

The Economist

Seeds of Destruction

Michael Boag, Mar 2 2001

One in 450 Brynanians is a victim of a landmine. The figure sounds unlikely, but a trip to a village in the southern region of Brynania will convince you otherwise. Since the country erupted in to a full-scale civil war in 1984 more than 2 million mines are estimated to have been planted in Brynania. Mines are so popular in this and other conflicts in the region because they are so cheap. Small landmines, which can be deployed almost as easily as farmers sow seed, cost as little as \$3 each.



Despite their intended military use civilians have largely been the victims of landmines in Brynania. The victims are predominantly young men although women and children are also victims. It is not unlikely to find two dozen mine amputees in a single village in the southern region of the country.

The agrarian nature of the economy in the south coupled with the mine problem has made farming a very hazardous occupation. Many of the fertile pastures have been the scenes of combat between the government and guerrilla forces. Farmers know the fields could be mined, but must cultivate the fields in order survive.

Homer Smith, a cotton farmer in the southwest, is unfortunately a typical victim. He knew his family's fields had likely been mined by government forces seeking to deny the PFLZ ground. He was aware of the potential danger, but would see his family starve if he did not plant seeds for the next growing season. That season while Homer planted cottonseeds Homer stepped on a mine and lost his foot. In villages across the southern region this story is all too common. With the civil war still raging, no international de-mining agency has undertaken a de-mining project and all warring sides continue to plant mines. The Norwegian Peoples Aid, the largest civilian de-mining NGO has noted that de-mining in Brynania will be a long a complicated operation when the time comes. If and when peace comes to Brynania landmines the horrors of war will not immediately cease with so many mines in the ground.

The Economist

When many nations came to Ottawa, Canada to sign what has become known as the Ottawa Protocol to ban the use of anti-personnel mines, Brynania was not present and has shown little interest in becoming a signatory.

Disclaimer: This is not the real Economist. Brynania is not a real country and exists as part of a fictional conflict simulation.
