



NEW ZEALAND
CAMPAIGN AGAINST LANDMINES

CALM newsletter

Part of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL)
Winner of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize

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Countdown to Nairobi! WANTED: A MINE FREE WORLD!

The Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World - or first Review Conference of the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty - takes place from 29 November to 3 December 2004 in Nairobi, Kenya. It is an historic occasion in the life of the Mine Ban Treaty, taking place halfway between the treaty's establishment under international law in 1999 and the deadline in 2009 for most member states to clear minefields.

100's of participants will take part in the formal proceedings and numerous side events: world leaders, NGOs, international organisations, landmine survivors, youth and UN agencies.

Beforehand, campaigners hope new countries will come on board the treaty. Anticipation of the event is also expected to galvanise other efforts.

The Summit will have far-reaching consequences. The ICBL is urging member states to adopt an ambitious action programme to finish the task of ridding the world of this evil scourge.

For info see: www.icbl.org

CALM NZ hopes to be represented in Nairobi by Convenor, Deborah Morris and Youth Coordinator, Chris Swain. If you would like to make a donation to assist us in meeting the cost of attendance any contributions would be most welcome.

Please send donations to Brian Hayes at PO Box 17-195, Wellington.

www.calm.org.nz

A 50 kilometre walk for 50 prosthetic legs as she turns 50!

Building on the efforts to fundraise for the Chiang Mai Prosthetic Foundation by participating in the River Kwai half marathon in Thailand last year, Wellington CALM member Leang Hayes is preparing to walk 50 kilometres to fundraise for 50 new legs for landmine victims.

The fundraising walk will take place on Saturday 21st November. At the end of the walk, Leang will also be celebrating her 50th birthday with friends, family and Campaign Against Landmines supporters.

A Thai cultural group will welcome Leang at St. Theresa's School Hall, Karori Road, where dinner and drinks will also be available.

Donations in support of the Chiang Mai Prosthetic Foundation are very welcome!

If you wish to join in the walk, make a donation, or attend the birthday celebrations please contact CALM Treasurer, Brian Hayes before 11 November:
Brian.hayes@justice.govt.nz

Three decades of turmoil

Deborah Morris, CALM Convenor and Landmine Monitor Researcher, describes her trip to Afghanistan in March 2004.

As I fly into Kabul I am struck by the harsh and arid landscape. Small concrete houses perch on rocky mountainsides. Everything is grey except the sprinkling of snow on top of the mountains.

The reading material in the seat pocket on my UN Humanitarian Air Services flight indicates some of the challenges the people of this land are facing. A laminated card describes the very real risk of encountering landmines and other explosive remnants of war in Afghanistan, and a report on the activities of the World Food Programme tells of poverty, illness and the efforts to improve the lives of Afghan people.

I prepare myself for the challenges ahead. I am visiting Afghanistan with other Landmine Monitor Researchers and staff from the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). Our objectives are to coordinate the Landmine Monitor reports for 2004 and engage in advocacy activities, including the launch a month of mine risk awareness education.

Visiting Afghanistan, I know I will come face to face with some of the gruesome realities of three decades of turmoil and conflict. I hope I will encounter the determined and hopeful human spirit I have witnessed in other mine-affected countries.

Mines were introduced into Afghanistan with the Soviet occupation from 1979-1989. They have also been used in the post-Soviet era, during factional fighting and since the international occupation of Afghanistan from October 2001. As a result, Afghanistan is one of the most-heavily mine-affected countries in the world and the presence of mines and other explosive remnants of war terrorises the Afghan people.

Afghanistan acceded to the Mine Ban Treaty in 2002 and its diplomats attending the 4th Meeting of States parties in Geneva described the urgent need for mine clearance. I recall hearing them urge the international community to support clearance as a means to creating peace and trust in the nation.

For Landmine Monitor Researchers to meet in Afghanistan demonstrates the commitment of the ICBL to support the nation and help highlight the progress Afghanistan has made in the past two years.

Touching down on Afghan soil one of the first things I observe is a mine clearance operation. The land surrounding Kabul airport is littered with mines. Clearance teams are working alongside the tarmac.



A landmine survivor receives rehabilitation support at the Red Cross hospital, Kabul

There is also evidence of the presence of international security forces - helicopters, tanks and other military vehicles are present on the tarmac.

The airport is full of men and I step out into a dry, dusty wind. The air is so dry my eyes and skin feel it immediately.

The city is full of holes ... buildings have been bombed but remain standing. People continue to live and work on the ground floor of buildings that are structurally unsound and crumbling because of the bombing.

I see few women on the streets, and most of them are wearing burkas tentatively making their way along the street. A few wear head scarves - reportedly a more recent development, following the fall of the Taliban. I am also struck by the sight of tiny children living with polio.

As our work gets underway, at a formal ceremony at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vice President His Excellency H.A. Arsalan tells us that many had hoped the killing or maiming of Afghans would stop with the end of the war but it hasn't stopped ... because of the landmines. Mines are slowing reconstruction efforts. Stockpiles are spread all over the country and they're in many different hands. Hundreds of new mine victims are created every month.

But progress is being made. International Security Armed Forces (ISAF), including New Zealand personnel, are helping to round up the weapons. Just days before we arrive in Kabul 2500 mine casings have been melted down to produce metal man-hole covers.

Everyday, 5000 deminers set about locating and removing mines from the ground. The men employed to do this work are fiercely proud of the contribution they're making to the security of their nation.

Afghanistan has established a Mine Action Authority and a Consultative Group on Mine Action to oversee the implementation of the MBT. It is clear that implementation will only be successful with financial and technical support from the international community.

