A Survey of Landmines in Top Ten Countries with Most Landmines

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Abstract - The message for the International Day of Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action on 4 April 2014 by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated that the Convention on the Anti-Personnel Mines Ban was adopted in 161 states. However, millions of landmines in 78 states are still waiting to be removed. Every year, landmines kill 15,000 - 20,000 people and most of them are children, women and the elderly. Furthermore, landmines are still used by the armed forces, the terrorists, and even civilians to protect their properties. This paper surveys problems of landmines and the efforts and progresses of landmine removals in the ten countries with most landmines, namely, Egypt, Iran, Angola, Afghanistan, Iraq, Cambodia, Kuwait, Bosnia, Mozambique, and Somalia.

Keywords - Landmine Problems, Landmine Removal, Landmine Top Ten Countries

I. INTRODUCTION

On 4 April 2014, the International Day of Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon stated that the Convention on the Anti-Personnel Mines Ban has been adopted in 161 states [1, 2]. However, every year, landmines kill 15,000 to 20,000 people and most of them children, women and the elderly. In addition to those killed, a lot more have been severely maim Landmines are scattered in some 78 countries. Furthermore, landmines are continued to be used both by the armed forces in war and by civilian in protecting their farms and other properties from intruders trying to rob them. Another reason for use of landmines is that terrorists like to use them against civilian population to force them from their communities. There is a growing list of outlaw organizations that are using more and more landmines. Landmines are simple and easy to make and workshop can be set up to make landmines. As a matter of fact, landmines have been used in every war since 1938 even though landmines have resulted in death or injury of civilian and contributed to limited military objectives. There are over 100 million landmines in the ground and over 100 million in military warehouses. The landmines can be bought at US$ 5 - 10 each. Furthermore, China is building landmines for less than US$ 3 each. One of the most effective ways to help the officials in clearing landmines is to train local volunteers to be members of the part-time mine clearing team. This paper surveys problems of landmines and the efforts and progresses of landmine removals in the ten countries with most landmines, namely, Egypt, Iran, Angola, Afghanistan, Iraq, Cambodia, Kuwait, Bosnia, Mozambique, and Somalia.

II. LANDMINES IN EGYPT

Searching Google for "Landmines in Egypt", 376,000 entries were found. From the web "Landminefree.org" [3], the number of landmines in Egypt to be removed is about 23 millions even though ten millions have been cleared in the past 15 years. One of the problems for Egypt is that most of the landmines are very old and very difficult to locate. The landmines were from World War II as well as the Egypt-Israel wars of 1956, 1967, and 1973. The landmines problems hindered
economic development of the rich area in the North coast and red sea. In the war between 1940 to 1943, Egyptian and British allies were fighting German and Italian forces to control North Africa and they infested the area with landmines. All the area contaminated is about 22% of Egypt and cannot be fully developed. In particular, the problem of landmines caused significant reduction of Egyptian production of oil and natural gas.

III. LANDMINES IN IRAN

Searching Google for "Landmines in Iran", 409,000 entries were found. According to the web "strategypage.com" [4], posted on 9 January 2014, Iran stated that it has cleared 60% of the mines planted during the 1980s war with Iraq. However, there are still 16 million mines left to be cleared. The mines are causing over 300 casualties per year. As an example, on 18 October 2013, seven school children in Iran were injured by landmines while playing in a field. As another example, two people were killed by the explosion of a mine left in an abandoned police station. Due to the large number of mines, many agricultural areas of land have been left unattended. Although the war has ended, the mines are still alive and moved by rain and wind; therefore, it is difficult to locate and clear.

IV. LANDMINES IN ANGOLA

Searching Google for "Landmines in Angola", 350,000 entries were found. According to www.undp.org/... [5], there are 10 - 20 million landmines waiting to be removed. However, Angola is a small country and therefore, it can be said that there are now 1 - 2 mines for every Angolan. In the past 30 years, about 80,000 Angolan have been killed or maimed by landmines since Angola's 27-year civil war started in the year 1975. More than 870 million square meters of land in Angola have been cleared of landmines. UNDP has trained over 1,000 demining specialists at the National Demining Institute. There was a five-year US$ 4.5 million Mine Action Capacity Development Project supported by Italy, Japan, Sweden and UNDP.

V. LANDMINES IN AFGHANISTAN

Searching Google for "Landmines in Afghanistan", 562,000 entries were found. According to www.afghan-network.net [6], there are about 10 million landmines waiting to be removed. It started in the war of 1978. Soviet and Afghanistan soldiers planted landmines in the year 1979 to 1992. An average of about 10 - 12 people per day were affected by landmines and about 50% of them died because of insufficient medical treatment. Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, is the most heavily mined capital city of the whole world. The UN stated in the year 1993 that 162 of 365 districts of the country were affected by landmines. Minefields accounted for 466 sq. km. Five provinces out of 29 had surveyed the largest amount of mines. During the fighting, 50% of Afghan villages were destroyed, 25% of paved roads were ruined. Crop harvests were seriously affected. In term of poverty and development, UNDP ranked Afghanistan 171 out of 173 countries, i.e. better than only 2 countries.

