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## Norwegian People's Aid

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# Norwegian People's Aid

## Profile

**Operating on the principles of solidarity, unity, human dignity, peace and freedom, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) is one of Norway's leading non-governmental organizations. Originating in 1939 as a result of the Norwegian labor movement, NPA quickly assumed an active role in Norway, performing rescue, first aid and public health services, assisting the elderly and disabled, offering services during natural disasters and operating reception centers for asylum seekers.**

NPA soon became an international figure and expanded its services to include agricultural, environmental, healthcare and psycho-social and human rights activities. NPA also offers emergency assistance, shelters, conflict prevention and resolution and, lastly, mine-clearance and mine-awareness programs. By extending this spectrum of services, NPA has secured its position as a vital force on the international humanitarian aid level and is presently involved in 400 projects in 30 countries. NPA also advocates that cooperation only enhances a

humanitarian organization's fight against inhumane behavior. It works closely with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is a member of Eurostep and SOLIDAR.

Although NPA accomplishes much from a national perspective, its mine clearance and mine awareness programs highlight its dedication to ridding the world of landmines and improving safety for all human beings. It has established a tradition of assisting African countries in their liberation movements, supporting each individual's right to freedom and justice, and has contributed to rebuilding and development efforts in recently liberated countries. NPA categorizes its efforts in Africa into two divisions: short-term emergency relief and long-term development cooperation, with Southern Africa and the Horn of Africa comprising its two prime geographical areas of concern.

### Landmine Activities

NPA's landmine projects have taken it to Angola where the organization focused on battle area clearance, mine clearance, survey and GIS database and mine awareness. Its expertise has landed it projects in Angola and Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Kosovo, Laos, Mozambique, Northern Iraq, Kurdistan and the Western Sahara. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, NPA surveyed the land, established mine clearance and mine awareness programs and deployed 150 deminers and five mine detection dog teams. To assist the refugees in Cambodia, NPA offered

local community development programs and supplied technical guidance to the Cambodian Mine Action Center (CCMAT). NPA also incorporates indigenous populations in its projects to promote cordial working relationships between the countries and NPA and to establish a competent demining team to further mine clearance efforts once NPA is no longer a presence in the country. In Kosovo, NPA trained 100 local deminers and dog teams to clear the affected land. As mine awareness comprises a significant portion of the landmine problem, NPA created mine awareness programs for returning refugees in the Western Sahara and trained approximately 30,000 people in refugee camps.

To optimize its efforts, NPA also focuses on the research and development of mine clearance technology, as there is always a need to improve safety, speed and cost concerns for mine detection and removal methods. NPA also emphasizes the need to approach all new technological advancements with a degree of caution, as there is never an easy solution to a problem this severe.

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