

# Human Rights & Human Welfare

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Volume 9 | Issue 1

Article 7

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2009

**Rebecca Root on Banning Landmines: Disarmament, Citizen Diplomacy, and Human Security. Edited by Jody Williams, Stephen D. Goose and Mary Wareham. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008). 348pp.**

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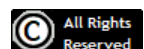


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## Recommended Citation

Root, Rebecca (2009) "Rebecca Root on Banning Landmines: Disarmament, Citizen Diplomacy, and Human Security. Edited by Jody Williams, Stephen D. Goose and Mary Wareham. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008). 348pp.," *Human Rights & Human Welfare*: Vol. 9: Iss. 1, Article 7. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/hrhw/vol9/iss1/7>



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**Abstract**

A review of:

Banning Landmines: Disarmament, Citizen Diplomacy, and Human Security. Edited by Jody Williams, Stephen D. Goose and Mary Wareham. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008). 348pp.

**Keywords**

Human rights, Humanitarian law, International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL)

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**Banning Landmines: Disarmament, Citizen Diplomacy, and Human Security.** Edited by Jody Williams, Stephen D. Goose and Mary Wareham. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008). 348pp.

It has been ten years since the Mine Ban Treaty entered into force. The story of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and its role in achieving the first comprehensive ban on a conventional weapon theretofore widely used across the planet has become familiar to scholars and practitioners of human rights. The drama of the Ottawa Process has become almost legendary among those who follow international humanitarian law and international struggles for disarmament. The process was launched by Canadian Foreign Minister Lord Axworthy's 1996 challenge to negotiate a mine ban treaty within one year, and then driven by a powerful partnership between states and NGOs. These efforts culminated in 1997 with the treaty's completion and the awarding of the Nobel Prize for Peace to the ICBL and its intrepid coordinator Jody Williams. The pace and the scale of this achievement have rendered this campaign one of the bright and shining examples of international diplomacy in the post-Cold War era.

As the editors of this new volume readily acknowledge in the introduction, this sense of a great triumph quickly achieved has falsely conveyed the sense that the process effectively ended in 1997. Yet the many excellent chapters included here make plain that much—indeed most—of the hard work has actually occurred since the signing of the treaty. Scholars and practitioners interested in deducing lessons about how to turn international law into improved human security and emerging global norms will find much of interest in these pages.

The volume is divided into two parts. Part One includes nine chapters detailing the various strategies employed to make the promise of the Mine Ban Treaty a reality. Some of these strategies have involved the creation of new institutions to respond to the treaty's lack of specified institutional mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing compliance with its provisions. The monitoring gap has been filled by the continued work of the coalition of committed states and NGOs, most notably by the ICBL's creation of the annual *Landmine Monitor Report*, which quickly became the authoritative assessment of compliance and issues of concern. For other specific challenges, focused but flexible contact groups and standing committees have been set up to coordinate state and NGO action. In addition to institutional innovations, the chapters here reflect a powerful commitment to direct action to implement the treaty, particularly through mine clearance and victim assistance programs.

In Part Two, six contributors assess the impact of the Ottawa Process on other attempts to extend rights and protections to vulnerable populations or to control weapons. Many of the key actors who fought for the Mine Ban Treaty have won victories in subsequent battles, such as those for the Disability Rights Convention and the Cluster Munitions Convention. Although nearly every author here notes a great resistance on the part of many states to allow NGO participation in treaty negotiations, it is clear that the power of the ICBL example has contributed to a more inclusive and pro-active culture in favor of disarmament than previously existed.

Every chapter in *Banning Landmines* is authored by a direct participant in the processes described. The sense of triumph and struggle that has defined their labor over the last decade is

often palpable, although other chapters are on the dry, technical side. Particularly for practitioners in the fields of arms control, humanitarianism, and human rights, there are invaluable insights about what works (flexibility, big tent NGO coalitions, venue shopping, and “evidence-based advocacy”) and what to avoid (consensus rules, exclusion of NGOs from negotiations, and too much focus on bringing great powers—like the United States, China and Russia – to the table). Although this volume is too detailed for an undergraduate audience, it provides a fresh and updated insider’s perspective that will allow scholars to apply these crucial lessons to broader analyses.

There is much to celebrate here. Today, 156 states have joined the treaty, half as many annual deaths are caused by landmines, and few states continue to produce them. One can forgive, then, the editors’ choice not to include selections that dwell at greater length on those hold-outs that refuse to join or respect the treaty. This may also reflect a division between those who continue to hope for these states to join, and those who believe that progress has been possible because of the absence of the “big powers.” One must look elsewhere, for example, for a thorough explanation of America’s refusal to sign despite overwhelming international support for the Mine Ban Treaty.

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