



INAPPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT OF THE UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE BY ISAF, CAUSES CASUALTIES TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY'S CHILDREN IN KHOST PROVINCE

On April 6, 2013, four community children were collecting wood and scrap metals in an open area, one kilo meter away from an ISAF base in the Mattoon district of Khost province. During this exercise, they were caught by an explosion resulting from an Unexploded Ordnance (UXO), killing a girl and a boy and injuring the other two. From the other two boys, one has lost an eye and the other lost a hand and they were all members of one family.

The area where this explosion has happened is called the ISAF training ground, located very close to the community people, and an open area which everyone can use to bypass the area for their routine business.

The victims of this incident were instantly transferred to nearest hospital, where eventually, two of them lost their lives and the other two were survived and remained with disabilities.

On the same day, after the MACCA regional office in Gardez received this news via UNDSS, we coordinated dispatching one of the MCPA LIAT teams to the place where this accident had occurred, says MACCA operations assistant in Gardez."

During the assessment and investigation of the MCPA LIAT team, a local community member Mr. Said Agha, shared, that there is this coalition forces' base for almost 10 years now, the base has occupied a huge land close to the our village. He added, that, no one is allowed to walk nearby their base, and they have even declared 200 meters area of around their camp as a no go zone, saying anyone getting close to the camp will be shot down without any prior warning.

He further says, "These restrictions have made our lives very hard, as we have to walk a long distance for obtaining food, collecting woods, grazing animals, and visiting relatives who were living on other side of their base." He continues, "When coalition forces stops trainings here, we will be happy and can begun a normal life; as you can see, all these mismanagements, born another catastrophe coming across all of these poor people."

The demining activity can be physically started after the coalition forces stops their trainings in this area, where then the area will be surveyed and will include in the operational plan. For now, MRE teams are tasked to conduct MRE seasons for the neighboring communities and the teams are also negotiating to polygon the area and to convince the military forces to move their trainings to a safer place where there is no harm to the local people.



In the picture: A child who lost his hand in UXO explosion

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MINE ACTION SUPPORTS ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Clearance of landmine and other explosives has many transformative effects in communities. One of the facilities which has been brought a light to the lives of Afghans, specially children and youth is the educational facilities. One example of this is how it has enabled access to education in Afghanistan.

Where there were once minefields, now stand modern buildings for basic, secondary and higher education.

The village of Gul Ghundi-Parwan was contaminated with landmines and explosives. Because of the minefields, all girls and boys used to go to a school which was very far from them.

“My brothers and me had to walk long distances to school: “I was in 2nd grade at the time, I remember that once my father said ‘don’t go to school anymore, because you are a child and I don’t want you to walk this long distance and go to school’”said Masood 12 year old Masood.

In 1387, MAPA implementing partner HALO TRUST cleared the area from mines and other explosive remnants of war.

As soon as the clearance was finished, the Estiqlal High School was built there and now for almost 3 years the children of Gul Ghundi-Parwan don’t need to walk the long distances to school: a relief to them and their families.

Anisa Ahadi, Principle of Esteqlal High School in Parch e Shash area of Parwan province said: “This area was a huge desert full of mines. No one could use this area and families were worried about their children and men who would sometimes walk cross this area.”

“Due to the hard work of deminers, the area was cleared of mines and other explosives and the government was able to build this school three years ago.” Anisa added.

1,014 male and female students attend this school and parents are not worried about their children being injured or killed by landmines or other explosives.

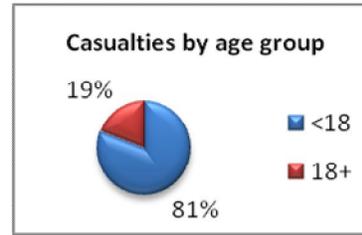
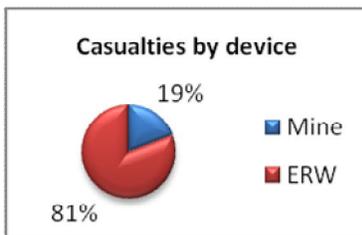
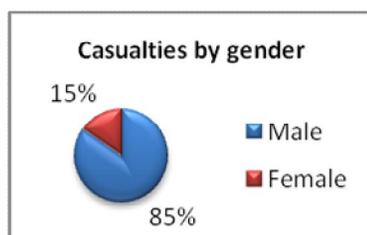
Qari Abdul Samad, head of Maidan Wardak Teacher Training Faculty said: “When we were trying to start the building here, we noticed there were some mines and explosives in the area. We were sure that would create a big problem for us, therefore contacted mine action to clear the area.”

The area was cleared by Mine Action within one and a half months and was handed over to the government for their use.

Now a building for Teacher Training Faculty which will have the capacity of 600 students in one time along with the hostel for both male and female students of Wardak province is being built. The plan is for the faculty to open in 1392.

CASUALTIES IN APRIL 2013

In **April 2013**, there were 26 casualties due to Mine/ERW recorded in Afghanistan (data as of 11 May 2013).



