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Established in 1998, Landmine Monitor is an initiative of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, 1997 Nobel Peace Prize Co-Laureate

## Key Developments: Non-State Armed Groups September 2006

Verifiable use of antipersonnel mines by non-state armed groups (NSAGs)<sup>1</sup> has continued to decline. According to *Landmine Monitor Report 2006*, at least 16 non-state armed groups used antipersonnel mines or victim activated explosive devices in 10 countries, down from 13 countries the previous year.<sup>2</sup>

Of the more than 40 different non-state armed groups mentioned in *Landmine Monitor Report 2006*, most are not mine users today, but may have been in the past; some have mined areas in territory under their control, and many use other types of explosive devices.

### Commitments to a Mine Ban

A significant number of non-state armed groups have chosen to forego mine use or possession. NSAGs have indicated their willingness to accept the ban through a variety of means, most notably through bilateral agreements or unilateral statements such as the Geneva Call Deed of Commitment.<sup>3</sup>

*Landmine Monitor Report 2006* notes that non-state armed groups in three States Parties (the Philippines, Senegal and Sudan) have committed to abide by a ban on antipersonnel mines through bilateral agreements with governments. Since the last Landmine Monitor Report, four groups have signed the Geneva Call Deed of Commitment: the Polisario Front in Western Sahara in November 2005; the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Turkey in July 2006; the Chin National Front (CNF) in Burma/Myanmar in August 2006; and the Kuki National Organization (KNO) in India, also in August 2006.<sup>4</sup> Landmine Monitor has reported that both the PKK and the CNF have been users of antipersonnel landmines.

<sup>1</sup> Non-State Armed Groups include any identifiable group that uses armed methods, and is not within the *formal* structure of a recognized state. This includes: 1) counter-state armed political movements, guerrilla movements and rebel armed forces; 2) militias or civil patrols often operating under the sanction of official entities, but not within the legal state structure; and, 3) criminal groups, among others. There are exceptions and complications to the above categories, and Landmine Monitor makes its own determination on a case-by-case basis, within this general framework. Information in this fact sheet covers the *Landmine Monitor Report 2006* reporting period (since May 2005).

<sup>2</sup> See *Landmine Monitor: Key Developments, Non-State Armed Groups & Other Mine Affected Areas, November 2005*, released at the Sixth Meeting of States Parties in Zagreb, Croatia.

<sup>3</sup> Geneva Call is a Swiss-based NGO. Under the Deed of Commitment, a signatory agrees to prohibit use, production, stockpiling and transfer of antipersonnel mines, and to undertake and cooperate in mine action activities.

PKK signs Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment," 18 July 2006; "The Kuki National Organization signs Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment," 9 August 2006; "The Chin National Front signs Geneva Call's Deed of Commitment," 10 August 2006. www.genevacall.org

## ***Use by Non-State Armed Groups***

Non-state armed groups continued to use antipersonnel mines and victim-activated improvised explosive devices (IEDs) that function like antipersonnel mines, as well as antivehicle mines and command-detonated IEDs.

NSAG use of antipersonnel mines or mine-like IEDs was reported in three States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty (Burundi, Colombia and Guinea-Bissau) and seven non-States Parties (Burma, India, Iraq, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia/Chechnya and Somalia). Guinea-Bissau was the only addition to the list this year, and four countries were removed (Georgia, Philippines, Turkey, and Uganda). Non-state armed groups in Colombia and Burma were the most prolific users of antipersonnel mines.

In Burma, the Karen National Liberation Army, Karenni Army, Shan State Army (South, SSA-S), Chin National Army (CNA), United Wa State Army (UWSA), Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, and several other non-state armed groups continued to use antipersonnel mines; it is likely that the Karen National Liberation Army was the NSAG using mines most extensively in this reporting period. CNA forces reported that they used landmines while on patrol in the tri-border between India, Bangladesh and Burma. The UWSA reportedly told villagers in December 2005 and January 2006 that, due to the dangers from newly laid mines, they could no longer to cross the border from Thailand into Shan State. The SSA-S laid mines in eastern Shan State resulting in civilian casualties. The DKBA was also reported to have laid mines near villages in Karen State in September 2005.

