



**United Nations Office  
for Disarmament Affairs**

**Introductory remarks at side-event on “Reaffirming Commitment to the  
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention for the Protection of Civilians” held  
on the margins of the 2026 Protection of Civilians Week**

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As delivered



21 May 2026  
New York

Excellencies,

Dear colleagues,

Good morning.

Let me begin by thanking the Permanent Mission of Norway to the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross for convening this timely discussion, and for their continued leadership in strengthening the protection of civilians and in advancing humanitarian disarmament.

We meet today during the 2026 Protection of Civilians Week at a moment that compels us to confront an urgent reality:

- After years of decline, landmine casualties are rising again, many of which are children;
- Anti-personnel landmines continue to be used and produced by both States and non-State actors;
- And contamination remains widespread across nearly 60 countries with devastating humanitarian, social and economic consequences.

These are not abstract trends. They translate into lost lives, shattered communities, and diminished prospects for recovery and development.

Against this backdrop, we gather to consider what it truly means to reaffirm our commitment to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The Convention is a cornerstone of humanitarian disarmament. Rooted in international humanitarian law, it reflects the international community's resolve to place the protection of civilians at the center of disarmament and security.

For nearly three decades, it has delivered extraordinary results- saving countless lives, enabling the destruction of tens of millions of stockpiles, restoring land to productive uses, and supporting the reintegration of victims and their families.

It has also established a powerful global norm – that anti-personnel landmines are unacceptable under any circumstances.

Most recently, Croatia's declaration of being mine-free, after more than three decades stands as a powerful reminder - both of the long-lasting impact of these weapons, and of what sustained commitment can achieve.

These are hard-won achievements. But today, they can no longer be taken for granted. The Convention is under increasing strain.

Withdrawals, unilateral announcements of suspension, concerns regarding compliance and the real possibility of renewed use and production risk are eroding of a framework that has been established to protect civilians from indiscriminate and inhumane weapons.

But this trend does not occur in isolation. It reflects wider geopolitical dynamics, marked by heightened insecurities, ongoing conflicts, and increasing pressure on established international norms. It is also taking place against the backdrop of rising military expenditure and a growing reliance on militarized responses to security challenges.

In such a context, we must be clear about two fundamental things:

First, there can be no trade-off between security and respect for international humanitarian law. The protection of civilians is not a secondary consideration - it is a core obligation, especially in times of conflict.

Second, the military utility of anti-personnel landmines has always been limited and advances in weapon technologies have only made them more obsolete. Any perceived military utility is far outweighed by the massive humanitarian consequences.

Reaffirming our commitment is therefore not about celebrating past achievement alone, it is about making deliberate choices.

It means upholding the integrity of the Convention.

It means rejecting any attempts to justify the reintroduction of these weapons.

It means condemning any use or production of anti-personnel mines by any actor under any circumstances.

It means committing sustained political will and resources to mine action, including clearance, victim assistance and universalization.

Encouragingly, progress continues. Lebanon's accession to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is a significant and principled step taken in a complex security environment. It sends a clear message: even under pressure and especially during an ongoing conflict, the protection of civilians and respect for humanitarian norms must remain a priority.

At the same time, the outcomes of the most recent Meeting of States Parties have highlighted both the resilience of the Convention and the urgency of reinforcing it. Multilateral fora are critical spaces where norms are upheld, commitments are renewed, and collective resolve is strengthened.

The United Nations remains fully committed to supporting these efforts.

Last year, the Secretary-General's campaign to uphold humanitarian disarmament treaties and accelerate mine action served as an urgent call to counter normative backsliding, to re-energize political commitments and to reaffirm the primacy of civilian protection.

We will continue to work with Member States and partners to preserve the integrity of the Convention and to promote its universalization, to advance full implementation and engage constructively with those that have stepped back from their commitments.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is more than a legal instrument. It is a reflection of our collective humanity and of the kind of security we choose to uphold.

As we approach its thirtieth anniversary next year, let us choose to reaffirm our commitment towards a mine-free world - not only in words, but through sustained political will and concrete action.

And let us ensure that anti-personnel landmines are consigned to history - decisively and permanently.

I wish you a productive discussion and thank you very much for your attention.

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