

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA



PROFILES

Eastern Europe & the Caucasus

HISTORY: After Marshal Tito's death in 1980 and the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) divided into five different countries: Slovenia, Croatia, **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (BiH), the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and the Republic of Macedonia. After having declared its independence from SFRY in March 1992, BiH fought in a war that lasted over three-and-a-half years. This war destroyed families, communities and infrastructure and left the country littered with landmines and unexploded ordnance. After the Dayton agreement was signed on Dec. 14, 1995, the war officially ended and the country was divided into two entities: BiH and Republika Srpska. Most mine fields are found along the Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) and the Zone of Separation (ZOS).

LANDMINE AND UXO

OVERVIEW: As a result of the war Bosnia and Herzegovina is a heavily mined country. As of January 1999, Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Center (BHMIC) reported 18,229 known mine fields of an estimated 30,000 mine fields in the country with 750,000 landmines in the ground. BHMIC reports that 83.55 percent are AP mines and 16.45 are AT mines.

VICTIMS AND CASUALTIES:

From Jan. 1, 1992 through Dec. 31, 1998, the ICRC has registered a total 3,885 mine victims (those injured or killed by landmines). In BiH there have been 145 victims.



DEMINING: The London Peace Implementation Conference in December 1996 stated that Bosnia and Herzegovina were to make all aspects of demining operations exempt from taxes and customs duties. The new Slovenia International Trust Fund could provide up to \$56 million for mine clearance and victim assistance in BiH. BHMIC is currently working on gathering more accurate information about the UXO situation in BiH through maps and surveys.

WAR REALITY CHECK: The civilian population of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been subjected to the cruel and inhumane process known as "ethnic cleansing." Landmines are a feature of the human rights abuses that have occurred there. At the beginning of the war, minority groups consisting of local Muslims and Croats were forced into labor detachments to support the Serbs. They were ordered

to collect wood from mined areas or clear houses that might have been booby-trapped. In 1992, Serb forces used landmines to keep mainly Muslim civilians in a makeshift detention camp. One thousand people were there at a time and most were eventually executed. In 1993 deported non-Serbs had to walk across mine fields to positions held by the government. In 1995 a Serb detention camp, which housed 400 men, forced prisoners to participate in mine clearance near the camp. The collapse of the U.N.-protected "safe haven" of Srebrenica to Serb forces in July 1995 led to numerous mine-related deaths and injury among the civilian populace.

UNMAC: The United Nations Mine Action Center (UNMAC) was established in 1996 to coordinate demining activities in the country. After concerns were expressed at the London conference in December 1996, which was set up to review the Dayton agreement, authorities in BiH were required to assist UNMAC by providing landmine data, and by making all aspects of mine clearance exempt from duties and taxes.

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