



KIMO RESOLUTION 4/95 (amended 96)

CHEMICAL WEAPONS AND MUNITIONS DUMPING

Following the end of the Second World War large quantities of chemical weapons (360,000 tonnes) and munitions were dumped into the world's oceans including the seas around Europe. At no time since the weapons were dumped has there been adequate environmental monitoring of the dump sites and in many cases complete records of what was dumped no longer exist or are being withheld. The barrels and ships, which contain these materials, have been subjected to corrosive salt and water and release their toxic materials into the marine environment. A number of sites are known to be around the Scottish coast including two sites west of the Hebrides between 50 and 100 miles from the coast, a site in the Irish Sea, another site near the Channel Islands and there are other major sites off the coasts of other European countries.

Large amounts of conventional weapons are regularly washed ashore in Northern Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man. These explosives were deposited in many cases in the same areas as the chemical munitions and there is a risk that chemical munitions could be also washed ashore.

Fishermen from all European countries are concerned about the prospects of snagging dumped weapon munitions in their nets and incidents in Denmark involving fishermen with mustard gas have raised concerns over health risks.

Some Governments currently employ a circular argument that since there is no evidence of leakage, there is no need of a monitoring programme. These materials not only represent an unacceptable threat to the marine environment but also are a health and safety risk to those working at sea and in harbours as well as to those who visit the coast for leisure.

KIMO

Having regard that chemical discharges from chemical weapons and the release of conventional munitions dumped at sea, and their real threat to the marine environment and the health and well being of communities around Northern Seas;

urges all Northern Seas States and the European Commission;

1) to investigate the exact locations of chemical and conventional weapon dump sites, compile inventories and to make this information available in the public domain,

2) commence independent monitoring programmes to assess the movement, integrity and current condition of dumped chemical and conventional materials.

KIMO members;

1) agree to submit this Resolution to all National Governments, the European Commission and other agencies.

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