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Office of the President

Palau Builds National Capacity against Explosive Remnants of War

In addition to the immense work that Cleared Ground Demining has been doing for the Republic for many years, further progress has been made since the Republic of Palau and the Norwegian People's Aid entered into partnership in 2015 to build the nation's capacity to self-manage, map, coordinate and clear explosive remnants of war (ERW).

In March 2017, President Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr. signed Executive Order No. 392 adopting the UXO Policy and the 2017-2019 Palau UXO Action Plan establishing necessary mechanism for national coordination and data collection.

The Bureau of Public Works' National Safety Office's ERW & UXO Team in conjunction with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Industries and Commerce (MPIIC) and the Ministry of State with technical advice and assistance from the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and the Japan Mine Action Service (JMAS) are working closely to address four key areas: abandoned explosive ordnances (AXO), placed Japanese defensive munitions, unexploded ordnances (UXO) and unexploded U.S. Air Force bombs.

A centralized national database and coordination system with a detailed list of hazardous areas, identification of ERWs, and other information relating to the presence and removal of AXOs, UXOs and other forms of ERW. The information were analyzed and compiled based on military records from Japan and the U.S. as well as oral records and data from previous ERW removal projects. Information stored in the database is critical for development, infrastructure and construction planning projects in addition to the safety of the residents of Palau.

Most ERWs identified and removed are AXOs and what is considered placed Japanese defensive munitions such as the 320-pound Japanese depth charge filled with trinitroanisole, a pale yellow crystal-like explosive chemical compound found at the water pipeline excavation and installation site near the Hawaiian Rock Quarry. The ERW and UXO Team who were dispatched immediately assessed, removed and cleared the site. Last week the Team was again dispatched to this area to about 100 meters away from the depth charge site were an aircraft bomb was found.

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Hawaiian Rock Quarry. The ERW and UXO Team who were dispatched immediately and assessed, removed the bomb and cleared the site.

The ERW & UXO Team will continue to conduct non-technical surveys, assessment and removal work efforts throughout Palau.

With the Norwegian People's Aid and Cleared Ground Demining, with JMAS and our local agencies working together to manage the clearance of UXO's, coordination is key to getting this important work done. It is important that while UXO surveys are being conducted, that everyone from every community give as much information they know about UXO's around their areas to help put together important data.

Assistance provided by NPA is funded by the Office of the Weapons Removal and Abatement (WRA) Bureau of Political and Military Affairs of the U.S. Department of State.