

### Victim Assistance in Kosovo: then and now

Kosovo	1	2	3	4	5	6
According to original study					•	•
According to LM 2002						
According to LM 2003						•

#### **Key Developments (LM 2002):**

*Kosovo:* In December 2001, the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Center stated that the clearance of all known minefields and cluster munition strike sites had been completed. It handed over responsibility for mine action to UNMIK and local bodies. Small-scale mine and UXO clearance will be needed for years to come. An estimated \$85 million has been spent on mine action in the province since June 1999. This resulted in the clearance of more than 32 million square meters of land and the destruction of more than 50,000 mines, cluster bomblets and other unexploded ordnance. In 2001, over 8 million square meters were cleared. Caches of weaponry including antipersonnel mines continue to be discovered. Civilian deaths and injuries declined during 2001 with a total of 22 casualties, including nine fatalities.

#### **Indicator 1: The extent to which information on mine victims' demographics and needs is available.**

##### **According to original study:**

A Mine Victim Casualty Surveillance System was established as a cooperative effort of the WHO, ICRC and UN MACC. LM 2000 reports that 492 casualties were recorded between June 1999 and May 2000. Under this System, the WHO Injury Surveillance tool is used to collect mine injury data throughout Kosovo in all hospitals and through community volunteers. As well, VVAF has been contracted through MACC to implement a pilot out-reach project to identify the needs of victims and provide appropriate follow-up support.

SAC is working with the UN MACC in Kosovo to adapt existing survey data into a Level 1 Impact Survey module of IMSMA. A socio-economic index of the impact of landmines and UXOs had previously been established at UN MACC. The GICDH is currently completing a Study of the Use of Socio-Economic Impact Analysis in Mine Action for the UNDP which will include analysis of the impacts on mine victims and incorporates a Kosovo case-study. A draft report of the Study is expected to be available at the SMSP.

##### **According to LM 2002:**

Civilian deaths and injuries resulting from landmine/UXO incidents continued to decline during 2001. According to MACC, there were 17 incidents that caused 22 casualties, of whom nine were killed and 13 injured.<sup>79</sup> In 2000, there were nine deaths and 84 injured.<sup>80</sup>

UXO incidents were more prevalent than mine or cluster bomblet incidents in 2001. There were five separate mine incidents, two bomblet incidents, and ten UXO incidents. Most UXO injuries involved intentional handling of items, indicating the need for continued public information campaigns on the dangers posed by UXO. Of the casualties, mines were responsible for two deaths and three injuries, cluster bomblets for three deaths, and UXO for four deaths and ten injuries. During 2001, there was one female casualty, an injury caused by UXO.<sup>81</sup>

According to ICRC data, eight people were killed and 22 injured in mine/UXO incidents in 2001.<sup>82</sup> It is not clear why there is a discrepancy between the MACC and ICRC statistics.

In April 2001, one British soldier was killed and two others injured when their vehicle hit a landmine in southwestern Kosovo.<sup>83</sup> In another incident in June 2001, a US soldier was injured when he stepped on a landmine.<sup>84</sup> The soldiers were all part of the KFOR peacekeeping mission in Kosovo. The incidents involving KFOR personnel are apparently not included in the MACC casualty statistics.

### Verified Civilian Mine/UXO Accidents in Kosovo June 1999-December 2001<sup>85</sup>

	June-Dec 1999	Jan-Dec 2000	Jan-Dec 2001	June 1999-Dec 2001
Injured	267	84	13	364
Killed	74	9	9	92
Total	341	93	22	456

In February 2002, there were six civilian incidents, involving three deaths and three injuries. One death resulted from handling a cluster bomblet, one from a mine incident, and one from a hand grenade accidentally burnt with garden rubbish.<sup>86</sup>

Casualties among deminers working for clearance agencies from June 1999 to December 2001 totaled 32 (including 14 traumatic amputations, one fatality, one permanent incapacitation, and one loss of sight).<sup>87</sup>

The ICRC provided support to the casualty surveillance system and maintained the database up to the handover of the MACC in December 2001.<sup>88</sup> Responsibility for casualty data collection was to pass from the ICRC to the Public Health Institute (PHI) within the Ministry of Health Environment and Spatial Planning.<sup>89</sup> The ICRC conducted a data collection training seminar for PHI staff on 13 February 2002. Initially, it was intended that a member of staff from each of the PHI's seven regional offices would undertake casualty data gathering. However, it seems no reporting has taken place.<sup>90</sup> As of early April 2002, no update of the IMSMA database had been supplied since November 2001.<sup>91</sup>

#### **Indicator 2: The extent to which a national disability coordination mechanism exists and recognizes mine victims.**

##### **According to original study:**

UN MACC in Kosovo coordinates organizations engaged in various aspects of mine action including victim assistance. The activities of international agencies (WHO and ICRC), international NGOs (HI and VVAF) and local NGOs (Mother Theresa Society, Handikos, and others) working on a range of victim assistance projects are coordinated through MACC.

