



COMMEMORATING THE
– 20TH ANNIVERSARY –
OF THE NEGOTIATION, ADOPTION AND SIGNING OF
THE ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION

Two decades of partnership between governments,
international organisations and civil society to “end the
suffering caused by anti-personnel mines”



2017 MARKS THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONVENTION.

TO COMMEMORATE THIS HISTORIC MILESTONE,
THE CONVENTION'S IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT UNIT (ISU)
HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS BROCHURE *SOME KEY EVENTS* IN THE
PROCESS THAT LED TO THIS LANDMARK CONVENTION.



AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH AT A GLANCE

The anti-landmine movement was born from the humanitarian impact in war-torn regions all over the world.

Between the late 1980s to the 1990s tens of thousands of girls, women, boys and men were killed or maimed by anti-personnel mines. These weapons also hampered post-conflict recovery and development efforts the world over. Humanitarian and aid workers bore witness to the devastating impact of landmines on civilians on a daily basis.

Civil society and international organizations led a coordinated effort to end the suffering caused by these weapons calling for their total prohibition and the achievement of a mine-free world.

In 1992, a group of non-governmental organisations created the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), a coalition that in 1997 won the Nobel Peace Prize for their determination in campaigning for the Convention.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) called for a total ban on anti-personnel mines, and with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, undertook exceptional public efforts – including advertising – to promote the adoption of a global anti-personnel mine ban. Soon, other international organisations and concerned governments joined the landmine ban efforts.

Important public figures including Diana, Princess of Wales joined the cause shining a global spotlight on the humanitarian crisis caused by landmines.



In 1996, at a global strategy conference on landmines in Ottawa, Canada called on like-minded States to return to Ottawa a year later to sign a comprehensive humanitarian and disarmament treaty prohibiting anti-personnel mines.

A *core group* of States in conjunction with international and non-governmental organisations set off to gather regional support for a landmine convention. Soon, the number of governments supporting a legally binding prohibition grew from about fifty to over one hundred.

In record time and after intense negotiations, the **Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction** was negotiated and adopted in Oslo in September 1997. Later in December, at a high-level conference in Ottawa, 122 States signed the treaty. Signing continued until the Convention entered into force in 1999.

SINCE THE REALISATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE BAN, 162 STATES HAVE ACCEPTED TO:

“...Never under any circumstances use anti-personnel mines; develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer to anyone, directly or indirectly, anti-personnel mines; assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited under the Convention... and ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines.”

AS A RESULT OF THIS LANDMARK TREATY:



Together the States Parties have destroyed over 51 million stockpiled anti-personnel mines, with only three States still having stockpile destruction obligations.



34 of the 50 States that at one time produced anti-personnel mines are now bound by the Convention.



30 of the 61 States Parties that have reported mined areas under their jurisdiction or control have declared completion of their clearance obligation; millions of square metres of land have been returned to safe and productive use.



New use of anti-personnel mines is now rare. World leaders and ordinary citizens view landmines as unacceptable in the modern world; the norms embodied by the Convention have taken hold.



Each State Party in a position to do so shall provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration, of mine victims; while much more needs to be done to address their needs, in many cases the situation for mine victims and survivors is undoubtedly better today than it was two decades ago.

THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE RESPONSE OF CONCERNED GOVERNMENTS

Late 1980s to 1990



A Red Cross make-shift ward in a refugee camp on the Thai Cambodian border in the late 1990s.

Photo, Ben Davies, LightRocket, Getty Images

In the late 1980s, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), humanitarian mine clearance operators and other humanitarian actors on the field encounter staggering numbers of civilian landmine casualties in countries affected by war or in post-conflict situations.

Confronted with this growing evidence, the ICRC undertakes a study on landmine injuries treated between 1989 and 1990 in ICRC-run hospitals in the Thai-Cambodian and Afghan-Pakistani borders¹. The study demonstrates the risks of anti-personnel mines to civilians in affected zones. "The study also revealed that landmine victims require far more surgical interventions, blood transfusions and longer hospital stays than those injured by most other weapons - not to mention life-long prosthetic care."¹

¹: Jacques Stroun, Head of ICRC Regional Delegation in Bangkok remembering the process that led to the Convention during the Eleventh Meeting States Parties in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2011.



