

Debunking the Myths on Landmines



On 1 March 2011 we celebrate the twelfth anniversary of the entry into force of the Mine Ban Treaty. Campaigners worldwide will be paying a visit to the United States embassy in their country today and during the rest of the month to call once again on the U.S. administration to join the treaty and renounce the use of antipersonnel mines forever. During these meetings, we will need to respond to many arguments that the U.S. has raised to justify staying away from the treaty. As campaigners, we also need to be prepared to answer difficult questions from a broader group of people who may be interested in the treaty: our family, our friends, the guy next door... We have therefore prepared this issue of the newsletter to provide answers to some of the assertions, often false, we sometimes hear. For more answers and to keep in touch, visit us at www.icbl.org

A deminer working with the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency. This photo was part of the exhibition on gender and diversity in mine action, hosted by the Gender and Mine Action Programme of the Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines in Geneva, Switzerland, during the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty. More information on page 7.
Photo: Johan Eklund

Sylvie Brigot, Executive Director

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MYTH BUSTER

MYTH: *Without the United States, China, Russia and others on board, the Mine Ban Treaty isn't worthwhile.*

It is regrettable that these countries, and a few others, remain outside of the treaty. However, this does not take away from the importance of the treaty, nor weaken its achievements as one of the few current success stories in international humanitarian law and multilateral diplomacy. Eighty percent of the world's states have joined the treaty, and even without the support of major powers, remarkable progress is being made in implementing and promoting its provisions.

It is significant that most states not party to the Mine Ban Treaty are responding to international pressure on this issue. The majority of them are in de facto compliance with the key provisions of the treaty. For example, the United States has not used mines since 1991 nor exported since 1992. It has destroyed part of its antipersonnel mines stockpile and is the world's largest individual contributor to mine clearance efforts. In addition, only one state (Myanmar) is still using antipersonnel mines. Sales and exports of antipersonnel mines now consist solely of a low-level of illicit and unacknowledged transfers. ■

MYTH: *Once a country is mine-free, the job is done.*

Making sure all mined areas are cleared as soon as possible, and within a maximum of ten years, is indeed a key obligation of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty. Yet once a country is mine-free, states must still provide life-long support to landmine survivors and protect their rights. They must also keep a residual mine clearance capacity to deal with any newly discovered mines. They must destroy all their stockpiles of antipersonnel mines, and should provide assistance to other states in dealing with their landmine problem, for example by sharing resources, expertise, or by contributing financially to mine action. ■

MYTH: *Assisting landmine survivors means providing them with artificial legs and crutches.*

In addition to overcoming physical trauma, landmine survivors struggle to achieve social acceptance, gain meaningful employment and ensure their rights are respected. States' responsibilities towards landmine survivors go way beyond providing first aid, medical care and assistive devices. On the basis of the Mine Ban Treaty, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Convention on the Rights of

Persons with Disabilities and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, survivors and other persons with disabilities have a right to psychological support and to socio-economic inclusion to ensure they can actively take part in the life of their communities. Landmine survivors themselves identify employment and educational opportunities as the top priority. ■

MYTH: *After all, a treaty is only a piece of paper.*

Banning landmines does make a difference. We have made a great deal of progress since the Mine Ban Treaty came into force on 1 March 1999. Vast tracks of land have been cleared and put back to productive use, tens of millions of stockpiled mines have been destroyed, and most importantly, there are now fewer new mine victims each year. The norm is so clearly accepted that there have been no confirmed violations of the prohibitions on use, production, and transfer of antipersonnel mines by States Parties to the treaty. ■



Providing means for landmine survivors to regain their place as productive members of their communities is an essential component of victim assistance. Photo: Cambodia Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munitions

