Ethiopia

Country Profile

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**Eritrea**

by Megan Wertz  
[Mine Action Information Center]

Eritrea’s landmine and unexploded ordnance contamination problem began during World War II when Italian and British forces fought on Eritrean soil. A long struggle for independence (1962–1991) and a border war with Ethiopia (1998–2000) followed, exacerbating the problem. Eritrea has never produced or exported anti-personnel mines; all mines used in the past were stolen from Ethiopian forces from minesfields or storage facilities during the War of Independence. There are no mine stockpiles except for 234 mines retained by the Eritrean Demining Authority National Training Center for training and development. Eritrea acceded to the Ottawa Convention Aug. 27, 2001, and it entered into force Feb. 1, 2002.

**Extent of Contamination**

The Landmine Impact Survey, completed in June 2004, found 481 of 4,176 communities affected by mines and UXO, with 33 communities considered high impact, 100 medium impact and 348 low impact. According to the LIS, there are 984 suspected, mined or mixed areas.

**Humanitarian Challenge**

Food security is a significant concern because much of the agricultural land is contaminated with mines. The problem has also impacted building a social support system for the most vulnerable population groups and creating linkages with recovery, reintegration and development. The scattered nature of the mines and UXO, combined with changes in weather patterns and seasonal activities, puts the civilian population at particular risk. During the harvest season, agricultural activities may have unmarked mine fields, which may result in additional civilian casualties.

**Government Mine Action**

In 2000, the United Nations Mission in Eritrea and the Eritrean Mine Action Coordination Center was established. The Center/actuated humanitarian mine action activities. The UNMEE’s Mine Action Operations will seek to fulfill four strategic objectives:

1. Return of displaced persons. Expanded resources to complete Survey and task-assessment planning, clearance, marking, and integrated mine-risk education and victim assistance to permit the return of IDPs, returnees and refugees.
4. Victim support. Establish a victim-support system that will provide effective assistance to Eritrean mine victims. All RONCO fieldwork is fully integrated with the tourism industry.

**Landmine/Explosive Remnants of War Action**

After the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict, with the end of the war in 2000, aid organizations began to focus on mine action. UNICEF estimated that at the time, it would take 20 years to clear the landmines in the Tigrai and Afar regions. UNICEF also conducted a retrospective mine action survey in 2004, which showed that the main focus on mine action was on the Tigrai region. The report indicated that about 2 million people were affected by landmines and that there were 1,100 casualties.

**Eritrea and Ethiopia**

Eritrea and Ethiopia have a long history of conflict and cooperation. In 1998, the two countries signed a peace treaty, which has since been ratified by both countries. The treaty calls for the demilitarization of the border area, a joint commission to oversee the demilitarization, and a joint border commission to resolve any future disputes.

**Ethiopia**

by Daniele Basier  
[Mine Action Information Center]

Ethiopia’s 70-year history of internal and international armed conflict has left a legacy of death, destruction, and poverty that affects millions of people. The country is one of the world’s least-developed countries, with a population of over 100 million people. The government estimates that it will take decades to clear all landmines and UXO.

**Landmine/Explosive Remnants of War Action**

After the end of the conflict in 2005, the government of Ethiopia, in coordination with the Eritrea Mine Action Coordination Center, began to focus on mine action. UNICEF estimated that at the time, it would take 20 years to clear the landmines in the Tigrai and Afar regions. UNICEF also conducted a retrospective mine action survey in 2004, which showed that the main focus on mine action was on the Tigrai region. The report indicated that about 2 million people were affected by landmines and that there were 1,100 casualties.

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**Ethiopia and Eritrea**

Ethiopia and Eritrea have a long history of conflict and cooperation. In 1998, the two countries signed a peace treaty, which has since been ratified by both countries. The treaty calls for the demilitarization of the border area, a joint commission to oversee the demilitarization, and a joint border commission to resolve any future disputes.
Somalia is not known to have produced or exported anti-personnel landmines, and as a result, landmines and mines are plentiful and can easily be bought from weapons markets. This easy access allows fighting clans to use landmines to defend themselves and their territories. Somalia is unable to accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention due to the lack of full control of the Government of Siad Barre in January 1991. In August 2004, the International Federal Government was formed.

**Humanitarian Implications**

The landmine problem in Somalia has a socioeconomic impact which is even more severe because landmines and mines are plentiful and can easily be bought from weapons markets. This easy access allows fighting clans to use landmines to defend themselves and their territories. Somalia is unable to accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention due to the lack of full control of the Government of Siad Barre in January 1991. In August 2004, the International Federal Government was formed.

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