

Statement of Estonia

Twenty-Second Meeting of the States Parties

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Geneva, 1-5 December 2025

Agenda item 9 (f): Universalizing the Convention

Madam President, Distinguished Delegates,

Let me begin by congratulating you, Madam President, on assuming the Presidency of this Meeting of States Parties and assuring you of Estonia's full support. We appreciate the opportunity to address this meeting.

Honourable Delegates,

Following a thorough reassessment of our national security needs in light of the drastically deteriorated security environment in our region, Estonia has decided to withdraw from the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

On 27 June 2025, Estonia officially notified the Depositary, all States Parties, and the members of the United Nations Security Council of this decision. The withdrawal was undertaken in full compliance with the procedure set out in the Convention, and it will take effect on 27 December 2025.

Excellencies,

Estonia shares its eastern border with the Russian Federation, whose illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, now nearing its fourth year, and its wider hybrid activities across Europe pose an existential threat to regional security. Russia is acting in blatant violation of international law and the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter by using military force to advance its expansionist aims. This aggression has destabilized the European security order and poses a grave threat to Russia's neighbouring states. Russia is not a State Party to the

Convention and continues to employ anti-personnel mines extensively, leaving more than 150,000 square kilometres of Ukrainian territory contaminated.

Our withdrawal is a limited and proportionate response to the threat posed by Russia and the acute security needs caused by it. It signals that Estonia is prepared to take all necessary and legal measures to defend its population, territory, and sovereignty. In this unstable regional environment, we must retain all options that strengthen our deterrence and ensure maximum flexibility for our armed forces.

Madam President, Distinguished Delegates,

We remain fully committed to taking all feasible precautions to protect civilians and civilian objects. Estonia recognises that in an armed conflict the choice of methods and means of warfare is not unlimited, and that all military operations in an armed conflict must adhere to the rules of international humanitarian law, including the principles of military necessity, humanity, distinction, and proportionality.

Let me stress that our withdrawal from the Convention does not affect Estonia's unwavering commitment to international humanitarian law, including customary international law and treaty obligations, notably the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and their Additional Protocols.

Despite our withdrawal, Estonia remains strongly committed to international cooperation and assistance aimed at addressing the humanitarian consequences of anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war. We have long contributed to humanitarian demining, both bilaterally and through international organisations. We reaffirm our readiness to continue supporting mine-action efforts, including through the Ottawa Convention's ISU Trust Fund, to help alleviate the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines.

Honourable Delegates,

We are grateful for the opportunity to present our views at this meeting. Estonia remains committed to engaging transparently and constructively with all States Parties to help uphold the safety and dignity of civilian populations worldwide.