

January 31, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

CC: Secretary of State John Kerry
Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel
National Security Advisor Susan Rice

Re: 1997 Mine Ban Treaty

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to urge you to promptly conclude your administration's review of US policy on banning antipersonnel landmines and to announce that you have determined that it is in the best interests of the United States to join the world's 161 States Parties to the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty.

Doing so would allow the United States to explain its decision at the Mine Ban Treaty's Third Review Conference, which opens in Maputo, Mozambique on June 23, 2014. Your administration's review is now into its fifth year, and it is hard to understand why the process should be delayed any further, particularly after the administration said more than one year ago that the review would conclude "soon."

We again urge that the outcome of the review should be a decision to join the Mine Ban Treaty as soon as possible, to prohibit the use of antipersonnel mines immediately, and to begin destruction of all stocks of antipersonnel mines.

Since the US policy review began in 2009:

- The Obama Administration has received letters of support for the US to join the Mine Ban Treaty from treaty States Parties, 68 Senators, 16 Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, key NATO allies, senior military veterans, dozens of leaders from non-governmental organizations, victims of US landmines, and more than 200,000 concerned Americans;
- Mine Ban Treaty special envoy Prince Mired of Jordan and representatives of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines have met with US officials in dozens of capitals around the world to discuss the need for the US to join the Mine Ban Treaty;
- The US has participated as an observer in every meeting of the Mine Ban Treaty since the Second Review Conference in Cartagena, Colombia in December 2009;
- US officials have expressed concern at new use of antipersonnel landmines by states not party to the treaty.



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Since the treaty entered into force on March 1, 1999, and with the assistance of the US and other donor nations, large tracts of land have been cleared of mines and returned to productive use. The number of civilians killed and wounded by mines each year has fallen dramatically. More than 46 million antipersonnel mines have been destroyed from stockpiles and use of the weapon even by those not party to the treaty is rare.

Nearly all of the 35 states that have not yet joined are in *de facto* compliance with most of the treaty's provisions. The United States has not used antipersonnel mines since 1991 (in the first Gulf War), has not exported them since 1992, has not produced them since 1997, and is the biggest donor to mine clearance programs around the world. The Clinton Administration in 1997 set the objective of joining the Mine Ban Treaty in 2006, but the Bush Administration reversed course in 2004.

We have repeatedly urged the US to fulfill its long-held intention to join the Mine Ban Treaty. US accession would help to convince the other countries not yet party to join, strengthening the norm against the weapon, thereby ensuring it is not used in the future and creates no additional humanitarian and socio-economic harm.

Two decades ago, in 1994, President William J. Clinton became the first world leader to call for the "eventual elimination" of antipersonnel landmines. We hope to see you fulfill this pledge by committing to ban these inhumane weapons that are no longer essential to our security or the security of our allies. Now is the time to act by joining the Mine Ban Treaty.

Sincerely,

Stephen D. Goose, Executive Director
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George Cody, PhD, Executive Director
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