

CANADIAN FORCES' INTERNATIONAL DEMINING EFFORTS

The indiscriminate use of anti-personnel (AP) mines in some 70 countries around the world has resulted in social and economic upheaval and human tragedy of immeasurable proportions. Canada is committed to achieving a global ban on the use, production and export of AP mines. As part of the Government of Canada's international leadership on this issue, the Department of National Defence (DND) and the Canadian Forces (CF) continue to play a pivotal role in countering the ever-present threat posed by AP mines.

The CF have participated and continue to participate in important post-conflict demining operations around the world, including such countries as Cambodia, Kuwait, Rwanda, Croatia and Bosnia. For example, in Cambodia, CF members have provided management advisory support services and technical training to the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) since 1993. CMAC is the world's largest civilian organization dedicated to the removal of landmines.

As well, the CF:

- provide mine awareness programs to affected populations in cooperation with local civil and military authorities;
- facilitate the return of civilians to their home towns by clearing access and supply routes; and,
- participate in mine clearing operations to ensure the safety of troops during international peacekeeping initiatives.

Given Canada's important role in international peacekeeping, the human and capital costs to Canadians of continued AP mine proliferation are extensive. AP mines jeopardize the work of Canadian peacekeepers abroad in two ways: first, they are a physical danger to our troops — in the last four years, there have been a number of mine incidents during which Canadian troops were injured or killed; second, because AP mines leave behind a legacy of war even after a formal truce is in place, sustainable peace is made much more difficult to establish and an international presence is required for longer periods of time.