

IRAN

Ten-Year Summary

The Islamic Republic of Iran's policy on banning antipersonnel mines has not changed in the past decade. It has cited its perceived need for antipersonnel mines on its borders as the main reason for not joining the Mine Ban Treaty. Iran has abstained from voting on every annual UN General Assembly pro-ban resolution since 1997. There is evidence that Iran has produced and exported antipersonnel mines in the past decade, despite government statements that it stopped both activities.

Iran has one of the world's largest mine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) problems, but the precise extent of contamination is not known. Seemingly huge demining operations have been undertaken in past years under the auspices of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mine Action Center (IRMAC), but reported results are unreliable and demining methods do not appear to meet the International Mine Action Standards.

Between 1999 and 2008, Landmine Monitor identified at least 840 mine/ERW casualties (238 killed, 542 injured, and 60 of unknown status). Under-reporting is significant, however, and there might have been more than 10,000 total casualties. From 2002–2008, risk education was provided by several governmental organizations and NGOs in affected provinces. There is no specific victim assistance framework and little is known about Iran's victim assistance activities. Services are in place for war-injured persons, including mine/ERW survivors, and healthcare has improved over the last decade, but remote areas are not well-served and not all survivors are eligible for state support.

Mine Ban Treaty

Iran has not acceded to the Mine Ban Treaty. Iran has cited its perceived need for antipersonnel mines on its borders as the main reason for not joining the treaty.¹

Iran has abstained from voting on every annual UN General Assembly resolution supporting the Mine Ban Treaty since 1997, including Resolution 63/42 on 2 December 2008. In explaining its vote, Iran stated that it “shares the humanitarian concerns” of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty, and welcomes “every effort to stop this trend” of irresponsible mine use. It continued, “The Ottawa Convention, however, focuses mainly on humanitarian concerns while neglecting or not adequately taking into account legitimate military requirements of many countries, particularly those with long land borders, for the use of APLs [antipersonnel landmines] in defending their territories. Due to the difficulties of monitoring sensitive extensive areas by established and permanent guarding posts of effective warning systems, landmines continue to be the effective means, for those countries, to ensure the minimum security requirement of their borders.”²

Iran has never participated as an observer in the annual meetings of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty, and, with one exception (May 2001) has not attended meetings of the intersessional Standing Committees in Geneva.

¹ In a February 2006 letter to Landmine Monitor, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated, “Due to our expansive borders and problems resulting from narcotics and terrorist trafficking, our defense institutions are considering the use of landmines as a defensive mechanism.” In August 2005, the director of IRMAC stated that Iran is against the use of landmines, but war in and occupation of two countries bordering Iran were not conducive to Iran joining the Mine Ban Treaty. Government representatives told Landmine Monitor in January 2004 and July 2003 that they believe that if mines were removed from the country's borders more Iranian soldiers would be killed while protecting the borders and drug trafficking would increase dramatically. They also stated that the cost of Iran joining the Mine Ban Treaty would be enormous. In July 2003, the government stated, “Landmines continue to be the sole effective means to ensure the minimum security requirement of borders in countries with long land borders.” For detailed sources, see *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, pp. 857–858.

² Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Explanation of Vote on the Draft Resolution L.6, UN General Assembly, First Committee, New York, 29 October 2008.

In December 2008, Iranian authorities raided and temporarily closed the NGO Center for Participation in Clearing Mined Areas, also known as the Mine Clearing Collaboration Campaign (MCCC), run by 2003 Nobel Peace Laureate Shirin Ebadi. The ICBL protested the closure.³ Ebadi had launched the NGO, which she created to support mine action in Iran, at the Mine Ban Treaty's First Review Conference in November–December 2004. She has also called on Iran to join the Mine Ban Treaty, and make a greater effort on mine clearance and victim assistance.

Iran is not party to the Convention on Conventional Weapons.⁴ It has not signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions.⁵

Production, transfer, stockpiling, and use

IRMAC's director told Landmine Monitor in August 2005 that Iran neither uses nor produces landmines.⁶ In September 2002, the Ministry of Defense declared, "The Islamic Republic of Iran, since the termination of its war [1988], has not produced anti-personnel mines."⁷ Iran is thought to have a large stockpile of antipersonnel mines, but no official information is available on its size and composition.

Iran exported a significant number of antipersonnel mines in the 1990s and earlier. An export moratorium was instituted in 1997, but it is not known if it is still formally in effect. In February 2006, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated, "It has been several years since Iran voluntarily halted export of anti-personnel mines."⁸

Despite these government statements, there is evidence that Iran has both produced and exported antipersonnel mines in the past decade.

