

March 22, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In February last year, 67 national organizations asked you to begin a review of U.S. policy on landmines. In November, your administration announced it was conducting such a review and attended the Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World. We applaud those steps and now call on your leadership to see that the United States joins the Mine Ban Treaty.

In accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, you said, "I am convinced that adhering to standards, international standards, strengthens those who do, and isolates and weakens those who don't." The Mine Ban Treaty has become the international standard for dealing with antipersonnel landmines. In the Western Hemisphere, only the United States and Cuba are not party to the treaty. Every other member of NATO except Poland (which has already signed and will ratify in 2012) is a State Party. In total, 156 countries are party to the treaty, including Afghanistan and Iraq.

Landmines are indiscriminate killers, whether persistent landmines or those designed to self-destruct after a period of time. They are triggered by the victim and cannot distinguish between an enemy combatant, a U.S. soldier, a mother working in the fields or young children on their way to school. Past and ongoing deployment of these weapons by state armies and non-state groups continues to undermine stability and development, exacerbate human suffering, and burden many of the world's weak and failing states.

The use of weapons that disproportionately take the lives and limbs of civilians is wholly counterproductive in today's conflicts, where winning over the local population is essential to mission success. The rest of the world recognizes that the human costs of these weapons far outweigh any perceived military utility.

The United States is not known to have used antipersonnel landmines since 1991, has not exported them since 1992 and has not produced them since 1997. Even while engaging in military operations in Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan, the United States did not use these weapons. Nor is there a need for the United States to deploy these weapons in potential future conflicts, including in the Korean peninsula.

The United States is the world's most generous donor to landmine clearance and victim assistance programs. Our government was one of the first to call for the elimination of landmines in the mid-1990s. In 1998, President Clinton set the goal of joining the treaty in 2006. In 2004, President Bush announced that the United States would not join, but set 2010 as the end date for U.S. use of persistent landmines anywhere in the world. The last

steps to joining the treaty are now achievable, and vitally important to United States efforts to protect civilians during and after armed conflict, strengthen international norms, and isolate irresponsible regimes.

We are hopeful that the review of U.S. landmine policy will result in a decision to accede to the Mine Ban Treaty as soon as possible, and that you are able to submit the treaty to the Senate for its advice and consent before the end of 2010. We stand ready to participate and assist in that review.

Sincerely,

Rocco Puopolo, s.x, Executive Director, **Africa Faith and Justice Network**
Mary Ellen McNish, General Secretary, **American Friends Service Committee**
George Cody, Ph.D, Executive Director, **American Task Force for Lebanon**
Ziad Asali, MD, President, **American Task Force on Palestine**
Nabil Mohamad, Vice President, **American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)**
Dr. James Zogby, President and Founder, **Arab American Institute**
Hassan Jaber, Executive Director, **Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)**
Daryl G. Kimball, Executive Director, **Arms Control Association**
Sarah Holewinski, Executive Director, **Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict**
Ken Hackett, President, **Catholic Relief Services**
Vincent Warren, Executive Director, **Center for Constitutional Rights**
Rabbi Ellen Weinberg Dreyfus, President, **Central Conference of American Rabbis**
Stanley J. Noffsinger, General Secretary, **Church of the Brethren**
Rev. John L. McCullough, Executive Director and CEO, **Church World Service**
Don Kraus, Executive Director, **Citizens for Global Solutions**
Stephen M. Veavey, President, **Community of Christ**
John Isaacs, Executive Director, **Council for a Livable World**
Robert W. Radtke, President, **Episcopal Relief & Development**
Ronald J. Sider, President, **Evangelicals for Social Action**
Joe Volk, Executive Secretary, **Friends Committee on National Legislation**
Jonathan Granoff, President, **Global Security Institute**
Wendy Batson, Executive Director, **Handicap International US**
Elisa Massimino, President & CEO, **Human Rights First**
Kenneth Roth, Executive Director, **Human Rights Watch**
Bruce E. Spivey, MD, President, **International Council of Ophthalmology**
Mark Schneider , Senior Vice President, **International Crisis Group**
Mark Pitkin, PhD, Director, **International Institute for Prosthetic Rehabilitation of Landmine Survivors**
Kenneth Gavin, S.J., National Director, **Jesuit Refugee Service/USA**
Robert Naiman, National Coordinator, **Just Foreign Policy**
Dr. Pary Karadaghi, Executive Director, **Kurdish Human Rights Watch**
Alison Bock, President and Founder, **Landmines Blow!**

Channapha Khanvongsa, Executive Director , **Legacies of War**
Sally Dunne, NGO UN Representative, **Loretto Community**
Marie Dennis, Director and Co-President, **Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns & Pax Christi International**
Rolando L. Santiago, Executive Director, **Mennonite Central Committee U.S.**
Ervin Stutzman, Executive Director, **Mennonite Church USA**
Heather Hanson, Director of Public Affairs, **Mercy Corps**
Deborah Forter, National Director, **Military Families Speak Out**
William D. Hartung, Director, Arms and Security Initiative, **New America Foundation**
Hiro Sakurai, President, NGO Committee on Disarmament, **Peace & Security**
David Krieger, President, **Nuclear Age Peace Foundation**
Morton H. Halperin, Senior Advisor, **Open Society Policy Center**
Stephen Rickard, Executive Director, **Open Society Policy Center**
Richard M. Walden, President & CEO, **Operation USA**
Matthew Naylor, PhD, President, **Outreach International**
Lucianne Siers, Executive Director, **Partnership for Global Justice**
Frank Donaghue, CEO, **Physicians for Human Rights**
Peter Wilk, MD, Executive Director, **Physicians for Social Responsibility**
Nora D. Sheets, Coordinator, **Proud Students Against Landmines**
Farshad Rastegar, PhD, President and CEO, **Relief International**
Dr. William F. Vendley, Secretary General, **Religions for Peace**
Michael Poffenberger, Executive Director, **Resolve Uganda**
Heidi Kuhn, Chairman of the Board, **Roots of Peace**
Jerry White, Founder and Executive Director, **Survivor Corps (formerly Landmine Survivors Network)**
Nicole C. Lee, Esq., Executive Director, **TransAfrica Forum**
Lavinia Limon, President and CEO, **U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants**
Caryl M. Stern, President/CEO, **U.S. Fund for UNICEF**
Sen. Timothy Wirth, President, **UN Foundation**
Rev. Peter Morales, President, **Unitarian Universalist Association**
Rev. John H. Thomas, General Minister and President, **United Church of Christ - Justice and Witness Ministries**
James E. Winkler, General Secretary, General Board of Church and Society, **United Methodist Church**
Bishop Howard J. Hubbard, Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace, **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**
Michael McPhearson, Executive Director, **Veterans For Peace**
Susan Shaer, Executive Director, **Women's Action for New Directions**
Carolyn Makinson, Executive Director, **Women's Refugee Commission**

cc: Honorable Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State
Honorable Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense
Honorable Gen. James L. Jones, National Security Advisor
Honorable Susan Rice, Ambassador to the United Nations