

## **ICBL statement on Universalization**

21 MSP Mine Ban Treaty  
Geneva, 20-24 November 2023

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Thank you, Mr. President,

The Mine Ban Treaty is a remarkable milestone in disarmament history. The moral stigma it created about the use of landmines is felt across the globe. Even non-signatories who claim they follow ethical principles and humanitarian law standards are forced to comply. The treaty has rightly been highlighted in this year's United Nations Secretary-General's "New Agenda for Peace."

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines welcomes States not party present at this meeting and appreciates all updates on the efforts towards joining the treaty. We also took note of the many votes in favor on the draft resolution promoting the Mine Ban Treaty at the UN General Assembly First Committee this month, and hope for an even better outcome in the final vote in December.

Regrettably, no new state has come onboard since Palestine and Sri Lanka joined in 2017.

We call on all the 33 states still remaining outside to take steps to join the Mine Ban Treaty ahead of the Fifth Review Conference next year. It has been too long since we welcomed a new member. We encourage Armenia and Azerbaijan to agree jointly to ratify the MBT as part of the recently agreed peace talks as both a sign of good faith and as a practical step towards making their communities safer and productive. We also call on Laos and Lebanon, who are states parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, to also join the Mine Ban Convention.

Over the past year the treaty and its norms have faced major challenges that must be addressed seriously and persistently. The ICBL is gravely disturbed by the recent use of antipersonnel mines on a scale we have not seen in years.

As reported by the Landmine Monitor, Russia, a state not party, has used extensively a wide range of antipersonnel landmines and banned booby-traps since its invasion of Ukraine in February of last year. In addition, another state not party - Myanmar -- has continued to use antipersonnel landmines in 2022 and 2023- something they have unfortunately done continuously over the past two decades.

As noted under the previous agenda item, in 2022 antipersonnel mines were also used by a State Party, Ukraine, which constitutes a grave violation of the treaty and needs to be thoroughly investigated.

Further, non-state armed groups in at least five countries, including Colombia, India, Myanmar, Thailand, and Tunisia have used antipersonnel landmine. Additionally, new use has been attributed to NSAGs in countries in or bordering the Sahel region of Africa.

All use of antipersonnel mines by anyone, anywhere, at any time needs to be condemned loudly and clearly, and measures to prevent future use must be put in place.

ICBL and its members continue to promote universalization of the Treaty and its norms globally, including at the First Committee and regional meetings, and at the national level, including in Azerbaijan, India, Laos, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, and the US, among others.

Lastly, we would like to thank Germany, the President of the 21 MSP, for reinvigorating the work on universalization, including through the informal universalization coordination group and numerous bilateral engagements.

Thank you.