

Depleted uranium is highly valued by the military, who use it in the tips of armour-piercing weapons. The material's high density and self-sharpening properties help it to penetrate the armour of enemy tanks and bunkers. Its use in conflicts has risen sharply in recent years. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that shells containing 1700 tonnes of the material were fired during the 2003 Iraq war.

Some researchers and campaigners are convinced that depleted uranium left in the environment by spent munitions causes cancer, birth defects and other ill effects in people exposed to it. Governments and the military disagree, and point out that there is no conclusive epidemiological evidence for this. And while they acknowledge that the material is weakly radioactive, they say this effect is too small to explain the genetic damage at the levels seen in war veterans and civilians.

TVNL Comment: And when it comes to health we should all take the word of governments and the military (whose job is it to kill people), over the scientific community.

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