

Press Releases: UN International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action

Press Statement
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Today is the United Nations' International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, which provides an opportunity for the world to reflect on both the progress made and the challenges that remain in clearing landmines and unexploded ordnance. These explosive remnants of war still endanger civilians in more than 60 states and other areas. The United States is working closely with partners worldwide to address this serious humanitarian challenge that puts innocent people, including many children, at risk.

The United States is the world's single largest financial supporter of efforts to address humanitarian hazards from landmines and unexploded ordnance in post-conflict countries and to reduce the availability of excess, loosely-secured, or otherwise at-risk weapons and munitions. Since 1993, the United States has invested more than \$2.9 billion for the securing and safe disposal of excess small arms, light weapons, and munitions as well as the safe clearance of landmines and explosive remnants of war in more than 100 countries.

The United States funds these programs worldwide to reduce at-risk weapons and munitions and improving stockpile security in order to prevent diversion of arms to terrorists and other destabilizing actors. Through its conventional weapons destruction program, the U.S. government has collaborated with partner nations and international organizations since 2003 to destroy more than 39,000 excess or poorly-secured man-portable air-defense systems (MANPADS), shoulder-fired missiles that pose a serious potential threat to global aviation in the hands of terrorists or insurgents.

Proactive community outreach through our Mine Risk Education programs have prevented countless injuries while U.S.-funded Survivor Assistance has provided essential medical and rehabilitation services to more than 250,000

people injured by landmines and unexploded ordnance.

Working in close cooperation with the Department of Defense and the U.S. Agency for International Development's Leahy War Victims Fund, the Department of State has helped numerous countries to declare themselves mine free.

On this day of mine awareness, we urge other nations to join us in a robust international partnership with the shared goal of reducing the impact of landmines around the world.

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