

Statement by the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Polish Ministers of Defence on the Withdrawal from the Ottawa Convention

Since the ratification of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (Ottawa Convention), the security situation in our region has fundamentally deteriorated. Military threats to NATO Member States bordering Russia and Belarus have significantly increased. In light of this unstable security environment marked by Russia's aggression and its ongoing threat to the Euro-Atlantic community, it is essential to evaluate all measures to strengthen our deterrence and defense capabilities.

We believe that in the current security environment it is of paramount importance to provide our defence forces with flexibility and freedom of choice of potential use of new weapon systems and solutions to bolster the defence of the Alliance's vulnerable Eastern Flank.

In light of these considerations, we—the Ministers of Defence of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland—unanimously recommend withdrawing from the Ottawa Convention. With this decision, we are sending a clear message: our countries are prepared and can use every necessary measure to defend our territory and freedom.

Despite our withdrawal, we will remain committed to international humanitarian law, including the protection of civilians during an armed conflict. Our nations will continue to uphold these principles while addressing our security needs.

We appreciate the understanding and support of all Allies and partners who recognize the dire security challenges we are facing and respect our decision in this matter.

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