Pakistan

Country Profile
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In 1991, Morocco and the Polisario announced an end to hostilities in the Western Sahara. When the United Nations imposed an end to hostilities in the Western Sahara, Morocco and the Polisario imported and used VS-50 anti-personnel mines. Though Morocco has yet to arrive at a resolution, the country’s stockpiles have been nearly demolished. Over 300 international organizations attended the Polisario’s destruction of the final 3,321 AP mines in its stockpile in 2007.

Dispute Settlement

Morocco and the Polisario have met on multiple occasions to resolve their issues. The second attempt at such an agreement in 2013 failed to satisfy Morocco. In August 2007, the United Nations provided a two-day retreat with researched presentations for the parties to negotiate a resolution, but parties were ultimately unable to arrive upon an agreeable peace plan. The prospect of peace is an important step toward full mine clearance and elimination in Western Sahara. Morocco, the Polisario, and Algeria-based refugees all depend on mine-action groups to clear Western Sahara so that they can one day safely inhabit the region again.

Survey, Marking and Clearance

At present, there is no central mine action authority or center in Pakistan. All mine/UXO clearance and marking activities are conducted by the military. In May 2005, Response International conducted a mine impact survey in Pakistan. The results of the survey were that about 1,200 AP UXO victims living in Pakistan and a mine/UXO accident rate of up to 15 per month. In December 2006, the Pakistani government, along with the United Nations Mine Action Service in Pakistan, is currently working on compiling a database of mine/UXO survivor information in Pakistan.

Looking Ahead

The recent conflicts surrounding or involving Pakistan have left a large threat of landmines, remnants of war for both Pakistan and its neighbors. The continuing instability in the region and Pakistan’s lack of a mine-action program has allowed the situation there to compound itself. The use of mines in multiple conflicts and a lack of mine-action efforts between states have led to multiple generations of mines and IEDs. In addition, external strengths and continued acceptance of the use of landmines has made current-mine action efforts difficult. The present mine and IED situation ensures continued casualties in Pakistan, particularly in the areas closest to the LOC, such as the Baluchistan and Jhelum-Tehsildistricts.

Pakistan has stockpiled at least six million AP mines, the fifth largest stockpile in the world. While Pakistan has shown progress for the international community in some areas, it is yet to accede to the Ottawa Convention. Pakistan has ratified Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Weapons and is an active participant in CWSC meetings.

Survey

In December 2006, the Pakistani government announced plans to mine the border with Afghanistan. Pakistani officials argued that the move would secure the border with Afghanistan and keep the Taliban from moving in and out of Afghanistan. Although Pakistan has not exported landmines, it still manufactured anti-personnel mines. Pakistan is one of the few countries to mine its border with Afghanistan. Certain Weapon meetings have left a large threat of landmines, remnants of war for both Pakistan and its neighbors. The continuing instability in the region and Pakistan’s lack of a mine-action program has allowed the situation there to compound itself. The use of mines in multiple conflicts and a lack of mine-action efforts between states have led to multiple generations of mines and IEDs. Pakistan, including the Pakistan Campaign to Ban Landmines, the Community Motivation and Development Organization, Response, and the Pakistan Campaign to Ban Landmines in the Balochistan province, mine incidents occur less frequently but are still of concern.

Future mine-action efforts will rely on the various NGOs operating in the country, help from the government seems unlikely but the possibility of renewal use of mines seems probable. Until Pakistan commits itself to a mine-action program and the establishment of national mine-action institutions, the situation will continue to claim the lives of those in the affected areas.