Anti-personnel (AMP) and anti-vehicle (AVM) mine incidents are on the increase in Namibia, especially along the volatile northeastern border areas.

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An undeclared low intensity war has been raging in the said areas since December last year between Namibian and Angolan security forces, on one hand, are pitted against guerrillas of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, well known by its Portuguese acronym, as UNITA, on the other.

The local media, citing police sources, reported this morning indicated that at least two AVM explosions went off on Tuesday morning at Mashangara a San (i.e. Bushman) settlement, some 200 kilometers east of Rundu the regional capital of Kavango. Rundu is located some 670 kilometers north of Windhoek, the Namibian capital. According to a front-page report in one of the three daily newspapers here, The Namibian, police sources yesterday said that a car carrying "Angolan nationals" blew up when it drove over "an antipersonnel mine" east of Rundu. However, another daily, Die Republikein, said also in a lead article this morning "a member of the Angolan army died and six others were seriously injured when their lorry drove over a landmine". An Angolan soldier died and six others received "serious" injuries, Die Republikein reported.

On the same day an armored personnel carrier, known here as a "Casspir", carrying 12 Namibian soldiers was also damaged in another mine explosion some 100 meters from the one that blew up the Angolan vehicle. The twelve Namibian soldiers received "slight" injuries in the explosion. "These can only an AVM, rather than APM explosions", said Phil ya Nangoloh, Sr, coordinator of the Namibian Campaign to Ban Landmines this morning.

Two other AVMs were discovered on the Trans-Caprivi Highway also some 200 kilometers east of Rundu last Tuesday, February 8, 2000. This brings to five, total number of AVM incidents that were recently reported in the media. Last week several embassies in Namibia, citing human insecurity and menace posed by landmines, advised expatriates to withdraw from the northern areas of the country.