In January 2008, media reports claimed that Afghan authorities seized stocks of Iranian-produced antipersonnel mines in Afghanistan's Farah province, as well as in other provinces in prior months.⁹

Tajikistan, a State Party to the Mine Ban Treaty, reported that in 2007 two Iranian YM-1 antipersonnel mines were "transferred from the stockpiles of the force structures of the Republic of Tajikistan to the Tajikistan Mine Action Center for the purposes of destruction. The indicated antipersonnel mines were confiscated or detected by the force structures as a result of counter-terrorism activity."¹⁰

³ ICBL, "Call for the Immediate Reopening of Nobel Peace Laureate Shirin Ebadi's Offices in Tehran," Press release, 22 December 2008, Geneva.

⁴ Iran told Landmine Monitor it has "announced its support for the regulations stipulated in the second protocol of this convention regarding the method of utilizing antipersonnel landmines." Letter to Landmine Monitor (Human Rights Watch), File No: 322-1/153811, from Ali Jazini, Director, Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Embassy of Pakistan in Washington, DC, 1 February 2006, transmitting the response of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to a letter sent on 7 September 2005.

⁵ For details on cluster munition policy and practice, see Human Rights Watch and Landmine Action, *Banning Cluster Munitions: Government Policy and Practice*, Mines Action Canada, May 2009, p. 210.

⁶ Interview with Hossein Vaziri, Director, IRMAC, Tehran, 28 August 2005. He did not state when Iran allegedly stopped using and producing mines, nor if there is a formal policy or law prohibiting use and production. Iran has manufactured several types of antipersonnel mines, including the YM-1, MK4, and a Claymore-type mine. Jondollah activists allege that Iranian forces maintain an "internal border" with mines in order to control insurgency in Baluchi areas of Iran. See *Landmine Monitor Report 2007*, p. 846.

⁷ Letter to Landmine Monitor from the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN in New York, 6 September 2002.

⁸ Letter to Landmine Monitor (Human Rights Watch), File No: 322-1/153811, from Ali Jazini, Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Embassy of Pakistan in Washington, DC, 1 February 2006, transmitting the response of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to a letter sent on 7 September 2005.

⁹ One report cites 113 mines recovered, including 50 antipersonnel mines. "Landmine deport smuggled from Iran discovered," *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 25 January 2008; and see "Iranian Land Mines Found in Taliban Commander's House," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 25 January 2008.

¹⁰ Tajikistan Article 7 Report, Form B2, 3 February 2008.

In November 2006, the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia reported shipments of arms including landmines from Iran to combatants in Somalia in violation of the embargo.¹¹ The type of mine, antipersonnel or antivehicle, was not specified. In response, Iran stated that it had not transferred any arms to Somalia.¹²

Landmine Monitor received information in 2002, 2003, and 2004 that demining organizations in Afghanistan were removing and destroying many hundreds of Iranian YM-I and YM-I-B antipersonnel mines, date stamped 1999 and 2000, from abandoned Northern Alliance frontlines.¹³

Non-state armed groups

In April 2009, the Congress of Nationalities for a Federal Iran (CNFI), a grouping of Iranian opposition political parties, called for an antipersonnel landmine ban in Iran, urging Iranian armed groups to sign the Deed of Commitment administered by the Swiss NGO Geneva Call and for the Iranian government to accede to the Mine Ban Treaty.¹⁴

In 2009, three factions of the Komala party signed the Geneva Call Deed of Commitment, pledging no use of antipersonnel mines. On 7 April 2009, the Kurdistan Organization of the Communist Party of Iran (the Komala) and the Komala Party of Kurdistan signed the Deed of Commitment, followed on 16 June 2009 by the Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan. All three factions acknowledged that they used antipersonnel mines sporadically in the past.¹⁵

The Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (Parti Démocratique du Kurdistan d'Iran, PDKI) signed the Deed of Commitment on 5 December 2007.¹⁶ In August 2008, the PDKI showed Geneva Call a stockpile of more than 400 antipersonnel mines that it said would be destroyed as soon as possible. The PDKI also admitted to previous use of antipersonnel mines prior to halting armed activities.¹⁷ On 1 September 2008, a stockpile of 392 PDKI antipersonnel mines was destroyed in Koya, northern Iraq. Mines destroyed included Chinese and Italian versions, as well as mines of Russian and United States design but of unknown manufacture.¹⁸

Militants in the Baluchi areas of Iran have carried out attacks using explosives, but few if any appear to have been antipersonnel mines or other victim-activated devices.¹⁹

¹¹ The report states that on 25 July 2006 an aircraft carrying arms, including an unknown quantity of mines, from Iran landed at Baldogle airport and was met by senior members of the Courts Union and the Dayniile Islamic Court. "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1676 (2006)," S/2006/913, 22 November 2006, p. 22.

¹² Ibid, p. 62.

¹³ Information provided to Landmine Monitor and the ICBL by HALO Trust, Danish Demining Group, and other demining groups in Afghanistan. Iranian antipersonnel and antivehicle mines were also part of a shipment seized by Israel in January 2002 off the coast of the Gaza Strip.

