

# Press Release



## **Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia destroys previously unknown stockpiled anti-personnel mines**

*Geneva and Skopje, 10 May 2012* – The armed forces of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have destroyed a previously unknown stockpile of anti-personnel mines in compliance with the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, or *Ottawa Convention*. At destruction events near Skopje yesterday and today, 1,248 PFM-1S anti-personnel mines were destroyed. These mines had been discovered in 2011 when the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia sought to determine which munitions under its possession would need to be destroyed in accordance with its international obligations.

“I wish to congratulate the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on its achievement. It has acted in an extremely responsible manner,” said H.E. PRAK Sokhonn, the senior Cambodian Minister who presides over the Convention. “Upon discovering this previously unknown stockpile, officials from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia informed the other States Parties and sought the technical assistance required to carry out today’s destruction.”

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had complied with its original Convention deadline of 1 March 2003 to destroy its stockpile, having destroyed more than 38,900 mines. However, the Convention’s States Parties have acknowledged the possibility that previously unknown stocks may be discovered. In 2009, the States Parties adopted the *Cartagena Action Plan*, which saw them commit to reporting such discoveries and destroying these anti-personnel mines “as a matter of urgent priority.”

“I commend the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for complying with its *Cartagena Action Plan* commitments,” said H.E. PRAK Sokhonn. “At the 2009 Cartagena Summit, we pledged to translate our action plan into sustainable progress. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has acted on this pledge.”

In destroying its previously unknown stock of mines, officials from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia benefited from the assistance provided by the Convention’s Geneva-based Implementation Support Unit as well as from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. In February, Minister of Defence Fatmir Besimi wrote to both to express “major appreciation for the professional support” provided.

### **The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

The AP Mine Ban Convention was adopted in Oslo in 1997, opened for signature in Ottawa the same year and entered into force in 1999.

To date 160 States are parties to the Convention; 155 of them no longer hold stocks of anti-personnel mines.

Over 44.5 million mines have been destroyed by the States Parties. Of the 50 States that at one time manufactured anti-personnel mines, 34 are now bound by the Convention’s ban on production. Most other parties have put in place moratoria on production and / or transfers of mines.

**AP Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit**

Of the 56 States Parties that have reported mined areas, 20 have completed implementation of their mine clearance obligations. Demining has resulted in millions of square metres of once dangerous land being released for normal human activity.

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For more information, interviews or information regarding the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention please email: [Press@APMineBanConvention.org](mailto:Press@APMineBanConvention.org) or contact Kerry Brinkert at +41 (0)22 906 1637. Connect with the Convention through our [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) or [Twitter](#).