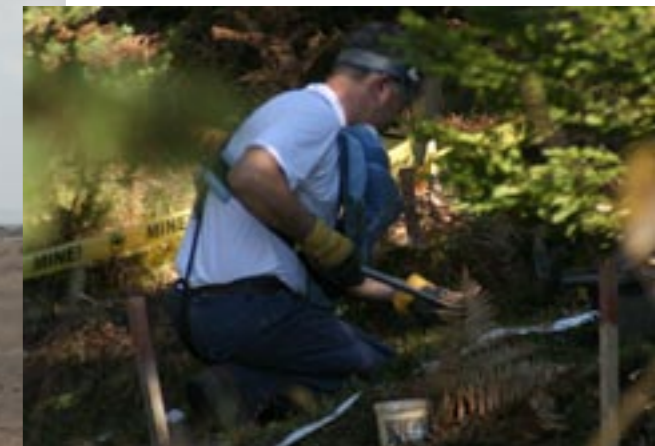
MYTH: *My country produces antipersonnel mines.*

Unless you are from India, Myanmar or Pakistan, your country likely did not produce antipersonnel mines in recent years. Only 12 countries still retain the right to produce antipersonnel mines, and as few as these three countries actively produced in recent years, in government-owned factories.

The only two publicly-traded companies that may still produce antipersonnel mines are based in Singapore and South Korea. Thanks to the Mine Ban Treaty, the stigma attached to antipersonnel mines is so strong worldwide that the market has virtually dried up. ■



Deminers walk on cleared land in Yemen during a ceremony to hand land over to local communities. Once a country is mine-free, it still has obligations under the Mine Ban Treaty. Photo: Jackie Hansen



Since the Mine Ban Treaty came into force on 1 March 1999, vast tracks of land have been cleared and put back to productive use. Photo: Tamar Gabelnick

MYTH: *Antipersonnel mines are indispensable to protect borders*

Mines are largely ineffective in protecting border regions, for example from smugglers, illegal immigrants or non-state armed groups. Today, most armies can easily avoid or cut through a minefield. Instead of offering protection, minefields terrorize and impoverish the communities living in the area. And in any case, the long-term humanitarian costs of mines far outweigh any military utility they may have. Alternatives exist for protecting military installations and borders, including: mobile and fixed border patrol,

motion detection equipment, and a variety of other barriers. Banning landmines increases peace and security and can actually be a valuable peace-building tool. For example, as part of their peace process, Peru and Ecuador have been collaborating on clearance of their border under their Mine Ban Treaty commitments. ■

Letter to President Obama: Ban Landmines

On 30 November 2010, 15 Nobel Peace Laureates sent a letter to U.S. President Barack Obama, asking him to join the Mine Ban Treaty. A few days later, Burma's recently freed opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi added her name to the list of signatories.

Dear President Obama,

As your fellow Nobel Peace Laureates, we are writing to urge the United States to join the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty. We are pleased that a review of US policy on antipersonnel landmines is underway and trust that it will be guided by the humanitarian concerns that have already led 156 nations to ban the weapon, including nearly all U.S. military allies.

As you know, the Nobel Committee awarded the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and its then-coordinator Ms. Jody Williams for their work in support of the banning and clearing of antipersonnel mines. Several other Nobel Peace laureates have long expressed concern at the humanitarian impact of this weapon and have worked for its eradication.

We understand that policy deliberations can be complicated, particularly on military matters and arms control. Yet in this instance we believe that there is a clear case to be made for the moral and humanitarian imperative for the US to relinquish antipersonnel mines and join the Mine Ban Treaty - especially since it has closely followed the core obligations of the Mine Ban Treaty for many years now.

The US is not known to have used antipersonnel mines since the first Gulf War in 1991. It became the first country in the world to unilaterally ban exports of the weapon in 1992. It has not produced antipersonnel mines since 1997, and has already destroyed approximately 3 million of its stockpiled mines. For almost two decades, the US has been the largest funder of global mine clearance and victim assistance programs.

United States accession to this important instrument would bring great benefits to the US and the world. It would strengthen US national security, international security, and international humanitarian law. It would help strengthen the fundamental goal of preventing innumerable civilians from falling victim to these indiscriminate weapons in the future, and help ensure adequate care for the hundreds of thousands of existing survivors and their communities. US membership would help spur to action the 39 states that remain outside the treaty.