¹⁴ Geneva Call, *Newsletter*, Volume 7, No. 1, May 2009, p. 3.

¹⁵ Geneva Call, "The Komalah—the Kurdistan Organization of the Communist Party of Iran and the Komala Party of Kurdistan Prohibit the Use of Anti-Personnel Mines," Press release, Geneva, 7 April 2009, www.genevacall.org; and Geneva Call, "The Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan Prohibits the Use of Anti-Personnel Mines," Press release, Geneva, 16 June 2009, www.genevacall.org.

¹⁶ See *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, p.859. The PDKI's declaration that it will forego the use of antipersonnel mines is the first by a non-state group in Iran.

¹⁷ Email from Katherine Krammer, Program Director, Geneva Call, 27 August 2008.

¹⁸ Geneva Call, "The Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan destroys anti-personnel mine stockpile," Press release, Geneva/Koya, 1 September 2008, www.genevacall.org; and email from Armin Köhli, Program Officer, Geneva Call, 3 September 2008.

¹⁹ In February 2009, Jondullah, a militant group operating in the Baluchi area near the border with Pakistan, claimed responsibility for an improvised explosive device (IED) or antivehicle mine which killed and injured Revolutionary Guard personnel in the Saravan area. D. Khatinoglu, "Blast kills 9 soldiers in Iran: Jondullah," *Trend News*, 14 February 2009, news-en.trend.az. In June 2007, an Iranian soldier reportedly died after stepping on a landmine during counter-insurgency activity against Kurdish militants. STRATFOR, "Situation Report," 13 June 2007, www.stratfor.com. In October 2007, an Iranian soldier reportedly was killed by an unspecified landmine "planted by thugs" in Piranshahr district close to the border with Iraq. "Iran Guards Corps member killed in land mine blast, buried in Orumiyeh," *BBC Monitoring Caucasus*, 4 October 2007.

Scope of the Problem

Contamination

Mines and ERW, especially UXO, remain in Iran from the 1980–1988 conflict with Iraq, affecting particularly the provinces of Ilam, Kermanshah, Khuzestan, Kurdistan, and West Azerbaijan.²⁰ UXO is said to include cluster munition remnants.²¹ No credible estimates exist for the extent of contamination remaining and the socio-economic impact is poorly understood. In April 2007, Brigadier General Morteza Habibi, who at that time headed IRMAC, claimed that 9,000km² of land remained to be cleared in the five provinces. It was also claimed that 34,000km² had been demined since 1988. Previously, the eastern provinces of Khorasan and Sistan-Baluchestan have also been reported to be affected by mines, especially in border areas with Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Casualties

In 2008, Landmine Monitor identified at least 87 mine/ERW casualties: five killed and 82 injured.²² IRMAC reported 75 of these casualties, and the media 12. The majority of casualties were civilians of unknown gender and age (70); eight were deminers (men, civilian/military status unknown); and four military/police (men). The age, gender, and civil status of five casualties are unknown.

Little information is known about the device type, location, or activity at the time of the incident. At least eight casualties were engaged in clearance operations and one in security activities (the activity of the remaining 78 casualties is unknown). Landmines caused at least 12 casualties; the device type for the remaining 75 casualties is unknown. Casualties were recorded in at least two western provinces, Kermanshah (seven) and Ilam (five), but the location of 75 casualties was unknown. An additional 11 casualties (nine killed and two injured) were identified through media reports but not included in the total as it was not possible to verify if they were already counted in IRMAC's total.

In 2009, the Ministry of Defense reported that casualty rates had decreased,²³ and in 2008 IRMAC was reported saying the casualty rate had fallen to 1.5 casualties per day. However, the MCCC estimates that there are on average 2.2 incidents per day.²⁴ The Iranian Minorities Human Rights Organization (IMHRO) reported that there are approximately 1,000 new, mainly civilian, casualties each year.²⁵ Between September 2008 and April 2009, IMHRO reported 250 casualties (mainly children and women).²⁶

Casualties continued to be identified in 2009, with at least eight mine casualties (two killed, four injured, and two of unknown status), as of 31 May 2009.²⁷ At least six casualties were civilians; the status of two was unknown. Three casualties were males of unknown age; one was a man and one was a female of unknown age; the age and gender of three casualties was unknown. Activities at the time of the incident included traveling (four) and conducting agricultural activities (two); the activity of two casualties was unknown. Antipersonnel mines caused five casualties and unknown mines three. Casualties occurred in West Azerbaijan province (four) and in Kurdistan province (two); the location of the remaining two casualties was unknown.

²⁰ See *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, p. 860; and see Mahdi Afruzmanesh, "Iran: Hidden Menace of 'Iron Soldiers,'" *Payvand's Iran News* (Tehran), 17 June 2008, www.payvand.com.

