NGOs and international institutions may also devise ways and means through which they can fulfill humanitarian goals. They could find a way to advance such goals and help states create a more secure environment at the same time. They could assure states regarding the purity of humanitarian purpose of their respective institutions. Furthermore, they could prevent third party abuses of the humanitarian cause for the purpose of intervening or undermining the sovereign rights of the state. In short, establishing an environment of mutual trust between actors is essential to overcoming legal and political impediments. Exploring the criteria and conditions for engaging armed non-state actors to secure their respect for international humanitarian law and human rights standards may, indeed, yield some positive results. However, this exercise cannot be done in a vacuum, turning a blind eye to other relevant factors and developments that shape and at times threaten international security. Otherwise, they will lead to more harm than good in the long run.

See Endnotes, page 112

Swiss Exploring Gender in Mine Action

The initiative to understand the topic of gender in mine action has recently generated significant discussion throughout the global community. Specialists exploring this area are shedding light on the dissimilar practices, behaviors and communications of males and females in order to improve international mine-action activities in the field and office. As part of the Gender and Mine Action Programme, the Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines is currently researching and producing a gender-integrated manual that synthesizes practical recommendations with actual case studies.

Not only will the manual answer the question of why mine-action practitioners should be more cognizant of gender issues, it will also answer the question of how gender-sensitive procedures may be implemented. For the latter purpose, the SCBL hopes to integrate legal theory and accessible resources to make progress easily attainable. Practicality is imperative, since the manual is intended for a broad audience of mine-action organizations, governments, donors, civil-society actors, gender-focused organizations and community-based organizations.

The first section of the manual will elaborate on gender as it relates to each of the five pillars of mine action. This section will include an overview of the current state of affairs, real-world illustrations, best practices and unsuccessfull enterprises. The manual will highlight recommendations to promote realistic application of the information presented. The second section of the manual will feature five in-depth case studies of Lebanon, Mozambique, Sudan, Sri Lanka and Colombia. Reports for each country will include details about the current mine problem for that country, insights about the regional gender situation, best practices and successful gender initiatives. Recommended topics for further research and piloting will also be incorporated.

The SCBL would appreciate participation in providing diverse personal perspectives for the manual. Though the formal submission deadline of 15 February 2008 has passed, e-mail Marie Nilsson at m.nilsson@scbl.ch (gender for more information or to send comments. SCBL is interested in receiving a broad range of pertinent content: project examples, initiatives, tips, ideas, measures of achievement, successful integration stories, unsuccessful initiatives, problems and relevant photos.

Additionally, the Journal of Mine Action’s upcoming issue 12.2 will focus upon gender in mine action, and related articles are now being accepted. Please see the “Call for Papers” on the back cover of this magazine for more information.

Dr. Sadi Cayci is currently International Law Advisor at the Ankara Strategic Anatolian Merkez (Centre for Eurasian Strategic Studies) in Ankara, Turkey. Cayci’s special areas of interest are national security, the law of armed conflict and counterterrorism. His activities include being a Course Director for the International Military Courses on the Law of Armed Conflict, held at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law, Sanremo, Italy.

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UNDP Management Training Programme for National Mine-Action Managers

The current training programmes for National Mine Action Managers are examined to determine the advantages of the courses as well as areas in which the programmes can be improved.

by Charles Downs (Downs Consulting)

From 2000 to 2006, 10 Senior Managers and 40 Middle Managers Training Courses were conducted for national staff of mine-action programmes from 42 countries. More than 800 managers (including nearly 200 senior managers and over 600 middle managers) completed these courses initiated by the United Nations Development Programme. The courses were designed on the basis of a 1999 UNDP-United Nations Mine Action Service’s Training Needs Assessment conducted in response to a 1997 United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs study on the “Development of Indigenous Mine Action Capacity” which concluded that the absence of management skills was a major obstacle to national ownership of mine-action programmes. At the end of 2004, the UNDP’s Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery sought to assess the impact of this training on national mine-action programmes in order to provide a solid basis for further decisions regarding future management training. In December 2006, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining agreed to conduct a review of the courses and their impact, with the final report to be completed by the end of January 2007. Within this short timeframe, GICHD collected and analysed extensive information about the course providers, course participants, their supervisors and others. It was, however, not possible to conduct country visits to assess the impact of the effectiveness of the national programmes from the perspective of key external stakeholders.

The GICHD study team (led by the author) established a work plan to collect and analyse relevant information, including interviews with the UNDP and background documents; site visits to the two prime
delivery partners (Cranfield University and James Madison University) for interviews and additional background documents; a visit to the final week of the Middle Managers Course held in Amman, Jordan; in December 2006; preparation and issuance of survey questionnaires to past course graduates, National Programme Directors and Chief Technical Advisors; follow-up interviews with selected graduates; and interviews with other knowledgeable U.N. agency staff.

The study team reviewed the final reports from all 10 Senior Managers Courses, as well as the reports from over a dozen Middle Managers Courses, with particular attention to subjects covered, allocation of time to subjects, use of guest lecturers and participant evaluations. The report did not review the detailed content of individual class sessions, although it did pay close attention to graduate comments on specific aspects.

