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Canada's Support for Mine Action in Europe and Central Asia

Victim Assistance
Mine Clearance
Mine Risk Education
Stockpile Destruction
Advocacy and Coordination



Department of Foreign Affairs
and International Trade

Ministère des Affaires étrangères
et du Commerce international

Canada

Victim Assistance

Dept. of Foreign Affairs
Min. des Affaires étrangères
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In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, Canada is supporting a Queen's University peer counselling project for landmine survivors and other disabled persons. Training for peer counselling leaders and local health professionals is provided on issues such as care of amputations, prosthetics and orthotics, psycho-social

issues, community and family interaction and entrepreneurship training. Canada also contributed to the International Children's Institute for its "Support to Children Victims of Landmines" project in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**. This project aims to build coping skills among children affected by landmines, allow-

ing them to successfully reintegrate into their schools and communities.

Canada contributed to Physicians for Human Rights for pilot testing of landmine survivor surveys in **Azerbaijan** and the production of a manual containing the survey instruments and detailed instructions on their use.



PHOTO: ICRC/Boris Heger

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Victim assistance programs address the immediate and long-term needs of landmine victims, from initial emergency treatment to social and economic rehabilitation. Canada's contributions to these programs help landmine survivors rebuild their lives and communities.

"Each State Party in a position to do so shall provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration, of mine victims" - Ottawa Convention, Article 6.3

Mine Clearance

Clearing mined land and returning it to safe and productive use is fundamental to addressing the humanitarian needs of people living near minefields. Canada supports community-oriented, impact-based models of mine clearance in an effort to build the capacity of local partners to clear priority land.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, Canada is contributing to the demining programs of Norwegian People's Aid, Akcija Protiv Mina (implemented by Handicap International) and the Entity Armed Forces (implemented by SFOR) with operations throughout the country. All of these programs use integrated demining techniques that involve manual clearance, mine

detection dog teams, and mechanical equipment.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia**, Canada provides support to the Canadian International Demining Corps for the training, accreditation and deployment of 36 mine detection dog teams.

In **Georgia**, Canada contributed to the British NGO HALO Trust for its integrated

mine action program in Abkhazia, including survey and mine marking activities. Canada's contribution supports ongoing survey work, the operation and deployment of two mine marking teams and the continued operation of the specialist explosive ordnance disposal section.

In **Yugoslavia**, Canada contributed funds, through the Danube Commission, for the clearance of landmines and unexploded ordnance in an effort to reopen the Danube waterway.

Canada played an important role in the UN-coordinated Mine Action Program in Kosovo, widely recognized as a resounding success. In the process, nearly 45,000 mines and unexploded ordnance were destroyed and over 30 million square metres of land were effectively cleared.

In **Macedonia**, Canada contributed funds for the provision of protective equipment and related training in an effort to expand mine clearance operations. Canada also provided funds for the purchase of mine detectors to support mine clearance operations in **Belarus**.



PHOTO: CIDA/Carol Hart

"Each State Party undertakes to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control" - Ottawa Convention, Article 5.1

Mine Risk Education

Canada supports mine risk education programs that help people living in affected areas modify dangerous behaviour that could lead to mine accidents. These programs engage people in learning about the dangers of mines, using educational techniques appropriate to culture, age, literacy levels and other factors. Mine awareness programs also help to identify where mines are laid, aiding mine clearance efforts.

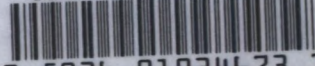
In **Georgia**, Canada supported the operation of three mine awareness teams in addition to the production and broad distribution of school supplies bearing mine awareness messages through HALO Trust.

