

## **DEPLETED URANIUM SHELLS DECRIED**

### **Citizens find Bush guilty of Afghan war crimes**

by Nao Shimoyachi

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A citizens' tribunal Saturday in Tokyo found U.S. President George W. Bush guilty of war crimes for attacking civilians with indiscriminate weapons and other arms during the U.S.-led antiterrorism operations in Afghanistan in 2001.

The tribunal also issued recommendations for banning depleted uranium shells and other weapons that could indiscriminately harm people, compensating the victims in Afghanistan and reforming the United Nations in light of its failure to stop the U.S.-led operation there.

The tribunal participants spent two years examining Bush's role as the top commander in the war, making eight field trips to Afghanistan and holding nearly 20 public hearings.

"Bush said that military presence in Afghanistan is self-defense," said Robert Akroyd, a British lawyer who served as one of the five judges. "But under international law," he said, "a defendant must pay great care to discriminate (between) legitimate objects and civilians" in claiming that one's act is self-defense, said Akroyd, former head of legal studies at Aston University in Britain.

Bush failed to do so with the U.S. military's use of "indiscriminate weapons such as the Daisy Cutter (a huge conventional bomb), cluster bombs and depleted uranium shells," he said.

Civilians and experts who have supported the tribunal movement agreed to work for creation of an international treaty that would prohibit the production, stockpile and use of depleted uranium rounds, like the Ottawa process that succeeded in 1997 in outlawing antipersonnel land mines.

Organizers said the tribunal on Afghanistan was the latest attempt to try a head of state by the efforts of citizens.

The history of citizens' tribunals dates back to the 1960s, when the British philosopher Bertrand Russell and others tried to examine the acts of the U.S. government during the Vietnam War.

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**See Also:** People vs Total War Incorporated - Questioning the New Imperial World Order, A Hearing on the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) The BRussells Tribunal is a hearing committee composed of academics, intellectuals and artists in the tradition of the Russell Tribunal, set up in 1967 to investigate war crimes committed during the Vietnam War. The hearing is scheduled for 14-17th April 2004 at The Beursschouwburg and Les Halles in Brussels. It will be presided by Professor François Houtart, one of the founding fathers of the World Social Forum in Porto Allegre. It is directed against the war in Iraq and the Imperial war policies of the Bush II administration. Its main focus will be the "Project for the New American Century", the think tank behind this war, in particular three of the co-signatories of the mission statement: Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney and Paul Wolfowitz, as they are the physical link between the discourse and the brutal practice of the New Imperial World Order as designed by PNAC.