A Broader Canvas: Jordan’s ERW Training Course

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T he Kingdom of Jordan has a long record of participating in international humanitarian crisis-prevention and peacekeeping efforts. On a per-capita basis, Jordan is one of the largest contributors to U.N. peacekeeping 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 issues. 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 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 explosive ordnance that have been left over after a conflict. They are used in a variety of ways; they are dropped or thrown by soldiers, used as improvised explosive devices or left behind in a battle zone to be used in the future.

Jordan is one of the countries that has taken steps to address ERW. In 2006, the Kingdom of Jordan signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. This commitment led to the establishment of the National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation (NCDR), which was established in 1995.

The NCDR has worked to remove landmines and ERW from the country’s borders and has worked with international organizations to develop policies and procedures to address the issue.

In January 2008, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Centre for Humanitarian Demining Education (ICHDE) announced the establishment of the Jordan ERW Training Centre (JERTC), which is the first and only training centre in the region to provide training on ERW.

The JERTC is located in Amman, Jordan, and is the first and only training centre in the region to provide training on ERW. The centre offers training 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 JUIN, 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—a two-week intensive training course followed by a four-week field application.

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.

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

October Launch

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