

by Liz Bernstein –
*International Campaign to Ban
Landmines (ICBL)*

the first half of 2000 has been eventful for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) as we continue to work for the universalization and effective implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty.

The second anniversary of the entry-into-force of the Convention on March 1, 2000 galvanized mine ban campaigners into worldwide action with events held in over 35 countries.

At the United Nations in New York, John Wack and Duane Robey, American landmine survivors from World War II, joined appeals signed by 1300 landmine survivors from more than a dozen heavily mine-affected countries, asking United States President Bill Clinton to join the treaty before he leaves office. Landmine survivors in countries including Bosnia and Cambodia also delivered petitions to US embassies.

In Thailand, a bicycle rally was organized by the Landmine Victims Network 1999, Sakaeo Province, in cooperation with the Thailand Campaign to Ban Landmines. The *Landmines Bicycle Rally 2000: Journey for Peace*, held April 25 to May 1, 2000, marked the first anniversary of the entry-into-force of the Mine Ban Treaty in Thailand. The event's 51 participants, including 28 Thai landmine survivors, cycled 259 kilometres, receiving substantial support from communities along the route and extensive media coverage. The rally was aimed at raising awareness of the impact of landmines in Thailand,

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gathering support for Thai landmine survivors and urging full compliance with the treaty.

In Fiji, ICBL Ambassador Tun Channareth spoke to a meeting of Parliamentarians of the Pacific Island Nations urging accession and ratification of the treaty among these states.

In Australia, artwork was collected from across the country for

the global *USA Ban Landmines Today* call for posters. Australia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexander Downer helped select the winning entries.

In July, the US Campaign to Ban Landmines held several successful events in Washington, D.C., including an activist training conference, an inter-faith prayer service with remarks by survivors, a reception in honour of Landmine Survivors Network co-founder Ken Rutherford and lobby days, during which campaigners from across the country met

with their congressional representatives. US Campaigners met with 223 members of Congress and their aides while Belgian campaigners handed over 24,913 mine ban postcards to Congressman James McGovern urging President Clinton to join the treaty.

Regional conferences, organized by ICBL members or including ICBL participants, were held in Azerbaijan, Belarus (on stockpile destruction), Egypt, Malaysia, Nigeria and Slovenia. National seminars or workshops were held in several countries

including Canada, India, Iran, Japan, Nepal and the USA.

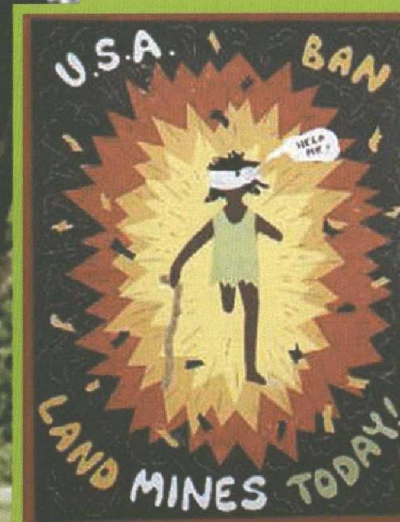
Members of the ICBL held a conference *Engaging Non-State Actors in a Landmine Ban in Switzerland*. ICBL also organized a briefing on landmines at the European Parliament Common Foreign Security Policy Contact Group in March. ICBL Ambassador Jody Williams and others followed up with visits to several European Union officials and Members of Parliament in May.

The campaign also continued its commitment to the Convention's intersessional work program throughout this period. ICBL participation in all the Standing Committee of Experts (SCE) meetings kept the committees focused on action throughout the first year of the program. Before the SCE Meeting on the General Status and Operation of the Convention in May, the ICBL sent a letter to all states parties highlighting issues of concern to the ICBL.

ICBL members also sent letters to government representatives on the occasions of the Organization of American States General Assembly, the Organization of African Unity Summit and the Assembly of African Francophone Parliamentarians.

The ICBL issued two action alerts, one an open letter to Russian President Vladimir Putin, expressing our "gravest concern at recent reports that Russia intends to mine its border with Georgia," and the other a campaign for increased treaty ratification before the Second Meeting of States Parties (SMSP) in September 2000. A large delegation of campaigners, deminers, survivors and Landmine Monitor researchers from around the world will attend the SMSP. In addition to launching *Landmine Monitor Report 2000*, the ICBL will organize exhibitions, briefings, film screenings and other media events. ●

Worldwide action to universalize and implement the Mine Ban Treaty



Above: Australian artwork collected for the *USA Ban Landmines Today* call for posters.

Left: Cyclists mark the first anniversary of the Mine Ban Treaty entry-into-force in Thailand.