We appreciate that as President, you have many aspects to consider in making such a decision. But we also know that you feel deeply the suffering of the innocents affected by war and its aftermath, and should have no trouble recognizing that the devastating impact of landmines on civilians is a terror of its own sort.

As your Nobel colleagues, we strongly urge you to join the Mine Ban Treaty, and thereby legally ban a weapon that the US has in practice already eschewed for almost 20 years.

Most sincerely,

Mairead Maguire (1976), Betty Williams (1976), Adolfo Perez Esquivel (1980), Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1984), Elie Wiesel (1986), Oscar Arias Sanchez (1987), His Holiness Dalai Lama (1989), Aung San Su Kyi (1991), Rigoberta Menchu Tum (1992), F.W. De Klerk (1993), Jose Ramos-Horta (1996), Jody Williams (1997), John Hume (1998), Shirin Ebadi (2003), Wangari Maathai (2004), Mohamed El Baradei (2005)

United States: Join the Mine Ban Treaty!

Throughout the month of March, ICBL members in dozens of countries will visit U.S. embassies to call on the United States to join the Mine Ban Treaty immediately. Here are some personal messages from campaign members to the Obama Administration.

Even though I am grown up, I often cry after waking up from a dream of having two legs, running and playing

happily in the field with friends. I know for me it is just a dream but I want this dream to be a true one for others, especially for children living in mine-affected countries like Cambodia. So the U.S. I beg you, you are great people and you can help me as a landmine survivor to build a real dream, to save the lives and limbs of others by joining the Mine Ban Treaty. Thank you so

much for all you do for clearing mines and helping victims. Do one more thing: stop mines from ever being produced or used again!"



Song Kosal, ICBL Youth Ambassador, Cambodia Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munitions, Cambodia

Through my work, I have talked with families affected by mines in numerous countries. For the people

living in fear of these weapons, for themselves or for their children, the unacceptable nature of antipersonnel landmines is pretty straightforward. Now, when I talk in public about the landmine issue one of the first questions people ask is whether the U.S. has joined the Mine Ban Treaty. Sadly, many people are not surprised that the answer is no. However, they sometimes are surprised to find that the U.S. hasn't used these weapons since before the

treaty was agreed. So the U.S. follows the treaty's lead, but refuses to join anyway? Joining the treaty would put the U.S. in a strong principled position and would really increase the pressure on the few other states that remain outside."



Richard Moyes, Action On Armed Violence, United Kingdom

A mine took both my legs and cut my dreams short when I was a teenager. Now I have to use a wheelchair 'to walk'.

My country went through a long civil war that left dozens of thousands of people dead and injured,

many by mines. I am happy that my country has joined the Mine Ban Treaty. But we want all Americas and all the world to be free of landmines. And this is why we want the U.S. to join the treaty now. The U.S. has many times proven its leadership and support to

Even Millions of landmines and other explosives are buried in the soil of my country. Thousands of my

countrymen have been killed and disabled by these weapons. Many more still live with the daily threat of being killed or injured. These weapons brought us nothing but devastation and poverty. As an Iraqi citizen I am calling on the U.S. - Iraq's closest ally - to join the Mine Ban Treaty

and put an end to this terrible weapon."



Sardar Sidiq Abdulkarim, Kurdistan Organization for Rehabilitation of the Disabled, Iraq

It's been nearly fourteen years since the Mine Ban Treaty came into existence. Countries that

appeared difficult to lobby have joined the treaty. To me as survivor, and to the many survivors all over the world, we take it as a great step towards total elimination of antipersonnel mines. Yet the U.S. Government, known for its stand on causes for the betterment of mankind, continues to be evasive when it comes to addressing the issue of antipersonnel mines. Is it taking the Mine Ban Treaty as something of less importance? Has the U.S. not experienced the

casualties and injuries caused by antipersonnel mines in its areas of operations? Hear us and take a positive move. Help prevent new victims and support the thousands of victims around the world."



