

Press Release



South Sudan joins the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Geneva and New York, 11 November 2011 – The newly-formed Republic of South Sudan has made banning anti-personnel mines one of its first multilateral commitments that it has entered into since it became an independent state on 9 July 2011. South Sudan deposited its notification of succession to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, or *Ottawa Convention* today at the United Nations headquarters in New York, becoming the 158th state to agree to be legally bound by this landmark humanitarian instrument.

The significance of the measure taken by South Sudan was noted by the Convention's leadership. "Landmine contamination in South Sudan is a grave problem for reconstruction and development, and impedes agricultural activities," said H.E. Gazmend Turdiu, the Convention's President. "By joining the Convention, South Sudan is making a commitment to clear mines on its territory, to assist landmine survivors and to never, under any circumstances, use anti-personnel mines."

Landmines in South Sudan are the result of over 20 years of civil war. According to the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre in South Sudan, "all 10 states of the newly-formed country have reported mine-related injuries and deaths. Contamination in 306 villages varies in size, from an item that may take an hour or so to destroy, to entire minefields which could take up to a year or more to address." As of September 2011, a total of 3,210 injuries and 1,263 deaths had been reported in the country. Since 2005, over 25,000 landmines have been destroyed. To date over 2,700 landmine survivors have received support.

"As a State Party to Convention, South Sudan has the right to request that other States Parties assist it in demining and in responding to the needs of landmine survivors," said Gazmend Turdiu. "We all have a responsibility to support the world's newest state and the Convention's newest party in overcoming these complex challenges."

With South Sudan having joined the Convention, there is near universal acceptance of this landmark treaty in Sub-Saharan Africa, where every country, except Somalia, has joined. South Sudan likely will be followed by Finland and Poland, which have indicated that they are taking steps to join the treaty. In September, Tuvalu became the 157th State to accede to the Convention.

"We look forward to welcoming South Sudan at the Convention's Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties (11MSP), in Phnom Penh from 27 November to 2 December," said Gazmend Turdiu. This meeting is the world's largest annual gathering of diplomats and landmine experts with over 1,000 participants expected.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention was adopted in Oslo in 1997, opened for signature in Ottawa the same year and entered into force in 1999.

AP Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit

To date 158 states have joined the Convention with 153 of these reporting that they no longer hold stocks of anti-personnel mines. Over 44.5 million stockpiled mines have been destroyed by the States Parties.

34 of 50 States that at one time manufactured anti-personnel mines are now bound by the Convention's ban on production. Most other parties have put in place moratoria on production and / or transfers of mines.

Demining has resulted in millions of square metres of once dangerous land being released for normal human activity.

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For interviews or more information regarding any aspect of the Convention kindly email: ISU@APMineBanConvention.org or contact Laila Rodriguez at +41 (0) 22 906 1656. Connect with the Convention through our [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) or [Twitter](#).