

# Explosive Remnants of War, Human Security and Development

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## Introduction

*Barbara Haering (Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining)* opened the discussion by emphasising that landmines, explosive remnants of war (ERW), and small arms and light weapons (SALW) are all tools of armed violence that negatively affect lives and livelihoods after conflict. Mine action (i.e. demining, victim assistance, mine risk education and stockpile destruction) can make an effective contribution to programmes focused on armed violence reduction, peace-building, security system reform, and the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants. The panellists discussed the experiences of mine action organisations in dealing with the legacy of ERW as part of efforts to strengthen human security and promote reconstruction and development.

## Summary of the individual presentations

*Dr Mohammed Haider Reza (Mine Action Coordination Centre for Afghanistan), “The legacy of ERW in Afghanistan and broader human security and development challenges”*  
Landmines/ERW impede development in Afghanistan, for example negatively affecting economic development, the delivery of government services and the return of refugees. Mine action is a key enabler for security and development in Afghanistan. Power supply to Kabul has improved as a result of clearance along power supply routes between Uzbekistan and Kabul. Kabul University campus was unusable seven years ago, but is now operating and producing graduates as a result of clearance of the campus. Clearance of the Aynak copper mine in Longar, south of Kabul will commence shortly, with the Afghan Ministry of Mines committing \$2.6 million for demining, the first time the Government of Afghanistan has allocated funding from its core budget for mine action.  
[https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/pdf/ma\\_development/practitioners-network/wk-may2009/LMAD-Wk-ISF-MACCA-Gva-May2009.pdf](https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/pdf/ma_development/practitioners-network/wk-may2009/LMAD-Wk-ISF-MACCA-Gva-May2009.pdf)

*Steve Priestly (Mine Advisory Group), “From humanitarian mine action to human security”*

The UK-based Mines Advisory Group (MAG), traditionally focused on humanitarian mine action, has in recent years broadened its scope to work on wider human security issues. MAG first got involved with small arms and light weapons (SALW) issues during the mid-1990s by supporting demobilisation efforts in Cambodia and Angola, countries where it was already working on mine action. MAG started off by helping to destroy surplus and abandoned weapons and ammunition, and have since found that many countries also require assistance with safe storage. Stockpile management is becoming a

serious issue in Africa and elsewhere. MAG has since established a Conventional Weapons Management and Disposal Programme through which the organisation:

- > Assists with the safe storage of arms and ammunition, collection and destruction of surplus arms, and training and capacity development of national police and militaries in countries like Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq and the Sudan
- > Provides technical support to the Nairobi-based Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA) for the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa.

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*Don MacDonald (Danish Demining Group), "Community safety: Promoting armed violence reduction and facilitating development"*

Danish Demining Group (DDG), part of the Danish Refugee Council, originally started out as a mine/ERW clearance operator. However, in many of the conflict-affected countries in which DDG works, they receive requests from mine/ERW-affected communities to assist them with addressing broader community safety problems, often in relation to SALW. Somaliland for example, has the third highest SALW ownership rate after Yemen and the USA, with communities among the poorest and most armed in the world. Although initially working in Somaliland on mine/ERW clearance, DDG recently initiated a community safety enhancement project. The project involves working with local communities and peace building NGOs to promote the safe storage of firearms, provide firearms safety education, deliver training in conflict management and resolution, and strengthen trust between local communities and the police. As opposed to previous failed attempts at forced disarmament, DDG is focusing on addressing the root causes of conflict and community insecurity.

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### Summary of the discussions

*Barbara Hearing* and *Dr Haider Reza* stressed the importance of prioritising clearance activities on the basis of socio-economic information. *Steve Priestley* emphasised the development of residual national capacity to address mine/ERW contamination and SALW misuse and proliferation, while also ensuring that residual capacity is not translated into strengthened military capacity. *Don MacDonald* discussed the challenges of developing national capacity in countries like Somaliland with limited government capacity.

### Conclusions

Mine action organisations are increasingly positioning themselves to address the

changing nature of conflict and insecurity but contributing to broader peace-building and armed violence reduction programmes. Strengthening coordination with national and international actors working in these areas is therefore vital.