Margaret Arach-Orech, ICBL Ambassador, Uganda Landmine Survivors' Association, Uganda

humanitarian causes and now is the time it can and should prove it again. Using mines for defense purposes is not effective and causes only pain and poverty. We do not want these anymore!"

Jesus Martinez, Fundación Red de Sobrevivientes, El Salvador



Peer-to-Peer Support in Iraq

The Kurdistan Organization for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled (KORD) has set up a peer-to-peer support project for landmine survivors. Developed with input from survivors themselves, the project includes hospital visits and access to rehabilitation programs and economic empowerment programs. Ten volunteer survivors participated in a training

course in mid-December, delivered in partnership with the NGO Heartland Alliance and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. Arrangements have been made for the hospital visits to start in 2011, and the project will now be handed over to the General Directorate on Mine Action. More information: kordiraq@yahoo.com ■



Photo: KORD Iraq

Visit to Kinmen Island

In December 2010, Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor Program Manager Jackie Hansen visited mined areas in Kinmen, Taiwan. Organized by the EDEN Social Welfare Foundation, the visit was an opportunity to take stock of the mine clearance work accomplished under Taiwan's "Antipersonnel Landmine Regulations Act", which plans for all mined areas in

Kinmen to be cleared by 2013. While acknowledging demining efforts, Ms Hansen noted that Taiwan currently still permits stockpiling and use of antipersonnel mines, and called on the authorities to urgently implement a complete ban as required by the Mine Ban Treaty. More information: ieden.info@gmail.com ■



Photo: EDEN Social Welfare Foundation

Congolese Campaign Briefs Partners

On 24 January 2011 in Kinshasa, the Congolese Campaign to Ban Landmines organized a conference to share the outcomes of the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty with its partners, and to release Landmine Monitor 2010. The event brought together partner NGOs from the Congolese Civil Society Advocacy Forum, government representatives from the office of the National Focal Point on Mine Action, and media. The event provided the campaign with an opportunity to advocate for the prompt promulgation of the national legislation implementing the Mine Ban Treaty and to encourage the government to start preparing its transparency

report on the Convention on Cluster Munitions while the ratification process is underway. The Democratic Republic of Congo's mine clearance deadline is 2012 but it is expected to submit an extension request. D.R. Congo is also among the states self-identified as having important numbers of landmine survivors and therefore the greatest responsibility in terms of victim assistance. According to the Monitor, Congolese landmine survivors "receive little attention from the government or the international community." More information: francky_tos@yahoo.fr ■



Photo: Congolese Campaign to Ban Landmines

Young Professionals Ready to Hit the Ground Running

Mines Action Canada has completed the recruitment process to select its next cohort of ten mine action interns, known as the Young Professionals (YP), who will be deployed from 18 March 2011 to work with ICBL member organizations in Cambodia, Colombia, Nepal, Tajikistan, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia.

The pre-departure program includes a week of independent study on the landmine and cluster

munition issues, and a one-week briefing in Ottawa on topics such as fundraising, public outreach, and intercultural effectiveness. The Government of Canada provides financial support for the YP program through the Canadian International Development Agency. More information: jordan@minesactioncanada.org ■

Sports Event for Peace Award

On 2 December 2010, the international organization Peace and Sport, under the patronage of Prince Albert II of Monaco, granted the 2010 Sports Event for Peace award to the wheelchair rugby exhibition match Rumble in Cartagena, held at the 2009 Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World. Co-hosted by the ICBL, the Cluster Munition Coalition, Survivor Corps, Fundación Arcangeles and the International Wheelchair Rugby Federation, the Rumble in Cartagena event

brought together disabled athletes from the United States and Colombia, including survivors of mines and other explosive remnants of war, to face each other in a heroic display of peace and solidarity. The Peace and Sports Awards recognize sport initiatives and individuals who contribute to peace and social stability in the world, in areas that have been made vulnerable due to poverty, the aftermath of conflict or lack of social cohesion. ■



