

Victim Assistance in Lebanon: then and now

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

Key Developments (LM 2002):

The Lebanese Army reported that the number of identified mined areas was 2,146 as of February 2002, nearly double the number reported in May 2001. In November 2001, an International Support Group was established to coordinate mine action donor support in Lebanon. The United Arab Emirates has begun awarding mine action contracts with the \$50 million pledged to Lebanon in May 2001. Other donors contributed more than \$12 million to mine action in 2001. In 2001, the Lebanese Army cleared more than 1.5 million square meters of land; NGOs and foreign armies cleared additional land. UNIFIL completed a technical survey in South Lebanon in 2002. Mines Advisory Group began a national Landmine Impact Survey in March 2002. In 2001, 90 new mine/UXO casualties were recorded, a decrease from 113 casualties in 2000.

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

According to original study:

LM 2000 reports 50 casualties in Lebanon in 1999 and at least 35 by June 2000 which represents an increased casualty rate as civilian return to mined-areas following Israeli withdrawal from Southern Lebanon. The Landmines Resource Center (LRC) at the University of Balamand, has estimated there to be more than 1,500 landmine survivors in Lebanon, as well as approximately 1,000 deaths due to mines. In December 1999, the LRC completed its data collection process of the nationwide door-to-door survey of landmine victims initiated in August 1998. This effort was designed to gain detailed understanding of the profile of victims and survivors, the nature and location of injuries and related needs. A database of survivors and casualties was created and a geographic information system is currently being developed. LM 1999 reports National Prosthetics and Orthotics Technical Unit of the Ministry of Health figures showing that more than 35% of individuals in need of prosthetic and orthotic devices and services are survivors of landmine injuries.

HMD Response (UK), with SAC technical support, is awaiting final approval from national authorities, and anticipates beginning a Level 1 Impact Survey during 2000. As well, the National Demining Office plans to integrate an IMSMA database for mine action information management (which includes a victim data module), into its operations in this year.

According to LM 2002:

The Landmine Resource Center (LMRC) at the University of Balamand continues to record landmine casualties in Lebanon through its network of NGO contacts and focal points in the villages of the South. In 2001, LMRC recorded 90 new mine/UXO casualties; 18 were killed and 72 injured. This is a decrease from 113 mine casualties for the year 2000, which included 14 killed and 99 injured. In the first ten days following the Israeli withdrawal there were seventeen mine injuries, but the casualty trend later decreased as emergency mine risk education and mine clearance programs were initiated. In the first half of 2002, LMRC recorded three people killed and 21 injured in landmine/UXO incidents.⁴³

In 2001, the majority of landmines incidents occurred in South Lebanon, where people are often injured in areas already known or suspected to be mined, but not fenced or marked. All casualties were male. Fifteen survivors required amputations, while some others suffered serious head or abdominal injuries. Landmines were the cause of the majority of casualties, followed by cluster bombs and UXO. Twenty children (aged under 18 years) were injured and eight killed, often while playing. Adults were injured while engaged in agricultural work or while traveling in a vehicle.

Previously, the LMRC undertook a survey of casualties in South Lebanon in July 2000, which identified 600 casualties in addition to 2,493 casualties reported in a previous survey in 1998-1999.⁴⁴

On 20 July 2002, a British deminer lost his leg in a landmine incident in southern Lebanon.⁴⁵

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

According to original study:

The World Rehabilitation Fund's project for the Development and Management of a National Program of Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services seeks to coordinate with the government and local agencies, the provision of rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities including landmine victims.¹ As well, the UN Portfolio of Mine-related Project reports plans to revitalise the National Committee for Mine Victim Assistance to improve coordination between agencies working with mine victims and to represent the health sector in the National Demining Office.

According to LM 2002:

On 21 October 2001, the NDO established a National Mine Victim Assistance Committee, which includes the major actors in survivor assistance in Lebanon.⁴⁶

In December 2001, WHO joined the victim assistance committee and invited NGOs to submit victim assistance funding proposals in a trial to find appropriate funders.

The LMRC was contracted by the WRF-UNDP program to hold a training workshop on 19-20 December 2001 on landmine victim assistance materials (documents translated from English) as part of a mine awareness package. The workshop examined translations of material in the Lebanese context and came up with definitions for "landmine victim," "landmine survivor," "victim assistance," and "survivor assistance." These definitions fell within the definitions of the ICBL.

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

According to original study:

A 1999 UNMAS Assessment Mission reports high health care costs, with resources concentrated on tertiary care, and weak overall pre-hospital care (first aid and ambulatory). LM 1999 reports that there are thirty-four prosthetic workshops in Lebanon and survivors receive a prosthetic from the Ministry of Health through a contracted workshop. The World Rehabilitation Fund's project for the Development and Management of a National Program of Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services seeks to coordinate with the government and local agencies, the provision of rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities including landmine victims.²

According to LM 2002:

In the South, the existing first aid structure is used for the evacuation of landmine casualties, including ambulances and first aid care provided by the Lebanese Red Cross, the Islamic Health Council and the Al Rissala First Aid Service. Landmine casualties are driven to the nearest emergency room, usually hospitals in Saida as the other four hospitals in the south are unable to provide the necessary assistance. This initial hospital care is usually paid for by the government, either through the Ministry of Health, the National Social Security Fund, the Council of the South or the Military Hospital (for military personnel only). Funding of long-term hospital care is not available. In certain cases, landmine survivors are obliged to leave the hospital.

