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ICBL Update on Stockpile Destruction
Intersessional Standing Committee Meetings
21 June 2010

States Parties' record of compliance with their obligation to destroy all stocks of antipersonnel mines was exemplary until March 2008. The fact that 86 states destroyed around 44 million mines and that as many as 152 States Parties do not have stockpiles speaks volumes about what this treaty has achieved. We should celebrate this extraordinary accomplishment and the commitment it represents on the part of states to eliminate these weapons forever. These 44 million mines will never be used; they will never lie in wait to take an innocent person's life or leg.

But as is well known, this excellent record was tarnished when Belarus, Greece and Turkey failed to meet their 1 March 2008 deadline and now once again when Ukraine missed its 1 June 2010 deadline. Each of these States Parties was not only unable to destroy their stocks within four years, but they also were left with between 1.5 to 6 million mines in their arsenals. Still today – more than two years after three of them missed their deadline, none can predict when completion will be finished. These failures present a significant challenge to overall well-being of the Mine Ban Treaty. States Parties recognized the urgent need to solve this problem in Actions 7, 8 and 9 of the Cartagena Action Plan, which call on these States Parties to comply without delay and to communicate their plans to do so, any assistance needed and an expected completion date.

We recognize that the four States Parties are not in willful violation of the treaty, and none desire to maintain an operational stockpile of antipersonnel mines. They have been making an effort to destroy their mines, though with varying degrees of success and determination.

Belarus completed destruction of its non-PFM antipersonnel mines in 2006, but has not been able to destroy any of its stock of almost 3.4 million PFM mines due to problems in obtaining international cooperation and assistance. Belarus has always made known its need for financial support to destroy these mines but unfortunately, a first project with the European Commission to carry out the destruction failed in 2006. In addition, according to our information, a second tender launched in July 2009 has also recently failed. The EC's inability to bring these tenders to completion are all the more frustrating because of the time each has taken to be developed, only to end without results.

Greece, on the other hand, is itself mostly responsible for the long delays in destroying its stocks. It took several years before deciding to task a private Greek company to destroy its stocks, and has been slow to react when long delays were apparent with the shipment of the mines to the subcontractor in Bulgaria for destruction. It still has only destroyed one-third of its mines, and no destruction has been reported since last fall. Most of these problems could have been avoided through earlier action and more determination on the part of the Greek government to act in an urgent manner.

Turkey also got started too late. It took the positive step of removing all fuzes from its mines, rendering them inoperable, but it experienced delays in building a high-technology destruction site and bringing it up to full capacity. Turkey now appears to be moving at maximum speed to finish destruction, with the facility working with 3 shifts, 7 days a week.

Ukraine, in violation of the treaty as of the first of this month, has also destroyed all its non-PFM mines and over 100,000 PFM mines, and has made clear its needs for international assistance to destroy the almost 6 million PFM mines still in its stocks. After a project with the European Commission fell through in 2007, Ukraine has been trying to find funds to boost its capacity to destroy the mines in a facility it says is already capable of destroying PMF mines. But it has not found a donor apart from the EC, which can only provide funds in 2011 and will go through another long tender process.

The ICBL calls on all States Parties and other stakeholders to continue to monitor the situation in these four states and to take proactive steps if progress is stalling, including through political engagement and contributing

whatever financial, technical or other resources could help to finish destruction without further delay. In particular, we call on the European Commission, upon which Belarus and Ukraine have been relying for financial support, to be as flexible and forthcoming as possible in order to ensure they get the funds they need in quickest manner possible. But the assistance of other states and organizations may also be needed. All States Parties still have an obligation to provide international cooperation and assistance for stockpile destruction under Article 6, and have recommitted to providing support for stockpile destruction in Actions 37 and 42 of the Cartagena Action Plan.

In addition to these four cases, stockpile destruction continues to concern other states that have not been able to locate all stocks under their jurisdiction or control. To begin with, it is not clear if Iraq has a stockpile of antipersonnel mines. In its initial Article 7 report from July 2008, Iraq stated that while it had not yet identified any stockpiles, "this matter will be further investigated and if required, corrected in the next report." Its subsequent report in May 2009 did not include any information on stockpiles or destruction. Iraq stated in its July 2008 report that it had destroyed 200,125 stockpiled antipersonnel mines since 2003.

In addition, some States Parties routinely discover, capture, seize, or receive turned-in arms caches containing antipersonnel mines. It is a State Party's responsibility to report on such mines and on their destruction, both before and after the completion of stockpile destruction programs. Action #12 of the Cartagena Action Plan calls on states to report on such mines and to destroy them "as a matter of urgent priority." States Parties agreed at the 8MSP to modify Forms B and G to encourage such reporting. So far 16 States Parties have reported on the discovery of new mines in their Article 7 reports, though not all use the new forms to do so. There have also been official or media reports of new discoveries or seizures of antipersonnel mines in at least seven other states, though none have reported on their discovery or destruction.

The ICBL continues to encourage States Parties to report on the destruction of sensitive fuzes and on steps taken to ensure that Claymore and OZM-72 Mines can only be used in Command-Detonated mode. A number of states have already reported on such steps taken to ensure that any antivehicle or remote-controlled mines remaining in their stocks cannot be used as antipersonnel mines.

Finally, the ICBL continues to be concerned about stockpiles in states not yet party to the MBT, since these mines present an even larger risk of being planted in the ground by a state military or non-state armed group. Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor estimates that up to 35 states not party to the Mine Ban Treaty stockpile over 160 million antipersonnel mines.^[22] The vast majority of these stockpiles belong to just three states: China (estimated 110 million), Russia (estimated 24.5 million), and the US (10.4 million). Other states with large stockpiles include Pakistan (estimated six million) and India (estimated four to five million).

In a positive development, Poland, a signatory state, declared a stockpile of over 1 million mines at the end of 2002, but had reduced it to around 200,000 mines by the end of 2009.

We will provide more specific comments after the States Parties with Article 4 obligations make their presentations.

Thank you.