Brian Sheridan, Prince Albert II of Monaco and Juan Pablo Salazar who received the award on behalf of the organizers. Photo: Fundación Arcangeles

Gender and Diversity in Mine Action

With financial support from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and technical support from the GICHD, the Gender and Mine Action Programme of the Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines launched in mid-2010 a call for photographs representing gender and diversity in mine action. More than 80 photographs were received, representing 15 countries and territories. A jury of three renowned photojournalists (Maria Eugênia Sá, Giovanni Diffidenti and Sean Sutton) and two design and mine action specialists (Lesley Macinnes-Gillies and Karma Al Azmeh Valluy) selected the 30 best photographs, which were displayed at

the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty, in Geneva. The photos challenged existing stereotypes by showing women successfully performing non-traditional roles within mine action, and illustrated the resilience and coping mechanisms of people living in mine-affected communities. More information: a.calza-bini@scbl-gender.ch ■

This photo by Alistair Moir was the favorite of the jury of the 'Gender and Diversity in Mine Action' photo call.

Australia: Untold Stories

In 2010 students and staff of the Griffith University Queensland College of Art spent three weeks working in Cambodia and Vietnam. Traveling to Siem Reap, Battambang, Phnom Penh and Ho Chi Minh City, they documented the positive use of international aid to bring hope to those in need, including mine-affected

communities and landmine survivors. Their stunning photo exhibition "Untold Stories" was displayed in January and February at the Queensland Center for Photography, in Australia, and can be viewed online at <http://theargus.net.au/cambodia/>. More information: rodsted@hotmail.com ■

Mine Risk Education in India

On 30 January 2011, the Indian Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munitions facilitated the first of its kind one-day workshop on mine risk education for 77 teachers and 8 NGO representatives from the mine-affected provinces of Rajasthan and Punjab. The workshop was held in Pune, in partnership with the Sadhana Vidyalaya School and R.R. Shinde Junior College. It is expected that

participants will in-turn organize mine risk education sessions in their respective schools and villages. In addition, in late 2010, the coordinator of the Indian Campaign, Balkrishna Kurvey, addressed members of parliament, politicians and policy-makers at the national convention of the Sunrise Peace Mission, in Nagpur and Delhi. More information: iipdep_ngp@sancharnet.in ■



3 December Celebrations

On 3 December 2010, ICBL members worldwide marked the International Day of Persons with Disabilities and celebrated the anniversary of the signature of the Mine Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Meanwhile, the ICBL organized an inclusive dance performed by the Swiss Association DanseHabile at the United Nations' building in Geneva as a side event to the 10th Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty.

Ecumenical Celebration in Bogotá

The Colombian Centre for Integrated Rehabilitation (CIREC) celebrated with an ecumenical ceremony in the central square downtown Bogotá. The celebration gathered representatives from the Jewish, Islamic, and Catholic religions, for a mass that included prayers made by landmine survivors. "It was a very touching and

moving ceremony, and all the attendees walked home with a white rose given by landmine survivors to keep in mind the importance of this date and the commitment we should all have to achieve a mine-free world," said Silvia Ojeda Acosta from CIREC. More information: ojedas@cirec.org ■



Photo: IANSA Women Nigeria

Nigeria: Youth Workshop

The IANSA Women Network Nigeria held a one-day awareness-raising workshop for youth and persons with disabilities, which was covered by both electronic and print media,

including on the network news of Nigeria's national television. More information: iansawomennig@yahoo.co.uk ■

Panel discussion in Ziguinchor

The Association Sénégalaise des Victimes de Mines in partnership with the Jeune Chambre Internationale de Ziguinchor organized a public discussion for youth that brought together various members of the mine

action community. Held in the mine-affected region of Casamance, the event was covered by the local media. More information: gassamamady@yahoo.fr ■

