

Victim Assistance in Russia: then and now

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

Key Developments (LM 2002):

Russian forces continued to use antipersonnel mines in Chechnya. Russia is increasing its participation in international mine action programs.

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

According to original study:

LM 1999 reports that there were an estimated 600 to 800 landmine casualties in Chechnya as a result of the first war with Russia in 1996. By the outbreak of the war in 1999, there were approximately 3,500 people registered by the Ministry of Public Health in the Chechen Republic as needing artificial limbs. Of those, Chechen Health Ministry officials estimate up to 20 percent were mine victims. According to LM 2000, no Ministry of the Russian government or of the official temporary Chechen administration was able to provide any information on civilian victims of the current war. There have been reports of hundreds of victims in 1999 and 2000. Information on mine victims treated at ICRC hospital in Novi Atagi (Chechnya) are fed into the ICRC War Wound Surgical Database.

According to LM 2002:

There have been a significant number of mine casualties in parts of the Russian Federation, particularly in Chechnya since 1994 and Dagestan since 1999.⁵⁴ There is no complete official data on mine casualties or incidents among the Russian soldiers fighting in Chechnya, or for civilians.

In 2001, based on various sources, 279 Russian armed forces (including army, police and interior ministry) were reported killed in landmine incidents; 684 were reported injured. In 2000, approximately 300 Russian servicemen were reported killed in landmine incidents and over 1,000 servicemen were reported injured.⁵⁵ It is not certain whether casualties are actually decreasing, or whether fewer casualties are being reported.

No ministry of the Russian government was able to provide any information on civilian casualties of the current war.

Two major landmine blasts in Dagestan claimed close to 50 lives in the first half of 2002. The first blast came on 18 January 2002, when a car carrying servicemen set off a landmine in Makhachkala, Dagestan's capital, killing seven of the servicemen.⁵⁶ The second, more deadly blast, came during Victory Day celebrations in Kaspiysk, near the border with Chechnya on 9 May 2002. Dagestani pro-Chechen rebels reportedly detonated a MON-90 mine via remote control, killing 43 people.

On 8 June 2002, one Russian peacekeeper was killed and another wounded by a landmine in the Kodori gorge of Georgia's separatist Abkhazia region. The peacekeepers were patrolling the gorge near the village of Zemmo-Lata when the mine exploded.⁵⁷

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

According to original study:

No information available.

According to LM 2002:

On 31 May 2001, the "International Complex Program on the Rehabilitation of War Veterans, Participants of Local Conflicts and Victims of Terrorism for 2001-2005" was approved by a resolution of the Council of the Heads of Government of the CIS countries.⁶⁵ Among the CIS countries taking part in the realization and financing of the program are Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russian Federation,

Tajikistan and Ukraine. The budget for 2001 was 35,738,000 Roubles (about US\$1.2 million).⁶⁶ In 2001, prioritized targets of Section I on “Medico-Social Aid” included: facilitating the work of rehabilitation centers in ensuring qualified and effective medical, social, psychological, and professional rehabilitation of war-wounded; medical examinations, consultations of specialists, verification of medical diagnosis, hospitalization, elaboration of individual rehabilitation programs; provision of prostheses, wheelchairs, rehabilitation means and medicine; and, medical and psychological rehabilitation and treatment in specialized sanatoria.⁶⁷

Within the framework of the Program, support was provided to 45 veterans’ organizations. In addition, direct support was provided to 15,896 people, mostly from the Russian Federation and Belarus. Altogether, in 2001, 37,009 people benefited from the program: 36,281 received medicines, 42 were provided with wheelchairs, 440 with prostheses and other assistive devices, 140 received hospital and outpatient treatment, and 106 received specialized treatment and rehabilitation in sanatoriums.⁶⁸

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 1999 reports that health care system in Chechnya, which prior to the 1999 conflict with Russia forces was inadequate, has since been in a state of crisis. In Grozny, two thirds of hospitals and clinics were destroyed and insecurity has prevented the provision of assistance by international organizations. According to LM 2000, it is currently reported that the only place where a person who has been wounded by antipersonnel mines can receive assistance is Ingushetia. Emergency medical care is provided at the ICRC hospital in Novi Atagi.

