

# BLUE BERET



## Cambodian demining team completes mine-clearing in Lefka-Aplici

Nicosia, 8 December 2015 – A team of 29 Cambodian deminers deployed by the United Nations has completed a six-month assignment in Cyprus, having cleared areas of the buffer zone around Mammari and Lefka-Aplici. The team was despatched from Lebanon through inter-mission cooperation with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), under the guidance of the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS). They have been in Cyprus since May, clearing areas near Mammari after heavy rains washed mines into the buffer zone. The team also cleared 1,847 m2 around Lefka-Aplici and conducted a technical survey of Deryneia, as part of confidence-building measures to open up new crossing points, as agreed by the leaders on 28 May 2015. “The opening of the crossing points at Lefka-Aplici and Deryneia is one step closer thanks to the demining operation,” said the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Cyprus, Ms. Lisa M. Buitenheims. “UNFICYP remains committed to supporting the efforts of the leaders as they work towards a sustainable and comprehensive settlement.”

“UNFICYP would like to express its sincere appreciation to the brave and diligent Cambodian demining team for their meticulous work to protect the people of Cyprus from dangerous mines,” said UNFICYP Force Commander Maj. Gen. Kristin Lund. “We are also grateful to UNIFIL for their support for demining efforts in Cyprus, to UNMAS for their guidance and to the communities and leadership of the island for their cooperation in the operation.” The UN expressed appreciation to the Greek Cypriot leadership for providing UNMAS with records of 28 minefields laid in the north in 1974, and to the Turkish Cypriot leadership for providing mine clearing teams with access to the sites. Assessments found that 25 of these sites were no longer a threat, while three sites require technical surveys to investigate whether they still pose a threat. Between 2004 and 2011, the Mine Action Centre cleared 27,000 mines – 18,000 of which were anti-personnel mines – from the buffer zone and released 11 km2 of land as being safe. UNFICYP are evaluating options to see how to take the next step in achieving a mine free Cyprus.



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