##### **According to LM 2002:**

Handicap International was appointed as the lead agency for victim assistance by UNMIK in 2000, taking over this responsibility from the WHO. HI undertakes support in cooperation with HandiKos, a local disability NGO.<sup>96</sup>

In its exit strategy the MACC acknowledged that "more emphasis will need to be applied to rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives because of the relatively low level of attention given to this aspect of mine action to date."<sup>107</sup> Under new arrangements of the provisional self-government, the Department of Health and Social Welfare has been split into the Ministry of Health, Environment and Spatial Planning, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, which will assume responsibility for the long-term aspects of survivor assistance.<sup>108</sup>

#### **Indicator 3: The extent to which programs and services for the medical care and rehabilitation of mine victims are available.**

##### **According to original study:**

LM 2000 reports that the resources currently available to deal with the immediate and follow-up specialized treatment for mine victims are inadequate. There is one prosthetics center in Kosovo, in Pristina. In addition, the International Trust Fund of Slovenia has provided rehabilitation assistance to a number of mine victims. UN MACC in Kosovo coordinates organizations engaged in various aspects of mine action including victim assistance. This includes the activities of international agencies (WHO and ICRC), international NGOs (HI and VVAF) and local NGOs (Mother Theresa Society, Handikos, and others) working on a range of victim assistance projects including the provision of prostheses, rehabilitation and outreach services.

##### **According to LM 2002:**

HI operates a prosthetics workshop in Pristina with the capacity to produce and fit lower limb prostheses. The workshop is the only such facility in Kosovo, and has sufficient capacity to deal with the number of cases it receives. However, it is very difficult for some patients to access the facility on a regular basis, particularly those living in rural areas without family and friends in Pristina.<sup>97</sup> In 2001, HI fitted 72 prostheses, distributed

290 wheelchairs and 460 crutches throughout Kosovo, and supported physical rehabilitation at the Klokot Physical Rehabilitation Center.<sup>98</sup> According to HI, there are currently only 24 physiotherapists in Kosovo – for a population of approximately two million. HI is seeking to support the University in Pristina in strengthening the Physiotherapy Department and developing training for physiotherapists to start in September 2002. In 2001, 360 landmine survivors benefited from the program.<sup>99</sup> In 2001, HI received funding support from DFID (UK), ECHO and the government of Luxembourg.<sup>100</sup>

Mine/UXO survivors can also receive assistance from the ITF in Slovenia, which has a specialist rehabilitation center in Ljubljana for mine survivors. In 2001, 28 mine survivors from Kosovo were treated at the Slovenian Rehabilitation Institute.<sup>101</sup>

HI is concerned that, rather than seeking to establish sustainable programs of rehabilitation in Kosovo, some organizations have sought to provide assistance through transporting those requiring rehabilitation or prosthetics to other countries. HI claims that such approaches are more expensive than local solutions, often of limited benefit for the intended beneficiary, and work against the reestablishment of an effective and well-funded Kosovo-based rehabilitation capacity for mine survivors.<sup>106</sup>

#### **Indicator 4: The extent to which programs and services for the social and economic reintegration of mine victims are available**

##### **According to original study:**

Various international agencies (WHO and ICRC), international NGOs (HI and VVAF) and local NGOs (Mother Theresa Society, Handikos, and others) are working on a range of victim assistance projects are coordinated through UN MACC. UN Portfolio of Mine-related projects notes that the provision of psychosocial, rehabilitation and vocational support in particular must be increased in Kosovo.

##### **According to LM 2002:**

In February 2001, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) set up a mine victim assistance program aimed at reducing the dependency of mine survivors and assisting their reintegration into society. In 2001, the program operated in Prizren where activities included assessment visits to 155 mine/UXO survivors of which 59 were children, assistance with school materials, and the distribution of food parcels and firewood to 30 families. The JRS program to assist women with disabilities with training at the sewing center in Ferizai is in its second year. Sixty women have completed the training and a new group started in October 2001.<sup>102</sup>

The Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAF) survivor assistance program ended on 28 February 2002, having been in Kosovo since November 1999. During 2001, the VVAF program provided psychosocial assistance to persons with war-related disabilities, including mine survivors, their families and communities, involved direct material assistance in food, medicine, or transport, educated survivors on their rights, and designed sports and recreational activities. In 2001 the program assisted 400 families, about 2,400 individuals. The program was budgeted at \$595,000 with funds provided by UNICEF and the ITF.<sup>103</sup> After the program's closure, VVAF presented each regional Center for Social Work (CSW) with summaries of VVAF's work with the families and recommended follow-up action. The CSWs, a part of the UNMIK Department of Social Welfare, have responsibility for ongoing support. According to VVAF, one of the great successes of this program was enrolling all of its beneficiaries who qualified with the CSWs. VVAF also enrolled its beneficiaries with HandiKos.<sup>104</sup> In 2002, VVAF started a new program called "Sports for Life," which aims to promote rehabilitation, rights, and reintegration for all persons with disability, including mine survivors.<sup>105</sup>

#### **Indicator 5: The extent to which mine victims are protected and supported by effective laws and policies.**

##### **According to original study:**

No information available.

