

Argentina

History

After gaining independence from Spain in 1816, Argentines battled amongst themselves in political conflicts between conservatives and liberals. Naturally, due to the intensity of a structured environment aggravated by war, conflicts also arose as the military society merged with the civilians. These opposing entities battled through a long period of authoritarian rule that later ended in a military junta, which usurped the Peronists' authority in 1976. Democracy was not implemented as a governing standard until 1983.

Landmines/UXO Overview

During a 1978 conflict between Argentina and Chile, the Chilean army laid mines along its border with Argentina. According to the 2004 *Landmine Monitor*, it is not known if Argentines laid mines as well. On numerous occasions, Argentine reports have stated that only the Falkland/Malvinas Islands are deemed mine-affected territories (see Falkland Islands profile p.81). The Office of Humanitarian Demining of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces told the *Landmine Monitor* that there is also a problem with UXO in the islands. It said no official studies have been made on the existence of UXO in Argentina.

The 2000 *Landmine Monitor* reported that parts of the border between Argentina and Chile have been mined—up to 14 different areas, according to a news report—but the Argentinean government maintains that all of the mines are on the Chilean side. According to the report, there are several minefields in Argentinean territory, many of which are unmarked. Previous reports had indicated that there were at least eight mined areas in the regions of the Licancabur and Llullailaco volcanos. In a documentary filmed in the area of the Llullailaco volcano, the director of International Security of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Juan José Arcuri, said, "There are no landmines planted by Argentina in the continental territory of

the country." An Argentinean official reiterated in early 2005 that these reports of mined areas were unconfirmed and restated that there are no minefields within continental Argentina.

Casualties

Argentina has been fortunate not to have anyone killed due to landmine explosions. The *Landmine Monitor* reports that no landmine casualties of any kind have ever been reported in Argentina. The *Landmine Monitor* states in its 2003 report that the Argentinean government is considering providing a mine risk education program for people living near the mine-affected border areas.

Demining

When Argentinean officials decided to stop manufacturing anti-personnel landmines after 1990, the demining process began. In 2002, a total of 8,004 AP mines were removed from stockpiles, destroyed or transformed into anti-vehicle mine fuses. Argentina ratified the Ottawa Convention in July 1999, and the Convention entered into force in March 2000.

Reality Check

In June 2003, the Organization of American States (OAS) and Argentina signed an agreement for cooperation and technical assistance for stockpile destruction. According to its obligations under the Convention, Argentina was required to complete stockpile destruction by March 2004. As of December 2003, Argentina is one of the 55 state parties that have completed their Stockpile Destruction Plan, having destroyed the approximately 90,000 anti-personnel mines in its arsenal, retaining 1,772 mines for training purposes. In 2000, an Office for Humanitarian Demining was established, and the Center for Training in Humanitarian Demining (CEDH) provides training for Argentinean armed forces personnel.



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