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Landmine Survivor's Network Provides Victim Assistance in Jordan

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With almost 500 mine fields, Jordan suffers from a widespread landmine problem. Landmine Survivor's Network is working to help the country cope with this issue by providing victim assistance in a number of ways.

by Kathleen Powers, *LSN*

Landmine History in Jordan

According to military figures, most mine incidents occurred during the latter part of the 1960s and early 1970s, when the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict spilled into Jordan. Incidents rose again during the early part of the 1990s due to heavy rains and floods that shifted landmines from their originally marked and mapped fields into unrecorded areas.

Jordan Landmine Statistics

Landmine Monitor estimates the number of victims, including both civilian and military personnel to be 505. Military estimates show the number of victims to be 700–900.² Jordan has declared that there are 497 mine fields containing 220,000 mines in both Jordan River Valley and in the northern areas of Irbed, Balqa and to a lesser extent, Mafrak (Syrian border).¹

The Royal Corps Of Engineers conducted all demining operations from March 1993 to present. The RCOE has cleared approximately 82,928 mines.¹ Factors impeding mine clearance operations include high temperature, heavy vegetation, and seasonal flooding.

LSN Background in Jordan

Landmine Survivor's Network (LSN) established a country office in Amman in 1999. The Jordan Office works under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Development to provide peer support for landmine victims and other persons with limb loss. There are an estimated 900 landmine survivors, and LSN estimates that there are 3,000 amputees in the country from other causes.

Target Group

In accordance with LSN philosophy, the Jordan Network Director and Field Workers are themselves amputees. Currently, there are four Field Workers covering the northern areas of Irbed, Ramtha and Mafreq, where there are high numbers of landmine victims, and in Amman and Zarqa, where there are high numbers of amputees from other causes. Also, LSN is working with

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military survivors, most of whom are mine removal specialists. Hundreds of them have been injured by landmine blasts. As a result, there is a Liaison Officer whose role is to provide follow-up care, facilitate access to military medical care resources and provide regularly updated information about new mine incidents.

LSN Activities

Field workers conduct home and hospital visits to over 325 survivors to assess their needs, offer psychological and social support, educate their families about the effects of limb loss, and provide awareness about local disability rights and support for gaining those rights. Core elements of LSN work are listed in the following sections.



Offering Peer Support for Landmine Survivors and Other Persons with Limb Loss The Jordan LSN team. C/O LSN.

Through peer visits, LSN outreach workers provide survivors with a safe environment to recount their experiences, promoting improved psychological and physical well-being. During these visits LSN interviews survivors, identifies their needs and provides educational materials.

Providing Educational Materials

LSN distributes the Arabic version of the *Surviving Limb Loss* pamphlets to service providers, amputees and their families. The network also produces *Rehabilitation Service Directories* for distribution to service providers and people with disability.

Link or Referral to Existing Service.

LSN has multiple contacts within government and local organizations and refers survivors to agencies such as the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Development, which facilitates authorizations needed for disability benefits and medical insurance for civilians. To date, 275 survivors¹ have received services through these organizations.

Providing Direct Assistance

If there is no help available from local resources, LSN provides direct assistance (DA). Currently, there are 79 survivors¹ who have received DA to meet their needs. DA is normally provided in the form of vocational training, house repair, small business development and mobility devices.

Promoting and Supporting Sports for Persons with Disabilities

Working in parallel with the Jordan Sport Federation to promote sports for persons with disability, LSN has assisted the Federation in organizing a number of competitions (regional and national tournaments) and has formed the first swim team for persons with disabilities in Jordan. Two swimmers from the team participated in an international tournament in Tunisia.

LSN also sponsored a Running Clinic for amputees, facilitated by Paralympic athletes Dennis Oehler and Todd Schaffluaser. The clinic was designed to teach amputees how to resume a life of walking, running and even jumping.

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