The Impact of ERW on Children

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Challenges

Although CBD reduces some of the security threats, it does not eliminate them. In fact, the program has been experiencing some challenges. Although there have been some incidents, including two prominent kidnappings in December 2010,3 the deminers were soon released safely with the intervention of community elders because most members of the CBD teams were from the mine-affected communities.

Alternatively, the kidnapping of 32 CBD project members in Farah province, Afghanistan in July 2011, which resulted in the killing of four of them, shocked MAPA as well as the people of Afghanistan. Although the other 28 deminers were returned unharmed through the mediation of community elders, all CBD operations in this region were suspended. It is still unknown who was responsible for this brutal action. The government of Afghanistan, as well as the Taliban, condemned the kidnapping and killing of the deminers, who were working to serve people.

The Future

The bottom line is that a continuation of such events will seriously damage the normal demining operations of CBD projects and will consequently result in the increase of civilian casualties in the communities located in insecure parts of Afghanistan. Ongoing insurgency and an unstable security situation not only continues to hinder mine-action assistance, but it also exposes the lives of innocent people to the danger of mines and ERW.

However, strengthening communication with influential community elders and convincing them of the importance of demining operations for the safety and security of the local populations can help to minimize the risks to deminers. Educating the community on the benefits of demining operations and demonstrating these benefits is the best insurance against attacks on deminers. Further, bringing money and jobs to mine-affected communities through CBD will help to minimize resentments and hostility toward demining groups. By using CBD, and thereby benefitting the local community, MAPA hopes to continue to expand its operations to other mine-affected regions currently inaccessible to demining teams. 

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