

ICBL Statement on Clearance

Mine Ban Treaty Intersessional Meeting, Geneva, 19-21 June 2023

Thank you Chair,

The ICBL thanks all affected States Parties who provided updates on their implementation of Art. 5 and shared openly about their challenges and future plans. We also thank the Committee on Art. 5 and the ISU for their ongoing efforts to support States Parties in fulfilling their obligations.

While we were pleased to hear reports of some positive developments in land release recorded in some States Parties, we should all be deeply concerned about the overall slow pace of progress in land clearance in many affected States Parties.

No State Party reported completion of clearance in the past two years. Twenty-three States Parties have deadlines to meet their Article 5 obligations either before or during 2025, but only one - Zimbabwe - appears to be on track to meet its deadline, pending availability of funding. Beyond 2025, the picture is equally disturbing – only one more State Party – Sri Lanka - seems to be on track to meet its original deadline of 2028. We hope Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka will stay on course and will serve as an example for other affected states.

The aspirational goal agreed by States Parties at the Third Review Conference in June 2014 in Maputo, *“to clear all mined areas as soon as possible, to the fullest extent possible by 2025,”* now unfortunately appears to be unobtainable.

As reported by the Landmine Monitor last year, as many as eight States Parties with Article 5 clearance obligations undertook no clearance in 2021, and another eleven States Parties cleared less than 1 km². This means that more than half of all States Parties with Art. 5 obligation did nothing or close to nothing in 2021 to respect the treaty’s obligation to clear contamination ‘as soon as possible.’ Unfortunately, this was not an exceptional year.

Without an immediate and profound change to Art. 5 implementation, the vast majority of currently affected States Parties will continue to request deadline extensions, prolonging completion of Article 5 for years and years to come.

Many affected States Parties have relatively small areas of contamination and should have been able to complete clearance long ago. With proper land release techniques in place and adequate

resources allocated, most could become mine-free in a relatively short period of time. It's worth recalling that land release should not be seen as simply outputs of square kilometers released, but as land returned to mine-affected populations as well, ensuring that the land released truly benefits people most impacted.

There is an urgent need to rethink the extension request process so that we regain the momentum needed to complete clearance as soon as possible and to ensure that states fully respect past extension decisions and the Oslo Action Plan commitments.

In this regard, we welcome the mandate of the Committee on Art. 5 implementation adopted at the 20MSP last year *“to assess the Article 5 extension request process and challenges (...) in an open, inclusive, and transparent manner (...) and to report its conclusions and recommendations at the Twenty-first Meeting of States Parties.”*

We want to thank the Chair of the Committee on Art. 5 Implementation for engaging in discussions on this matter with ICBL earlier this year and for presenting today the plan to fulfill the mandate by the 21st MSP.

Considering up to 22 deadline extension requests are expected in 2024 and 2025, in addition to the extra work related to the next Review Conference, this year presents the best opportunity to reflect on and address some of the ongoing challenges related to Art. 5.

We therefore warmly welcome the proposal for open-ended consultations on these matters to be held in September with all relevant and interested stakeholders, and we look forward to working in very close partnership with the Committee, States, the ISU, and other partners to achieve meaningful reflections and recommendations on the extension request process by the 21st MSP, that would ultimately advance completion of Art. 5 *“as soon as possible.”*

Thank you.

ICBL statement on Risk Education

Mine Ban Treaty Intersessional Meeting, Geneva, 19-21 June 2023

[English & Spanish]

Thank you Chair,

The ICBL thanks you for this opportunity to deliver a separate statement on mine risk education and reduction.

Risk education is a core pillar of humanitarian mine action and a key aspect of the legal obligations of States Parties under Article 5 of the Mine Ban Treaty. The need for mine risk education and reduction remains crucial given the high number of mine and ERW casualties that occur worldwide. Armed conflict, contamination by antipersonnel mines, and the growing use of improvised mines continue to claim the lives of innocent people.

The Landmine Monitor recorded over 5,500 people killed or injured by landmines and explosive remnants of war globally in 2021. The trend of civilian harm caused by mines and ERW continued to be apparent, with civilians comprising the vast majority of all casualties.

Given the continued death and suffering caused by mines and ERW, delivery of risk education to affected populations is a necessary and cost-effective means of preventing injuries and saving lives. The Oslo Action Plan outlines commitments to improve the prioritization and provision of context-specific risk education, to build national capacity, and to integrate risk education with humanitarian, protection, and development interventions.

Despite much attention and progress in this area since the adoption of the Oslo Action Plan, further work is required by States Parties to ensure that the risk education and reduction actions from the Plan are actually met.

