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Discussing the responsibilities regarding the dismantling of abandoned warzones

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Tayra Yuna
Deputy President



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Name: Tayra Yuna

Position: Deputy President

Introduction

The dismantling of abandoned war zones represents a critical yet undermined challenge in international relations. Once areas of conflict, these regions still pose a threat to civilizations and hamper progress due to leftover hazards such as unexploded ordnance (UXO), environmental contamination, and damaged infrastructure. Millions of people worldwide are affected, from urban areas in Syria to remote towns in Cambodia. In addition to being physical remnants, abandoned warzones are also symbolic of unresolved conflicts. They sometimes reinforce displacement, poverty, and cycles of violence.

Dismantling these regions is a difficult undertaking that requires sustained political commitment, adequate financing, technological innovation, and a coordinated international reaction. By leveraging collaboration and employing an analytical approach, we aim to address this issue comprehensively and effectively.

Definition of Key Terms

Abandoned Warzones

Areas formerly occupied as regions of military conflicts are now exempt from active combat but remain marked by physical, environmental, and social challenges.

Dismantling

Take something apart into separate pieces, in this context, the process of removing hazards and rebuilding infrastructure in abandoned warzones to make them safe and habitable.

Explosive Remnants of War (ERW)

"...unexploded ordnance and abandoned explosive ordnance that are left by a party to an armed conflict following the cessation of warfare." (United Nations, 2004:2)

Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)

Weapons or explosive devices that have not detonated and pose a significant threat to people in post-conflict areas.

De-mining

The process of detecting, removing, and safely disposing of landmines and unexploded ordnance from affected areas.

Environmental Degradation

The deterioration of the environment through the contamination of soil, water, and air contamination is often exacerbated by the remnants of war, such as chemical pollutants or destroyed ecosystems.

Post-Conflict Recovery

The comprehensive process of rebuilding and rehabilitating societies and environments in regions affected by war encompasses physical, social, and economic dimensions.

Mine Ban Treaty (1997)

Also known as the Ottawa Treaty, this international agreement seeks to eliminate the use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of anti-personnel landmines and ensure their destruction.

General Overview

The dismantling of abandoning war zones is an issue that requires urgent attention. These regions have been damaged by years of conflict, being left with remains that pose considerable threats to civilians and hamper the process of close-conflict recovery. From unexploded ordnance (UXO) to damage to the environment and infrastructure, warzones are a major reminder of the unfortunate and long-term consequences of warfare.

Historical Context

The issue of abandoned war zones is not recent. Conflicts such as World War I and World War II left behind massive devastation, with unexploded munitions being discovered across Europe to this day. One example of an ongoing threat is the threats posed by the Vietnam War. During the war, the United States dropped more than 7.5 million tons of bombs, resulting in an estimated

number of 80 million unexploded devices. These remains continue to endanger lives and hinder agricultural production in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

More recently, conflicts in the Middle East and Africa have caused extensive damage, resulting in deserted cities, hazardous areas, and displacement within the population. For instance, evacuees face major difficulties due to unexploded ordnance, destroyed infrastructure, and chemical contamination in war-torn areas as a result of the Syrian Civil War (which is currently in its second decade).

Current Landscape

Today, abandoned war zones are present in many regions, including Syria, Ukraine, and Afghanistan. These regions are notably characterized by the existence of landmines, unexploded ordnance, and other remains of war that continue to harm people years, even decades after the war has ended. Situations such as these are further heightened due to a lack of infrastructure and resources to deal with these devastations.

In Iraq, the liberation of cities such as Mosul from ISIS left behind widespread destruction. War-related explosive remains are found in hospitals, schools, and residential areas, making it dangerous for evacuees and residents to return to their daily lives. In a similar light, the long-lasting war between Russia and Ukraine has led to consequences escalating. The use of cluster munitions and other advanced weaponry has complicated the recovery process in both urban and rural areas.

The negative impact of abandoned war zones goes beyond physical hazards. Environmental damages such as polluted water resources and deforestation further complicate the recovery process. In addition, the physiological damages cannot be overlooked. Long-term displacement and the death of a loved one can cause serious damage and trauma for survivors, making it even more difficult to recover.

Challenges in Dismantling

The dismantling of abandoned war zones is a multifaceted challenge. Financial limitations are a significant problem since many affected nations lack the funds to carry out extensive rehabilitation activities. Along with this, international funding, while being greatly required, is also insufficient to address the full extent of this issue.

