

## Action Alerts of 18 March 2025

We are in an unprecedented crisis, and urgent action by all ICBL members is needed.

For those who have not seen it on our WhatsApp group, I'm writing with the devastating news that four countries are moving closer to leaving the Mine Ban Treaty.

Today the Ministers of Defense of **Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland announced that they all recommend leaving the treaty.** The announcement is unusual in that it doesn't come from the Ministers of Foreign Affairs or heads of government, so it seems they are trying to push their colleagues into a decision, perhaps before they are ready. But there is certainly political momentum towards withdrawal, and it may move very quickly. Latvia has already announced later today that its government did approve the decision and would send it to the parliament for approval. The other countries will also need to ask their parliaments before finalizing a decision. Here are some links to the articles/Tweets from

today: <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/2514407/baltics-poland-to-exit-anti-personnel-mine-ban-convention>, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/poland-baltic-nations-pull-out-landmines-convention-2025-03-18/>, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/defense/18.03.2025-latvia-moves-to-exit-ottawa-convention-on-anti-personnel-land-mines.a591951/>

**Finland** is also seriously considering withdrawal, but so far is continuing its internal process – due to conclude in April/May - before speaking out publicly. But if these other 4 countries leave, Finland is likely to join them no matter what the internal evaluation concludes.

The ICBL has sent letters to key decision makers of those countries, has been meeting with their missions in Geneva, and visited Helsinki to engage in direct dialog with the authorities. A further mission to Lithuania and Poland, and perhaps others, is in preparations.

Decisions seem imminent, so **we need a quick and loud public reaction** to try to keep these countries in the treaty. Here are some ideas for taking action, and please feel free to share more. **We need all the great creativity and energy of the campaign at this very difficult time!**

**Letter writing campaign:** We will soon send a sample letter that we hope as many people as possible can send to the governments of these countries (we'll provide email addresses so you just will need to copy and paste into an email).

**Media engagement:** Please try to get coverage by your national or international media contacts. The news now makes it look like it's understandable/logical for the countries to leave, so we need journalists to explain why landmines are horrible weapons and should never be used again.

**Government engagement:** Reach out to your government to contact these countries at the highest possible level to urge them to stay in the Mine Ban Treaty. These countries should have to pay a political price paid if they are going to leave the

convention. They should know that their reputation will be damaged, and their allies disapprove.

**Social media messages:** We need to be as vocal as possible on social media to counter the ignorant voices in these countries that are saying it would be good to leave the convention. Here are some ideas for posts on whatever platform you use, but many of you will have more creative ideas. Just please use the recommended handles for these countries so they are sure to see them, as well as for the ICBL.

1. Landmines don't keep people safe – they are hidden killers that take civilian lives and limbs for generations. No one should want them planted on their soil ever again.
2. Landmines are horrific weapons that cannot distinguish between military or civilian targets. @minemonitor shows 85% of victims are civilians, and 40% are children.
3. Landmines are outdated, Cold War-era weapons with questionable military value in modern warfare. Reverting back to them does not project strength, but rather weakness and desperation.
4. Some military options must remain off the table. Just as nations reject biological and chemical weapons, we must continue to reject AP mines and cluster munitions.
5. Currently, only Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, and Russia are using anti-personnel mines. Modern militaries like Poland, Lithuania, Finland, Estonia and Latvia should not align themselves with the practices of these nations.
6. If Poland, Lithuania, Finland, Estonia and Latvia leave the Mine Ban Treaty, it would be a victory for Russia and others seeking to undermine global humanitarian norms and the rule of law.

**X:** @LithuaniaMFA @BudrysKestutis @PolandMFA @sikorskiradek @MFAestonia @Tsahkna @Latvian\_MFA @Braze\_Baiba @Ulkoministerio @elinavaltonen @minefreeworld

**Bluesky** (not all govts present there yet): @um.fi, @radek-sikorski.bsky.social, @tsahkna.bsky.social, @baibabraze.bsky.social @minefreeworld.bsky.social