New developments in risk education are not adequately reflected in Article 7 transparency reporting. In 2021, only eight States Parties included full details on risk education activities, with beneficiary data disaggregated by sex and age. In line with Action 32 of the Oslo Action Plan, we continue to encourage States Parties to improve their reporting on mine risk education to keep the sector informed of the progress being made.

Action 24 of the Oslo Action Plan requires States Parties to provide detailed, costed and multi-year plans for context-specific mine risk education in extension requests. In 2022, only two States Parties, Guinea-Bissau and Sudan, had submitted requests with detailed risk education plans. A risk education plan is missing from the current draft request of Ukraine. It is crucial for States Parties requesting clearance extensions to provide multi-year and costed plans, and to implement them on the ground. It is particularly important in situations where land clearance is delayed.

We encourage donor States to fund mine risk education, and to report risk education support separately from clearance to enable these essential contributions to be tracked.

In closing, lives are at stake, casualty numbers must be reduced, and risk education should be made a stand-alone agenda item for the convention. This will allow States Parties to adequately report on actions #28 to #32. Until then, States Parties should make distinct updates on risk education during this session.

Thank you.

Thank you Chair,

La ICBL agradece esta oportunidad de presentar una declaración por separado sobre educación y reducción en el riesgo de minas.

La educación en el riesgo de minas y otros artefactos explosivos es un pilar fundamental de la acción humanitaria contra las minas y un aspecto clave de las obligaciones legales de los Estados Parte en virtud del Artículo 5 del Tratado de Prohibición de Minas. La necesidad de educación y reducción del riesgo de minas sigue siendo crucial dada la gran cantidad de víctimas por minas y remanentes explosivos de guerra en todo el mundo. El conflicto armado, la contaminación por minas antipersonal y el creciente uso de minas improvisadas continúan cobrando la vida de personas inocentes.

Como evidencia de esto el Landmine Monitor registró más de 5.500 personas muertas o heridas por minas y remanentes explosivos de guerra en todo el mundo en 2021. La tendencia de los daños civiles causados por estos artefactos explosivos sigue siendo evidente, y los civiles constituyen la gran mayoría de todas las víctimas.

Dadas las continuas muertes y sufrimientos causados por las minas y los remanentes explosivos de guerra, impartir educación en el riesgo a las poblaciones afectadas es un medio necesario y costo efectivo para prevenir lesiones y salvar vidas. El Plan de Acción de Oslo describe los compromisos para mejorar la priorización y la provisión de educación en el riesgo ajustada al contexto, para desarrollar la capacidad nacional e integrar la educación en el riesgo de minas con las intervenciones humanitarias, de protección y de desarrollo.

A pesar de la gran atención y el progreso en esta área desde la adopción del Plan de Acción de Oslo, los Estados Partes deben trabajar más para garantizar que las acciones de educación y reducción de riesgos del Plan se cumplan.

Los nuevos desarrollos en la educación en el riesgo no se reflejan adecuadamente en los informes de transparencia del Artículo 7. En 2021, solo ocho Estados Parte incluyeron detalles sobre las actividades de educación en el riesgo de minas, con datos de los beneficiarios desglosados por sexo y edad. Alineado a la Acción 32 del Plan de Acción de Oslo, alentamos a los Estados Parte a mejorar sus informes sobre educación en el riesgo de minas para mantener informado al sector sobre el progreso realizado.

De igual manera, el punto 24 del Plan de Acción de Oslo requiere que los Estados Partes proporcionen planes detallados, presupuestados y plurianuales para la educación en el riesgo de minas ajustado a contextos específicos en las solicitudes de extensión. En 2022, solo dos Estados Parte, Guinea-Bissau y Sudán, habían presentado solicitudes con planes detallados sobre este tema. Falta un plan de educación en el riesgo en el borrador actual de la solicitud de extensión de Ucrania. Es crucial que los Estados Parte que solicitan extensiones proporcionen planes multianuales y presupuestados, y que los implementen en el terreno, particularmente en situaciones en las que se retrasan las actividades de despeje.

Por otra parte, alentamos a los Estados donantes a que financien la educación en el riesgo de minas y a que reporten estos aportes de manera separada a aquellos de liberación de tierras para de esta forma poder hacer un seguimiento de estas contribuciones tan esenciales.

Para terminar, debo volver a resaltar que hay vidas en juego, se debe reducir el número de víctimas y la educación sobre el riesgo de minas debe convertirse en un tema independiente en la agenda de la convención. Esto permitirá a los Estados Parte informar adecuadamente sobre las acciones #28 a

#32. Hasta entonces, los Estados Parte deben realizar distintas actualizaciones sobre la educación en riesgos durante esta sesión.

Gracias