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Demining Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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BHMAC

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Demining Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In February 2002, a unique state-level Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BHMAC) structure was created. The adopted law created a legal framework for demining operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

by Marija Alilovic

Background

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country with the largest mine contamination problem in BiH (southeastern Europe). There are an estimated 670,000 mines and 650,000 pieces of UXO on 10,000 locations. The contaminated area is estimated to be over 2,000 sq km, which is over four percent of the total territory of BiH. Bosnia and Herzegovina started demining activities in cooperation with the United Nations Mine Action Centre (UNMAG). Local authorities took over the responsibility for the demining operations in 1998 (Entity Mine Action Centres and BHMAC as a coordination body, consisted of entity employers).

In February 2002, a unique state-level BHMAC structure was created. The adopted law created a legal framework for demining operations in BiH. Demining operations are being conducted in accordance with the National Demining Plan, approved by the Council of Ministers. The Council of Ministers is the authority responsible for mine action implementation—to ensure the implementation of Demining Law through the Demining Commission in BiH. The following is an overview of the structure and operations of the BHMAC since the law was created.

BHMAC Mission and Vision

The mission of the BHMAC is to undertake all available measures and procedures in humanitarian demining operations, risk-area marking and education of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in order to minimize the effect of mines in Bosnia and Herzegovina by 2010.

The BHMAC vision is to enable continuity, stability and long-term conduct of humanitarian demining operations, as well as other mine actions in order to eventually remove the mines and UXO in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

BHMAC Activities and Operational Goals

BHMAC activities include the following:

- Surveying (general, technical, socio-economic, area reduction)
- Planning
- Prioritization
- Definition of tasks
- Inspection/quality control (QC)
- Certification and handover of cleared areas
- Central database maintenance
- Establishing technical, safety and training standards
- Accreditation
- Coordination of all mine-related operations and activities
- Currently available demining capacity includes 86 mine detection dogs and 32 ground preparation machines. Approximately 2000 trained deminers, 42 governmental, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and commercial companies are also accredited in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Table 1 outlines the required level of humanitarian demining operations for 2003.

The following are BHMAC's operational goals for 2003:

- Increase demining operations to the level of 20 sq km per year by the end of 2003. Refugee returns are the first category of priority.
- Undertake emergency demining operations on risk areas in the second and third categories of priority in order to reduce mine danger.
- Increase technical survey within demining operations.
- Increase the level of risk-area permanent marking based upon national ownership.
- Improve mine risk education in high schools.
- Adopt new mine action standards at the state level, on the basis of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).
- Assist in conducting the Landmine Impact Survey (LIS).
- Participate in preparing and presenting projects for sustainable return to relevant donors, in cooperation with authorized ministries for refugees.

Contact Information

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Demining Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina

From Puppets to Empowerment: The Bosnia and Herzegovina Genesis Project

Genesis Project is a local, non-governmental, non-profit, humanitarian organization established in June 1996 in Banja Luke, Republic Srpska, BiH.

by Mrs. Dijana Pejic, Genesis Project

What is Genesis Project?

The main project objectives are the following:

- Interactive education of children through five puppet show performances representing diverse educational topics (mine risk education (MRE), children's rights, prevention of all sorts of addictions, etc.)
- Education of children and youth about healthy lifestyles.
- Community strengthening with the purpose of informing the public on freedom of speech, democracy and fundamental human rights.
- Assistance to war-traumatized children and their families.
- Development and support through various coexistence initiatives throughout BiH.
- Building of democratic governance.

Since its establishment, the Genesis Project has mainly worked with the population in the rural areas of Republika Srpska by setting up libraries or organizing puppet show performances for children. Although the vast majority of Genesis Project activities have been focused on the whole entity of Republika Srpska, we have recently started to be active in some parts of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well.

The Genesis Project staff includes local people and an international advisor on a voluntary basis. In 2003, the Genesis Project was funded by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) BiH. To date, BHMAC has recorded more than 18,500 minefields.

Orthodox Christian Charity (IOCC) and the European Union in BiH. In recent years, the Genesis Project was funded by the European Union—Commission Brussels, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), the Open Society Fund-Sarajevo, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the IOCC, and the Salvation Army.

Genesis MRE Project Goals and Objectives

The Genesis MRE Project has the following project goals and development objectives:

- Reducing the negative impacts that mines and UXO have on children and their communities in Republika Srpska.
- Achieving a permanent influence on the development of mine threat awareness, within child and adult population groups.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the most heavily mine-stricken countries in Europe, and it is mostly anti-personnel mines left over after the 1992-95 war that pose the greatest threat for the whole country's population. The Bosnia Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BHMAC) estimates that there are still more than 650,000 mines and 670,000 pieces of UXO in BiH. To date, BHMAC has recorded more than 18,500 minefields.

Contact Information

Genesis MRE Project

The Genesis MRE Project consists of the following components:

- MRE interactive puppet shows for children ages five to seven, performed in preschool education institutions.
- MRE interactive puppet shows for children ages seven to 11, performed in primary schools.
- MRE discussions with adults on the topic of impact of mines on their daily lives.
- MRE education of adolescents

Table 1: Required Level of Humanitarian Demining Operations for 2003. C/O Marija Alilovic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Area to be Reduced</th>
<th>Area to be Surveysd</th>
<th>Area to be Treated</th>
<th>Area to be Marked Permanently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planted Land</td>
<td>18,2 sq km</td>
<td>123.8 sq km</td>
<td>64 sq km</td>
<td>25 sq km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Risk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural Risk</td>
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<td>High Risk</td>
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<td>Medium Risk</td>
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<td>Low Risk</td>
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