Some of that support comes from organisations such as the Red Cross, working to provide prosthetic legs and rehabilitation to mine survivors and polio sufferers. Our visit to the Red Cross Hospital reveals the great work being done to train local people in the production of prosthetics, thereby providing much needed employment and income. Sadly, providing prosthetics is a growth industry.

A local museum provides a close-up look at the various weapons littering Afghanistan. Arms of all shapes and sizes are displayed ... and we see plenty of them on the streets too. Security guards stand outside unmarked embassy compounds in which government representatives live and work. We visited the Canadian compound, where guards carry some pretty serious-looking weaponry.

Similarly, on a visit to meet the King, who has recently returned from his thirty-year exile in Rome, security is extremely tight. Huge American soldiers stand guard and warn us we're liable to get shot if we set a foot wrong.

In each of the meetings and events in which we participate, I'm struck by the determination of the people to reconstruct this nation and make it mine-free. In one such meeting, the question is asked: How can the defenders of human rights still produce and use anti-personnel landmines? It is a fair question and one for which there is no simple answer.

What I can say with some confidence is that, even without some of the major states supporting the Ottawa Mine Ban process, the Treaty provides hope for nations such as Afghanistan and it is already making a measurable difference to the lives of many.

International Landmine News:

Landmine survivor athletes in Athens

Landmine survivors from Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Lebanon are amongst the athletes from around the world competing in the Athens Paralympics 17-28 September 2004.

One of **Afghanistan's** two disabled athletes is Qaher Gulam Hazarat (22), competing in the 50 km cycling event. Qaher has been a double amputee since he was injured in a land mine incident when he was 14 years old. In 1997 Qaher saw a boy riding a bicycle with one leg, asked him where he learned to do this and the boy led him to AABRAR (Afghan Amputee Bicyclists for Rehabilitation and Recreation, a member of the Afghan Campaign to Ban Landmines.)

Qaher participated in their Bicycle Rehabilitation Program in Jalalabad and has worked as a messenger for AABRAR's Disabled Cyclist Messenger Service since 2001.

Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) will send eight landmine survivor athletes to the Athens Paralympics, competing in athletics, sitting volleyball and swimming.

From **Lebanon**, Ali Srour (21) will compete in athletics, running the 100m and 200m. Ali lost his left leg below the knee in 2001.

Children's conference against landmines

More than 1300 Japanese youth and 18 young people (including landmine survivors) from Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Canada, Djibouti, France, Laos, Nepal and Rwanda met from 20-23 August in Shin-asahi Town, Japan for the "Ban Landmines! International Children's Conference" (BLICC).

The conference aimed to encourage young people to exchange views and action ideas and explore what they can concretely do to work towards a mine-free world. They discussed the necessity for mutual understanding and mine awareness education in all countries, and the consequences and widening impact of landmines.

Part of the conference declaration, to be submitted to the Japanese government and other states,

said that participants of the Ban Landmines International Children's Conference would like to encourage children:

- To continue creating peer-sharing activities such as BLICC and know that youth can act as a vital part of campaigns.
- To continue to take part in mine action activities including fund raising, mine awareness, and celebrations.
- To facilitate a mine ban network of the world's children and to continue to play a vital role in encouraging non-signatories to accede to the mine ban treaty.

Progress and disappointment in the American hemisphere

At the opening of the Americas Regional Mine Action Seminar in Quito, Ecuador, in August, the ICBL commended governments for their progress in eradicating antipersonnel mines and expressed its deep disappointment at the policies of Cuba and the United States. These remain the only countries in the region that have not yet joined the 1997 Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty.

On 27 February 2004, the Bush Administration announced its policy on landmines, which rejects the country's long-held goal of becoming part of the global ban of antipersonnel mines.

Eleven States Parties have completed destruction of their stockpiled antipersonnel mines (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Perú, and Venezuela).

Brazil is retaining 16,545 antipersonnel mines for training and research purposes as permitted under Article 3 of the Mine Ban Treaty, the highest of any State Party in the world.

Colombia remains the only country in the region where antipersonnel mines are being newly laid by the FARC and ELN guerrilla groups, as well as paramilitary groups.

Humanitarian mine clearance operations were initiated in Chile in August and are on-going in Ecuador, Perú, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. Costa Rica declared itself mine-free in December 2002 and Honduras is believed to be very close to attaining this status.

Please join CALM and help to spread its campaign message through these newsletters. These cost about \$10 per person per year to prepare and despatch so donations to the CALM Treasurer, PO Box 17 195, Wellington would be appreciated.

2004 Landmine Monitor Launch

5.45pm 24 November at RISE Café,
90 The Terrace, Wellington.

All CALM members are very welcome.

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or phone (04) 386-3001

Attention: parents, grandparents, teachers! Children's drawing contest for Nairobi

Children aged 8-12 are invited to enter a drawing contest

"A Mine-Free World: The Vision of Today's Children ...Through the Eyes of our Children."

Prizes may be awarded to winning entries.

They are asked to submit drawings addressing the question "What does a Mine-Free World mean to me?"

Entries will be exhibited at the UN Conference Center in Nairobi, Kenya during the upcoming Nairobi Summit as part of the ICBL's "[Wanted: A Mine-Free World](#)," exhibition.

Guidelines:

Use letter-size or A4 paper.

Drawings using felt pens, paint, pencils, crayons, markers, etc. will be accepted.

Each drawing should include the child's name, age and country.

A short description of the drawing and a photo of the child should accompany each submission. All entries must be received by **20 October 2004**.

Entries should be sent to: The Landmine Resource Center, Faculty of Health Science, University of Balamand, P.O. Box 166378, Ashrafieh, Beirut 1100 2807, Lebanon

For more information please contact Judy Kitts of the Landmine Resource Center in Beirut, Lebanon at: landmine@balamand.edu.lb.

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