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### Anti-Tank Mine Kills 7 Cambodian De-Miners

PHNOM PENH — At least one anti-tank mine in a former Khmer Rouge stronghold in northwest Cambodia blew up on Friday, killing seven de-miners, three of whom were women.

It was the worst incident to hit mine clearing agencies since they started work in the war-scarred southeast Asian nation in 1993, said Leng Sochea, a spokesman for the Cambodia Mine Action Centre (CMAC).

Initial investigations suggested a mine-clearing team near the town of Battambang came upon two anti-tank mines placed on top of each other. The mines detonated before they could be defused or blown up safely.

"It could have been because of a technical fault," Leng Sochea said.

The areas around Cambodia's border with Thailand are littered with landmines planted by Pol Pot's ultra-Maoist guerrillas and the Vietnamese army, which invaded Cambodia in 1979 to topple the Khmer Rouge.

Mine clearing teams have destroyed an estimated 1.6 million landmines in the last 10 years, but aid agencies and the government say at least 5 million more remain. They are responsible for hundreds of deaths and injuries every year.

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