

# **I**NTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO BAN LANDMINES AUSTRALIAN NETWORK INC

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**AUGUST 2002**

## **CANBERRA MARKS AUSTRALIA'S COMMITMENT TO MINE BAN TREATY.**

On the first of July the ACT Branch of ICBL Australian Network held a Public awareness event in the Canberra City centre, marking the third anniversary of Australia's entry into force of the Mine Ban Treaty. The Hon Graham Edwards MP, who launched the event, praised the significant role of non-government organisations in their efforts against Anti-Personnel mines, "I think there has been a tremendous partnership between government and non government organisations" he told the small crowd gathered in the winter sun.

"Having experienced first hand the trauma of a landmine, I'm in a good position to know the results and devastating injuries that occur," Mr Edwards said. He related that, as a soldier in Vietnam, access to medical support was nearby, but that it is unavailable to many civilian landmine casualties around the world.

Gaia Puleston read a speech for AUSTCARE's ACT Branch manager Stephanie Koorey, who was unable to attend due to illness. "In Afghanistan there are more landmines than flowers," began the speech that addressed the horror that landmines cause for returning refugees and displaced persons, and the work being done to address the problems. World Vision Australia's Susannah Bartlett spoke about the Destroy a Minefield program which World Vision runs in cooperation with AusAID. A representative from AusAID was also present and provided the event with a display and literature on how Australia's overseas aid program is involved in mine clearance, victim rehabilitation and landmine awareness.

On ending, the ACT Branch coordinator Loren Persi acknowledged all supporters, particularly mentioning the help of long-term supporters Caritas and the Medical Association for the Prevention of war. Mr. Persi announced that he was pleased to have the chance to thank and congratulate previous branch coordinators on the enormous efforts of their work, "When we reflect on the positive results today we bear witness to their achievements" he said.

The day was also an opportunity to continue public awareness of landmine issues in the capital by launching a campaign to build publicity of the ongoing problems before the next round of mine action funding allocations.

## **Fourth Meeting of States Parties**

The 4th Meeting of States Parties (4MSP) to the Ottawa Treaty will be held in Geneva 16-20 September. Government and campaigners for a ban on antipersonnel mines will discuss the implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty, now signed by 144 Countries.

Mark Zirnsak, contact person for the Victorian branch of the Network, will attend as part of the Landmine Monitor research group. John Scott Murphy from the NSW branch will represent the Network, and Patricia Pak Poy, National Coordinator will attend as part of the Australian Government Delegation.

ICBL groups are planning meetings around the sessions of the meeting.

A Roundtable on engaging Non-State Actors (NSAs) will also be held during the time of the 4MSP.

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## **EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR**



On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of July 2002 Landmine Action UK and Mines Action Canada on behalf of many Non Government Organisations (NGOs) including the ICBL - Australian Network presented a statement to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts on Explosive Remnants of War in Geneva.

The Statement emphasised the enduring impact that Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and in particular cluster submunitions have on post conflict communities.

The statement points out that “ Recent field research unambiguously concludes that communities take huge risks with ERW, risks where fear of death is overcome by the desire for a safe environment for their children and the need for economic security for their families.”

As many States Parties realise, NGO work in post conflict communities has demonstrated that all types of explosive munitions cause ERW incidents. An effective solution will necessitate measures that are both general and weapon specific.

It was welcome news that governments are beginning to acknowledge the problems arising from ERW and the need to address the issue.

The statement while recognising that States Parties need to find the appropriate balance between security needs and humanitarian concerns suggested three principles as the basis for legal measures to tackle the problem.

“ The first principle should be that the users of munitions take responsibility for, or provide assistance in , the clearance of unexploded ordnance.

Secondly, all information required to facilitate clearance should be provided immediately after hostilities cease - including types and numbers of ordnance used , geographical locations and render safe procedures.

Thirdly, the users of munitions likely to have a long-term impact should provide early and appropriate warnings to civilians.”

It was noted that to implement these principles “ political will, commitment to the principles of human security and the establishment of international norms are required.”

It was pleasing to see the statement taking a necessarily more immediate stand on cluster submunitions.

“Given the particular problems caused by cluster submunitions we once again call upon States to enact unilateral moratoria on the use production and transfer of cluster submunitions until the humanitarian concerns that arise from their use are addressed.”

