

MINE ACTION PROGRAMME OF AFGHANISTAN

NEWSLETTER: AUGUST 2010



NEW PROJECT TO CLEAR MINES FROM GHAZNI CITY BEGINS

This month a new project undertaken by OMAR, an Afghan humanitarian mine action NGO, will begin clearing minefields from the centre of Ghazni. This will support the city's preparations to be named Islamic Centre of Civilisation 2013 by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). The project is funded by the Canadian Government through the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action, which is managed by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS).

The OMAR project will clear nine minefields through the deployment of eight manual demining teams, one mechanical demining unit, one mine detection dog set and one explosive ordnance disposal team. In total, there



are 48 identified minefields remaining in the centre of Ghazni, which contaminate over six square kilometers of land, causing deaths and injuries as well as preventing the land from being used for housing or farming in at least 22 communities. This project will remove the impact of mines from seven communities including seven different sites of special archeological or historical importance, such as shrines and monuments. Maxwell Kerley, Director of UNMAS, said: "I am pleased that the work is now underway to clear the archaeologically and culturally rich

city of Ghazni. We appeal to our donor partners and friends in the Islamic world to contribute further to this important work so that the families of Ghazni can, for the first time in 30 years, live free from the threat of landmines and other explosive remnants of war." On completion of this project, if further funding is secured quickly, 12 demining teams could clear the remaining minefields in the centre in two years, in time for the city's designation as Islamic Centre of Civilisation 2013. The project will follow the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan's model of 'Community Based Demining', whereby the majority of deminers will be recruited and trained from Ghazni itself with expert oversight from OMAR's experienced deminers. So far, 50 new jobs have been created in Ghazni through the project. The training of these deminers will be completed on the 1st of September and they will join the teams who have begun the work so far. A further two teams will then be recruited and trained so that eventually all eight demining teams will comprise locally recruited people.

MAPA is supported by the following donors to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action:

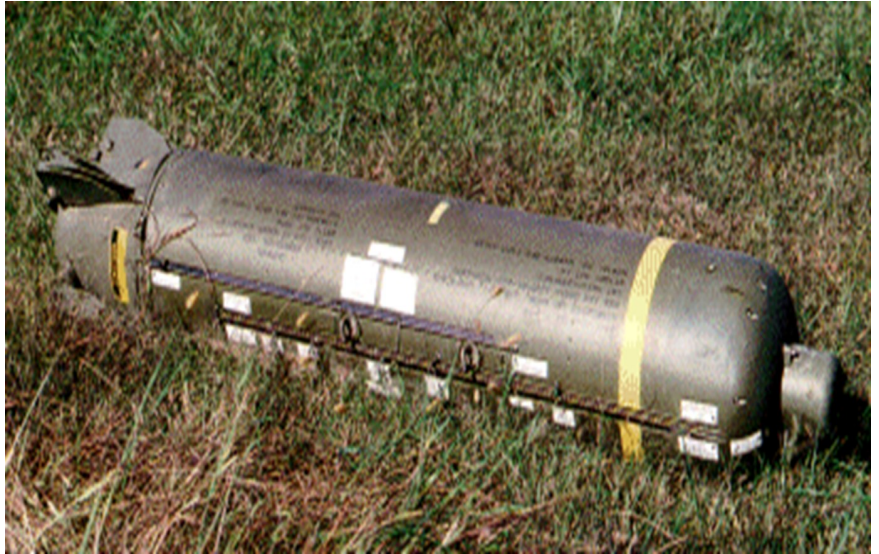
Canada, European Commission, Australia, Japan, Netherlands, Finland, Spain, Denmark, Austria, Luxembourg, Oman and Lithuania.

MAPA is also supported by the following bilateral donors:

USA, Germany, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Japan, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Government of Afghanistan, Ireland, Finland, Belgium, Czech & Slovak Federative republic.

