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Eritrea

Country Profile

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Eritrea
by Megan Wertz
[Mine Action Information Center]

Eritrea’s 70-year history of internal and international armed conflict, dating back to 1961, has left Eritrea in a state of armed conflict with Ethiopia and the Sudanese border areas. Despite efforts by the United Nations (UN) and other donors to help Eritrea achieve peace and national reconciliation, the country remains one of the most militarized in the world. The current conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia has been ongoing since 1998, with periodic outbreaks of violence. The conflict has resulted in the displacement of thousands of civilians and the destruction of infrastructure and property.

Landmine/Explosive Remnants of War Action
After the end of the recent conflict with Ethiopia in 2000, the government of Eritrea declared the Orra Convention in 2001. This declaration called for the destruction of all landmines and other explosive remnants of war. The government has made significant progress in clearing landmines and other explosive remnants of war. As of the end of 2008, Eritrea had cleared 90% of its landmine-contaminated areas.

EMAO reported that in 2004, 109 square kilometers (4.2 square miles) of land were cleared and 478 anti-personnel mines, 67 anti-vehicle mines and 8,352 pieces of UXO were destroyed. EMAO’s mines are identified by the United Nations (UN) and are destroyed by the Eritrean Demining Team (EDT), a UN-mandated team that works in close coordination with the Eritrean Demining Team (EDT).

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Ethiopia
by Daniele Bassier
[Mine Action Information Center]

Ethiopia’s history has been marked by struggles for independence from Italian colonial rule and a civil war between the Derg regime and the EPLF (Ethiopian People’s Liberation Front). The country has been torn apart by war, with waves of displacement and return migration. The result is that many are unable to use their land and are left dependent on food aid.

Challenges and Hope
Ethiopia has been identified as one of the “24 States Parties with the greatest needs and responsibility to provide adequate survivor assistance.”

In 2004, Tëkwold Mengasher, Head of EMAO, estimated that the cost of clearing the minefield was $250 million. The government of Ethiopia has committed to providing funding for a victim-assistance project in the Somali region providing physical rehabilitation to landmine/UXO victims.

RaDo. The Rehabilitation and Development Organization is an indigenous nongovernmental organization that has been implementing RME in the Tigray and Afar regions with financial and technical assistance from UNICEF. In 2006, the organization has appealed for funding for a victim-assistance project in the Somali region providing physical rehabilitation to landmine/UXO victims.