

## **25 Years of Global Efforts to Eradicate Landmines and Empower Lives**

### ***Civil society urges vigilance against backsliding on the treaty's norms***

(Geneva, 1 March 2024) – Today marks the 25th anniversary of the Mine Ban Treaty's entry into force, a monumental milestone in global efforts to end the use of antipersonnel landmines, inherently indiscriminate weapons that have a devastating impact on communities worldwide.

Signed in December 1997, the treaty came into force on 1 March 1999, establishing a global prohibition on any use, production, stockpiling and transfer of antipersonnel landmines, as well as obligations to clear contaminated land and assist landmine victims. It was a groundbreaking achievement – the first time in history a conventional weapon was totally banned and victims' rights to assistance recognized and included in a disarmament treaty.

Reflecting on the past 25 years, Ms. Tamar Gabelnick, Director of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines - Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC) said: *"Over the past 25 years, the ICBL has driven a transformative change in humanitarian disarmament. Our collective efforts have led to tangible and lasting changes for communities affected by mines – from the clearance of huge tracts of land to the recognition of rights of survivors. With tens of millions of stockpiled mines destroyed and near universal respect for the ban on use, the future risk to communities has also been curtailed."*

### **Key Achievements**

Today the convention enjoys widespread support with 164 countries formally onboard and with a strong stigma against the weapon established globally. Over the past 25 years the treaty has had remarkable impact, including:

- A substantial reduction in landmine casualties - down from some 25,000 casualties per year in 1999 to less than 5,000 casualties recorded last year by the Landmine Monitor; this means thousands of lives and limbs spared around the world;
- Large tracts of contaminated land cleared and returned to productive use, with over 30 countries becoming mine-free;
- The almost universal end to use of a previously widely employed weapon
- Over 55 million mines held in stockpiles destroyed, with production and transfers almost non-existent;
- The recognition of rights and needs of landmine victims, with efforts to provide assistance including medical care, rehabilitation, and psychosocial support and social and economic inclusion.

The Mine Ban Treaty has also inspired and served as a model for other international instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons, and most recently the Political Declaration on the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas.

### **Remaining Challenges**

Despite these achievements, significant challenges persist. The conflict in Ukraine has created a new threat to the ban norm, with massive new contamination by Russia and reports of use by State Party Ukraine. Recent news reports also indicate that other European States Parties to the treaty fearing a threat from Russia are rethinking their commitment to the treaty despite their legal and moral obligations to the ban.

"Any movement by States Parties away from the norms of the treaty is unacceptable, would create a highly disturbing precedent, and would be an affront to the countless people who have lost lives and limbs to these hideous weapons. The reasons they were banned in the first place – their inherently indiscriminate nature, the horrific wounds they inflict, and the long-term threat they create for

communities – hold equally true in times of conflict,” declared Ms. Gabelnick. “Any use of antipersonnel mines, by any actor, under any circumstances must be condemned in the strongest terms.”

Use has also been documented by Myanmar, as well as non-state armed groups in a handful of countries. New use has led to new contamination and a sharp rise in casualties. As reported by the latest Landmine Monitor over 85% of casualties recorded were civilians, and 50% were children.

Dozens of countries still remain contaminated. In many clearance efforts have been slow, with contamination of improvised mines posing additional challenges. Many livelihoods are directly impacted and communities facing daily the threat of an accident. Risk education and victim assistance remain pressing challenges.

The needs of mine victims and survivors, who typically face permanent disabilities with profound impact on themselves and their families, are too often overlooked. Many struggle with access to assistance, services, and viable economic opportunities. [The Landmine Monitor 2023 report](#) underscores this concern, revealing that rehabilitation programs and support are critically underfunded, with international aid for victim assistance constituting only 5% of the total mine action funding.

The universalization of the convention has slowed down lately, with 33 states that are yet to join and no new member since 2017.

While celebrating the progress made over the past 25 years, the ICBL urges the global community to fortify efforts to fulfill the central goal of the treaty: “To put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.” “We all need to continue with full determination to ensure further progress – stagnation or any backsliding are not an option, especially in these times of conflict and unrest. The treaty’s obligations to end all use of antipersonnel mines, clear all contaminated land, and empower all survivors must be respected without excuses, exceptions, or delays,” added Ms. Gabelnick.

ICBL’s call for redoubling of efforts comes ahead of *the Siem Reap – Angkor Summit On A Mine-Free World* - the Mine Ban Treaty’s milestone 5<sup>th</sup> Review Conference in Cambodia on 25-29 November 2024. States, the UN, and civil society, including mine survivors, will gather to assess the progress made to date and to provide a roadmap for the work ahead for the next five years, towards a future where no one lives in fear of landmines.

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) has played a pivotal role in the global movement to ban landmines, working hand in hand with governments, international organizations, and affected communities to create the treaty, expand its membership, and ensure its powerful provisions are put into practice by states. The ICBL has remained at the forefront of the efforts to see its promise fulfilled and put a conclusive end to the global scourge of landmines.

**#### Ends ####**

#### **About the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL)**

The ICBL is a global network of non-governmental organizations advocating for a world without antipersonnel landmines and where the suffering caused by these weapons has ended, and where the rights of victims are upheld and realized. The campaign was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997 for its efforts to bring about the Mine Ban Treaty.

#### **Links**

- ICBL-CMC new website - <https://www.icblcmc.org/>
- Landmine Monitor 2023 - <http://the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2023/landmine-monitor-2023.aspx>
- ICBL Twitter - [twitter.com/minefreeworld](https://twitter.com/minefreeworld)
- ICBL Facebook - [www.facebook.com/pg/minefreeworld/](https://www.facebook.com/pg/minefreeworld/)

**For more information, please contact:**

[Full Name]

ICBL-CMC XXX Mobile: xxx xxx xx xx

Email: [media@icblcmc.org](mailto:media@icblcmc.org)