

Press Release



Greece makes advances in the destruction of landmines prior to major international anti-landmines conference

Geneva and Athens 9 June 2014 – Greece has announced that it has made significant advances in the destruction of all stockpiled anti-personnel mines in accordance with its obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, or Ottawa Convention.

“The transfer by Greece of anti-personnel mines to a special facility in Bulgaria, where nearly a million landmines will be destroyed, is well underway,” said Alexandros Alexandris, Ambassador of Greece to the United Nations (Geneva). “As of today, 224,101 anti-personnel mines have been transferred to Bulgaria and, of these, 56,530 anti-personnel mines DM-31-type mines have been destroyed.”

The sheer number of mines that Greece was obliged to destroy, combined with financial constraints, contractual and legal issues, meant that Greece missed its four-year deadline to complete destruction and impeded the pace of the destruction process.

“Despite difficulties that we have encountered in fulfilling our obligation to destroy all stockpiled anti-personnel mines, Greece has never wavered in its commitment to implement the Convention,” said Ambassador Alexandris.

“We will continue apace with our stockpile destruction effort and provide a further update at the Maputo Review Conference,” added the Ambassador, noting that 729,184 anti-personnel mines remain in Greece and will be transported to Bulgaria for destruction.

The announcement comes on the eve of the Convention’s **Maputo Review Conference on a Mine-Free World**, which will take place in the Mozambican capital from 23 to 27 June.

“I am pleased that Greece’s stockpile destruction effort is moving forward and that it will share additional good news at the Maputo Review Conference,” said Pedro Comissario, Ambassador of Mozambique to the United Nations (Geneva), who is leading preparations for the Maputo conference.

According to the Convention “each State Party undertakes to destroy or ensure the destruction of all stockpiled anti-personnel mines it owns or possesses, or that are under its jurisdiction or control, as soon as possible but not later than four years after the entry into force of this Convention for that State Party.”

At one time, 89 of the Convention’s 161 States Parties possessed anti-personnel mines. All but five of these 89 States Parties have completed their stockpile destruction efforts, destroying more than 45.7 million mines.

In addition to Greece, four other States Parties – Belarus, Finland, Poland and Ukraine – are in the process of destroying stockpiles.

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The *Maputo Review Conference on a Mine-Free World* is the name given to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention's third five-year review.

Over 1,000 representatives of States and international and non-governmental organizations are expected to gather in the Mozambican capital to chart the path forward in the global effort to end the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.

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