



## Press Release

### The United Kingdom announces mine clearance completion

*Geneva 14 November 2020* — A batch of landmines were symbolically destroyed today concluding a more than a decade-long project to clear mine contaminated lands. The beaches of Yorke Bay were officially opened following the ceremony with a small girl cutting the ribbon that held islanders from entering the dangerous territory.

The United Kingdom will make a formal announcement before the members of the treaty that bans landmines to which the UK is party to. The States Parties to the AP Mine Ban Conventions are (virtually) meeting from 16-20 November from Geneva.

The news was warmly welcomed by the Convention President, Ambassador Osman Abufatima Adam Mohammed, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sudan to the UN in Geneva, who will oversee the work of what amounts to be the world's largest anti-landmine meeting.

“In a time when restrictions due to Covid-19 is forcing the mine action community to adjust the way we work; the news of completion is a welcome respite. It is an indication that no matter the challenges, we can meet our ambition of a world free of anti-personnel mines,” said the Sudanese Ambassador. “It also reminds us that our ambition of a mine-free world is not only achievable but within reach”, added the Ambassador, noting that the UK had finished its task four years ahead of its deadline.

British companies Safelane Global, Baric Consultants, and Fenix Insight working with expert Zimbabwean teams cleared over 23 million square meters of contaminated lands in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas). Deminers faced harsh conditions due to the islands' sometimes unpredictable and extreme weather, and remote location of the mine fields.

The United Kingdom ratified the Convention banning all use, production, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel mines on 31 July 1998, undertaking to destroy or ensure the destruction of all mines within a decade. Due to a number of technical challenges, the United Kingdom requested additional time for clearing the mines, and a new deadline was set for 1 March 2024.

The United Kingdom is a committed supporter of mine clearance and assistance to mine-affected communities pledging £36 million so that these efforts can continue around the world. The UK is also Chair of the Convention's Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance and as such leads efforts to bring attention to other mine action programmes that require support.

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**Editorial note:** The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention also known as the *Ottawa Convention* was adopted in 1997 and entered into force on 1 March 1999. There are 164 States Parties representing more than 80% of the countries in the world; together these States have destroyed almost 53 million stockpiled anti-personnel mines and released millions of square meters of land that were once contaminated. The Convention was the first multilateral treaty to take into consideration the rights of a weapon's victims. The Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties in Geneva takes place from 16-20 November. For more information please contact, [press@apminebanconvention.org](mailto:press@apminebanconvention.org).