



PATRICKBROWNPHOTO.COM

Peace of Mine

Mines Action Canada's Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan shows the world how to *Disarm*

Land mines may seem like a distant problem for many Canadians, but the reality is that many people around the globe have to deal with their existence on a daily basis. In *Disarm*, a new documentary about how anti-personnel mines continue to wreak havoc on peoples' lives around the world, Mines Action Canada staffperson and film subject Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan sheds light on the landmine issue—and offers hope for the future.

Monday: Can you tell me a little bit about the film?

Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan: It started out as our movement looking at itself; how did we get here, where are we going? We know what our goal is—a mine-free world—and we know we've come a long way towards it because we have measurable indicators. An enormous number of countries, more than three quarters, have signed the mine ban treaty. Every year, more mines are coming out of the ground and victim numbers are dropping globally . . . so our film is us looking at ourselves and the various dilemmas that we have and obstacles we still have in reaching our goal as a mine-free world.

Monday: You are working on the ground in Burma in the film. What is the most effective on-the-ground strategy for eradicating land mines?

YM-P: To stop using them. Burma is one of the great problem cases for our movement. It's one of only two countries that has been consistently using land mines since the mine ban treaty. There have been a few other cases of sporadic use elsewhere, but there are only two cases of consistent use: Russia in Chechnya and Burma with use by all kinds of armed actors there, the state as well as the insurgency.

Monday: Has the ban been effective?

YM-P: The ban has been effective . . . civil society really mobilized this treaty . . . it's the first major disarmament treaty to be convened outside of the United Nations process ever. There was a place for the peoples' organizations involved in putting together this treaty to do the monitoring of it as well as the governments who monitor their own compliance and since the very first year, we've been producing this annual report and putting it on the desks of the governments and the UN agencies and the governments essentially threw up their hands and said, "We can't do monitoring as good as this."

Monday: What is Canada doing to help with land mines?

YM-P: The Canadian government is spending more this year than they did last year, so that's good . . . last year, they spent 64 cents per Canadian. As a comparison, little Luxembourg spent \$3 U.S. for every person to help implement the Ottawa Treaty. We've been trying to get them up and I'm happy to say they're finally up to \$1. We think they could spend a bit more. It's one of only two international treaties that bears Canada's name and Canada has been seen as one of the mobilizers of it.

Monday: What do you hope this film will achieve?

YM-P: Greater awareness and mobilizing people to continue to care about this issue. We've had incredible success; we're the great success story of our time, but we need to keep that focus to achieve 100 percent success. If we can do it with land mines, we can do it with something else and that will mean passing on a precious gift: the gift of hope.

Disarm

7pm Thursday, August 9

Eric Martin Pavillion, 2334 Trent

By donation

595-3542 • www.disarmfilm.com

—Amanda Farrell