

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Humanity & Inclusion Canada commemorates the 25th anniversary of the Ottawa Treaty

Montreal, December 1, 2022. — In view of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3, [Humanity & Inclusion \(HI\) Canada](#) is organizing a visit in Canada for three key figures in the anti-personnel landmine movement to mark the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Ottawa Treaty. Since then, 55 million stockpiled mines have been destroyed, and over 3,300 square kilometres of land have been rehabilitated. Nevertheless, between 2001 and 2020, 130,000 people, mostly civilians, half of them children, were killed or injured by landmines or explosive remnants of war.

From December 1 to 6, 2022, Jean-Baptiste Richardier, one of the founders of HI, Philippe Chabasse, an important figure in advocacy, as well as Gniep Smoeun, a victim of an anti-personnel mine at the age of 10 in Cambodia, and one of the first to be treated by HI, will participate in several activities in Montreal and Ottawa. Their visit coincides with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3.

At the time, and still today, HI has a specific mission to remain in the field to assist victims and vulnerable populations in countries affected by crises, conflicts, and disasters. The organization, formerly known as Handicap International, was founded in 1982 out of a sense of injustice to landmine victims and the lack of an adequate response to their humanitarian needs. Today, it runs 452 projects in 60 countries.

"Since 2014, the number of landmine victims has been on the rise mainly due to the increase in the number of armed conflicts and the use of improvised mines. These deadly weapons impact the lives of many people and can lead to social marginalization. They kill, injure and affect the lives of men, women and children. First aid training for volunteers from affected communities can reduce the mortality rate by 10-12%. By 2021, almost 65% of victims survive landmine accidents. In the same year, however, funding for victim assistance reached its lowest level since 2016," says Anne Delorme, Executive Director of Humanity & Inclusion Canada.

Over the past decade, 23 million people have benefited from HI's programs worldwide. These programs cover inclusive education, rehabilitation, and weapons of war and violence reduction, among others. By 2021, nearly 1 million people have benefited from risk reduction activities related to these destructive weapons in countries such as Yemen, Lebanon, and Iraq.

HI was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997, along with five other partner organizations, for leading the International Campaign to Ban Landmines since 1992, which brought to the signing of the Ottawa Treaty.

Ottawa Treaty: The Canadian leadership

In October 1996, at the first Ottawa conference on the use of anti-personnel mines, where Humanity & Inclusion played a crucial role, Canada challenged the international community to

negotiate a treaty banning the use, stockpiling and production of anti-personnel mines. One year later, on December 3, 1997, [122 governments](#) met in Ottawa to sign the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty.

“This year, the 25th anniversary of the Ottawa Convention occurs on the same day as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which gives us added reason to pause and reaffirm our goal of a mine-free world. Landmines are indiscriminate, they wound more people than they kill, and they disproportionately impact civilians and communities. As we celebrate the Ottawa Convention's successes over the past 25 years, let us also rededicate ourselves to ending the use of landmines once and for all”, adds the Honourable Mélanie Joly, Canada’s Minister of Foreign Affairs.

"For the first time in the history of disarmament, international mobilization has led to the banning of a conventional weapon. This is a clear diplomatic success for Canada. The Dublin Convention banning the bombing of civilian areas, which Canada has just endorsed with more than 60 countries, is part of this success," adds the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1996 to 2000.

According to *The Landmine Monitor*, mines caused more than 7,000 casualties, with 2,492 deaths and 4,561 injuries in 2020. Between 2014 and 2021, 1.2 million square kilometres of territory were cleared. In 2021 alone, 117,000 pieces of landmines have been removed.

Today, the 164 governments that signed the Ottawa Treaty must assist mine victims through the implementation of specific activities or financially support these activities to promote the inclusion of survivors and persons with disabilities in society. Nationally, Global Affairs Canada is the primary funder of HI Canada, which allows for the support of projects such as those in Ukraine.

To support Humanity & Inclusion Canada and help reduce armed violence, [click here](#).

About Humanity & Inclusion

Humanity & Inclusion (HI) is an international solidarity organization that works with people with disabilities and vulnerable populations facing crises, conflicts, and disasters. HI creates an alternative future for the most vulnerable by meeting their basic needs, improving their living conditions, and promoting respect for their dignity and fundamental rights. The organization is now active in 60 countries, and a total of 23 million people have benefited from its programs of inclusive education, rehabilitation, and weapons of war and violence reduction, among others. Recognized for its advocacy work, HI is one of the six founding organizations of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997 and winner of the 2011 Conrad N. Hilton Award. In Canada, HI has been based in Montreal and Ottawa for almost 20 years and works in partnership with Mines Action Canada and Canadian Landmine Foundation. For more information, please visit <https://www.hi-canada.org/en/index>.

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