Serbia and Montenegro

Country Profile

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Landmine/Unexploded Ordnance Problem

Although landmine clearance has been completed, UXO still pose a threat to the southern region of the country, and the Directorate’s role in mine action is to carry out its inventory plan. This contamination is expected to be cleared by 2009.

The Road to Clearance

Macedonia became a State Party to the Ottawa Convention 1 March 1999 and is a State Party to the Ottawa Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Macedonian authorities conducted stockpile clearance two and a half years before the Ottawa Convention-mandated deadline. In September 2006, four years after starting, Macedonia reached landmine clearance. The Macedonian government set priorities for mine clearance, which began in 2002. Among the greatest concerns were areas that prevented internally displaced persons from returning home and Sheepbane village, because a hospital was to be built there. Organizations that participated in clearance of the region contaminated after the 2001 conflict were Handicap International, MineTech International (contracted by CARE International) and the International Mine Action Trust for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance. The U.S. Department of State also contributed to mine action in Macedonia through the ITF and by funding the deployment of six demining teams from Bosnia and Herzegovina. By the end of 2004, 200,000 mines/UXO had been found and destroyed.

A United Nation Mine Action Office was established in September 2001 after the UNMCCC survey, and the Ministry of Defense took over in 2003. Shortly thereafter, the Protection and Rescue Directorate was formed, becoming the only body responsible for mine/UXO clearance in Macedonia. The Directorate began its work in 2005. The Directorate’s role in mine action involves surveys, clearance, mine deconstruction, mapping and fencing minesfields, and medical treatment of victims.

Mine-risk Education

The 2001 conflict and resulting border contamination created a need for mine-risk education campaigns in the northern region of the country. The International Committee of the Red Cross led Mine Action operations until UNMCCC’s two years of activities along with UNICEF’s involvement in 2001 resulted in over 17,000 individuals being reached.

The Road Ahead

The Directorate formulated an action plan in 2005. The plan details the period 2006 to 2010 and involves three phases:

1. Developing national capacities and obtaining equipment. This phase has been completed.
2. Conducting surveys to establish future priority areas. This phase is set to be completed by 2008.
3. Developing operationally and establishing national and international partnerships. This phase is a continuing process.

The Mine Action Center of Serbia was established in 2004, the mine-action center was formed, becoming the only body responsible for mine action in Serbia. The 19th of September 2001, Serbia set priorities for mine clearance. This phase is set to take two years and should be completed by 2008.

Landmine and UXO Problem

In Montenegro, the RCUD observed all anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines by 1 March 2003. As of March 2006, cluster bombs remained in six main areas of Serbia, affecting approximately 10,000 hectares (9.27 square miles). The Regional Center for Underwater Demining, which was founded in 2001, continues to work and focuses primarily on underwater mine and UXO removal but also oversees general demining. As of February 2006, U.S. AID found that contamination consisted of about 46 minefields of unknown size containing approximately 4,268,000 mines and UXO.

Border territories around Serbia and Montenegro remain contaminated by landmines and other explosive remnants of war. Cluster bombs and large aerial bombs from NATO’s air campaign were cleared in 2005 with 634 mines and 27 cluster bomblets destroyed.

In Montenegro, the RCUD was able to clear the Vrige trench in the Bay of Kotor in November 2004 with financial help from the United States but was unable to clear its stockpile of anti-personnel mines in August 2005 with financial help from the United States, which had unexploded stockpiles of 195,000 landmines.

Contact Information

Matthew Veoage
Assistant Director
Journal of Mine Action
E-mail: matveoage@jmu.edu

For more information, see the Endnotes, Page 1.

The Future

Even though the breakup of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia led to the formation of new countries, relationships have not been severed. Organizations such as the Southern-Eastern Europe Mine Action Coordination Centre have helped all the countries in the region share the burden of the landmine problem. Currently, the organization is seeking the means to allow the countries to work together in the future.