In addition to services provided by the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Affairs, rehabilitation services are also provided through NGOs. Usually, military casualties receive services from the Military Hospital. Three NGOs service landmine survivors in the south and during the last quarter of 2001, a Beirut-based rehabilitation NGO established a new branch in Marjeyoun. In February 2002, a West Bekaa-based rehabilitation NGO opened a branch in Hasbaya. In 2002, the Ministry of Health again started providing prosthetic services on a limited scale.

Norwegian People's Aid continued to provide physical and psychological rehabilitation services to the physically disabled, including landmine survivors. At the beginning of 2001, NPA launched a new landmine survivor assistance program in the south in cooperation with three local partners and in consultation with the NDO.⁴⁷ In 2001, 73 people received new prostheses and a further 51 had their artificial limbs repaired. Renovations, to improve access for disabled persons, were carried out in five schools, thirteen homes and two public places. A number of patients also received prosthetic eyes, hearing aids, splints and silicon socks, and psychological support. Forty health workers received first aid training. NPA also provided rehabilitation equipment and therapeutic and technical tools to the physiotherapy departments and prosthetic workshops of

their local partners. The annual budget for the program is NOK3,000,000 (US\$333,333) with funding provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁴⁸

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

According to original study:

The World Rehabilitation Fund's project for the Development and Management of a National Program of Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services seeks to coordinate with the government and local agencies, the provision of rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities including landmine victims.³ However, LM 1999 reports that rehabilitation and social integration services targeting survivors are limited and mostly restricted to physical rehabilitation. . The UNDP is currently supporting a project by the World Rehabilitation Fund to develop guidelines for the socio-economic reintegration of landmine survivors based on pilot projects in four mine-affected countries including Lebanon.

According to LM 2002:

The World Rehabilitation Fund (WRF) continues its program of socio-economic reintegration of landmine survivors. Components of the program include: designing and implementing an approach to community based rehabilitation (CBR) that meets the needs of persons residing in mine-affected areas; a project to address the problems of war-related stress among young women through the development of a mentoring program; creating sustainable income-generating activities; and creating a mechanism in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Health to standardize service for the provision of prostheses and orthoses for landmine survivors, and other persons with disabilities. Approximately 50 people have benefited from the program. The WRF also supports the Landmine Resource Center. The programs are funded by UNDP, USAID and the US Leahy War Victims Fund.⁴⁹

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:

After a campaign by the National Council of the Disabled and other concerned NGOs, the Parliament approved the "Access and Rights of the Disabled" law on 25 May 2000. The law consists of 143 decrees asserting the rights of the disabled with respect to health care, education, employment, recreational activities, independent life, transportation, and exemption from taxation. Landmine survivors are included in the disabled population protected by this law. The law is not yet in effect, but Nabih Berri, the head of Lebanon's parliamentary Council of Deputies, has promised to activate it as soon as possible.⁵⁰

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

According to original study:

No information available.

According to LM 2002:

After a campaign by the National Council of the Disabled and other concerned NGOs, the Parliament approved the "Access and Rights of the Disabled" law on 25 May 2000.

Endnotes:

¹ Information from the Portfolio of Victim Assistance Programs prepared for the SCE-VASERMA, March 2000, Geneva. (Note: It is unclear whether this program is currently running or a proposal.)

² Information from the Portfolio of Victim Assistance Programs prepared for the SCE-VASERMA, March 2000, Geneva. (Note: It is unclear whether this program is currently running or a proposal.)

³ Information from the Portfolio of Victim Assistance Programs prepared for the SCE-VASERMA, March 2000, Geneva. (Note: It is unclear whether this program is currently running or a proposal.)

⁴³ LMRC has a month-by-month breakdown of casualties from January 2001-June 2002. The worst month was August 2001, with 21 casualties; the following month, there were none. In the most recent month, June 2002, there were nine injuries and zero deaths.

⁴⁴ The 1998-1999 survey excluded the occupied territories at the time.

⁴⁵ Rodeina Kanaan, "British sapper loses leg in southern Lebanon land mine explosion," AP, 20 July 2002.

⁴⁶ Members include: WHO, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Council of the South, the Landmine Resource Center at the University of Balamand, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Lebanese Red Cross, UNICEF, the World Rehabilitation Fund, the Islamic Health Council, the Islamic Al Rissala Scouts Association, the Lebanese Welfare Association for the Disabled, the Welfare Association for the Disabled in Nabatieh, the Vision Association for Development, Rehabilitation & Care in Bekaa, the Welfare Association for the Care of the Injured and Disabled of War in Lebanon and Norwegian People's Aid.

⁴⁷ See *Landmine Monitor Report 2001*, pp. 1030-1031.

⁴⁸ Interview with Ketil Volden, Advisor for Middle East, Norwegian People's Aid, Oslo, 4 July 2002.

⁴⁹ Email from Jack Victor, WRF, to Landmine Monitor, June 2002.

⁵⁰ *Annahar* and *Al Mustakbal* (daily newspapers), 25 January 2002.