

Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction

Volume 9
Issue 1 *The Journal of Mine Action*

Article 28

August 2005

Geneva Diary: Report from the GICHD

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Recommended Citation

Mansfield, Ian (2005) "Geneva Diary: Report from the GICHD," *Journal of Mine Action* : Vol. 9 : Iss. 1 , Article 28.

Available at: <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/cisr-journal/vol9/iss1/28>

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The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining provides operational assistance to mine action programmes and operators, conducts research and provides support to the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention.

NOTES
from the field

GENEVA DIARY

Report from the GICHD

by Ian Mansfield [Operations Director, GICHD]

Evaluation of Mine Action Programmes

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) has recently initiated a range of activities designed to improve the standard and effectiveness of mine action evaluations. The Centre is following a two-track approach. One aspect is to develop a range of tools available to all, which will assist in improving the standard of evaluations, and the second is to undertake a range of evaluations itself where appropriate.

In August 2004, the Centre appointed an officer to guide this work. To date, an evaluation handbook has been drafted and internal training has been conducted at the GICHD. Now the Centre has combined with the World Bank and Carleton University in Canada to offer a mine action evaluation module as part of its annual training course offered to developing countries. The GICHD will be sponsoring a number of attendees at this course in the summer of 2005 (contact t.paterson@gichd.ch for details).

In addition to this work, the Centre has been undertaking a series of evaluations itself, both to prove the methodologies being developed and to fill a gap in the market. To date, the Centre has undertaken project and programme evaluations for France, Germany, Sweden, the United Nations and soon for the European Union. In addition, the Centre will establish a repository of evaluations and expand on the lessons learnt from them.

Ongoing Work at the GICHD

An extensive outreach programme has commenced in support of the *Study of Mechanical Application in Demining* that was reported in the last edition of the *Journal of Mine Action*.¹ Briefings on the study findings have been made to the United Nations, a number of non-governmental organizations and people in mine-

affected countries; these briefings will continue throughout the year. Follow-on work is also continuing in areas such as the use of rollers, route clearance, residual hazards and the use of machine-mounted magnets to remove metal fragments. This last technique looks particularly promising.

The Study on Manual Mine Clearance is under way and aims to address the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of manual demining. Specific study areas include average clearance rates, cost, safety and techniques, as well as the management and organization of demining teams. Results of this work should be available in mid-2005.

The GICHD has an ongoing programme to help mine-affected countries take the International Mine Action Standards and develop them as national standards. A training package has been produced and workshops held in a number of countries. Most recently, the GICHD has helped the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan develop a comprehensive set of draft national standards. These national standards will be available on the GICHD website (see contact information below).

Finally, the GICHD publication *A Guide to Mine Action* has recently been released in Arabic and Russian language versions, to complement the English, French and Spanish editions. All GICHD publications can be ordered online at www.gichd.ch. ♦

See "References and Endnotes" on page 105

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Charges Against ICBL Activist Dropped

The Bangladesh district court in charge of the case against peace activist and advocate for landmine awareness Rafique al Islam has ordered the charges against him be dropped. A *Landmine Monitor* researcher and member of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), al Islam had been charged with smuggling ammunition and explosives in August 2004, which he and the ICBL denied all along. The case was dismissed for lack of evidence. Al Islam described the court's resolution as "a victory of the nonviolence work, the peace movement, the ICBL community and of the people who believe in the work for peace." The ICBL consists of over 1,300 groups in 90 countries and works toward the goals of having landmines banned and educating people about landmine risks.

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enhancing its visibility and corporate image in the beneficiary country. In Thailand, for instance, MLI received funding from Shell Oil Company to provide six MDDs to the Thailand Mine Action Center to sniff out landmines and save lives along the Cambodian border. MLI has had a challenging but productive history with many lessons learned and looks to the future with great hope and optimism, wishing great success for all mine action organizations and mine-affected countries. ♦

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