



**5<sup>th</sup> Review Conference of the  
Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention  
Siem Reap, 26 November 2021**

Joint Statement  
of the  
**International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**  
and the  
**International Committee of the Red Cross**

**Agenda item 8c – Clearing Mined Areas and Mine Risk Reduction**

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Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies, and gentlemen,

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, including its member National Societies in 192 countries, is grateful for the opportunity to address this important Review Conference. As the world's largest humanitarian network, with over 16 million volunteers, our colleagues work in, and are often from, the world's most mine-affected communities. Our colleagues know the victims, see in their faces the suffering they endure and know the heartbreaking tragedy of lost livelihoods for individuals, families and communities. In partnership with the ICRC and the International Federation, National Societies do their best to assist the victims and, in many countries, carry out risk awareness and safer behavior activities to prevent new casualties.

As many others have spoken on the challenges of clearance, we would like to make only two points on this subject. First, we welcome the considerable progress that has been made in many countries including our host country Cambodia, which reportedly cleared a record amount of land in 2023. Since 2000 its people have benefited from a drop in annual casualties from 838 to only 32 in 2023, according to Landmine Monitor. This is compelling evidence of the effectiveness of mine action and of Cambodia's commitment.

Secondly, we would like to join others in highlighting our deep concern at the alarmingly slow pace of clearance in many of the 33 States Parties with clearance obligations and with the repeated extension of clearance deadlines. It is estimated that only 3 of these States Parties are on track to meet their current deadlines and it appears likely that up to 14 more States will seek extensions in 2025. We urge this Review Conference to take steps to dramatically change these trends over the next 5 years.

Steps towards this end should include (a) mobilizing key stakeholders through an article 5 support group, (b) strengthening the extension process to ensure all requests include detailed plans and that those without such plans are extended only for the time needed to prepare them, (c) naming a high-level emissary of the Convention on clearance and (d) deciding to establish a Trust Fund for completion of article 5 obligations by States with quality plans but without adequate funding. As we witness in our work around the world, delayed clearance often translates into lost limbs, lives and livelihoods.

Given the human cost of delayed clearance there is only one other way to help “put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines”. This is through what the Convention calls “mine risk education” and we in the Movement refer to as “risk awareness and safer behavior” activities. Although mine risk education has always been discussed under the Convention and the Oslo Review Conference decided that all extension requests must contain “detailed, costed and multi-year plans” for this work, it has only recently begun to receive the attention it deserves.

Thanks to the Oslo Action Plan reporting on mine risk education by mine-affected States Parties increased from 70% to 85% between 2019 and 2023, according to Landmine Monitor. However, the Monitor also highlights that only two of 9 States Parties requesting clearance extensions in the last two years have included the “detailed, costed, multi-year plans” for this work as required by the decisions of the last Review Conference. And all States Parties continue to approve such requests. With up to 14 more extension requests expected in 2025 it is crucially important to pay greater attention to the planning and implementation of mine risk education activities. Specific decisions by this Review Conference could help achieve this.

- First, is the designation of a focal point on the article 5 Committee to help ensure that extension requests include quality plans for mine risk education and to promote implementation and reporting in all States Parties with clearance obligations.
- Second, the inclusion of mine risk education as a standing agenda for future Convention meetings to help ensure a continued focus on this life saving work, increased reporting and better funding by relevant States Parties, and
- Third, either a decision by this Conference or the development of a practice by the article 5 Committee, to request the revision of extension requests that do not yet contain “detailed, costed, multi-year” plans for mine risk education or, alternatively, the granting of short extensions during which the requests can be strengthened.

Ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel landmines requires synergetic implementation of all Convention obligations, including non-use, clearance, mine risk awareness and reduction and victim assistance. Slow implementation of clearance requirements makes vigorous implementation of risk reduction programs for civilian populations all the more important. It is also an area in which the ICRC and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies can work closely with national authorities to help them meet their treaty obligations. We urge this Review Conference to make decisions that will significantly enhance this area of work over the next five years.

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