

Joint Civil Society Statement on Ukraine's Unlawful Suspension of the Mine Ban Treaty

November 29, 2025



UN, Japanese, and Ukrainian deminers demonstrate new mine action technologies in Ukraine.

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As civil society coalitions and organizations working to reduce the catastrophic impact of war through humanitarian disarmament, we are deeply alarmed by Ukraine's decision to unlawfully suspend the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty. Similar to the highly regrettable withdrawals by the Baltic States, Finland, and Poland, this step blatantly contradicts the treaty's core humanitarian mission, which as set out in its preamble seeks "to put an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines, that kill or maim hundreds of people every week, mostly innocent and defenceless civilians and especially children...."

Importantly, the treaty does not permit suspension of its obligations, including during times of conflict.¹ Allowing this unilateral suspension sets a dangerous precedent that could weaken respect for any instrument of international humanitarian law during armed conflict in any part of the world. We urge all countries to make clear publicly and as part of the final report of the next Meeting of States Parties, scheduled for December 1-5, that suspension is not permitted under the treaty.

¹ Human Rights Watch and Harvard Law School's International Human Rights Clinic, *Challenging Ukraine's Mine Ban Treaty "Suspension": A Humanitarian and Legal Imperative*, September 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/09/22/challenging-ukraines-mine-ban-treaty-suspension> (accessed November 20, 2025).

Ukraine's decision not only undermines the Mine Ban Treaty's humanitarian and lifesaving purposes; it jeopardizes nearly three decades of hard-won multilateral progress to protect civilians in conflict, achieved through the collective work of states, civil society, the United Nations, and the International Committee of the Red Cross. It also disregards the repeated pleas of mine victims and affected communities, who have consistently called on states to never return to these archaic and devastating weapons.

We condemn in the strongest terms the Russian Federation's widescale and egregious disregard for the rules of international humanitarian law in its war against Ukraine. Russia's actions have resulted in devastating civilian suffering across Ukraine. And it is civilians, especially children, who will pay the heaviest price for this suspension and withdrawals.

A frequently invoked justification for withdrawing from or suspending the Mine Ban Treaty is the claim of unprecedented geopolitical challenges. Yet, we have faced challenging times before, after which states responded not by dismantling norms, but by strengthening international humanitarian law and the rules-based order. It is therefore deeply troubling that some states are now choosing to weaken the very system created to protect humanity and promote peace.

It matters how wars are fought. It matters that humanitarian principles are respected. And it matters that the rules-based system endures.

Signed by **77** organizations from **39** countries and the following humanitarian disarmament coalitions:

- International Campaign to Ban Landmines-Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC)
- Control Arms
- International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)
- International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW)
- Stop Killer Robots

To see a full list of international, regional, and national organizations that have signed, please visit: <https://humanitariandisarmament.org/2025/11/29/joint-civil-society-statement-on-ukraines-unlawful-suspension-of-the-mine-ban-treaty/>