



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Trump cancels Obama landmine policy; ensures civilian suffering with new mine use potential**

Montreal, Canada — The Trump Administration [has announced](#) a deadly landmine policy shift, effectively committing the U.S. to resume the use and stockpiling of antipersonnel landmines. Landmines are devastating, victim-activated devices that cannot discriminate between the footstep of a child or that of a soldier.

“This move is a death sentence for civilians,” says Jerome Bobin, Canadian Executive Director of Humanity & Inclusion. “There are acts in war that are simply out of bounds. Nations, even superpowers, must never use certain weapons because of the superfluous injury and unnecessary suffering they cause. Landmines fall directly into this category. There is no use for landmines that cannot be accomplished by other means that do not so significantly and indiscriminately kill and maim civilians.”

The move is a direct reversal of [President Obama’s 2014 commitment](#) that inched the U.S. closer to compliance with the 1997 Ottawa Convention, known as the Mine Ban Treaty. President Obama’s move left only the Korean peninsula as an exception, due to ongoing mine use in the demilitarized zone.

#### **Failure rate**

The announcement states, “The Department of Defense is issuing a new landmine policy. This policy will authorize Combatant Commanders, in exceptional circumstances, to employ advanced, non-persistent landmines specifically designed to reduce unintended harm to civilians and partner forces.”

Non-persistent mines are typically laid on the ground surface, and they should be able to destroy themselves within a relatively short period of time—from few hours to days.

“Don’t be fooled,” warns Alma Taslidžan Al-Osta, Humanity & Inclusion’s Disarmament and Protection of Civilians Advocacy Manager. “Everything that man creates has a failure rate. The idea that so-called “advanced” landmines will be safer than older types of devices, is absurd. What happens if they don’t neutralize as intended? Our teams see, first hand, how weapons often marketed as “self destructing” continue to injure, maim, and terrorize civilians all over the world on a daily basis.

“We also see how quickly and regularly civilians move from one area to another to avoid conflict. What if they enter a mined area and such self-destruction hasn’t happened to the mines around them?”



## Mine Ban Treaty

The U.S. is one of the few countries that has yet to join the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, sharing ranks with China, Egypt, India, Israel, Pakistan, and Russia. There are [164 States parties](#) to the treaty, making the ban on landmines a universal norm of international humanitarian law. However, the great paradox of this policy shift is that for nearly 30 years, the U.S. has refrained from using or trading antipersonnel landmines.

What's more, the policy change sends a very negative signal, essentially handing a blank check to States or groups willing to continue or expand their use of landmines, which had significantly decreased after the entry into force of the Mine Ban Treaty. "Canada cannot remain indifferent to this dramatic American movement," Bobin adds.

Humanity & Inclusion's decades of experience with clearing landmines, as well as taking care of survivors of landmine explosions, leads to the conclusion that no use is safe. "We oppose in the strongest terms the idea that military commanders will feel empowered to use mines," Bobin notes. "The safest landmine is the one that is never produced."

## Backward step

"Make no mistake, this is absolutely a step backward," Bobin adds. "This significant and negative development is a thunderclap for all of the thousands of individuals who have survived contact with a landmine, as well as the family and friends of hundreds of thousands who have not."

Humanity & Inclusion runs projects to minimize the impact of landmines on civilians [in dozens of countries](#), returning land to communities through demining, teaching people to spot, avoid and report explosive remnants of war through risk education, and providing support and care to victims of landmines. The organization works to raise the visibility of these landmine victims and their communities, so that the world is reminded of the scourge of landmines.

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## Notes

### Experts available

Humanity & Inclusion's experts on explosive weapons and civilian harm are available for interviews in North America and Europe.

### Mine Ban Treaty

The Mine Ban Treaty prohibits the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of antipersonnel mines. It



is the most comprehensive international instrument for eradicating landmines and deals with everything from mine use, production and trade, to victim assistance, mine clearance and stockpile destruction. The treaty has been signed in Ottawa in 1997.

### **About Humanity & Inclusion**

Co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for its work banning landmines, Humanity & Inclusion (the new name of handicap international), is an independent international aid organization working in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster for 38 years. Humanity & Inclusion is one of six founding organizations of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), co-recipient of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize, and winner of the 2011 Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize. Humanity & Inclusion takes action and campaigns in places where “living with dignity” is no easy task. In 2018, Humanity & Inclusion’s projects directly benefited 2.1 million people.