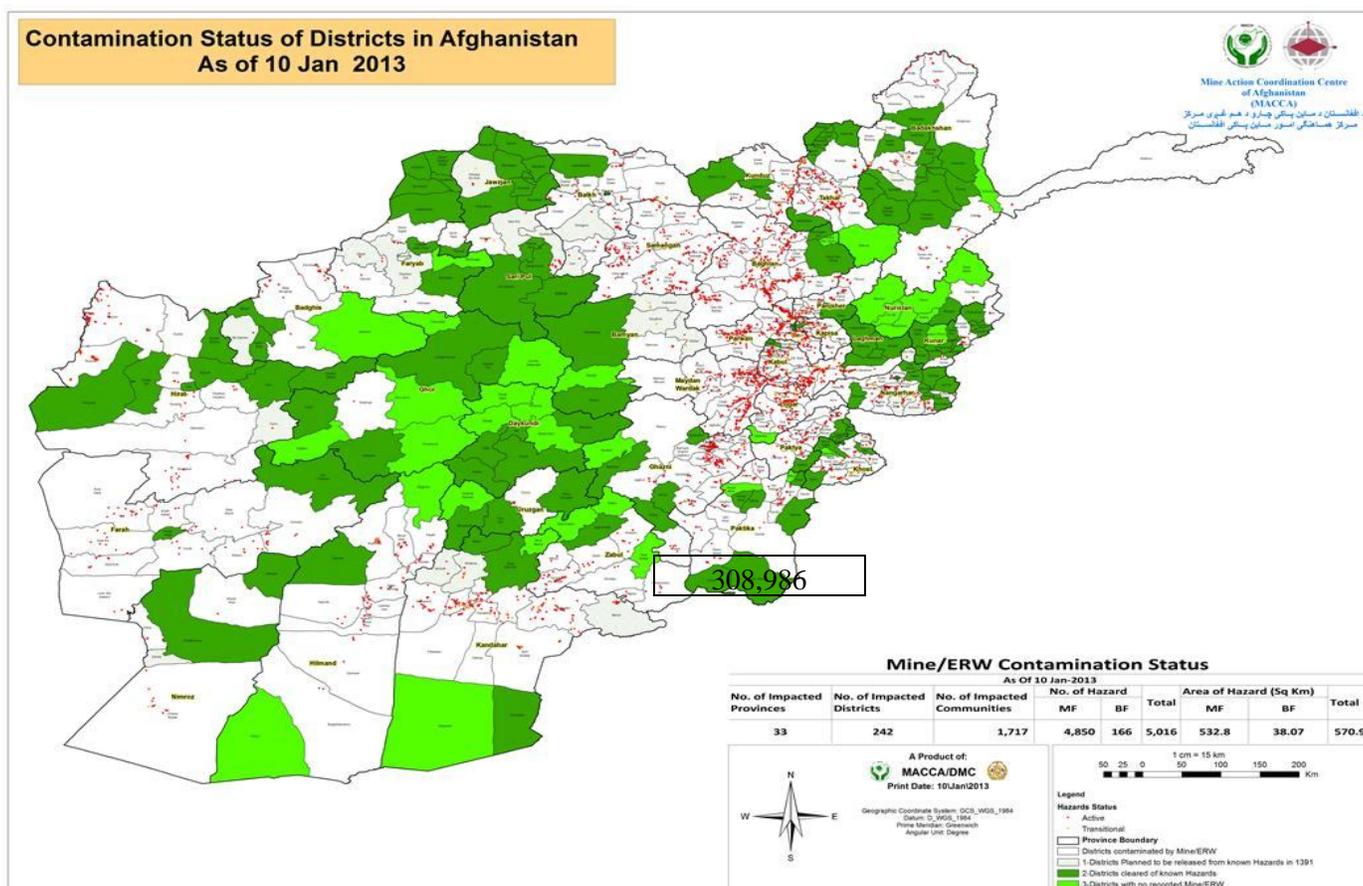
MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS IN AFGHANISTAN

Ottawa Convention:

As part of its obligations under the Ottawa Convention, Afghanistan aimed to clear all emplaced anti-personnel (AP) mines by 2013; destroy all known AP mine stockpiles by 2007; provide mine risk education and assist mine survivors. To note, the Ottawa Convention is about the removal of AP mines, and not of anti-tank (AT) mines or ERW. However it is equally important to ensure that the other hazards are not forgotten whilst the focus is on meeting the Ottawa Convention obligations. In March 2012, the Government of Afghanistan applied for 10-year extension of its deadline to clear all AP mines by 2023. All AP mine stockpiles have already been destroyed.

BENCHMARK TABLE - APRIL 2013

	Baseline		New Hazard		Hazard Processed		Progress		Remaining Hazard	
	Hazards	Area	Hazards	Area	Hazards	Area	% of Hazards	% of Area	Hazards	Area
(AP,AT ,ERW mixed)	9,318	724,595,051	34	1,657,467	5,920	463,639,276	63.53	63.99	3,398	260,955,775
AT + ERW	5,190	645,615,318	36	406,487-	3,907	391,281,777	75.28	60.61	1,283	254,333,541
Total	14,508	1,370,210,369	70	1,250,980	9,827	854,921,053	67.74	62.39	4,681	515,289,316



MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS IN YEAR 1391 SO FAR (April 2013)

- * 2,064 AP mines, 63 AT mines, and 22,550 ERW destroyed.
- * 37 communities cleared of mines and ERW.
- * 19,142 women and girls and 24,646 men and boys received MRE throughout the country.

