

### Victim Assistance in Yemen: then and now

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

**Key Developments (LM 2002):** On 27 April 2002, Yemen destroyed the last 8,674 of its stockpiled antipersonnel mines. Between May 2001 to February 2002, 2.2 million square meters of land were cleared of mines and UXO. Yemen has served as co-chair of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance since September 2001.

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

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

LM 2000 reports that there are still no accurate records of mine victims. LM 1999 reports that according to the Ministry of Interior, landmines and UXOs have claimed a total of 723 victims in Yemen between 1992 and 1996 (an average of fifteen victims each month), of which 204 have died of their injuries. LM 2000 reports that a victims survey conducted by ADRA for three districts in Al Hodeida governate (Hais, Jabal Ras, and Al Khokha) and one in the Tazeh governate (Shameer) showed 1,326 people with disabilities, of which 50 were mine victims. A SAC Level 1 Impact Survey is being conducted by Mine Clearance Planning Agency of Afghanistan using an IMSMA database which is expected to be completed during July 2000.

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

The National Mine Action Center registered five mine survivors in 2001; it does not register those killed in mine incidents. The Regional Mine Action Center in Aden gave different numbers: in September 2001, a mine explosion injured three children (two lost their lower limbs and fingers) in Azal village, Ebb governorate; during the same month, ten people were killed and five injured in an antivehicle mine explosion in Al-Nadra, Ebb governorate.<sup>39</sup>

Mine/UXO incidents continue to be reported in 2002. On 24 March, two soldiers were injured in a mine explosion during a training exercise at the Regional Mine Action Center in Aden. On 25 March 2002 in the al-Baida Governorate, a ten-year old boy was killed and two other children were injured in a UXO explosion.<sup>40</sup> On 2 April 2002, a mine incident in Al-Otbat village in Qataba killed a goat, but there were no human casualties.<sup>41</sup>

The Landmine Impact Survey, completed in July 2000, recorded a total of 4,904 casualties, of which 2,560 were killed and 2,344 injured.<sup>42</sup> At the time, it was noted that casualties were markedly higher than any statistics previously collected. Concerns have been expressed that the numbers are not accurate and could be as high as double the real figure. It is possible that the survey raised expectations of compensation, which induced people to register even though they were victims of other causes.<sup>43</sup>

The Victim Assistance Department developed a medical survey plan to follow up the results of Landmine Impact Survey. The plan is divided into three stages: medical survey, diagnosis, and provision of medical support. Implementation of the survey commenced in June 2001. An eight-member medical survey team targeted the Qataba district in the Al-Dhala governorate and identified 64 survivors (16 females and 48 males) and the Al-Nadra district in Ebb governorate where 110 survivors (16 females and 94 males) were identified.<sup>44</sup> On 21 January 2002 the Victim Assistance Department referred 51 mine and UXO survivors from Al-Dhala governorate to the Aden Hospital for medical treatment and for rehabilitation services at the prosthetic workshops.<sup>45</sup>

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

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

LM 2000 reports that a Rehabilitation Department was established in 1999 within the Ministry of Public Health to examine the needs of the disabled and coordinate activities at the national level. The Victim Assistance Advisory Group has representatives from the Ministries of Public Health, Social Affairs and Education, as well

as Rädä Barnen, Handicap International, Movimondo and ADRA, together with national and international staff from the National Mine Action Program.

**According to LM 2002:**

Landmine survivor assistance in Yemen is coordinated through the Victim Assistance Advisory Committee; the membership of which includes the Ministry of Public Health and Population, the Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs (MOISA), Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, and four international NGOs, ADRA, Handicap International Belgium, Movimondo, and Rädä Barnen. There is no representation from local NGOs or mine survivors.

**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 Sana'a, the capital city, and other major cities like Taz and Aden have surgical units with capacity to perform amputations. More training is however also needed there, and in 1999 the Italian Government Emergency Unit was started a bilateral project, training Yemeni surgeons, specifically on mine victims operations. LM 2000 draft reports a number of international initiatives to train Yemeni medical personnel. In January 2000 Handicap International (HI) began training staff at a new rehabilitation center in Aden together with the Ministries of Health and Social Affairs. This center is meant to serve landmine survivors and others in need of orthopedic devices from the governorates of Aden, Abyan, Shabwa, Lahej, and Dhale.

According to the UN Portfolio of Mine-related Projects, the Yemeni Ministries of Health and of Insurance and Social Affairs work with NGOs to provide limited support programs for mine victims. UNDP assistance to the National Demining Committee is directed towards community-based rehabilitation (CBR) projects and medical support projects. There are plans to expand current projects for greater coverage of Yemen's mine-affected communities to include training of CBR workers, prosthetic technicians and physiotherapists, and support for victims unable to afford treatment and rehabilitation. The establishment of a wheelchair factory is under consideration.

**According to LM 2002:**

The Victim Assistance Department of the National Mine Action Program provides emergency medical assistance to landmine/UXO casualties in any area of Yemen when incidents are reported.

The ICRC assisted the Ministry of Health National Artificial Limbs and Physiotherapy Center in Sana'a to adopt ICRC technology.<sup>46</sup> After the delivery of materials in March 2001, the center produced 284 prostheses and 1,870 orthoses. The Ministry of Health requested the ICRC to extend assistance to a new prosthetic workshop that is being built in Mukalla in the isolated Hadramout governorate.

