

**BELGIUM**

**Compliance**

**Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention – Fifth Review Conference – November 2024**

Mr. President,

Belgium remains strongly committed to the full implementation and respect of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in order to move towards a mine-free world.

This is not a fair-weather Convention. Its provisions must be respected, by any actor under any circumstances, as it enshrines a set of fundamental norms and humanitarian objectives.

Belgium strongly condemns the massive use of anti-personnel mines in Ukraine by the Russian Federation in its illegal war of aggression. Ukraine has become the most mined country in the world. This war will leave behind a legacy that will be paid for with the blood of the Ukrainian population now and in future generations. This constitutes an unprecedented situation: a State Party fighting an existential battle is faced with an enemy not bound by any restriction. This inequality naturally leads to dilemmas and stark military choices. We plead with Ukraine to choose for humanity.

In this regard, we profoundly regret the announced transfer of US anti-personnel mines to Ukraine. We note that the Convention does not include an exemption for so-called 'non-persistent' mines. Belgium strongly calls on Ukraine to uphold its commitments under the Convention. We encourage it to continue the dialogue on full compliance.

Belgium encourages any State Party to the Convention involved in an ongoing armed conflict, to remain vigilant on the use of antipersonnel mines, to thoroughly investigate any alleged use, including of an improvised nature, and to be transparent on the findings and steps taken to remedy the situation.

Furthermore, we would like to underline the importance of maintaining a constructive dialogue between States Party, with the presidency and the ISU but also with other actors of the mine action community, on any challenges in the framework of the Convention, including timely discussions on barriers to formulate a substantiated extension request.

It is through compliance that we strengthen the Convention and are able to maintain the spirit of cooperation and constructive dialogue embedded in the Convention.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by thanking the members of the Committee on Cooperative Compliance for the work that they have carried out during this important year marked by the Review Conference. We are looking forward to joining this Committee and to contribute to its efforts to strengthen the implementation of this Convention.

We remain hopeful that all States Party stay fully committed to the Convention.

Thank you, Mr. President.