Mine Action

In post-conflict countries, landmines, unexploded bombs and other explosive remnants of war continue to injure and kill civilians, sometimes for decades after the fighting has stopped. In addition to the human toll, unexploded ordnance prevents countries and communities from developing to their full potential, affecting food security, access to farmland, social services, clean water and roads. In many post conflict countries, leftover explosive remnants of war have a direct impact on progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Worldwide, landmines and other explosive remnants of war kill almost 4,000 people per year. The global economic cost of unexploded ordnance is estimated to be in the hundreds of billions of dollars a year, often affecting the poorest countries. In many societies affected by conflict or instability, unexploded ordinance stands in the way of long-term peace and prevents the rehabilitation and reintegration of former combatants and people affected by conflict, such as returning refugees.

UNDP’s approach

UNDP works closely with governments in post-conflict countries to ensure that mine action efforts are an important part of recovery, development and livelihoods. Clearance activities often occur in tandem with other financial and livelihoods support, including small business loans, vocational training and technical help with transport, food storage and livestock handling.

UNDP is part of the United Nations Mine Action Community – 14 UN agencies that work towards the eradication of landmines and explosive remnants of war. In 25 countries affected by mines, UNDP ensures that Mine Action is incorporated into national budgets and development plans, and helps to reinforce national and local capacity across five focus areas:

1. **Demining**: surveying, clearing and destroying landmines and explosive remnants of war;
2. **Victim assistance**: providing assistance, rehabilitation and reintegration services to victims;
3. **Mine-risk education**: mitigating risk by helping communities understand how to stay out of harm’s way and preventing new victims;
4. **Advocacy**: promoting a ban on anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, as well as compliance with relevant international legal instruments and promoting the rights of people with disabilities. UNDP helps Member States meet their existing obligations under these treaties, such as clearance deadlines, developing victim assistance legislation, reporting on progress, and stockpile destruction; and
5. **Stockpile destruction**: helping countries destroy their stockpiles of landmines and explosive remnants of war.

Various unexploded ordnance have been safely removed from communities and await disposal. Photo: UNDP Cote d’Ivoire.

Amin Assan lost both legs and his right hand in 1999 from a landmine. UNDP helped him receive and adjust to a new prosthetic leg. Photo: UNDP Iraq.

FAST FACTS

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Various unexploded ordnance have been safely removed from communities and await disposal. Photo: UNDP Cote d’Ivoire.
UNDP in action

• Globally in 2013, UNDP provided nearly 170,000 victims in affected areas with sustainable employment opportunities. UNDP supported initiatives that promote vocational training, access to small grants, livestock, psychosocial support, social rehabilitation and government employment in countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon. UNDP also ensured that more than 150,000 school children have benefited from the construction of playgrounds to protect children from venturing out into dangerous areas;

• With support from UNDP, the Albanian Mine & Munitions Coordination Center cleared 15,250 square metres of land, which benefited more than 25,000 people. In addition, 86 survivors received prosthetic devices at a repair workshop, which was equipped and refurbished through UNDP’s mine action programme;

• In Cambodia, with UNDP support, approximately 19,000 households benefited from land that was declared free of mines in 2013, 61 percent of which is now used for agriculture;

• In Lebanon, with UNDP support, more than 900 people benefited from socio-economic recovery activities in mine affected areas in 2013. Together with mine clearance organizations and other key partners, UNDP has now helped clear 66 percent of total contaminated areas in the country. 97 percent of cleared land has been immediately put to use by the local population;

• With UNDP support in Yemen, 162,000 people who had been displaced by fighting returned to their homes in 2013, after the Yemen Mine Action Center cleared mines from the land around their homes. Across the country, approximately 240,000 people benefited from Mine Risk Education and Clearance activities in 2013; and

• Also in 2013, UNDP helped Albania, Chad and Iraq to meet their obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. In Mozambique and Albania, UNDP helped the countries fulfill their obligations under the Convention on Cluster Munitions and submit transparency reports.

New mine free countries

• Uganda and Jordan recently declared themselves free of mine fields, meeting obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. UNDP assisted in establishing Mine Action Centres in both countries and has provided technical, logistical and financial support.

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