

## **Landmines in Pakistan**

### ***How many landmines are in Pakistan?***

There is a reserve of about six million landmines in Pakistan. The numbers are not exact because they have not been confirmed or denied by the Pakistani government. What is known is that the existing landmines are being converted from non-detectable anti-personnel landmines to detectable ones - a process that is done while it is being placed (a metallic disc is placed in the mines while placing the mine.), meaning they still exist and have not been destroyed as of yet.

### ***Where have they been used in Pakistan?***

The Pakistani military has used landmines in wars with India in 1947, 1965, and 1971. In addition Pakistan used landmines in its 1979 conflict with the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.). Pakistan continues a policy of using landmines as a way to defend its borders. Landmines have been used by the Pakistani military in past conflicts with Indian forces to defend the regions of Jammu and Kashmir (the North Eastern part of Pakistan) and continue to use them in case of future danger. They have also been used in the Kohlu District in the province of Baluchistan (in the Western part of Pakistan.)

Pakistan has been accused of continuing to use landmines by India. 386 antipersonnel and antitank landmines have been recovered from militants in Kashmir in 2000 and another 46 mines were recovered in 2001 as of May 31. There continues to be allegations of mines (either company bought or home-made) being used, not only in nation war as a tool of defence but also in interpersonal and intertribal conflicts.

### ***How severe is the problem in Pakistan?***

The government states that Pakistan is not a mine-affected country. It does admit that certain problems are encountered along the areas near the border of Afghanistan since these area continue to experience disturbance and fact that the Pakistani military do not have a complete hold in the area due the accessible nature of its borders with Afghanistan. Landmines in Pakistan have caused hundreds of casualties and a serious socio-economic epidemic. Many of the casualties have been caused by what is known as a "Butterfly" mine that tends to look like a toy. Many of them were scattered by Soviet and Afghan forces in large quantities from aircraft and helicopters wide areas of ground.

There has been 599 victims since 1980, 261 (44%) were killed and 253 (42%) had to get amputations. 35% of those victims were women who worked in agriculture activities and 29% were children under the age of 18. 40% of the accidents happened while farming/grazing animals/crossing fields and 21% were

when people were just out walking. In Mamund, in the Bajaur Agency, accounted for 78% of victims identified in the region. In the year 2000, 31 people were killed or injured in the Banjaur Agency.

### ***Does Pakistan produce landmines?***

Pakistan has a state-owned Pakistan Ordnance Factories that produces six types of antipersonnel landmines. As of 1 January 1997 only detectable mines were being produced. The production of what is known as a "fragmentation mine" was abandoned. On December 1999 all detectable hand-emplaced remotely delivered mines were replaced with self-destruct and self-deactivating mechanisms.

### ***Does Pakistan export landmines?***

It is said that as of 1991, Pakistan has not exported landmines. In 1997, there was a unilateral moratorium on exports and finally on February 1999 there was a total ban on the export of antipersonnel landmines. However, antipersonnel and antitank mines with the Pakistan Ordnance Factories seal were spotted and photographed by a South Asian researcher during an interview with Indian Border Security Force officials and Indian Army officials.

### ***Why has Pakistan not joined the Mine Ban Treaty?***

Pakistan states that reason that it is unable to join the Mine Ban Treaty based on their policy of using all tools available to them to protect their border and sovereignty and its expression of concern in the long-standing conflict with its neighbour India over the disputed region of Kashmir. The Pakistan government states that it will be difficult to join the Treaty unless other methods for defence are made available.

## **The Kashmir Conflict**

### ***Who's involved in the dispute over Kashmir?***

The territory of Kashmir was hotly contested even before India and Pakistan won their independence from Britain in August 1947. Under the partition plan provided by the Indian Independence Act of 1947, Kashmir was free to become part of India or Pakistan. The Maharaja, Hari Singh, wanted to stay independent but eventually decided to accede to India, signing over key powers to the Indian Government - in return for military aid and a promised referendum. Since then, the territory has been the flashpoint for two of the three India-Pakistan wars. In 1999, India fought a brief but bitter conflict with Pakistani-backed forces that had infiltrated Indian-controlled territory in the Kargil area. In addition to the rival

claims of India and Pakistan to the territory, there has been a growing and often violent separatist movement fighting against Indian rule in Kashmir since 1989.

