

A Week of Advocacy Activities in Managua, Nicaragua

In February 2009, members of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) convened in Managua, Nicaragua to conduct advocacy and outreach in support of the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty.

The ICBL delegation to Managua included including eight landmine survivors from Colombia, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Peru. ICBL representatives contributed to a victim assistance meeting held parallel to the Managua Workshop. Before the opening of the Managua Workshop, ICBL member Handicap International organized a briefing on victim assistance at American University.

On 25 February, delegations of ICBL representatives met with diplomatic representatives of Cuba and the United States, the only countries in the Americas that have yet to join the Mine Ban Treaty. Cuban Ambassador Luis Hernandez Ojeda expressed interest in the treaty's Second Review Conference. The deputy U.S. representative to Nicaragua Richard M. Sanders agreed to transmit the ICBL's request for a review of U.S. landmine policy back to Washington, DC.

The ICBL held a press conference on 23 February 2009 and its media outreach resulted good local media coverage in national print, radio and television media as well as EFE, AFP, Associated Press and Reuters Television wire services. Other outreach included a public talk by ICBL and Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) representatives for students at the American University.

At the conclusion of the Managua Workshop, the ICBL representatives participated in a half-day briefing on the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions held by the Cluster Munition Coalition in cooperation with Nicaragua and Norway. Approximately a dozen states participated including non-signatories Brazil, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Chile, Colombia, Nicaragua, Panama all stated that their respective ratifications of the Convention are progressing. The CMC disseminated new ratification campaign materials in Spanish. At a meeting held on 25 February between CMC representatives and five members of the national congress, the vice president of Nicaragua's parliamentary foreign affairs commission committed to swift ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

ICBL executive director Sylvie Brigot, CMC staff member Serena Olgiati, and campaigners from twelve countries across the region participated in the week's activities: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Government representatives attended the Managua Workshop from 18 countries across the region: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela.