

Getting Rid of Landmines

Landmines are weapons soldiers put on the ground or just underneath the ground. Landmines explode when enemy soldiers walk on or drive near them. The major problem is that landmines cannot distinguish between a soldier and a civilian. Therefore, even years after a war has ended and the fighting has stopped, landmines can kill or injure innocent people and even children.

Today, there are 110 million landmines buried all over the world. Many of these are buried in Egypt, Angola, Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, China, Cambodia, Bosnia, Croatia, Somalia. Although the mines only cost between \$3 and \$30, the cost of removing them is \$300 to \$1000. That means the cost of removing all landmines around the world could be as much as \$100 billion. According to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines network, every year as many as 5,000 people including about 2,000 children are killed or severely injured by landmine explosions.

Even when landmines do not kill or injure, they create a danger so the whole area is not safe for people to live or for farmers to plant crops. Therefore, millions of innocent families have become refugees or homeless.

Getting rid of the landmines is a huge challenge for the global community. Until recently, about 100,000 mines were being removed every year, but another two million more were planted. If deactivating landmines remains about the same, and no new mines are laid, it will still take more than 1000 years to get rid of all the world's active landmines.