1991

- Human Rights Watch Asia Watch and Physicians for Human Rights publish the pivotal report "Landmines in Cambodia: The Coward's War", documenting the use of anti-personnel mines and their devastating effect on civilians.
- Soon after in a coordinated effort to ban landmines, the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation and Medico International launch an advocacy campaign with other non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

1992

- Handicap International, Human Rights Watch, Medico International, the Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Physicians for Human Rights and Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation launch the **International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL)**, with Jody Williams as Campaign Coordinator.
- Belgium introduces a UN resolution calling for a coordinated approach to the problem of mine removal.
- The European Parliament adopts a resolution asking all Member States to declare a five year moratorium on landmine exports.
- The United States (US) passes a one-year moratorium on landmine exports.

1993

- The ICRC hosts the Montreux Symposium on Anti-Personnel Mines, followed by the Symposium of Military Experts (1993) on the effectiveness and impact of landmines, embarking on discussions with members of the armed forces and weapons industry. Sometime later and thanks to additional efforts by non-governmental organisations, 18 producing countries agree to enact moratoria on the transfer and use of landmines.²
- France announces it will abstain from exporting anti-personnel mines, and requests a Review Conference to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.
- The UN General Assembly adopts a US-sponsored resolution calling on States to enact their own landmine export moratorium.
- UNICEF declares anti-personnel mines to be a priority issue instructing its national committees to begin advocacy work. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) joins UNICEF in calling for a full ban.
- The US extends a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel mines for three additional years.

2: Toward a global ban on landmines, Article, International Review of the Red Cross, No. 307, by Anita Parlow, 31 August 1995.

ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga: "From a humanitarian point of view, we believe that a worldwide ban on anti-personnel mines is the only, truly effective solution."³

3: ICRC: A total ban on antipersonnel mines and blinding weapons is the best option. Statement at Press Conference, Geneva, 24 February 1994.

1994

ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga calls on the international community to adopt a total ban on anti-personnel mines.

- Italy announces a moratorium on transfer and production of mines.
- The Netherlands announces it will destroy its stockpiled mines.
- US President Bill Clinton addresses the UN General Assembly calling for the "ultimate goal of the eventual elimination of anti-personnel mines"; the first time a major world leader calls for such a ban.

The ICRC commissions a study looking at the use and effectiveness of anti-personnel mines over a period of 55 years. The "Anti-personnel Landmines: Friend or Foe", was written by Brigadier Patrick Blagden of the United Kingdom with support from ICRC's Peter Herby and Louise Doswald-Beck. The study's conclusion, developed by eight military officers from different countries, indicates that,

"...The horrendous human cost of anti-personnel mines far outweighs their limited military utility and therefore they should be prohibited."

Fifty-five (55) other senior active and retired military officers from 19 countries endorse the conclusion.



1995

- Belgium enacts national legislation banning the use, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines, and engages to destroy its stockpiled mines, becoming the first State in the world to do so.
- Norway adopts a binding resolution calling for a complete ban on anti-personnel mines.
- Canada, Philippines, Switzerland announce their support for a complete and immediate international ban on these weapons.
- The UN in Geneva holds a high-level Meeting on Mine Clearance with attendance of 97 countries, 11 international organisations, 16 UN entities, and 30 non-governmental organisations. At the meeting, the UN Secretary General also calls for a total ban on anti-personnel mines.
- The Cambodian Campaign to Ban Landmines holds a three-day conference to raise public awareness on the problematic; in a message to the meeting, Pope John Paul II and the Vatican, call for a permanent ban on this weapon.

Ottawa Process begins | October 1996: Ottawa

After an attempt to ban anti-personnel mines in the auspices of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), Canada announces it will convene a meeting with like-minded States to discuss how to achieve a total prohibition on these arms.

The **International Strategy Conference: Towards a Global Ban on Anti-Personnel Mines (the 1996 Ottawa Conference)** takes place 3–5 October 1996 with the participation of 75 States and international and non-governmental organisations.

At the Conference, and after intense negotiation, 50 participating States known as the “Ottawa Group”, agree to “enhance cooperation and coordination of efforts to achieve their goals, including the earliest possible conclusion of a legally binding international agreement to ban anti-personnel mines,”⁴ through the Ottawa Declaration.

