

Anti-tank and anti-personnel mines in Unity and Jonglei states

Landmines have been used in South Sudan for decades. During the conflict between north and south, both the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) planted thousands of landmines to secure their military positions. Today, mines buried during the war terrorize local populations, who often live close to areas that have not yet been cleared. The problem has been exacerbated by rebel militia groups who planted new anti-personnel (AP) and anti-tank (AT) mines on roads in Unity and, to a lesser extent, in Jonglei last year.

In 2011, there were 35 mine-related incidents, resulting in 34 deaths and 76 injuries, compared to 22 deaths and 52 injuries in 19 reported incidents in 2010, according to the UN-approved Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA). Between May and December 2011, 20 out of 24 reported mine incidents occurred in Unity state, and were blamed on the South Sudan Liberation Army (SSLA). This spike in incidents and casualties is a direct result of the SSLA's campaign, both under its former leader Peter Gadet and current head James Gai Yoach, to topple the SPLA and local government in Unity state. Rebels are primarily planting three types of AT mines—Type 72, TM-57, and GLD-215, manufactured mostly in Russia and China—on roads, forcing de-mining teams to clear the routes over and over again. Unlike most AT mines recovered from caches and destroyed during clearance in the border areas of South Sudan, recently recovered mines in Unity state are new and freshly laid.

Samples of recovered AT mines



In March 2011, the SPLA confiscated more than 250 AT mines from South Sudan Democratic Army forces loyal to George Athor in Jonglei state. The mines were a combination of TM-57 and GLD-215 models, manufactured in Russia and China.



TM-57 AT mines seized from the SSLA in April 2011, near Mayom, Unity state. A number of similar AT mines were confiscated from George Athor's forces during the same period.



New Chinese manufactured T-72 AT mines, reportedly laid by the SSLA around Mayom, Unity state, on 29 October 2011 with batch number 07-81-6902. The mines were recovered on the same day they were planted.



The SPLA recovered PMN AP mines from the SSLA around Mayom, Unity state, in June 2011. The same mines were seized from forces loyal to George Athor a few months earlier.

5 March 2012