

U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines
E-mail Newsletter
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In this edition. . .

- I. News Release: Clinton Urged Not to Forget Landmine Ban Promise
- II. Urgent Action: Last Chance to Call President Clinton
- III. Spotlight on Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- IV. Racecar Driver Injured by a Landmine

I. News Release: Clinton Urged Not to Forget Landmine Ban Promise

For Immediate Distribution
January 12, 2001

Clinton Urged Not to Forget Landmine Ban Promise

(Washington, D.C., January 12, 2001) – The U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines (USCBL) today urged President Clinton to take significant steps to move the United States closer to joining the international ban on antipersonnel mines before he leaves office.

"As President Clinton was the first world leader to call for an international ban on antipersonnel landmines, it is thus fitting that he should be remembered as the U.S. President who moved the Mine Ban Treaty off his desk into the hands of the Senate for ratification," said Gina Coplon-Newfield, Coordinator of the U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines. "Short of that, President Clinton can still do more to bring the U.S. closer to compliance with the treaty."

The U.S. has said it will not join the Mine Ban Treaty until 2006, and then only if it has identified and fielded an alternative to the weapon. To date, 139 countries have signed or acceded to the Mine Ban Treaty, including nearly every major U.S. ally. The treaty entered into force in March 1999.

Ideally, the president should submit the Mine Ban Treaty to the Senate. The U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines also recommends a number of executive actions to begin implementing a comprehensive ban. These include:

- Set a definitive and earlier deadline for joining the treaty, rather than a conditional objective of 2006.

- Declare a permanent ban on production of antipersonnel mines.
- Take steps necessary to insure that any systems resulting from the Pentagon's landmine alternative programs are compliant with the Mine Ban Treaty.
- Remove from consideration the "battlefield override" feature of the non-self-destructing landmine alternatives program; this feature would be prohibited by the treaty.
- Eliminate the "RADAM" program to produce new mixed antipersonnel/antitank mine systems that would be prohibited by the treaty.
- Instruct the Department of Defense to establish plans, procedures, and timetables for the destruction of all stockpiled antipersonnel mines, and begin by placing in inactive status ADAM, PDM and GEMSS antipersonnel mines immediately.
- Commit the United States immediately to a policy of no use of antipersonnel mines in joint operations (NATO and otherwise) with states that have signed the Mine Ban Treaty. Similarly, commit the United States to a policy of no transiting of antipersonnel mines across the territory, air space or waters of Mine Ban Treaty signatory states.
- Order the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. stockpiles of antipersonnel mines from countries that have signed the Mine Ban Treaty.
- Instruct the Department of Defense to begin the process of making the changes in war plans, doctrine, training, and manuals necessary for future combat without antipersonnel mines.

President-elect George W. Bush has not publicly stated any position on the landmines issue.

Other steps the president could take before leaving office are listed in "Clinton's Landmine Legacy," a 42-page report from USCBL-member Human Rights Watch released in July 2000 and available on-line at the Human Rights Watch website at: <http://www.hrw.org/hrw/reports/2000/uslm/>

The U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines is a nationwide coalition of non-governmental organizations and a member of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, 1997 Nobel Peace Prize winner.

For more information, please contact:

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- Stephen Goose, Human Rights Watch: (202) 612-4355
- Jerry White, Landmine Survivors Network: (202) 464-0007

3

II. Urgent Action: Last Chance to Call President Clinton

Please call the office of President Clinton today at 202-456-1111 and urge him to take "specific executive actions on landmines" (outlined in above news release) before leaving office in a few short days! We think there is a significant chance that the President will take all or some of these actions, but only if he prioritizes landmines over many other pressing issues before him. More than 700 people receive this e-mail newsletter. Several hundred phone calls on landmines to the President in the next few days could be the very thing we need to get him to prioritize this issue before leaving office. Call now!

Also, please consider writing a letter to the editor to your local paper on Clinton's last chance to improve his landmines legacy.

III. Spotlight on Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Under the leadership of Lou Ann Bohn, John Peck, and Kevin Endsley, The Milwaukee Campaign to Ban Landmines generated a tremendous amount of publicity and awareness on landmines in honor of the third anniversary of the signing of the Mine Ban Treaty. On December 4, John Peck of the University of Wisconsin Greens created a mock minefield in honor of what he called "The Third Anniversary of the US Not Signing the Treaty." Hundreds of students walked through the minefield and received stickers, flyers, and petitions. The demonstration included a life-size cardboard cutout of President Clinton with a caption that read "Now I wish I had signed the Mine Ban Treaty." That same evening, the group hosted speaker Lou Ann Bohn and screened videos "Are We the Enemy?" and "Survivors Stories." The event received coverage from local print and broadcast media.

At Marquette University High School, Kevin Endsley and his fellow students organized a basketball slam dunk contest in their gym. The event, which received extensive t.v. coverage, raised over \$900 for demining efforts. Several members of the Students Against Landmines chapter at Marquette High plan to attend the Legislative Action Conference in Washington, D.C. this March. For more information you can reach Lou Ann Bohn at lbohn@voyager.net.

IV. Racecar Driver Injured by a Landmine

El Ghallaouiya, Mauritania -- Jose Eduardo Ribieiro, a racecar driver supporting KTM Teams motorcycles in a race from Paris, France to Dakar, Senegal, veered suddenly from the race trail on Monday and struck a landmine. One of his feet was severed from his body. His vehicle was destroyed. Ribiero was promptly airlifted by UN helicopter to a hospital in Morocco where he received initial treatment. Ribiero was then transferred to a hospital in the Canary Islands, his home, where he is listed as being in stable condition.

The incident occurred at the "Mur" (sand wall) border crossing that separates Morocco from Mauritania, 93 kilometers into the 8th stage of the 20 stage, 10,853 kilometer rally between Paris, France and Dakar Senegal. The area around this border crossing is heavily mined as a deterrent to the advancements of the Polisario Front, a rebel group that seeks independence for the vast Western Sahara Region that was annexed by Morocco in 1975. The US State Department estimates that there are in upwards of 200,000 mines spread throughout the Western Sahara Region.