Limitations in technology also play a role. Even though efficiency has increased significantly with robotic systems and AI-powered mapping systems, initiatives remain the same in many regions. These initiatives are risky, time-consuming, and dependent on skilled workers who are used to frequently operating in hazardous conditions.

Another crucial issue is the coordination between governments, NGOs, and international organizations. The lack of a cohesive strategy results in inefficiencies and further effort. The efficient execution of the recovery projects is often hindered by political instability in areas damaged by conflicts.

Finally, one crucial but frequently disregarded part of dismantling abandoned war zones is environmental rehabilitation. In addition to restricting agricultural activities and posing long-term health threats to civilians, contaminated soil, water, and air also extend poverty cycles and further increase the need for outside assistance.

Health

Abandoned warzones have serious and complex health effects. Civilians are directly physically threatened by landmines and unexploded ordnance(UXO). Among other serious injuries, these devices have the potential to cause fatalities, burns, and amputations. Living in continual terror of unexploded ordnance has a serious psychological impact as well; survivors are frequently diagnosed with anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Long-term health problems can also arise from environmental degradation brought by conflict, including pollutants, hazardous waste, and chemical weapon residues. Residents of impacted areas may develop cancer, respiratory issues, and other severe medical disorders due to exposure to dangerous chemicals. Due to the destruction of medical facilities, access to healthcare is frequently restricted in these places, depriving individuals of the attention and treatment they require.

Asylum

Millions of people are frequently displaced as a result of abandoned combat zones, having to leave their homes to avoid the perils of fighting. People who have been displaced frequently apply for asylum in nearby nations, where they have difficulties with legal recognition, integration, and service access. Many refugees and asylum seekers are left without the means to rebuild their lives after their homes and means of subsistence are destroyed. Furthermore, the difficulties experienced by refugees are made worse by the dearth of infrastructure in both the displaced communities and the places where they seek safety.

Education

Children's education is severely disrupted in areas affected by war when schools and other educational facilities are destroyed. Schools are frequently converted into military outposts or bunkers in abandoned combat zones, preventing pupils from completing their education. A

generation may suffer long-term consequences from losing access to education during a conflict, including diminished chances for the future and continuing cycles of instability and poverty. The persistent risks posed by explosive ordnance and a lack of funding frequently make it difficult to restore educational facilities and ensure access to education in post-conflict environments.

Discrimination

Another issue that emerges in defunct war zones is discrimination, particularly in areas where members of ethnic or religious minorities were singled out during the fighting. When displaced populations attempt to return home or reintegrate into society after a war, they may encounter discrimination. In post-conflict areas, this prejudice can exacerbate tensions and instability by limiting access to resources, housing, and job prospects. Any long-term rebuilding plan in former combat zones must address discrimination and guarantee that all communities have equitable access to resources.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Event
1919 - 1930s	Post WWI Cleanup
1945 - 1950s	Post WWII Cleanup
1955 - 1975	Vietnam War
1980s - 1990s	International Mine Action
18 September 1997	Mine Ban Treaty
20 March 2003 - 15 December 2011	Iraq War
15 March 2011 - Present	Syrian Civil War
2014 - Present	Ukraine Conflict
2015 - Present	Middle East Demining
2022	Ukraine Demining Initiative
2023 - Present	Global Recovery Advocacy
2024	Conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa

Major Parties Involved

Australia

Australia plays a significant role in global demining efforts and post-conflict recovery, particularly in Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands. It has contributed significantly to the Mine Action Program in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, where unexploded ordnance (UXO) from past conflicts continues to be a deadly hazard. In addition to funding demining operations, Australia also funds environmental recovery, infrastructure repair, and community rehabilitation. Through organizations like the Australian Civilian Corps (ACC), Australia provides technical expertise and long-term humanitarian aid. Additionally, Australia is an active participant in international forums that promote landmine removal and the development of safer, more sustainable environments for people who were affected by conflict.

European Union (EU)

The European Union (EU) is one of the largest global donors for post-conflict recovery and mine action. Demining operations in war-affected areas like Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Iraq are actively funded by the EU. In post-conflict regions, EU External Action supports demining, infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian needs through several programs, such as the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). The EU's law enforcement agency, Europol, works with member states to disrupt trafficking networks and promote regional stability. To ensure that rehabilitation activities comply with international humanitarian rules, the EU additionally enforces standards on human rights, the rule of law, and the protection of people during post-conflict recovery.

