



**HELŚIŃSKA FUNDACJA PRAW CZŁOWIEKA
HELSINKI FOUNDATION for HUMAN RIGHTS**

00-018 Warszawa, ul. Zgoda 11
tel./fax: (48 22) 828-10-08, 828-69-96
e-mail: hfhr@hfhrpol.waw.pl
konto: PKO BP SA I O/Centrum
58 1020 1013 0000 0502 0002 9165
swift: BPKOPLPW

ZARZĄD FUNDACJI

Prezes: Marek Antoni Nowicki
Wiceprezes: Danuta Przywara
Sekretarz: Andrzej Rzepliński
Skarbnik: Elżbieta Czyż
Członek Zarządu: Zbigniew Hołda

Warsaw, 9th March 2007

908/2007

**The Honourable
Jarosław Kaczyński
Chairman of the Council of
Ministers of the Republic of
Poland**

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

The Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights would like to express its deep concern with respect to the Polish Government's stance adopted at a Common Conference of the UN, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Cluster Munitions Coalition on the prohibition of the use and production of cluster munitions (*Oslo Conference on Cluster Munitions*), held on 22-23 February 2007.

It is astonishing that with respect to such an important humanitarian issue Poland declined to sign the Final Declaration which is the basis for further international co-operation aimed at prohibiting the use and production of these weapons. It must be noted that only three out of 49 participating countries did not accept the Final Declaration (i.e. Poland, Romania and Japan).

During the Conference it was stressed that cluster munitions are relicts of the Cold War. Nowadays urban areas suffer most from modern military conflicts and civilian population endures most of the effects of cluster munitions. When it explodes, the canister ejects its cargo of sub-munitions which are scattered over the target area and are meant to explode on impact. This type of weapon constitutes a real threat even many years after the conflict (app. 70% of cluster munitions are active 20 years after mining).

In view of the above the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights considers that the initiative to prohibit the use and production of this terrible weapon should gain recognition. Therefore, we are kindly asking you, Mr. Prime Minister, to have Poland join it. Future conferences in Lima, Vienna and Dublin shall be a good opportunity thereto.

Sincerely,

/ - /

Marek Antoni Nowicki
President of the Board