

VIETNAM

HISTORY

Following the Vietnam War (1959-1975), the use of landmines between divided Vietnamese troops was widespread. Heavily bombed areas during the war proved to contain the most concentrated areas of UXO. As a result, the Mine Technology Center in Hanoi estimates that 350,000 tons of landmines are undetected along Vietnam's borders and within its fields. Today, the Vietnamese government focuses on restoring political stability and reforming economic standards that deteriorated following the Vietnam War. For the most part, mine action, awareness and education are carried out by local NGOs and internationally funded mine programs.

LANDMINES/UXO OVERVIEW

As a result of conflicts with China and Cambodia, the U.S. Department of State estimates there to be 3.5 million landmines in Vietnam's 61 provinces, in addition to unidentified amounts of UXO. Of this, 350,000 tons of landmines remain hidden over a total of 16,478 sq. km of land. According to the *Landmine Monitor Report 2000*, these figures are believed to be widely underestimated since the country has never stopped



production of land-mines. Although all of the provinces in Vietnam are affected, Quang Tri Province, along the old Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), is said to have the largest concentration of landmines and UXO from the heavy fighting, along the DMZ.

CASUALTIES

Mine-related injuries account for 15 percent of Vietnam's total disabled population. According to a nationwide survey conducted in September 1999 by the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), 38,248 people have been killed and 64,064 people have been injured since the end of the Vietnam War, an estimate of 180 casualties per month. Often, victims are treated at health stations provided by the Vietnamese government, but more often victims who cannot afford expensive medical treatment and rehabilitative costs turn to international organizations offering disability programs. A

total of \$2.6 million (U.S.) in funding is allocated to Vietnamese disability programs by USAID and the European Union.

DEMING

From 1975-1985, 15 to 20 percent of explosives remaining from the war were cleared by the People's Army of Vietnam. Projects started in 1999 and 2000 have paved the way for mine action. In addition to five internationally funded landmine/UXO projects, the Vietnamese army has plans to destroy 2,000 tons of AP mines in 2000. Projections by the Ministry of Defense indicate that clearance of landmines and UXO in Vietnam would require 10 years and would cost \$4 billion to \$15 billion. Since plans to establish a mine action center in Vietnam have not yet been approved by the Vietnamese government, Quang Tri Province has taken its own demining and clearance initiatives. With the help of JMU's Mine Awareness Program, the Quang Tri People's Committee is developing the Mine Action Master Plan for mine awareness education and landmine/UXO assessment.

REALITY CHECK

Internal political and social strife continues on all levels in Vietnam. Rural unrest, beginning in 1997, persists with civilians objecting to high prices and excessive taxation. In addition, conflict between reformers and conservatives continues to thwart progression towards a stable infrastructure.

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