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History

Kuwait's history has been filled with stress due to the vast amount of oil found throughout the country. During the Gulf War, Iraq occupied Kuwait from August 1990 until February 1991. The Iraqi troops planted millions of AP and AT mines in the "Kuwait Theater of Military Operations." Approximately 97.8 percent of Kuwait's land became mined or UXO affected. Heavily mined areas were the northern coast of Kuwait Bay and the Kuwait-Saudi Arabia border.

Landmine / UXO Overview

Immediately after Kuwait's liberation, the government planned for an integrated mine action program. The duration was 24 months and cost \$128 million (U.S.). According to the *Landmine Monitor Report*, as of April 3, 1999, almost 2 million landmines had been recovered from coastal and desert areas of Kuwait. A mine awareness program was also established to inform civilians about the dangers of landmines.

Landmines are still found in coastal and desert areas, including rough vegetated sandy plains, active drainage basins and oil contaminated patches. Emergency teams are still working to clear the hidden killers

Casualties

According to Kuwaiti officials 429 people were wounded and 20 were killed between 1991 and 1993. Close to 1700 civilians and thousands of livestock have been killed since the Gulf War. 2300 civilians have been seriously wounded, 70 percent of whom are children. Fortunately, the number of victims is declining because of the successful demining operations. Still, 44 mine casualties were reported in 2000, according to the 2001 Landmine Monitor Report.

Demining

Many challenges are faced when demining Kuwait's land. The high diversity of landmines planted, the harsh environmental conditions and the lack of information all combined to leave the deminers with a hard task to accomplish. Because of this, many deminers fell as victims during demining operations. During 1991 and 1993 alone 191 deminers were killed. However, at least 250 anti-personnel mines and anti-tank mines were cleared in 2000, according to the 2001 Landmine Monitor Report.

Reality Check

Hundreds of human rights violations that took place during the Iraqi occupation have not yet been resolved. More than 160 people are believed to be serving sentences as a result of unfair trials, and at least 70 disappearances of alleged "collaborators" with Iraqis have occurred. Reports of torture of victims have been received, along with victims who have died during the torture.

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