

# Kingdom seeks to be mine-free by 2009

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — The Kingdom's decisive goal is to be mine-free by 2009 to ensure human security for its citizens, HRH Prince Mired said on Sunday.

"The Kingdom has to be clear of mines by 2009 and to succeed we need to bolster our efforts without compromising the safety of our soldiers and citizens," said Prince Mired, who is chairman of the board of the National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation (NCDR).

"Our children could also be potential targets of mines and the country could be affected from a humanitarian and economic perspective," he added.

The Prince's remarks were made during a meeting with the director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), Ambassador Stephan Nellen, and the accompanying delegation at the NCDR headquarters.

The Kingdom signed the Ottawa Treaty in 1997, committing itself for the next 12 years to the convention's provisions to eliminate the use, transfer, production, and stockpiling of landmines.

Prince Mired also underscored the importance of the Mine Action National Strategy Plan (MANSP) (2005-2009), expected to be launched on June 7.

The MANSP is an integrated approach towards the Kingdom's mine problem and is designed to meet the 2009 Ottawa Treaty deadline.

"The plan [MANSP] will help unify national efforts exerted in this field and specify the roles and duties of each party to eliminate the mine problem in Jordan as soon as possible," Prince Mired told the visiting delegation.

The MANSP will also "allow donor countries to see the areas they can assist us with," he added.

The Prince also highlighted the National Centre for the Rehabilitation of Amputees at King Hussein Medical Centre, currently being built by the NCDR.

The centre will provide prosthetic and orthotic care, rehabilitation and occupational therapy.

Nellen told the gathering that the GICHD works on building coalitions with countries affected by mines such as Jordan.

Nellen, who is on a three-day visit to the Kingdom, is scheduled to meet with army officers, local NGOs and UN officials, in addition to making field visits to mined areas.

His visit will also include the launch of a book on mines that was translated into Arabic by the GICHD.

"I have chosen Jordan as the launching base for the book because I was impressed by the constructive work done in the Kingdom on mines and because I felt we had a common goal," Nellen said.

Nellen also added that "he appreciated Jordan's role in facilitating the GICHD's mission of training Iraqis on mines."

The GICHD, an independent foundation supported by 18 governments, works towards a world free of anti-personnel landmines and for the reduction of the humanitarian impact of remnants of war by providing operational assistance, creating and sharing knowledge, and supporting instruments of international law.