



**REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
MINE ACTION CENTRE**

**Meetings of the Standing Committees
AP Mine Ban Convention
Geneva, 20-24 June 2011**

**Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine
Action Technologies**

I

Problems connected with demining in Serbia are numerous and are mostly conditioned by specificity of the mine situation and lack of funds for conducting demining.

Specificity of the mine problem in Serbia is reflected in the fact that in our country, apart from the groups of mines in the south of Serbia along the administrative line with Kosovo and Metohija, large area is significantly contaminated with unexploded cluster munitions, air bombs – rockets and other types of unexploded ordnance.

II

After the foundation of the Centre as a national coordinating body for demining, in the border area with the Republic of Croatia, in the Municipality of Šid, a survey of 10.000.000 sqm of mined suspected area was conducted. It was established that antipersonnel and antitank mines were emplaced in the area of 6.197.791 sqm. Given that it was not possible to remove only antipersonnel mines without removing antitank mines, the Centre made 44 demining projects, namely projects for clearance of all kinds and types of mines and other unexploded ordnance in the mined area totaling 6.197.791 sqm, where 5.139 various types of mines and UXO were found and destroyed (3.997 AP, 842 AT and 300 UXO). Demining was conducted owing to donations, which were, through the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF) provided by the Governments of the USA, Norway, Germany, Spain, Canada, and Czech Republic, also by the Delegation of European Commission, as well as by the State Enterprise "Building Directorate of Serbia".

There are no more minefields in the border area with Croatia. The last mines in that area were removed on 10 November 2009.

IV

It is assumed that from the 1999 bombing, 64 air bombs-rockets weighed 930 kg can be found in 44 locations in the ground at depth of up to 20 meters, as well as in the river beds of the rivers Danube and Sava.

V

It is suspected that after fire and explosion at the military depot in Paraćin, on 19 October 2006, various types of unexploded ordnance are located outside of military objects in the area of about 5,000,000 sqm.

On the border with Romania, In the Đerdap Gorge, on the Danube River, in 1944, German war vessels containing large quantity of unexploded ordnance, including anti-ship mines, were sunken, and now pose a threat to people, navigation and environment. In 2006, a survey was conducted and the positions of 22 sunken vessels were determined, as well as the existence of various types of UXO and anti-ship mines on 4 of these vessels.

VI

The Serbian Mine Action Centre achieves international cooperation with numerous subjects in the field of mine action.

Cooperation with the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF), as well as regional cooperation through various forms of the work of the Southeastern Europe Mine Action Coordination Council, known as SEEMACC, give excellent results.

Good bilateral cooperation has been achieved with Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre, particularly with the Croatian Mine Action Centre, through exchange of experience about demining, quality control of demining, making and implementation of projects, training of personnel, etc.

In order to enhance its so far cooperation, the Centre has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ITF on 24 February 2011, and signing of Protocol on cooperation with Croatian Mine Action Centre is in final phase.

VII

Problems related to demining in Serbia are numerous and without financial help of international community and donors Serbia alone can not solve these problems in reasonable time.

Antipersonnel mines are no longer produced in Serbia.
Stockpiles of antipersonnel mines were destroyed in May 2007.

Despite the fact that the Republic of Serbia destroyed all stockpiles of antipersonnel mines and cleared all minefields which were known to us by December 2009, the Republic of Serbia can not yet report that it have completed implementation of Article 5 of the Convention, since towards the end of 2009 we obtained knowledge of groups of various types of mines emplaced along the administrative line with Kosovo and Metohija.

Immediately upon discovering existence of groups of various types of mines in that part of Serbia, we have organized a survey with the help of the Norwegian People's Aid and ITF. The results of the survey have shown that in the municipalities of Bujanovac and Preševo mine suspected area totals around 3.800.000 sqm. The Centre has prepared demining projects for one part of the area and is conducting activities for provision of donations or other sources of funding so that demining operations can commence in this part of Serbia.

Please note that Serbia in accordance with Ottawa Convention has undertaken obligation to remove all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction by 1 March 2014 and hopefully, with the support of donors, we will be able to achieve it.

III

It has been established that during the 1999 bombing of our country, NATO dropped cluster bombs, which contained 145 – 247 pieces of cluster munitions, in 16 municipalities in the Republic of Serbia without Kosovo and Metohija: (Niš City-Municipality of Medijana and Municipality of Crveni Krst, Kraljevo, Brus, Preševo, Bujanovac, Kuršumljija, Raška, Gadžin Han, Laposavić, Sjenica, Čačak, Vladimirci, Knić, Stara Pazova and Sopot).

During and immediately after the bombing, the Serbian Army and police conducted removal of unexploded cluster munitions from the surface which contributed significantly to safety of people and substantially influenced the reduction of the number of the injured, above all, civilians. Given that cluster munitions that went through the ground were not detected and destroyed, the removal has to be done now in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards in order to provide complete safety to people.

So far it has been established that in the territory of the above municipalities there are 290 risk micro locations, total area of 14,920,000 sqm. Another 110 suspected micro locations, total area of 6,151,000 sqm, have been noted and will be additionally surveyed in order to confirm or reject suspicions on existence of cluster munitions in these locations.

It is estimated that after the additional survey the area to be demined in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards will total around 15,000,000 sqm.