The initial design of the mine-action management training courses was based on the 1999 Global Training Needs Assessment. The study was directed to assess the management-training needs of national staff, distinguishing among three levels of managers: Executive (National Director); Senior (heads of national departments) and Middle Managers (heads of service delivery units and their sections), to determine the major subject areas in which training was required; to estimate the number of people requiring such training worldwide; and to recommend appropriate organisational options for delivery of the training.

The TNA identified a "strong need for training to develop planning skills, leadership, performance measurement, and control, particularly in the Senior Managers Course, as the course participants insisted this was not relevant to their work." The Global TNA sought to estimate the number of people who would be appropriate candidates needing each type of management-training course. Based on the existing 16 national mine-action programmes of various sizes, the study estimated there were between 80 and 175 candidates for the Senior Managers Course (which includes up to 15 Executive Managers) and between 120 and 250 candidates for the Middle Managers Course. Furthermore, as the study authors considered mine-action employment to be desirable and stable with low turnover, they expected that most of the needs identified for training would be fulfilled. However, further general training once the initial round was completed was recommended.

The TNA also strongly urged that the Senior Managers Course be revised for an eight-week course for each, comprised of four two-week modules. In both cases, participants found this design too long and repetitive, and the courses were eventually shortened to six weeks. The delivery partners adapted and reshaped the courses. Both courses have been through full reviews by the delivery partner. The MMC was thoroughly revised in 2006, on the basis of comments provided to the TNA at the conclusion of the study. The global TNA was based on the 1999 TNA. The top few senior managers in nearly all U.N.-supported national programmes (including the possibility of adapting the core course for national staff in other countries) to guide the overall direction of training. A pedagogic committee would involve delivery partners and interested individuals from "guidance" and "pedagogic review" mechanisms for the courses. The guidance committee would involve key stakeholders (e.g., UNMAS, UNDP (Unit Aid Project for International Development, donors and representatives from key national programmes) to guide the overall direction of training. Several communications were held with the UNDP, UNMAS, and the U.S. Department of State to consider training needs for the MMC course. Both courses have evolved over time, reflecting feedback from participants and others willing to review the substance of the training courses.

Need for further management training. More national staff members have taken the MMC and the SMC courses than were anticipated in the 1999 TNA. The top few senior managers in nearly all U.N.-sponsored national programmes have taken the SMC, though language skills made this impossible. Many participants in recent SMCs do not appear to hold senior-management positions. Additionally, many national managers are now able to attend mine-action training in their own countries, have greater formal training and are more experienced than at the time of the TNA. Despite some turnover and the creation of new programmes, it appears that the SMC and the MMC are on the right track. The UNDP has committed to the need for more training in areas of applied management, including financial and human resources management, project management and quality management. Many also requested more intensive immersion in mine-action issues, cases and exercises.

Increasing interest by United Nations agencies and international stakeholders to present to the Senior Managers Course has reduced the time available for core management subjects. On the other hand, the MMC is a strong but can be further strengthened. Graduates identified this as a weakness of the new training course.

The UNDP originated the management training material in 2000–2001, but today it is a one of several stakeholders in management training for mine action. The UNDP is virtually the sole sponsor for the SMC, but it is a minority client for the Middle Manager Course, providing nine of 10 SMCs, but only 40 of 400 SMCs. Both UNMAS and the U.S. Department of State have contracted more courses than UNDP in recent years, acting directly on a country-specific basis.

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The management training courses have had a significant impact on networking and cooperation among country programmes and with staff in related organisations who do not directly work together. The MMC graduates affirm that the exchange of experience with senior managers of other countries was one of the greatest benefits of the course. Most graduates remained in contact with one another for some time after the course, although this was more often a social contact than work-related. The MMC graduates sometimes advise that the contacts and opportunities to work with staff of other units and organisations were equally as useful as the course content or learning about mine action and its international context. This natural indirect benefit of the course experience could be encouraged and supported, perhaps through a Web-based forum for the SMC graduates and periodic in-country gatherings for the MMC graduates.

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by Zoran V. Gruijić [ Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Center ]

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According to the Landmine Impact Survey, conducted in 2002 and 2003, mine- and UMO-contaminated locations directly impact the security of an estimated 1,376,000 people, 100,000 of whom live in highly impacted communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

From the beginning of the conflict until the end of 2006, there were 4,822 mine/UMO casualties in BiH. In the period from 1998 until the end of 2006, there were 1,577 mine casualties, out of which 463 persons were killed. For the period 2005–2007, there was an increase compared to the period of 1998–2003 of mine accidents with 35 victims, including 18 deaths.

Domestic has been taking place in Bosnia and Herzegovina for 12 years. Landmine victim assistance in BiH is ever older—the first landmine victim-assistance activities started in early 1994. Naturally, the state had institutions that were expected to take care of the task, but it was unreasonable to expect them to contribute significantly to the problem.

