



Norwegian People's Aid

The Land Release Concept

“A more cost efficient approach to mine action”

- **Introduction to NPA Land Release**

Jordan November 2007

Drastic changes and new approaches are needed if the humanitarian and political objectives of the Mine Ban Treaty are to be met.

History has proven that approx 98% of clearance is in areas where there are no mines!

The data for planning humanitarian mine clearance typically exaggerate the extent of the problem.

Imperative: The mine action community must;

- *seek agreement at both international and national level*
- *adopt land release principles and methodology*
- *establish appropriate criteria for cancellation and reduction of SHAs*

NPA is in the process of mentally shifting its focus/approach from clearance to information gathering, hence we believe that;

- + Mine Action is all about gathering information on the probability of the presence of mines in a SHA.
- + NPA seeks to release an SHA by gathering sufficient information to confirm the absence of mines to the best possible standard.
- + If we understand that there always is a residual risk, then the challenge will be to determine this threshold.
- + NPA will never release a SHA without documenting our methodology and without approval from the land owner, local community, national authorities or national mine action centre.

In an NPA understanding, land can be **released** through 3 different actions;

- + **Cancellation** – the preferred process; an area is released based on information gathering and analysis only.
- + **Area Reduction** – the second approach; one or more demining tools have been used to gather more information about the presence/absence of mines.
- + **Clearance** – The last option; mine clearance tools are used to physically clear an area. Defined as “full clearance” according to IMAS and national standards.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF LR

Past	Future		
Method	Method	Time	Cost
100 % clearance	50 % cancellation	1 %	0,1 %
	40 % Area reduction	40-70 %	50%
	10 % clearance	100 %	100 %

A successful introduction of a Land Release approach has a **tremendous time and cost saving potential** (probably far greater than any new technology)

HOW CAN LR CHANGE MINE ACTION?

- ✦ It introduces a “risk management” thinking to MA and a subsequent understanding of residual risk.
- ✦ It is a mental shift. MA is not only about clearance, but now more about information gathering and analysis.
- ✦ Increased need for small technical and highly skilled survey teams (decreased need for large manual capacities?)
- ✦ Tools that previously had limited applications can be introduced.

LAND RELEASE – Challenges

- ⊕ The LR concept must be practical, reliable and easy to understand
- ⊕ The LR concept must be in accordance with IMAS and national standards/ legislations
- ⊕ The end user and other stakeholders needs to have confidence in the methodology applied
- ⊕ For the LR concept to be functional, it requires a strong and competent national authority that is willing to take the responsibility if an accident happens
- ⊕ The whole mine action community must acknowledge the need to develop principles and methodolgies for Land Release.