From Demining to Mine Action
THE DEVELOPMENT OF MINE ACTION
in the UNITED NATIONS
by Martin Barber  (UNMA)
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THE DEVELOPMENT OF MINE ACTION under the UNITED NATIONS
by Martin Bотор (UNMAS)
The dormant threat posed by landmines is still present in many countries where the Soviet Union and its allies had a significant military presence during the Cold War. The destruction of landmine stockpiles and the cessation of new landmine use as a result of the 1997 landmine ban has led to a decrease in the number of landmine-related incidents, but the legacy of the past continues to haunt many countries. In recent years, the United Nations has taken a leading role in addressing the challenges of landmine clearance and assistance to victims, with the establishment of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in 1998.

The UNMAS was established with the mandate to coordinate and support efforts to eliminate landmines and other mines, particularly in areas affected by armed conflict. The agency’s work focuses on three main areas: demining, mine action, and advocacy. Demining involves the removal of landmines and other mines from areas affected by armed conflict, while mine action involves the provision of assistance to people affected by landmines and other mines, such as mine victims, and the provision of training and support to national authorities and communities in need.

In recent years, the UNMAS has made significant progress in addressing the challenges of landmine clearance and assistance to victims. The agency has supported the clearance of millions of square meters of landmine-contaminated land, provided training and support to national authorities and communities, and worked to raise awareness of the dangers of landmines and other mines.

The UNMAS has also worked to promote international cooperation and support for the implementation of the Ottawa Convention, the international treaty that bans the use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. The convention entered into force in 2003, and the UNMAS has played a key role in supporting its implementation.

In conclusion, the UNMAS has made significant progress in addressing the challenges of landmine clearance and assistance to victims. The agency’s work is critical in helping to eliminate the legacy of the past and ensuring that future generations are not denied the opportunity to live free from the threat of landmines and other mines.