to manufacture and use cluster munitions?

RB: Yes. The Convention on Cluster Munitions opened for signature in December 2008 and entered into force in August 2010. This treaty categorically bans the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of cluster munitions. It came about as a result of strong cooperation between governments and civil society groups belonging to the Cluster Munition Coalition. Today over 110 nations have joined the treaty.

ICAN: How have you promoted divestment from companies that produce cluster munitions?

RB: In October 2009, IKV Pax Christi and Netwerk Vlaanderen – both members of the Cluster Munition Coalition – published a report on divestment titled *Worldwide Investment in Cluster Munitions: A Shared Responsibility*.

Divestment from cluster munitions had been on the agenda for years but this was the first time worldwide research was published. The research focused on financial institutions that invested in cluster munition producers, but also highlighted good examples of financial institutions that had taken measures to prevent involvement with these companies.

Abdullah Yaqoob was injured in a British cluster bomb strike on Basra, Iraq, in 2003.



Photo: DanChurchAid

ICAN: What about the investment policies of governments?

RB: Besides our focus on financial institutions, we also included a chapter on government practice on banning investments. The Convention on Cluster Munitions provided a solid base to do so. Although the treaty does not explicitly mention investments in cluster munition producers, it bans “assistance” in the production of cluster munitions. Over the years, more and more governments have stated that, in their understanding, investments should be seen as falling under this prohibition.

ICAN: How have you campaigned to ensure that your report's findings are acted upon?

RB: On the day that we released the report, the Cluster Munition Coalition launched the global “Stop Explosive Investments” campaign. The combination of the research publication and worldwide engagement from campaigners has proven to be a strong force for change. On our first global day of action to stop explosive investments,

campaigners from around 20 countries organized press briefings and letter sending actions.

Media coverage has been strong. Campaigners have engaged with financial institutions to achieve policy changes, have targeted banks with public actions and have created spin-off reports about investments in their respective countries.

ICAN: What effect has “Stop Explosive Investments” had in ending cluster bomb financing?

RB: Many financial institutions have introduced new policies or strengthened existing ones to exclude investments in cluster munition producers from their portfolios. A number of governments that are parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions have also either introduced legislation to ban these investments or issued interpretive statements that the convention includes a prohibition on investments. IKV Pax Christi and Netwerk Vlaanderen have issued updates of the report in 2010 and 2011, and will do so again in 2012

www.stopexplosiveinvestments.org