



Jordan Declared Minefield Free

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After nearly two decades of landmine removal, Jordan is the first country in the Middle East to declare itself "free of minefields." In the aftermath of this event, nongovernmental organizations and mine-action groups are working with landmine survivors to change negative perceptions of people with disabilities.



CISR Director, Ken Rutherford receives a plaque of recognition on behalf of CISR for its support of Jordan's landmine-abatement efforts.
Photo courtesy of CISR.

In 1998, Jordan became one of the first countries in the Middle East to sign and ratify the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction* (also known as the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention or APMBC). On 24 April 2012, Jordan celebrated its minefield-free status with dignitaries worldwide, nongovernmental organization leaders and landmine survivors at the King Hussein bin Talal Convention Centre near the Dead Sea. Under the leadership of His Royal Highness Prince Mired bin Raad, Jordan began clearance work in 1993, five years before signing the APMBC.

As a result of the 1948 partition of Palestine, the Arab-Israeli conflict (1967–1969), the 1970 civil war and the 1975 confrontation with Syria, anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines, explosive remnants of war, unexploded ordnance and abandoned explosive ordnance contaminated Jordan's northern and western

borders. Between 1948 and December 2010, Jordan's National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation recorded 909 casualties (120 killed and 789 injured).¹ Following the conflicts, NCDR spent almost 20 years removing more than 300,000 anti-personnel and anti-tank mines² from more than 500 minefields covering an area of 60 million square

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During the ceremony, Jordan's Crown Prince Hussein bin Al Abdullah, representing his father, His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein, thanked various sponsors and donors who helped the NCDR in its work, including Norway, Norwegian People's Aid and Jordan's Royal Engineering Corps. Crown Prince Hussein also recognized James Madison University's Center for International Stabilization and Recovery as an important partner of the Jordanian people in clearing the country of landmines, assisting its victims, and for providing mine-risk education to Jordanian youth about the risks of ERW and UXO. CISR Director Ken Rutherford attended the ceremony and received a plaque from Crown Prince Hussein in recognition of CISR's work in helping Jordan achieve its minefield-free status.⁵

These words of encouragement were indicative of many who hoped that achieving a minefield-free homeland for Jordan would soon spread to other landmine and ERW-plagued areas. “Becoming mine-impact free was not an easy task—there still are many years of hard work ahead for Jordanian survivors and their communities—but it is a huge step in securing peace and stability...” noted Rutherford.⁵

The photo-collage is titled "الأردن خال من حقول الألغام" (Jordan Free of Minefields) and is dated "24٩ نيسان ٢٠١٢" (24th of April 2012). The header includes the Jordanian flag, the NCDR logo, and the text "Jordan Free of Minefields". The collage consists of 15 individual photographs arranged in a grid, showing various mine clearance activities. The photos depict individuals and groups working in the field, using equipment, and handling explosives. The background of the collage is a blue map of Jordan.

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Endnotes

1. Jordan." *Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor*. <http://bit.ly/JwVRc7>. Accessed 31 May 2012.
2. "CISR Director attends ceremony declaring Jordan landmine impact-free." *CISR: Center for International Stabilization and Recovery*. <http://cisrjmu.tumblr.com/post/21714244073/cisr-director-attends-ceremony-declaring-jordan>. Accessed 31 May 2012.
3. Ghazal, Mohammad. "Jordan first Mideast country to be free of minefields." *The Jordan Times*, 25 April 2012. <http://jordantimes.com/jordan-first-mideast-country-to-be-free-of-minefields>. Accessed 31 May 2012.
4. "Jordanian Royals Celebrate Mine-Free Jordan." *The Royal Forums*. <http://bit.ly/JyGwvk>. Accessed 31 May 2012.
5. Ken Rutherford, email correspondence with CISR staff. 4 May 2012.
6. "Jordan Becomes the First Middle Eastern Country Free of All Known Landmines." Press Release. *AP Mine Ban Convention*. <http://www.apminebanconvention.org/fileadmin/pdf/mbc/press-releases/PressRelease-Jordan-24Apr2012.pdf> Accessed 31 May 2012.

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