

FARC Troops Help Boost Colombia's Landmine Removal Effort



Bogota, February 17 (RHC)-- As part of Colombia's transition to peace, around 1,000 former FARC rebels will help to identify and remove land mines across Colombia, as the country works towards its goal of eradicating land mines in the next four years.

Experts, however, say that it will take Colombia at least a decade to clear all of its mines from its rugged terrain. Authorities report that mines are present in 700 of Colombia's 32,000 local municipalities.

Some 1,000 disbanded members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, will help assist with the removal efforts.

As well as providing extra helping hands, former FARC members will assist authorities in locating land mines by providing information on their location. Signs will be put up warning civilians of minefields and state anti-mine personnel will remove the devices with the help of FARC instructions.

In Colombia, improvised explosive devices have killed 11,400 people since 1990, putting the country second behind Afghanistan for casualties, according to government numbers.

In 2015, the Colombian government and the FARC first agreed to work together to remove land mines during peace talks in Cuba. The project is supported internationally through the Global Demining Initiative for Colombia, with the U.S. and Norway contributing nearly \$112 million for the cleanup to date.

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