



Statement
Ambassador Dara In, Permanent Representative of Cambodia
to the United Nations Office in Geneva
Item 9(d): Preventing and Suppressing Prohibited Activities
and Facilitating Compliance
At the Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention
Geneva, 4 December 2025

Speaking time: 5:00

Madam President,

1. Cambodia thanks the Madam Chair for her insightful report, which stands at the convergence of legal obligation, humanitarian purpose and the deeper normative foundations that give this Convention its moral force. This is not merely a treaty of prohibitions; it is a collective ethical compact. It affirms that the remnants of war must not be permitted to outlast the conflicts that produced them and that weapons incapable of distinguishing between combatant and civilian have no place in any rules-based international order.
2. For Cambodia, these principles are not abstractions but lived realities. Landmines have shaped our national memory and the daily experience of our people. Our adherence to the Convention is grounded in experience, moral conviction and the understanding that humanitarian law must serve as a durable architecture of protection, not as an instrument of political convenience.
3. Guided by this foundation, Cambodia has approached all compliance-related concerns with seriousness and integrity, including Thailand's allegations of so-called newly emplaced mines. The alleged incidents occurred in areas that are within Cambodian territory as defined in maps produced under the 1904 and 1907 Treaties and reaffirmed under the 2000 MoU. Thailand's so-called 'evidence' is entirely unilateral, produced without permitting Cambodia or neutral experts access to the sites. Such opacity falls far below any standard of scientific credibility or good-faith cooperation. Claims that cannot withstand independent scrutiny cannot credibly form the basis of a compliance allegation under this Convention.
4. This is not a matter of competing narratives but of method. Compliance assessments under this Convention must be guided by verifiable evidence, objective analysis and cooperative verification. Cambodia has consistently emphasised that truth in humanitarian disarmament emerges from rigour, transparency and shared investigation, not from unilateral assertion.

Madam President,

5. Precisely because Cambodia honours its obligations, we must register our profound concern at Thailand's persistent attempts to politicise the Convention's compliance mechanisms, deploying them to advance extraneous

political and territorial aims. These mechanisms exist to safeguard the Convention, not to be used as levers in bilateral disputes or instruments for strategic messaging. No State Party should permit such distortion.

6. Cambodia has responded not with speculation but clarity and evidence. We have provided technical detail, historical context and precise geographical data, all set out in our comprehensive clarification document submitted to the UN Secretary-General. This reaffirms our unbroken record as a principled, constructive and cooperative State Party.
7. Such politicisation erodes the integrity of Article 8, undermines the mutual trust essential to cooperation among States Parties and risk transforming a humanitarian regime into a forum for strategic manipulation. If left unchecked, it would weaken the Convention for all States Parties, compromising its impartiality, legitimacy and humanitarian character.
8. It must therefore be recalled that Article 8 was never intended as a shortcut for unilateral accusation or political manoeuvring. It was crafted to foster trust, *not* suspicion, and to require cooperation, *not* confrontation. The travaux préparatoires confirm that Article 8(1) imposes a *mandatory obligation* to seek clarification through direct consultation, with Article 8(2) functioning only as a *conditional mechanism* once those efforts have been genuinely undertaken and remain unresolved. Thailand's invocation of Article 8(2) without first discharging its obligations under Article 8(1) constitutes a deliberate instrumentalisation of the Convention's compliance tools for purposes wholly unrelated to mine action. Such an inversion not only departs from the legal sequence prescribed by the Convention but also replaces fact-based inquiry with adversarial positioning—precisely the abuse of process the drafters sought to prevent. Cambodia rejects such misuse.

Madam President,

9. Humanitarian disarmament is sustained not by political expediency but by principled conduct. The authority of this Convention rests upon the integrity of its processes, the accuracy of its evidence and the good-faith conduct of its States Parties. Cambodia's commitment is anchored in our history, our legal responsibilities and the imperative that no community—anywhere—should endure the suffering our own people have known.
10. We therefore urge all States Parties to defend the Convention against politicisation, uphold the procedural and evidentiary integrity of Article 8 and ensure that compliance deliberations remain firmly grounded in truth, cooperation and the humanitarian purpose that inspired this treaty.
11. Cambodia stands ready, as always, to engage constructively, transparently and in full conformity with the principles that have guided this Convention.

I thank you!