

Statement on Stockpile Destruction

ICBL Statement on Stockpile Destruction

Tenth Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty
2 December 2010

States Parties' record of compliance with their obligation to destroy all stocks of antipersonnel mines was excellent until March 2008. They have destroyed more than 45 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines, including about 1.5 million in the past year. Eighty-six States Parties have officially declared their stockpile destruction complete, with **Kuwait** and **Ethiopia** as the most recent. We should celebrate these extraordinary accomplishments and the commitment they represent on the part of states to eliminate these weapons forever.

However, the treaty's record of success was tarnished when **Belarus, Greece, and Turkey** failed to meet their March 2008 stockpile deadline and **Ukraine** missed its June 2010 deadline. Each country was not only unable to meet its deadline, but each still had a very large number of mines left to destroy at the time of its deadline. Furthermore, none of the four could commit to a firm date for completion of stockpile destruction completion-then or now.

Iraq is the only other State Party that has not yet completed its stockpile destruction. In its Article 7 report submitted in June 2010, Iraq indicated for the first time that it had 690 antipersonnel mines stockpiled in the Kurdistan region and elsewhere. It should have no trouble destroying these by its 1 February 2012 deadline.

The failure of **Belarus, Greece, Turkey, and Ukraine** to meet their deadlines presents a challenge to the overall well-being of the Mine Ban Treaty. We recognize that the four States Parties are not in willful violation of the treaty, and none desire to maintain an operational stockpile of antipersonnel mines. They have been making an effort to destroy their mines, though with varying degrees of success and determination.

States Parties recognized the urgent need to resolve the four cases of stockpile destruction non-compliance in Actions 7 to 9 of the Cartagena Action Plan, which call on the four states to comply without delay and to communicate their plans to do so, to request any assistance needed, and to provide an expected completion date.

However, with the exception of **Turkey**, not much progress has been seen in 2010 on the destruction of the more than 10 million antipersonnel mines held by these four countries.

Belarus has been working with the European Commission since it joined the treaty on a stockpile destruction project. After the first tender failed in 2006, a second tender was launched in July 2009, but no technically compliant company was found. As we have just heard, a third tender was launched in mid-2010, and a company has been selected. We certainly hope this time that the project will be successfully finalized and implemented.

Greece's stockpile destruction has been on hold since last February, after an explosion in the facility that was destroying them in Bulgaria, and the cancellation of its contract with a Greek company. Only 40% of its mines have been destroyed, with more than 950,000 remaining. As we have just heard, Greece is having legal issues with the company whose contract it terminated, and associated financial concerns. Nonetheless, we believe Greece must put its highest priority on coming into compliance with its international treaty obligations. We call on Greece to work urgently to conclude a new contract, to set a firm completion date, and to finish destruction in a matter of months.

On a related matter, it was good to hear both **Greece** and **Bulgaria** pledge to work together to resolve the troubling matter of 480 unaccounted for mines-Greek mines slated for destruction in Bulgaria that have gone missing.

We were very pleased to just hear that **Turkey** has made significant progress, finishing the destruction of all but its ADAM mines. We offer our congratulations, while also asking for a firm deadline for destruction of the remaining mines.

Ukraine has conducted only limited destruction, focusing in the last year on seeking funds from donors outside the EC to boost its capacity to destroy its mines. In that context, it was very encouraging to hear of Norway's

new commitment of up to \$1 million and we hope that these funds, along with increased national resources, will allow Ukraine to start destroying large numbers of PFM mines in the near future.

We ask all four of these states to be as transparent as possible and to provide monthly updates on their progress or problems.

In the Cartagena Action Plan, other States Parties reaffirmed their commitment to their obligation to provide international cooperation and assistance for stockpile destruction. The ICBL calls on all States Parties and other stakeholders to continue to monitor the situation in these four states and to take proactive steps if progress is stalling, including through political engagement and contribution of whatever financial, technical, or other resources could help finish destruction without delay.

In addition to stockpile destruction, another area of concern is reporting on and destroying captured, seized, or newly discovered stockpiles of antipersonnel mines. It is a State Party's responsibility to report on newly discovered or seized mines and on their destruction, both before and after the completion of stockpile destruction programs. Action 12 of the Cartagena Action Plan calls on states to report on such mines and to destroy them "as a matter of urgent priority."

In the past year, **Afghanistan, Algeria, Burundi, and Uganda** reported new discoveries or seizures of antipersonnel mines in their Article 7 reports. In addition, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, for the seventh year in a row, reported an increase (of 346) in the total number of stockpiled antipersonnel mines it has destroyed. Presumably these are newly discovered stocks, mines turned in by the population, or illegal mines seized from criminal elements, but Bosnia and Herzegovina has not explained the changes.

Moreover, there were also government or media reports of seizures of antipersonnel mines in **Colombia, Iraq, FYR Macedonia, Niger** and **Turkey**, although these were not included in their transparency reports.

Finally, the ICBL continues to be concerned about stockpiles in states not yet party, since these mines present an even larger risk of being planted in the ground by a state military or non-state armed group. Landmine Monitor estimates that up to 35 states not party to the Mine Ban Treaty stockpile more than 160 million antipersonnel mines, with the vast majority belonging to just two states: **China** and **Russia**. This shows the importance of continuing our efforts to universalize the treaty and to stigmatize the weapon thoroughly.

Thank you.