Handicap International Belgium (HIB) supports two physical rehabilitation centers in Taiz and Aden, in cooperation with the Ministry of Insurance, Social Affairs, and Labor (MOISA) and the Ministry of Public Health.<sup>47</sup> In 2001, the Taiz Rehabilitation Center provided 3,060 physiotherapy treatments, 768 prostheses were fitted, and 109 prostheses were repaired. As well as providing rehabilitation services, the Aden center facilitated the training of twelve orthopedic technicians and six physiotherapy assistants.<sup>48</sup> Thirty-five amputees are registered on the center's waiting list of which twenty percent were injured in mine or UXO incidents. Production of below-the-knee prostheses started at the Aden workshop in March 2002 when four prostheses were provided to patients, including two mine survivors.<sup>49</sup> In 2001, donors to the HIB program included the European Union, the Social Fund for Development, the British Council, French Co-operation, and private donors.<sup>50</sup>

Since May 2001, support from the National Mine Action Program to the Italian NGO, Movimondo, ceased due to a lack of coordination with the Victim Assistance Advisory Committee. However, Movimondo's assistance program, which includes the training of Yemeni physiotherapists and nurses, continues as planned.<sup>52</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:**

The Yemeni Ministries of Health and of Insurance and Social Affairs work with NGOs to provide limited support programs for mine victims. UNDP assistance to the National Demining Committee provides support for community-based rehabilitation (CBR) projects and there are plans to expand current projects for greater coverage of Yemen's mine-affected communities to include training of CBR workers. ADRA and Radda Barnen are both running CBR programs.

LM 1999 reports that the Ministry of Labor and Vocational training is running 23 vocational training centers throughout the country. These centers are providing some short term vocational courses for those unemployed who possess a minimum level of education, and occasionally they accept physically disabled people. Also the Ministry of Social Affairs is running two vocational training centers, one in Sana'a and one in Aden, each of which deals specifically with the integration of persons with disabilities. LM 1999 reports that people with disabilities in need of support are entitled to a small allowance equivalent to \$10 to \$14 per month.

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 Yemen.

**According to LM 2002:**

In 2001, the Yemen office of Radda Barnen (Save the Children Sweden) supported the Ministry of Social Affairs in a community-based program to assist children with disabilities, including landmine survivors, in the governorates of Aden, Lahej, Abyan, Taiz, and Ebb. Following an evaluation of the program, a workshop was held on 26-28 January 2002 to discuss the outcomes and implement recommendations and lessons learned. Since then, new plans have been discussed between different parties to improve the effectiveness of the program in the field.<sup>51</sup>

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

**According to original study:**

LM 2000 reports that draft legislation has been submitted to parliament: Act for the Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled. Article 5 of the draft act stipulates that all categories of disabled persons are entitled to one or more of the following benefits: welfare, special equipment; education; rehabilitation or training; suitable work in the case of those with vocational qualifications, those who have been rehabilitated and those who are educated; follow-up in the case of those who have been employed to ensure they are settled in their jobs; tax exemptions in the case of those who are employed; enjoyment of concessional use of various means and transport; exemptions from customs duty for aids, equipment and educational training materials that they are obliged to import on account of their disability; facilitated access to mobility in public places. Article 11 of the draft act entitles disabled persons right to all stages of education and article 21 ensures the right to employment commensurate with the level of rehabilitation.

**According to LM 2002:**

Act 61 on the Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled was issued in December 1999.<sup>53</sup> On 23 January 2002, Presidential Law Number 2 establishing a care and rehabilitation fund for the disabled came into effect. The fund will initially cover the costs of immediate medical care in hospital.<sup>54</sup>

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

**According to original study:**

The Society for the Physically Disabled acts as a watchdog group on government policy. The War Victim's Society of former soldiers has 4,600 registered members registered; statistics are not available on numbers of landmine survivors. The Society for the Physically Disabled have 5,500 disabled members of which it is estimated that 40% are war victims, but the mine/UXO survivors amongst them is undocumented.

**According to LM 2002:**

No information available.

**Endnotes:**

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Fadhle Garama, Director, Regional Mine Action Center, Aden, 8 April 2002.

<sup>41</sup> Telephone interview with a local mine awareness committee member, Qataba, 2 April 2002.

<sup>42</sup> See *Landmine Monitor Report 2001*, pp. 993-994.

<sup>43</sup> Opinions from various sources given to Landmine Monitor in confidence.

- <sup>44</sup> Interview with Abobaker Abbas, Director of Medical Department, Sana'a, 3 January 2002.
- <sup>45</sup> Interview with Alkadher Abdulla, Director of the Victim Assistance Department, Regional Mine Action Center, Aden, 9 May 2002.
- <sup>46</sup> ICRC (Geneva), *Special Report, Mine Action 2001*, July 2002, p. 39.
- <sup>47</sup> See *Landmine Monitor Report 2001*, pp. 994-995.
- <sup>48</sup> Handicap International Belgium Activity Report 2001.
- <sup>49</sup> Interview with Roel Janssen, Handicap International Belgium, Aden, 25 March 2002.
- <sup>50</sup> Handicap International Belgium Activity Report 2001.
- <sup>51</sup> Telephone interview with Soud Al-Hibshi, Community Based Rehabilitation Program Officer, Rädda Barnen, 30 April 2002.
- <sup>52</sup> Interview with Roberta Contini, Movimondo, Sana'a 11 March 2002; see also *Landmine Monitor Report 2001*, p. 994.
- <sup>53</sup> For details see *Landmine Monitor Report 1999*, pp. 869-870.
- <sup>54</sup> Telephone conversation with Ehab Salem, Chairperson of the Aden Disabled Society, 9 May 2002.