



Press Release

| For Immediate Release
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**Twelfth Anniversary of the Mine Ban Treaty:
The U.S. Should Join Now**

Washington, D.C.—As the Mine Ban Treaty celebrates its twelfth anniversary today, March 1, the United States should decide to join the treaty without delay and ban antipersonnel landmines forever, the United States Campaign to Ban Landmines (USCBL) said.

The Obama administration initiated a comprehensive interagency review of its landmine policy in late 2009. "U.S. citizens and other campaigners from around the world have been calling on the U.S. to join the Mine Ban Treaty since it was negotiated in 1997," said Zach Hudson, USCBL Coordinator. "Since the policy review began this outcry has only intensified. The administration has received letters of support for the Mine Ban Treaty from 68 Senators, NGO leaders, key NATO allies, 16 Nobel Peace Prize laureates, victims of U.S. landmines, and countless concerned Americans. Enough is enough—it's time to join."

By joining the treaty, the U.S. would help send a clear signal that all types of antipersonnel mines are unacceptable weapons and would ensure that these weapons are never used again by the U.S. or anyone else. Joining would also encourage other remaining outliers to accede and strengthen international security.

It should not be difficult for the U.S. to join the Mine Ban Treaty, as it is already in compliance with the majority of the convention's provisions: the U.S. has not used antipersonnel landmines since 1991, has not exported any since 1992, and has not produced any since 1997. The U.S. is also the world's largest individual donor to mine clearance and victim assistance programs.

Additionally, at the beginning of 2011, the U.S. discontinued all use of so-called "dumb" mines or "persistent" mines everywhere in the world, including on the Korean peninsula. However, this fulfillment of a 2004 Bush-era policy still allows the military to use so-called "smart" mines equipped with a self-destruct or self-deactivation mechanism—weapons that the USCBL and the international community still condemn.

"Smart mines are not safe mines," said Hudson. "While these mines are active, they cannot distinguish between a soldier and an innocent civilian, and a large number will fail to self-destruct, posing dangers to civilians and requiring costly demining programs. By retaining the right to use them, the U.S. stands completely at odds with the international norm that rejects all use of antipersonnel mines."

As part of the Mine Ban Treaty anniversary celebrations, during the month of March campaigners from the Nobel Peace Prize recipient International Campaign to Ban Landmines

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(ICBL) will be meeting with U.S. government officials at U.S. embassies around the world to urge the U.S. to join the Mine Ban Treaty.

The USCBL will also be launching its new student campaign, as well as co-hosting an event at Georgetown University on Tuesday, March 1 which will include a reception, panel discussion and book signing featuring Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate (1997); Ken Rutherford, Director of the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery, James Madison University; and Steve Goose, chair of the ICBL and Executive Director of the Arms Division at Human Rights Watch. The event is open to the public; details and the RSVP form can be found at www.uscbl.org.

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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.