

Press Release



Treaty president calls for immediate end to landmine use in Yemen

Geneva, 24 April 2017 – The President of the international treaty banning anti-personnel mines has expressed deep concern after reports published this week seem to indicate that armed non-state actors in Yemen have made use of landmines. “The use and devastating toll of anti-personnel mines on civilian populations should be of great concern to all of us. Landmines violate key principles; their use runs counter to international and humanitarian law,” said H.E. Thomas Hajnoczi, Ambassador of Austria to the UN in Geneva who presides over the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, also known as the *Ottawa Convention*.

Ambassador Hajnoczi made his comments after Human Rights Watch published a report pointing to the use of anti-personnel mines in Yemen by non-state groups and their devastating humanitarian impact.

“Reports surfacing from Yemen point to the urgent need to carry out efforts to protect the civilian population. Now more than ever, Yemen requires support to continue providing mine risk education and undertaking mine clearance and victim assistance efforts to eliminate any further casualties and suffering,” said the Ambassador referring to the core activities laid out by the Convention.

Ambassador Hajnoczi also called on those laying landmines in Yemen to “immediately halt their use in order to prevent further suffering”.

The 162 States Parties that have joined the legally binding treaty, including Yemen, have formally agreed to “never, under any circumstance, use anti-personnel mines, develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer to anyone, directly or indirectly, antipersonnel mines”.

Yemen has long recognized the inhumanity of this indiscriminate weapon, becoming one of the first countries in the Middle-East/North Africa region to join the Convention in 1998. Yemen is currently undertaking mine-clearance efforts with a 2020 deadline. In 2005, Yemen declared having destroyed over 78,000 stockpiled mines, retaining only some 3,000 for permitted training purposes. Yemen is also among 29 States Parties with significant number of landmine survivors.

The Convention was adopted and signed 20 years ago and entered into force in 1999. It is the prime humanitarian and disarmament treaty aimed at ending the suffering caused by landmines by prohibiting their use, stockpiling, production and transfer, ensuring their destruction, and assisting the victims.

Together the States Parties have destroyed over 50 million mines; 158 States Parties no longer have stockpile destruction obligations under the Convention. Demining has resulted in millions of square metres of once dangerous land being released for normal human activity.