**THE PEACE EDUCATION CENTER’S STATEMENT OPPOSING PRESIDENT TRUMP’S DECISION TO USE LANDMINES IN CONFLICTS AROUND THE WORLD**

The Board of the Peace Education Center of the Greater Lansing Area opposes President Donald Trump’s decision to reverse President Obama’s policy of limiting the use of landmines in military conflicts. The Peace Education Center calls on concerned citizens and our elected representatives to oppose this change of policy.

Although the United States has not signed the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty (164 nations have ratified), President Obama in 2014 ordered the Pentagon to no longer “produce or otherwise acquire any anti-personnel landmines,” known as APLs. These are small explosive devices placed on, near or under the ground and explode, usually on contact, causing death or injuries. If the person survives, the injuries usually require amputations or multiple surgeries. Between 1999 and 2018, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), which won the Nobel Peace Prize along with Jody Williams, estimates that landmines have caused about 130,000 casualties mostly civilian with many occurring long after any conflict has ceased. The military value of landmines, as compared to the civilian costs, does not appear strong.

It is unclear whether the American military even wanted this change in policy. The new policy contrasts starkly with the U.S.’s role as the single largest contributor to mine clearance efforts globally. Some have suggested that this change in policy represents President Trump’s general desire to reverse President Obama’s policies at all levels of government. This is a dramatic policy change that has arms control experts and humanitarian groups deeply concerned. “This announcement flies in the face of 20 plus years of progress towards eliminating the human suffering caused by landmines and comes just weeks after most of the countries in the world recommitted to achieving a mine-free world by 2025, at the Fourth Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty” said ICBL-CMC Director Hector Guerra.

The Peace Education center urges all concerned citizens to contact Michigan’s senators and representatives to speak out in opposition to President Trump’s policy to allow the military use of landmines.

*Adopted by the Board of the Peace Education Center on February 6, 2020.*