

DU Weapons: The political and legal framework

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1. Uranium weapons – what is it all about?

- Special conventional ammunition with DU core – anti-tank
- Link to nuclear cyclis – but not (as) „DU waste removal“
- Highly chemically and radiologically toxic (but neither chemical/nuclear nor poison/“radiological“ weapon)
- Alternatives: Tungsten, Kobalt... - German Armed Forces=„clean“
- Tendency of replacement (because of us?) but also opposing trends



2. Uranium weapons in the Ukraine war

- Altogether: puzzling picture – missing/difficult verification(actual use)
- Propaganda war/(intentional) confusion with nuclear weapons
- ICBUW: check weapon systems
- Russian/Soviet tanks possibly equipped – unclear information by GICHD: Svinets2 ammo „found“
- Western side: Challenger and Charmes3 – Abrams and (re-produced) DU ammo? – negative: Milan and Javelin missiles



3. War victim: the environment

- UNEP Report 2022: Environment – Conflict in Ukraine - DU
- Broader perspective: environmental destruction through war
- International discourse – victim protection and environmental remediation (like in case of nuclear weapons/TPNW)
- Not greening the war!...
- Connection to climate change (movement)



4. Legal framework

- Existing international legal prohibition even without a specific treaty
- Multifaceted approach: IHL – HR Law – Environmental Law
- Right to a healthy environment (emerging)
- Complex and fitting argument: precautionary principle/approach
- Domestic: Belgian/Costa Rica law and Italian cases

5. Political processes

- UNGA resolutions (bi-annual): lastly 77/49 – 147/5/23 – positive substance (precaution/transparency/help affected)
- Broadening: „Environment and conflict“ – UN Environment Assembly (start) 2016 (Ukrainian initiative!)
- International Law Commission: Draft principles on the protection of the environment in relation to armed conflict (PERAC)
- Nov 6th: UN Day against environmental destruction by war (=ICBUW Action Day)
- Support by other organisations: EU/EP (up to a ban); ICRC; CEOBS (Conflict and Environment Observatory); EUROMIL...