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## A Broader Canvas: Jordan's ERW Training Course

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## A Broader Canvas: Jordan's ERW Training Course

Jordan is embracing the role of international humanitarian ambassador, particularly in the field of mine action. Jordan's National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation has hosted several events for mine-affected countries and has recently completed its first explosive-remnants-of-war training course.

by Mohammad Breikat [ National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation ]  
and Olaf Juergensen [ United Nations Development Programme Jordan ]

The Kingdom of Jordan has a long record of participating in international humanitarian crisis-prevention and peace-keeping efforts. On a per-capita basis, Jordan is one of the largest contributors to U.N. peace-keeping missions—with an emphasis on providing field hospitals and support for mine action. Jordan regularly dispatches relief supplies and heavy equipment when natural disasters strike around the world.

In the mine-action sector, Jordan's National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation has hosted a number of mine-affected countries (including Iraq, Libya, Mauritania and Sudan) over the past few years to exchange ideas and share tactics on a range of subjects. NCDR staff have also traveled to programs in Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, Croatia, Lebanon and South Korea to learn how each country has addressed its unique challenges. In May 2009, the NCDR moved to the next phase in connecting with other mine-affected countries; it sent two of its operations staff to the Libyan program, where they provided short-term capacity-building support to the Libyan teams working in the eastern border area.

### Expanding the Scope of Work

As the work of the international mine-action community moves into its second decade, it is clear that the number of accidents, stockpiles and the proliferation of landmines have begun to decrease. However, a great deal of work remains to be done around the world



His Royal Highness Prince Mired of Jordan, Chairman of NCDR (left), poses with the Deputy Foreign Minister of Mozambique, His Eminence Henrique Benz, following discussion of bilateral mine-action exchanges and NCDR's new International ERW Training Course, at the 9th Meeting of States Parties in Geneva, Switzerland. November 2008.

PHOTO COURTESY OF OLAF JUERGENSEN

at the national level. With recent conflicts and the ever-changing nature of war, it has become clear to the international community that in addition to further work on clearance, old threats remain and new threats have been identified that require a systematic and often civilian-led approach similar to what the mine-action community has successfully adopted.

The threats come in the form of what are generally classified as explosive remnants of war. A broader topic than landmines, ERW are explosives often left strewn across a war-torn landscape and are not necessarily intended to be activated through human contact. ERW, therefore, include a wide variety of threats ranging from abandoned or unexploded artillery shells, cluster submunitions and unspent rockets to the more ubiquitous scourge of landmines. In-

deed, cluster munitions are seen as so problematic that an international convention was created at the end of 2008 to deal with the hazard. As recent events in the Middle East have demonstrated, the threat of ERW is pervasive. It not only breeds terror and fear, but it also affects the health, stability, commerce, education, agriculture and public safety of a community. ERW remediation is not an area that lends itself to easy management because it is a multi-faceted issue and deals with many diverse functions during volatile periods in a country's history. Despite the pressing need to develop national capacities to cope with ERW, an internationally coordinated approach has thus far been absent.

Building on the considerable capacity that exists in the mine-action sector (skills, knowledge systems, standards, procedures and institutional organization), the NCDR began to approach donors and potential partners to establish a one-month intensive training course in Jordan that would build on previous United Nations Development Programme Senior Mine Action Managers' Courses. The Jordan ERW training course would address both the latent needs of the mine-action community and the increasing capacity-development needs related to the more broadly defined ERW sector. Based on several high-level meetings, UNDP-commissioned reports and presentations, and a joint NCDR-UNDP questionnaire, it was determined that there was a demand for further management training to strengthen national capacity to deal with ERW that are curtailing reconstruction and recovery in war-torn societies. As it is still affected by

ERW, Jordan provides an excellent opportunity to view ongoing operations and blend the classroom theory with field application.

### October Launch

Through a grant from the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs' Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the U.S. Department of State, the first training course was held from 11 October through 5 November 2009, and a second course is scheduled for November 2010. Applying a unique blend of theoretical, methodological and case-study materials, the Jordan Explosive Remnants of War Training Course provided first-class instruction on the design and management of national responses to the presence of landmines and ERW. Based on the campus of the former United Nations University in Amman, Jordan, the NCDR course was coordinated through close cooperation with James Madison University's Mine Action Information Center and utilized experts from JMU, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining Implementation Support Unit, International Committee of the Red Cross, Mines Advisory Group, Norwegian People's Aid and the United Nations Mine Action Team. The course was global in scope and was open to 30 participants at a time. It was taught in English and operated for a period of six weeks—two weeks via long-distance education prior to arrival in Amman followed by four weeks of in-residence lectures, group work and field exercises in Jordan. Invitations to apply for the course were sent out in July 2009 and the costs for accepted applicants were fully covered as part of the grant. ↴



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