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Investigation

Israel did use Depleted Uranium weapons in the Gaza Strip

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ACDN (Action of Citizens for the total Dismantling of Nukes) has continued its investigation into the 1000 guided bombs (GBU-39) which the USA delivered to Israel a few weeks before "Operation Cast Lead" against Gaza. This investigation confirms the essential points made in ACDN's initial allegations: these radioactive weapons indeed contain Depleted Uranium, which makes them weapons of a genocidal character.

In an article published on 4 January 2009 on its website www.acdn.net, an article widely diffused and picked up by numerous sites, ACDN denounced the use of GBU-39 bombs by the Israeli Air Force from the beginning of "Cast Lead", stating that they contained Depleted Uranium (DU). This is a radioactive metal and a chemical poison. When it is inhaled or ingested in the form of micro- or nano-particles, it attacks the DNA of the cells and human genome. Used to harden munitions, DU is pyrophoric (it ignites on impact), and it is also, in the medium to long term, seriously pathogenic, carcinogenic and teratogenic (causing birth deformities). To use such weapons in the heart of a population without taking account of these well-known effects of DU is to knowingly risk genocide. Hence the title of our article on 4 January: "[In Gaza, the Genocide by Depleted Uranium has begun](#)" and our appeal for the massacre to cease immediately.

Reactions

Since the « international community » - both the official one and the antinuclear one - did not seem to react to this cry of alarm, except to cast doubt on it, ACDN compiled a more complete dossier on the GBU-39s and published it on 14 January "[Genocide in Gaza with Depleted Uranium: the Dossier.](#)". Then on 18 January, just after the ceasefire was proclaimed by Israel, [ACDN's president wrote to the UN Secretary-General](#), Mr Ban Ki-Moon, asking him to urgently open an investigation into the presence of radioactive materials in the Gaza Strip and to take urgent measures, if appropriate, to neutralize these materials if possible or at least to protect the Gazans and their neighbours from radioactivity. The letter proposed entrusting this task to the UN Environment Program (UNEP), which had already investigated such matters in the Balkans and which knew how to find DU where it was present.

Meanwhile on 19 January the accredited ambassadors to Austria of the Arab nations presented, through Prince Mansour Al-Saud, a [letter to the International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\)](#) expressing concern about "*medical and media reports*" and saying that "*traces of Depleted Uranium have been found in Palestinian victims.*" That is indeed what Dr Mads Gilbert, one of the Norwegian doctors working in the Al-Chifa Hospital in Gaza, had stated as early as 31 December 2008. The Arab ambassadors asked the IAEA to carry out a "*radiological and physical investigation in order to ascertain the presence of Depleted Uranium in the weapons used by Israel in the Gaza Strip*". The IAEA replied quickly that it agreed to the request and was going to carry out the investigation. That announcement ruled out the UNEP undertaking the mission.

At the time of writing (12 February 2009), the IAEA has not yet released a report. It is true that even before the IAEA investigators arrived in Gaza, an Israeli government spokesperson assured them they would find nothing. Earlier the Israeli Defense Force chief had at first denied (on 13 January) that white phosphorus bombs had been used, before being forced to admit it on January 20 and fall back on his second line of defense: "*they are authorized weapons*". Yes, tolerated only just, and not for use on civilians.

Without awaiting the results of the AIEA's expertise, ACDN continued its investigation into the GBU-39s and managed to gather the following details:

Profile and specifications

According to a "well-informed source" the GBU-39s delivered to Israel represent a quite new generation of guided bombs. Their casing is composed of a metallic C/DU alloy based on DU (80%), with tungsten being replaced by carbon (20 %). It may at first seem that carbon is more brittle and friable than tungsten, therefore less suited for a metallic casing that is meant to ensure that the bomb can penetrate deep into the earth, into an apartment building or into a bunker, through reinforced concrete and other multiple resistant obstacles. In fact the opposite is true.

This carbon is actually a special carbon, coming directly from the military laboratories of Los Alamos, and linked to the research (both university and private) conducted into nanomaterials and metal structures which developed a new "type of carbon" with reinforced molecular structures, the **fullerenes**. As resistant as diamonds, fullerenes appear outwardly like black soot and they combine easily with other metals, in this case with Depleted Uranium.