²¹ See *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, p. 860; and Eddie Banks, "Demining in Iran," *Journal of Mine Action*, Issue 9.2, February 2006, www.maic.jmu.edu.

²² Landmine Monitor media monitoring from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2008; and interview with Amir Hossein Saeedi, Director, IRMAC, Tehran, 6 November 2008.

²³ "Iran, Iraq Form Joint Demining Commission," *Fars News* (Tehran), 5 April 2009, english.farsnews.com.

²⁴ Mahdi Afruzmanesh, "Iran: Hidden Menace of Iron Soldiers," *Payvand's Iran News* (Tehran), 17 June 2008, www.payvand.com.

²⁵ IMHRO, "Iran: People Threatened By Old & New Materiel," 19 March 2008, www.unpo.org.

²⁶ IMHRO, "2009 Mine Monitoring Report: Mine fields increased in Minorities' areas of Iran," 4 June 2009, iranianminorityshumanright.blogspot.com.

²⁷ Landmine Monitor media monitoring from 1 January to 31 May 2009.

The total number of mine/ERW casualties in Iran remains unknown. Between 1999 and 2008, Landmine Monitor identified at least 840 mine/ERW casualties including 238 killed, 542 injured, and 60 of unknown status.²⁸ One local media report estimated that from 1994 to 2008 some 10,000 people were killed in landmine incidents.²⁹ The number of deminer casualties is unknown, but local media reported that between 2000 and 2008, 168 people were killed in clearance operations.³⁰

According to a 2006 study by the Janbazan Medical and Engineering Research Center (JMERC), between 20 August 1988 and 20 March 2003 at least 3,713 persons were injured by landmines and ERW, including 1,499 people who underwent amputations in five western provinces of Iran. Among the amputees, 92% were male and 8% female; the average age at the time of the incident was 13–23 years old. The most common activities at the time of the incident were grazing livestock (29.6%), farming (8.1%), tampering (7.9%), and playing (4.5%). The study found that 33.1% of casualties were registered in Kurdistan, 22.2% in Kermanshah, 19.8% in West Azerbaijan, 15.1% in Ilam, and 9.9% in Khuzestan.³¹

Another study, carried out between 1998 to 2004, collected information on 156 casualties (six killed and 150 injured) who were treated at the Shahid Motahhary Hospital in West Azerbaijan province. It found that 80% of casualties were civilians and 20% military. The majority of casualties were male (95%) and 5% were female; 65% of casualties were between 15 and 35 years old. Activities at the time of the incident included herding, farming, smuggling, and playing; no statistics on activities were provided.³²

In 2006, the UN reported that since the early 1990s, there had been approximately 10,000 casualties in Iran (some 4,000 people killed and 6,000 injured). During the same period more than 850 casualties among military deminers were reported.³³ Ministry of Interior data, used by the Iranian Mine Victim Resource Center (IMC), recorded 6,765 mine casualties in Iran (2,840 people killed and 3,925 injured) from 1988–2002 in five provinces. The Sina Trauma and Surgery Research Center (STSRC) also recorded 990 people killed and 1,270 injured in incidents in Kermanshah province from 1994–2004. According to the STSRC, more than 95% of the mine incidents it recorded resulted in civilian casualties and around 15% involved children.

Risk profile

At-risk groups are men conducting livelihood activities (farmers, nomads, and shepherds), children and women living in western provinces,³⁴ as well as military personnel and deminers (see Casualties section above). Pilgrims traveling to Karbala in Iraq are also said to be at risk.³⁵

²⁸ See previous editions of Landmine Monitor. *Landmine Monitor Report 2007* did not report a total casualty figure for 2006, however, it cited a Ministry of Defense report that nine deminers had been killed and 20 injured in clearance operations and that the IRCS recorded “more than 60 civilian casualties.” Therefore, for this report, Landmine Monitor has counted 89 casualties (nine killed, 20 injured, and 60 unknown) in 2006. *Landmine Monitor Report 2005* reports two sets of figures for 2003, 34 killed and 101 injured recorded by IMC and 45 killed and 21 injured reported in the media. As there is no way to determine whether these figures overlap, for this report, Landmine Monitor has counted 135 casualties (34 killed and 101 injured) for 2003. *Landmine Monitor Report 2004* reported 191 casualties (69 killed and 122 injured) in 2001. However, *Landmine Monitor Report 2003* reported 18 civilians killed, 52 army deminers killed and 122 army deminers injured in 2001. Therefore, for this report, Landmine Monitor has counted 192 casualties (70 killed and 122 injured) in 2001.

²⁹ Mahdi Afruzmanesh, “Iran: Hidden Menace of ‘Iron Soldiers,’” *Payvand’s Iran News* (Tehran), 17 June 2008, www.payvand.com.

