

## Conventional weapons destruction and landmine clearance in Lebanon (Lebanon)

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**Washington, DC, March 24, 2009 - The Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the U. S. Department of State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs has granted \$1.5 million to the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) for conventional weapons destruction in eight impacted communities in southern Lebanon. The presence of conventional weapons following the 2006 conflict between Hezbollah and Israel has impeded post-conflict recovery. MAG's project is critical to restoring access to land for agricultural development and infrastructure rehabilitation and development.**

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As a result of the 2006 conflict, southern Lebanon was littered with cluster sub-munitions and other conventional weapons, including landmines. Even after two years, new weapons strike locations continue to be discovered and communities continue to be threatened, reducing the residents' ability to recover and return to sustainable livelihoods.

Coordinating closely with the Lebanon Mine Action Center, MAG will deploy teams to eight communities in southern Lebanon, and expects to clear an estimated 680,000 square meters of priority land. We anticipate that the population of these communities, approximately 45,000 people, will indirectly benefit from these Battle Area Clearance efforts.

Since the conflict in southern Lebanon ended, the U.S. Government has provided over \$15.5 million to support the clearance of explosive remnants of war (ERW).

The Department of State has led the overall effort, providing over \$7 million to MAG for ERW clearance in southern Lebanon, including unexploded cluster munitions, and \$2.5 million in 2007 and 2008 to the Lebanese Mine Action Center to help develop capacity to address the landmine and unexploded ordnance contamination problem.

The Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement manages both humanitarian mine action programs (including clearance of landmines and explosive remnants of war, survivors assistance, and mine risk education) and conventional weapons destruction programs worldwide. To learn more visit [www.state.gov/t/pm/wra/](http://www.state.gov/t/pm/wra/)

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