The Declaration recognized that the

“extreme humanitarian and socio-economic costs associated with the use of anti-personnel mines requires urgent action on the part of the international community to ban and eliminate this type of weapon.”

The then-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, “surprises some and shocks others” as he calls on the international community to meet in Ottawa a year later to sign a global landmine ban. The fast-track negotiation that would be known as the **Ottawa Process** begins.

4: United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law, 2008.



“This was not an ad-hoc call. It was a well thought out strategy,” said Hon. Axworthy recalling the events that took place during the Ottawa Process, in a meeting held by Croatia in 2017 to commemorate the 20 years of the Convention.

Ottawa Process | November 1996: the Austrian Text

- States are keen to negotiate a convention. In pursuit of this aim, Austria takes on the lead role of elaborating a draft text. The Austrian Text, as the draft convention comes to be known, is informally discussed with pro-ban states Austria, Canada and Switzerland and selected international and non-governmental organisations at the Quakers United Nations Office in Geneva before distribution.
- **November 1996:** only a few weeks after the closing of the Ottawa Conference, Austria circulates through its embassies worldwide, the First Draft of the convention.
- Austria decides to host a governmental meeting in Vienna to enable States to exchange views on the content of the circulated draft. The date is set for February 1997, and an invitation is extended to States, international and non-governmental organisations.
- Worldwide support for a ban gains momentum. Prominent public figures and religious leaders join the international movement.



Afghanistan is one of 29 States Parties with a significant number of landmine survivors.

- Civil society, international organisations and a *core group* of friendly States that include, Austria, Belgium, Ireland, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, South Africa, Sweden and Switzerland, support and promote regional meetings and mine action forums *in parallel* to the **Ottawa Process**, with a view to adopt a treaty in time to meet the Canadian challenge.

Other significant events in parallel to the Ottawa Process

- **May 1996:** Nicaragua and ICRC host a two-day meeting, Anti-personnel mines, mine clearance and rehabilitation of victims in Central America, with representatives of other mine-affected countries in the region including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, plus Mexico and Panama.
- **June 1996:** the Organization of American States (OAS) passed a resolution calling for a global landmine ban, establishing a Central America mine-free zone, and a hemisphere free of mines.
- **September 1996:** the Council of Foreign Ministers of Central America agree to enact national laws to make this a mine-free region. Fourteen years later, in 2010, Central America is declared a region free of landmines.



Alberto Mendoza Bogran points to the spot where his brother was killed by a landmine explosion. Mendoza himself stepped on a second landmine as he tried to aid his dying brother, blowing both his legs in the process.

Nicaragua once plagued by landmines declared having fulfilled its mine clearance obligation in 2010. Nicaragua however, is one of 29 States Parties with a significant number of landmine survivors. Photo, Rodrigo Arangua Vazquez, AFP Getty Images.

- **1996:** Ken Rutherford and Jerry White, two American landmine survivors co-found the Landmine Survivors Network (LSN). Launched in Geneva the LSN becomes the world's first international non-governmental organization for and by landmine survivors, bringing the voices of survivors into international negotiations to ban these weapons.
- **November 1996:** the United States introduces a UN draft resolution entitled "An international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines", with 84 co-sponsors. The General Assembly adopts the Resolution in December (154 in favour, 10 abstentions, 0 against).
- **1997:** Jordan, Qatar and Yemen become the first three countries in the Middle East to declare support for the Ottawa Process.
- **1997:** South Africa and Mozambique announce they will ban landmines.
- **1997:** Austria adopts national legislation permanently banning use, production, transfer and stockpiling of anti-personnel mines.



HRH Prince Mired of Jordan signing the Maputo Declaration in 2014. Prince Mired, who has participated in the work of the Convention for over a decade, is also a Special Envoy of the Convention.

Ottawa Process | February 1997: Vienna

The **First Expert Meeting on the Convention for a Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines** takes place in Vienna, 12–14 February 1997. The Meeting, attended by 111 States, is designed to elicit comments on the draft treaty text and intensify efforts towards a total ban. After receiving comments and modifications at the meeting, Austria produces a Second Draft. On 14 March 1997, the Draft is sent to all interested parties. The absence of verification measures gives rise to debate. Germany decides to host a second governmental meeting devoted exclusively to this issue two months later.



