THE HUMANITARIAN IMPACT OF MINES,

PROBLEM AND SOLUTIONS

Kazakhstan, March 2007

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EPIDEMIC OF INJURY, DEATH AND SUFFERING

• The great majority of victims are civilians
  – In the 1990s, 2,000 persons per month were killed or injured by AP mines

• Severe human costs of AP mines
  – Amputation and multiple operations
  – Permanent disability
  – High long-term costs: in particular social and economic costs.

This epidemic does not occur by 'accident', it is the result of the design of the weapon itself. Buried AP mines are designed to shatter limbs and lives beyond repair.
VERY LIMITED MILITARY UTILITY OF AP MINES

- Little or no effect on the outcome of the hostilities
- High human costs could not be justified by their limited military utility
- Minefields have not proved successful in preventing border infiltration

By giving up AP mines, you are not doing a favour to your enemy,
You are taking a vital step to protect your OWN population

THE SOLUTION

The ban on AP mines is based on two of the most fundamental rules governing the choice of weapons under international humanitarian law:

- Parties to an armed conflict must always distinguish civilians from combatants. In most instances, AP mines are indiscriminate in their effects.

- It is prohibited to use weapons of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering.
The Ottawa Convention

• The Ottawa convention imposes a total ban on the use, production, development, acquisition or transfer of AP mines.

• The Ottawa convention provides a comprehensive humanitarian program of action:
  - 4 years to destroy stockpiled AP mines
  - 10 years to demine all mined areas under their jurisdiction
  - Each state party shall provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation as well as social and economic reintegration of mine victims and for mine awareness programs.

SUCCESS ?

• Major decrease in the use of AP mines
• Significant decrease in the production of AP mines
• De facto global ban on export of AP mines
• 39.5 million AP mines have been destroyed
• Partial success in containing the epidemic: annual number of victims decreases in States parties to the Convention.

When states remain outside the Ottawa framework, they provide a justification for the continued use of AP mines everywhere.