

ICBL Statement on Stockpile Destruction
MBT Intersessional Standing Committee Meetings
21 May 2012



Thank you Madame Chair,

With Turkey's completion of stockpile destruction last year, a total of 88 States Parties have now finished destroying their stocks of antipersonnel mines, with over 45 million mines destroyed. The lasting impact of this treaty on human security is reflected in such figures – that's 45 million mines that once might have taken someone's leg or life and now never will.

Each stockpiling state that joins the treaty adds to this positive legacy. This year, we have two new States Parties with stocks – South Sudan with a deadline of 9 July 2015 and Finland that must destroy its AP mines by 1 July 2016.

With Finland's accession to the MBT, we welcome the prospect of destroying another significant arsenal of antipersonnel mines – over one million mines. For Finland, it was the hypothetical possibility to use this stockpile that made it reticent to join the treaty for so many years. By joining the ban on AP mines, it has accepted to destroy them instead. We congratulate them for taking this decision and urge Finland to destroy them as soon as it possibly can.

South Sudan reported the discovery of a small stockpile, though all known stocks located in its territory had been destroyed as part of Sudan's stockpiles in 2008. We hope it will fulfill its promise to destroy those mines this year. Given its history, more of these small stockpiles are likely to be found in the future, so we encourage it to continue to report on and destroy them as a matter of urgency. In a country that unfortunately is facing ongoing violence, seeking out and destroying insecure stocks that still may exist can directly lead to saving lives.

This spring we are also marking the alarming fact that two States Parties—Belarus and Greece--have been in non-compliance with their destruction deadline for four years – meaning they will take at least twice the legal time allotted for destruction. Ukraine unfortunately appears likely to do the same as it is two years late and foresees the need for at least a few more years at least before it finishes. Each of these states has faced numerous complications –financial, technical, and otherwise – in arranging for their stocks to be destroyed that were not always in their control. But bureaucratic delays and a late start have also been a factor in each case. The main lessons that the new States Parties should draw from such experiences is to start early and quickly address any problems that may arise so that they do not endanger their ability to meet their deadline.

We thank Belarus, Greece, and Ukraine for their updates today. It is good to hear that Belarus is on its way to completion and should finish in about a year. We are pleased to hear that destruction will soon begin, and we hope it can still fulfill its plan to finish by the end of 2013. We encourage Belarus to continue to place a high national priority on completing destruction in the shortest possible timeframe, including by ensuring that the contract is being fulfilled in a timely manner and any complications that might develop are quickly addressed.

The ICBL visited Athens two weeks ago and learned the legal case with former contractor EAS may conclude this fall. While understanding that the timing of the case cannot be

affected, we urge Greece to take the necessary steps so that it can take action as soon as the verdict is handed down. After such long delays, we strongly urge Greece to arrange for the destruction to be done in the shortest possible amount of time. The timeframe it announced last year when it was negotiating a contract with EAS was even longer than the original contract though 40% of stockpiles were already destroyed. We would also like to know what steps Greece is taking to ensure the existing budget can still be used in the next fiscal year.

Ukraine has regularly provided detailed information on its stockpile destruction plans and requirements for assistance. Yet in the end, there are still many elements that remain unclear. For example, we understand that in January 2012, the Ukrainian President signed the law ratifying a stockpile destruction agreement with NAMSA for the destruction of 3 million PFM-type mines, partly funded by the EC. But we have also learned that there have since been administrative delays by Ukraine's partners in unlocking funds to allow the destruction to start. The ICBL urges the EC and NAMSA to agree on mechanisms for execution of the project as soon as possible so that Ukraine can finally make full use of the destruction capacity it has put in place with support from Norway.

The ICBL also encourages Ukraine to share more information on how it plans to destroy the mines not covered by this project, namely around 2.7 million additional PFM mines, as well as over 150,000 non-PFM mines. In June 2011 Ukraine estimated that with adequate funding, it could complete destruction by the end of 2014, but it did not mention any deadline at the 11MSP. With the delays in the NAMSA project and no clear plans for the other mines, we would like to encourage Ukraine to provide an updated plan on destruction, including an expected completion date, as called for in the Cartagena Action Plan.

Thank you.