



Press Release - For Immediate Release

## **Positive Changes in U.S. Landmine Policy Stop Short of Immediate Ban**

**Commitment to No Longer Produce Antipersonnel Mines**

(Maputo, June 27, 2014) Today's announcement by the United States that it intends to join the Mine Ban Treaty in the future, and will not produce or acquire antipersonnel landmines is a positive step, but falls short of what is needed to ensure the weapons are never used again said the US Campaign to Ban Landmines. The U.S. Ambassador to Mozambique Douglas M. Griffiths made the announcement today at the Mine Ban Treaty's 3<sup>rd</sup> Review Conference in Maputo, which the US is attending as an observer.

The US still reserves the right to use its millions of stockpiled mines anywhere in the world until they expire, and it has not made a firm commitment to accede to the Mine Ban Treaty.

It is past time for President Obama to fulfill the United States' long-standing pledge to join the Mine Ban Treaty. The United States can and should commit to ban the use of these inhumane weapons that are no longer essential to our nation's security or the security of U.S. allies.

The U.S. announced that it is "diligently pursuing ... solutions that would be compliant" with the Mine Ban Treaty and "that would ultimately allow us to accede" to it.

This reinforces that the 1997 treaty provides the best possible framework for achieving a world free of antipersonnel mines, and that antipersonnel mines are not legitimate weapons.

The U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines has repeatedly urged that the outcome of the policy review be a decision to join the Mine Ban Treaty as soon as possible, to prohibit the use of antipersonnel mines immediately, and to begin destruction of all stocks of antipersonnel mines. In a [January 31, 2014 letter](#) to President Obama, the leadership of the U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines reiterated this call.

A total of 161 nations are party to the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, which prohibits antipersonnel landmines, requires the destruction of stockpiled mines, and requires clearance of contaminated land and assistance to victims. Mine Ban Treaty members include all European Union countries, all NATO members except the U.S., all nations in sub-Saharan Africa, all countries in the Western Hemisphere except Cuba and the

U.S., many countries in Asia-Pacific, and several nations from the Middle East, North Africa, and the former Soviet Union.

According to U.S. officials, the statement delivered today does not represent the final outcome of the landmine policy review initiated by the Obama administration in 2009, but is an interim announcement as “other aspects” of the landmine policy “remain under consideration.” The U.S. Department of Defense has been tasked with conducting a detailed study into alternatives to self-destructing antipersonnel mines and the impact of no further use of the weapon.

The announcement does not preclude the U.S. from using self-destructing antipersonnel mines anywhere in the world as has been U.S. policy since January 1, 2011. The US is believed to have a stockpile of about 9 million self-destructing antipersonnel mines. It has already banned use of non-self-destructing mines, and is in the process of destroying them.

According to the announcement, in the future the U.S. “will not produce or otherwise acquire” antipersonnel mines “that are not compliant” with the Mine Ban Treaty and will not replace those mines “as they expire in the coming years.” An official indicated that the U.S. would not extend the shelf-life of existing systems, by replacing their batteries for example.

The United States Campaign to Ban Landmines is a coalition of more than 400 non-governmental organizations. It is the U.S. affiliate of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, co-laureate together with former ICBL Coordinator Jody Williams of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize.

For more information, see:

- U.S. Campaign to Ban Landmines letter to President Obama, January 31, 2014:  
[http://www.uscbl.org/fileadmin/content/images/Letters/USCBL\\_Letter\\_to\\_Obama\\_31Jan2014.pdf](http://www.uscbl.org/fileadmin/content/images/Letters/USCBL_Letter_to_Obama_31Jan2014.pdf)
- Official website of the Mine Ban Treaty’s Third Review Conference:  
<http://www.maputoreviewconference.org/>
- ICBL website on the Mine Ban Treaty’s Third Review Conference:  
<http://bit.ly/1ncgcYA>

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