

# 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.**