Furthermore, the "friability" of carbon makes it possible to obtain a metallic alloy forming thousands of tiny shards, using a brand-new fabrication process which makes use of what is called "fragmentary sintering". The metal (the alloy 20/80 C/DU) is not really a "homogenous mass"; it is a network of deliberate microfissures which facilitates its breaking into tiny bits of "metal shards" whose dispersal is increased also by the type of explosive used in the GBUs.

According to the most recent information seen by ACDN, the explosive charge of the GBU-39s used by Israel during "Cast Lead" is not thought to be the same as the DIME (Dense Inert Metal Explosive) which is present, over 80kg of it per unit, in the Mk-82s. These are the 500-lb bombs on which the GBU-39 are based and they also were used in Gaza. Confusion between the two is possible; the fate of their victims is almost identical. The explosive in the GBU-39s is said to be a new formula of perchlorate (a highly carcinogenic product) with the addition of micromolecular carbon powder (in place of aluminium) and of a « booster » based on DU powder. The role of this powerful explosive is to ensure great velocity for these "metal shards" which ignite because they contain pyrophoric DU, but only after the friction of impact with their "targets" raises their temperature sufficiently.

"Preformed in the form of needles", these tiny shards drill into anything that gets in their way. They can travel right through human bodies and only reinforced concrete stops them at a depth of about a metre (between 0.85 m and 1.15 m). After that, they burn, releasing a maximum of heat and minimum of smoke... on account of the "mini impacts dispersed widely around the target".

The GBU-39s used during the Israeli intervention have an extra feature: a complementary ignition system which forces the explosion if the primary system of impact fails to function. Thus the bomb explodes in seconds or minutes after contact with the target, whatever the nature of the target. This means that the material is sure to disappear when used. No remains will be found of a GBU-39, either intact or in fragments. Only a little black powder.

These things - the new composite materials, the GBUs' other characteristics described in our earlier articles, and their operating system as a whole - give the GBUs a "multiple service" of destruction and lethality:

- deep penetration into the best-protected targets (concrete of high, very high, or ultra-high performance; thick armour made of steel, or steel reinforced by DU);
- explosion differed until the desired and programmed depth is reached;
- subsequent explosion and self-destruction of the device, if the primary operating system fails to function;
- "classical" destruction of the target, by blast from the inside;
- projection of metal shards in inert or living bodies inside or surrounding the target, with "decapitation" or "amputation" effects on human bodies;
- external and internal cremation of the bodies, with the metal shards themselves becoming fire-carriers;
- the impossibility, in the case of wounded survivors, to distinguish the metal shards and to extract them

surgically;

- reduction of the length of survival for the injured and the burnt, because of internal radiotoxic and chemical poisoning due to Depleted Uranium and its descendants;
- radioactive contamination of the natural environment by dispersion, on the sites of the explosions and beyond, caused by DU nanoparticles and other radionuclides derived from uranium;
- attacks on the genome of the target population.

The murderous innovations of the arms merchants defy the imagination. So does their ability to make DU disappear from their nomenclatures, to dodge all embarrassing questions, and even to find unexpected allies for themselves.

The Art of Dodging

The GBUs are built in the USA by the Boeing corporation in its factory in Saint Louis (Missouri). Knowing this, a US citizen who remained "skeptical" about ACDN's assertions asked the US Department of Defense (DoD) whether or not the GBU-39s contain DU. While awaiting the DoD's response - one is still waiting - he asked the Boeing's communications officer the following question: «*Does the Boeing facility in St. Louis have a DOE license for holding or handling depleted uranium ?*». He received this reply: «*Boeing does not have a license as there is no depleted uranium activity at our St. Louis/St. Charles facility.*» **(Note 1)**

Nevertheless, despite its appearance of denial, that answer does not at all imply that there is no DU in the GBU-39s: their « construction » in Saint Louis might be limited to the assembly of separate pieces, and does not imply either furnaces or foundries for metal alloys, or even the machining of the pieces. If one wishes to trace the DU present in the casings of the GBU-39s back to where the alloy is made or the casing is machined, one might have to start with the US Army's laboratories (especially those in Los Alamos, leaders in metallurgy and nano-technologies), with Westinghouse, the company that supplies the uranium for the nuclear plants, or with one of their subcontractors. It's a sure bet that the answer would be either "defense secret" or pure and simple denial. In the USA as elsewhere, the military is the group that finances, manages and controls everything that concerns weapons. And their methods include silence and disinformation.

