Ethiopian Mine Action Office: Tackling Landmine Problems in Ethiopia

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Ethiopia has suffered from a landmine/unexploded ordnance problem for more than seven decades due to the following factors:

- The Italian invasion in 1935
- The Ethiopia and Somalia conflict, 1977–1978
- The dispute with Sudan in 1980
- The Ethiopian Civil War, 1975–1991
- The recent conflict with Eritrea, 1998–2000

Though the Ethiopian Landmine Impact Survey results need further verification, the preliminary findings of the survey indicated that 2,443 square kilometers (943 square miles) of land contains mines. Over 9 million people in Ethiopia live in landmine-impacted communities, and the survey identified 1,492 responsibilities as impacted by landmines and UXO. Three regions in particular are contaminated: Tigray, Afar and Somali.

To address this problem, EMAM was established by the Ethiopian government through the Federal Council of Ministers Regulation No. 70/2001, under the Office of the Prime Minister. EMAM’s role is to provide the government’s focal point for management of mine-action operations and related activities. EMAM’s goal is to allocate special funds to build local and national mine-action capacities.

Conclusion

With the highest level of political commitment, establishment of the NMAA and heavy involvement of the United Nations and the international donor community, the prospects for development of demining operations in Sudan seem very positive. Of the 1,000 suspected mined areas identified so far, 270 sites have already been cleared by the implementing partners of the United Nations and national and international organizations. The number of key supply and access routes to land used for agriculture and third to any

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The Ethiopian Mine Action Office was created in an attempt to alleviate the situation. This article discusses the country’s history and the efforts made to make it safe.

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