HALO Trust

HALO Trust is one of the world's leading non-governmental organizations specializing in landmine clearance and post-conflict recovery. The HALO Trust works in more than 25 countries, clearing landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) so that people can go back to their homes safely and start again. Their efforts make it easier to rebuild infrastructure, restore agricultural land, and safely reopen hospitals and schools. As part of its long-term commitment, HALO Trust will help communities recover from conflict's psychological and physical effects, assist local governments in creating mine response plans, and educate impacted populations about risks.

Human Rights Watch (HRW)

Human Rights Watch (HRW) keeps an eye on the state of human rights in areas that have recently experienced conflict, recording violations and fighting for the rights and safety of marginalized groups. HRW has played a significant role in raising awareness of the difficulties faced

by displaced people, particularly those living in former combat zones. The group works on legal frameworks for accountability, promotes a worldwide ban on landmines, and assists displaced people in securely returning home. In addition, HRW works with governments to provide justice and protection for conflict survivors and investigates human trafficking, forced labor, and other abuses that take place in areas devastated by war.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is a vital component of post-conflict recovery that focuses on medical assistance, humanitarian aid, and the removal of landmines and UXO. The ICRC provides emergency medical care to war victims, including those who have survived landmine accidents, in places including South Sudan, Yemen, and Colombia. The ICRC also encourages adherence to international humanitarian law, aids in family reunions, and supports displaced people. The group is also a major force in promoting worldwide disarmament and informing the public about the risks posed by UXO. Through its wide-ranging operations, the ICRC guarantees that recovery efforts fit with international values of humanitarian protection and dignity.

Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

The Mines Advisory Group (MAG) is tasked with clearing landmines and explosive ordnance in areas devastated by conflict. MAG operates in countries like Syria, Afghanistan, and Cambodia, where the consequences of war continue to pose a major threat to populations. In addition to demining, MAG's mission includes victim assistance, risk education programs, and the reconstruction of critical infrastructure. The group collaborates with communities and local governments to promote agricultural activities, restoration projects, and safe conditions for returnees. Through its work, MAG reduces the risk of harm and death, supports sustainable livelihoods, and aids in the long-term recovery of affected areas.

Norway

Norway has long advocated for post-conflict recovery and international mining action. The nation provides technical and financial support for demining efforts in countries including Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Norway's assistance also covers the rebuilding of infrastructure damaged by war and environmental restoration. An important portion of Norway's contribution is provided by the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), an NGO that works to remove UXO and landmines from some of the most hazardous post-conflict places in the world. Norway is a fervent supporter of global

disarmament initiatives and was instrumental in the creation of the Ottawa Treaty, which outlaws anti-personnel landmines.

United Nations (UN)

Global demining activities are led by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), while the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) helps distribute aid in conflict-affected areas. Through the coordination of resources and expertise from its different agencies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN offers a framework for peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery. To ensure that reconstruction efforts are inclusive and long-lasting, the UN also seeks to advance social justice, human rights, and the rule of law in areas devastated by conflict.

United States

The United States plays a significant role in post-conflict recovery and international demining initiatives. The United States funds demining efforts in nations including Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Laos through organizations like the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The United States additionally supports economic recovery, infrastructure rehabilitation, and the restoration of vital services like healthcare and education in conflict-affected areas. U.S. policy has prioritized anti-trafficking efforts to combat human trafficking and forced labor in conflict areas. Additionally, the U.S. military has provided logistical and technical support to demining and disaster recovery activities worldwide.

World Bank

The World Bank plays a crucial role in helping post-conflict nations rebuild economically. In areas affected by conflict, the organization offers financial assistance. Along with providing financial assistance, the World Bank also provides technical assistance to governments and NGOs involved in post-conflict recovery, assisting them in creating and carrying out successful reconstruction initiatives. In addition to providing for the needs of displaced people, ensuring access to basic services, and promoting sustainability over the long term, the World Bank places a high priority on social stability and community-based development. The group also assists in obtaining funding for environmental restoration and sustainable resource management projects in conflict-affected areas.

Possible Solutions

Environmental Rehabilitation Projects

Recovery plans could include rehabilitating contaminated soil, replanting deforested areas, and cleaning polluted water resources. International environmental agencies can provide funding and expert opinions.

Technological Advancements

Utilizing robots, drones, and AI-powered machinery/mapping can enhance the efficiency of demining operations. Making sure all research groups have access to such technology will create international cooperation.

Further Reading

[Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention](#)

[The Ottawa Landmine Treaty](#)

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