Return to the Human

White phosphorus, DIME, tungsten, DU... Doctors think differently from military chiefs and their bosses. Concerned only with humanity, the [surgeons present in Gaza](#) have described the effects on victims of the "new types of weapons" thus: «*2 metres away, a body is cut in two; 8 metres away, legs are severed, burnt as if by thousands of needle pricks* ». The wounded survivors «*have no trace of metal in their bodies, but strange internal haemorrhages. Some substance burns their blood vessels and causes death, we can do nothing*» (Dr Mads Gilbert, *Le Monde*, 12 January) «*Initially, everything seems in order...but it turns out on operation that dozens of miniature particles can be found in all their organs (...)* It seems to be some sort of explosive or shell that disperses tiny particles...that penetrate all organs. These miniature injuries, you are not able to attack them surgically.» (Dr. Jam Brommundt, a German doctor working at Kham Younis, a city in southern Gaza)

We are forced to ask the same questions as Dr Gilbert: « **Could this war perhaps be the laboratory for the death-makers? Could it be possible in the XXIst century for one group to confine population of 1.5 million and do whatever it wants with them while calling them terrorists?** »

And how can one describe this "war" which on the one side causes 14 deaths (11 Israeli soldiers, 4 of which were hit by "friendly fire", plus 3 civilians hit by a rocket fire) and 50 wounded, and on the other side at least 1330 killed and 5450 wounded, most of these being civilians, and half of these children? (Source : [Foreign Policy In Focus](#)) Is 1

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against 100 a fight or a massacre? A collection of war crimes? The start of a genocide which dares not speak its name and which hides behind the memory of another genocide?

A crime against humanity then?

Whatever the words, Israel has gone too far.

"A War Too Far"

The next Israeli decision-makers will have to acknowledge swiftly and repair, if that is at all possible, the huge human, ecological, economic and political damage suffered by the Palestinians in "Operation Cast Lead". They should do this in their own interest and that of their people, independently of Hamas - which should for its side acknowledge its own responsibilities.

If Israel does not take these steps, then justice and the "international community" will have to force it to. Otherwise the door will be open to all sorts of military follies, including nuclear massacres.

We appeal to everybody's good sense, sense of justice and sense of humanity.

Note 1 - Added 18 February

On the same day, 13 January 2009, Jack Cohen-Joppa (founder and editor of "the Nukeresister") had also written to ACC/PA Operations, asking for "*Comment... on claims of DU in GBU-39*":

Dear People,

Regarding my correspondence with Tim Deaton, IDS Weapons Programs Communications with the Boeing Company, below, can you please provide an authoritative response to the claim I have cited below that the GBU-39 contains depleted uranium? And if this warhead does not incorporate depleted uranium, can you provide further assurance that no uranium of any isotopic ratio or alloy is used in this Small Diameter Bomb?

Your response will help me to accurately portray the information provided by the Air Force and DoD when I write and edit about the subject of depleted uranium weapons.

Thank you for your assistance.

On 1/22/09, Jack Cohen-Joppa received from Ferrau, Jennifer S Capt USAF ACC PA/PAOM, the following answer:

Sir,

Thank you for your patience.

We do not discuss sensitive information regarding Air Force weapons systems.

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Thank you for your interest in this matter.

v/r

- ▶ JENNIFER S. FERRAU, Capt, USAF
 - ▶ Chief, ACC Media
 - ▶ Langley AFB, VA
 - ▶ DSN: 574-5007
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*"Israel did use Depleted Uranium weapons in the Gaza Strip
"ÒACDN, 12 February 2009.*

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PETITION

[To sign the petition for the abandonment by France and other countries of DU weapons and for a universal ban on radioactive weapons](#)