



PHILIPPINES

Intersessional Meeting (ISM) of the Anti-Personnel Land Mine Convention 22-24 June 2021

Thematic Session 6: Strengthening Compliance Measures

Mr. President-designate,

The Philippines takes pride in its strong commitment to all humanitarian disarmament instrument, including this Convention.

We remain firm in our adherence to the principles of International Humanitarian Law in general and of the Convention in particular, even as we continue to address threats from armed non-state actors that continue to indiscriminately use mines in violation of these principles, such as the terrorist New People's Army.

In the interest of transparency, the Philippines wishes to provide the following updates with regards to our compliance with the Convention's Article 9:

- While the Philippines has yet to enact a Comprehensive Landmines Act, stakeholders are currently consulting on a draft bill that will take into account concerns regarding improvised explosive devices (IEDs) acting as mines.

The working draft of this bill already exceeds the APMBC since it includes not just anti-personnel mines but also all “manually emplaced munitions and devices, including those of an improvised nature, whether designed to be activated manually, by remote control, or automatically after lapse in time.”

- Even pending the passage of this bill, the Philippines already complies with its Article 9 obligations through a constellation of policies and regulations that allows itself to implement the Convention at the operational level. In terms of penal provisions, the Philippines' Article 9 obligations are covered by the Firearms, Ammunitions, and Explosives Act, the International Humanitarian Law Act, the Comprehensive Firearms and Ammunition Act, and the Strategic Trade Management Act.
- While the Philippines is not a significantly mine-contaminated country, many Philippine communities have fallen victims to mines use by armed non-state actors such as the terrorist New People's Army. In this regard, the Government negotiated and concluded a Comprehensive Agreement to Respect Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) with the New People's Army in 1998. Unfortunately, the terrorist group has consistently violated this agreement.
- The robustness of Philippine domestic mechanisms to implement APMBC is demonstrated by the recent submission of the AFP Human Rights Office's submission of a comprehensive report detailing instances of the New People's Army's landmines use to the Philippines' independent Commission on Human Rights. The results of the Commission's investigation could be a basis of prosecution under the penal provisions of legislations mentioned earlier.

Thank you, Mr. President-designate.