The Legacy of the Ottawa Process to Ban Landmines:  
*Is Its Success Transferable to Future International Humanitarian Issues?*  
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**Abstract**

Five years ago, over 150 countries and 400 non-governmental organizations came together in an unprecedented display of international cooperation in support of a global ban of anti-personnel mines. The so-called Ottawa Process started in 1996 after a failure of the negotiations on the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons to bring a global ban on landmines. Seizing on the heightened international sensitivity regarding the issue, pro-ban states came together “to develop a strategy to move the international community towards a global ban on anti personnel mines.”

The Ottawa Process was unique in several ways. First, its organizers held negotiations outside traditional diplomatic channels and mechanisms. Also, it showed that an NGO, such as the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, could bring an issue on the international agenda. In fact, the Process embodied a “two-track diplomacy” approach in which NGOs and governments worked together as partners in establishing an international policy. Finally, the Process allowed smaller countries “to provide global leadership and achieve major diplomatic results, even in the face of opposition from bigger power.”

Five years and 145 signatures later, we are still trying to gauge the full importance of the Ottawa Process in the evolution of humanitarian law making. To do so, we must look at the impact of the Treaty on the global landmine problem, and analyze ways in which the success of the Ottawa Process may be replicated in other humanitarian issues. Although transferability can be judged on numerous criteria, the scope of this paper limits us to the discussion of three issues: the nature of the Ottawa Process’s cause; the creation of an NGO-government network; and the departure from consensus-building diplomacy.