

Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties

16 November - 20 November 2020, Geneva



Statement - Mine Situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honor and pleasure to address you on behalf Demining Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs and Demining commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is in charge of demining, with the help of donors and domestic sources of funding, has done a great job in removing the mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants, as well as considerable work on developing capacity and technology to implement operational activities.

Unfortunately, despite the efforts made, BiH is still at the very top in terms of the number of landmines and unexploded ordnance in Europe. Mine suspected areas amount to 965.26 km² or 1.88% of the total territory of the country.

There is a decreasing trend in mine victims' statistics in 2019 and 2020 compared to the previous years where Bosnia and Herzegovina is making additional efforts to further reduce the number of victims through all aspects of mine action. In these two years has been no civilian casualties, which is certainly the result of risk reduction through demining and marking operations and numerous mine risk education activities.

Our Ministry is determined to solve this problem and take measures in that direction in order to eliminate the remaining mines in the best possible way. We would like to remind you all that during the last year the BiH Ministry Council adopted a new Mine Action Strategy for the period 2018-2025, which took the concept of "Land release" as a fundamental principle of resolving demining problem, while adapting mine action domestic legislation with Mine Action International Standards.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs has high expectations in the implementation of "Land Release" activities, which aims to liberate more mine suspected areas using all available and necessary methods, and with as low funding as possible.

Over the past 18 months, the Mine Action Center in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in cooperation with the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the NGO "Norwegian People's Aid", has implemented a project entitled: "General Assessment of Mine Suspected Areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2019" funded by the European Union. The result of this project is a clearer picture of the mine situation with priorities set to make the mine action process even more transparent and precise. The project processed data for 143 municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the potential mine danger was confirmed in 118 municipalities, while a total of 478 mine suspected areas was made, as logical territorial units for Land Release tasks.

Based on the results of this project, by the end of 2020, the Ministry will send a request to the Council of Ministers of BiH to initiate a revision of the Strategy 2018-2025 in order to be in line with the present mine situation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has sufficient capacities to carry out mine actions planned by Strategy 2018 - 2025. Involvement of human resources within the companies is not more than 50% and it is very unequal during the year, which has particularly bad effect on commercial and non-governmental companies, who do not have their own sources of funding. The ratio of donor funds is still 55% compared to 45% from national sources

I would also like to note that a new extension of the deadline for the period 2021-2027 has been requested under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Anti-Personnel Mines, which was signed in 1997. Fulfillment of this obligations for BiH was the end of 2019, but still not all obligations have been completed. Our country also requested to extend the deadline for the removal of all remaining assets under the Convention on Cluster Munitions for the period 2021-2022. , which is expected to be approved at the next annual meetings of the conventions to be held by the end of this year.

As you know, the existing Law on Demining in Bosnia and Herzegovina was adopted in 2002 and it is a kind of backbone for our country demining activities. And we all know that things can always be better and that we can always do more. Additionally what I can say with full responsibility is that the Ministry of Civil Affairs will make all efforts in the upcoming period to do all what is required to make all regulations related to mine action as high quality and useful and finally more easier to be implemented.

Thank you for your attention!