

**Notes for ICRC statement on countries declaring completion of Article 5 obligations,
12th Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention
Geneva, 5 December 2012**

The International Committee of the Red Cross also enthusiastically congratulates the five States that have declared completion of their Article 5 obligations: **Denmark, the Republic of Congo, Guinea Bissau, Jordan and Uganda**. To have so many States declaring completion on the 15th Anniversary of the signing of the Convention is a cause for celebration and we applaud all States involved for their commitment, as well as all those who have supported them to reach this goal.

In light of the experience of **Uganda** this year, we take this opportunity to urge all mine affected States that believe they might “just miss” their Article 5 deadline to submit a request to the States Parties for a short extension of time, which could be done using a simplified format so as not to detract resources away from finalising clearance. In requesting a short extension to allow for additional time needed to get the job done, the concerned State would avoid finding itself in non-compliance of the Convention.

We also believe that **Jordan** could have been more conservative in estimating the time required to fulfil its Article 5 obligations. As we have heard today, Jordan’s diligence in conducting verification operations in the Jordan Valley and along the boundaries of its former minefields on its northern border have borne fruit, with over 1,000 anti-personnel mines being uncovered. The fact that these verification operations are uncovering additional mined areas raises the question of whether the areas currently being verified could be deemed “suspected” within the definition of mined areas under the Convention, and whether it might have been prudent for Jordan to have sought an extension of time until the verification operation is complete. We have no doubt, however, that Jordan has acted in good faith and we commend it for its transparency and detailed reporting.

As the Convention matures, we are faced with new challenges and causes for reflection. The obligations in the Convention to make every effort to identify mined areas, as well as to declare all mined areas that contain, or are suspected to contain, antipersonnel mines, are among topics on which further discussion is warranted. We know that some States nearing completion are seriously considering these questions and we would welcome further research and discussion to assist States in this regard.

While it is a time for reflection, it is also a time for celebration, and none of these comments are intended to detract from the accomplishments of the five countries declaring completion. Through fulfilment of their Article 5 obligations, lives and limbs have surely been saved, which is, after all, the principle aim of this Convention. We herald these successes and remarkable achievements.