



Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange Congregational Stance on Landmines November 2000

Because

"Landmines are blind weapons. They cannot distinguish between the footfall of a soldier and that of an old woman or child gathering firewood. They recognize no cease-fire and, long after the fighting has stopped, they continue to destroy the lives of the children and grandchildren of the soldiers who laid them. Landmines are designed to maim, and maim horribly. People who survive the initial blast usually require amputations, long hospital stays, and extensive rehabilitative services." - Amnesty International

Because

"Every 22 minutes another man, woman or child somewhere in the world will become the victim of a landmine. There will be 70 casualties today, 500 this week, more than 2,000 this month and over 26,000 this year. These victims, overwhelmingly civilian, will be casualties of a peace that these weapons do not recognize.

An estimated 100 million landmines laid in 68 countries, mostly developing nations, indiscriminately kill or maim over 26,000 people a year. But the impact of landmines is far greater than the direct medical and rehabilitation costs for the world's quarter million landmine-disabled people. According to a recent socio-economic study *After the Guns Fall Silent*, "landmines directly or indirectly affect almost every aspect of national life in mine-contaminated countries and the daily lives of those who live in them". In particular the presence of landmines prevents farmers from tilling their fields, people and herd animals from approaching water sources, relief shipments from being delivered. It also prevents refugees from returning home and results in over-farming and over-grazing of less suitable land which causes desertification and deforestation." - Vietnam Veterans Association Foundation

Because

U.S. leadership is necessary to urge holdout countries to join the treaty and to aid in the implementation and enforcement process; - Bishop Pilla, President US Catholic Conference

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange join the international CBL , the US Campaign and the Catholic Campaign to Ban Landmines' in urging the President, the US military, and the Congress to:

- Announce a permanent ban on production of antipersonnel landmines and their components.
- Commit the United States immediately to a policy of no use of antipersonnel mines in joint operations (NATO and otherwise) with nations that are a party to the Mine Ban Treaty.
- Set a date certain for the Department of Defense to obtain alternatives to antipersonnel mines, and accelerate Pentagon efforts to obtain these treaty-compliant alternatives.
- Make a decision not to produce the RADAM mixed mine system or any other system that is not compliant with the Treaty.
- To increase significantly resources for demining and victim assistance.

