

Ratification: The Campaign Continues

For the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the road to nations signing the Ottawa Convention began many years ago. Active in conflict zones around the world, the ICRC war surgeons found themselves treating an increasing number of mine victims in the early 1990's, including an appalling proportion of civilians. This reality was a stark motivator behind a comprehensive call to action.

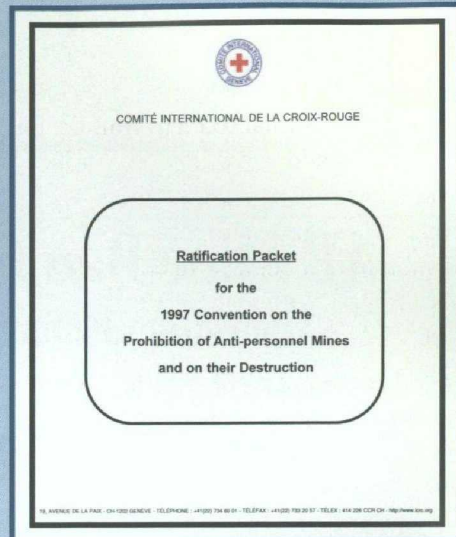
An international symposium on landmines held in Montreux, Switzerland, in April 1993 brought together legal, medical and military experts from interested governments, agencies and organizations. In February 1994, the ICRC launched its first-ever public advocacy campaign against landmines using the slogan "Landmines Must be Stopped."

In keeping with its mandate for the development and promotion of international humanitarian law, the ICRC and the entire International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement have been actively involved in the drive to impose a total ban on anti-personnel mines. This was done through public awareness campaigns and by

encouraging diplomatic and military circles to support the ICRC effort.


Following the signature of the Ottawa Convention, the ICRC endeavor will continue in order to: support international response for the earliest possible entry-into-force of the Convention; to co-ordinate and improve the care given to victims; and extend preventive mine-awareness programs.

The ICRC, after consultations with the Treaty Section of the United Nations (UN) Office of Legal Affairs in New York, has developed a reference document to facilitate the process of adherence to the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction. The ICRC prepared Ratification Packets in seven languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. They contain summaries of the Convention and model instruments of ratification or accession. The Ratification Packets, which were distributed to the representatives of the states attending the Convention Signing Conference and Mine Action Forum in Ottawa, describe the procedure which most states will need to follow to sign and ratify or accede



to the Convention and implement its provisions.

The ICRC also distributed Ratification Packets through all its delegations and 186 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and directly through meetings of the UN and regional organizations. In 1998, the ICRC will be promoting universalization and ratification through seminars for military and political officials from 19 European and Asian countries.

Ratification Packets can be obtained at any Red Cross national office near you. 

Judith Lavoie, Canadian Red Cross

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The Convention will also promote mine clearance and victim assistance to mine victims thereby contributing significantly to our African renaissance efforts," said South Africa's Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo.

One hundred and twenty-two states signed the Convention when it first opened for signature last December. There are now 131 signatories and, compared to many other treaties, the pace of ratification has been very rapid, signalling the continued strong international political and public momentum behind the ban.

Countries that have ratified the ban are: Andorra, Austria, Bahamas, Belize, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Fiji, the Former

Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Germany, Grenada, The Holy See, Hungary, Ireland, Jamaica, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Mozambique, Niue, Norway, Peru, Samoa, San Marino, South Africa, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, the United Kingdom, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

Entry-into-force will also lead to the First Meeting of the States Parties, expected in mid-1999. At that meeting, countries that are party to the Convention will gather to review progress to date in implementing the Convention and set new goals for increased international co-operation to meet the humanitarian challenges of AP mines.

The four Ministers called upon all countries to join them in becoming States Parties to the Convention and pledged to work together to promote effective global mine action. 

News from the Field


Bosnia: Integrated Mine Action

Canada has earmarked \$10 million for a five-year program to address the humanitarian impact of landmines in Bosnia. Landmines remain a pernicious obstacle to economic recovery, refugee resettlement and stability for victims of the war. Despite our relatively large contribution, the magnitude of the landmine problem is such that Canada cannot make a decisive impact without the support of other donors. For this reason, we are working closely with Norway and Austria in Bosnia, and hope to co-operate with other countries where possible.

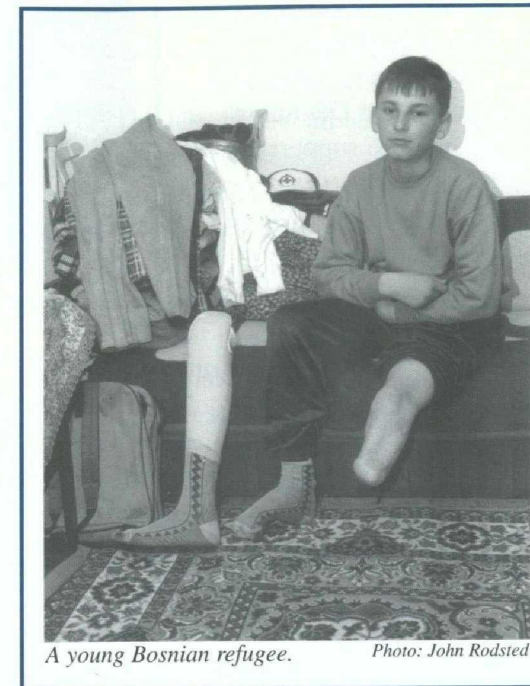
Bosnia is a unique operating environment for Canada. Approximately 900 local deminers are trained in humanitarian standards of mine clearance, but only a small portion are active at any given time, despite the various demining organizations operating in the country. With the recent signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Entity Armed Forces and the

Bosnia Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BHMIC), 450 indigenous military deminers have agreed to work to the humanitarian standards of the United Nations in priority areas designated by the BHMIC.

To accommodate the unique needs and capacities in Bosnia, Canada has developed an integrated, horizontal mine action program. It relies upon existing resources using the respective strengths of the BHMIC, Stabilization Force (SFOR), and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to ensure maximum effectiveness and coherence. It also supports activities across the spectrum of mine action, from mine awareness to surveying, quality assurance, mine clearance and rehabilitation of victims.

The ultimate goal of the program is to assist Bosnia in developing and maintaining an independent capacity to address the landmine problem over the long term. 

Canada's Mine Action Team



A young Bosnian refugee. Photo: John Rodsted


Stockpile Destruction: Destroying Mines Before They Reach the Ground

Canada attaches a high priority to stockpile destruction and is looking to develop, with other partners, a consortia approach to address the stockpile issue in a range of countries around the world. With tens of millions of anti-personnel (AP) mines in the global stockpile, the cost of destroying mines on the shelf is low, compared to the cost of clearing mines out of the ground which can be over \$1 000 per mine.

The destruction of stockpiled AP mines is also an obligation for signatories under Article 4 of the Ottawa Convention. Further, State Parties in a position to do so are obliged in Article 6 to provide assistance for the destruction of stockpiles.

Canada believes that, with a partnership of donors and a clear willingness on the part of the state possessing the stockpile, stockpiles can effectively be destroyed before they reach the ground.

Canadian assistance for stockpile destruction will be linked to a commitment from the state holding the stockpile to adhere to the terms of the Ottawa Convention by signing and eventually ratifying the Convention.

Canada has already initiated discussions with the Ukraine on stockpile destruction and possible Canadian assistance. 

Canada's Mine Action Team