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Lebanon

Country Profile
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Country Profiles

Jordan

by Anthony Morin [ Mine Action Information Center ]

Landmines, unexploded ordnance, and explosive remnants of war have plagued the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan as a result of its long and turbulent history. The Jordanian government and its opponents first planted landmines during the conflict immediately following the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli conflicts, and later as a result of the 1967-1969 Arab-Israeli conflicts, again during the subsequent period of civil war and violence as a defensive measure during the 1979 armed conflict with Syria. Having imported its last mine in 1978, Jordan has since emerged as a regional leader for mine action in the Middle East and has proudly engaged in “spreading both the spirit and letter of the global landmine campaign.”

Extent of Contamination

The distribution of landmines is largely concentrated along the northern border with Syria, the western border with Israel, and within the Jordan Valley. Although these contaminated areas are now controlled by the Jordanian military and are essentially blocked from the public, their presence still has a significant impact on the distribution of land cover and environmental resources of local communities.

According to the Royal Corps of Engineers, Jordan’s primary demining authority, when humanitarian demining started in 1993, there were an estimated 60 million square meters (25 square miles) of suspected hazardous areas contaminated with approximately 354,653 mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) and 10,000 pieces of UXO were removed and destroyed, resulting in the reduction of more than 25 million square meters (9 square miles). The remaining 35 million square meters (13.5 square miles) of HEAs are believed to affect the lives of as many as 500,000 people, or roughly 8 percent of Jordan’s total population. Jordan has been at great pains to blame for restricting access to some of the country’s most valuable agricultural lands, as well as to the economic and environmental rehabilitation of much needed economic infrastructure in the form of irrigation and hydroelectric power projects, construction and cultural heritage tourism sites.

National Mine-action Program

Jordan signed the Ottawa Convention on 31 August 2000 and on 13 November 1998, and officially became a State Party with the treaty’s entry into force on 1 May 1999. In April 1999, it established its own Mine Action Unit and its governmental council, consisting of 124 anti-personnel mines. In accordance with Article 5, Jordan is required to destroy all mines located within its jurisdiction no later than 1 May 2009. If provided proper funding to allow the expansion of its demining capacity, the Jordanian government believes that it will be able to comply with its international obligations.

The establishment of the National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation in 2000 formalized national implementation of the Ottawa Convention. As Jordan’s primary national mine-action authority, the NCDB is responsible for the organization and implementation of integrated mine-action goals, strategies, and programs, including mine clearance, mine-risk education, survivor and victim assistance, and policy-universalization activities. In 2005, the NCDB published its first National Mine Action Plan. This five-year plan functions as a strategic planning framework designed to catalyze an integrated national approach to mine action, primarily through capacity development.

Casualties and Survivor Assistance

From 1993 to April 2006, 527 landmine/UXO casualties were reported with 115 killed, 418 injured and four circumstances unknown.

These casualties included 212 civilians, 128 military personnel, 172 deminers, and 13 peacekeepers. Although static and reliable figures are difficult to obtain prior to 1995, the government has estimated that the actual number of total casualties dating back to 1997 could be as high as 800.

Landmine survivors and victims have had access to basic health and rehabilitation services since the 1990s. There has been a need, however, for more specialized rehabilitative services. The National Rehabilitation Center for Amputees was designated to fill that void, however, it has never fulfilled its function, because the NCA does not have the funding or equipment needed to perform its role.

Despite this drawback, the Jordanian government has been active in its support of a variety of survivor/victim assistance initiatives, including the development of national, long-term VAWA policies and other programs that address disability policy and long-term health and social welfare research and data collection, first aid and primary healthcare, hospital-based medical care, rehabilitation, and socioeconomic reintegration.

Outlook for the Future

In March of this year, the 2008 Anti-Personnel Mine Law was endorsed by Royal decree. The new law follows much the rhetoric as the mine has prohibitions under the Ottawa Convention. The law forbids the handling, destruction of mines, and those with a special written order from the Minister of Defense have permission to handle these weapons.

In response to decreasing clearance rates and a looming 2009 Ottawa Convention deadline, Jordan in 2003 elected to expand its clearance activities to include civilian demining organizations. Furthermore, during the International Mine Action Conference in 2006 framed around the topic of landmine destruction, Jordan outlined a new three-step approach for reaching its deadline. Although encouraging, such a plan seems too optimistic.

Recent trends show a steady decline in funding that threatens the country’s ability to sustain and increase its clearance rates. Therefore, a new timetable is expected to spring in 2011. Jordan has determined to uphold its commitment, and it has hosted the Eighth Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention in November 2007. With any luck, the international attention that accompanied the meeting will result in increased donations.

Counrty Profiles

Lebanon

by Rachel Canfield and Veronica Wightman [ Mine Action Information Center ]

Certain Conventional Weapons. A great deal of humanitarian mine action, however, is conducted throughout the country. MAG/LAC coordinates humanitarian clearance. Some nongovernmental organizations, such as DanChurchAid and Mines Advisory Group, are also involved with clearance.

Following the conflict with Israel, mine clearance activities were halted and priority was given to rapid-response explosive ordnance disposal. At the end of 2005, an estimated 5.4 square kilometers (1.3 square miles) had been cleared, with the destruction of over 100,000 pieces of UXO.

Clearance continued into 2007. During the first three months of the year, almost five million square meters (1.26 acres) of surface and 844,751 square meters (206 acres) of subsurface were cleared of over 131,000 unexploded cluster munitions. Altogether, 144,689 square meters (40 acres) of mined areas were cleared, with the destruction of 157 anti-personnel mines, five anti-vehicle mines and 76 pieces of UXO.

Casualties and Economic Consequences

Immediately following the August 2006 ceasefire there was a dramatic spike in cluster munition casualties. In fact, 100,000 people were disabled because of the 2006 conflict.

Casualties involved injured to limping, 1,654,429 square meters (40 acres) of mined areas were cleared, with the destruction of 157 anti-personnel mines, five anti-vehicle mines and 76 pieces of UXO.

The majority of contamination is in South Lebanon, and other areas of the country are also affected.

In addition to an increase in UXO, there have been increases in human and livestock casualties. According to UNHCR, 2007, the conflict has led to the deaths of over 1,100 disabled individuals in need of prosthetics after the conflict had received USD 310 million in international humanitarian aid.

Progress in Clearance

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