

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Intersessional Meetings

Geneva, 17-20 June 2025

National Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Latvia

Madam President,

Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of Latvia, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the President and the Implementation Support Unit for their unwavering dedication in facilitating this meeting.

Latvia highly values the critical role of the Ottawa Convention in addressing the humanitarian consequences of anti-personnel mines, as well as in promoting international cooperation and assistance in mine action.

However, we find ourselves confronted with a critical juncture where the pursuit of ideals must be balanced against the tangible reality of an imminent threat to our national security.

Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, coupled with its resurgent imperialistic ambitions and disregard for the territorial integrity of sovereign nations, has profoundly impacted the security landscape of our region.

While engaged in a brutal, unprovoked, and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine for over three years, Russian officials have issued direct threats towards its neighboring states, including Latvia. Hybrid warfare, manifesting in the form of damaging underwater infrastructure, interference with GPS signals, and acts of sabotage, is currently being employed against us. Regrettably, the possibility of further military aggression against more of Russia's neighboring states cannot be entirely discounted.

Madam President,

Eighty-five years ago, in June 1940, the communist regime of Russia invaded the Baltic States, resulting in widespread deportations, loss of life, immense suffering, and occupation that persisted for five decades. Today, we are resolute in our determination to prevent such atrocities from ever being repeated.

In this context, on April 16, the Latvian Parliament made the difficult decision to withdraw from the Ottawa Convention. This decision was not taken lightly and is rooted in the necessity of adopting a regional approach. Our primary objective is to ensure

that, in the event of a worst-case scenario, our armed forces possess the requisite capabilities and flexibility to safeguard our citizens, preserve the sovereignty of our nation, and protect our allies.

Throughout the decision-making process, Latvia conducted national and regional consultations with its NATO Allies and international partners, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs). We will continue to engage in transparent dialogue.

It is imperative to clarify that Latvia remains steadfast in its commitment to the principles of international humanitarian law, encompassing the Geneva Conventions and the Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We will continue to be guided by integrity and responsibility.

Furthermore, Latvia continues to support global mine action, particularly humanitarian de-mining. Since 2023, Latvia has been actively involved in humanitarian de-mining activities in Ukraine. On May 23, Latvia pledged an additional voluntary contribution to the United Nations Mine Action Service. While Latvia may be withdrawing from the Convention, it remains committed to upholding its humanitarian objectives.

Madam President,

We extend our sincere appeal to the States Parties to acknowledge the prevailing security environment. Peace, security, and humanitarian goals are not mutually exclusive; they must be collectively defended. However, this can only be achieved if states aspiring to these goals preserve their sovereignty and independence.

We welcome the opportunity to engage in this forum and reaffirm our commitment to collaborative efforts with all partners to provide support to affected communities and foster a safer world for all.

I thank you for your attention!