



## Special Envoy asks the Lebanese Republic to join anti-landmine treaty

*Beirut, Brussels, Geneva 4 October 2019* – Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium, in her capacity as Special Envoy of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (also known as Ottawa Convention), has just concluded a visit to the Lebanese Republic where she called on its leadership to continue taking concrete steps towards acceding to the leading humanitarian disarmament instrument.

In late 2018, at a formal meeting of the Convention in Geneva, a delegation of the Lebanese Republic expressed that it continues to clear mine contamination “with the same spirit of adhering to the noble causes of the mine ban treaty”, and that it *de facto* follows the Convention norms as it has “never produced or exported anti-personnel mines, and does not use, stockpile or transport anti-personnel mines”. In further signs of affinity with the Convention, the delegation expressed that “the Government of Lebanon is studying the possibility of acceding to the Ottawa Treaty, and great steps have been taken towards that.”

“As Special Envoy and given this public and clear endorsement of the purpose and objective of the Convention, I was encouraged to visit the Lebanese Republic to convey to the President and Lebanese leadership that the Convention’s States Parties welcome and encourage these signs of aperture in landmine policy,” said HRH Princess Astrid who for nearly two decades has participated in the work of the Convention. “This is an opportunity for Lebanon to join a great family of States Parties who together represent over 80% of the world’s states; have destroyed in excess of 52 million anti-personnel mines and cleared millions of square metres of once-dangerous lands, saving countless lives and returning lands for their safe use,” said the Special Envoy.

“In my visit with the President, I have encouraged the Lebanese Republic to engage with the work of the Convention including attending the upcoming Fourth Review Conference with positive news concerning concrete steps taken towards accession,” added Her Royal Highness.

Her Royal Highness’s visit is sponsored by a Decision adopted by the European Union Council seeking to support efforts to implement the Convention and promote its norms among States that have not yet joined such as the Lebanese Republic.

In mid-September, representatives of the Lebanese Republic attended a global conference on the rights of victims of mine and other explosive remnants of war and disability. Her Royal Highness’ delegation included the Ambassador of Belgium in Lebanon H.E. Hubert Cooreman, and in its capacity as President of the Convention Norway represented by H.E. Leni Stenseth, Ambassador of Norway to Lebanon.

The Convention’s 164 States Parties are set to meet from 25-29 November at the *Oslo Review Conference on a Mine-Free World* to discuss next steps in implementing the treaty. The Lebanese Republic has been invited to participate as an Observer.