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Operating with UXO Containing White Phosphorus

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Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Appearance</th>
<th>Number of Victims</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5224</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2178</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>115</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>8,023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course, the information system will be fully integrated into the Bosnian and Herzegovina Mine Action Information System and organised in a way to offer information to all interested parties. BHMAC will coordinate delivering and updating the data.

The Solution

The BHMAC information system was created to inform and start the information gathering and retrieval process needed by BH rather than to pass judgment on previous systems. Taking all of the above into consideration, the guidelines for the system’s creation were to:

- Cover all data gathered by all organizations
- Avoid gathering medical treatment and other data that may be considered a privacy violation by the victims
- Provide a system with enough information to make it a valid target-group assessment tool
- Provide initial information on mine-incident locations to improve mine-action planning
- Provide landmine victim-assistance projects a planning tool with full transparency and traceability for landmine victim-assistance projects
- Create a basic LASV questionnaire form
- Create reporting forms in order to assure regular information flow from all stakeholders into the system.

The Central Database Elaboration Project for the support and coordination of landmine victim-assistance activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina was created and had all of its data verified in 2006. As a part of those activities, memoranda of cooperation were signed and data was acquired from various organizations.

As shown in Table 2, the combined system includes 12,226 records; the oldest one lists an injury from WWI dated 1941 and there are approximately 350 records without a date. Qualitatively, there are 153 fields describing a mine victim. Using all applied information systems, only 29 entries were included more than 75 percent of the fields completed. During the process of data clarification, we determined the existence of a large number of records with the same name, but with other information described in a way that does not confirm that the records refer to the same person. These records were considered as unique. Consequently, the database contains 8,023 of these unique records as shown in Table 2.

The Way Forward

Having the information system software in place, the next task is to create and ensure the information flow channel. In order to achieve this objective, BHMAC will create a working group with all the relevant ministries represented with the aim to produce a joint statement related to landmine victim-assistance activities coordination. Once signed, the statement will become the base point for further building of coordinated activities for Bosnia and Herzegovina. In order to assure that all the data gathered is processed in timely manner, BHMAC, together with HOPEF, an Austrian non-governmental organization, will open a data entry office that will employ four landmine victims as data-entry personnel.

Conclusion

Effective landmine victim assistance is a difficult task under the best of conditions and depends greatly on the efficient flow of information. To achieve coordination through data exchange, BHMAC undertakes the tremendous task of compiling and organizing information on mine victims to better assess their needs. Getting numerous agencies and governments to cooperate and contribute was not easy, but the results of BHMAC’s efforts will have positive effects on all parts of the mine-victim-assistance chain—from victims to donor to care providers, the new information system works to assure effective coordination of assistance.

See Endnotes, page 112

Operating with UXO Containing White Phosphorus

This article provides a brief account of the unexploded ordnance problem in Azerbaijan and describes the particular hazards of dealing with UXO containing white phosphorous. Drawing from the experience of the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action’s work at Saloglu, guidelines for handling WP UXO are discussed.

by Elham Asizov [Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action]

The efforts of the government of Azerbaijan and NATO to eliminate the country’s UXO problem resulted in an agreement between the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency and the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action. The aim of the agreement was to launch a joint project on clearing UXO and explosive hazards in the former military base at Saloglu in the Agdash district of Azerbaijan in January 2006. The Saloglu Project was the first result of cooperation between Azerbaijan and NATO within the Partnership for Peace program. The containing white phosphorous, were scattered over 4,600 hectares (17 square miles), posing a serious humanitarian, socioeconomic and environmental threat to the local population. Since the explosion, 152 UXO-related accidents have been reported, with 32 people killed.

The project covers checking, clearance and removal of stockpiled UXO located at the towns Agtala and Poylu of Agdash district. After the implementation of the project, it has become clear that the problem is more serious and more difficult to solve than was initially thought by the international experts during their assessment missions to Azerbaijan. Obtaining some experience from the on-site operations conducted in the frame of the project, the ANAMA UXO operations team implemented a few new techniques for handling UXO stockpiles and UXO devices containing explosives of various types, including those with WP. The following paragraphs present ANAMA’s experience gained from operating with WP-containing devices.

Operating With UXO Containing WP (White Phosphorous)

There are few countries in the world affected by WP UXO stockpile contamination similar to what Azerbaijan encountered during operations;
RONCO based the training program on a successful endeavor in Az Zubair, Iraq, which trained Iraqis in the country are more than two decades old, but total clearance of the millions of mines could be more challenging. The training is being conducted by 20 ANA personnel and will be assisted by a 25-person quality assurance team. The Explosive Ordnance Disposal School, ANA’s first branch training facility outside Kabul, is completed the first of five phases in training to be explosive ordnance disposal technicians. The Explosive Ordnance Disposal School, ANA’s first branch training facility outside Kabul, is located at Camp Shahwan.

