

Action Alert!

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(Thursday 20 November 2003) Take action to celebrate the sixth anniversary of the Mine Ban Treaty signing and the Nobel Peace prize award to the ICBL *and* launch the preparations for the treaty Review Conference in 2004.

1. INTRODUCTION

This action alert launches the International Campaign to Ban Landmines' (ICBL) preparation for the first Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty in one year's time. The Mine Ban Treaty is officially titled the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and On Their Destruction. The treaty Review Conference takes place from 29 November to 3 December 2004 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Also, the action marks two significant anniversaries: six years ago the Mine Ban Treaty was opened for signature in Ottawa, Canada and the ICBL and Jody Williams were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway. 3 December is also International Day for Disabled People. More on the Treaty:

<http://www.icbl.org/5msp/mediakit/faqtwo.html> and the ICBL:

<http://www.icbl.org/5msp/mediakit/faqthree.html>.

We have come a long way in six years but still much remains to be done to universalise and implement the treaty. Please take part in this action and help make the dream of a mine-free world a reality.

TAKE ACTION!

There are two components to the action alert:

- **PUBLICITY:** press statement, opinion pieces and other publicity efforts;
- **LOBBYING:** meetings with governments about the Mine Ban Treaty Review Conference.

Priorities and other activities:

- Feel free to prioritise certain activities from this action alert: particularly meeting your government to encourage attention to the Review Conference and submitting an opinion-editorial article. (Suggestions for youth campaigners are below.)
- Jody Williams, ICBL Ambassador and founding coordinator, will be participating in an official launch of the Review Conference process in Cyprus on 2 and 3 December, with President Tassos Papadopoulos of Cyprus and the President-Designate of the Review Conference, Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch of Austria.
- Jody Williams has sent letters to all Foreign Ministers with a message urging high-level representation at the Review Conference in 2004. This action alert reinforces and complements these letters. [Sample letter sent to Albania](#) (PDF document).
- Youth campaigners are encouraged to write letters to editors of local newspapers, sharing information about the anniversaries and encouraging their government to continue to take action to eliminate this weapon. Young people can also write to their decision makers to let them know that they want their

government to continue working on the landmines issue on the road to the Review Conference in Nairobi and beyond, until we achieve our goal of a landmine free world. Find information about writing to newspapers and governments here: <http://www.icbl.org/youth/action/take.html#Anchor-Letter-35326>.

Please let us know how you take up this action alert and if you have feedback or queries. Contact Sue Wixley, Advocacy and Communications Officer, ICBL: wixley ('at' sign) icbl.org

2. TAKE ACTION

PUBLICITY

Approach national and local media to get coverage of the landmine issue, using the anniversaries and the launch of the Review Conference process as a 'peg' or 'hook'.

- Adapt and distribute the ICBL press statement (available from 1 December, embargoed until 3 December).
- Write an opinion piece for a newspaper or website.
- Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper/or call a radio or TV talk show.
- Other ideas: photo opportunity, photo essay, press conference and exclusive story/interview.

[See tips and tools in 3 below.](#)

LOBBYING

Lobby your own government!

Organise a lobbying meeting to send a message to members of the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty (the States Parties) or non members (signatories and non-States Parties). Check who has joined and who has not: <http://www.icbl.org/ratification/>.

Message to States Parties:

- The Review Conference in 2004 is a key milestone in the life of the Mine Ban Treaty. It will mark the incredible progress since the birth of the convention and chart the way forward for its full implementation and universalisation.
- Because it is such a significant occasion, it is essential that the target country be represented at this important event at the highest possible level, preferably at ministerial level. Request that a decision your government's delegation be made shortly.
- Stress the importance of preparation for the conference. Urge your government to take part fully in the preparation for the Review Conference, including during intersessional Standing Committee meetings: 9 – 12 February 2004 and 21 – 29 June 2004: <http://www.icbl.org/sc/>.
- Underline points about the implementation of the treaty that are relevant to your government e.g. stockpile destruction, clearance or other mine action activities; submission of Article 7 reports; enactment of Article 9 national legislation. Encourage governments to come to the Standing Committee meetings prepared to report on implementation plans, priorities, problems and progress (the '4Ps').

- Encourage your government to do as much as possible in the coming year to promote the treaty amongst States not Party. Specific action points and targets for universalisation are listed here: <http://www.icbl.org/news/2003/429.php>.

Message to States not Party:

- Point out that most of the world's governments have already banned antipersonnel mines and will be participating in the Mine Ban Treaty's Review Conference in 2004. Give examples of recent or significant accessions and ratifications from your region, check here: <http://www.icbl.org/ratification/>.
- Explain that the Review Conference event is a key milestone in the life of the Mine Ban Treaty and will mark the incredible progress since the birth of the convention and chart the way forward towards a mine-free world.
- Urge your government to join the Mine Ban Treaty by the time of the Review Conference. Encourage that, at a minimum, they take certain positive steps to show their commitment to the principles of the Mine Ban Treaty and willingness to join the convention at some point. Mine-affected countries should be urged to do as much as possible to protect civilians from antipersonnel landmines, including through mine action and victim assistance. Other positive steps to be encouraged are listed here: <http://www.icbl.org/news/2003/430.php>
- Conclude that the Review Conference will highlight the situation in countries that remain outside the emerging international norm that rejects antipersonnel mines.