³⁰ “Wartime landmine kills four in Iran,” *Press TV* (Tehran), 6 July 2008, www.presstv.ir.

³¹ Ahmadreza Soroush, Farahnaz Falahati, Mousa Zargar, et al. “Amputations Due to Landmine and Unexploded Ordnances in Post-war Iran,” *Archives of Iranian Medicine*, Vol. 11, No. 6, November 2008, p. 596.

³² A. Afshar, N. Afshar, F. Mirzatoloei, “Injuries due to Landmine Blast Referred to Shahid Motahhary Hospital, Iran,” *Medical Journal Armed Forces of India*, Vol. 3, No. 2, February 2007.

³³ UN, “2006 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects,” New York, 2007, p. 199.

³⁴ IMHRO “Iran: People Threatened By Old & New Materiel,” 19 March 2008, www.unpo.org; observations during Landmine Monitor field mission, Iran, 1–6 November 2008; telephone interview with Nima Dadbin, Mine Action/Cooperation Program Responsible, ICRC, 27 July 2009; and see *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, p. 862.

³⁵ Interview with Mr. Ziyai, Head of Mine Risk Education, State Welfare Organization, Tehran, 3 November 2008; and interview with Amir Hossein Saeedi, IRMAC, Tehran, 6 November 2008.

Program Management and Coordination

Mine action

The National Mine Action Council (NMAC) was established in 2003 by the government (the legislative basis is not known). It consists of the ministries of interior, foreign affairs, health and medical training, the provincial governors of the five mine-affected border provinces in the west, the joint chief of command for the armed forces, IRMAC, national mine action NGOs, and operational demining units belonging to Iran's armed forces.³⁶ The NMAC is chaired by the Minister of Defense.

In 2003, NMAC established IRMAC, a civilian body, to implement and coordinate mine action activities.³⁷ IRMAC has five regional offices (one in each of the five western contaminated provinces).³⁸

Risk education

IRMAC is responsible for the coordination of risk education (RE) and established an RE committee in December 2005 that includes representatives from the ministries of defense, education, and welfare, the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), and the ICRC. There has been no coordination meeting since 2007, although IRMAC is kept informed of ongoing RE activities by operators.

Victim assistance

Despite the high number of mine/ERW casualties, there is no specific victim assistance (VA) framework in Iran. IRMAC does not implement³⁹ or coordinate VA activities.⁴⁰ The Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs is the main organization responsible for war-injured persons, including mine/ERW survivors,⁴¹ although some services are provided by the State Welfare Organization, the Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation,⁴² and the IRCS.⁴³

Policies created by IRMAC under the Ministry of Defense do not include any objectives on VA, but have the general aim of "raising the standards of victim assistance and integrating mine action activities with development projects."⁴⁴

Data collection and management

IRMAC does not have a robust data collection and management system and does not use the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA). There is no comprehensive data collection system in Iran and it is unclear which organization has the final responsibility to collect information on mine/ERW incidents. Casualty data is recorded by hospitals (although there is limited information in existing medical files), police, and provincial authorities.⁴⁵

As in previous years, IRMAC did not respond to Landmine Monitor requests for detailed casualty data. IRMAC stated that it collects casualty data,⁴⁶ but one source reported to Landmine Monitor that IRMAC does not collect/verify casualty data directly and it has no casualty

³⁶ See also IRMAC, "Demining activities," www.irmac.ir.

³⁷ Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by Amir Hossein Saedi, IRMAC, 21 July 2009; and interview with Amir Hossein Saedi, IRMAC, Tehran, 1 November 2008.

³⁸ Interview with Amir Hossein Saedi, IRMAC, Tehran, 1 November 2008.

³⁹ See *Landmine Monitor Report 2007*, p. 852.

⁴⁰ Landmine Monitor source requesting anonymity.

⁴¹ Telephone interview with Nima Dadbin, ICRC, 27 July 2009; and email from Dr. Reza Soroush, Director, JMERC, 6 May 2009.

⁴² Email from Dr. Reza Soroush, JMERC, 6 May 2009.

⁴³ Telephone interview with Nima Dadbin, ICRC, 27 July 2009.

⁴⁴ "Iran to clear mines in border areas by 2011," *Fars* (Tehran), 14 February 2007.

⁴⁵ Ahmadrza Soroush, Farahnaz Falahati, Mousa Zargar, et al. "Amputations Due to Landmine and Unexploded Ordnances in Post-war Iran," *Archives of Iranian Medicine*, Vol. 11, No. 6, November 2008, p. 596; and telephone interview with Nima Dadbin, ICRC, 27 July 2009.

