

U.S. CAMPAIGN TO BAN LANDMINES
E-Mail Newsletter
May 2, 2001

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MEMORIAL DAY ACTION ALERT

Memorial Day, May 28, is fast approaching and serves as a good opportunity for us to raise the visibility of the landmines issue. As the Bush administration and Members of Congress currently review the military and the recently proposed Landmines Elimination and Victim Assistance Act of 2001 Memorial Day, now is the perfect time to tell our law-makers that we care about this issue. Memorial Day was established as a national holiday to pay tribute to those who have fought and died for the United States. Many of those killed in military conflict have been victims of landmines. In fact, in the Vietnam War, it is estimated that one third of U.S. casualties were from antipersonnel landmines, and that upwards of 80% of those mines responsible for these casualties were made or laid by the United States.

Consider organizing the following activities in your community:

- * Have a letter-writing table at an existing Memorial Day event in your community. Attract people to your table with posters or a banner. Provide paper, pens, and sample letters to President Bush and your state's Senators and Representatives urging them to support the Mine Ban Treaty and the current Landmine Elimination and Victim Assistance Act of 2001. See www.banminesusa.org for more information on this bill and for a sample letter. Send the letters yourself to make sure that they get to where they need to go.
- * March in a Memorial Day parade with a landmines banner. The banner could say "Ban Landmines Now to Protect Future Soldiers and Civilians."
- * Organize an event at your church, home, school, or community center, show the new U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines video (see below for more information), and ask people to write letters to their legislators about the treaty and the current legislation in Congress. See www.banminesusa.org for more information on this bill and for a sample letter.
- * Find a veteran in your community who has either been injured by a landmine or who saw his fellow soldiers injured or killed by mines. Ask him to speak about his experiences at a local event. Please ask us for information that explains why landmines are detrimental both to civilians and the U.S. military.

* If you met with Members of Congress in March during Ban Landmines Week but have not yet sent the members thank you notes, you can send the letter this month , tie Memorial Day into your letter, and tell them about the local activities planned.

* Members of Congress are scheduled to be in their districts May 25-June 4. Call the district offices of your Senators and Representative and request a meeting to discuss landmines. If you can, bring with you a veteran who can make the connection to Memorial Day.

* Write a letter to the editor and submit it to your local paper (see below for a sample letter to the editor).

Whatever you do, please let us know at USCBL headquarters. You can e-mail us at banmines@phrusa.org or call at 617-695-0041. We can provide you with petitions, toolkits for action, posters, videos, and other materials and information that could help make your activities a success.

SAMPLE MEMORIAL DAY LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Getting letters to the editor published is a useful way to educate the public and keep the issue of landmines on the radar screen of policy-makers. Below is a sample letter that might help you craft your own letter to the editor on or around Memorial Day. Make sure that your letter is 100-200 words, that it is sent to the appropriate person at your local newspaper, and that you send copies of published articles to the USCBL/ care of Physicians for Human Rights/ 100 Boylston Street, Suite 702/ Boston, MA 02116.

To the Editor:

As Memorial Day approaches, I think about the thousands of U.S. soldiers who have been killed by antipersonnel landmines, in many cases by mines made or laid by the United States. In fact, during the Vietnam War, upwards of 80 percent of U.S. landmine casualties were from U.S. mines.

Former military generals are beginning to publicly denounce the military utility of antipersonnel landmines. In a February Washington Times Op Ed, Retired Lieutenant Generals James Hollingsworth and Henry Emerson stated that "mines, either permanent or self-detonating, are blind and...have proven to be as adept at maiming and killing our own troops as much as of an opposing force."

As we pay tribute to U.S. soldiers lost to wives, children, brothers, sisters, friends, and their country, let us think of future soldiers as well. By joining the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty as more than two thirds of the world's nations have done, we will protect the American soldiers of generations to come. Of course, we will also be protecting the majority of people who step on antipersonnel landmines: civilians in impoverished nations.

Your Name/Address/Phone Number

NEW USCBL VIDEOS AVAILABLE TO SHOW IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

The USCBL and Vox Television have recently teamed up to create a 10 minute video about the global landmines crisis, the U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines, and ways to get involved. It includes interviews with landmine survivors, absorbing background music, and footage from mine-affected countries and the recent Ban Landmines Week in Washington, D.C. Showing this video will be an inspiring way to start off any landmines presentation in your community. This video is only \$8.00. Please e-mail banmines@phrusa.org if you would like to order one or more copies.

TURKEY AND GREECE TO JOIN THE MINE BAN TREATY

According to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, on Friday, 6 April 2001, Mr. _small Cem, The Minister Of Foreign Affairs of The Republic Of Turkey, and Mr. George Papandreou, Minister Of Foreign Affairs Of The Hellenic Republic On Anti-Personnel Land Mines, issued a joint statement announcing that Greece will take the necessary domestic steps to ratify the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty and Turkey will initiate the process to accede to the treaty. When the ratification and accession process is complete, all NATO members except the United States will be party to the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty.

SPOTLIGHT ON KENTUCKY

U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines members in Kentucky have been doing impressive and inspiring outreach as of late. Cindy and Nancy Scheldorf, Mary and Reverend Andy Rutrough, John Capillo, and Nathan Burns traveled to Washington D.C. during "Ban Landmines Week" in order to exchange ideas with landmine ban advocates from throughout the country and the world. They also met with Kentucky legislators to urge them to support the Landmine Elimination and Victim Assistance Act of 2001. The group showed legislators a certificate from the Mayor of Louisville proclaiming the first full week in March "Ban Landmines Week." Republican Senator Mitch McConnell responded with his co-sponsorship of the bill.

Since Ban Landmines Week, Cindy Scheldorf and her friends have organized landmines presentations and encouraged letter-writing efforts at three United Methodist Women's groups (with commitments and dates to speak at four more). They have gotten "Banning landmines" to be the Priority Social Action Issue for the Louisville District United Methodist Women this year, which has already published a newsletter article on the issue. They submitted landmines articles to FORsooth, the Louisville Chapter Fellowship of Reconciliation newspaper, and RESPONSE magazine, a national United Methodist Women publication.

In the near future, they will be teaching campers at the United Methodist District Day Camp about the effects of landmines, particularly on children. They also plan to organize a shoe pile display and letter-writing table at the Kentucky Annual Conference of United Methodists. They

hope to recruit more Kentuckians to get involved in the campaign in order to demonstrate to Kentucky legislators and President Bush that people in the bluegrass state feel strongly that the United States should ban this devastating and cowardly weapon.