Hundreds of land mine warning signs have been stolen from Southern areas and presumably used as scrap metal, according to an association for the disabled.

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Beirut (Lebanon): Some signs have also apparently been knocked down by passing cars, exposing several areas littered with landmines. An executive committee member of the Welfare Association Caring for South Lebanon's Disabled, Ghassan Rammal, said that the association had staged several awareness campaigns to caution the public about land mines. "We have staged these campaigns in cooperation with the National Anti-Landmine Office and Balamand University," he added. The association said it had cautioned in the past about the removal of the signs, stressing the danger that the lack of signs represents to tourists and residents.

The association called on the authorities to act on the problem and punish anyone who has deliberately removed any of the warning signs. The signs were installed by the National Anti-Landmine Office at international expense. They are red and blue in color and come in either square or triangular shape. The center of the signs is red and bears the words: "Land mines, suspicious objects and unexploded ordinances are a threat against your life and that of your family."

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