

Demining Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In February 2002, a unique state-level Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BHMIC) structure was created. The adopted law created a legal framework for demining operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

by Marija Alilovic

Background

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country with the largest mine contamination problem in (BiH) southeastern Europe. There are an estimated 670,000 mines and 650,000 pieces of UXO on 10,000 locations. The contaminated area is estimated to be over 2,000 sq km, which is over four percent of the total territory of BiH.

Bosnia and Herzegovina started demining activities in 1996 in cooperation with the United Nations Mine Action Centre (UNMAC). Local authorities took over the responsibility for the demining operations in 1998 (Entity Mine Action Centres and BHMIC as a coordination body, consisted of entity employees).

In February 2002, a unique state-level BHMIC structure was created. The adopted law created a legal framework for demining operations in BiH. Demining operations are being conducted in accordance with the National Demining Plan, approved by the Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers is the authority responsible for mine action implementation—to ensure the implementation of Demining Law through the Demining Commission in BiH. The following is an overview of the structure and operations of the BHMIC since the law was created.

BHMIC Mission and Vision

The mission of the BHMIC is to undertake all available measures and

procedures in humanitarian demining operations, risk -area marking and education of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in order to minimize the effect of mines in Bosnia and Herzegovina by 2010.

The BHMIC vision is to enable continuity, stability and long-term conduct of humanitarian demining operations, as well as other mine action in order to eventually remove all the mines and UXO in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

BHMIC Activities and Operational Goals

BHMIC activities include the following:

- Surveying (general, technical, socio-economic, area reduction)
- Planning
- Prioritisation
- Definition of tasks
- Inspection/quality control (QC)
- Certification and handover of cleared areas
- Central database maintenance
- Establishing technical, safety and training standards
- Accreditation
- Coordination of all mine-related operations and activities

Currently available demining capacity includes 86 mine detection dogs and 32 ground preparation machines. Approximately 2000 trained deminers, 42 governmental, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and commercial companies are also

accredited in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Table 1 outlines the required level of humanitarian demining operations for 2003.

The following are BHMIC's operational goals for 2003:

- Increase demining operations to the level of 20 sq km per year by the end of 2003. Refugee returns are the first category of priority.
- Undertake emergency demining operations on risk areas in the second and third categories of priority in order to reduce mine danger.
- Increase technical survey within demining operations.
- Increase the level of risk-area permanent marking based upon national ownership.
- Improve mine risk education in high schools.
- Adopt new mine action standards at the state level, on the basis of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).
- Assist in conducting the Landmine Impact Survey (LIS).
- Participate in preparing and presenting projects for sustainable return to relevant donors, in cooperation with authorized ministries for refugees.■

Contact Information

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General Survey	area to be reduced by general survey	->	18.2 sq km
	risk area to be surveyed	->	123.3 sq km
Technical Survey	area to be reduced by technical survey	->	10.4 sq km
Demining	area to be demined	->	15.2 sq km
Permanent Marking	area to be marked permanently	->	25 sq km

■ Table 1: Required Level of Humanitarian Demining Operations for 2003. © Marija Alilovic