

Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction

Volume 15
Issue 3 *The Journal of ERW and Mine Action*

Article 24

October 2011

Nepal Declared Mine-Free

News Brief

Center for International Stabilization and Recovery at JMU (CISR)

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Recommended Citation

Brief, News (2011) "Nepal Declared Mine-Free," *The Journal of ERW and Mine Action* : Vol. 15 : Iss. 3 , Article 24.

Available at: <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/cisr-journal/vol15/iss3/24>

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Nepal Declared Mine-Free

After four years of demining operations, Nepal's final landmine was destroyed on 14 June 2011, rendering the country officially mine-free. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the Government of Nepal signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006, which allowed for demining operations to begin in 2007. The landmines were a consequence of the two factions' decade-long conflict, which took place from 1996 to 2006.¹ During the conflict, the Maoist rebels employed landmines; the Nepalese Army also used landmines in an effort to protect their bases and infrastructure, including hydropower plants that provided electricity to parts of the country.²



A landmine is safely destroyed as part of the United Nations Mission in Nepal mine-action program to assist local authorities in removing the threat of unexploded devices. September 2007.
Photo courtesy of U.N./Robel Mockonen.

The Mine Action in Nepal program was developed with the help of the United Nations Mine Action Service and UNICEF. The cooperating organizations comprise the U.N. Mine Action Team in Nepal, while the Nepalese Army was responsible for carrying out demining operations in the field.

Prime Minister Jhala Nath Khanal and Army Chief of Staff, General Chhatra Man Singh Durung, attended a ceremony in Phulchowki on 14 June 2011 to participate in the detonation of the last remaining mines of the 12,070 buried during the conflict. Senior Technical Advisor of the United Nations Mine Action Team, Richard Derieux, also attended the ceremony and presented the Nepalese Army with a certificate confirming the land's clearance in accordance to international standards. The Nepalese Army worked in conjunction with UNMAT to clear more than 200,000 square meters (49 acres) of land over the four-year period. Prime Minister Khanal praised Nepal's progress since the conflict by realizing its

goal of becoming mine-free. He stated that reaching mine-free status will help heal the wounds from the conflict and begin the country's journey toward a more prosperous and peaceful Nepal.³ After China, Nepal is the second country in Asia to be declared mine-free. ↴

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Endnotes

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