

Press Release



Jordan becomes the first Middle Eastern country free of all known landmines

Crown Princes of Jordan and Norway participate in landmark announcement

Geneva and Amman, 24 April 2012 – Jordan has become the first country in the Middle East to have removed all minefields in its territory in accordance with its international obligations. “I am proud to declare that all known mined areas in Jordan have been demined, thus respecting and fulfilling our legal obligations under international law as a State Party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, or Ottawa Convention,” said His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Al Hussein of Jordan, who, since 2004, has served as the Chair of Jordan's National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation.

More than 60 million square metres of areas known or suspected to contain mines were cleared. Many of these areas were subsequently made available for major development projects, including for agriculture in the Jordan Valley, for religious pilgrimages to locations such as the Christian Baptism Site, and for tourism in Aqaba.

In making his announcement at ceremony on the shores of the Dead Sea, Prince Mired acknowledged the role of landmine survivors: “The achievement that we are here to celebrate has most meaning for our brave survivors. We salute you for your spirit and we renew our promise to you that we will try our utmost in the future to fulfil our responsibilities to you.”

The completion ceremony was presided over by Jordan's Crown Prince, His Royal Highness Hussein bin Abdullah, who was serving for the first time as Jordan's Regent, or acting Head of State. The Crown Prince of Norway, His Royal Highness Haakon Magnus, also took part in the event. Norway was one of several States whose contributions were instrumental in supporting Jordan's demining programme. In addition, the non-governmental organisation Norwegian People's Aid played a particularly central role.

“Norwegian People's Aid deserves tremendous praise for its amazingly successful work in demining southern Jordan as well as the demining of the very complex mine belt that existed along our northern border,” said Prince Mired.

“Jordan's efforts to fulfil its obligations saw it clear all minefields along its northern border with Syria, along its border with Israel, and in other locations in the Jordan Valley,” said Kerry Brinkert, the head of the Ottawa Convention's Geneva-based Implementation Support Unit. “Jordan's commitment to peace and security serves as an example for others in the region to follow.”

In announcing the end of Jordan's demining programme, Prince Mired noted that “a residual risk could remain in areas where anti-personnel mines have been emplaced. As a responsible State Party, Jordan, with the support of Norwegian People's Aid, is carrying out a verification exercise in and near areas that have been demined to ensure that the specified requirements of the Convention have been fulfilled.”

“In the event that previously unknown mined areas are discovered, Jordan will report such mined

AP Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit

areas in accordance with its obligations under the Convention, will share such information, will ensure the effective exclusion of civilians from areas in question, and will destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in these areas as a matter of urgent priority,” stressed Prince Mired.

Jordan is expected to submit a formal declaration of completion to the Convention’s 3-7 December 2012 Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties, which will take place at the United Nations’ headquarters in Geneva.

Landmines in Jordan

Demining in Jordan preceded the adoption of the Ottawa Convention when in 1993 the late King Hussein ordered demining to take place along Jordan’s western borders following Jordan’s peace agreement with Israel.

On 13 November 1998, Jordan ratified the Ottawa Convention with the Convention entering into force for Jordan on 1 March 1999. By ratifying the Convention, Jordan agreed to never again use anti-personnel mines, to destroy its stockpiled anti-personnel mines and to clear all mined areas in Jordan.

On 1 May 2003, Jordan reported that it had completed the destruction of all stockpiled anti-personnel mines, destroying over 92,000 mines.

In 2006, Norwegian People’s Aid and Jordan’s Royal Engineering Corps began the push to finish demining in the Jordan Valley. This effort, which involved the Wadi Araba and Aqaba mine clearance projects, was completed in 2008 with over 14 million square metres of minefields and suspected hazardous areas released. Over 58,000 landmines were removed and destroyed.

In 2008, Jordan requested and received an extension, until 1 May 2012, of its ten year Convention deadline to complete the clearance of all mined areas. During this period, 10.5 million square metres on Jordan’s northern border with Syria were cleared from 93 minefields spanning 104 kilometres.

Since 2010, Prince Mired has been the Ottawa Convention’s Special Envoy, which has seen him meet with leaders around the world to promote the eradication of anti-personnel mines.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in the Middle East

In addition to Jordan, other Middle Eastern countries that have joined the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention include Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and Yemen. Kuwait addressed its landmine problem prior to joining the Convention. Mine clearance is continuing in Iraq and Yemen. Qatar has been spared the scourge of anti-personnel mines.

Over the past two years, two States not parties in the region – Israel and Syria – have made new use of anti-personnel mines. The Convention’s Presidency has expressed deep concern about these actions.

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For more information, interviews or information regarding the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention please email: Press@APMineBanConvention.org or contact Kerry Brinkert at +41 (0)22 906 8346. Connect with the Convention through our [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) or [Twitter](#).