

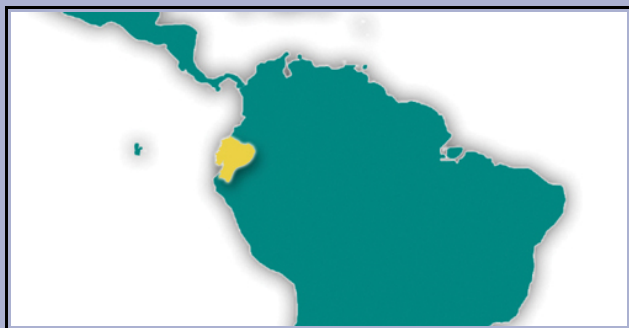


[Editorial](#)
[Focus](#)
[Feature](#)
[Making it Personal](#)
[Book Review](#)
[Special Report](#)
[Notes](#)
[Profiles](#)
[R&D](#)
[News Briefs](#)

Information within this issue may be outdated. [Click here](#) to link to the most recent issue.

Ecuador

by Zach Wall and Alex Davenport [Center for International Stabilization and Recovery]



At the Ninth Meeting of States Parties in November 2008, Ecuador was one of 15 countries to request an extension on the Ottawa Convention¹ deadline for completing landmine clearance. These 15 States Parties were the first group to do so since the adoption of the Convention in 1997. Delegates agreed unanimously to grant Ecuador's request, extending the original 2009 deadline a full eight years to 1 September 2017. In its request, Ecuador reported fulfilling its Article 52 obligations in 53 of 128 suspect areas—totaling 118,707 square meters (29 acres) of cleared area. Approximately 498,633 square meters (123 acres) in the existing suspect areas remain to be demined before the new deadline.³

Border Conflict and Landmine Contamination

Border disputes with Peru during the 1990s created Ecuador's present-day landmine-contamination problem, which is concentrated in the Cenepa River region. Following the first Peruvian-Ecuadorian War in the early 1940s, the neighboring countries entered into the *Protocol of Peace, Friendship, and Boundaries between Ecuador and Peru*, commonly known as the Rio Protocol.⁴ This peace agreement officially demarcated the disputed Amazonian territory; however, it did not definitively put the issue to rest. Instead, it became a source of longstanding contention between both countries. In 1991 Ecuador renewed its military presence in the Cenepa River region, deploying troops and laying thousands of anti-personnel mines. In early 1995, conflict broke out briefly, resulting in several hundred casualties over a five-week period.⁵

Ecuador has reportedly not laid any anti-personnel mines since the end of what is commonly called the Cenepa War. Five provinces in the region contain a remaining 75 suspected hazardous areas, with the most significant contamination in the Condor Mount Range. Since 2001, the Organization of American States' *Acción Integral Contra las Minas Antipersonal* program has assisted Ecuador's national demining organization, *Centro Nacional de Desminado Humanitario*, in directing the country's mine-action program. According to the *Landmine Monitor Report*, national demining efforts have cleared an average of 13,190 square meters (3 acres) annually since 1999. However, clearance trailed off significantly between 2005 and 2007, averaging just 7,466 square meters (2 acres) each year.⁶ In early 2008, Ecuador submitted an initial Article 5 extension request, indicating it would be unable to complete demining operations by its original 1 October 2009, deadline. The request acknowledged several factors complicating clearance efforts, such as adverse climate and the inadequacy of manual-demining techniques in some areas.

According to Sergio Ugarte Arguello, National Coordinator for *Acción Integral Contra las Minas Antipersonal*, "Ecuador

does face mine-action challenges different from other settings. One cannot disregard the challenging terrain, weather and overall jungle environment. There are no roads or footpaths leading to the mined areas; torrential rains are common; and deminers must guard against other killers such as snakes and mosquitoes.”⁷

Clearance efforts have also been complicated by budgetary constraints. Since 2005, annual international assistance has sharply declined, with Ecuador receiving 66 percent less from donors in 2007 than in 2006. Canada, Spain and the European Commission pledged US\$409,284 cumulatively through OAS-AICMA for mine action in 2008–2009.⁶ Ecuador’s extension request, however, indicated that an additional \$16.67 million in total—more than double the existing annual budget—will be necessary to complete clearance operations within the amended timetable. While the government of Ecuador will finance approximately half of this sum, another \$1 million per year will be required from international donors. Representatives at the Ninth Meeting of States Parties noted that such an increase in financing “suggests that Ecuador may find itself in a situation wherein it could proceed with implementation faster than that suggested by the amount of time requested.”³


Victim Assistance and Mine-risk Education

More than 13 percent of Ecuador’s population—at least 1.6 million—has some sort of disability. Because there was no formal data collection on landmine casualties prior to 2001, the number of mine survivors is unknown. Since then, however, AICMA has maintained a registry of casualties, which includes 17 survivors as of 2008.⁶ The extent of the disabled population, combined with the difficulty of providing rehabilitative services to individuals in remote and rural areas, greatly curbs the country’s victim-assistance capacities.

