



The Landmine Problem

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is considered the most heavily mine affected nation in Europe; remnant of the five-year civil war in the former Yugoslavia. Most recently, it was estimated that 1,738 km² of land are suspected hazardous areas. According to the BiH Mine Action Center, mines and other explosive remnants of war directly affect more than 900,000 people. Most impacted communities are in rural areas where people depend economically on contaminated land. The BHMAC reports that in 2007, 8 people were killed and 22 people were injured by mines. The majority of mine victims in BiH are males in the 19-39 year old age range. The mine accidents kill or disable victims, leaving them amputees while in the prime of their lives.



Humanitarian Demining Programs

BiH benefits from a well-run humanitarian demining program that is making tremendous progress in helping clear the nation of mines. Nation-wide strategy and coordination is helping to unify the efforts of the many non-governmental and commercial organizations helping Bosnia recover from the devastating remnants of its civil war.

The regional Mine Detection Dog Center for South East Europe (MDDC) in BiH trains dogs to help mine-affected nations throughout the region.

The Marshall Legacy Institute's Program

In 2007 and 2008, The Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI) partnered with the International Trust Fund for Humanitarian Demining and Victims' Assistance (ITF) and the MDDC to provide ten fully trained mine detection dogs to one local non-government organizations in BiH and the Office of Civil Protection. The ten dogs were all trained by the MDDC, resulting in increases to indigenous capacity for humanitarian demining twice, first through improving the local training programs and secondly through the actual dogs, which will remain in Bosnia and Herzegovina. MLI also launched CHAMPS International in Bosnia in 2007. This program links schools in the United States with schools in Bosnia. The students chat with each other via video conference, get to know each other, and work together to assist young Bosnian landmine survivors. Most recently, two Girl Scout troops from Vermont raised money within their communities to provide Anita, a young Bosnian landmine survivor, with a new prosthetic limb.

Sources of Additional Information

- *The Landmine Impact Survey for Bosnia and Herzegovina*, the Survey Action Center
- *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, Human Rights Watch/International Campaign to Ban Landmines
- *To Walk the Earth in Safety*, U.S. Department of State