

## National Casualty and Victim Assistance Surveys

### Introduction

Surveying casualties of mines, cluster munition remnants, and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) as well as assessing the needs of survivors, their families, and affected communities are key to the victim assistance activities of the Mine Ban Treaty and Convention on Cluster Munitions. To address their victim assistance challenges, states should collect all necessary data on survivors disaggregated by gender and age and include information on both the needs of survivors and the availability of relevant services.

### Survey Activity in 2009

In 2009, annual data on mine/ERW casualties was collected in numerous countries and in some places, survey or needs assessment activities were undertaken as pilot projects or had a limited geographic scope. Most notably, in Sudan, a Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) collected data on recent casualties and services received by survivors in those areas known to be most affected by mines/ERW in 16 of Sudan's 26 states. However, Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor only identified seven national surveys of mine/ERW casualties or survivors: Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) which is a States Party to both treaties, Algeria, Jordan, Peru,<sup>1</sup> and Thailand which are States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty, and Lao PDR and Lebanon, a State Party and a signatory to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, respectively.

However, none of these national surveys includes all the elements of a comprehensive national survivor survey and needs assessment such as data disaggregated by gender and age, and data collected in an accessible and accurate format, being used fully and effectively by the stakeholders to make relevant services available according to needs. In Algeria, BiH, Jordan, Lao PDR, and Lebanon the main result was an increase in the number of known casualties. In Thailand, the number of Thai survivors still living in the country was clarified. Peru only reviewed the status of known survivors.

### Recent National Surveys

Country	Survey Completed	Period Covered	Casualties		Age and Gender	Needs Assessment
			Identified by survey	Previously recorded		
Algeria	2009	1962-October 2009	6,762 landmine casualties	Previously unknown	N/A	Yes
BiH	2009	1992-2009	7,431 mine/ERW casualties	4,998 mine/ERW casualties	Yes	Yes
Jordan	2010	1948-March 2010	899 mine/ERW casualties	779	Yes	Yes
Lao PDR	Ongoing, but first phase complete in	1964-2008	50,136 mine/ERW casualties	Previously unknown	Yes	Yes

<sup>1</sup> Signatory to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

	2008					
<b>Lebanon</b>	2009	July 2006-2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes
<b>Peru</b>	2010	To February 2010	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Thailand</b>	2009	To April 2009	1,252 mine/ERW survivors	1,971 people injured by mines/ERW	Yes	Yes

N/A=information not available

Some national surveys were limited to data on landmine casualties, and did not adequately record casualties of other explosive devices, for example in Algeria no information was available on casualties caused by ERW.

### **Use of Survey Information**

Most countries reported that their survey included an assessment of the needs of survivors which was to be used to develop or improve victim assistance plans, to better integrate victim assistance into the health or disability sectors, and to improve referrals or service delivery. However, by the end of 2009, not all countries had begun to use information collected to assist survivors, their families, or communities. In Lao PDR and Lebanon data collected was used by victim assistance stakeholders for planning purposes and/or to improve referral of survivors to existing services. Those two countries also initiated further surveys in 2010 to cover casualties from time periods not yet surveyed.<sup>2</sup> However, in Peru, the revised information on survivors' status was only used to improve their access to government entitlements.

National surveys are only useful when data is made available to stakeholders in an accessible format and when data is accurate. In BiH several key actors were unable to access the information and one service provider found the data to be inaccurate. As a result, just one victim assistance project used the survey data. One important drawback of the survey in Lao PDR was that the number of survivors still alive at the time of the survey was not recorded, although this number was thought to be significantly lower than the total number of people injured given that the majority of incidents occurred decades ago.

Data from surveys should be utilized to link needs and services. In Colombia an effort to map victim assistance services at the national level was not linked to comprehensive efforts to determine the number and needs of mine/ERW survivors.

The usefulness of survey data decreases over time if not systematically used for victim assistance implementation purposes. In Iraq, there were no national efforts to assess the needs of survivors despite the completion in 2006 of Phase 1 of the Iraq LIS in 13 of the 18 Iraqi governorates or to actively use the ILIS casualty data for planning purposes. Although the Sudan LIS was completed in June 2009, Sudan noted in November 2009, as it has done repeatedly since 2004, that the lack of sufficient data on landmine survivors in some mine/ERW affected areas remained "one of the most pressing challenges" for victim assistance provision.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In the case of Lao PDR, the timeframe was from 2008 onwards and in Lebanon survey activity was to include survivors injured prior to July 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Statement of Sudan, Second Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty, Cartagena, 30 November 2010.

### **International frameworks and casualty/survivor surveys**

- In the 2005-2009 **Nairobi Action Plan** of the Mine Ban Treaty, States Parties agreed to develop or enhance national mine victim data collection as a baseline for appropriate victim assistance.
- The 2010-2014 **Cartagena Action Plan** of the Mine Ban Treaty went a step further as states committed to collect all necessary data, disaggregated by gender and age, and to assess the needs of survivors and the availability of relevant services.
- The **Convention on Cluster Munitions** victim assistance provisions compel relevant States Parties to make every effort to collect reliable relevant data, to assess cluster munition victims' needs, and to provide adequate age- and gender-sensitive assistance.