VI. LANDMINES IN IRAQ

Searching Google for "Landmines in Iraq", 450,000 entries were found. According to www.hrw.org/legacy/campaigns/iraq/iraqmine s1212.htm [7], there are about 10 million landmines waiting to be removed. They are from World War II, 1980-1988 Iraq-Iran War, 1991 Gulf War, and two decades of internal conflict. Landmines are problems in the North, along the Iran-Iraq border, and throughout the Central and Southern regions of the country. In the year 2001, an estimate of 30 casualties per month was reported. Humanitarian mine action programs have been in operation with funding of about US$80 from 1993 to 2001. The UN also funded Iraq Mine Action Program (MAP) with about US$20 in the year 2000, and over US$28 million in the year 2001. The Army of Iraq also used mines in Kuwait in 1990-1991.
VII. LANDMINES IN CAMBODIA

Searching Google for "Landmines in Cambodia", 460,000 entries were found. According to Wikipedia [8], there are about 4 - 6 million landmines waiting to be removed. From the three decades of war in Cambodia, there have been some 40,000 amputees which is the highest among all countries in the world. In the year 2013, 111 people were dead or injured by the mines. The landmines in Cambodia were placed by the Khmer Rouge, the Heng Samrin, and the Hun Sen regimes during the Civil War in Cambodia in the 1970s. One of the problems is that people who placed the mines do not remember them a few years later. From the survey conducted in the year 2002, 20% of all villages in Cambodia are still contaminated by landmines, resulting in restrictions on access to agricultural land, pasture land, forests, and water resources. The Cambodian Mine Action Authority (CMMA) estimates that the combined cost for demining operations are US$30 million and that Cambodia needs 10 to 20 years to clear the mines.

VIII. LANDMINES IN KUWAIT

Searching Google for "Landmines in Kuwait", 216,000 entries were found. According to The-monitor.org [9], there are about 5 million landmines waiting to be removed. In the year 2001, Kuwait stated that 45,845 landmines have been removed following the Gulf War and have been destroyed and that Kuwait forces have never used landmines. In the year 2002, the US moved at least 7,776 mines from Qatar to Kuwait. In the year 2003, Kuwait collected and destroyed 28,262 pieces of ammunitions from an area of about 154.6 square kilometers. From March 2000 to December 2002, there were 22 mine casualties in Kuwait. From 1991 to 1999, sixty were killed and 131 injured during mine clearance operations. The Kuwait Red Crescent Society provides services for persons with disabilities including mine survivors. In the year 2002, NGO called the Kuwaiti Society for Landmine Victims Assistance was established. In the year 2003, approximately 35 civil groups requested that the government establish a national fund for people with disabilities in Kuwait, with financial support from individual and company donations.

IX. LANDMINES IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Searching Google for "Landmines in Bosnia-Herzegovina", 190,000 entries were found. According to Wikipedia [10], there are about 3 million landmines waiting to be removed. Landmine contamination in Bosnia and Herzegovina became serious after the war from 1992 to 1995. By the year 1996, 2 million landmines littered Bosnia. By September 2013, there are landmines in 28,699 locations with a total of 2.4% of the country's territory. In May 2014, extensive landslides and flooding unearthed landmines so severe that government had to send in de-mining workers in residential areas. The country hoped to clear all landmines by the year 2019. From the year 1992 to 2008, 5,005 people were killed or maimed by landmines. The casualties after the year 2008 are 28 for 2009, 14 for 2010, and 23 for 2011.

X. LANDMINES IN MOZAMBIQUE

Searching Google for "Landmines in Mozambique", 294,000 entries were found. According to Aljazeera.com [11], there are about 3 million landmines waiting to be removed. Hundreds of thousands of mines were planted in Mozambique during the war of independence from the year 1964 to 1975 against Portugal, and in the civil war from 1976 to 1992. However, Mozambique is expected to be declared landmine-free soon. The de-mining efforts in Mozambique have become a model for other countries. A team from Handicap International which is a nongovernmental organization has been de-mining around power supply line which had been mined during the civil war to protect the power line from sabotage. In de-mining, human de-miners with metal detectors enter
the danger zone, with a dog with keen sense of smell to sniff out explosives in the ground. The dogs are about 30 times faster than human de-miners. Also, the dogs' weight distribution make them less likely to trigger the mines.

XI. LANDMINES IN SOMALIA

Searching Google for "Landmines in Somalia", 336,000 entries were found. According to Irinnews.org [12], there are about 1 million landmines waiting to be removed. The problem of landmines in Somalia is the result of internal and regional conflicts over about 40 years. The first conflict in the year 1964 and the second conflict in the years 1977 to 1978 were between the Somali Democratic Republic and Ethiopia over what is now Ethiopia's Somali Region. The third conflict in the years 1981 to 1991 between the Somalia National Movement and Somalia National Army. The UNDP stated that 400,00 to 800,000 landmines were laid between 1988 and 1991 alone. Central and Southern Somalia are heavily mined. Landmines reduce access to land for agricultural production and for livestock. Landmines increases transportation costs, contributes to poor performance of rehabilitation and development efforts, loss of life, disabilities, lack of security, and etc. The UN thinks that the mine problems in Somalia can be solved in 7 to 10 years with adequate resources.

XII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Landmines problems and solutions are interdisciplinary in the sense that they require knowledge and efforts in many disciplines, such as Technology in general, Information and Communications Technology, National and Social Development, Health Sciences, and etc. There are still millions of landmines to be removed and more landmines are being employed. Therefore, all parties concerned must try their best in combating the landmines problems.

REFERENCES

(Arranged in the order of citation in the same fashion as the case of Footnotes.)
