

Press Release



Anti-landmines special envoy commends Ecuadoran President for demining progress

Quito and Geneva, 31 March 2014 – His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Al Hussein of Jordan, special envoy of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, or Ottawa Convention, has commended Ecuadoran President Rafael Correa for progress that Ecuador has made in removing landmines from its territory as required by the Convention.

Prince Mired met President Correa in Quito at the beginning of a two-day visit to Ecuador, one of the first States to ratify the Convention which prohibits the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines.

“Ecuador has made good progress in addressing 128 areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mines totalling 621,035 square metres,” said Prince Mired.

“I am pleased to learn that only 24 mined areas remain, totalling 225,983 square metres, and that Ecuador is on track to fulfil its mine clearance obligation under the Convention by its 1 October 2017 deadline.”

Ecuador’s original 2009 mine clearance deadline was extended until 2017 after Ecuador requested additional time to address its landmine contamination, in part because of the remote location of and difficulty accessing mined areas. The request was presented by Ecuador in 2008, when Prince Mired was presiding over the international treaty.

“I am impressed with the steps that Ecuador has taken to enhance its demining effort since the Convention granted the extended deadline,” said Prince Mired, who led the analysis of Ecuador’s extension request in 2008.

“Ecuador has increased its funding of demining operations and has made use of more efficient demining and survey techniques.”

Also while in Quito, Prince Mired met with Carlos Larrea Dávila, Vice-Minister of Defence, and Ambassador Leonardo Arízaga, Deputy Foreign Minister.

Prince Mired’s visit will include a stop in Fort La Balbina, in Pichincha, where he will meet Colonel Pedro Mosquera, Technical Director of the Ecuadoran Army Corps of Engineers. Prince Mired will see firsthand the work of Ecuadoran deminers and will be given an update of the joint Peru-Ecuador demining programme entitled *Walking Together*.

“Strengthening cross-border cooperation has been instrumental in facilitating demining operations in both Ecuador and Peru,” said Prince Mired. “Peru and Ecuador’s bilateral cooperation is an excellent model that others may wish to use to overcome border demining issues.”

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After concluding his visit to Ecuador, Prince Mired will head to Medellin, Colombia where he will participate in a global conference on assisting landmine and other explosive remnants of war victims and survivors in the context of disability rights and other domains.

The conference, ***Bridges between Worlds***, takes place on 3-4 April and is partly sponsored by the European Union.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention was adopted in Oslo in 1997, opened for signature in Ottawa the same year and entered into force on 1 March 1999.

To date, 161 States have joined the Convention, including every State in the Americas except Cuba and the United States.

Since entering into force, millions of square metres of once dangerous lands have been released for normal human activity and more than 47.5 million stockpiled mines have been destroyed.

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