



STATEMENT 24 03 2024

POLAND RESUME LANDMINE PRODUCTION

Poland announced Thursday plans to produce one million landmines. This follows the decision it made last week, along with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, to withdraw from the Ottawa Treaty—a global agreement banning anti-personnel landmines—aimed at bolstering the countries' defences along their eastern borders with Russia and Belarus.

“We are dismayed by such a decision that overestimates the questionable military advantage of landmines and underestimates its costs on civilians’ lives. Anti-personnel mines disproportionately harm civilians. They render land unusable for agriculture, block access to essential services, and cause casualties, decades after conflicts end. Their use is devastating for civilian populations. Producing and maintaining landmines is costly but removing them would be even more expensive and complicated. Plus, new production of landmines would make this weapon more available, and easier to purchase.

We urge the Polish government to reverse this decision, which normalizes a weapon that has been prohibited since 1999 when the Ottawa Treaty entered into force and fragilize the Treaty. Consequences of such a decision for civilians will be vast.

The Ottawa has been incredibly effective in protecting civilians and drying up the landmine market, a weapon that was almost no longer produced. Landmines casualties was divided by 5, passing from 25 000 a year in 1999 to 5000 in 2023.”