

FAST FACTS

United Nations Development Programme



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Mine Action

After a conflict has ended, landmines can continue to claim lives, impede development and create a feeling of fear and insecurity.

In addition to death and injuries, when landmines, unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war obstruct roads and poison fields, they threaten productivity, basic social services and access to property and vital infrastructure, including schools and health centers.

According to the UN, **every year landmines kill 15,000 to 20,000 people** — most of them children, women and the elderly — and severely maim countless more. The *Global Burden of Armed Violence 2008* report estimated that worldwide, the annual productivity costs associated with armed violence—including landmine and small arms violence—is **US\$95 billion and could reach as much as \$163 billion**— or 0.14 percent of the annual global Gross Domestic Product.

The United Nations Mine Action community is comprised of 14 UN bodies all working towards the eradication of the threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war, to facilitate development and to ensure that victims are fully integrated into society.

UNDP's approach

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supports programmes in 40 countries affected by mines. UNDP works to ensure that Mine Action is incorporated into national budgets and development plans promoting agricultural production, infrastructure construction, water supply, health, education, and the delivery of other basic social services.

UNDP works closely with national Mine Action institutions and local partners to build their capacities to return to communities areas that were previously contaminated by landmines, unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war. UNDP promotes the full and effective participation of landmine survivors in society and development through rehabilitation and recovery programmes. It also ensures that members of affected communities are enabled to manage the risks posed by mines through educational and advocacy programmes.

As part of the UN Mine Action Team, UNDP advocates for treaties and international legal instruments banning antipersonnel mines and cluster munitions (such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and Convention on Cluster Munitions). It helps countries to meet their existing obligations under these conventions and destroy existing stockpiles.



UNDP supports programmes in 40 countries affected by mines. A deminer in action in the city of Kisangani in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Photo: Gwen Dubourthoumieu/IRIN

UNDP in action

Burundi and **Guinea Bissau** declared themselves mine-free in 2011, after successfully implementing national Mine Action plans developed with UNDP assistance, and meeting their obligations under the articles of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention on stockpile destruction and clearance of all mine-affected areas.

UNDP assisted in the establishment of both countries' Mine Action centres and provided long-term technical, logistical and financial support to their national Mine Action authorities.

In **Cambodia**, during 2006-2011, UNDP mobilized more than \$40 million which helped to release some 50 million square metres of previously mine-affected land, and strengthen national capacities to regulate, coordinate and monitor the Mine Action sector. In 2011 alone, UNDP helped to release some 8.9 million square metres of previously contaminated land which is now being used to produce food and earn income for the affected communities.

More than 15,000 people were able to use the cleared land for either housing or agricultural use. In addition, more than 200,000 people were able to access school, roads, pagodas, and other public infrastructures.

With UNDP's support, Mine Action is now a central element of the National Strategic Development Plan, and Cambodia strengthened the implementation of the 9th Millennium Development Goal related to landmines and unexploded ordnance clearance and victim assistance.

In the same year, Cambodia recorded the lowest ever number of casualties resulting from landmines and other explosive remnants of war, down to 211 from a high of 4,320 in 1996.

The **Tajikistan** Mine Action Centre (TMAC), with financial and technical assistance of UNDP, developed the National Mine Action Strategy for 2010-2015, endorsed by the Government in April 2011, and supported by the Poverty Reduction Strategy and other national development strategies.

UNDP through TMAC provides oversight and quality control for demining and destroying of mines and other weapons. In 2011, the Centre coordinated and managed the clearance of more than 2 million square metres of the country's mine-contaminated land (105 percent of annual target), which contributed to clearance of 86 percent of the total territory in Tajikistan.

As a result, 38 cleared sites were handed over to the local authorities for safe use. UNDP and the International Committee of the Red Cross provided financial support to TMAC and the Red Crescent Society to train 877 mine risk educators from 24 mine-affected districts reaching more than 70,000 people. These efforts have contributed to reduce the number of casualties five-fold in just five years—down to two in 2011.



UNDP supports educational programmes that inform affected communities about the risks posed by mines. At a mine risk education session at a school in Shorish district, Iraq, the students learn about the risks of landmines and how to avoid them. Photo: UNDP

In **Iraq**, UNDP is working with government institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to expand and improve services to those affected by landmines and explosive remnants of war, including by integrating their specific needs into national policies. In 2011 over 1,693 persons with disabilities received ortho-prosthetic devices, maintenance of devices, physiotherapy, walking aids and vocational training services.

In addition, three NGOs in Iraqi Kurdistan are integrating into the health system, creating unprecedented and sustainable services for landmine survivors funded by the Kurdistan regional government.



Agriculture starts over in Zubeir, Iraq after mine-cleaning. Photo: UNDP/Jahal Penjwery

In **Angola**, more than 870 million square metres of land have been cleared of mines since 2008, allowing people to build infrastructure and farm crops more safely. UNDP has contributed to local efforts by training more than 1,000 demining specialists at the National Demining Institute in recent years. These trainings have improved the technical and administrative skills of the demining brigades. Field operating results are also of a better standard.

Since 2008, the trained deminers have cleared over 160 million square metres of land, and helped rid the country of over 297,000 anti-personnel mines, 9,508 anti-tank mines and 491,767 other unexploded ordnance devices, such as artillery and mortar shells, rockets and bombs.

The Menongue airport, southeast of the capital Luanda, was among the cleared areas and is now functioning with new and improved facilities. The main railway line that serves the interior of the country to the western port city of Lobito is now also clear of mines. Other mine-free areas include the western city of Catembula, with a population of 913,000, and a residential area in the central Huambo Province, with 2.1 million people. Clearance work has also allowed fibre optic cables to be safely laid and maintained throughout the country, improving communication links.

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