

Peru

by Lauren Hill and Cory Kuklick
[Center for International Stabilization and Recovery]

Situated between Chile and Ecuador, next to the South Pacific Ocean, Peru faced a decade of military rule in the 1970s and internal conflict in the 1980s when democracy was reestablished. These periods of conflict, as well as a border dispute with Ecuador in the 1990s, have resulted in landmine problems.¹ The Ottawa Convention went into force for Peru in 1999, meaning its deadline for total mine clearance should be reached in 2009. Peru requested, and was granted, a deadline extension through 2017, citing a lack of funding.

History of the Mine Problem

The majority of the landmine contamination in Peru is located near its border with Ecuador, an area known as *Cordillera del Condor*, which was heavily mined during the border dispute between the two countries. Electricity towers and public infrastructure are also heavily mined in Peru. Internal conflict during 1980–92 led Peru to use anti-personnel landmines as a defense against the Maoist guerrilla organization *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) and other revolutionaries, making explosive remnants of war the greatest concern within the country.²

Mine Ban Policy

By 1998, Peru had signed and ratified the Ottawa Convention,³ and in 1999 it became a State Party when the Convention went into effect. In 2006, the Peruvian Congress passed a law making the manufacturing, use, stockpiling, production or transfer of AP mines punishable by five to eight years in prison. That same year, Peru formally expressed the challenges it faced regarding mine clearance and victim assistance at the Seventh Meeting of States Parties in Geneva, Switzerland. The Peruvian Armed Forces General Directorate of Humanitarian Demining is responsible for demining in the most highly affected area: the border with Ecuador. Mine clearance near electricity

towers and other public infrastructure is the responsibility of privately owned electricity companies, who have contracted *División de Seguridad Contraminas* (DIVSECOM), a specialized unit of the National Police of Peru, to help with this clearance.⁴

Casualties

Since 2005, there has been an increase in landmine/ERW casualties. In 2006, at least 13 victims were identified—five were killed and eight injured. In 2007, it was reported that there were 48 new landmine/ERW and improvised explosive device casualties—two caused by AP mines and the rest by other ERW and IEDs.⁴ Since collection of casualty data is difficult due to the remoteness of the affected areas, a total number is not unknown. Victims of landmines and other ERW include both deminers and civilians, including children.²

Progress

Peru requested a 10-year extension to its original 1 March 2009 clearance deadline, set in place by Article 5 of the Ottawa Convention⁶ to eliminate the estimated 50,000 remaining mines. Preparing for the completion of demining, Peru set a 12-year plan for 2007 through 2019, its proposed 10-year extension date. However, the plan's mine-clearance strategy concerning Peru's border with Ecuador was deemed inadequate, and Peru's 10-year extension request was rejected. Peru then requested an eight-year extension, to 2017, which was approved in 2008.

A DIVSECOM update in March 2007 stated that the demining around high-security prisons and police stations was awaiting funding and could not be completed until the money was available.² Progress remains slow because of problems with mine-action management; however, some progress has been made. China, for example, donated US\$100,000 in 2008 to help clear landmines on the border between Peru and Ecuador.⁷ Other financial contributions to

mine clearance in 2008 included a total of US\$237,110 from Germany and the Republic of Korea.⁴

Ecuador and Peru have joined together on a project in the Condor region coordinated by their respective national mine-action programs. The *Centro de Desminado del Ecuador* and the *Centro Peruano de Acción contra las Minas Anti-Personal* will work in coordination with the OAS program, *Acción Integral contra las Minas Antipersonal*, to ensure the commitments to the Ottawa Convention are followed. The OAS-AICMA program assists with these goals by overseeing the allocation of funds from international donors and gathering contacts to help coordinate programs. A single regional coordinator directs the OAS-AICMA offices in Quito and Lima, making effective communication possible between the countries. Funded by countries such as the United States, as well as the European Commission, OAS-AICMA supports both national mine-action centers to ensure that goals are reached in a timely manner and efforts to help clear mines in the *Cordillera del Condor* region are initiated.¹⁰

Financial Concerns

Peru's lack of funding for mine-action projects impedes the progress of mine clearance. Its 10-year extension request included an estimated cost for all clearance procedures between 2009 and 2019, but Peru worried that national and international funds would not provide the required cost of these operations. Peru and Ecuador worked to obtain financial and technical funds during a series of meetings in 2007 with international donors to assist with these needs.⁴ The lack of mine-risk education due to a shortage of funds is part of the overall limitations Peru has in managing the country's landmine/unexploded ordnance crisis. Victim assistance in Peru has also been affected by a lack of funds, with comprehensive medical assistance limited in rural areas. Community-based rehabilitation services exist in Lima, but, due to a lack of funding, the program has been unable to expand to other parts of the country.²

Geographic Obstacles

Geographic obstacles where the majority of the landmine problems are located restrict the program's ability to reach its deadlines.

Peru contains mountain and jungle regions, both of which provide conditions that make it difficult for demining. Irregular mountain terrain such as peaks and gorges, as well as a lack of oxygen in high altitudes, make de-mining difficult. Similarly, conditions such as heavy precipitation and dense vegetation hinder mine-clearance in Peru's jungle regions, including along its border with Ecuador.¹¹

Looking Forward

Peru has suffered from inadequate MRE and victim-assistance programs, due in no small part to a lack of funding. Despite the country's inadequate resources, some organizations, including the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, still question why Peru has taken so long to clear its remaining landmines.⁸ The extension granted to Peru at the ninth meeting of the States Parties in November 2008 was done in light of its commitment to more consistent demining and the projected socioeconomic benefits. Hopefully, this investment will pay off and give Peru a future free from the plight of landmines.⁹ ♦

See Endnotes, Page 114



Lauren Nicole Hill has been a part of *The Journal of ERW and Mine Action* team as an Editorial Assistant since August 2008. She will graduate from James Madison University in 2010 with a Bachelor of Arts in communication studies, as well as a concentration in public relations and a minor in Italian.

Lauren Nicole Hill
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



Cory Kuklick is a senior at James Madison University, where he is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in print journalism and a minor in nonprofit studies. In addition to working for *The Journal of ERW and Mine Action*, he writes a music column for *The Breeze*, JMU's student newspaper, and has written for various music Web sites.

Cory Kuklick
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

News Brief

Lebanese Deminer's Stories Told in Documentary

Remnants of War, a feature-length documentary about the post-war environment in Lebanon, was recently shown at the 20th annual Human Rights Watch Film Festival. The film was the first feature-length documentary by director Jawad Metni, an Arab-American filmmaker of Lebanese descent who grew up in Texas. Metni's film was chosen from about 500 films submitted for the festival. Only 21 feature-length films and 11 shorts were screened at this year's festival.

Metni, who still has family in Lebanon, felt helpless as he watched the 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah unfold before him while living in New York. Close to one million cluster munitions were dropped on Lebanon by Israel in the conflict, and it is estimated that 30 percent of these munitions failed to detonate. The munitions posed an immediate danger to the Lebanese people and continue to present difficulties to civilians in the area. The conflict spurred Metni to move to Lebanon for seven months in 2007, filming the lives of deminers in South Lebanon. Working with a shoestring budget, most of which was used for living expenses, *Remnants of War* is devoid of narration. Instead, the film showcases the deminers themselves, allowing them to speak about their lives, hopes and fears for the future of their country.

The Human Rights Watch Film Festival is a program of Human Rights Watch, a group that highlights human rights violations around the world. Coordinators at the festival noted that each year's submissions are more professional and sophisticated, with high production values and musical scores. Films are chosen, however, based on their ability to present the issues at hand.