

March 2012

A New Name and Mission for the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance

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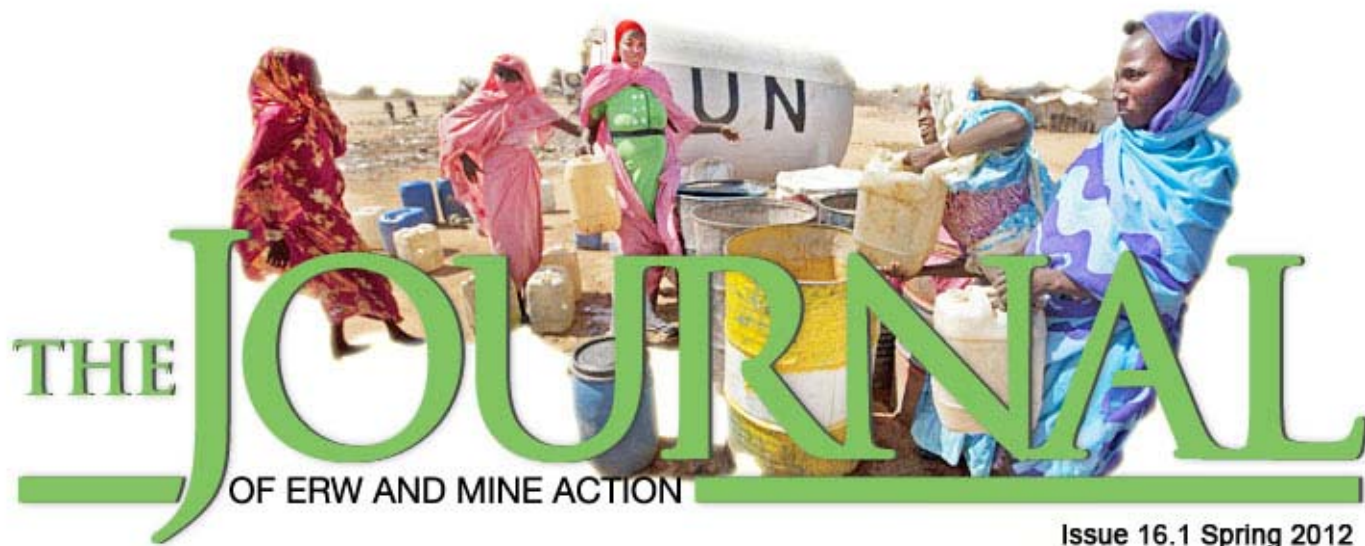


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JOURNAL, CISR (2012) "A New Name and Mission for the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance," *The Journal of ERW and Mine Action* : Vol. 16 : Iss. 1 , Article 6.
Available at: <http://commons.lib.jmu.edu/cisr-journal/vol16/iss1/6>

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A New Name and Mission for the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance

Since its formation in 1998 by the Slovenian Government, the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance has continuously expanded and enhanced its mission, widening its scope of activities to reflect the changing human-security environment, needs of beneficiary countries and priorities of the donor community. Now it has a new name to reflect its broader mission: ITF Enhancing Human Security.

ITF recently adopted a new strategy for 2009–2013 to address broader post-conflict challenges, such as conventional weapons destruction, security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs. The new strategy reflects the realization that the failure to address these challenges poses a potential threat to human security that rivals the dangers from landmines and unexploded ordnance.

Clearance and Rehabilitation Efforts

Through contracts with specialized companies, nongovernmental organizations and public institutions, ITF has carried out more than 2,750 mine/UXO clearance projects and cleared more than 115,600 million square meters (45 square miles) of mine-polluted areas in South Eastern Europe and another 2,100 million square meters (519 acres) in the South Caucasus. More than 71,299 mines and items of UXO were found and destroyed in these efforts. ITF activities in the region of South Eastern Europe have contributed to the successful completion of landmine-clearance activities in Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Major mine-action projects continue to be implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, which are still heavily contaminated.

ITF has also contributed to the physical rehabilitation of more than 1,160 mine/UXO victims. More than 82,000 children and adults from mine-affected communities directly participated in programs to raise awareness of the mine/UXO problem, and more than 200,000 family members received mine-risk awareness education indirectly. ITF has implemented training for more than 880 experts in the field of humanitarian demining, rehabilitation and mine-action management, and supported the activities of national mine-action centers in the mine-affected countries of South Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, as well as in Cyprus, Colombia, Jordan and Tajikistan.

Since the adoption of its new strategy, ITF has also become more involved in conventional weapons destruction programs. ITF supported clearance of ammunition storage facilities in Gërdec, Albania and Chelopechene, Bulgaria after both experienced accidental explosions. Almost 107,800 shells were collected and removed in Gërdec alone, after the 2008 explosion. ITF also supports destruction of surplus ammunition in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Lithuania and works for the improvement of physical security and stockpile management in Lithuania and Serbia. Partnerships, national primacy and capacity development are essential to ITF's coordinated CWD efforts for stability, sustainable development and lasting peace in targeted regions, countries and communities.

Donors

The Slovenian Government is grateful to its more than 130 donors, including 28 governments, the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme, numerous local authorities, nongovernment and humanitarian organizations, businesses and individuals, who have entrusted more than US\$354,900 million to ITF since 1998 and made its work possible. Almost 95 percent of the donations originate from public donors, while the rest of the funds were contributed by private donors. The Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs' (PM/WRA) matching-fund mechanism for South East Europe's Humanitarian Mine Action program ensures that every dollar raised by ITF is matched by an additional dollar from PM/WRA. This mechanism has proved exceptionally successful as a method of attracting and retaining donor support for humanitarian aid and development. ↴

~ Sabina Beber Boštjančič, ITF, provided this profile with assistance from Megan Reichart, CISR staff

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