### ***What are the rival claims?***

Islamabad says Kashmir should have become part of Pakistan in 1947 because the majority of people living in the region are Muslim. Pakistan also argues that Kashmiris should be allowed to vote in a referendum on their future, following numerous UN resolutions on the issue. India, however, doesn't want international debate on the issue, arguing that the Simla Agreement of 1972 provided for a resolution through bilateral talks. India points to the Instrument of Accession signed in October 1947 by the Maharaja, Hari Singh. Both India and Pakistan reject the so-called "third option" of Kashmiri independence.

### ***What is the Line of Control?***

A demarcation line was originally established in January 1949 as a ceasefire line, following the end of the first Kashmir war. In July 1972, after a second conflict, the Line of Control (LoC) was re-established under the terms of the Simla Agreement, with minor variations on the earlier boundary.

### ***Is the UN involved?***

The UN has maintained a presence in the disputed area since 1949. Currently, the LoC is monitored by the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) whose mission is to "to observe, to the extent possible, developments pertaining to the strict observance of the ceasefire of December 1971".

### ***Who are the militants?***

Several groups are pursuing the rival claims to Kashmir. Not all are armed, but since the Muslim insurgency began in 1989, the number of armed separatists has grown from hundreds to thousands. The most prominent are the pro-Pakistani Hizbul Mujahideen. Islamabad denies providing them and others with logistical and material support. The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) was the largest pro-independence group, but its influence is thought to have waned. Other groups have joined under the umbrella of the All-Party Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference, which campaigns peacefully for an end to India's presence in Kashmir.

Indian forces announced a unilateral ceasefire against militant groups in November 2000, but violence continued. Attempts to get talks going between the government and the separatist parties have faltered over separatist demands that Pakistan should be included in any dialogue. India says there can be no

discussion involving Pakistan because it sponsors violence in Kashmir. India and Pakistan failed to narrow their differences over Kashmir at a summit in the Indian city of Agra in July 2001. In December 2001-January 2002 the situation over Kashmir once again escalated, leading to increased military build-up along the India- Pakistan border, including the use of AP mines.

## **Pakistan Campaign to Ban Landmines**

Pakistan Campaign to Ban Landmines (PCBL) is already involved in some of the activities with the youth, especially in colleges, schools, university students and landmine victim's children. Due to lack of resources it has not yet been given a formal shape, however the youth are involved with PCBL in different activities like their involvement in PCBL awareness activities i.e. conference, Seminars workshops etc and filling up the petition forms of Youth Against War. PCBL has the capacity to coordinate the activities of youth and in this regard the Coordinator and other staff members works on different activities related to youth.

PCBL is interested to involve the youth in anti- landmine activities more effectively. The main reason of involving youth in campaign activities is because people have sympathies, love and affection toward youth and their voice have greater effect on the mind of people. The main goal of the youth program of PCBL is to effectively carryout the campaign activities against landmines that ultimately lead to a total ban on landmines.

The Campaign Coordinator performs a leadership role in all activities of PCBL including youth activities. As the youth, especially of this part of the world is not fully aware of the landmine issue, moreover the issue of landmine is also a sensitive issue & require expertise and knowledge to address it properly in Pakistan, therefore a constant guidance is required for the youth.

Involvement is for the youth in the age group of 10-22 years. There is a membership form that is provided to youth & by filling of that he or she becomes a member of the youth Campaign.

### ***Activities and Events***

The activities related to youth in Pakistan are concerned, there are organized presentations, sports events, and exhibitions etc in various schools colleges and universities. In addition to all these some constructive activities like essay competition, sketch competition, debates against the use of landmines will be helpful to enhance the knowledge of youth and to better understand the landmine issue around the globe.

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