



Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Intersessional Meeting

June 2021

Statement by the CEO of The HALO Trust

Check Against Delivery

Thank you Ambassador,

Today marks two weeks since the greatest loss of life in HALO's 33-year history.

On the evening of 8th June, 110 deminers were sleeping in a camp set up in an old school compound in Baghlan province. At 2150 local time, a group of masked armed men broke into the camp, demanding that my staff identify anyone from ethnic and religious minorities. Our deminers bravely refused, standing in solidarity with their friends. The gunmen opened fire, shooting indiscriminately – they murdered ten men and fatally wounded another, who later died in hospital.

HALO has condemned this attack in the strongest possible terms. This condemnation was echoed by the UN Secretary General, the Security Council, NGOs and States Parties to this Convention. Humanitarian workers are not – and must never be – a target.

I wish to pay tribute here to our friends who lost their lives:

Abdul Satar, Abdul Manan, Sher Mohammed, Said Ahmad, Noor Agha, Ghulam Mohammed, Mohammed Yousuf, Abdal Satar, Mohibutahman, Abdul Razeq and Rahmatullah.

The experience has been a shocking one. But it has been made easier by the support and the messages of condolence we have received, including from many of the States and NGOs participating today. I wish to thank all of you who have stood with us in the face of this appalling attack.

The HALO Trust was founded in Afghanistan in 1988. We have stayed the course through all of the challenges the country has faced since then. We are wounded but unbowed, and we are determined that The HALO Trust will remain in Afghanistan until our work is done.

Thank you.

ENDS