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Kosovo

Country Profile

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**KOSOVO**

**HISTORY:** Serbia and Montenegro are the only two remaining Yugoslavian republics. The federation began to dissolve in June 1991, when Croatia and Slovenia declared independence. The Republic of Serbia has two autonomous provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina, which are administratively a part of Serbia. Most of the population in Kosovo is Albanian.

**LANDMINE AND UXO OVERVIEW:** Information on the problem in Kosovo remains inconclusive. Yugoslav forces, paramilitary troops and KLA fighters have laid mines and booby traps. UXO litters the area. The border areas are the most affected. There are more than 10,000 known defensive mines on the borders, but only the Yugoslav army has information about the miles of land affected. A Senior Survey Officer for HALO Trust estimated that there are at least 500,000 mines in the ground and there may be 3,000 UXO. Ordnance can also be found in the surrounding waters. Under the terms of the Military Technical Agreement, NATO land forces are responsible for clearing roads and military locations. Serbian forces are responsible for supplying NATO with detailed records of all mines and UXO with the hope that Serbian forces will clear the Kosovo/Macedonia border areas. Serbian officers have been arriving in Pristina to implement these roles. The KLA does not have records of mine field planting. Many international mine clearance agencies believe that mine fields will be easier to locate than they were in Bosnia. The war in Kosovo was shorter than the war in Bosnia, and the geographic area is smaller and there may be more information available regarding mine field location. In Kosovo, the most affected areas are roads, houses and schools, and forests. An estimated 50 percent of Kosovo's livestock is dead or missing from the crisis.

**VICTIMS AND CASUALTIES:** AP and AT mines are the most immediately obstacles for refugees returning home. In the first week ethnic Albanians began returning to Kosovo there were over 30 mines and UXO accidents. Some reports have stated that at least 27 people have been killed in 61 reported mine incidents just for the month of June 1999, according to NATO figures. This would put mine casualties as high as 11 per 100,000 people. About 20 percent of casualties have been KLA deminers. The World Health Organization in Pristina reported that between June 13, 1999 and July 12, 1999 there were as many as 170 deaths in Kosovo caused by mines and UXO. Despite the economic and social problems in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, they have developed medical and rehabilitation services for landmine victims. The Institute of Prosthetics in Belgrade is the only institution in FRY that can provide full treatment for landmine victims to include orthotics, reablitation, reintegration and prosthetic production. Landmine survivors during their rehabilitation process are provided skills training compatible with their disability.

**DEMINING:** Approximately 12 mine action organizations are now operating in Kosovo. These include CARE, NPA and MINTECH. Thirteen dog teams with 26 dogs have been deployed. The L.N. High Command for Refugees has intensified demining work with priority areas including Pristina, Uroševac, Prezren, Suva Reka, Džakovica, Peć, Podujevo, Gnjilane and Glogovac. The VJ has reported 425 Protective mine fields to NATO. Where VJ forces established headquarters often in houses and villages, nuisance mines and booby traps were placed for denying movement to KLA forces and terrorizing local populations. Many of these mines are trip-wired fragmentation mines. As part of the peace settlement the KLA were required to clear these mines and have reported completion of this activity. UXO dropped by NATO aircraft on VJ positions and Gospodar Cush Bumps are the main cause of contamination. NATO dropped over 1,000 cluster bombs over Serbia, including Kosovo. Recent reports have indicated that the demining process is not continuing at the required rate and many claim this is because of the lack of technical means. The UNMAC estimates that it takes from 5 to 21 days to clear a cluster bomb strike after it has been located. Kosovo civilian deminers have been held in demining by international aid organizations and have cleared 400 mines.

**MINECARE:** The ICRC concluded from its Psycho-Social Needs Assessment that ethnic reconciliation is not enough to ensure a viable Kosovo. "Kosovo is seeped in pain, hatred and desire for revenge against the Serbs, Kosovars do not speak of reconciliation," the report states. "Only the ones that have access to landmines. In 1998, grenades and even mines were still used in different conflict bungeles throughout Kosovo. The apprehension and confiscation of these landmines is currently unclear, but the government officials are working hard to find all of the undiscovered landmines to destroy them. In May 1998, the Foreign Ministry of Kosovo stated that all but 1.5km of the 72km affected by landmines have been cleared. The remainder of this land is being cleared with the help of the United States.

**MOLDOVA**

**HISTORY:** Moldova is split into two main regions, Bessarabia and Transnistria. Bessarabia is in the eastern part of historic Moldova and is mostly Romanian while Transnistria is the land on the eastern bank of the Nistru River and is mostly Slavic (Ukrainians and Russians). After the Russo-Turkish War in 1806-12, Bessarabia ceded to Russia. Finally on Aug. 27, 1991, Moldova declared its independence from the USSR and was recognized by the United States in December of that same year as they opened an embassy in its capital in 1992. A new constitution was adopted on July 28, 1994, which forever replaced the Soviet Union's constitution and was a symbol of the complete break away from the USSR.

**MINECARE:** Moldovan governmental officials as well as the army have been working over time to clear as much land as possible. During the 1991-1992 conflict in Transnistria, Separatist and Russian Cosacks mined much of the village's fields and roads that surrounded the center of the war zone, leaving most people little access to their homes. After the war ended, over 371 acres still remained to be cleared. Vladimir Munteanu, chief of the demining unit in the Staff of the Army, announced that countless vineyards and forests surrounding the villages of Cosinta and Pogrebea needed to be demined. These two areas are of the greatest priority because there are no maps defining the position of the landmines for the deminers. Sgt. Boris Milhallov and Pvt. Ion Frunza were killed while searching for and demining the landmines in these regions. Other landmine incidents have continued to occur all throughout the country. Three other Moldovan soldiers were killed while 24 others were severely wounded during a peacekeeping operation in a security zone.

**DEMINING:** The demining process in Moldova has been marked as painstaking tedious due to the con­stant problems that arise. The Moldovan governmental officials as well as the army have been working over time to clear as much land as possible. During the 1991-1992 conflict in Transnistria, Separatist and Russian Cosacks mined much of the village's fields and roads that surrounded the center of the war zone, leaving most people little access to their homes. After the war ended, over 371 acres still remained to be cleared. Vladimir Munteanu, chief of the demining unit in the Staff of the Army, announced that countless vineyards and forests surrounding the villages of Cosinta and Pogrebea needed to be demined. These two areas are of the greatest priority because there are no maps defining the position of the landmines for the deminers. Sgt. Boris Milhallov and Pvt. Ion Frunza were killed while searching for and demining the landmines in these regions. Other landmine incidents have continued to occur all throughout the country. Three other Moldovan soldiers were killed while 24 others were severely wounded during a peacekeeping operation in a security zone.

**VICTIMS AND MEDICAL FACILITIES:** Thousands of people have been affected by the presence of landmines within this country as well as hundreds of other countries. The Moldova Foreign Ministry reported that in one incident from 1992 to 1993, two Moldovan peacekeepers were killed, eight injured and six severely wounded. Landmine explosions are not only devastating to a single individual. For every one person harmed, there is a family in need and suffering due to the unfortunate explosion. The facilities in Moldova leave much to be desired, as there is a shortage of good doctors and necessary equipment. These facilities can offer the basic, minimum treat­ment, which leaves most to fend for themselves.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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