

## Press Release

**\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\***

### **EU-Wide Mine Ban a Reality, Five More Mine-Free Countries, Following Mine Ban Treaty Conference**

(Geneva, 7 December) – Poland’s announcement of the country’s imminent ratification of the Mine Ban Treaty, made at the Twelfth Meeting of States Parties (12MSP), highlighted the strength and momentum of the Mine Ban Treaty on its 15th anniversary.

Poland will become the 161st State Party to the treaty and will make the ban on antipersonnel mines universal among European Union countries, only days before the EU is slated to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

The United States is the lone holdout among NATO countries. The US attended the meeting as an observer and declared that it would announce its decision on whether to join the treaty, “soon,” following a policy review that began in 2009.

“Fifteen years after the opening of the Mine Ban Treaty, we still see a high level of commitment from States Parties and a vibrant partnership of civil society, governments, international organizations and UN agencies aimed at ending for all time the scourge of landmines,” said ICBL Head of Delegation, Stephen Goose. “But there remain many challenges and issues of concern,” he added.

The ICBL heartily congratulated five countries - Denmark, Guinea-Bissau, Jordan, the Republic of Congo and Uganda - on announcing completion of their mine clearance duties.

The presence of 17 states not parties at the meeting - including China, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libya, Myanmar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, United States, and Vietnam - reaffirmed the strength of the treaty’s norm and the priority placed by the international community on achieving a mine-free world.

Additionally, Palestine attended the annual meeting for the first time and declared its strong desire to accede to the Mine Ban Treaty as soon as possible. With its new status at the UN, it is now eligible to join.

The meeting featured landmine survivors prominently, beginning with a statement in the opening session by ICBL Ambassador, Tun Channareth of Cambodia. Interventions by survivors from the ICBL delegation highlighted the humanitarian effects of antipersonnel landmines and underscored the reality that in mine-affected areas, survivors still have difficulty in accessing services and being included in their societies.

“Governments must do more to identify the gaps in services in order to address survivors needs,” said landmine survivor and Director of the Uganda Landmine Survivors Association, Margaret Arach Orch. An alarming cut in victim assistance funding – 30 percent from 2010 to 2011 – was also cited as a major concern.

The ICBL highlighted a number of disturbing compliance concerns. Most notably, it does not appear States Parties Sudan and Yemen are carrying out



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Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines  
Mines Action Canada  
Nepal Campaign to Ban Landmines  
Norwegian People's Aid  
Protection (Egypt)  
Religions for Peace

#### **ICBL AMBASSADORS**

Margaret Arach Orch  
Tun Channareth  
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investigations into serious allegations of use of antipersonnel landmines by government forces. Moreover, three States Parties - Belarus, Greece, and Ukraine - have remained in violation of the treaty for several years for having missed their deadlines for destroying stockpiled antipersonnel mines. On a positive note, all three reported progress in this regard at the meeting.

Another major concern is the number of countries requesting mine clearance extensions since 2008: thirty, including four that were approved this week. In addition, the ICBL was disturbed by the lack of progress with clearance in some of the states that have already received extensions, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chad, Senegal, Thailand, and the United Kingdom.

The Twelfth Meeting of States Parties closed today, 7 December.

**Links:**

- **ICBL 12MSP Statements** - <http://www.icbl.org/index.php/icbl/Treaty/MBT/Annual-Meetings/12MSP>
- **Mine Ban Treaty Video** - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaYp4vXMUWM>
- **ICBL 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Video** - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUkDYnegeuE>
- **ICBL 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Homepage** [http://www.icbl.org/index.php/icbl/Library/News-Articles/20th\\_anniversary](http://www.icbl.org/index.php/icbl/Library/News-Articles/20th_anniversary)
- **ICBL on Twitter** at <https://twitter.com/minefreeworld>
- **ICBL on Facebook** at <http://www.facebook.com/minefreeworld>
- International Campaign to Ban Landmines on **Flickr** at [www.flickr.com/photos/minefreeworld](http://www.flickr.com/photos/minefreeworld)
- *Landmine Monitor 2012* and related documents at [www.the-monitor.org/lm/12](http://www.the-monitor.org/lm/12) .
- Detailed individual **profiles** for all countries of the world and seven other areas are available at [www.the-monitor.org/cp](http://www.the-monitor.org/cp)

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