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HRH Prince Mired on the Ottawa Convention

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Three key takeaways from the lecture delivered by His Royal Highness Prince Mired Bin Ra'ad Bin Zeid Al-Hussein of Jordan on 'The Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Landmines – Asia's Opportunity and Challenges':

- 1. The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction – also known as the 'Ottawa Convention', is a treaty that aims to universalise the ban of anti-personnel landmines.**
 - 2. The Ottawa Convention is a unique disarmament treaty, as it incorporates socio-economic policies in a victim-oriented approach, including education, employment retraining, and medical support for landmine victims.**
 - 3. Sri Lanka can play a significant leadership role to further the impact of the Ottawa Convention in South Asia, by promoting the objectives and norms of the treaty.**
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Introduction

- HRH Prince Mired of Jordan spoke on “The Ottawa Convention on Anti Personnel Landmines – Asia’s Opportunity and Challenges” on 6 March 2018 at the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute (LKI), at a lecture organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sri Lanka.
- Prince Mired is Special Envoy to the Ottawa Convention, a position he has held since 2009.
- The event was chaired by Dr. Dinusha Panditaratne, Executive Director of LKI, who highlighted some of the following key takeaways from the lecture and moderated a question and answer session.
- The event was attended by over 120 academics, government officials, members of civil society, the media and the private sector.

Takeaways from lecture by HRH Prince Mired:

Content of The Ottawa Convention

- The Ottawa Convention was adopted in December 1997 and entered into force in March 1999, with the purpose of eliminating the use, production, stockpiling, and transfer of anti-personnel landmines by all nations.
- The Convention is one of the most widely accepted disarmament and humanitarian treaties in the world. The 164 states party to the treaty are obligated to eliminate the production and use of landmines in their territorial boundaries, and clear any affected areas of anti-personnel landmines within 10 years following its entry into force, for that country.
- The Convention mandates that states that have ratified the convention must provide aid to victims of landmines. Aid is to be provided in the form of care and rehabilitation,

social and economic reintegration and healthcare for victims, and establishment of mine awareness programmes.

- Including explicit provisions in disarmament treaties to support victims was a new initiative of this Convention. Today, when developing new disarmament treaties, it is viewed as ‘common sense’ to include provisions for victim-assistance.
- The Convention recognises that anti-personnel landmines violate key principles of international law due to its indiscriminate nature.
- The Convention is a result of an unprecedented partnership between civil society and state governments—a defining example of the power of civil society to change norms and lives for the better.

Participation in the Treaty

- One of the significant achievements of the Ottawa Convention has been the destruction of more than 51 million anti-personnel mines, and the clearance of millions of square metres of land that was once contaminated with mines.
- Of the 33 states that have not signed the treaty, a significant number are in Asia – including India and Pakistan, who remain large manufacturers and/or users of landmines.
- States that have not ratified the Ottawa Convention face pressure from the international community because of a global consensus against the use of landmines as a weapon.
- The majority of states that are not party to the Ottawa Convention have been influenced to implement provisions of the Convention. For example, since 2014, the USA has aligned its anti-personnel landmine policy outside the Korean Peninsula with key requirements of the Ottawa Convention, despite not being party to the treaty.

Jordan’s Victim Oriented Approach

- HRH Prince Mired spoke about Jordan’s victim-oriented approach to mitigating the long-term harms of using landmines.
- In 2017, Jordanian legislation on ‘The Rights of Persons with Disabilities,’ placed obligations on most government ministries—including the sectors of education, health, diagnostic testing, accessibility, voting and employment—to integrate and include persons with disabilities into society.

Sri Lanka’s role in the Ottawa Convention

- Sri Lanka was the 163rd country to join the Ottawa Convention on 13 December 2017, on the 20th anniversary of the Convention.
- By ratifying the treaty, Sri Lanka has set a positive example for others to accede to the Convention, particularly for other South Asian states, indicating that joining the treaty can be compatible with pursuing national security goals.

- Sri Lanka, as a nation that has suffered from the use of landmines during its civil conflict, has the necessary experience to generate dialogue and to influence states like India, Pakistan and Nepal to adopt the Convention.
- Sri Lanka has also set an example to other states with its structured and organised implementation of clearing landmines, and by facilitating resettlement of those displaced by armed conflict.
- Sri Lanka has set the ambitious but possible task of being landmine-free by 2020.

Suggested Further Reading

Abhayagunawardena, V. (2016). The Cabinet Decision On Sri Lanka Accession To The Mine Ban Treaty. Colombo Telegraph. Available at:
<https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/the-cabinet-decision-on-sri-lanka-accession-to-the-mine-ban-treaty/>.

International Campaign to Ban Landmines. International Campaign to Ban Landmines – Arguments for the Ban | Problem | ICBL. Available at: <http://www.icbl.org/en-gb/problem/arguments-for-the-ban.aspx> .

International Humanitarian Law Databases – ICRC. Customary IHL – Rule 71. Weapons That Are by Nature Indiscriminate. Available at: https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule71.

Koorey, S. (2017). The landmine ban, 20 years on. The Strategist. Available at:
<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/landmine-ban-20-years/>.

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