⁴⁶ Interview with Amir Hossein Saedi, IRMAC, Tehran, 6 November 2008.

database.⁴⁷ Landmine Monitor was not able to confirm this information. IRMAC reported that the IMSMA “could not be received for political reasons.”⁴⁸

JMERC maintains a mine casualty database with medical and demographic details.⁴⁹ In 2006, JMERC, in collaboration with the ICRC, published the first phase of an epidemiological study of mine/ERW injuries in five western provinces of Iran.⁵⁰ A second phase of the study, which includes casualty data collection, was ongoing as of July 2009; results are expected in 2011.⁵¹ Several research institutes in Iran have conducted historical casualty data collection for research purposes. It is unknown if the IMC collected casualty data from 2008–2009.⁵²

Plans

Strategic mine action plans

In February 2007, the Minister of Defense reportedly declared that a 40-year timetable for mine clearance was being reduced to five years. He further noted that “In view of the president’s special attention to this matter, the ministry has given priority to mine clearance operations.” He claimed that operations would be concluded in West Azerbaijan and Kurdistan provinces by 21 March 2007, and that one year later, the province of Kermanshah would be cleared of mines. Finally, he declared that, “in line with our schedule and taking into account the high level of contamination in Khuzestan and Ilam Provinces, these two provinces will be decontaminated by 1389 [2011].”⁵³

On 5 May 2009, the UNDP Deputy Representative in Iran, Sagen Bayeva, met with NMAC and IRMAC staff and discussed possible Iran-Iraq cooperation in mine action in border areas with the support of UNDP.⁵⁴ The extent of any subsequent progress has not been reported.

It is not known if the 2007 national action plan for RE has been implemented.

National ownership

Commitment to mine action and victim assistance

Despite Iran’s predictions of completing mine clearance within five years, there is little evidence that this will be achieved. Iran’s mine action program is under full national management and all mine action operations are funded from national resources. In 2007, the International Congress on Landmine Induced Injuries was held in Tehran and VA was identified as a priority for mine action in Iran. In 2000, the First International Conference on Landmine Victim Assistance during Peace Period was held in Tehran to discuss VA efforts.

National mine action legislation and standards/Standing operating procedures

On 5 April 2009, the Iranian Parliament adopted legislation to support deminers of private companies.⁵⁵ Under the new legislation, the Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs, a governmental organization, is responsible for providing medical and socio-economic support to deminers who are injured or killed during their duties, as well as their families.⁵⁶ New national mine action standards and supporting standing operating procedures were said to have been drafted in 2008;⁵⁷ as of July 2009 it was not known if they had been formally approved. In 2005, IRMAC claimed to have developed national mine action standards based on the International Mine Action Standards.⁵⁸

⁴⁷ Landmine Monitor source requesting anonymity.

⁴⁸ Interview with Amir Hossein Saeedi, IRMAC, Tehran, 6 November 2008.

⁴⁹ Email from Dr. Shahriar Khateri, Responsible for Landmine Victims Project, JMERC, 12 May 2009.

⁵⁰ Email from Dr. Reza Soroush, JMERC, 6 May 2009; and see *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, p.862.

⁵¹ Email from Dr. Reza Soroush, JMERC, 6 May 2009; and telephone interview with Nima Dadbin, ICRC, 27 July 2009.

⁵² In 2008, Landmine Monitor reported that the IMC was unable to collect data in 2007 or 2008 “due to financial constraints.” See *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, p. 862. Landmine Monitor was unable to establish contact with the IMC in 2009.

⁵³ IRMAC, “Minister of Defense of I.R. Iran: Mine Action Takes Off,” www.irmac.ir. See also *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, p. 861.

⁵⁴ Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by Amir Hossein Saeedi, IRMAC, 21 July 2009.

⁵⁵ I. R. of Iran Official Newspaper No. 18671.

⁵⁶ Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by Amir Hossein Saeedi, IRMAC, 21 July 2009.

⁵⁷ Interview with Mr. Alizadeh, Research and Development Manager, OICE, Tehran, 2 November 2008.

⁵⁸ Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by Amir Hossein Saeedi, IRMAC, 21 July 2009.

Demining and Battle Area Clearance

Iran's demining capacity consists primarily of engineer units of the Iranian army and the Revolutionary Guard. Demining projects in support of oil exploration often use the private sector, which typically recruits retired veterans.⁵⁹ One such commercial demining company is ISOP (Immen Sazan Omran Pars), which was established in 2004 in Tehran by war veterans with authorization from the Ministry of Defense.⁶⁰ Deminers use manual methods and machines, but not mine detection dogs. In March 2007, a total of 941 deminers (300 from the army, 200 from the Revolutionary Guard, and 441 from private companies) were reportedly employed in demining operations. In accordance with Iran's five-year demining plan it was planned to deploy a total of 8,000 people for demining,⁶¹ but more recent figures for demining capacity are not available.