Undoubtedly civil society’s awareness of the disastrous effects of ERW is increasing and hopefully the push for change that is gaining momentum will see Governments agree and implement an effective response to an evil that has already taken too many innocent lives.

*Gerald Hinton* S.A Coordinator.

### World Vision Qantas Study Tour to Cambodia

Six 40 Hour Famine Qantas Study Tour winners were selected to go to Cambodia in January 2002 to see World Vision's work first-hand. Travelling through Phnom Penh, Battambang & Siem Reap, they saw minefields being cleared through the Destroy a Minefield project, child labour projects, vocational rehabilitation centres, educational training centres, sponsor children, area development projects and more..

To see more about the experiences of these young people go to:-  
<http://www.wva.org.au/appeals/landmines2/qantas.asp>

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### **Landmine Monitor Launch**

The Australian launch of the Landmine Monitor 2002 (LM2002) will be done by Mrs Chris Gallus, Government Special Representative on Mine Action, on Friday 13 September at 11.45am - in the Cathedral Hall, 39 Wakefield Street Adelaide. All welcome.

The report on Australia was done by Shauna McGreevy and a team which included Heather Elliott, Lorel Thomas and Mark Zirnsak, all volunteers of the Victorian Branch, whose extensive research will be much appreciated.

### **Change of State Coordinators/Contacts**

**Victoria:** Mark Zirnsak from the Uniting Church Victorian office is replacing Shauna McGreevy who has resigned because of other commitments. Shauna was most active in developing branch activities while leading the research for the Monitor.

**ACT:** Loren Persi has re-launched the ACT branch with activities which includes forming a group at the Australian National University. Contact through ACFOA.

**NSW:** Denis Doherty, from the Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition (AABCC) is the new contact person. Thanks to Patricia Coyle RSCJ and John Scott Murphy (Caritas Australia ) for their coordination.

Thanks to all and to their supporting organisations

### **A Note From Afghanistan**

John Rodsted, known for his great work with the camera for ICBL in many hot spots around the world, is in Afghanistan.

We are delighted to advise he has agreed to be our Guest Speaker for an Australian Tour later this year.

Here is an extract from a recent e-mail. " Off to Kandahar tomorrow and back here next week. Was on an amazing cluster strike two days ago. One unexploded BLU 97 every one to two metres. Twenty four visible in a ten by ten metre area and many more outside of that. Walked over the hill and found eight, 250kilogram aircraft bombs, rockets, clusters etc. In amongst all of this are the Koochis, the nomads. They are getting blown up regularly "

The program for John's Speaking Tour will be available after his return to Australia in late September. He is a speaker with a great story to tell. It will be an occasion not to be missed.

**ONE MILLION MARK REACHED**

The HALO Trust has just passed the million mark for mines and UXO cleared.

They are hopeful that the second million mark will be reached more quickly.

The Halo demining team currently consists of 5,000 deminers, 120 heavy machines and 10 dogs

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**Austcare Refugee Week 5-13 October 2002**

This year the South Australian Branch of the ICBL - Australian Network is organising two events for Thursday the 10<sup>th</sup> October. At 11.00 a.m. in Rundle Mall a shoe tree will symbolise the limbs and lives lost to landmines. At 7.45p.m. at Bethlehem Hall, Sudholz Place Adelaide, a Seminar "Cluster Bombs and Unexploded Ordnance a Growing Threat to Refugees and Post Conflict Communities" will be held. This will feature a newly released video "Bombies", graphically showing the people of Laos living with the constant danger of cluster bombs

**For more details on the SA functions ring Coordinator Gerald Hinton on 08 83372250**

**EAST TIMOR TO SIGN MINE BAN TREATY**

The Mine Ban Treaty was part of a package of international treaties that the Council of Ministers of East Timor (now the Cabinet) approved for signing as part of the country's Independence Day ceremonies of 20 May 2002.

Below is a sample letter to President Xanana Gusmao congratulating him on this fact and wishing him well in his future leadership of East Timor.

You can help the campaign towards a mine free world by sending this letter.

*His Excellency  
President Xanana Gusmão  
C/o UNTAET  
P.O. Box 2436  
Darwin NT  
Australia*

*HE President Xanana Gusmão,*

*I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the fact that you intend to join the Mine Ban Treaty, and to urge for a swift accession.*

*I also wish to congratulate East Timor on its independence. We look forward to your leadership on this and other important humanitarian issues in the region.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*(Your Name)*