Nepal: Painting Competition

The Nepal Campaign to Ban Landmines organized a painting competition in 20 schools, under the theme "Paintings for the Universalization of the Conventions." The Minister of Justice and Law, Prem Bahadur Singh, distributed the prizes during an event that gathered over 300 representatives of NGOs and of governmental authorities, and that received excellent media coverage. In addition, in mid-January, a member of

the Monitor's Editorial Team, Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan, visited Nepal and met with representatives of various ministries, including the Minister for Peace and Reconstruction, to discuss Nepal's accession to the Mine Ban Treaty. More information: purnashova@gmail.com ■

High-Level Celebration in Iraq

The Iraq Alliance for Disability Organizations (IADO) and Handicap International held a national celebration that included music, speeches, and distribution of certificates and gifts. Attendees included the deputy president, the deputy prime minister, the director of the Iraqi Mine Action Center, persons with disabilities, and representatives from

a number of government ministries. On 10 December 2010, the IADO also celebrated the International Day of Human Rights with its members as well as Ad Melkert, representative of the UN Secretary-General, and Wijdan Michael Salim, Minister of Human Rights of Iraq. More information: maffak62@yahoo.com ■



IADO members with Wijdan Michael Salim and Ad Melkert. Photo: IADO



IADO members and Wijdan Michael Salim. Photo: IADO

Syria: Raising Awareness at the Regional Level

During the regional Amman Meeting on Disability Projects, the Arab Net for Research on Landmines and ERW (ANROLM) circulated a press release calling on states from the region to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities and to join the Mine Ban Treaty and Convention on Cluster Munitions. ANROLM's Coordinator, Ghassan Shahrour, met with the Director-General of the Arab Organization of Disabled People and briefed her on both treaties. It was agreed

to include the specific needs of landmine and cluster munition survivors in the next regional meeting on disabilities. On 29 December 2010, ANROLM organized a ceremony to recognize the work and dedication of volunteers on victim assistance and disability issues. The event was covered by Syrian television. More information: ghassan.dr@gmail.com ■



Photo: ICBL Georgian Committee

Georgia: Don't Forget

The ICBL Georgian Committee, Youth for Peace and Development and the Union of Afghan and Other Wars Veterans organized an event titled Don't Forget -- a call to not forget people with disabilities, war veterans, and civilian victims both during and after armed conflicts. Several famous actors and musicians took part in the event, which brought together over 500 politicians, representatives of NGOs and

international organizations, and students. The opening performance was followed by a play on the threat of landmines in Afghanistan, and by a discussion with the audience. Participants decided to establish a youth movement whose first activity was to donate books to the school library in the cluster munition-affected village of Karbi. More information: maia.buchukuri@gmail.com ■

Sarajevo Applauds its Employers of the Year

The Landmine Survivors Initiatives, in partnership with the NGO Center for Development and Support and the web portal Posao.ba, hosted the closing ceremony of the year-long national campaign "Employer of the Year for Persons with Disabilities." Diplomats, organizations of persons with disabilities and representatives of ministries and national institutions gathered to congratulate five employers that serve as role models in employing persons with disabilities: Geneza

Mostar (small enterprises), Deljkovic Bugojno (medium enterprises), Volkswagen Sarajevo and FIS Vitez (large enterprises), and Komunalac Brcko District (public enterprises). The very successful event received broad media coverage. In addition, the Landmine Survivors Initiative published the guidebook "Stepping Up Victim Assistance in Southeast Europe: Good Practices and Lessons Learned in the Region." More information: amujanovic@ipm-lsi.org ■



Photos: CEDAC

Public Demonstrations in Burundi

The Centre d'Encadrement et de Développement des Anciens Combattants (CEDAC) raised awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities through a public march and ceremony that included drumming and dancing, followed by a round-table that brought

together victim assistance stakeholders including a representative of the Ministry of Defense. The event was organized in partnership with the Réveil Communautaire d'Assistance aux Victimes and Mines Action Canada. More information: ericniragira@gmail.com ■

ICBL CAST AND CREW

In each newsletter issue, this section introduces campaign members from throughout the world.