[See tips and tools in 3 below.](#)

In just six years the Mine Ban Treaty has attracted the support of 75% of the world's governments. Still, 44 countries remain outside the convention. Its hoped that these non-State Parties will be spurred to embrace the ban in the build-up to the treaty Review Conference in 2004. Map by Jasmine Desclaux Salachas for Landmine Monitor. [More maps](#)

3. TIPS AND TOOLS

PUBLICITY

Adapt a press statement

- Add in a quote from your campaign spokesperson.
- Mention actions you are taking for the anniversary e.g. meeting with government representatives or other.
- Translate the statement into your own language/s.
- Relate the Review Conference to the situation in your country. E.g. for African countries: this key event on the continent will highlight any cases of ongoing mine use and the importance of implementing the treaty in full; for non-State Parties: there will be pressure domestically and internationally to join the treaty in the lead-up to the Review Conference and much to gain by joining; for user countries: state and non-state actors using antipersonnel mines (and/or producing, stockpiling etc) will be under renewed pressure as diplomats and world leaders gather for this event; for States Parties and friends of the treaty: it will be a milestone in their work for a mine-free world, providing a chance for celebration and forward-planning.

- Include facts on the mine situation in your country or your country's role/position (see Landmine Monitor Report 2003: <http://www.icbl.org/lm/2003/>).

Write an opinion editorial (op-ed) article

Contact a national or local newspaper or website and offer to write an opinion article for Wednesday 3 December or that week. (Op-eds are usually published towards the centre of a newspaper, opposite the editorial column and near readers' letters and some websites run regular viewpoint columns.)

- Look at the kinds of pieces your target newspaper or site publishes. Decide if they are likely to run an article on antipersonnel landmines and what would be an appropriate angle.
- Find out who is in charge of the opinion-editorial section (often it is the Editor-in-Chief but sometimes there is an editor for the comment section). Ask about their policy for publishing op-eds, including their maximum word length and deadline.
- Gather ideas and prepare your argument to convince the editor to publish your article. Call up, meet or write to the relevant editor and pitch the article. Convince him or her that your article will be of interest to the newspaper's readers.
- Be prepared to answer these kinds of questions: What insight will you provide into the landmine problem? Why is it important for your country/city/community? Why publish the article now? What is your angle?
- Possible answers and ideas for angles: the anniversaries of the treaty signing and Nobel Peace Prize and the launch of the process for the first treaty review conference is an appropriate moment to analyse the mine situation in the country/region/ world; with international diplomacy looking increasingly troubled, the Mine Ban Treaty is one area where multilateralism is working and progress being achieved through governments and civil society working together; even today landmines continue to have enormous humanitarian consequences, taking lives and limbs, burdening economies and hampering reconstruction. Other ideas for angles: <http://www.icbl.org/5msp/mediakit/quotes.html#Heading40>.
- Write the op-ed. The format is pretty straightforward: first state your argument, referring to the anniversary and the Review Conference. Then make the argument. Try and give a personal and preferably a local angle to the piece. Provide hard-hitting facts and figures and quote experts' opinion to back up your position. Then wrap up and provide information on where to go to find out more, such as the ICBL or your campaign website. You may also end off with a point about your hopes for the Review Conference in 2004. Aim for about 750 words, but check with your target newspaper to see if they have a required word length. Examples of opinion pieces on the landmine issue: <http://www.icbl.org/news/2003/413.php>, http://www.banminesusa.org/news/965_news.htm, and http://www.thecommonwealth.org/pdf/Currents1-2_02.pdf (page 20 and 21 of this PDF)
- If one newspaper rejects your piece, then try another. Or ask them to use the article for a news story or profile piece. Or ask a high-profile supporter (e.g. a community leader, celebrity, actor, academic) to submit an opinion piece on your behalf as some editors prefer to pieces by well-known contributors.

Write a letter to the editor

See tips on writing to the editor in the Campaign Kit booklet: *So you want to publicise your campaign?*
<http://www.icbl.org/resources/campaignkit/publicise/editor.html>

Other

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<http://www.icbl.org/resources/campaignkit/publicise.html>

More publicity ideas: <http://www.icbl.org/news/2003/374.php>

LOBBYING

- Write to request a meeting. Here is a sample letter for this: <http://www.icbl.org/news/2003/431.php>
- Plan your delegation: try to keep the numbers down to a manageable size -- two or three people is ideal. Aim for a spread of expertise amongst the representatives e.g. have a researcher, campaigner and landmine survivor on the delegation. Also, think about religious, gender, language and racial balance.
- Prepare your message: make sure that everyone in the delegation agrees on the main message for the meeting. Prepare counter-arguments by thinking about arguments that your government has used in the past or may use this time. See message ideas in this action alert.
- Bring a package of useful contacts and resources e.g. Landmine Monitor Report 2003, the International Committee of the Red Cross Kit for national legislation (<http://www.icrc.org/Web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/f2b045e65f4558eec1256c300053880b/2610f2cd6ffcabefc1256b66005fb407?OpenDocument>), VERTIC's guide to Article 7 reports: <http://www.vertic.org/assets/Guide%20to%20reporting.pdf>, and contacts for the Implementation Support Unit at the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (<http://www.gichd.ch/mbc/isu/index.htm>).
- Report back afterwards: make sure someone in your delegations takes detailed notes in the meeting. Use this lobbying report form to summarise key points and share with other campaigners and the ICBL: <http://www.icbl.org/news/2003/428.php>
- For more tips, see: the Campaign Kit booklet: *So you want to lobby decision makers?*
http://www.icbl.org/resources/campaignkit/lobby.html#_Toc472084516