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RECORD-BREAKING PROGRESS FOR MINE BAN According to *Landmine Monitor 2010* released today

Geneva, 24 November 2010 – Record-breaking progress in implementing the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty was made in 2009. Use and production of the weapon, as well as casualty rates, were the lowest on record, while more contaminated land was cleared than ever before according to *Landmine Monitor 2010*, released today at the United Nations.

In 2009, 3,956 new landmine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) casualties were recorded, the lowest number for any year since the Monitor began reporting in 1999. The Monitor removed Nepal from its list of mine producers, leaving a dozen countries on the list, of which as few as three are believed to continue to actively manufacture antipersonnel mines (India, Myanmar, and Pakistan). For the first time the Monitor did not list Russia as a mine user, leaving Myanmar as the only government confirmed as using mines in 2009–2010.

An area over five times the size of Paris was cleared of mine/ERW contamination in 2009. International funding for mine action remained stable despite the global economic downturn. International support for mine action totaled US\$449 million, the fourth consecutive year that funding has surpassed \$400 million.

“The record progress made in the past year toward eliminating antipersonnel mines shows that the Mine Ban Treaty is working,” said Mark Hiznay of Human Rights Watch, *Landmine Monitor*’s Final Editor. “Sustained action by governments and civil society, including stable funding, are the key to ensure this progress continues until we completely eliminate the weapon.”

Eighty percent of the world’s states are party to the Mine Ban Treaty. Thirty-nine countries—including China, India, Pakistan, Russia, and the United States—have yet to join the treaty, but most are in *de facto* compliance with many of the treaty’s key provisions. The US is engaged in a comprehensive review of its landmine policy.

In 2009 and 2010, in addition to government forces in Myanmar, non-state armed groups in only six countries (Afghanistan, Colombia, India, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Yemen) continued to use the weapon. There were disturbing allegations of use of mines by the armed forces of Turkey, a State Party, which the government is investigating.

Eighty-six states have completed destruction of their stockpiles, collectively destroying over 45 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines. In 2010, however, Ukraine joined Belarus, Greece, and Turkey in failing to meet their treaty-mandated stockpile destruction deadlines, placing all four in serious violation of the Mine Ban Treaty.

In 2009, a total of 66 states and seven other areas were confirmed or suspected to be mine-affected. In 2009 and 2010 seven countries announced completion of their clearance activities (Albania, China, Greece, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Tunisia, and Zambia).

Mine action programs cleared at least 198km² of mined areas in 2009, by far the highest annual total ever recorded by the Monitor, resulting in the destruction of more than 255,000 antipersonnel mines and 37,000 antivehicle mines. At least 359km² of former battle areas were cleared in 2009, disposing of 2.2 million ERW. Eighty percent of recorded clearance occurred in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Croatia, Iraq, and Sri Lanka.

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Ensuring full compliance with Mine Ban Treaty clearance obligations is one of the greatest challenges facing States Parties. As of September 2010, 22 States Parties had received or were formally seeking extensions to their mine clearance deadlines. According to Stuart Casey-Maslen of Norwegian People's Aid, the Monitor's Mine Action Editor, "Too many of the State Parties granted extensions in 2008 and 2009 have since made disappointing progress and in some it has been totally unacceptable. Venezuela, for example, has not even started clearance operations more than a decade after ratifying the treaty."

A 28% reduction in the number of recorded mine and ERW casualties in 2009 is cause for hope, although because of incomplete data collection the actual number of casualties is certainly significantly higher. Some improvement in victim assistance services was noted in 11 countries or other areas in 2009, but declined in nine others. "While survivors know their needs and rights best, it is disappointing survivors or their representative organizations were involved in victim assistance implementation in less than half of affected countries," said Katleen Maes of Handicap International, the Monitor's Casualties and Victim Assistance Editor. "Given that survivor participation usually consists of small, non-governmental peer support activities, much work remains to be done to ensure that survivors are decision-makers whose rights are respected."

The \$449 million in international support for mine action in 2009 is roughly equal to 2008 contributions. The United States gave the most money (\$119 million), while Afghanistan received the most (\$107 million). Just 9% of funding for mine action was dedicated to victim assistance.

This is the 12th annual Landmine Monitor report. *Landmine Monitor 2010* covers global developments in landmine ban policy, use, production, trade, and stockpiling, and also includes information on landmine and ERW contamination, casualties, clearance, and victim assistance. The report covers calendar year 2009, with information included up to August 2010 when possible.

Landmine Monitor 2010 is being released in advance of the Tenth Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty, being held in Geneva, Switzerland on 29 November–3 December 2010.

The Monitor was created in June 1998 by the Nobel Peace Prize-winning International Campaign to Ban Landmines and is coordinated by an Editorial Board drawn from five organizations: Mines Action Canada, Action On Armed Violence, Handicap International, Human Rights Watch, and Norwegian People's Aid. It constitutes a sustainable and systematic way for non-governmental organizations to monitor and report on the implementation of humanitarian and disarmament treaties. The Monitor released the first Cluster Munition Monitor report earlier this month.

Landmine Monitor 2010 and related documents will be available at 10:00 GMT on 24 November at www.the-monitor.org/lm/2010.

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