

Victim Assistance in Yugoslavia: then and now

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

Key Developments (LM 2002):

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has initiated the process to accede to the Mine Ban Treaty. FRY reported destruction of 90,000 stockpiled antipersonnel mines from April 2001-May 2002, and has called for assistance to deal with future stockpile destruction and mine clearance. FRY established a mine action center in Belgrade in April 2002.

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:

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, landmines and UXO caused 32 casualties in southern Serbia in 2001. Mines and UXO killed 11 people (one Serb and four ethnic Albanian civilians including two children, four members of the Serbian paramilitary police, and two members of the Yugoslav Army) and injured 21 others (five ethnic Albanian civilians including four children, seven policemen, and nine soldiers). In 2000, five people were killed and 22 injured by landmines or UXO. No incidents for 2002 were recorded up to March. The Ministry of Internal Affairs report details each of these incidents, including the circumstances and identities of those involved.⁴⁴

In contrast, the ICRC records three people killed and four injured in 2001; in 2000, five killed and six injured; and in 1999, two people killed and two injured by mines.⁴⁵

The risk of casualties may have been increased by the return, in mid-2001, of some 5,300 people from Kosovo to southern Serbia; many of these found inadequate housing and returned to Kosovo later in 2001, with some returning to southern Serbia in 2002.⁴⁶

According to media reports on antipersonnel mine incidents: on 1 June 2001, a Serbian soldier stepped on an antipersonnel mine near Lučani village (Bujanovac municipality), sustaining a serious leg injury;⁴⁷ on 20 August 2001, a ten year-old boy from Veliki Trnovac village (Bujanovac municipality) activated a directional fragmentation mine camouflaged in vegetation, sustaining serious injuries to the head and upper part of his body;⁴⁸ and, on 13 October 2001, an Albanian farmer was killed by a directional fragmentation mine while collecting wood near Veliki Trnovac village. His 16-year-old son was seriously injured in the same incident.⁴⁹

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:

No information available.

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:

The FRY formerly had well-developed surgical and rehabilitation services for mine survivors, as well as reintegration programs.⁵⁰ However, the economic situation has hurt the quality of health care services. People injured by mines or UXO receive immediate medical care in hospitals. During 2001, the ICRC donated emergency surgical kits to major hospital in the FRY, including Vranje, KBC Nis, Military Hospital Nis, Emergency Center Belgrade, and KBC Zvezdara Belgrade. The ICRC health program in southern Serbia included training for medical staff from mobile clinics and ambulance teams.⁵¹

Handicap International (HI) assists persons with disabilities, including landmine survivors, in southern Serbia.⁵² HI supports partner organizations, including NGOs and associations for the disabled, with medical and orthopedic equipment and training.

Since receiving 40 mine survivors in 1999, the Institute for Orthopedics and Prosthetics in Belgrade has made no prostheses for members of the Yugoslav Army or Serbian police injured in southern Serbia due to a lack of funds, and has received no other patients injured by landmines or UXO. The Institute received no funds or other assistance in 2001 or early 2002.⁵⁵

A study by the Institute of Public Health of Serbia, in cooperation with WHO and UNICEF, reported that 62.5 percent of participants surveyed could not afford expenses for health care and medication.⁵⁶ In December 2001, the Serbian Ministry of Health facilitated an interagency health coordination meeting, which signaled its intent to lead international agencies in helping to improve the health status of the population. Monthly coordination meetings are planned for 2002.⁵⁷

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:

HI also provides psychosocial support and finances micro-credit programs for disabled persons.⁵³ In February 2001, HI signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Serbian Ministry of Social Affairs, and is now an official partner of the State in the process of reforms and creation of a new policy addressing the needs of persons with disabilities.⁵⁴

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:

On 3 December 2001, International Day of Disabled Persons, a series of events were held in FRY to focus public attention on disability issues. The events focused on bringing persons with disabilities into mainstream society and using community resources to improve the situation of individuals and families living with disabilities. A follow up seminar was held on 7 December and included topics such as equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, access to education and psychosocial support, and lower prices for orthopedic devices. On 17 December, it was announced by the Finance Minister that as from 1 January 2002, the 20 percent tax on medicine, blood, and devices for the physically disabled would be abolished.⁵⁸

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:

⁴⁴ Report from the Ministry for Internal Affairs, signed by Minister Dusan Mihajlovic, 8 March 2002.

⁴⁵ ICRC, "ICRC Mine/UXO Awareness Programmes: Mine Incidents in South East Europe," 28 January 2002, accessed at www.reliefweb.int on 18 February 2002.

⁴⁶ UNOCHA, "UN Interagency Progress Report and Recommendations on the Situation in Southern Serbia, FRY", 29 January 2002, p. 5.

⁴⁷ "Vojnik teško povredjen" ("Soldier Seriously Injured"), *Danas*, 2 June 2001, p. 5.

⁴⁸ "Dečak teško povredjen od mine" ("Boy Seriously Injured by Mine"), *Danas*, 21 August 2001, p. 4.

⁴⁹ "Otac poginuo, sin teško ranjen" ("Father Killed, Son Seriously Injured"), *Politika*, 14 October 2001, p. 7;

"Mine Explosion Kills Ethnic Albanian in Southern Serbia," *Agence France Presse*, 13 October 2001.

⁵⁰ See *Landmine Monitor Report 1999*, pp. 834-836.

⁵¹ World Health Organization, "Health Action in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, November-December 2001," 12 January 2002, accessed at www.reliefweb.int on 10 May 2002.

⁵² Interview with Vladimir Čitaković, Handicap International, Belgrade, 17 December 2001.

⁵³ "Handicap International Review of Activities: 2001," pp. 150-155.

⁵⁴ Handicap International, "Annual Program Implementation Plan: Mission in Serbia – Federal Republic of Yugoslavia 2002," p. 3.

⁵⁵ Interview with Dr. Slavica Eremić, Director of the Institute for Orthopedics and Prosthetics, Belgrade, 11 April 2002.

⁵⁶ The study was conducted in June and July 2000, and included 17,000 citizens of all age groups. UNOCHA, "OCHA Belgrade: Humanitarian Situation Report 21 December – 31 January 2002," 31 January 2002, accessed at www.reliefweb.int on 10 May 2002.

⁵⁷ World Health Organization, "Health Action in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, November-December 2001," 12 January 2002, accessed at www.reliefweb.int on 10 May 2002.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*