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Cambodia

Country Profile

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PROFILES

CAMBODIA



HISTORY

The Republic of Cambodia was battered throughout much of the 1970s and 1980s by civil war and, most noticeably, the Khmer Rouge regime. After 30 years of near constant conflict, Cambodia is one of the world's most landmine and UXO-affected countries. As areas formerly controlled by the Khmer Rouge were freed, numerous mine casualties were reported.

LANDMINES/UXO OVERVIEW

The Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC) believes that 644 square km of land is mined in the country, with an additional 1,400 sq. km suspected of mine contamination. Many of the landmines afflicting Cambodia are found along the Thai border, where a majority of fighting has occurred since 1979. Meanwhile, the country is also affected by UXO remaining from the Vietnam War. In 1998, a U.S. Department of State

report estimated the number of mines in Cambodia to be about 4 million - 6 million, although the actual figure is unknown.

CASUALTIES

Casualties are decreasing at a considerable rate in Cambodia. 1,012 people were killed or injured by landmines in 1999, a 41 percent decrease from the previous year. From January to May 2000, 417 casualties were reported—a rate of about 83 per month, compared to 84 per month in 1999. These numbers show significant improvement in the last four years—casualties occurred at a rate of 254 per month in 1996. Unfortunately, the number of mine-related accidents involving children has increased from 16 percent in 1998 to 30 percent through May 2000. This in-

crease is generally attributed to the increase of resettlement and land clearance during times of repatriation from Thai border camps.

DEMINEING

A majority of the demining performed in Cambodia is attributed to villagers, CMAC, the military, the NGOs Mines Advisory Group (MAG), and Halo Trust, and some commercial firms. From 1993 to 1999, villagers cleared 69,780,000 sq. m., bettering even CMAC's 53,875,460 sq. m. Since demining began in Cambodia, about 155 sq. km have been cleared, including 8,006 AP mines, 70 AT mines and 91,131 UXO stretching across 11.86 sq. km in 1999.

REALITY CHECK

While the effects of the Vietnam War, civil conflicts and the Khmer Rouge regime are still felt throughout the country, Cambodians can take solace in the fact that the Khmer Rouge has been reintegrated into the population and, currently, no significant guerilla factions exist in Cambodia.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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