



## The Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World

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### Albania announces that it is free of anti-personnel mines

**Tirana, Albania, 8 October 2009** – “TODAY we can say that the vision of an Albania free from anti-personnel mines has come true.” According to Petrit Karabina, Chairman of the Albanian Mine Action Committee, his country has become the second state in South Eastern Europe to have cleared all its known mined areas in accordance with its obligations under the Anti-Personnel (AP) Mine Ban Convention.

“After almost a decade of work, Albania is proud that it has fulfilled its Convention obligations well before its deadline,” said Karabina. “Over 14 million square metres of land that had been mined have been released for normal human activity. People in Northeast Albania, can return to normality, and once again move freely, use their farm lands and feel safe.” According to Karabina, by demining contaminated areas, Albania demonstrates “it is willing to promote peace in the South Eastern Region.”

The announcement comes while Albania is hosting the Tirana Workshop on Achieving a Mine-Free South Eastern Europe. The workshop is one of the events leading up to The Cartagena Summit for a Mine-Free World which will take place in Colombia from 30 November to 4 December.

Cartagena Summit President, Ambassador Susan Eckey of Norway, in attendance at the workshop, said that Albania’s announcement shows “we are one step closer towards our goal of ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines.” Ambassador Eckey added: “at the Cartagena Summit, we will be able to showcase the impressive progress made by Albania as well as the sizeable work that remains in clearing mined areas elsewhere and in assisting the victims wherever they may be.”

“While we are proud of our accomplishments, Albania still faces ongoing challenges in meeting the needs and guaranteeing the rights of survivors,” said Mr. Karabina. “In addition, work must continue in Albania to address the persistent threat caused by unexploded ordnance.”

#### Mines in Albania

Mines were laid in Albanian territory in the late 1990s by the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia during the conflict in Kosovo. In addition, Albania has had to contend with the

problems caused by other explosive remnants of that conflict that have littered the Albanian districts of Kukës, Has and Tropojë.

Hundreds of Albanians have fallen victim to mines and other explosive remnants of war since the conflict. According to Karabina, one of the challenges that still remains in Albania, is building the prosthetic & orthotic capacities and keeping medical personnel in areas of greatest need.

### The AP Mine Ban Convention

The Cartagena Summit is the name that has been given to the AP Mine Ban Convention's Second Review Conference. The AP Mine Ban Convention is a short way of referring to the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. The Convention bans anti-personnel mines and requires states that join the Convention to destroy all existing stocks, clear all mine areas and assist the survivors.

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