

# INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO BAN LANDMINES AUSTRALIAN NETWORK INC

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## LAUNCH OF LANDMINE MONITOR 2002

OCTOBER 2002

On September 13 2002 the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) released at locations throughout the world the fourth annual report of the Landmine Monitor initiative, the 923 page Landmine Monitor Report 2002: Towards a Mine Free World.

This is the most comprehensive report on the global landmine situation, containing information on every country in the world with respect to mine use, production, trade, stockpiling, humanitarian mine clearance, mine risk education and mine survivor assistance.

The premiere Australian release took place in Adelaide where the Hon. Chris Gallus MP, Australia's Special Representative for Mine Action, officially launched the global report. Mrs Gallus reiterated the government's commitment to the removal of landmines and took the opportunity to announce that the Federal Government is to allocate a further \$1.5 million to help Afghanistan with mine action.

Australia is not immune to the impact of the global landmine crisis. In January this year an Australian SAS soldier was injured after stepping on a landmine in Afghanistan. And in February another Australian soldier, also serving in Afghanistan, was killed after his vehicle hit a landmine. He was the first Australian to die in combat since the Vietnam War when over one hundred Australian military personnel died as a result of landmine injuries.

According to the report, new casualties due to land-

mine casualties in the Asia region continue to report casualties: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

The number of new mine/UXO casualties each year is now estimated by Landmine Monitor to be some 15-20,000 per year. The majority of new casualties continues to be civilians.

Landmine Monitor identified at least 7,987 reported new casualties in 2001, roughly the same number as in 2000, but many casualties continue to go unreported. In Afghanistan alone, 1,368 new landmine casualties were reported in 2001.

"While the number of reported new mine casualties in some of the worst affected countries has fallen in recent years, landmines continue to take an appalling civilian toll. The needs of hundreds of thousands of landmine survivors around the world will have to be met for decades to come," said Sheree Bailey of Handicap International Belgium, coordinator for victim assistance for Landmine Monitor, who returned home to take part in the Adelaide release.

According to the report, progress has been made. More than 34 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines have been destroyed by 61 states, including 7 million in the past year. The export of antipersonnel landmines has nearly ceased, the number of countries producing the weapon has decreased from 55 to 14, mine action programs have expanded and the use of

## ACFOA Human Rights Award Granted to Sister Patricia Pak Poy



The Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) has granted the 2002 ACFOA Human rights Award to Sister Patricia Pak Poy, RSM, AM, the National Coordinator of the Australian Network of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

Sister Patricia has coordinated the Australian Campaign since its inception in 1993. Her community work in the Landmine Campaign has been recognised by her appointment as a Member of the Order of Australia, by the RSL 1998 ANZAC Peace Prize, and by awards from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and the Medical Association for the Prevention of War.

Sister Patricia was unable to be present to accept the ACFOA Award because of a commitment to attend the Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty in Geneva as a Member of the Australian Government Delegation. Her Acceptance Speech (presented in her absence) which is indicative of why she is such a worthy recipient of the Award is presented in full.

*“As I have increased in age, experience and the hope for wisdom, I have come to realise that among us human beings - men and women and the young of us - common ground is wholesome and holy ground; and human rights and responsibilities to and for one another are our universal common ground.*

*I am honoured to be granted the ACFOA Human Rights Award not so much as an award of merit, but as an acknowledgment of the importance of the work done and issues of justice addressed with so many colleagues, co-workers and volunteers over the years.*

*I am pleased to accept the Award because it recognises the significance of the work already done by these same colleagues, co-workers, volunteers and supporters with me - hundreds of them - for and with and among those of us who at one time or another have been vulnerable, oppressed or under threat, and*

*who at another time may have been able to help bring about some social change, to make a more wholesome world in which to live together - safer, free of mines and cluster bombs and persecution; freer through mutual acceptance, education and finding a voice in the political system; healthier through better access to services; and more compassionate by sharing a little of life with one another.*

*Catherine McAuley, 170 years ago founded the Sisters Of Mercy in Ireland, then under Penal Law. Her Foundation was to work among those who were poor, sick and ignorant with a special care for the education of women, and for the care of the sick in their homes. The work was on the cutting edge of society at the time just as our work and that of ACFOA and its members though sometimes different is still on the cutting edge of society. And the edge of international relations and mutual understanding is even sharper. The common ground of humanity and the good of people remains, and continues to challenge us all.*

*I regret that I am not present to accept the*

### **An Unintended Helping Hand.**

As planned the SA Branch erected a pile of shoes of all varieties in Adelaide's Rundle Mall on the Thursday of Refugee Week to remind people of landmine victims.

What wasn't planned, was the help provided to some of Adelaide's street people who arrived at the end of the display to check out the pile for a

### The German Initiative to Ban Landmines

Congratulations to the German Campaigners whose persistent efforts have led the German government to move towards *an effect-oriented definition* of landmines .