In 1997, H.E. Thomas Hajnoczi of Austria, a central figure throughout the negotiations, chairs the Vienna meeting.

Twenty years later, as Ambassador of Austria to the UN in Geneva, Thomas Hajnoczi presides over the work of the Convention and chairs the Meeting of the States Parties in Vienna.

Other significant events in parallel to the Ottawa Process



- **March 1997:** Japan hosts the **Tokyo Conference on Anti-Personnel Landmines** with the participation of 27 States, the European Union and 10 international organisations. In this photo, the Ambassadors of Norway, Canada, Belgium and Austria together with a Minister of the Philippines appeal for a total ban on anti-personnel mines.

Photo, Chiaki Tsukumo, AP, Keystone

On 24–25 April 1997, Germany hosts the **International Meeting of Experts on the Possible Verification of a Comprehensive Treaty Prohibiting Anti-Personnel Mines** in Bonn.

Germany presents the “Option Paper for a possible Verification Scheme for a Convention to Ban Anti-Personnel Landmines”, to 121 States that participate in the meeting.

Views remain divided. While detailed verification is essential to some States in order to ensure its effectiveness, other States argued that the “proposed agreement was essentially humanitarian in character and stress the overriding importance of a clear norm prohibiting anti-personnel mines and its clearance commitments.”⁵

After the meeting, on 28 April 1997, Austria circulates the revised draft text to the *core group*, which recommends further revisions regarding compliance. A Third Draft is ready in May 1997, right on time for the **Brussels Conference**.

5: Article, International Review of the Red Cross, No. 325, by Stuart Maslen and Peter Herby, 31 December 1998.



1984 Nobel Peace Laureate Desmond Tutu, seen here, attends both meetings calling for full support of a global landmine ban. Photo, Gallo Images, Business Day, Garth Lumley



Several months later, the then-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany seen here in Ottawa, signs the Convention on behalf of his country. Photo, Marcos Townsend, AFP, Getty Images.

Other significant events in parallel to the Ottawa Process

- April 1997: Zimbabwe and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) host the regional conference, Anti-Personnel Mines: What Future for Southern Africa? All 12 OAU members participate and agree to support a landmine treaty.
- May 1997: South Africa destroys over 5,000 landmines as part of the First Continental Conference of African Experts on Landmines with the participation of 41 African States.

From 24–27 June 1997, Belgium hosts the **International Conference for a Global Ban on Anti-Personnel Mines**, the official follow-up to the 1996 Ottawa Conference. A record 156 countries, attend the Conference.

Participating States agree that the Austrian Text serve as a negotiation tool for the next diplomatic conference to be held in Norway.



In 2017 Belgium commemorated the 20 years of the Brussels Declaration with an outdoor exhibit in Brussels. Photo, Belgian MFA.

Other significant events in parallel to the Ottawa Process

- June 1997: Turkmenistan, Canada and ICBL host a meeting to mobilize support for a global ban on anti-personnel mines in Central Asia.
- July 1997: ICBL hosts a meeting in Australia to mobilize support around Asia and the Pacific; representatives of 22 States attend the meeting.
- July 1997: ICRC organises the Asian Regional Seminar on Anti-Personnel Mines in Manila, some 30 military experts from 18 countries attend. The Philippines is one of six States in the region to sign the Brussels Declaration, and actively engages in promoting the adoption of the Convention.

Ninety-seven (97) countries sign the Brussels Declaration stating their intent to negotiate a treaty banning anti-personnel mines in Oslo in September and to sign it by the end of the year in Ottawa. The Declaration is also presented to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.



HRH Princess Astrid of Belgium, signing the Maputo Declaration in 2014. Princess Astrid, who has participated in the work of the Convention for nearly two decades, is also a Special Envoy of the Convention.



From left, the Philippine National Defence Secretary, the ICRC Asia-Pacific Region Director, Lt. Gen. Gurbir Mansingh of India, and Brigadier Patrick Blagden of the United Kingdom speak to the press during the Asian Regional Seminar on Anti-Personnel Mines in Manila. Photo, AP, Victoria Calaguian, Keystone.



The late Diana, Princess of Wales visits Angola in January 1997 meeting with a group of children maimed by anti-personnel mines. Her interest in the plight of landmine victims and survivors contributes to galvanize public opinion in favour of banning these weapons.