Demining and battle area clearance results for 2008⁶²

Province	Area released (km ²)	Antipersonnel mines destroyed	Antivehicle mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Ilam	743	43,560	25,420	75,849
Kermanshah	51	13,676	3,580	42,228
Khuzestan	1,204	38,225	48,896	82,325
Kurdistan	4	10,875	0	0
West Azerbaijan	4	12,253	0	0
Total	2,006	118,589	77,896	200,402

In the past, the casualty rate among deminers was very high. In 2007, IRMAC reported that 168 demining personnel had been killed and a further 697 injured over the course of eight years. This would represent the highest known casualty rate for deminers in the world. In 2008, there were a further 61 reported demining casualties (of whom four were killed and 57 injured). In response to the level of casualties, demining units are now obliged to use personal protective equipment systematically and the use of mechanical demining equipment, such as flails, has been increased.⁶³

Quality management and handover of cleared land

Quality management is performed for IRMAC by Mohandesin Moshaverine Omrane Iran (Omran Iran Consulting Engineers, OICE).⁶⁴ Once quality management is complete, IRMAC issues a handover certificate, which should be signed first by the contractor, then by OICE, thirdly by IRMAC, and lastly by the land owner (beneficiary).⁶⁵ Governors General (the representatives of the government at the provincial level) monitor the post-clearance use of land. They report any incident in previously cleared areas. The contractor is responsible to re-clear lands on which any incident occurs.⁶⁶

⁵⁹ International Congress on Landmine Induced Injuries, "Hand in Hand Toward a Landmine Free World," Information booklet, March 2007, p. 12.

⁶⁰ ISOP, "ISOP Profile, Missions," www.isop-co.com.

⁶¹ International Congress on Landmine Induced Injuries, "Hand in Hand Toward a Landmine Free World," Information booklet, March 2007, p. 14.

⁶² Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by Amir Hossein Saedi, IRMAC, 21 July 2009.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Interview with Amir Hossein Saedi, IRMAC, Tehran, 1 November 2008.

⁶⁵ Interview with Mr. Raesi, Deputy Director, OICE, Tehran, 2 November 2008.

⁶⁶ Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by Amir Hossein Saedi, IRMAC, 21 July 2009.

Risk Education

In 2008, RE was provided by the State Welfare Organization of the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security (Behzisti), the IRCS, and local NGOs. The ICRC continued to provide technical and financial support.⁶⁷ The number of beneficiaries reached is unknown, but target groups included schoolchildren, teachers, nomads and shepherds living in five affected western provinces (Ilam, Kermanshah, Khuzestan, Kurdistan, and West Azerbaijan), as well as Afghan returnees across the country.⁶⁸

The State Welfare Organization provided school-based RE in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and IRMAC in the five affected western provinces.⁶⁹ Awareness messages were provided in all schools in Ilam and between 60 and 80% of all schools in contaminated areas of the remaining provinces.⁷⁰ In 2008, with ICRC support, it organized a training session for RE trainers in Ilam province.⁷¹ The State Welfare Organization used various RE materials including books, leaflets, and documentaries translated into local languages.⁷² It also implemented a pilot RE project that specifically targeted farmers and nomads in Kermanshah province.⁷³ In 2009, the State Welfare Organization's RE activities were expanded to target some 30,000 people in Ilam province (from some 5,000-6,000 people previously).⁷⁴

The IRCS provided awareness messages for local people in the five affected western provinces and for Afghan returnees.⁷⁵ The IRCS training program for volunteers in affected provinces included an RE component.⁷⁶ The ICRC also supported another local NGO which was working with the army to mark some dangerous areas in Kermanshah province.⁷⁷

The NGO Pishgaman Maaf implemented an RE pilot project in 10 villages in Kurdistan province.⁷⁸ Thirty-one members of Pishgaman Maaf received RE training from the ICRC and the IRCS.⁷⁹ In 2009, coverage has been expanded to 40 villages.⁸⁰

From 2002 to 2008, RE has been provided in affected areas by several governmental and non-governmental organizations including the IRCS, the State Welfare Organization, IRMAC, local NGOs, Zaynab Welfare Agency, ICRC, and UNHCR.

Victim Assistance

The total number of survivors is unknown but estimated to be between 546 and 6,000.⁸¹ Little information is available on governmental and NGO agencies providing assistance to persons with disabilities, including war-injured and mine/ERW survivors. In 2009, during the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, the Ministry of Defense

⁶⁷ Telephone interview with Nima Dadbin, ICRC, 27 July 2009.

⁶⁸ Ibid; and ICRC, "Special Report—Annual Report 2008," Geneva, April 2009, pp. 16, 20.

⁶⁹ Telephone interview with Nima Dadbin, ICRC, 27 July 2009.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ ICRC, "Special Report: Mine Action 2008," Geneva, April 2009, p. 20; ICRC, "Annual Report 2008," Geneva, 27 May 2009, p. 340; and telephone interview with Nima Dadbin, ICRC, 27 July 2009.

