

**GROUP OF GOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS OF
THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION
ON PROHIBITIONS OR RESTRICTIONS ON
THE USE OF CERTAIN CONVENTIONAL
WEAPONS WHICH MAY BE DEEMED TO BE
EXCESSIVELY INJURIOUS OR TO
HAVE INDISCRIMINATE EFFECTS**

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Agenda item 8

Mines other than anti-personnel mines (MOTAPM)

Working Group on Mines Other than Anti-Personnel Mines

ANTI-VEHICLE MINES

Prepared by the Russian Federation

1. Russia shares the concerns of the international community over the problem of the use of certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects.
2. A fundamental feature of the Convention on “inhumane” weapons is the effort to limit the impact of conventional weapons on civilians, both during and after military activities. The protocols attached to the Convention ensure that this principle is put into practice.
3. A number of countries have suggested that a new protocol should be drawn up to restrict the use of anti-vehicle mines. Russian experts have carefully studied these proposals. Some doubts have arisen as to whether anti-vehicle mines may be classified as a type of “inhumane” weapon.
4. “Inhumane” weapons are characterized by two features: they are excessively injurious and have indiscriminate effects. These are the fundamental components of humanitarian concern over the impacts of conventional weapons.
5. Anti-vehicle mines featuring among the armaments of most of the world’s armies have been developed principally to neutralize armoured military equipment by causing the minimum damage necessary to restrict its manoeuvrability or immobilize it. This is reflected first and foremost in the design of the munitions and in efforts to minimize the weight and dimensions of their operational components.

6. Equipping such mines with fuses which reliably identify military vehicles as targets makes it possible to achieve a high degree of selectivity in operation, as confirmed by the results of the use of anti-vehicle mines in warfare.

7. Analysis of blasts in which military personnel were hit by explosive objects during the counter-terrorist operation in Chechnya shows that the overwhelming majority of losses are caused by anti-personnel mines, home-made blast mines and explosive devices, and only 12 per cent by other explosive objects.

8. Russia has some experience in demining of areas which were the scene of military activities during the Second World War and during modern armed conflicts. Analysis of the results of land-clearing operations by Russian deminers in the Chechen Republic shows that the overwhelming majority of home-made explosive devices and blast mines continue to “wage war” after military activities have ended, while the proportion of anti-vehicle mines is insignificantly small.

9. Hence Russia considers that there is a need to study more thoroughly the need for significant restriction of the use of mines other than anti-personnel mines. In this context it is essential to take into account already existing restrictions on such mines in the Additional Protocol on landmines.

10. In addition, the implementation of the proposals submitted by 30 countries will entail the need to modernize existing munitions and develop new ones which comply with new technical requirements regarding the detectability and reliable operation of anti-vehicle mines. This will call for substantial material and financial resources which will not be within the reach of every State. This is connected with the following aspects.

11. The modern landmine is a complex technical structure which automatically identifies a target and strikes it, while at the same time it must be safe to handle. For this purpose the munition contains special devices and mechanisms. In addition to the operational part of the mine there is the fuse assembly, which generally consists of: a safety device, a power source, a target sensor and a firing mechanism. To comply with the requirements of the new protocol, the mine must include the following new or updated devices: a device for ensuring detectability, a self-destruction mechanism and a self-deactivation element. Russian experts estimate that, bearing in mind essential costs for research and development, pre-production, production of the minimum necessary reserves of new or modernized anti-vehicle mines and delivery to stores and arsenals, the cost of these measures per munition stands at over US\$ 200. This will entail substantial costs for a State which needs thousands of such munitions to protect its land borders and which does not intend to lower its defensive potential.