UN SALUTES THE NEW CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS

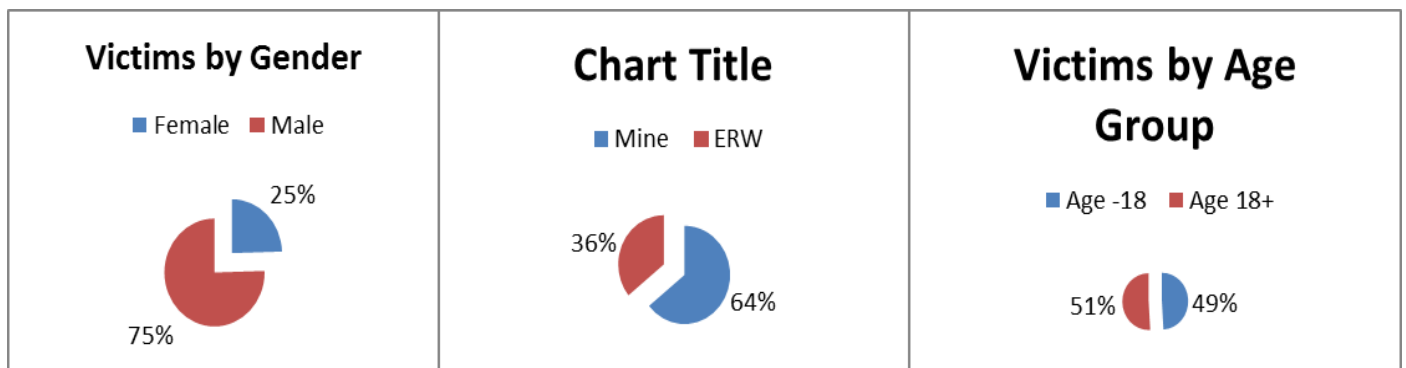
Max Kerley, Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), expressed his satisfaction about the new Convention on Cluster Munitions in New York. "This is a major step for the global disarmament agenda. Cluster munitions cause considerable humanitarian and socio-economic damage, as witnessed by UNMAS in numerous countries and territories." The United Nations announced the entry into force of the new Convention on Cluster Munitions on 1 August 2010. The new convention prohibits the use, production, and trade in cluster munitions, requires assistance to victims of the weapons and provides a framework for assistance and cooperation to affected countries. Afghanistan signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 3rd December 2008 but has not yet ratified it. According to the National Database, 180 areas have been reported as



contaminated with cluster munitions. To date, 157 of these areas have been cleared by the implementing partners of Mine Action Programme and total of 270,447 devices cleared from these areas. This means that 23 contaminated areas remain to be cleared. From December 2001 to July 2010, a total of 206 civilian casualties (40 dead and 166 injured) were recorded in the national database. The number of casualties has reduced dramatically over the last nine years. In 2010, only two casualties were reported compared to 70 in 2001.

CASUALTIES IN AUGUST 2010

In August 2010 there were 53 casualties recorded due mines and other explosive remnants of war. The below charts show a breakdown of these casualties:



MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS IN AFGHANISTAN

Ottawa Treaty:

Clear all emplaced anti-personnel mines by 2013;
 Destroy all known anti-personnel mine stockpiles by 2007; and
 Provide mine risk education to Afghans and assist mine survivors.

Afghanistan Compact:

Land area contaminated by mines and ERW will be reduced by 70% by March 2011;
 All stockpiled anti-personnel mines will be located and destroyed by March 2007.

AFGHANISTAN'S PROGRESS TOWARD MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS

70% reduction of mine/ERW contaminated areas by 2011 and clearance of all known anti-personnel landmines by 2013:

Indicator	Adjusted Baseline June 10	Remaining Contamination at 30 June 10	Clearance Processed at 30 June 10	Compact Target of 70% of Hazards	Progress towards Compact	Treaty Target of 100% of Hazards	Progress towards Treaty
Number of Hazards	12,121	6,679	5,442	8,485	64%	12,121	45%
Hazardous Area (sqkm)	1,247	650	579	873	68%	1,247	48%

EXPLANATION ON CHANGES TO BENCHMARK TABLE

In January 2006, when the Afghan Compact was signed, the baseline set of known hazard was 719 sq. km, therefore the target of clearing 70% of the hazard required a removal of 503 SQ km. The benchmark table below shows that to date, 579 SQ km has now been cleared. This would mean the MAPA would have now exceeded the goal of 70% clearance, if the baseline had remained the same.

However, the baseline set at that time was in fact an incorrect picture of the overall hazard in the country. Much work has been done over the last few years to ensure that the national database presents an accurate picture of known hazard. For a full explanation on these changes, please see p 25-27 of the 1389 Integrated Operational Framework, available on www.macca.org.af. In short, this work has resulted in an increase in the baseline.

The current baseline and progress is shown in the benchmark table below. However, as people continue to return and resettle in Afghanistan, new hazard continues to be discovered. In addition, there is new hazard being laid by the insurgent forces in some parts of Southern Afghanistan, although not in traditional high-density mine belts. Therefore it is expected that the baseline will continue to change and the progress towards these goals July fluctuate as the challenges to meeting these goals increases.

MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS SUMMARY APRIL - AUGUST 2010

- * 19,314 AP mines, 428 AT mines, and 401,791 ERW destroyed.
- * 77 communities cleared of mines and other explosive remnants of war.
- * 178,646 women and girls and 244,179 men and boys received MRE throughout the country.