In Colombia, the FARC continued to be the biggest user of landmines in the country, and among the biggest in the world. Landmine Monitor registered new use of antipersonnel mines by FARC forces in several municipalities that had not reported mine incidents previously. Other groups, notably the ELN, also used mines. There were no specific reports of use of antipersonnel mines by AUC in this reporting period, though mines were seized from and turned in by AUC members.<sup>5</sup>

In Nepal, Maoists used large numbers of command-activated explosive devices, as well as victim-activated and time-activated devices, that led to casualties in almost every district of the country. Use stopped with the May 2006 cease-fire, and both the Maoists and the government agreed to a Code of Conduct that prohibits use of landmines.

In Pakistan, NSAGs used antipersonnel mines, antivehicle mines and IEDs extensively in Baluchistan, and to a lesser extent in Waziristan and elsewhere in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

In India, a variety of NSAGs continued to use antipersonnel mines, antivehicle mines and, most commonly, improvised explosive devices. Communist insurgents in central India used command-detonated IEDs, victim-activated explosive devices, and booby-traps. A number of groups in northeastern India used victim-activated devices. Insurgents in Kashmir used command-detonated IEDs, and the Indian Army recovered antipersonnel landmines from the insurgents.

In Burundi, the government continued to accuse the Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu-Forces nationales de libération (PALIPEHUTU-FNL) rebels of using antipersonnel mines; the increased number of mine casualties, particularly in Bujumbura Rural province where fighting has been taking place, indicated ongoing use of antipersonnel mines.

In March and April 2006, a faction of the Senegal-based Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance led by Salif Sadio fled into northern Guinea-Bissau and laid both antipersonnel and antivehicle mines during fighting with Guinea-Bissau armed forces, causing civilian casualties and significant socioeconomic disruption.

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<sup>5</sup> FARC: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia; ELN: Ejército de Liberación Nacional; AUC: Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia.

In Iraq, opposition forces continued to use improvised explosive devices in great numbers, as well as antivehicle mines. The IEDs appeared to be almost exclusively command-detonated, though Coalition forces discovered many caches of antipersonnel mines. In June 2006, insurgent forces reportedly placed numerous victim-activated IEDs in the area surrounding the bodies of two American soldiers who had been kidnapped and killed.

In Somalia, there is little specific information available, but several sources have alleged ongoing use of antipersonnel mines by various factions in different parts of the country. Chechen rebels continued to use improvised explosive devices extensively. It was difficult to ascertain the degree to which victim-activated antipersonnel mines or IEDs were being used, but it appears that in most instances, the rebels were using command-detonated IEDs targeting vehicles.

Militants in Egypt may have used antipersonnel mine-like devices during an August-October 2005 operation against them by Egyptian security forces.

In Sri Lanka, since December 2005, suspected use by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) of command-detonated Claymore mines has escalated greatly, and the Army has in a few instances alleged use of antipersonnel mines by the rebels.

For the first time in several years, there were no confirmed reports, or even serious allegations, of use of antipersonnel mines by non-state actors in Georgia. There were many instances in 2005 and 2006 where the Ugandan military seized caches of antipersonnel mines belonging to the Lord's Resistance Army, but Landmine Monitor did not find any reports of use of antipersonnel mines by the LRA. The LRA is known to have used mines in the past.

Many media and other reports in the Philippines referred to use of "landmines" by several NSAGs, including the New People's Army (NPA), the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Abu Sayyaf Group, but Landmine Monitor could only identify use of antivehicle mines and command-detonated mines and IEDs. The NPA stepped up its use of command-detonated improvised antivehicle mines, resulting in more casualties than ever before. NPA and MNLF both have stated that they do not use victim-activated antipersonnel mines. All non-state armed groups in the Philippines claim not to use victim activated antipersonnel landmines. Some are bound by bilateral agreements with the Philippine government, some have signed the Geneva Call Deed of Commitment, others have simply claim publicly not to use them.

Similarly, media and official reports in Turkey frequently referred to use of "landmines" by the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK/Kongra-Gel) but, again, Landmine Monitor could only clearly identify use of antivehicle mines and command-detonated mines and IEDs. Some incidents during the reporting period appear to have been the result of victim-activated antipersonnel mines or IEDs, but the date of their placement was not evident. The Turkish government has reported that in 2005, 39 military personnel were killed and 155 injured by mines laid by the PKK. In December 2005, the Gendarme General Command reportedly recovered 40 DM-11 antipersonnel mines and other weapons that belonged to the PKK. According to Geneva Call, the PKK has admitted to use of command-detonated mines, but denied any use of explosive devices that can be activated by a victim or a vehicle. In commenting on a draft Landmine Monitor report, the government stated that the PKK's claim not to use victim-activated mines "does not square with reality." As noted above, in July 2006, the PKK signed the Geneva Call Deed of Commitment banning antipersonnel mines.