Thus far, a number of different organizations have worked to provide aid to landmine victims, either through stand-alone projects or by working with other organizations to support their activities. The common denominator for all of them has been that they were gathering data and creating databases for their target groups and locations.

Nevertheless, there was no coordination of any kind, at the end of the day, the landmine victim-assistance issue is all cooperation, and a lack of resources, information, and knowledge. Thus far, there was no standardization of any kind, at the end of the day, the landmine victim-assistance issue is all cooperation, and a lack of resources, information, and knowledge. Thus far, there was no standardization of any kind, at the end of the day, the landmine victim-assistance issue is all cooperation, and a lack of resources, information, and knowledge.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Center is recognized as a state organization for landmine victim assistance activities and over the years has decided to conduct coordination through data sharing. A fact 2002, when the mine-action strategy was accepted and the need to approach landmine victim assistance in a more serious, planned and systematic way became obvious, the Landmine Victim Assistance Sub-strategy was developed and incorporated into the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Strategy.

In light of the existence of programmes that partly overlap services to targeted groups, which in turn leads to unnecessary duplication of activities and inappropriate spending of available resources, the official nomination of landmine victim-assistance projects and activities is necessary among national governments, regional governments and organisations.

There is need to have an information system available to all interested parties and to provide appropriate information to those who need it. Specifically, the new information system is designed to address the following:

• Mine victims will get a reference database needed to define their status, present their needs and inform them of good and bad practices related to landmine victim-assistance activities.

• RHMAC will obtain all the mine-incidence locations for all victims (previously this information was available only for RHMAC-gathered data).

• The donor community will have full oversight of all the projects, budgets required, final results of their donations, etc.

• Organisations will have access to all the victim data (locations, gender, age, family info, etc) required to plan projects and will be provided with the conduct to present brief forms of their projects to the donor community in real time.

This system will ensure timeliness and consistency of programs and projects, coverage of all impacted areas, efficiency in the use of resources and an exchange of lessons learned. Thus far, all stakeholders have been in constant conflict in all the issues, so we believe the integrated database will prove to be a positive outcome for Bosnia.

This process demands the creation of coordination tools. The results that BiH has achieved in the field of mine-risk education activities through an informational system make it clear that the main landmine victim-assistance coordination tool should also be an information system. This system will be available to victims, organisations and donors, and its existence will provide full transparency of all activities and needs in the landmine victim-assistance field. Complete information on landmine victim rights will also be easily available through database and Web presentation.

The VA Information System in BiH

Because of the conflict there in the 1990s, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been plagued by landmines, unexploded ordnance, explosive remnants of war and all of the problems associated with them. With so many victims, the need for an organized system to help these people was imperative. In this article, the author describes how the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Center and other organisations helped establish an information system in BiH to help inform landmine victims about what they can do to help themselves and their families.

News Brief

Oslo Process Makes Progress in Bantering Cluster Munitions

Representatives from 138 nations and 140 civil societies concluded the third major international conference on cluster munitions in early December 2007, noting that a cluster ban treaty will likely be signed in 2008. The conferees, meeting in Vienna, Austria, reported that important progress was made on issues like victim assistance, clearance, stockpile destruction and international cooperation and assistance.

Members of the civil societies came from more than 50 countries and praised the progress made at the conference. The need for standardized and monitored victim assistance was particularly important to these organizations, which sought consensus on assistance to victims and their families and communities, as well as on obligations to clear contaminated areas and stockpiles.

Coordinators should design future training efforts within a strategic framework, complementing them with other actions to enhance the performance of the national mine-action programme. Among these facilitating actions should be guidance to international Technical Advisors to support capacity development of national staff.

Notes from the field

Need for more frequent evaluation. More than six years elapsed between the first of the SCMs and MMCs and the initial overall review of such courses. The delivery partners wrote completion reports with each course or contract and the UNDP submitted completion reports to donors. However, while the desirability of assessing impact was recognized, an inappropriately long period transpired without evaluation, given that the UNDP spent some US$1.3 to $2 million, and others spent double that amount on this UNDP sustained training programme.

The impact of the manager training should be assessed more regularly at both the global and, more importantly, the national level. This review should include:

• Follow-up on each course to assess its impact and the use of materials (at roughly three and 12 month intervals following the course) to recommend steps within the national programme to make better use of the learning, and to provide feedback regarding possible adjustments to the training.

• Assessment of the impact of training on the performance of the national mine-action programme, especially from the perspective of the stakeholder—those who are dependent on the services of the mine-action programme.

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Charles Downs has worked in mine action since 1993 when he became the Chief of the Mine Action Unit of the United Nations Office for Project Services, a position he held until 2004. Current assignments include Survey Action Center Technical Advisor of the Kenya Landmine Impact Survey, improvement of UNDP efforts to strengthen government capacity to manage projects of the Global Fund against AIDS, TB and malaria, advisor to UNDP/Glob minerals in design of its mine-action strategy and professor of international project management at New York University’s Wagner School.

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