

Intersessional Meetings of the Mine Ban Treaty

Geneva

Statement on Universalization

25-26 June 2015



Thank you Mr President.

The Mine Ban Treaty is one of the world's most widely accepted treaties: over 80% of the world's countries are on board. With 162 States Parties, only 35 states remain outside the treaty, and most of these are in de facto compliance — they do not use, produce or transfer antipersonnel mines.

We were very happy to welcome Oman on board the treaty last August, and we encourage others in the region to follow suit.

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines continues its efforts towards full universalization. Since the Third Review Conference, ICBL members have undertaken advocacy activities in Azerbaijan, Georgia, India, Iran, South Korea, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Libya, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Syria, United States and Vietnam, to encourage accession or steps towards joining the treaty, and in Western Sahara to strengthen the norm against use.

In recent years, universalization has understandably slowed compared to the early years of the treaty. However, positive steps and the progress continue to be made in a number of states not party, for example:

- Last year the United States announced new policy measures that it characterized as designed to move it closer to joining the Mine Ban Treaty.
- The Sri Lanka Minister of Defence, reportedly said that the Defence Ministry was ready for Sri Lanka to sign the treaty. Sri Lanka has been actively clearing mines and providing some assistance to victims.
- Nepal stated that recommendations regarding accession to the Mine Ban Treaty would be completed “soon”. It has already completed clearance of mine fields and provided some support to victims.

- Last year, China informed Landmine Monitor that it currently stockpiles five million antipersonnel mines, a great reduction from the 110 million previously cited by the Monitor.
- Following the establishment of its Mine Action Center, Palestine informed States Parties of its interest in joining the Mine Ban Treaty.
- Bahrain, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Palestine, Sri Lanka, the United Arab Emirates and many others have expressed support for the aims of the treaty.
- Half the states outside the treaty vote each year in favor of the UN General Assembly resolution on the treaty.

The ICBL urges all states not party to show solidarity with affected communities worldwide and to add their weight to the ban by joining the treaty. We call in particular on those that have already made the important commitment of banning cluster munitions.

Due to the strength of the growing international norm, over 60 non-state armed groups have committed to ban the use of landmines through the efforts of Geneva Call, an ICBL member. In 2014, five additional non-state armed groups signed the Deed of Commitment for a total ban of landmines in India, Sudan and Syria. In March 2015, a non-state armed group was reported to have destroyed 3000 stockpiled landmines in the area of Western Sahara. Last year Geneva Call brought together 70 high-level representatives from 35 non-state armed groups to discuss humanitarian mine action and to enhance the norm. A number of other ICBL members also engage with non-state armed groups, including in the Philippines and Myanmar.

We hope that all States Parties live up to the Maputo Action Plan and the Maputo Declaration by actively encouraging states to join the treaty. The ICBL will continue working together with all of you for the full universalization of the treaty and its norms.