

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Twenty Second Meeting of the States Parties
Geneva, 1-5 December 2025

STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
ON THE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE CONVENTION

Geneva, 2 December 2025

Ms. President,

Thank you - and my congratulations, Ambassador ICHIKAWA Tomiko, on assuming the presidency of this 22nd Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Lithuania values the professionalism and transparency with which the Presidency has conducted consultations, including on Lithuania's sovereign decision to withdraw from the Convention.

On 27 June 2025, Lithuania submitted its instrument of withdrawal to the Depositary of the Ottawa Convention. The withdrawal is expected take effect on 27 December 2025, subject to the conditions set forth in Article 20 of the Convention.

Lithuania's choice to withdraw from the Convention followed extensive consultations – both domestically and with our NATO Allies and partners. This decision is based on a sober assessment of the security environment on Europe's eastern flank, marked by an existential threat from Russia, which is not a State Party to the Convention. The security realities Lithuania confronts today are not those of 2003, when we joined the Ottawa Convention in good faith, believing that diplomacy, disarmament instruments, and cooperative security could guarantee peace in Europe.

That belief has been shattered by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

Ms. President,

Let us be clear: the single greatest threat to humanitarian norms, to disarmament progress, and to the safety of civilians across Europe is Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war against Ukraine. It is a war waged with complete disregard for international law and human life.

Russia, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, has weaponized terror on an industrial scale. Russia has deliberately targeted civilian infrastructure and laid vast numbers of mines on Ukrainian soil. Russian mines will maim and kill civilians for decades to come.

As a frontline NATO nation, Lithuania faces direct threats from this same aggressor.

In this context, Lithuania must and will take sovereign measures to defend its people and territory against the threat of an authoritarian adversary, which rejects the rules of war.

The first duty of any state is to protect its citizens - and Lithuania will fulfil that duty fully.

We remain steadfastly committed to international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its relevant protocols.

Lithuania will continue to take all feasible precautions to protect civilians from the effects of mines and explosive ordnance - including through fencing, marking, monitoring, and post-conflict clearance. We will maintain detailed records of any mine-affected areas and ensure demining operations commence as soon as conditions permit.

Ms. President,

Our commitment to demining is tangible. Lithuania co-leads, together with Iceland, the Demining Capability Coalition for Ukraine - an initiative that delivers practical, life-saving assistance to those suffering the consequences of Russia's indiscriminate warfare. Even as we withdraw from the Ottawa Convention, we continue to invest in humanitarian action.

We are prepared for open, respectful dialogue with all interested partners about our decision and its implications. But we must also be honest. Humanitarian aspirations cannot substitute for credible defence and deterrence when faced with aggression.

Lithuania continues to believe in the humanitarian spirit that underpin the Ottawa Convention. But we also believe that security and our values must be defended - sometimes literally.

Thank you, Ms. President.