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## Afghan Technical Consultants

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# Afghan Technical Consultants

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Afghan Technical Consultants (ATC) is the oldest and largest non-profit and non-governmental organization for humanitarian mine clearance in Afghanistan. It was established in October 1989, by the present director Kefayatullah Eblagh. ATC started demining operations in early 1990, with an initial staff of thirty-five. Since then, it has undergone significant change and expansion. ATC has developed into a highly organized and effective NGO, employing about 1,300 personnel.

## Support and Operations

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ATC operates under the auspices of the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA) and removes ordnance from both mined areas and former battlefields. ATC also promotes mine awareness for the people living near contaminated areas and those who are exposed to the greatest risk.

ATC also has four specialized explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams, which clear bombs and other devices beyond the technical capabilities of other mine clearance staff. Since its establishment, ATC has vigorously undertaken manual mine clearance, battle area clearance, mechanical mine clearance and explosive ordnance disposal in most areas of Afghanistan, namely Badakhshan, Bamyan, Ghazni, Kabul, Kandahar, Kapisa, Kunar, Kunduz, Laghman, Logar, Nangarhar, Paktika, Paktya, Parwan, Takhar and Wardak. ATC works in close cooperation with other demining organizations coordinated by UNOCHA.

ATC is funded by a number of nations through UNOCHA and directly by the Commission of the European Union. Individual NGOs have also taken part by providing urgently needed funding on an ad-hoc basis. ATC welcomes any contribution of funds and is ready to show the results in the field.

ATC appreciates the support of the donor nations, which has enabled it to run its humanitarian demining operations, whether through UNOCHA or directly. This support, beyond any doubt, has benefited the Afghan people directly and indirectly.

## Policy

ATC's policy on discipline and complete political neutrality in the community has been followed in order to foster friendly relationships with government authorities and regional and local leadership. This helps to promote respect and appreciation for demining operations carried out by ATC, and it also helps with the smooth running and timely completion of their projects.



Relying on a metal detector,  
a miner works his lane.

*Photo c/o ATC*

The Mine Action Program for Afghanistan is one of the most successful operations in the world. The Mine Action Program implements projects to save lives of innocent civilians, to enable safe repatriation of refugees and to implement other humanitarian projects. The Mine Action Projects include mine awareness, mine clearance training and monitoring, mine field survey and clearance of surveyed minefields. The Program clears about 25 million square meters of land each year at a cost of less than \$1 (US) per square meter, the lowest in the world.

These life-saving operations have faced a serious shortage of funds to carry on its planned activities since September of 1997. This shortage of funds is mainly due to a reduction in funding support from some traditionally strong donors.

The Mine Action Program for Afghanistan urgently needs \$4.5 million; otherwise, the program has to stop operations in Kabul and other mine-contaminated provinces. This will result in a disastrous situation, as 10 people a day are victims of landmines somewhere in Afghanistan.

## **Contact Information**

Kefayatullah Eblagh  
H.Q.

45. D-4, Old Jamrud Road  
University Town, Peshawar  
NWFP, Pakistan

Tel: +92 (91) 840122/40412

Fax: +92 (91) 44780