##### **According to LM 2002:**

In its exit strategy the MACC acknowledged that "more emphasis will need to be applied to rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives because of the relatively low level of attention given to this aspect of mine action to date."<sup>107</sup> Under new arrangements of the provisional self-government, the Department of Health and Social Welfare has been split into the Ministry of Health, Environment and Spatial Planning, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, which will assume responsibility for the long-term aspects of survivor assistance.<sup>108</sup>

Legislation has been introduced in Kosovo, which provides all mine survivors with a small monthly stipend.<sup>109</sup>

**Indicator 6: The extent to which there is a disability community advocacy network.**

**According to original study:**

No information available.

**According to LM 2002:**

HandiKos has been instrumental in establishing the Disability Council and the appointment of a Disability Adviser with the Prime Minister's Cabinet and the development of a Comprehensive Disability Policy Framework document, which is currently in the process of validation.<sup>110</sup>

**Endnotes:**

<sup>79</sup> "UNMIK Mine Action Programme Annual Report 2001," MACC, paras. 36-38; this data does not include deminers/EOD staff and is for the year to 15 December, the date of the handover of the MACC responsibilities.

<sup>80</sup> See table below, "Verified Civilian Mine/UXO Accidents in Kosovo June 1999-December 2001."

<sup>81</sup> "UNMIK Mine Action Programme Annual Report 2001," MACC, paras. 36-38.

<sup>82</sup> ICRC, "ICRC Mine/UXO Awareness Programmes: Mine incidents in South Eastern Europe," 28 January 2002. The ICRC figures also do not include accidents involving mine/UXO clearance staff.

<sup>83</sup> Stefan Racin, "British Soldier Dies in Kosovo Mine Blast," *UPI*, 14 April 2001.

<sup>84</sup> "2 U.S. Soldiers Hurt in Mideast," *Associated Press*, 25 June 2001.

<sup>85</sup> The Praxis Group Ltd, "Willing To Listen," 12 February 2002, p. 73; "UNMIK Mine Action Programme Annual Report 2000," MACC, p. 4; "UNMIK Mine Action Programme Annual Report 2001," MACC, paras. 36-38.

<sup>86</sup> Interviews with Rajmonda Thaqi, Mine Awareness Assistant, and Bajram Krasniqi, Public Information Assistant, DCP, Pristina, 15 April 2002.

<sup>87</sup> "Summary of Lessons Learnt of the Mine/UXO Accidents in Kosovo," MACC, 1 November 2001.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Nora Demiri, ICRC, 19 April 2002.

<sup>89</sup> "Mine/UXO Victim Assistance in Kosovo: Roles And Responsibilities of Local Government Departments and Supporting Organizations," MACC, 13 December 2001.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Nora Demiri, ICRC, 19 February 2002.

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Lance Malin, Mine Action Program Manager, HI, Pristina, 13 April 2002.

<sup>96</sup> *Landmine Monitor Report 2001*, p. 969.

<sup>97</sup> "UNMIK MACC Exit Strategy Discussion Paper," 3 January 2001, p. 11.

<sup>98</sup> Interview with Driton Ukmata, HI, 15 April 2002; and response to Landmine Monitor Survivor Assistance Questionnaire, 19 July 2002.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Driton Ukmata, HI, 15 April 2002.

<sup>101</sup> "Annual Report 2001," International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance, p. 22.

<sup>102</sup> "Annual Report 2001," Jesuit Refugee Service, p. 57.

<sup>103</sup> Robert Schmidt Jr, Head of Mission, VVAF, Pristina, Response to Landmine Monitor Survivor Assistance Questionnaire, 18 February 2002.

<sup>104</sup> Email to Landmine Monitor (HIB) from Robert Schmidt Jr, Head of Mission, VVAF, Pristina, 19 February 2002.

<sup>105</sup> Sarah Warren, Program Development Officer, VVAF, presentation at the ITF Workshop on Assistance to Landmine Survivors and Victims in South-Eastern Europe: Defining Strategies for Success, Ig, Slovenia, 1 July 2002.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Driton Ukmata, HI, 15 April 2002. These views were also expressed by other participants at the ITF Workshop on Assistance to Landmine Survivors and Victims in South-Eastern Europe: Defining Strategies for Success, Ig, Slovenia, 1-2 July 2002.

<sup>107</sup> "UNMIK MACC Exit Strategy Discussion Paper," 3 January 2001, p. 13.

<sup>108</sup> "UNMIK Mine Action Programme Annual Report 2001," MACC, paras. 39-43.

<sup>109</sup> The Praxis Group Ltd, "Willing To Listen," 12 February 2002, p. 84.

<sup>110</sup> Driton Ukmata, Handicap International Kosovo, presentation at the ITF Workshop, Slovenia, 1 July 2002.