

# *Mozambique Removes Last Known Landmine*

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Maputo, September 17 (RHC)-- The African nation of Mozambique has been declared free of landmines after its last known landmine was removed in the country's central region. The British Halo Trust charity organization, which has led the clearance in Mozambique, said on Thursday that it had removed nearly 171,000 landmines.

The last mine was removed from the base of a railway bridge located in the country's central area, after more than two decades of work aimed at ridding the country from the explosives.

Albert Augusto, director of Mozambique's National Demining Institute, said the government's efforts and the "generosity of donors" contributed to the country's achievement. "Many people thought Mozambique would take one hundred years to demine the whole country. We ended up demining in less than 30."

Many of the mines were planted during a battle for independence followed by a civil war, which began in 1977. Mines were also left behind as recent as the 1990s. A large number of the explosives were planted near important structures including dams, bridges, and electricity pylons.

The group said Mozambique is the first large mine-contaminated country to be mine-free. The announcement comes as countries such as Sri Lanka, Laos, Angola, and Colombia continue to clear their territories from mines.

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