

ICBL statement on universalization

Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention Intersessional Meetings, 20-22 June 2022

Treaty universalization is imperative, thus seeking to bring more States on board the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention should be an ongoing effort. The global norm against antipersonnel landmines needs to be nurtured, both through the strictest adherence to implementation and the advancement of universalization.

While the Convention boasts an impressive 164 States Parties, placing it amongst the most universally accepted disarmament treaties, there are still 33 countries remaining outside of the framework, many of which either hold large stockpiles or are users, including Russia, which has been making extensive use of landmines in the ongoing war in Ukraine.

The ultimate way to prevent landmine use and to eradicate them is by joining the Convention. Short of that, the international norm has to be promoted and deepened by the stigmatization of landmines, condemning their use by anyone, anywhere, without exception.

ICBL is alarmed by the extensive use over the past months of these nefarious weapons by Russia in Ukraine which have caused many casualties as well as immense human suffering, in what is the first time that landmines are used in the territory of a State Party to the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention by a State not Party.

The mine action Community has begun to raise its voice against such use of landmines, however, to-date only eight states have spoken up against this use. ICBL is pleased to have heard the voices of Mexico and the European Union this week. We call on States Parties who have not yet done so, speak out.

We also urge States Parties to address this situation as part of your bilateral engagement with Russia and Ukraine. ICBL continues to monitor and report on the situation and should you require additional data, please approach us at any moment or refer to our website.

On a separate note, we would like to take this opportunity to commend the United States on its announcement yesterday on the revision to its landmine policy, thus aligning with the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention outside the Korean Peninsula. And we call on the US to take further steps to join the convention.

Mr. President,

It has been agreed in the Oslo Action Plan that the realization of a world free of landmines is contingent upon universal adherence to the Convention. The Plan features a series of highly relevant, practical and actionable steps for the diplomatic corps to take towards this goal.

We are calling for much greater diplomatic engagement and action to shore up the Convention by promoting its universalization. We urge states to: arrange meetings in the

capitals of states not parties; promote military to military dialogue; and include other relevant stakeholders and civil society, including local ICBL members.

ICBL provides capacity building to its member organizations for the promotion of the Convention at the national level through the Investing in Action programme. Our members in Azerbaijan, India and Nepal are some of the recipients of our grant programme this year. If you intend to reach out to the authorities in these countries to promote their adherence to the Convention, please let us know and we can arrange a complementary or joint approach as appropriate.

As multilateralism and international law are being questioned if not openly undermined, by action or omission, all the work done for the construction and development of the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention is a major contribution to the defense and advancement of the rule of law. We clearly need this more than ever.