

Eradicating the World's Landmines

Landmines are indiscriminate weapons that maim or kill 15,000 to 20,000 civilians every year. They cost as little as \$3 to produce, but as much as \$1000 to remove. Join the international effort to ban the use of landmines, clear existing minefields, and provide financial and emotional support to landmine survivors.

Partnering Organization and Contact:

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Background Information:

Decades of conflict have left Afghanistan one of the most heavily mined countries in the world, with anti-personnel (targeting people) and anti-tank (targeting military vehicles) landmines found in 27 of the 29 provinces in the country. Landmines are partially buried beneath the ground, making them difficult to detect. They detonate when people step on them, resulting in serious injury or death. Afghans are not alone; people are maimed or killed annually by landmines in over 90 countries.

Landmines can be found in conflict areas all over the world—they are cheap to make and easily deployed. Landmines do not discriminate between military forces and civilians, and they continue to cause harm decades after a ceasefire agreement has been reached. In recognition of these atrocities, the majority of the international community has signed on to the Mine Ban Treaty, also known as the Ottawa Convention. This international agreement has garnered 145 signatories since its inception in 1997, yet eight signatory countries must still ratify the agreement, and 41 countries are not treaty members, including Iran, China, Russia, Syria, Vietnam, India, and the United States.

While the interim Afghan government signed on to the Mine Ban Treaty in July 2002, there are plenty of pre-existing landmines; more than 200,000 people in Afghanistan have been maimed or killed by mines in the last two decades. While women constitute only about 10-15% of landmine casualties, they experience a larger burden of social, medical, and psychological consequences of landmines. If her husband becomes a landmine victim, a woman must take on extra responsibilities for the family to survive. It is not uncommon, however, for female survivors to be shunned by their husbands or communities while still expected to support their families. Women are less likely than men to receive mobility aids (i.e. prosthetics) and medical attention after a landmine injury. In fact, women are often the last to receive medical care and technologies because they are tended to after injured soldiers and other men. As a result, the fatality rate is much higher for females (43%) than males (29%). It is vital that landmine education include women, not only for their personal safety, but because they are in a special position to pass the knowledge along to their communities and families, especially children.

Take Action to Help Clear Minefields in Afghanistan!

Adopt a Minefield

The Adopt-a-Minefield Campaign (www.landmines.org), a campaign of the U.S. United Nations Association, seeks to resolve the global landmine crisis by funding landmine removal and assisting landmine survivors. Sponsors can adopt entire minefields or contribute smaller amounts to finance landmine removal

- Adopt-A-Minefield (AAM) launched **the Farah Appeal** in May of this year to raise critically needed funds for mine action in Afghanistan. Farah Ahmedi stepped on a mine while walking to school when she was only seven years old; now 17, Farah is the new AAM Youth Ambassador. Funds raised through the Farah Appeal will support the adoption and clearance of a minefield in Farah's home village near Kabul, as well as assistance for landmine survivors as they reintegrate physically, emotionally, and economically into their communities.
- Contact AAM and ask about tailoring specific activism to the needs and interests of your campus, whether you are interested in reaching out to local, younger students in their AAM "That Landmine Thing" network or learning more about funding landmine removal operations in other countries.