⁷² Interview with Mr. Ziyai, State Welfare Organization, Tehran, 3 November 2008; and telephone interview with Nima Dadbin, ICRC, 27 July 2009.

⁷³ Telephone interview with Nima Dadbin, ICRC, 27 July 2009.

⁷⁴ ICRC, "Special Report: Mine Action 2008," Geneva, April 2009, p. 16; and email from Camilla Waszink, Policy Adviser, Arms Unit, Legal Division, ICRC, 28 August 2009.

⁷⁵ ICRC, "Annual Report 2008," Geneva, April 2009, pp. 16, 20.

⁷⁶ Telephone interview with Nima Dadbin, ICRC, 27 July 2009.

⁷⁷ ICRC, "Annual Report 2008," Geneva, 27 May 2009, p. 340.

⁷⁸ Ibid, pp. 339–340.

⁷⁹ ICRC, "Special Report: Mine Action 2008," Geneva, April 2009, p. 20.

⁸⁰ Telephone interview with Nima Dadbin, ICRC, 27 July 2009.

⁸¹ The lower number is based on Landmine Monitor data (1999–2009); the higher one is based on UN statistics from UN, "2006 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects," New York, 2007, p. 199. For more information see the casualty section in this report.

stated its commitment to support mine survivors and their families.⁸² However, in 2008, several persons with war injuries expressed their dissatisfaction with the assistance received, stating that many disabled do not enjoy decent standards of living.⁸³

Services to assist mine/ERW survivors are in place, although quality and accessibility varies between urban centers and remote villages.⁸⁴ Eligibility criteria for mine/ERW survivors who want to receive government services is an issue of concern, as the procedures are time-consuming.⁸⁵ Certain categories of people are excluded from services/benefits (for instance those who intentionally entered a minefield or tampered with a device).

Specialized care is available in large cities (usually provincial capitals). Institutions providing medical and rehabilitation services to mine/ERW survivors included the Mehran Emergency Center, Ilam provincial hospital, Sanandaj Besat Hospital in Kurdistan province, the STSRC in Tehran, and the Kowsar Orthotics and Prosthetics Center.⁸⁶ While there are state funds for vocational training of persons with disabilities, these centers are mainly in urban areas.⁸⁷

Iran has legislation protecting persons with disabilities. Accessibility for persons with disabilities remained an issue of concern.⁸⁸ As of 1 July 2009, Iran had not signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities or its Optional Protocol.

Victim assistance activities

The number of mine/ERW survivors assisted in 2008 or in the last 10 years is unknown. The Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs provides a wide range of services to war-injured persons (including mine/ERW survivors) and their families, including healthcare, education, and financial support.⁸⁹

JMERC does not implement VA activities but conducts research on mine/ERW casualties. As of May 2009, ongoing projects included: a comparative study on post-traumatic stress disorder among mine/ERW and chemical weapons survivors in Kurdistan province; a study to increase the knowledge of mine/ERW survivors using a special educational package; and a collective medical examination camp for 50 young survivors of mine/ERW survivors.⁹⁰

In April 2008, IRMAC initiated a new project to provide support, including social and psychological assistance, for the families of mine casualties, specifically focused on deminers' families. No progress was reported as of July 2009.

Support for Mine Action

Landmine Monitor is not aware of comprehensive cost estimates for meeting mine action needs in Iran. Iran has not reported on the value of national funding to its own mine action program in 2008, as in 2007. As of May 2009 Iran had contributed three battle area clearance teams to support clearance efforts in southern Lebanon.⁹¹ It has not reported on the value of this contribution to date.

⁸² "Iran ready to support mine casualties: Defense Minister," *Iranian Students News Agency* (Tehran), 4 April 2009, www.isna.ir.

⁸³ Fariba Pajooah "Iranians Count Cost of War, Two Decades on," *Mianeh* (Tehran), 3 June 2008, www.mianeh.net; and see *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, p. 864.

⁸⁴ Telephone interview with Nima Dadbin, ICRC, 27 July 2009; and see *Landmine Monitor Report 2007*, p. 851.

⁸⁵ Email from Dr. Reza Soroush, JMERC, 6 May 2009.

⁸⁶ See *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, p. 863.

⁸⁷ US Department of State, "2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran," Washington, DC, 25 February 2009.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Email from Dr. Reza Soroush, JMERC, 6 May 2009; and interview with Dr. Reza Soroush, JMERC, Tehran, 3 November 2008.

⁹⁰ Email from Dr. Reza Soroush, JMERC, 6 May 2009.

⁹¹ Presentation by Col. Mohammed Fehmi, Head, Lebanon Mine Action Center, Beirut to International Support Group, Beirut, 14 May 2009.