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Chad

by Megan Wertz

[Mine Action Information Center]

Profile: Chad



C O U N T R Y

The mine and unexploded ordnance contamination in Chad is a result of decades of internal conflict, the 1973 Libyan invasion and intensive mining during Libya's occupation of the Aouzou Strip in the north from 1984 to 1987. Most of the known mined areas are in the Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti region in the north and the Biltine and Quaddai regions in the east. Areas such as the Wadi Doum Military Base are also contaminated with abandoned missiles, munitions and other explosive remnants of war.

Chad signed the Ottawa Convention¹ on July 6, 1998, ratified it May 6, 1999, and became a State Party Nov. 1, 1999. A Landmine Impact Survey conducted from December 1999 to May 2001 identified 249 mine-affected communities in 23 of the 28 departments surveyed and a total contamination of over 1,000 square kilometers (386 square miles), not including the Tibesti region.² Chad is not known to have produced or exported anti-personnel mines and has not retained any mines for training purposes.

The LIS showed mine contamination directly interferes with the livelihood and safety of over 280,000 Chadians, blocking access to water, pasture, agricultural land, roads and trails. A lack of comprehensive records and the shifting of mines due to rainfall and drifting sands make marking mine and unexploded ordnance locations difficult.

In 2004, there were at least 32 new casualties due to mines and explosive remnants of war in Chad; seven people were killed and 25 injured. In January 2005, a child injured his hand when an unidentified device exploded near a borehole in the town of Bir Goz. Animals are also regularly killed in minefields; in April 2005 a herd of eight camels was killed after walking into a minefield in Wadi Doum.

Mine-action Strategy

In conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office for Project Services and the Chadian government, the mine-action program has been developed in three phases. Phase One, completed in 2001, established the High Commission for National Demining to plan and coordinate mine-action activities. A national demining capacity was developed and a national

database established. Phase Two, initiated in 2002, aims to establish a mine-clearance and explosive-ordnance-disposal capacity and complete the LIS. Due to lack of funding, only parts of Phase Two have been completed. Parts of the third phase began in 2004; this phase consists of the operational deployment of the mine-clearance/EOD capacity in areas identified as national priorities by the government. Teams have been deployed to a number of locations, including but not limited to N'Djamena, Massenya, Faya Largeau, Kalait, Fada, Ounianga Kebir and Wadi Doum. In 2003, Chad completed one of its obligations under the Ottawa Convention, destroying its stockpile of 4,490 anti-personnel mines.

Mine-action Coordination

HCND has three regional offices, located in Fada, Bardi and Wadi Doum, with a logistical center in Faya. Its role is to coordinate and plan mine-action activities and assure quality control. The organization prioritizes clearance and survey mainly according to impact scoring in the LIS, the discovery of new minefields, and the arrival of refugees. Priorities are agreed upon in consultation with local authorities and selection of survey areas is also based on developmental priorities.

In 2004, HCND implemented mine-action operations through the support of the United Nations Development Programme, the nongovernmental organizations HELP and Mines Advisory Group, and the Chadian Army. Several deminers resigned in 2004 due to apparent funding problems; deminers were not being assigned demining tasks and thus not getting paid. There were also delays in paying salaries. Clearance operations in Chad started through a United Nations Office for Project Services contract in 2000 with HELP, which was the only operator from August 2000 to October 2004. From September 2001 to October 2004, HELP cleared minefields and battlefields, including the main battle areas along the Sudanese border from Adre to Bahai from July to October 2004. MAG replaced HELP in 2004 and was the only NGO until December 2005.

In October 2004, through a bilateral contract with the United States and Chad, MAG was chosen by the U.S. Department of State to implement a three-year program to clear mines and ERW from water access

points in the Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti region. Due to lack of funding, the MAG/UNOPS contract ended in December 2005 and the deminers are waiting for a new contract. The deployment of three EOD teams was planned for April 1, 2006, but due to logistical problems and security issues, the teams have not yet deployed.

Toward a Mine-safe Future

Over 19,768 mines and over 875 tons of UXO have been destroyed; 1,658,659 square meters (409 acres) of land have been cleared and returned to the community. The Convention-mandated deadline for Chad to be mine-free³ is November 2009; however, without additional funding and signing of the Tibesti Peace Agreement, that goal is not attainable. If donors increase funding to approximately US\$20 million per year, the known and accessible high-priority areas (not including the Tibesti region) can be cleared by the end of 2007.⁴

To view endnotes and references for this article, visit <http://maic.jmu.edu/journal/10.1/profiles/chad/chad.html#endnotes>.



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