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## MAG (Mines Advisory Group)

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## MAG (Mines Advisory Group)



MAG employs many female deminers. These women are working in Xieng Khouang Province, Laos. All photos courtesy of Sean Sutton/MAG.

**M**AG (Mines Advisory Group) is a nonprofit global humanitarian organization that helps create peace and prosperity by removing deadly remnants of war. For more than two decades, MAG has directly reduced the devastating effects of armed violence and conflict, and paved the way for reconstruction, peace and security in some of the world's poorest communities, thereby saving lives and enabling safer futures.

MAG works in areas of the world that have been affected by conflict, assisting local populations with recovery and development. MAG teams consult with local community members, working to lessen the threat of death and injury, while releasing land that is safe and other vital resources back to the population to help communities rebuild and develop their social and economic potential. In 1997, MAG received the Nobel Peace Prize for its work with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

With 60 staff in the United Kingdom and more than 2,500 staff worldwide, MAG has worked in roughly 40 countries since 1989 and has operations in Angola, Burundi, Cambodia,

Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Laos, Lebanon, Libya, Republic of Congo, Sri Lanka, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Vietnam. It is funded through grants from 14 different governments, United Nations contracting agencies, the European Union, trusts and foundations, and the general public.

### MAG's Objectives

Throughout the world, where conflict results in human death or injury from remnants of war such as landmines, unexploded ordnance, weapons and ordnance stockpiles, and other residual contamination that have a highly damaging effect on populations, MAG aims to relieve instability, suffering and distress by:

- Providing training and assistance in clearance and reconstruction
- Undertaking preventive measures that improve human security including safely managing, storing, destroying or reducing the availability of stockpiles of weapons and ammunition
- Providing risk education
- Finding solutions to problems faced by those whose lives are affected by conflict

### How MAG Works

**Mine action.** Identifying landmines and other UXO as lethal barriers to development and physical safety, MAG has long pioneered land release and clearance best practices.

**Weapons disposal and security.** Finding and destroying unsecured and often unstable weapons and ammunition stockpiles is an integral part of many MAG programs worldwide. Working with national authorities MAG is making substantial progress destroying surplus weaponry that threatens, not only surrounding communities, but also regional security.

**Teaching safety.** In addition to managing and destroying landmines, UXO, and small arms and light weapons, MAG proactively educates communities at risk with tailored safety messages about the dangers of UXO and weapons proliferation.

Managing stockpiles and developing capacity. MAG works with security forces in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Somaliland and the state of Puntland in Somalia, and provides weapons management and storage training. In Burundi, MAG conducted a nationwide survey of all police armories and performed physical-security upgrades in many locations. MAG trains police and army officers to safely store and keep records of firearms, significantly reducing the risk they pose to civilians.

**MAG and the Millennium Development Goals.** The world's 10 poorest countries are either in or emerging from conflicts.<sup>1</sup> MAG's work helps release land, increase safe access to vital resources—such as water, education, trade and health services—and promotes gender equality in many of these countries. As a result, MAG's work actively contributes to the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, which strive to “free people from extreme poverty and multiple deprivations.”<sup>2</sup> Moreover, MAG continues to work to minimize the devastating effects of armed violence and remnants of war/conflict. ☺

~ MAG staff; Katy Lovin, CISR staff, assisted with this article.

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MAG teams working in Laos to clear unexploded ordnance in partnership with UNESCO. This project was funded by the New Zealand Government and intended to secure World Heritage status for the site. Here Boua Van is marking the spot where her detector signaled a metal item. It could be a piece of fragmentation, a nail or a cluster bomblet.



MAG community liaison session. The team discusses the priorities for clearance determined by the community. Among other things, this involved drawing a community map, explaining MAG's methodologies, and conducting UXO awareness discussions.

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