

ICBL Intervention on Stockpile Destruction
Sixth Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty
Zagreb, Croatia
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Thank you for the floor, Mr. Chairman. A total of 71 States Parties have now completed destruction of their stockpiled antipersonnel mines. All of them are to be congratulated for fulfilling this vital treaty obligation that saves untold numbers of lives and limbs. We offer special congratulations to Algeria, which finished destruction last week, and Guinea-Bissau, which finished last month.

It is regrettable that they were the only two of the seven States Parties to meet the challenge put forth by the co-chairs of the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction to complete destruction before this Sixth Meeting of States Parties. We take this opportunity to remind all States Parties that the obligation is to destroy stockpiled mines “*as soon as possible*”—without fail by the four-year deadline—but first “*as soon as possible*.” Many states have completed their programs far in advance of the deadline.

The draft Zagreb progress report notes, and we largely concur, that there are now 13 States Parties with stockpiles of antipersonnel mines to destroy. But we cannot be certain of that number. It includes three states that have not yet submitted initial Article 7 transparency reports and thus not yet officially declared possession of stocks: Guyana (whose Article 7 report is long overdue), Ethiopia (whose report was due yesterday), and Latvia (whose report is due in June). In three voluntary reports, Latvia has given inconsistent information about numbers of stockpiled mines and whether some, none or all of them are retained for training purposes.

The highly successful track record of States Parties in meeting Article 4 stockpile destruction obligations will be tested in the course of the next three years due to a number of factors. It will be essential that States Parties with stocks maintain the political will to meet the deadline, and that states without stocks maintain the willingness to encourage and assist others in every way possible.

The next three States Parties with deadlines are the Democratic Republic of Congo (1 November 2006), Angola (1 January 2007), and Afghanistan (1 March 2007). In each of these, it appears the state is having difficulties determining the accurate stockpile total, due to mines that may be under their jurisdiction, but not control—held for example by current or former rebel forces or other armed forces. This may also prove to be an issue for Burundi and Sudan, both with deadlines of 1 April 2008. It could be useful for the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction to discuss possible approaches to this problem.

Another challenge will be the fact that the four States Parties with the largest remaining stockpiles, including those with problematic PFM and ADAM mines, all have a fast-

approaching deadline of 1 March 2008: Belarus (with 4.5 million mines), Turkey (2.9 million), Greece (1.5 million), and Serbia and Montenegro (1.3 million).

There is also concern regarding Guyana, with a 1 February 2008 deadline, in part because it has not submitted its initial Article 7 report, failing to meet even that simple treaty requirement, but more generally because of its lack of engagement with the Mine Ban Treaty process.

We would like to raise an issue that has not been addressed directly by States Parties before, and that is the matter of antipersonnel mines seized from or turned in by non-state actors, or former non-state actors. It would seem logical that these mines should then be treated as stockpiled antipersonnel mines by a State Party. Indeed, three States Parties have reported such mines in their Article 7 reports: Burundi, Sudan and Turkey. However, nine other States Parties have been identified by the media or other sources as having seized or received stocks of antipersonnel mines from NSAs, but have not subsequently reported on such mines: Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Philippines, Serbia and Montenegro, Uganda, and Yemen.

These States Parties should report on the acquisition and destruction of these mines, consistent with the Nairobi Action Plan's Action #15 on newly discovered stockpiles of antipersonnel mines. With respect to Action #15, the ICBL has suggested that the information should be reported immediately to the Implementation Support Unit and Standing Committee co-chairs, as well as in Article 7 reports, and the ICBL has stressed the importance of complete transparency regarding numbers and types of mines, and of timely destruction, in less than one year.

Mr. Chairman, we appreciate that you have highlighted the issue of multi-purpose firing devices and hope that the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction will continue to explore the ramifications of this matter. Similarly, it is important that States Parties have clarity with respect to Claymore-type and OZM-72 mines. Both of these antipersonnel mines are designed to be capable of both command-detonation (which is permitted by the treaty) and victim-activation (which is prohibited by the treaty). These issues—multipurpose firing devices and “dual use” mines—require greater transparency and technical exchange of information by States Parties. It is particularly important that States Parties report on what steps have been taken to ensure that these devices and mines cannot be used in a manner contrary to the Mine Ban Treaty.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to close with some statistics regarding non-signatories to the treaty. According to the latest *Landmine Monitor Report*, non-signatories have an estimated 160 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines, including China with an estimated 110 million, Russia with 26.5 million, and the United States with 10.4 million. It is notable that Russia publicly disclosed its stockpile total for the first time, and stated that of the 26.5 million total, 23.5 million are subject to destruction by 2015. Russia reported destroying approximately 19.5 million antipersonnel mines from 2000 to 2004. Thank you.