



For Immediate Release
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One more country declared mine free, but new use of antipersonnel mines condemned at Mine Ban Treaty meeting

Geneva, 24 June 2011 — Nigeria, which joined the Mine Ban Treaty in 2002, declared that it is free of antipersonnel landmines during an international meeting held in Geneva this week.

"We welcome Nigeria's completion of mine clearance and the work that continues around the world to clear mine-affected land," said Kasia Derlicka, director of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL).

"But at the same time, we are deeply disturbed that landmines continue to be laid in Burma, Libya, and, apparently, southern Sudan," she added.

This week, a delegation from the United States joined representatives from 100 governments, as well as the United Nations, international organizations and the ICBL, to meet in Geneva for annual "intersessional" meetings of the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty. The week has seen a mixture of good and bad news:

- Germany announced that it had discovered an area suspected to contain landmines and cluster munition remnants at a former Soviet firing range at Wittstock in the east;
- The Pacific nation of Tuvalu participated for the first time in a meeting of the Mine Ban Treaty, and said it intends to join;
- ICBL member Human Rights Watch confirmed antipersonnel landmine use by Libyan government forces in the Nafusa mountains;
- The southern Sudan Demining Authority said that landmines have been used recently in the region by "renegade" rebel groups, but also said that southern Sudan intends join the Mine Ban Treaty after it formally becomes an independent state on 9 July;
- Turkey, which missed its stockpile destruction deadline in 2008, declared that it will complete the destruction of its remaining antipersonnel mines by the end of August 2011;
- Belarus, Ukraine and Greece, the other States Parties that also missed their stockpile destruction deadlines, described the measures they are taking to destroy their mines;
- Algeria, Chile, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Eritrea requested extensions to their treaty-mandated deadlines to clear all their mined areas.

"Germany's identification of a potentially mined area is surprising, but shows the government is transparent, and we are pleased that Germany will assess the area to determine if clearance is required," Derlicka said.

Cambodia will host the Mine Ban Treaty's 11th Meeting of States Parties in Phnom Penh from 28 November – 2 December 2011.

The ICBL is a coalition of non-governmental organizations that is working to create a landmine-free world. In 1997, it received the Nobel Peace Prize for its role in the creation of the Mine Ban Treaty.

A total of 156 countries have joined the Mine Ban Treaty, while 39 states remain not party.

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*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.

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines is a global network in over 90 countries, working for a world free of antipersonnel landmines. 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.

Adopted in 1997, the Mine Ban Treaty entered into force on 1 March 1999. The treaty comprehensively bans all antipersonnel mines, requires destruction of stockpiled mines within four years, requires destruction of mines already in the ground within 10 years, and urges extensive programs to assist the victims of landmines.