



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

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13 October 2006

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Department of House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

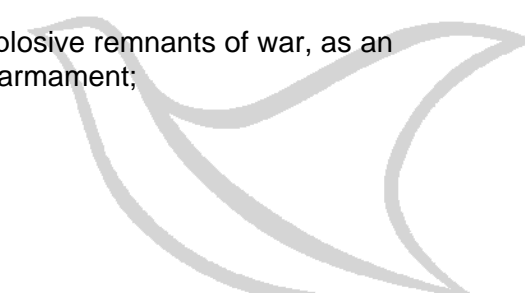
I am writing on behalf of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Uniting Church in Australia, to support the Australian Government taking the necessary treaty action to be bound by *Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War of the Convention on Prohibitions or restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects* (CCW). We further request that the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties recommend that the practices of the ADF, through its doctrine, orders, manuals and standard operating procedures are made compliant with the technical annex of Protocol V.

There is a need for all countries that are States Parties to the CCW to ratify Protocol V so as to move towards an international norm in which explosive remnants of war are cleaned up as quickly as possible after a conflict. Like landmines, unexploded munitions continue to kill and maim long after conflicts end. At least 90 countries have problems with unexploded munitions, resulting in thousands of civilian casualties every year and long-term impediments to economic development. Details of the impact of explosive remnants of war are covered well in the enclosed report *Explosive remnants of war and mines other than anti-personnel mines: Global survey 2003-2004* by Mines Action Canada, Actiongroup landmine.de and Landmine Action UK.

The Synod of Victoria and Tasmania has been deeply concerned at the humanitarian impact of explosive remnants of war, especially on impoverished communities in post-conflict situations. In 2002 the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania resolved:

Recalling Assembly Resolution 82.56 that affirmed the Uniting Church in Australia to be a peacemaking body supportive of work towards general and complete disarmament:

- (a) To support international efforts to minimise explosive remnants of war, as an interim step towards general and complete disarmament;



- (b) To call on the Australian Government to support a ban on the manufacture, stockpiling, transfer and use of anti-vehicle mines;
- (c) To call on the Australian Government to support the development of a Protocol 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* to cover explosive remnants of war and containing the following elements:
 - (i) That the parties to the conflict promptly clean up all unexploded ordnance, taking particular responsibility for those that they have generated;
 - (ii) Include in agreements to terminate hostilities, peace negotiations and other relevant military technical agreements provisions allocating responsibility, standards and procedures for signing off land as cleared of unexploded ordnance;
 - (iii) Parties to the conflict are to inform demining agencies of where strikes have been made and how to render safe or destroy their unexploded ordnance;
 - (iv) Parties to the conflict are to provide appropriate information and warnings to civilians, both during and after the conflict about the dangers of unexploded ordnance;
 - (v) A prohibition on the use of weapons with large amounts of submunitions in or near concentrations of civilians; and
 - (vi) Where nations resort to the evil of explosive munitions, that all munitions have high quality fuses and detonation systems that ensure explosion on impact, self-destruct within seconds of impact or that render munitions safe if they fail to detonate.
- (d) To inform the Prime Minister, the Minister for Defence, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Leader of the Opposition, the Shadow Minister for Defence and the Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs of this resolution.

Thank you for your consideration of this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Mark Zirnsak
Director
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Synod of Victoria and Tasmania