Landmines
International Campaign to Ban Landmines

Background
The 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (or Mine Ban Treaty) is one of the most universally adhered-to international instruments. This year marks 20 years since the Treaty was adopted. In only two decades, remarkable progress has been made towards eliminating these weapons and addressing their deadly legacy. Sustained financial and political support is needed to ensure the Mine Ban Treaty fully delivers on its promises.

States parties to the Mine Ban Treaty have adopted the target date of 2025 for the global elimination of antipersonnel mines. They will strive to universalise the Treaty, complete clearance of mine-contaminated land, destroy all stockpiles, and make assistance to victims sustainable—as soon as possible and by 2025 at the latest.

Current context
Last year, the Landmine Monitor recorded a major increase in people injured or killed in explosions of landmines and explosive remnants of war—in part due to ongoing acute conflicts. Eighty percent of people injured or killed by landmines worldwide were civilians.

Fifty-nine states have antipersonnel landmine contamination on their territory. Some 35 states may own stockpiles of the weapon, including four states parties that have a legal obligation to destroy them. Survivors, their families, and communities must see their rights respected and their needs met. Through the 2014–2019 Maputo Action Plan, states parties to the Mine Ban Treaty have agreed on robust and realistic measures to end the suffering caused by landmines.

Thirty-five states are still outside the Mine Ban Treaty, but the vast majority abide de facto with its core provisions: they do not use, produce, or transfer antipersonnel mines. Each year, half of them vote in favour of the First Committee resolution on the Mine Ban Treaty, thus showing their support for the aim of eliminating antipersonnel mines.

Non-state armed groups in some ten countries still use antipersonnel mines. Most use improvised mines, also known as victim-activated improvised explosive devices (IEDs), rather than factory-made landmines. Such devices are covered by the Mine Ban Treaty as they explode due to the presence, proximity, or contact of a person.

The 16th Meeting of States Parties (16MSP) will take place from 18 to 21 December 2017 in Vienna, Austria. All states are welcome to participate. The Treaty leadership is made up of the following states until the 16MSP: Algeria, Austria (President), Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Ecuador, Iraq, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden, Switzerland, Uganda, United Kingdom, and Zambia.
Recommendations

During First Committee, delegations should:
• Report on measures taken in 2017 to implement the Maputo Action Plan or to otherwise put an end to the suffering caused by landmines;
• Pledge financial support for the implementation of Treaty obligations, including land clearance and assistance to survivors, their families, and communities;
• Reiterate that any use of landmines by any actor is unacceptable;
• Report on progress towards joining the Mine Ban Treaty;
• Engage bilaterally in discussions on the universalisation or implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty; and
• Vote in favour of the resolution on the Mine Ban Treaty and encourage others, such as regional group members, to do so as well.

Beyond First Committee, states should:
• Adopt laws, regulations, and policies that facilitate Treaty implementation;
• Contribute to discussions on how to ensure sufficient resources and their efficient use to reach the goal of a mine-free world by 2025; and
• Participate in meetings of the Mine Ban Treaty and report on efforts made to eliminate antipersonnel mines.

Author: Amelie Chayer