According to LM 2002:

Russian military medical practice has accumulated enormous experience in the treatment of blast injuries. Medical, surgical, prosthetic, rehabilitation, and reintegration services are available for landmine survivors in Russia.⁵⁸

Several international agencies and local and international NGOs support the health infrastructure in Ingushetia with medicines, hospital supplies, expertise, and training for local staff through hospitals, health posts, and mobile clinics in four towns and 40 villages. These organizations include WHO, UNICEF, UNHCR, ICRC, Medecins du Monde, Medecins Sans Frontieres, Islamic Relief, International Medical Corps, Hammer Forum, VESTA, and People in Need Foundation.⁵⁹

There are about seventy specialized federal prosthetic enterprises operating in the Russian Federation. Some mine survivors receive assistance in Moscow and others travel to Baku (Azerbaijan) within the framework of a joint program of the Ministries of Social Insurance of both republics; details on the number of mine survivors benefiting from this program was not available.

RKK “Energiya” has developed standardized prosthetic workshops, including mobile units. Eight experimental mobile workshops (based on PAZ-3205 bus) have been produced to provide operative prosthetic aid in remote areas. According to the Federal State Institution “Glavorgpomoshch” Russia manufactures about 600 types of prosthetic devices. Lower limbs devices comprise 90 percent of all prostheses.⁶⁰

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

According to original study:

No information available.

According to LM 2002:

The International Institute for the Prosthetic Rehabilitation of Landmine Survivors (IPRLS) and its Russian partner, the St. Petersburg Institute of Prosthetics, have been assisting mine survivors with surgical and rehabilitation assistance and vocational training since 1998.⁶¹

In August 2000, UNICEF commenced its Mine Action Program in the North Caucasus with survivor assistance being one of the main components. The program, which focuses on mine-injured children and women from Chechnya, includes physical rehabilitation, the fitting of prostheses, psychosocial counseling, and vocational

training. The program also established two amputee football clubs for about 120 child mine survivors in Grozny and the IDP camps in Ingushetia.⁶²

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:

Since 1995, mine survivors in Russia have been under the protection of the Federal Law “On Social Security of Disabled/Handicapped.”⁶³

The All-Russian Public National Military Foundation is focusing its efforts on the support of military personnel injured in Chechnya. On 21 February 2002, at a session of the Foundation Charity Council attended by RF President Vladimir Putin, two major directions for the Foundation's efforts were identified: the purchase of flats for the families of the servicemen killed in Chechnya; and ensuring medical aid to servicemen wounded in Chechnya, especially to those who need prosthetic aid. According to the Chairman of the Council, state agencies including the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Internal Affairs will provide the Foundation with verified lists of persons needing medical or other aid. The Foundation will then arrange and finance the necessary aid.⁶⁴

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

According to original study:

No information available.

According to LM 2002:

No information available.

Endnotes:

⁵⁴ For casualties post-WW II, see *Landmine Monitor Report 1999*, p. 814.

⁵⁵ Data collated by Landmine Monitor from media reports, human rights reports, RF MoESDC, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Defense, and Ministry of Health.

⁵⁶ “A car bomb defused in Dagestan,” *AFP/Times of India*, 17 May 2002.

⁵⁷ “Russian peacekeeper killed in breakaway Georgian province,” *Associated Press*, 9 June 2002.

⁵⁸ For more information see *Landmine Monitor Report 2000*, p. 845.

⁵⁹ UN OCHA website; see also *Landmine Monitor Report 2001*, p. 907.

⁶⁰ See *Landmine Monitor Report 2001*, pp. 907-908.

⁶¹ See *Landmine Monitor Report 2001*, p. 908; see also ICBL Portfolio of Landmine Victims Assistance Programs, available at www.landminevap.org.

⁶² ICBL Portfolio of Landmine Victim Assistance Programs.

⁶³ For more details see *Landmine Monitor Report 2001*, pp. 908.

⁶⁴ *RIA NOVOSTI*, 21 February 2002.