Despite an increase in armed conflicts in the Darfur region of Sudan during the reporting period, the ban on mine use agreed between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan Liberation Army/Movement (SLA/M) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) has held.

Use of antivehicle mines by non-state armed groups was reported in at least six countries: Chad, Eritrea, Iraq, the Philippines, Pakistan and Turkey. In the Philippines, both the Abu Sayyaf Group and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) have admitted to use of antivehicle mines.

PKK/Kongra-Gel Kurdish rebels in Turkey have used antivehicle mines against Turkish military forces resulting in both civilian and military casualties. Antivehicle mines newly laid by unknown parties continue to be found from time to time in the UN monitored zone between Eritrea and Ethiopia. In Chad in October 2005 the Movement for Democracy and Justice (MDJT) laid antivehicle mines against the military resulting in casualties. In Peru in July 2005, a singular incident involving an antivehicle device was blamed on Shining Path guerrillas by authorities.

The US government reported that detainees had received training in the use of landmines at an insurgent camp as a part of its process for determining that a person was an “enemy combatant” in its Guantanamo Bay holding facility. The International Court of Justice determined a case of aggression by Uganda against the Democratic Republic of Congo based in part on previous use of antipersonnel landmines by an Ugandan-sponsored armed group. In April 2006, Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden encouraged armed militias in western Sudan to begin accumulating antipersonnel landmines.

### ***Production***

Non-state armed groups in Burma, Colombia, India, Iraq and Nepal are known to produce victim-activated mines or IEDs.

Command- or remotely-detonated IEDs were produced by NSAGs in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Chechnya, Colombia, India, Iraq, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and southern Thailand.

In Sri Lanka, the peace process has been under stress following an increase in the use of command-detonated directional fragmentation mines and IEDs by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The LTTE produced large quantities of landmines in the past and has not renounced production. In January 2006, a shipment of 60,000 electronic detonators for explosives bound for LTTE-controlled areas was intercepted by the Sri Lankan Navy.

In the Philippines, both the Abu Sayaf group in the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front admitted to production of command-detonated devices using purchased and recycled explosives. The Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist has a demonstrated ability to produce a wide variety of bombs and explosive devices, including some victim-activated booby-traps. IEDs continue to be constructed by the Communist Party of India (CPI). In September 2005, 24 members of the Central Reserve Police Force on patrol in a mine-protected vehicle in Chhattisgarh were killed when CPI militants detonated an 80kg antivehicle device under it. Taliban and other forces in Afghanistan have begun to manufacture, and deploy, an increasing number of remotely-detonated IEDs.

In Iraq, the armed opposition continues to wage primarily IED warfare against US and allied forces, in large part by recycling the high explosive content of the abandoned arsenals of the former regime. In 2005, 445 US military personnel were killed by attacks involving IEDs, almost twice as many as the previous year.

Low intensity insurgencies in Bangladesh and southern Thailand have produced and deployed remotely-detonated explosive devices in increasing numbers during the reporting period.

### ***Transfer***

For the past decade, global trade in antipersonnel mines has consisted solely of a low-level of illicit and unacknowledged transfers. In this reporting period, there were only a small number of reports of such trafficking in antipersonnel mines. However, a UN panel leveled the most serious and specific allegation ever of a transfer of antipersonnel mines to an NSAG by a Mine Ban Treaty State Party. In May 2006, a UN arms embargo monitoring group reported that the government of

Eritrea had delivered 1,000 antipersonnel mines to militant fundamentalists in Somalia in March 2006. Eritrea denied the claims as “baseless and unfounded” and labeled the report as “outrageous and regrettable.” An earlier October 2005 report from the UN monitoring group stated that between 25 March and 10 April 2005, Eritrea twice shipped arms including mines to an opponent of Somalia’s Transitional Federal Government (TFG); in these earlier shipments however, it did not specify antipersonnel or antivehicle mines. The May 2006 UN monitoring group report said that in August 2005 traders at Mogadishu’s Bakaraaha arms market in Somalia reportedly purchased mines and other arms from a Yemeni arms trading network.

