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this is likely to continue until the border is demarcated, land is demined and security is ensured.

In addition, at the time of writing, Ethiopia and Eritrea are still in disagreement over demarcation of their border. In recent months, the UNMEE MACC's demining efforts have slowed in the TSZ, particularly on the Eritrean side, as UNMEE deminers and workers have been banned from flying helicopters since October 2005 (thus blocking demining safety requirements). Western workers were then ejected from the country in December 2005 (though MRE in Eritrea continues).

On the Ethiopian side of the TSZ, demining continues but border tensions are rising, and at least two anti-vehicle mines were found recently as well as newly emplaced anti-personnel landmines, with ongoing UXO casualties being reported.⁹ Additionally, there have been reports of troop movement on both sides of the TSZ. Coupled with this insecurity at the Ethiopian-Eritrean border, in the south and southeast of the country a drought and food crisis have resulted in rising malnutrition. This humanitarian crisis is impacting most of the Horn of Africa and may inadvertently result in a diversion of attention and funding from demining for now.

Gebriel Lager Ezekiel, Head of Operations at EMAO, confirms that in

Ethiopia, mines and UXO are directly contributing to poverty by denying access to already limited resources in communities and hindering development. EMAO is a new organization and faces challenges such as Ethiopia's climatic conditions of mountains, hard-baked rocky ground, forests and high winds that make demining difficult, as well as establishing effective organizational capacity and receiving needed funds. However, he optimistically points out that Ethiopia's mine-action strategy is future-oriented, with strategic plans for 25 mine dogs by the end of 2006 (through Norwegian People's Aid), a training center for demining, and a multi-purpose group for technical survey and rapid response teams.¹⁰

Conclusion

Encouragingly, in April 2005, the European Commission announced it was giving Ethiopia US\$9.6 million to support a large-scale three-year continuation of mine-clearance efforts in the remote Afar, Tigray and Somali regions through EMAO and the UNDP. Negotiation talks for border demarcation in the TSZ continue and so far, conflict has not erupted. For now, demining efforts still progress both in the TSZ and across the country, even in the face of challenging circumstances. ❖

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



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