

Subject: **Reject landmines - Stay in the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention**

Dear Leader

I am writing as a member of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, co-laureate of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize, to express our deep concern over your country considering to withdraw from the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (Ottawa Treaty). We urge you to remain committed to this vital treaty, which has saved countless lives and strengthened global norms against indiscriminate weapons.

While we fully acknowledge your country's legitimate security concerns, reintroducing anti-personnel mines would be a flawed, ineffective, and dangerous response. Here is why staying in the Convention is the right choice:

- **Humanitarian Impact:** Anti-personnel mines are indiscriminate, causing long-term devastation to civilians. Studies show that 85% of victims are civilians, with 40% being children. These weapons continue to kill and maim long after the end of the conflict, leaving a legacy of suffering for generations.
- **Moral and Legal Parallels:** Like chemical and biological weapons, anti-personnel mines were banned due to their inability to distinguish between soldiers and civilians. Their primary victims are innocent civilians.
- **Questionable Military Utility:** Modern warfare has outgrown anti-personnel landmines, and their military effectiveness remains highly disputed. Withdrawing from the Convention and reverting to their use would signal desperation and weakness rather than strength.
- **International Consensus:** The vast majority of the world—165 states, including all EU and NATO members (except the U.S.)—reject their use. The only governments still using these weapons are Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, and Russia. Aligning with their practices would severely harm your country's international reputation.
- **Global Humanitarian Commitment:** Withdrawal would undermine international humanitarian law and embolden actors who disregard global norms. It would be seen as a victory for those seeking to weaken international humanitarian commitments, like Russia.

We urge your government to consult with experts, humanitarian organizations, and civil society to understand better the impact mines have had on communities worldwide.

Rejecting anti-personnel mines is not just a legal obligation—it is a moral imperative.

Stay in the Convention. Stay on the right side of history. Protect civilians.

Sincerely,



Michael Schopf SJ, International Director, Jesuit Refugee Service

