

ONE YEAR LATER...



DPA/MAFC

Top: UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy at the signing of the Convention.

Below: Removing a fragmentation mine in Bosnia.



John Rodsted

required forty country ratifications in early September, making it the most rapidly ratified multilateral treaty in history. A

total of 133 countries have now signed or acceded to the convention which will become international law March 1, 1999.

The question remains: Is the Convention working? Let's look at the facts.

The destruction of vast stockpiles of anti-personnel mines held by governments has begun. Over 11 million stockpiled mines in 12 countries will have been destroyed by the end of this year. Even non-signatories are swayed by the moral pressure of the Ottawa Convention and its humanitarian objectives: The United States has announced that it will sign the convention by 2006 and has already begun destroying significant portions of its national stockpiles. Russia has begun destroying its

stockpiles and plans to stop production of anti-personnel blast mines, which represent 90 percent of its stocks.

Moreover, the once flourishing international trade in anti-personnel mines appears to have all but ceased. Fewer than

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fifteen countries have yet to renounce production of AP mines. Of the traditional exporters, almost all have ceased export.

But there have also been disappointments. The recent use of landmines in Angola and Kosovo has justifiably attracted international condemnation. The flooding and landslides caused by Hurricane Mitch have scattered tens of thousands of previously contained landmines, adding further to the dangers and misery being endured by the people of Nicaragua and Honduras.

Moreover, the optimism of Ottawa Convention supporters

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has been tempered by the reality that landmines continue to take thousands of lives and limbs in parts of the world that are struggling to return to the path of sustainable peace and development - Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, Chechnya and Mozambique.

And so the costly and dangerous task of clearing mine-infested land continues. Over the past year, Canada and our partners have mobilized significant new resources to support mine action programs in dozens of countries. Integrated victim assistance and mine clearance programs have been launched by Canada in Bosnia and Mozambique. We continue to support multilateral efforts in Afghanistan and Cambodia. Additional programs are being

developed in Asia, Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe.

A year after the Ottawa Conference, much has been done to turn our vision of a mine free world into a concrete reality for millions of people who live with the threat of

mines every day. While the Ottawa Convention provides deadlines for action to clear mines and destroy stockpiles, the Convention will only be as successful as the political will and resources mobilized and committed to its implementation. ●

Landmine Monitor research kicks off

Landmine Monitor, the initiative by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) to monitor compliance with the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, held its first major meeting in Dublin, Ireland from September 15 to 18. 150 NGO participants from 60 countries came together to exchange information, assess the current state of research and data gathering, attend training

criteria. Over \$200,000 in fiscal grants is allocated for research.

Researchers will participate in a second meeting in Ottawa on December 1-2 to present detailed outlines of their projects and report any initial findings. The meeting will help Landmine Monitor to standardize methodology, reporting and quality.



workshops and regional sessions and discuss the development of common research methods and reporting mechanisms.

Landmine Monitor aims to release its first annual report at the First Meeting of States Parties in Maputo in May, 1999.

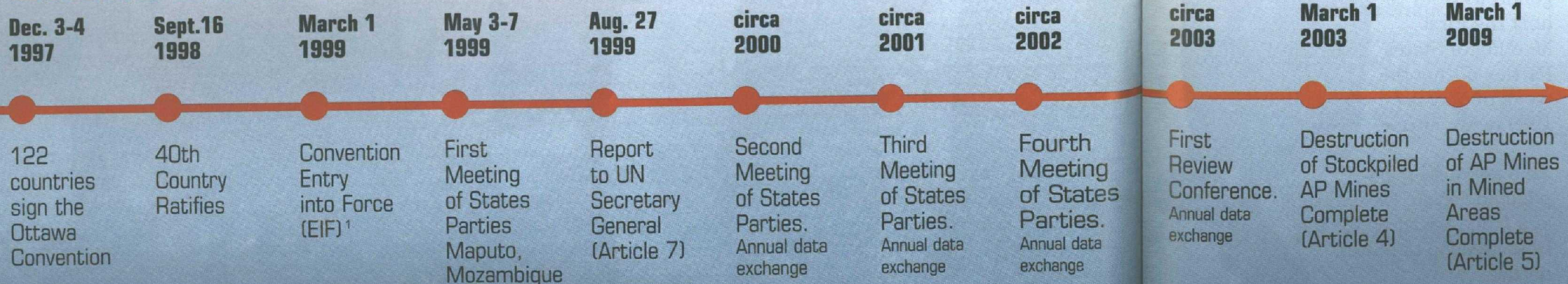
After the meeting, a mass mailing of research application packets was sent out soliciting research proposals.

To participate in Landmine Monitor, or for more information, contact: Human Rights Watch, 1522 K St. NW, # 910, Washington, DC, 20005, USA, Tel: (202) 371-6592; Fax: (202) 371-0124. Or, Mines Action Canada, 1 Nicholas St., suite 1210, Ottawa, ON, K1N 7B7, Canada. Tel: (613) 241-3777 ●

On October 25-26, 1998, the Landmine Monitor Core Group - a five-member body - met in Brussels to examine research grant applications. The Core Group assessed the applications against a rigorous set of

By Mary Wareham, Human Rights Watch

Ottawa Convention time line



¹ General Obligations for those countries which have ratified before March 1, 1999 include a ban on the development, use, stockpiling and transfer of AP mines. (Article 2)