

## ICRC Statement on Article 3

### Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention 25 May 2012

The ICRC would like to start by thanking all delegations that provided updates on Monday or today on the retention of anti-personnel mines for the development of, and training in, mine detection, mine clearance, or mine destruction. We think this is a very important and valuable discussion and has served to supplement information contained in States Parties' Article 7 reports.

We are very pleased to see that the trend towards the reduction of retained mines noted in previous years persisted last year. In particular, we commend Brazil for having reduced their retained mines by over 1000. We also welcome the significant reductions reported this year by Angola and the United Kingdom, which both reduced their retained mines by about half.<sup>1</sup> We also commend Luxembourg and the Ukraine for having reduced to zero the number of anti-personnel mines retained under Article 3, thus joining almost 50 States that report having no retained AP mines.

Despite this very good news, according to ICBL's helpful summary list, States Parties have retained between them over 177,000 anti-personnel mines, some of which are inert. This number does not include the newest States Parties South Sudan, Finland or Somalia, nor four other States Parties that have never reported on retained mines and for which the number of retained mines is unknown.<sup>2</sup>

Nine States have never reported making use of any retained mines for permitted purposes,<sup>3</sup> although we note the commitment expressed by Belarus during the 2011 Intersessional Meetings to reduce the number of mines retained under Article 3.

Two States (Bangladesh and Turkey) still report retentions of over 12,000 AP mines, although we acknowledge Turkey's statement today that it is considering reassessing the number of mines retained under Article 3 and we look forward to the outcome of that assessment.<sup>4</sup> In this regard, we recall the commitment made by all States Parties at the Second Review Conference, as set out in point 56 of the Cartagena Action Plan, to "regularly review the number of anti-personnel mines retained to ensure that they constitute the minimum number absolutely necessary for the purposes permitted by the Convention and destroy all those exceeding the number."

We also seize this opportunity to remind States Parties that in point 57 of the Cartagena Action Plan, they have also committed themselves to report, on a voluntary basis, on the plans for and actual use of anti-personnel mines, and to explain any increase or decrease in the number of retained mines. The ICRC welcomes the reports in this regard by a number of States Parties in this Standing Committee meeting and urges others to provide such voluntary information in their Article 7 reports.

To conclude, the ICRC wishes to reiterate that unless anti-personnel mines are required and effectively used for permitted purposes, their retention might be considered to amount to stockpiling of anti-personnel mines. It would also undermine the ultimate goal of the Convention, the total elimination of anti-personnel mines.

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<sup>1</sup> Brazil has reported a total of 7,913 retained mines in its 2012 report, as against 8,976 last year. Angola reduced the number of its retained anti-personnel mines by 1,073, or 42.7% of the previous number retained. The United Kingdom reduced its retained anti-personnel mines by 363, or 53% of the previous number retained.

<sup>2</sup> Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Saint Lucia.

<sup>3</sup> Belarus, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cape Verde, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo.

<sup>4</sup> Bangladesh 12,500, Turkey 15,100.