



Press Release



Landmine treaty President calls for fact-finding mission in Myanmar

Geneva, Vienna, 22 September 2017 – The President of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention has contacted Myanmar authorities after reports by Amnesty International point to possible use of landmines by government forces.

“I have asked the government of Myanmar to clarify the situation and consider a fact-finding mission with international participation into this matter. Any use of anti-personnel mines, an indiscriminate weapon which has dire consequences on civilian populations, is of grave concern to the States Parties of our Convention,” said H.E. Thomas Hajnoczi, Ambassador of Austria to the UN in Geneva who chairs the treaty of the 162 States that have undertaken to “never, under any circumstance, use anti-personnel mines, develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer to anyone, directly or indirectly, antipersonnel mines”.

While Myanmar is not a party to the treaty, the overwhelming majority of States outside the Convention have refrained from using this inhumane weapon and place high value on the humanitarian imperative set by the legally binding instrument.

“In a communication with the government of Myanmar I called on authorities to take urgent action to save lives and safeguard the health of civilians. International established measures such as mine awareness education, fencing, marking of hazardous areas and mine clearance should be urgently undertaken by the government,” said the Ambassador.

“In 2012, Myanmar’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, U Wunna Maung Lwin, said his government was ‘seriously considering all key disarmament treaties including the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, as part of its state reforms and was optimistic that his government would positively consider the treaty’. “I hope that Myanmar will take action as soon as possible to fulfil this ambition. A first step could be to participate as an observer in the 16th Meeting of States Parties which will take place 18-21 December in Vienna” said the Ambassador.

The Convention was the first multilateral treaty to take into consideration the rights of the victims of a particular weapon. As of 2017, there are 162 Parties to the Convention representing more than 80% of the world’s countries. Together, the Parties have destroyed more than 51 million landmines, and made millions of square metres of land around the world safe again.