The facility is adjacent to a 72 square kilometer (28 square mile) demolition range that will be fully functional in the remaining four training phases. The training is being conducted by 20 Afghan and international instructors from RONCO Consulting Corporation in the hopes of speeding the denicing of Afghanistan, one of the world’s most heavily mined countries. Denicing efforts in the country are more than two decades old, but total clearance of the millions of mines could take decades.

RONCO based the training program on a successful endeavor in Az Zubair, Iraq, which trained Iraqis for three years in country-specific threats. The 22-week program, designed to be challenging, addresses issues specific to Afghan EOD efforts and safety.

Mine Action Support Group Update

This article contains excerpts from the United Nations’ third quarterly newsletter in 2007, which highlights the activities of the Mine Action Support Group from July to September 2007, including updates from the United Nations Mine Action Service, the United Nations Development Programme and UN-CEPT.

The Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan continued to conduct tasks in support of the humanitarian and development objectives throughout the country despite a range of serious security incidents occurring over the reporting period. These problems included raids by antigovernment elements on NGOs implementing partner compounds in Kandahar in late June and early July 2007, the abduction and release of 19 NGO personnel in Ghazni in late June; the abduction and killing of three NGO personnel in the Panjshir Valley area of Kandahar in August; and three ambushes on a single NGO convoy moving in the Panjwayi Valley area of Kandahar in August. These incidents occurred over the reporting period. These problems included raids by antigovernment elements on NGOs implementing partner compounds in Kandahar in late June and early July 2007, the abduction and release of 19 NGO personnel in Ghazni in late June; the abduction and killing of three NGO personnel in the Panjshir Valley area of Kandahar in August; and three ambushes on a single NGO convoy moving in the Panjwayi Valley area of Kandahar in August. These problems included raids by antigovernment elements on NGOs implementing partner compounds in Kandahar in late June and early July 2007, the abduction and release of 19 NGO personnel in Ghazni in late June; the abduction and killing of three NGO personnel in the Panjshir Valley area of Kandahar in August; and three ambushes on a single NGO convoy moving in the Panjwayi Valley area of Kandahar in August.

During the demolition preparation the explosive ordnance disposal team consists of a water-filled, metal tube installed at the site. As soon as the subsurface fragments with the WP are recovered, they are immedi- ately placed into the tub to prevent burning. If the tub is too far from the operation point, then ordinary metal buckets of water may be utilized for collecting the fragments. A team of four or five people should be able to move the tubes to the demining area safely.

During the demolition preparations the WP UXO projectors can be mixed with the other types of munitions, because usually the thickness of their casing is greater and there are no other explosives inside. This process requires a larger donor charge to disrupt and vaporize these items—for example, TNE to destroy WP-free projectiles. Also, explosives are used during the demolition operations of WP ammunition should be placed underneath the stockpile in order to provide the maximum possible height of explosion, as this will pre- vent scattering and provide full neutralization of the WP substance.

This article has provided an overview of the ANAMA team’s operations in the field as part of the Sahel Project. Hopefully, this account of the team’s work has given the inter- national demining community useful insights into dealing with the unique hazards of UXO containing white phosphorous.

EOD Training Underway for Afghan Soldiers and Policemen

Nearly 40 soldiers and policemen from the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police have completed the first five phases in training to be explosive ordnance disposal technicians. The Explosive Ordnance Disposal School, ANA’s first branch training facility outside Kabul, is located at Camp Shahwan.

The facility is adjacent to a 72 square kilometer (28 square mile) demolition range that will figure prominently in the remaining four training phases. The training is being conducted by 20 Afghan and international instructors from RONCO Consulting Corporation in the hopes of speeding the denicing of Afghanistan, one of the world’s most heavily mined countries. Denicing efforts in the country are more than two decades old, but total clearance of the millions of mines could take decades.

RONCO based the training program on a successful endeavor in Az Zubair, Iraq, which trained Iraqis for three years in country-specific threats. The 22-week program, designed to be challenging, addresses issues specific to Afghan EOD efforts and safety.

therefore, the ANAMA team would like to share some critical safety guidelines obtained from its explosive ordnance disposal team’s experience. Because the WP compound left on outside armor, hard hats, respirators and glasses. In case of an emergency, an on-site medical support team should have a compounded solution of sodium carbonate and copper sul-

All ordnance disposal and battle area clearance; and appropriate mine-risk education and coordination and operational demining capac-

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