<h2>Stockpile Destruction</h2> <p>Destruction of stockpiles is key to preventing the spread of landmines, and can be a technically complex task. Canada offers support to help countries, in particular States Parties, to meet their obligations to destroy stockpiled mines.</p>	<p>In Albania, Canada sponsored a NATO Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) Trust Fund project, managed by the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA), to destroy 1.6 million landmines. The destruction was completed in April 2002, without incident, a full two years ahead of the destruction deadline. Canada also engaged the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining to oversee verification and quality assurance measures for this project.</p> <p>In Moldova, Canada is participating in a Netherlands-</p>	<p>sponsored NATO EAPC Trust Fund project to destroy munitions, including landmines and rocket fuel.</p> <p>In Ukraine, Canada is sponsoring a NATO EAPC Trust Fund project to destroy 400,000 PMN landmines. The project was officially opened by the NATO Secretary General in July 2002. Canada is also developing, along with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Union, a project to destroy almost 6 million PFM landmines in Ukraine.</p>	<p>Through its involvement with the Reay Group, Canada participated in a Belgian-led stockpile destruction assessment mission to Southeast Europe. This mission identified the assistance requirements, if any, of various countries with the aim of helping them meet their destruction deadlines under the terms of the Ottawa Convention. As a result, Canada and Norway are providing technical equipment to Romania to assist in the destruction of their stockpiles.</p>
<h2>Advocacy and Coordination</h2> <p>As the effort shifts from the achievement of a comprehensive ban on anti-personnel landmines to implementing the Ottawa Convention, maintaining public support remains crucial. Canada supports efforts to universalize the Convention and continues to raise awareness at home and abroad of its important role in the elimination of landmines.</p>	<p>Since the signing of the Ottawa Convention, Canada has supported a variety of sub-regional initiatives promoting its universalization and implementation in Europe and Central Asia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Canada provided support to a NATO EAPC South Eastern Europe Initiative Workshop on Regionally focused Mine Action in Greece, in May 2001. - Canada continues to lend its support to the Reay Group on Mine Action, a forum that promotes a coordinated approach to mine action in the Balkans. The Regional Support Group for Mine Action, functioning under the auspices of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, was renamed in honour of Lieutenant General (Retired) Gordon Reay, who served as Chairman of the Reay Group 	<p>until his death in December 2000. This initiative has been built on existing structures in an effort to avoid duplication, and to assist coordination efforts by identifying and filling gaps in activities taking place at a regional level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Canada, through the UNDP, is providing institutional support to further develop the management and coordination capacity, technical and safety standards, communication infrastructure and upgrade minefield mapping capabilities of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre and Entity Mine Action Centres. - Canada and Hungary co-hosted a seminar on the Destruction of the PFM-1 Mine held in Budapest in February 2001. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General (Retired) Maurice Baril, former Chief of the Defence Staff, led a mission to Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland and Poland with the aim of opening a military-to-military dialogue on the issue of banning landmines. - Together with the Government of Armenia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Canada co-hosted a seminar in Yerevan entitled "Banning Anti-Personnel Landmines: Cooperation and Capacity Building" in October 2002. - Canada co-sponsored with the Government of Poland the "Understanding the Ottawa Convention" conference in Warsaw in June 2001.

Europe and Central Asia are home to two of the world's 10 most mine-affected states: Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia. The estimated number of landmines in the ground is enormous. However, the number of victims, the amount of unusable arable land, the impact on local economies, and the slow pace of reconstruction serve as the best indicators of the adverse impact of landmines. The most insidious aspect of mines is the fear they create by denying human beings the right to live and move freely during their daily lives.

Europe has been at the forefront of the campaign to ban anti-personnel landmines. From the first calls to action from the field in the mid-1990s to the continuing efforts of states to implement the Ottawa Convention, the region has displayed a genuine commitment toward mine action. To date, 40 countries in Europe and Central Asia have signed the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel landmines and 35 have formally accepted its obligations through ratification or accession.

Europe and Central Asia remain a key focus for the Canadian Landmine Fund, established by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien in 1997 to support global mine action. Canada's contributions are helping Europeans and Central Asians to implement their Ottawa Convention obligations, meet the needs of mine-affected communities and mobilize global resources for mine action.



"I stepped on a landmine when I was 10 years old, outside playing with my friends. The explosion took off my right foot. I now wear an artificial leg. When it happened to me I felt that I had to keep strong. I was the oldest boy in my family and my father was missing. My mother and two younger brothers needed me to grow up fast. So I keep a smile and positive attitude that helps me and helps others around me."

- Nermin Tahić, Bosnian Landmine Survivor, in a greeting statement to Her Majesty Queen Noor in Tuzla, June 2001.



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