

Statement on Mine Clearance

Interessional meeting, Mine Ban Treaty, Geneva, 17-20 June 2025

Thank you, Chair.

On behalf of the ICBL, I would first like to congratulate Oman on completing its Article 5 clearance obligations — the first such achievement in five years!

We also thank other States Parties for sharing their updates this week, including an encouraging one from Croatia.

Since the adoption of the Mine Ban Treaty, some 30 States Parties have fulfilled their clearance obligations — a major achievement, with civil society, including ICBL members, playing a vital role. However, urgent and substantial action is still required to accelerate progress and uphold the Treaty's promise.

We wish to highlight several pressing concerns that we have been raising over the past few years, some of which have been raised by a number of previous speakers:

- Despite the aspirational 2025 completion goal, the rate of Article 5 completion has slowed significantly. Only five States — Oman among them — have declared completion in the past decade, compared to 22 in the previous decade.
- Of the 33 States Parties with ongoing clearance obligations, very few are on track. Around two-thirds report either no clearance or less than 1 km² cleared annually — a troubling trend.
- A record 14 States are requesting deadline extensions this year. Many of them should have completed clearance long ago, yet continue requesting additional extensions, often for another five years, frequently without presenting comprehensive plans. If this pattern continues, 2030 risks becoming the new 2025: with few completions and more extensions and delays.
- The extension provision, originally intended as an exception, has become the rule. As a result, delays have accumulated, communities remain at risk, and over 25,000 casualties have been reported in States Parties during extension periods.

While some delays stem from genuine challenges such as ongoing conflict or insecurity - many obstacles lie within States' control, including:

- Persistent lack of national ownership and political will;
- Prolonged delays in clearing sensitive areas, such as borders and military zones;
- Declining international funding;
- And a permissive extension process that undermines accountability.

The Siem Reap–Angkor Action Plan provides useful guidance for addressing some of these issues, but far bolder action is needed. Otherwise, we risk arriving at 2030 with another long list of extension requests and very few completions.

To break this cycle, the ICBL urges the following concrete steps:

First, tighten extension approvals — Extensions should only be granted for the period covered by comprehensive, costed work plans for clearance and risk education, as called for in the SRAAP.

Second, establish an informal Article 5 support group — Bringing together interested donors, civil society experts, and other stakeholders to informally support the Article 5 and 6 Committees to facilitate in-depth country-specific engagement, and ensure funding is aligned with sound national planning and efforts.

Three, appoint a high-level envoy on Article 5 — To help foster greater national prioritization of clearance at the highest levels of government.

Finally, better connect clearance obligations with funding opportunities — So that all countries with clearly defined needs can access the necessary resources. In this context, we welcome the ongoing discussions on a voluntary trust fund and hope it will provide a practical mechanism to support more States in reaching completion.

Thank you.