



Press Release

**For Immediate Release
March 1, 2012**

**Thirteenth Anniversary of the Mine Ban Treaty:
What Is President Obama Waiting For?**

Washington, D.C.—As the Mine Ban Treaty celebrates its thirteenth anniversary today, March 1, the United States Campaign to Ban Landmines (USCBL) once again calls on President Obama to finally announce the conclusion of the landmine policy review and join the treaty without delay.

The Obama administration initiated a comprehensive interagency review of its landmine policy in late 2009. Over the past two years, Obama and his administration have received letters of support for the Mine Ban Treaty from 68 Senators, nearly 100 leaders of prominent U.S. nongovernmental organizations, key NATO allies, retired senior military officers, 16 Nobel Peace Prize recipients, landmine survivors and countless citizens from around the world.

"The U.S. has still not announced its decision to join the Mine Ban Treaty," said Zach Hudson, USCBL Coordinator. "U.S. citizens, landmine survivors and campaigners from every corner of the globe have been calling on the U.S. to join the treaty for the last fifteen years. The world has waited long enough."

Many civil society organizations have voiced concerns that, despite the U.S.'s participation in the Mine Ban Treaty States Party meetings since 2009, not enough is being done within the administration to ensure that the policy review is concluded and that any obstacles to joining the treaty are isolated and overcome.

"Promises that the issue is still important to the President just aren't good enough anymore," said Hudson. "A never-ending review with no announced outcome is not a satisfactory response to the innocent survivors and mine impacted communities that are waiting for the U.S. to finally join the treaty and ban landmines once and for all. The administration needs to submit the treaty to the Senate for its consent or explain its rationale for continuing the Bush-era policy of near isolation in remaining outside the convention."

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. Joining would also encourage other remaining outliers to accede and strengthen international security.

The U.S. has not used antipersonnel mines since 1991 (in the first Gulf War), has not exported them since 1992 and has not produced landmines since 1997. However, it still retains 10.4 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines for potential future use. The U.S. is one of only 37

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countries in the world that have not joined the Mine Ban Treaty—and is the only member of NATO that is not a signatory, and the only country in the Western Hemisphere, aside from Cuba, that has not joined.

From March 1 to April 4—the U.N.’s International Day for Mine Awareness, the USCBL will be joining the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) in the global *Lend Your Leg* campaign. Last year, in Colombia, a small group of motivated citizens rolled up their pant leg in a symbolic gesture of solidarity with landmine survivors across the globe that have lost limbs to this deadly device. What began as a grassroots campaign to raise awareness of this ongoing humanitarian crisis soon spread via social media and quickly gained broad public support. This year, joining U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, world famous sports stars, actors, artists, and landmine survivors, thousands of people worldwide will roll up their pant leg for a mine-free world.

Kasia Derlicka, Director of the ICBL said: “As we get into our 20th year of campaigning we are proud of how far we have come on our road towards a mine free world. But we are not there yet: landmines still threaten thousands around the world every day. This is why we are launching this global action today, together with our partners, to remind the world about landmines and call on governments and the international community to put an end to the suffering and devastation they continue to cause. We know together we can achieve a mine free world in our lifetime.”

For more information, visit 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.