

An international ban on anti-personnel mines

History and negotiation of the “Ottawa treaty”

by **Stuart Maslen and Peter Herby**

The background to the Ottawa process

As the First Review Conference of the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons¹ (CCW) closed in Geneva on 3 May 1996, there was widespread dismay at the failure of the States Parties to reach consensus on effective ways to combat the global scourge of landmines. The CCW Protocol II as amended on 3 May 1996² (Protocol II as amended) introduced a number of changes that were widely welcomed, but it fell far short of totally prohibiting these weapons, a move already supported by more than 40 States. Keen to sustain the international momentum that might otherwise have slackened, the Canadian delegation announced that Canada would host a meeting of pro-ban States later in the year to develop a strategy to move the international community towards a global ban on anti-personnel mines.

That meeting, the “International strategy conference: Towards a global ban on anti-personnel mines” (usually referred to as “the 1996 *or* the first

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¹ United Nations 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, of 10 October 1980.

² Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices as amended on 3 May 1996 (Protocol II as amended on 3 May 1996), annexed to the CCW, *supra* note 1.