The Mine Advisory Group (MAG) and the National Demining Office handed over the "Tower Field land" to its owner, Angele Khawand Zeeny, after clearing it of mines.

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Beirut (Lebanon): The land is called "Sidoun Tower" or "Peace Tower" because it served as a surveillance tower for the Israeli Army from 1989 to 2000. A ceremony was held for the occasion by Zeeny, in coordination with the National Demining Office, the United States Agency for International Development and the Japanese and Norwegian embassies. The building was in the hands of MAG, which has been contracted to map all mined areas between the UN-demarcated Blue Line and the Litani River in the South.

The owner of the tower, Zeeny, celebrated the return of the property, which was surrounded by hundreds of land mines and unexploded ordnances. "MAG started to search for land mines and unexploded ordnances in 2001," the director of the group, Ghazi Fanton, said in an address during the handing over ceremony. He added that MAG was working closely, at the time, with the National Land Mine Office. He said MAG has always relied on its manual team to search for land mines, as well as mechanical mine detectors and a pack of dogs that could pinpoint the exact location of a buried land mine. He said that the team had discovered, in the tower site, some 176 explosive devices, including 18 land mines, six anti-personnel mines and 152 unexploded ordnances. "We spent more than 250 hours to finish searching this site for land mines and bombs," added Fanton. Lebanese Army Brig. Salim Raad, who attended the ceremony, said despite recent efforts, more than 120,000 land mines and unexploded ordnances are still buried in the South.

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