In August 1997, Princess Diana visits Bosnia with American landmine survivors and co-founders of the Landmine Survivors Network, Ken Rutherford and Jerry White.

Her high-profile tour of the war-torn country brings additional global media attention and public support to the issue of landmines, especially to the rights and dignity of landmine survivors.

Princess Diana dies on 31 August, one day before negotiations for the Convention begins. She had been invited to deliver remarks; instead, the Conference takes a minute of silence in her honour.



Upper photo, Tim Graham/Getty Images. Lower photo, Ken Rutherford.

Ottawa Process | September 1997: Oslo

The **Diplomatic Conference on an International Total Ban on Anti-Personnel Mines** takes place 1–18 September 1997 in Oslo, concluding with the adoption of the Convention. It is an exciting moment for campaigners and diplomats working towards a legally binding humanitarian and disarmament treaty.

H.E. Bjørn Tore Godal, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway opens the Conference. South Africa is elected to preside over the meeting and lead negotiations. Belgium, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, Philippines and Zimbabwe are elected as Vice Presidents.

The work of the Conference is divided in three groups: Plenary, Committee of the Whole and Friends of the Chair. On 3 September, the various groups return to hear the then-Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan address the meeting.

On 17 September the Plenary agrees to adopt the Text, confirming the willingness of the parties to adopt an unambiguous, comprehensive ban on anti-personnel mines.



The United Nations is charged with providing official translations of the text and circulating it worldwide to potential signatories. In a special ceremony on 27 September 1997, H.E. Bjørn Tore Godal of Norway hands over the official text to be signed in December in Ottawa, to his Canadian counterpart Hon. Lloyd Axworthy. Then-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, witness the event.

On 18 September, the Text of the Convention on the Prohibition of Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction is formally adopted.

Other significant events in parallel to the Ottawa Process

- **October 1997:** for their determination in campaigning for the Convention, the ICBL and its Coordinator Jody Williams, are jointly awarded with the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize. The award ceremony takes place on 10 December just after the signing of the Convention.



Former ICBL Coordinator Sylvie Brigot and Mines Action Canada Director Paul Hannon, display the Nobel diploma and medal, during a special ceremony at the Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties in Phnom Penh, commemorating the 15th anniversary of the signing of the Convention.

December 1997: the Ottawa Process ends successfully



World leaders gather in Ottawa on 3–4 December 1997.
Photo, AFP, Marcos Townsend, Getty Images

On 3–4 December 1997, representatives of 122 States gather to sign the Convention in Ottawa, thereby taking a fundamental step towards ending the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.

The Convention bans the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines. In addition, States that join, agree to destroy stockpiled and emplaced anti-personnel mines within the Convention's deadlines, and assist the victims of these weapons.

- At the ceremony, Canada, Ireland, and Mauritius also deposit their instruments of ratification.
- On 9 December 1997, the UN General Assembly adopts the Convention (142 to none, 18 abstain) and invites all States to sign it.

Canada's Deputy Chief of Protocol presents a copy of the Convention to Cambodian landmine survivor and ICBL campaigner Tun Channareth, after Cambodia signed the Global Ban on Landmines. A week later "Reth", as he is known to those working in the landmine movement, receives on behalf of the ICBL and together with Jody Williams, the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize "for their work for the banning and clearing of anti-personnel mines".

Photo, Marcos Townsend, AFP/Getty Images)



1998 — 1999

- Burkina Faso becomes the 40th State to ratify the Convention triggering its entry into force six months later.
- During the signing ceremony, Switzerland announces it will establish a centre of mine action experts to support the work of the States Parties. In 1998, Switzerland and other countries, establish the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), which Cornelio Sommaruga joins later as President. The Centre also hosts the Convention's Implementation Support Unit.
- On 1 March 1999, the Convention enters into force.

- Just two months later, from 3–7 May, the Convention holds its First Meeting of the States Parties in Maputo, Mozambique.

Photo (l-r), in 1996 a pile of shoes is erected before the Palais des Nations in Geneva to symbolise those fallen to landmines. In 1997, the Swiss Foreign Minister signs the Convention. Donald Stampfli, AP, Keystone, and Dave Chan, AFP, Getty Images.



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