



Press Release

For Immediate Release

April 4, 2012

**Celebrities, Global Leaders, Landmine Victims and Thousands Worldwide
Call on U.S. and Other Outliers to Join Mine Ban Treaty**

Washington, D.C. - In celebration of April 4th, the United Nations' International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, thousands of people in more than 70 countries are rolling up their pant leg and standing side-by-side with survivors and landmine-affected communities to call for a full stop to the harm landmines still cause.

The U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines (USCBL) joins the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) in the *Lend Your Leg* initiative to demand an end to the scourge of antipersonnel mines, and to once again call on the Obama administration to announce the conclusion of the landmine policy review launched in 2009 and to join the Mine Ban Treaty without further delay.

Lend Your Leg 2012, officially partnered with the ICBL and the United Nations with support from the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, and was launched on March 1—the 13th anniversary of the Mine Ban Treaty—by landmine survivors from all over the world joined by U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. Since then United Nations officials, politicians, celebrities, journalists and ordinary people everywhere have pledged to “lend their legs” to speak out against this indiscriminate weapon that continues to impair people’s lives every day.

“Rolling up your pant leg is a way to demonstrate that we have not forgotten the hundreds of thousands of men, women and children killed or maimed by landmines,” said Zach Hudson, USCBL Coordinator. “We must remember that the job is still not done until every country has joined the Mine Ban Treaty and assured the world that there will never again be another landmine casualty. We call on the U.S. to finally make known its intention to become a States Party to the treaty.”

Just last month the world saw once again the devastating consequences of landmines. In Syria, eyewitnesses confirmed seeing the Syrian army laying mines along its borders with Lebanon and Turkey, sparking global outrage. This new use adds to the already existing daily threat in some 70 countries infested with landmines and can only increase the more than 4,000 people killed and maimed by this indiscriminate weapon every year.

“Raising awareness and providing assistance for mine action and victims are very important, but not enough, to rid the world of these weapons once and for all,” said Kasia Derlicka, ICBL Director. “Syria’s mine use last month was a sad and shocking reminder of that fact. The deadly legacy of landmines will remain until all states—including Syria, Myanmar, China, the United States and others renounce the weapon and come on board the Mine Ban Treaty.”

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Thanks to the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, which comprehensively bans antipersonnel landmines, there has been a sharp decrease in landmine casualties, use, production and export, with tens of millions of stockpiled mines destroyed and large tracts of land cleared. In total, 161 countries are signatories to the treaty, including every member of NATO (besides the United States), as well as every member of the European Union, and other key U.S. allies, such as Afghanistan and Iraq. The U.S. is one of only 37 countries in the world that have not joined the Mine Ban Treaty and the only country in the Western Hemisphere aside from Cuba that has not joined. The U.S. still retains 10.4 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines for potential future use.

Since the Obama administration initiated a comprehensive interagency review of its landmine policy in late 2009, the administration has received letters of support for the Mine Ban Treaty from 68 Senators, 16 Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, key NATO allies, retired senior military personnel, dozens of NGO leaders, victims of U.S. landmines and countless concerned Americans.

As a part of the *Lend Your Leg* campaign in the U.S., the USCBL is now circulating a letter as a follow-up to a request in 2010 by 67 NGO leaders to the Obama administration asking for a timely, transparent and inclusive review of U.S. landmine policy aimed at accession to the Mine Ban Treaty. Americans across the country are also participating in *Lend Your Leg* by rolling up a pant leg and sending an email message to President Obama through the USCBL's online advocacy tools.

For more information, visit www.uscbl.org.

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About the United States Campaign to Ban Landmines (USCBL):

The USCBL, currently coordinated by Handicap International, is a coalition of thousands of people and U.S. non-governmental organizations working to: (1) ensure no U.S. use, production, or transfer of antipersonnel landmines and cluster munitions; (2) encourage the U.S. to join the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty and the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions; and (3) secure high levels of U.S. government support for clearance and assistance programs for victims of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war.

The USCBL is the U.S. affiliate of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL)—the co-laureate of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize—and is a member of the Cluster Munition Coalition, an international coalition working to protect civilians from the effects of cluster munitions by promoting universal adherence to and full implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

About the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL):

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) is a unique global network in some 100 countries, working for a world free of antipersonnel landmines. Founded in 1992, the ICBL celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. In 1997, the ICBL received the Nobel Peace Prize together with its founding coordinator Jody Williams for its efforts to bring about the Mine Ban Treaty. For more information please visit www.icbl.org/20

About Lend Your Leg:

The Lend Your Leg campaign was initiated by the Colombian NGO Fundación Arcángeles and its President Juan Pablo Salazar. Colombia is one of the world's most mine-affected countries, and last year thousands of Colombians, including President Juan Manuel Santos, took part in the first Lend Your Leg action. This year the campaign has gone global, and Lend Your Leg 2012 is officially partnered by the ICBL and the United Nations with support from the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. To join the global campaign, or to find out more information, please visit the website: www.lendyourleg.org.