ICBL Georgian Committee

Founded in 1998, the ICBL Georgian Committee currently manages a two-fold project supported by Austrian Development Aid and Gemeinsam gegen Landminen Austria and covering all of the seven districts of Georgia that are affected by landmines and/or explosive remnants of war (ERW). A two-year data collection program aims at recording all existing civilian and military survivors of landmines, cluster munitions and ERW, and gathering information on their living conditions and needs, to inform future assistance

programs of the Georgian Committee. The Committee also trains youth volunteers who facilitate risk reduction education sessions in primary schools, using materials prepared in collaboration with psychologists, and held in partnership with the Ministry of Education. In addition the Committee raises awareness through public events and media work, and lobbies for Georgia to come on board the Mine Ban Treaty and Convention on Cluster Munitions. More information: maia.buchukuri@gmail.com ■

Senegalese Association of Mine Victims

Founded in 1999 by a group of landmine survivors with support from the African Meeting for the Defense of Human Rights (RADDHO), the Senegalese Association of Mine Victims (ASVM) brings together some 400 members from the mine-affected area of Casamance. In partnership with UNICEF, the ASVM has facilitated risk

education sessions in schools and villages, distributed mobility devices, and carried activities to enhance access to emergency healthcare and physical rehabilitation. The ASVM also engages in advocacy through public events and media outreach. More information: gassamamady@yahoo.fr ■

Afghan Landmine Survivors' Organization

Established in 2007, ALSO offers peer support to landmine and ERW survivors; works to ensure the physical accessibility of public buildings in Afghanistan by building ramps, adapting facilities, etc; and offers vocational training for women with disabilities in Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif. It also conducts awareness-raising activities via national media and in three provinces through public discussions at the community level.

Over the last three years, ALSO offered peer support to over 1,300 survivors and made 30 public areas, including schools, hospitals and parks, accessible to persons with disabilities. ALSO provided English and computer skills training for 299 people in addition to providing 120 women with vocational training. More information: info@afghanlandminesurvivors.org

Croatia: Mine Aid

Mine Aid started working in 2006 on victim assistance and advocacy, and is currently managing a project called Building and strengthening the support network for landmine survivors and their families, supported by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the International Trust Fund. Based on needs identified by survivors themselves, the project runs in 8 cantons affected by landmines and/or cluster munitions. It offers psychological support groups

for adults and children; visits by social workers to implement tailored, individual plans for improving health, education or social inclusion; and financial support for living needs as well as support to the development of small business plans. Mine Aid also lobbies for enhanced victim assistance, contributed to creating the government's National Coordination Body on victim assistance, and now has a seat on that body. More information: marijabreber@yahoo.com ■

8 MARCH 2011

International Women's Day

The Gender and Mine Action Programme of the Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines would like to dedicate the 2011 International Women's Day to female ERW/landmine survivors and women with disabilities worldwide. In most mine affected countries, the majority of civilian landmine/ERW direct victims are boys and men, but their accidents also have deep impacts on their families and communities, who become indirect victims. If the male victim was the breadwinner of the family, the females in the household will often take on responsibilities for the family's income and also care for the victim, in addition to their previous tasks. When

females are the direct victims, the gender inequalities prevalent in some societies may limit their access to services, reintegration and compensation. In some countries, female landmine survivors may even be abandoned by their spouses and/or families. The Cartagena Action Plan adopted at the Second Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty states that "States Parties are resolved to provide adequate age- and gender-sensitive assistance to mine victims", and several of the actions related to victim assistance include gender considerations. More information: www.scbl-gender.ch ■



A landmine survivor and her family in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Photo: Paul Jeffrey

The ICBL is a global network in over 90 countries, working for a ban on landmines and cluster munitions.

We welcome any comments and questions about ICBL News.

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