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DDASaccident514

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Humanitarian Demining Accident and Incident Database

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DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date: 27/01/2008	Accident number: 514
Accident time: Not made available	Accident Date: 26/06/2003
Where it occurred: Not made available	Country: Iraq
Primary cause: Field control inadequacy (?)	Secondary cause: Management/control inadequacy (?)
Class: Missed-mine accident	Date of main report: Not made available
ID original source: None	Name of source: [Name removed]
Organisation: [Name removed]	
Mine/device: BLU-97 submunition	Ground condition: not recorded
Date record created:	Date last modified: 27/01/2008
No of victims: 2	No of documents: 1

Map details

Longitude:	Latitude:
Alt. coord. system: Not made available	Coordinates fixed by:
Map east:	Map north:
Map scale:	Map series:
Map edition:	Map sheet:
Map name:	

Accident Notes

inadequate investigation (?)
inadequate survey (?)
inadequate area marking (?)
inadequate training (?)
mine/device found in "cleared" area (?)

Accident report

Details of this accident have been withheld by the demining NGO that employed the Victim. A spreadsheet including the Victim's name and very brief details of the accident was made available in 2007. Some details can be inferred from the information released. For example, it is reasonable to presume that the Victims were repositioning markers *inside* the area known to be cleared/safe.

This entry will be expanded if access to the report of the investigation is made available in future.

The spreadsheet data is reproduced below, edited for anonymity.

“Date and country. [Name removed]: fatal

[Name removed]: fatal

BLU 97 detonated when two members of staff moving to reposition minefield markers, suspected stepped on partially buried BLU-97.”

[From interview with demining group staff, it is known that the task was a BLU-97 strike area and not a minefield.]

Victim Report

Victim number: 672	Name: [Name removed]
Age:	Gender: Male
Status: deminer	Fit for work: DECEASED
Compensation: Not made available	Time to hospital: Not made available
Protection issued: Not recorded	Protection used: Not made available

Summary of injuries:

FATAL

COMMENT: Multiple injury: No medical report was made available.

Victim Report

Victim number: 673	Name: [Name removed]
Age:	Gender: Male
Status: deminer	Fit for work: DECEASED
Compensation: Not made available	Time to hospital: Not made available
Protection issued: Not recorded	Protection used: Not made available

Summary of injuries:

FATAL

COMMENT: Multiple injury: No medical report was made available.

Analysis

This incident is classed as a "Missed-mine accident" because it seems that the device that detonated was inside the area cleared. If it was not, then this would become yet another "Survey accident" (the demining group had several in Iraq at this time). The primary cause of this accident is listed as a "Field control inadequacy" because the victims went to place markers in an area that was believed to be safe but which was not. Those responsible for the work should have kept an accurate record of the safe area. It seems that the field controllers may also have allowed safety distances to be ignored. The secondary cause is listed as a "Management control inadequacy" because the management of the demining group declined to make the accident details available. Although this is sometimes done to protect the Victims, in this case the Victims' names were among the limited detail made available. It is possible that the managers have chosen to avoid transparency because they are afraid that the circumstances of the accident would reflect badly on their organisation.

It is known that the Victims had been recently moved from the North of Iraq to conduct submunition clearance and it is possible that they did not fully understand the threat posed by the BLU-97 and its potential sensitivity to any movement, including the placement of markers close by.