In June 2002 the German Parliament has passed a resolution that asks the German Government, among other things, to :-

- influence Ottawa member states to share the position, that an AVM with sensitive fuzes which can be detonated by a person has to be regarded as an APM, and means that these mines are covered by the convention.
- work towards a ban within the CCW context on all AVM with sensitive fuzes which can be unintentionally detonated by a person
- to remove - step by step - all AVMs from German stockpiles



#### NEW

Visit the new web site of ICBL Australia Network Inc at <http://australia.icbl.org>

### Humanitarian Mine Removal, Environmental Hazards and Environmental Awareness

The international campaign has long stated that landmines create environmental disasters. They can leave affected land inhabitable and unusable, harmful to people and animals. For De-miners, the mines themselves may be only one of many environmental hazards in the course of their work. Other unexploded munitions can also pose serious risks. Cluster bomblets (aerially-delivered explosive devices) and armaments containing radioactive depleted uranium for ballast weight are some of the nasties to be encountered. De-mining is a job with complex risks.

Each piece of equipment employed may have drawbacks as well as its good points. Dogs, being only human, need rest too. Some metal detectors have a gap in their sensor field at the front of each arced swing of the detector head. This anomaly has led to injuries when detectors have knocked against the protruding trigger of bounding mines, which stick out from the ground at about the height the detector is swung back and forth.

Amongst these difficulties and the nitty-gritty of occupational safety and survival are the ecological guidelines for de-mining, laid out in technical notes from The Geneva International Centre For Humanitarian De-mining (GICHD) The primary goals are to preserve and care for resources such as; water, fish, vegetation, herds, soil and archaeological and cultural assets.

The GICHD notes recommend negotiation with local people and authorities on these matters. If archaeological artifacts are uncovered de-mining should cease until proper evaluation can be undertaken. Techniques for the preservation of vegetation and topsoil to avoid erosion are outlined, and the use of chemical defoliants to clear land for de-mining is highly discouraged.

The efforts taken by the de-mining profession to conserve remaining resources in mine affected places are encouraging because the impact of landmines is spread throughout entire communities and economies. The technical notes do emphasize personnel safety and the “immediate humanitarian imperative to save life” above all else.

Complex and difficult, the exceptional work done by humanitarian de-miners around the world must be

**You can help to work towards a mine free world. Take Action Today.**

## 4<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE OTTAWA TREATY (4MSP)– GENEVA, 16-20 SEPTEMBER 2002



- The Fourth Meeting of States Parties (4MSP) brought together representatives of 90 countries, some 20 observer countries and 100 participants from the International Campaign and its national campaigns, including 8 landmine survivors from Africa through the Raising the Voices Project. Members of the Australian Delegation were Ambassador Michael Smith, Mr Peter Truswell, Dr Geoffrey Shaw from the Permanent Mission in Geneva, and Sr Patricia Pak Poy RSM from the Australian Network of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). John Scott Murphy and Mark Zirnsak attended for the Australian Network and Landmine Monitor respectively.
- Observers from our region came from Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore, and Papua New Guinea
- Australia is to be co-Rapporteur for the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance for the next year, and Co-Chair for the following year leading to the first Review in 2004.
- Thailand is to host the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties 2003
- The ICBL Delegation was led by Steve Goose and included Susan Walker and representatives of the Working Groups. Australia was represented by John Scott Murphy and Mark Zirnsak. John Rosted and Sheree Bailey, both Australians, were also involved in the ICBL activities – the photographic exhibition on Afghanistan and the Landmine



A Demining demonstration in Geneva.  
Photo: Kjell Knudson

### Refugee Week

- As part of AUSTCARE's Refugee Week events in the ACT, John Rodsted, ICBL campaign photographer addressed two engagements in Canberra. Both audiences found John's use of projected imagery, combined with down to earth talk about the global landmines situation and history, captivating. Many questions revealed the extent to which many individuals are still unsure of the crucial facts about AP mines and ERW. The first presentation entitled 'Afghanistan: A year after the headlines' was introduced by AUSTCARE's ACT manager Stephanie Koorey and Chairman of the ACT Refugee Week Committee Professor William Maley. Afghanistan's Ambassador to Australia considerably attended and several members of the Canberra Afghan community were also amongst the audience. The next day at the Australian National University John delivered a powerful lecture at a presentation titled 'Debilitating Debris: the enduring consequences of modern conflicts' which was supported by the ANU's Centre for Arab and Islamic studies. Although the crowds were small the interest was towering and the ACT Branch of the Australian Network thanks John for the energy, inspiration and good humor he spreads as he goes. John has just returned from Afghanistan and 4MSP and his real life experiences are vivid and spellbinding.
- David Johnson will be talking on Landmines and Explosive Remnants of War at two Refugee Week luncheons, 18 October in Rockhampton and **26 October in Innisfail- Queensland.**

### John Rodsted in Tasmania

John's visit to Tasmania is from 16 October to 22 October and he will be speaking in both Devonport and Hobart. The **Devonport Public Meeting**, with the topic of **How Safe is Afghanistan?** will be held **on October 22 from 7.30 to 9.00 in the Devonport Library, 21 Oldaker St Devonport.**