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## Israel

Country Profile

*Center for International Stabilization and Recovery at JMU (CISR)*

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# Journal of Mine Action

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Israel comprises much of the historic regions known as Palestine and has existed as a country since 1948. During the late 1800s, many Jews immigrated to Palestine from Eastern Europe with the hope of establishing a Jewish state. In 1948, the nation of Israel was established, and neighboring Arab countries invaded immediately. The years have seen continuous wars though an uneasy peace has sometimes prevailed. In May 2000, Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon.

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## Landmines/UXO Overview

The number of mines in Israel is estimated to be 260,000. They are located along the borders of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, including the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights. There have been isolated incidents resulting in civilian injuries, including those from accidental detonation of mines and confrontations across the border with Israeli forces in the immediate area of the borderline, particularly at the now-closed Kfar Kila/Fatima Gate crossing. Mine fields are required to be marked, but a state audit revealed that many are improperly marked. According to the 2001 landmine Monitor Report, Israel has continued to use anti-personnel mines in the Occupied Palestinian Territories without proper marking and fencing.

## Casualties

Because victims of landmines are treated under "victims of hostile activities," detailed statistics on landmine victims are not available. Because victims fall under this clause, they receive extensive treatment, which includes initial evaluation, operations, prosthetics and rehabilitation. Vocational training and outpatient treatment are also provided. Military graduates and school children receive detailed mine awareness sessions, and the newspapers report military landmine victims.

## Demining

Indigenous capacity is considered significant and includes mine-clearing equipment, safety shoes, mine plows and ground-penetrating radar. Israel and Jordan are currently involved in humanitarian mine clearance projects. When Israel withdrew from south Lebanon in May 2000, it gave the United Nations detailed mine field maps.

## Reality Check

Many non-state actors use mines. Hezbollah has used AP mines in south Lebanon. The group has continued to use mines and improvised explosive devices regularly. Israeli officials have stated Hezbollah refuses to stop using landmines.

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