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Armed Non-state Actors: The Main Users of the “Poor Man’s Weapon”

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Geneva Call

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A powerful landmine blast ripped through a passenger bus loaded with commuters and schoolchildren in northwestern Sri Lanka in early June. The attack, attributed to the terrorist group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (popularly known as the Tamil Tigers), killed more than 64 people and injured dozens more. Officials said many of the injured were bystanders not on the bus.

The explosion tore through the packed bus in a crowded part of Kaththipilawa, a town about 200 kilometers (125 miles) north of the capital, Colombo. Military officials said the blast came from two landmines hanging from a tree and rigged to detonate when signaled from a remote position. Ripping mines above ground on trees and other structures is a common Tiger tactic to reduce blast shielding provided by landmines hanging from a tree and rigged to detonate when signaled from a remote position. Rigging mines at the Ministry of Internal Affairs in St. Petersburg in 1987. He then worked as a Resettlement Officer at the Department of Defence, Legal Issues, Human Rights and International Law.

Rigged Mine Blast Kills 64, Injures More

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The Sri Lankan Air Force responded later by bombing several rebel-held areas in other parts of the country. The Tigers are a separatist terrorist group seeking independence of certain areas from Sri Lanka and have been classified as a foreign terrorist organization by the U.S. Department of State.

TMAC, in cooperation with the MSFPP, ICRC, UNDP, and RICS, organized a summer camp for 32 mine survivors in Romit valley of the Vahdat district in July 2005. The camp provided the survivors an opportunity for psychological re-

Advocacy

A regional conference, "Progress towards the Ottawa Convention’s Aims in Central Asia," was held 15–16 April 2004, in Dushanbe. The conference was organized by the UNDP with the support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. Official representatives of central Asian countries and Afghanistan, the UNDP, the ICRC, the GICHD, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the ICRC, representatives of diplomatic corps and international organizations registered in Tajikistan, governmental authorities and NGO representa-

In accordance with Article 7 of the Ottawa Convention, the Republic of Tajikistan submits its annual reports to the U.N. Secretary-General on the country’s mine-

Conclusion

The Civil War of the 1990s created a mine/UXO problem for Tajikistan that is still threatening the daily lives of its citi-

This report, which builds on the 2004 Geneva Convention initial analysis, provides a comprehensive mapping of the use, acquisition, production, transfer and stockpiling of landmines by armed non-state actors through a presentation of individual group profiles and a global analysis. The report records global occurrences of anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mine planting by NSAs during 2003–2005, whether activated by victims, vehicles or at a distance using command detonation.

Promoting the banning of anti-personnel mines in a decade later. The Tajikistan Mine Action Centre is remedying the devastating effects this problem has had on the coun-

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developing a successful strategy for engaging these groups in the landmine ban. Four reasons for mine use were identified as the purpose of the report: 1. Self-defence 2. Defensive 3. Economic gain 4. Strategic ‘insurgency mining’

Many NSAs use landmines in an offensive manner, for example, the CPN-M in Nepal, the Karen National People’s Party, the People’s Defense Force (Kyrgyzstan) and the Kachin Independence Organization. In addition, some landmines are also used to hinder the local population, such as communications and railroads, or to affect civilians. Other examples are groups in Colombia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. FARC allegedly placed mines at the entrances of towns and villages.

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As for nuisance mining, the most cited example is probably that of the Lord’s Resistance Army. Nuisance mining is the use of mines that serve no direct military or economic purpose but are instead randomly used against strategic infrastructure, such as communications and railroads, or to affect civilians. Other examples include groups in Colombia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. FARC allegedly placed mines at the entrances of towns and villages, or in many conflicts towards increased use of command-detonated mines. However, although command-detonation is clearly preferable from a humanitarian point of view to victim-aimed vehicle activation, this does not constitute a guarantee that civilians and humanitarian actors will not be victimised. As such, their use remains controversial.

There is currently a trend in many conflicts towards increased use of command-detonated mines. However, although command-detonation is clearly preferable from a humanitarian point of view to victim-aimed vehicle activation, this does not constitute a guarantee that civilians and humanitarian actors will not be victimised. As such, their use remains controversial. This trend is due to the increasing use of anti-personnel mines by NSAs in many conflicts, particularly in the context of counter-insurgency operations.

The Involvement of Armed Groups and NGOs in Mine Use

A major reason for the increased use of mines by NSAs is the involvement of armed groups and NGOs in mine use. A major reason for the increased use of mines by NSAs is the involvement of armed groups and NGOs in mine use. NGOs have been involved in mine-related activities, such as mine risk education and mine clearing operations, since the adoption of the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines in 1997. NGOs have played an important role in raising awareness about the dangers of landmines and in promoting alternative livelihoods for mine-affected populations. However, NGOs have also been involved in mine use, particularly in the context of counter-insurgency operations.

The humanitarian impact of NSAs’ mine use is particularly concerning, as it affects civilians and non-combatants alike. NGOs have a crucial role to play in addressing this issue, as they are often the first to respond to mine-related emergencies and to provide humanitarian assistance to affected populations.

Conclusion

The Global Report clearly demonstrates a need for a clear demarcation of mine use with non-combatants. Many NSAs (as well as states) lack the legal and political framework to prevent the use of mines against non-combatants, and it is therefore crucial for the international community to find channels of communication with NSAs on the AP mine issue. Parties to conflict often use accusations of AP mine use to discredit the other party be- longing to the international community. In the case of the Lord’s Resistance Army, which has been under international pressure to cease its attacks, such attacks are often used to discredit the other party. It is therefore crucial for the international community to find channels of communication with NSAs on the AP mine issue.

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