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In Remembrance: Femisberto Novele

by Cory Kuklick [Center for International Stabilization and Recovery]

Femisberto Novele, a member of Mine Action Centre in Cyprus, was killed by an anti-tank explosion on 28 October 2009. Novele, 48, was working in Yeri, only 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) southeast of Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus. A native of Mozambique, Novele is the first death MACC has suffered during its five years of working on the island, although nine people, including civilians and deminers, were injured in 2008.¹

Cyprus has been affected by landmines since the 1974 crisis between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Landmines were laid by both sides, including inside of the buffer zone created after the conflict. The buffer zone, now controlled by United Nations forces, consists of three percent of the island and holds agricultural land valuable to farmers.² Mine clearance in the buffer zone is managed by the MACC, which plans, coordinates and monitors the clearance of mines and unexploded ordnance. Working alongside U.N. Peacekeeping Forces in Cyprus, MACC has cleared 57 minefields, covering 65 square kilometers (25 miles) of land.¹

In a 2008 interview with *Blue Beret* magazine, Novele said he was proud of the work he was doing. "Our efforts are to guarantee the new generations of the future a safer world," he said. "The land cleared can give way for [hospitals and schools] and that is why I am proud."³ Novele was supporting a wife and eight children, as well as a widowed mother.

Endnotes

1. Evripidou, Stefanos. "UN soldier killed in demining accident." The Free Library. <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/UN+solder+killed+in+demining+accident.-a0210687270>. Accessed 5 November 2009.
2. "Cyprus." Electronic Mine Information Network. <http://www.mineaction.org/country.asp?c=62>. Accessed 5 November 2009.
3. Kreouzos, Netha. "De-miners – Clearing a path for peace." The Blue Beret. June/July 2008. http://www.unficy.org/media/Blue%20Beret%20-%20pdf%20files/2008/BB_June-July_for_web.pdf. Accessed 5 November 2009.



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