The October 2005 and May 2006 UN reports also said that factions in Somalia had received unspecified types of landmines from the government of Ethiopia. Ethiopia strongly denied the allegations. The October report also said that the TFG was supplied by the government of Yemen with unspecified types of mines, apparently in July 2005.

Turkish authorities recovered mines they state were brought into the country by the PKK.<sup>6</sup>

In Pakistan, there continued to be occasional allegations that armed groups were smuggling mines from Afghanistan into the country.

### ***Stockpiles and destruction***

Non-state armed groups were reported to possess stockpiles of antipersonnel mines in Bangladesh, Burma, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Pakistan, Somalia, Turkey and Uganda. Most often, this was discovered by seizures or recovery of mines by government forces, but some NSAGs have openly acknowledged their stocks.

In March 2006, the Bangladesh army and border security forces (BDR) recovered 48 antipersonnel mines alleged to have belonged to a foreign rebel group. The seizure contained 32 antipersonnel mines of Burmese manufacture among other arms. In October 2005, the Colombian Army seized 128 antipersonnel landmines from a cache in Arauca Department and another 60 in the same month in Cauca Department, both belonging to FARC. In 2005, 973 antipersonnel landmines were handed in, along with other weapons, by former rebels who entered the national demobilization program. In April and May 2006, Dan Church Aid destroyed nine antipersonnel and 345 antivehicle mines at the request of DRC authorities, who indicated that the mines were part of weapons collected during the demobilization program. The Indian Army stated that it recovered 69 antipersonnel and antivehicle mines from militants in Jammu and Kashmir during 2005, and more than 50 mines from January through April 2006. Pakistani officials have acknowledged that they seized some antipersonnel landmines during counter-insurgency operations but have given no further details. Media reports have indicated that the Philippine Army has seized antipersonnel landmines in counterinsurgency operations. Throughout 2005, Uganda recovered 26 antipersonnel landmines from the LRA, and another 20 in February 2006.

Although landmine stocks were seized or recovered in eight States Parties during the reporting period, only the Democratic Republic of Congo reported these in its Mine Ban Treaty Article 7 transparency report. Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, El Salvador, the Philippines, Turkey and Uganda have not reported the acquisition, or any subsequent destruction, of seized antipersonnel mines.

In Somalia, several militias who signed Geneva Call’s Deed of Commitment revealed some details on mines in their possession. USC/SNA stated it had 3,500 antipersonnel and antivehicle mines, the Somali National Front declared 200 antivehicle mines, one faction of the Rahanweyn

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<sup>6</sup> In December 2005, Turkish forces seized a small cache of DM 11 mines which they state had been brought to Turkey by the PKK from former Iraqi stocks. However, Iraq is not known to have possessed this mine type. Turkey itself has more than 1.7 million DM 11 mines in its stockpile.

Resistance Army declared approximately 1,500 antivehicle and antipersonnel landmines, Puntland's Mine Action Center declared 800 antivehicle and antipersonnel landmines in three military camps. In addition, EUFOR forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina and KFOR forces in Kosovo have recovered mines in caches or in abandoned arsenals left over from former conflicts.

### ***Mined Areas, Demining and Mine Risk Education***

Only non-state armed groups with significant amounts of territory under their control are involved in mine action. The exact number of NSAGs who have mined areas under their control is not known. At least a dozen armed groups in Burma have non-hostility pacts with the ruling military junta, allowing them to control "Special Administrative Zones" within the country. Many of these have mined areas left from previous confrontations, or have mines surrounding the armed groups' military command headquarters. In Somalia, various clans control certain areas, and many of these are mine-affected from past or ongoing conflicts. Mined areas are under the administration of the LTTE in Sri Lanka, and under the control of different armed groups in Colombia.

