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## **Finland becomes 159<sup>th</sup> country to join global landmine ban One million more mines to be destroyed**

(Geneva, 12 January 2012): Finland has become the latest nation to join the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, which comprehensively bans the use, production, trade, and stockpiling of antipersonnel landmines.

Finland deposited its instrument of accession at the United Nations in New York on Monday 9 January 2012, the United Nations announced yesterday.

"We warmly welcome Finland to join the majority of countries to have completely banished these indiscriminate weapons," said Firoz Alizada, Campaign Manager for the [International Campaign to Ban Landmines \(ICBL\)](http://www.icbl.org).

"We appreciate it has fulfilled so early in the year its long-standing pledge to join the Mine Ban Treaty in 2012," he added.

Finland will now destroy its stockpile of [more than one million antipersonnel mines within four years](#), as required by the treaty. There are no existing minefields in Finland, but it provides millions of Euros to global demining efforts each year.

Finland confirmed its intention to accede to the Mine Ban Treaty in 2012 at last November's [Eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty](#), held in Phnom Penh. Finland first pledged to accede in 2012 in September 2004, after earlier citing a target date of 2006.

"We hope other nations will now follow Finland's lead, particularly Poland, the only European nation not to have fully joined the ban treaty," Alizada said.

Poland has signed the treaty, but not yet ratified—a step it has promised to take in 2012.

"We also hope this will spur the United States to conclude its landmine policy review soon, with a decision to join the treaty, as happened in Finland," he added.

In the past, Finland claimed that antipersonnel mines played a crucial role in its defense policy so it could not ban them.

Laura Lodenius, who has been campaigning with the Finish Campaign to Ban Landmines for more than a decade, said: "We are so happy that after all these years Finland is finally part of the Treaty. It was not an easy decision for Finland and many Finns, but in the end the humanitarian impact of mines and the importance of the global Treaty beat the defense policy arguments. The persistence of the campaign was vital and we hope this gives strength to campaigners working in countries still outside the ban, and indeed the countries themselves, and proves that difficulties can be overcome to join the majority of the world in banning this awful weapon."

**ENDS**

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### **Notes to editors**

For more information on Finland's activity as part of the mine and cluster munition ban process visit the [Country Page on the Landmine and Cluster Munition monitor](#).



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Adopted in 1997, the Mine Ban Treaty entered into force on 1 March 1999. The treaty comprehensively bans all antipersonnel mines, requires destruction of stockpiled mines within four years, requires destruction of mines already in the ground within 10 years, and urges extensive programs to assist the victims of landmines.

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines is a global network in over 90 countries, working for a world free of antipersonnel landmines. In 1997, the ICBL received the Nobel Peace Prize together with its founding coordinator Jody Williams for its efforts to bring about the Mine Ban Treaty.