

**SAMPLE ARTICLE**

**RECORD-BREAKING PROGRESS FOR MINE BAN**

A report released by Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor shows that record-breaking progress was made in 2009 in implementing the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty. Use and production of the weapon, as well as casualty rates, were the lowest on record, while more contaminated land was cleared than ever before.

“The record progress made in the past year toward eliminating antipersonnel mines shows that the Mine Ban Treaty is working,” said Mark Hiznay of Human Rights Watch, Landmine Monitor’s Final Editor. “Sustained action by governments and civil society, including stable funding, are the key to ensure this progress continues until we completely eliminate the weapon.”

In 2009, 3,956 new landmine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) casualties were recorded, down 28% from 2008—the lowest number recorded for any year since the Monitor began reporting in 1999. However because of incomplete data collection the actual number of casualties is certainly significantly higher.

Eighty percent of the world’s states are party to the Mine Ban Treaty. Thirty-nine countries—including China, India, Pakistan, Russia, and the United States—have yet to join the treaty, but most are in *de facto* compliance with many of the treaty’s key provisions.

The Monitor removed Nepal from its list of mine producers, leaving a dozen countries on the list, of which as few as three are believed to continue to actively manufacture antipersonnel mines (India, Myanmar, and Pakistan). For the first time the Monitor did not list Russia as a mine user, leaving Myanmar as the only government confirmed as using mines in 2009–2010.

In 2009 and 2010, in addition to government forces in Myanmar, non-state armed groups in only six countries (Afghanistan, Colombia, India, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Yemen) continued to use the weapon.

Eighty-six states have completed destruction of their stockpiles, collectively destroying over 45 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines. In 2010, however, Ukraine joined Belarus, Greece, and Turkey in failing to meet their stockpile destruction deadlines, placing all four in serious violation of the Mine Ban Treaty.

In 2009 a total of 66 states and seven other areas were confirmed or suspected to be mine-affected and an area over five times the size of Paris was cleared of mine/ERW contamination. At least 198km<sup>2</sup> of mined area was cleared, by far the highest annual total recorded by the Monitor, resulting in the destruction of more than 255,000 antipersonnel mines and 37,000 antivehicle mines. At least 359km<sup>2</sup> of former battle areas were cleared in 2009, disposing of 2.2 million ERW. Eighty percent of recorded clearance occurred in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Croatia, Iraq, and Sri Lanka. In 2009 and 2010 seven countries announced completion of their clearance activities (Albania, China, Greece, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Tunisia, and Zambia).

Ensuring full compliance with Mine Ban Treaty clearance obligations is one of the greatest challenges facing States Parties. As of September 2010, 22 States Parties had received or were formally seeking extensions to their mine clearance deadlines. According to Stuart Casey-Maslen of Norwegian People’s Aid, the Monitor’s Mine Action Editor, “Too many of the State Parties granted extensions in 2008 and 2009 have since made disappointing progress. Venezuela, for example, has not even started clearance operations more than a decade after ratifying the treaty.”

Some improvement in victim assistance services was noted in 11 countries or other areas in 2009, but declined in nine others. Just 9% of funding for mine action was dedicated to victim assistance.

The \$449 million in international support for mine action in 2009 is roughly equal to 2008 contributions. The United States gave the most money (\$119 million), while Afghanistan received the most (\$107 million).

This is the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Landmine Monitor report.