The Quito-based *Fundación Hermano Miguel* is one of the principal providers of disability services in the country. The organization’s *Centro de Atención Integral al Discapacitado* programs offer both physical rehabilitation and vocational training opportunities to Ecuador’s extensive disabled population. Since 1986, CAID has equipped 19 medical facilities throughout Ecuador, and its prosthetic and orthotic laboratory manufactures assistive devices that benefit approximately 300 individuals with disabilities each month. Additionally, CAID’s rehabilitation specialists provide direct victim-assistance services to some 80 patients per month.⁸

The key achievement of the Ecuadorian mine-action program is its national mine-risk education program (see [article in this issue](#) for more information). Mine-risk education is an essential component of the AICMA Ecuador multidimensional assistance program and is currently being conducted in the Loja, El Oro and Morona Santiago provinces. AICMA coordinates its national awareness campaign in collaboration with the Ecuadorian Red Cross and the *Comando General de Desminado*. Delegates to the Eighth Meeting of States Parties reported that, in total, 37,000⁶ individuals had received MRE services as of 2007, and in 2008, the AICMA MRE program reached more than 1,800 individuals in mine-affected communities.⁷

Looking Forward

Like some of the other 15 States Parties that requested Ottawa Convention extensions in 2008, the Ecuadorian mine-action authorities have acknowledged expected challenges to completing its obligations. However, the nation’s current position warrants optimism. “There are several strengths in the national [mine-action] program; and there are challenges that could be misconstrued as weaknesses,” says Sergio Ugarte Arguello. Ugarte Arguello also noted that the government and OAS have been open to making “improvements in organization [and] training and to exploring the use of mechanical equipment” for more efficacious operations in the years ahead. 

Biographies

Zach Wall was with the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery as an Editorial Assistant from September 2007 through May 2009. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in sociology from James Madison University in spring 2009, and he is now on tour with his band.



Alex Davenport worked at *The Journal of ERW and Mine Action* from January to November 2008. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in justice studies at James Madison University.

Endnotes

1. *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction*, Oslo, Norway. 18 September 1997. The document was opened for signature in Ottawa, Canada, 3 December 1997, commonly known as the Ottawa Convention. <http://www.icbl.org/treaty/text/english>. Accessed 24 February 2009.
2. Article 5 of the Ottawa Convention requires that signatories identify all mined or mine-suspected areas; ensure these areas are marked, monitored and protected so as to effectively exclude civilians; and destroy or ensure destruction of all mines in these areas as soon as possible and no later than 10 years after the Convention's entry into force. The Ottawa Convention is available at <http://www.icbl.org/treaty/text/english#5>. Accessed 24 February 2009.
3. "AP Mine Ban Convention: Article 5 Extension Requests." *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction*. Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. <http://www.apminebanconvention.org/meetings-of-the-states-parties/9msp/what-was-decided/article-5-extension-requests-analysis-of-requests/>. Accessed 5 February 2009.
4. *Protocol of Peace, Friendship and Boundaries between Ecuador and Peru*, Rio de Janeiro, Argentina. 29 January 1942. This agreement is commonly known as the Rio Protocol. http://www.usip.org/library/pa/ep/ep_rio01291942.html. Accessed 24 February 2009.
5. "Ecuador." *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*. <http://www.icbl.org/lm/2008/countries/ecuador.php>. Accessed 24 February 2009.
6. Palmer, D. S. "Peru-Ecuador Border Conflict: Missed Opportunities, Misplaced Nationalism, and Multilateral Peacekeeping." *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* (1997): 109–148.
7. E-mail correspondence with Carlos Calderon, Organization of American States. 20 February 2009.
8. "CAID Programs." *Fundación Hermano Miguel*. http://www.fundacionhermanomiguel.org/programscaid_ing.htm. Accessed 20 February 2009.

Contact Information

Zach Wall
 Editorial Assistant
The Journal of ERW and Mine Action
 Mine Action Information Center
 Center for International Stabilization and Recovery
 James Madison University
 E-mail: maic@jmu.edu

Sergio Ugarte Arguello
 National Coordinator
 AICMA Ecuador/Peru
 Tomas Bermur No. 39-337 y Francisco Urrutia
 Sector Batan Alto
 Quito / Ecuador
 Tel: +593 22 457 655



(c) 2009 *Journal of ERW and Mine Action*, Mine Action Information Center, Center for International Stabilization and Recovery. All rights reserved.

If cited properly, short sections (a sentence or two) can be used without permission. Written *Journal of ERW and Mine Action* approval is required, however, before longer sections of content published in *The Journal* may be used by another source or publication. ISSN:2154-1485

Views expressed in *The Journal of ERW and Mine Action* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery, the Mine Action Information Center, James Madison University, the U.S. Department of State or the U.S. Army Humanitarian Demining Program. Authors who submit articles to *The Journal* are expected to do so in good faith and are solely responsible for the content therein, including the accuracy of all information and correct attribution for quotations and citations.

[Past Issues](#) * [CISR Home](#)