

**NPA Statement on Agenda Item 7(a): Universalization
2025 Interessional meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Geneva, 17-20 June 2025**

**Delivered by
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Thank you, Madame President,

In November last year, we came together in Cambodia—a country once among the world's most heavily mine-contaminated—where States Parties adopted the new Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan and formally reaffirmed the importance of continued and accelerated pursuit of the universalization and implementation of the Convention. It is therefore deeply concerning that, just months later, we are now witnessing certain States Parties taking steps towards withdrawing from the Convention that bans indiscriminate weapons they once recognized as unacceptable. Just yesterday, Finland's parliament voted to withdraw from the Convention, following earlier decisions by the parliaments of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Poland is expected to vote in the coming weeks.

While the security concerns of these countries are understandable, the answer does not lie in the use of anti-personnel mines. It is troubling that such decisions are taken based on arguments of their alleged military utility – the very same arguments that were largely debated and settled back in the time when the Convention was negotiated. However, the evidence remains valid as before and speaks clearly – there is no such thing as responsible use of AP mines; these weapons do not defend borders; they do not win wars. What they do is that they continue to terrorize, kill and maim civilians during and long after conflicts end. Security in today's world cannot be ensured by outdated and inhumane weapons that have proven to have devastating humanitarian consequences. Anti-personnel mines are banned by more than 160 states for a reason.

Let us be reminded that the Convention has been a massive success and saved countless lives and limbs - the annual number of AP mine casualties has fallen by over 75% from its peak in the late 1990s, vast areas have been cleared and handed back to the local communities for their productive use. We extend our warm welcome to the Marshall Islands that have joined the APMBC community this year and recognized the importance of the Convention and the fact that these weapons have no place in modern warfare. It is also encouraging to hear that Tonga is on its path towards accession and we urge other states not yet party to follow suit. The Convention still stands as strong as ever and continues to save lives and limbs every day and brings hope for a better life to affected communities.

This is not the time to weaken international norms and the rules-based world order we all rely on. It is time to protect and reinforce them. Walking away from the Convention designed to protect civilians is a step backward for international humanitarian law and human dignity, but most importantly, for the withdrawing states themselves. We therefore call on Lithuania, Latvia, Finland, Estonia, and Poland and any other State Party contemplating withdrawal to reconsider such ill-informed decisions, look at the evidence, and reaffirm the commitment to protecting civilians and upholding IHL.

Double standards undermine the Convention's objectives and particularly the credibility of State Parties, and we urge all States Parties to do their utmost to consistently protect the norm against anti-personnel mines by speaking up and standing firm by their commitments and legal obligations. Only then can we achieve the common goal of finally ending the suffering caused by these inhumane weapons.

I thank you.