Only the LTTE in Sri Lanka has been involved in ongoing and substantial demining operations, in cooperation with specialist non-governmental organizations. A Regional Mine Action Office in Kilinochchi, under the nationwide structure coordinated by UNDP, is managed by the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO), which coordinates and supports mine action in the LTTE-controlled areas of the north and east of Sri Lanka. The Humanitarian Demining Unit, the implementing arm of TRO, received support from Norwegian People's Aid, Mines Advisory Group and the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action. The HDU in cooperation with these humanitarian demining organizations has manual and mechanical demining teams in the field, as well as undertaking battle area and EOD clearance, community liaison, fencing, marking, technical survey and MRE. During the reporting period, the HDU partnerships cleared more than 6 million square meters of land of more than 6,000 antipersonnel landmines

*Landmine Monitor Report 2005* reported that at the request of local communities, the ELN in Colombia had undertaken limited removal of landmines it had laid in Micohaumado, Morales municipality. At the time, the Colombian government did not cooperate in a proposal to allow independent international verification of the clearance. In July 2006, the Colombian Antipersonnel Mine Observatory stated that it had not carried out verification of the area cleared by the ELN in early 2005, given that the "verification should have been done during the demining operations and a verification now would require demining the area again." The Colombian Campaign Against Mines' local branch indicated that the road had been used since clearance by the ELN and that no accidents had been registered as of February 2006. In June 2006, the mayor of Samaniego municipality in Nariño Department announced that the ELN would carry out humanitarian demining in 14 hamlets of Samaniego in coming months. The Observatory said that it celebrated the news and wanted to ensure that the operations by the ELN would comply with international humanitarian standards; one possibility was the creation of mixed groups of army and ELN deminers.

In August 2005, the Movement for Democracy and Justice in Chad (MDJT) signed a cease-fire with the government that included an agreement to clear mines.

Military agreements between the UN mission in Western Sahara, the Moroccan Armed Forces, and the Polisario Front have led to the removal or destruction of more than 37,000 mines and UXO over the past five years, as well as the marking of hazardous areas.

Four former non-state armed groups who are now a part of formal governments have undertaken mine action within a national framework in Iraq, Burundi and Sudan; in the cases of Burundi and Sudan these activities were documented in their respective Article 7 transparency reports.

The Karen National Union in Burma permitted a limited Mine Risk Education program. Non-governmental organizations are permitted to undertake mine risk education in rural Colombia provided they do not focus on the use of mines or mine policies of the armed groups. In Nepal, Senegal and the Democratic Republic of Congo, radio and television MRE programs reach the population in some areas that are either under the control of an armed group, or are in their area of operations.

### ***Victim Assistance***

Some non-state armed groups, associated with a specific population, provide mobile or stationary medical clinics, hospitals, prosthetic facilities or other health infrastructure for mine victims. Medical capacities of NSAGs are almost always supported by an NGO donor/partner specializing in providing humanitarian medical assistance. In Sri Lanka, victim assistance was provided by LTTE-linked organizations, such as the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization and White Pigeon.

In Burma, the Karen National Union (KNU) Gho Kay hospital in a liberated area provided 21 prostheses through a prosthetics program supported by the KNU-linked Committee for Internally Displaced Karen Peoples. The oldest person fitted with a prosthesis from the KNU hospital was 63 and the youngest 16. Technicians travel to villages to measure amputees, return to the hospital to make the limb, and then deliver the prostheses to the amputees for fitting and adjustment. Clear Path International has supported training for prosthetics technicians of the Shan State Army (SSA), the Karen National Union and the Karenni People's National Liberation Front, as well as the construction of and materials for a prosthetics center run by the SSA. Several international donors support the Back Pack Health Worker Teams in Burma—a pan-ethnic, cross-border, medical service to communities in insurgent-held areas of Burma. The Free Burma Rangers, a private relief agency, runs its own mobile medical teams in insurgent-held areas of Burma; they can provide emergency amputations for mine victims among other services.

Casualties from landmines and other war injuries are cared for by the ICRC's War Wounded emergency medical assistance programs in Burma, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia. They are also cared for through ICRC support of national Red Crescent/Cross facilities in Guinea-Bissau, Somalia, Kashmir in India, and Baluchistan in Pakistan. Handicap International provides medical assistance in rebel-controlled northern Ivory Coast.

### ***Mine Action Funding***

Governmental donors have supplied more than US\$6 million in support of mine action by the Humanitarian Demining Unit in LTTE-controlled regions of Sri Lanka. The HDU works under the LTTE-linked Tamil Rehabilitation & Relief Organization. Some donors support victim assistance undertaken by the LTTE in Sri Lanka and rebel groups in Burma.

Mine action programs which had previously started in the areas of former non-state armed groups that became a part of the governments in Iraq, Burundi and Sudan have continued in cooperation with national mine action authorities.