



Seminar on Alternatives to Using Live Anti-Personnel Mines Retained for Permitted Purposes

21 June 2024 | 09:00 – 17:00 | Hotel Royal Genève

Background

The 1997 *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction* (informally, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention) is the cornerstone of the international effort to end the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines. By joining this landmark humanitarian treaty, the States Parties agree without exceptions to the Text of the Convention.

In this context, Convention members agree to Article 1 of the General Obligations where “Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances [...] otherwise acquire, stockpile, or retain anti-personnel mines”. Notwithstanding the General Obligations, Article 3 permits States Parties “the retention or transfer of a number of anti-personnel mines for the development of and training in mine detection, mine clearance, or mine destruction techniques”. There is not set number or percentage of mines that a State Party may retain for permitted purposes; however, Article 3 states that these “shall not exceed the minimum number absolutely necessary”.

The intention is further developed in Action 16 of the Oslo Action Plan (OAP) which requires States Parties to review annually “the number of mines retained to ensure that they do not exceed the minimum number absolutely necessary and destroy all anti-personnel mines that exceed that number”. Action 17 further calls to “explore available alternatives to using live anti-personnel mines for training and research purposes where possible.”

Challenges Faced and Opportunities for Cooperation

There are 64 States Parties that retain mines for permitted purposes. The number of mines retained range from a less than a dozen to the thousands. These States Parties are to inform annually – by 30 April through their Article 7 Reports – on the status and use of retained mines. In addition, they are to report on OAP Action 16 and are strongly encouraged to explore alternatives to using live mines for permitted purposes and report if applicable on Action 17.

While the effective implementation of Article 3 is an obligation under the Convention, matters related to retained mines have not been a priority of the States Parties. As such, reporting rates and information provided could be strengthened. Likewise, only a handful of States have adopted alternatives for permitted purposes and/or have reported on exploring alternatives.

The Convention President, Cambodia, which has been tasked with taking the lead on “any issue related to the pursuit of the Convention’s aims [...] including on matters related to transparency regarding the exceptions contained in Article 3”, is keen to increase engagement with all 64 States Parties that retain anti-personnel mines for permitted purposes to foster dialogue and cooperation particularly on the road to the *Siem Reap-Angkor Summit on a Mine-Free World*.

The Convention’s Implementation Support Unit (ISU) is therefore backing the President in hosting the seminar, thanks to funding provided through a project (Decision CFSP 2021/257) adopted by the Council of the European Union. The Decision aims to support implementation of the Convention, including of Action 16

by increasing reporting, Action 17 by exploring alternatives to live anti-personnel mines, and Article 6 for increased cooperation and assistance.

Agenda | Seminar on Exploring Alternatives to Using Live Anti-Personnel Mines for Permitted Purposes
Hôtel Royal Genève | Rue de Lausanne 41 | Tram 15 or bus A2, stop Môle

09:00 – 09:30

Welcome coffee and exhibition – Delegates are welcome with a cup of coffee and an exhibit of inert mines and other alternatives for training. A group photo is scheduled at 09:15. Please bring the badge you received during the Intersessional Meetings to facilitate entry.

Session 1 – 09:30 – 09:45

Opening of the Seminar

- H.E. Ly Thuch, Senior Minister attached to the Prime Minister and First Vice President of the Cambodia Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority, and President of the Siem Reap-Angkor
- Marketa Homolkova, Head of the Disarmament Section, Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations in Geneva

Session 2 – 10:00 – 10:30

Article 3: Mines Retained for Permitted Purposes and Exploring Alternatives under the Oslo Action Plan

- Juan Carlos Ruan, Director, Implementation Support Unit
- Steve Goose, Head of Arms Division, Human Rights Watch, International Campaign to Ban Landmines

This session will focus on reporting and need for quality data from the point of view of the implementation of the Convention and civil society's view on implementation on Article 3. Interested delegations are invited to speak on the matter and ask questions to the panellists.

Session 3 – 10:35 – 11:00

Risks of Live Anti-Personnel Mines in Storage and Proper Management System

- Norwegian People's Aid

Ineffective inventory systems may hinder the identification and correct reporting on the type of mines retained. Improper or lack of effective management systems could lead to devastating accidents. This session is a compilation of good practices. Interested delegations are invited to speak on the matter and ask questions.

Coffee break in parallel

Session 4 – 11:10 – 12:30

Views of States Undertaking Mine Clearance on Alternatives to the Use of Live Anti-Personnel Mines

- Nathalie Ochoa Niño, Coordinator, Colombian Mine Action Programme
- Colonel Pisan Amornratananuparp, Royal Thai Armed Forces, Thailand Mine Action Centre

States actively undertaking clearance find themselves needing live anti-personnel mines for training. Or do they? This session will explore training with inert elements simulating factory and/or improvised anti-personnel mines (which may include “detonations” using light or sound in case of activation). This session is a compilation of good practices. Interested delegations are invited to speak on the matter and ask questions.

Lunch break

Session 5 – 13:45 – 15:00

Advances and Techniques in the Use of Inert Anti-Personnel Mines for Training (Part A)

- Edison Pineda, Humanitarian Mine Action Expert, Swiss EOD Center, Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport DDPS, Swiss Armed Forces
- Colin King, Chief Intelligence Officer, Fenix Insight
- Greg Crowther, Director of Programmes, Mines Advisory Group

What are surrogate mines and how do these operate? What is a “hardware library” and how are these techniques being applied on the field including in places like Ukraine? Do 3-D printed mines work? The role of retained mines in training. A hands-on explanation from actors in the field. This session is a compilation of good practices. Interested delegations are invited to speak on the matter and ask questions.

Coffee break – evaluation forms

Session 6 – 15:30 – 16:45

Advances and Techniques in the Use of Inert Anti-Personnel Mines for Training (Part B)

- Lieutenant-Colonel Djimon Sahgui, Director, Centre for the Improvement of Post-Conflict Actions Related to Demining and Decontamination, Benin
- Simon Elmont, Global Land Release Technical Specialist, Humanity and Inclusion
- Hans Risser, Regional Director Africa, Latin America, Europe, Norwegian People’s Aid

The session will also dive into advances and techniques through the eyes and experience of different panellists. This session is a compilation of good practices. Interested delegations are invited to speak on the matter and ask questions.

Session 7 – 16:45 – 17:00

Closing of the Seminar

- H.E. Ly Panharith, Secretary General, Cambodia Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority, Presidency of the Siem Reap-Angkor Summit
- Marketa Homolkova, Head of the Disarmament Section, Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations in Geneva

End of the seminar