



PARLIAMENTARY FORUM  
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

## Report on Cluster Munitions Disarmament hearing 10 July 2007

At a hearing on Wednesday the 10th of July, undertaken on the island of Gotland, Sweden during the 'Almedalen Week' which is an annual event taking place in July and is considered an important forum in Swedish politics. During the week, representatives from the political parties in Sweden take turns to hold speeches, seminars and other political activities.

Key stakeholders from Sweden and neighbouring countries discussed a possible ban on cluster munitions. Gathered in the Methodist Church, the panellists and resource persons included:

Minister of Defence Mats Odenberg  
MP Birgitta Ohlsson, Sweden  
Eva Veble, Head of DCA Humanitarian Mine Action Unit  
Grethe Östern, Policy Advisor, Norwegian People's Aid/Co-Chair, Cluster Munition Coalition

The principal results from the seminar were:

1. Sweden will not announce a moratorium; not a *de iure* moratorium ... although the Defence Minister says that a "de facto moratorium" on cluster munitions is already in place.
2. Bombkapsel 90, a strategic weapon in the Swedish fighter plan BAE JAS-Gripen, is considered to be included in any putative definition of cluster munitions, according to the Minister of Defence. This contrasted with the Swedish Association of Defence Industries, which says that none of their members have production or handling of "what can be considered as cluster munitions".
3. Sweden would continue to pursue both tracks (Oslo and CCW-ERW), according to the Minister. CMC partners present at the seminar aired great dissatisfaction with this, since it would probably provide obstacles to the campaign.
4. The Minister said that the process had been extraordinarily speedy, and that Sweden admittedly was deficiently prepared and involved in the international process.
5. On the comment of one participant, all panellists concluded that if BK90 was used over an area, not one of them would take its family members out to play football on that area – regardless of its tested reliability, self-destruct devices, etc.

It was concluded that the choice ultimately stands between humanitarian/political considerations on the one hand and military/technical ones on the other hand. That is a choice which the Parliament and Government must make – and soon.