

Moving Forward

Jordan Signs Treaty

NGOs Create Momentum in Region

The first regional meeting on landmine injury and rehabilitation in the Middle East, "Surviving the Scourge of Landmines," took place in Amman, Jordan on July 11-12, under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein. The event was organized by the Landmine Survivors Network and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), and was sponsored by Norway and Canada.

Queen Noor announced Jordan's signature to the Ottawa Convention during the opening plenary. On August 12, Jordan became the 129th country to sign the Ottawa AP mine Ban Convention. In the region, only four other countries have signed the Convention: Yemen (who has ratified), Algeria, Qatar and Tunisia. Jordan's commitment to the anti-personnel mine issue and adherence to the Convention will

surely spark the enthusiasm of other countries in the Middle East, and, it is hoped, will provoke a snowball effect that will encourage other countries to sign the Convention. There is a strong commitment and momentum amongst the non-governmental organization (NGO) community in the region to approach individual governments to ban the use, production, export and stockpiling of landmines.

The Landmine Survivors Network introduced a bill of rights for survivors of AP mines. Governments and international agencies, NGOs and religious authorities in the region are committed to the establishment of national and regional rehabilitation

centres, the promotion of legislation and the implementation of policies that will provide affordable, quality care and effective treatment to mine victims and disabled persons.

Canada's Mine Action Team



Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan

Vienna Conference Examines Convention Implementation

The "European Seminar on the Implementation of Treaty Obligations with Regard to Mines in the Armed Forces," co-hosted by Austria and Italy, was held in Vienna in July, 1998. The seminar was the first of its kind organized by ministries of defence for military experts, and 33 European countries participated.

Against the background of the rapid ratification process of the Ottawa Convention, the seminar considered the challenges and objectives of the Convention. It demonstrated and evaluated methods of mine detection, clearance and destruction, as well as focused on international co-ordination and co-operation in mine action. Practical experience on the destruction of stocks was exchanged, taking into account environmental concerns and cost-effectiveness.

The seminar provided a useful forum for discussing the use of military expertise for humanitarian mine-clearance in a co-ordinated and coherent way. It also offered participants concrete methods for reaching the objectives of the Ottawa Convention.

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The ICBL Launches the Landmines Monitor Initiative

From September 15 to 18, representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and country campaigners met in Dublin, Ireland to discuss *Landmines Monitor* — the civil society based reporting network for monitoring nations' compliance with the 1997 Ottawa Convention and other aspects of the global landmines crisis. The *Landmines Monitor* initiative seeks to complement the existing state-based reporting and compliance mechanisms established by the treaty. It aims to provide a constant flow of standardized and high quality data from the field on the nature of the anti-personnel mine crisis in all its aspects. The findings of the reporting network will be presented in an annual report.

Landmines Monitor requires the participation of mine-affected communities, International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) country campaigns and NGOs, international organizations, the media and ordinary citizens. The Ottawa Convention would not have been achieved without the support and work of people living in mine-affected areas, and people everywhere must work together to monitor compliance.

Landmines Monitor hopes to draw on the experience of monitoring other conventions and treaties relating to women, the environment, human rights, peace and

disarmament. While *Landmines Monitor* is an initiative by the ICBL, overall responsibility for developing and co-ordinating the *Landmines Monitor* system and for producing the annual report rests with a "Core Group" consisting of Handicap International, Human Rights Watch, Kenyan Coalition Against Landmines, Mine Action Canada and Norwegian Peoples' Aid. This Core Group works with a larger "Working Group" of NGOs that intend to play a very active role in *Landmines Monitor*.

In addition to exchanging information, assessing what research and data-gathering has taken place, and identifying what gaps and needs exist, the *Landmines Monitor* meeting also included training workshops and emphasize the development of common research methods and reporting mechanisms. To participate in *Landmines Monitor* or to obtain more information, please contact: any of the Landmines Monitor Core Group Members, Human Rights Watch at 1522 K St. NW #910, Washington, DC, 20005, USA, tel: (202) 371-6592, fax: (202) 371-0124 — or Mines Action Canada (MAC) at 1 Nicholas St., Suite 1210, Ottawa, ON, K1N 7B7, tel: (613) 234-6755, e-mail: macpaul@web.net.

By Mary Wareham, Human Rights Watch

Moscow Regional Conference: New Steps for a Mine-Free Future

From May 27 to 29, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, in co-operation with International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, hosted the first-ever international non-governmental organization conference on landmines in Russia. Participants came from across the territory of the former Soviet Union, and from as far away as Australia and Pakistan. The focus of the meeting was to encourage participants to embrace the concept of a total and unconditional ban on landmines and to join the Ottawa Process.

Progress in this region, both in terms of a campaign and in the evolution of policy, will be made in small, but significant, steps. For example,

Russia declared another five-year moratorium on the export of dumb mines (i.e., mines that are not equipped with a self-destruction mechanism and are invisible to mine detectors). Russia is also destroying 500 000 anti-personnel mines this year, and is expanding its

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These small steps might encourage campaigners and advocates to speak up on this issue for the first time, or give birth to a new campaign or humanitarian NGOs.

The value of this type of conference is that a range of participants from the region, including NGOs, veterans groups, church organizations, doctors and government officials, had their first opportunity to: focus on the issue of landmines; discuss the humanitarian impact of landmines; and examine the options available to them to contribute to global efforts to eliminate these inhumane weapons forever.

Canada's Mine Action Team