

## **ICBL comments on Afghanistan's extension request**

*20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty, 21-25 November 2022*

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Thank you, President,

We would like to thank Afghanistan for presenting its requests for extending their Art. 5 deadline, and the Committee on Art. 5 for its work and analysis.

While regretting Afghanistan was not in a position to submit a comprehensive request this year, the ICBL is pleased that submission of an interim request was secured over the summer. We truly hope Afghanistan will be in a position to develop and present a comprehensive plan and request, ahead of its newly requested deadline of 2025.

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our concern over the future of mine action programme in Afghanistan and to call on all relevant national authorities and stakeholders to ensure that Afghanistan's mine action programme continues its vital work on the ground, and remains well functioning, efficient, and receives all necessary support.

As reported by the Monitor, Afghanistan is a State Party with the highest number of casualties recorded last year, and with over a thousand annual casualties for more than a decade.

Thank you.