Northern Namibia is littered with unexploded ordnance (UXO) as a result of the war that brought the country’s independence in 1989. Extensive fighting and live-fire training ranges have left large areas of land covered with unexploded military debris. Unexploded items of land-service ammunition, such as artillery shells, rockets, mortars and rifle grenades, are particularly widespread in all of the northern regions. The South African Defence Force also laid defensive minefields around a number of key infrastructural sites—military bases, water towers and electricity pylons—in an effort to prevent their capture or sabotage.

These weapons have continued to injure and kill in the years since the formal cessation of hostilities. The victims are civilians going about everyday tasks. A very large proportion of the casualties are the young who, if they survive, will be burdened by their wounds for the rest of their lives.

Whilst the problems caused by UXO in Namibia are not as severe as those faced by many other post-war countries, they are steadily claiming lives. The Police Explosives Unit are responsible for the destruction of UXO. They are party to the US backed ‘Demining Programme’, established in 1995 to tackle landmine and UXO contamination. The Explosives Unit remains, however, under-funded and under-resourced. Through a commercial contract and the demining programme, much more money has been spent on clearing the minefields; however, the statistics show that anti-personnel mines account for little over 4% of all casualties since 1989. The results of the mine-clearance work have been mixed. Namibian staff have developed valuable skills and experience in landmine clearance and explosive ordnance disposal but the various clearance methods have not been wholly effective. The low rate of anti-personnel mine accidents over the last ten years also suggests that priorities should be reviewed.

MAG was invited by Namibian authorities to look at the UXO problems in the country. This report seeks to highlight how the problems in Namibia are relevant to the governments, aid agencies and financial donors addressing such issues internationally. We also hope it may provide a focus for discussion about how the response to UXO and landmines in Namibia can be made more effective. As a result of this report, MAG will conduct further general survey work with a view to offering tangible assistance.
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UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE (UXO) AND LANDMINES:
Unexploded ordnance and landmines can cause death, injury and poverty to civilian communities trying to rebuild their lives after war.

A significant proportion of ammunition that is fired fails to explode. These unexploded but unstable shells, mortars, rockets and grenades remain buried in the ground or lying on the surface. They can detonate if touched, moved or tampered with. Unexploded ordnance comes in a wide variety of shapes and sizes; it can be particularly threatening to young people who are curious about unfamiliar items in their environment.

Landmines are victim activated. They are inherently indiscriminate; unable to distinguish between soldiers and civilians. Landmines remain lethal for generations - killing and maiming people who are simply engaging in everyday tasks.

The survivors of UXO and landmine accidents are often left socially and economically marginalised. They can struggle to find employment or get married and many post-war countries lack the resources to support their social and economic reintegration.

Above: Selma and Johan point out an R2M2 anti-personnel blast mine that they found whilst herding. The mine, now showing signs of prolonged exposure to the sun, has probably rolled out of the berm produced when Namibian Blasting Agents cleared this minefield (see pages 8-12).

Unexploded ordnance and landmines are a serious threat to populations living across northern Namibia. Fortunately, the problem does not affect tourist areas at present but it may limit the expansion of tourism in the future.
Overview

CHRONOLOGY

1988 Drafting of UN Resolution 435 to bring the conflict between South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) and South African Defence Force (SADF) to an end.

1989 South African withdrawal with the implementation of Resolution 435. During the withdrawal SADF 'clear' the 8 minefields around their military bases and 2 water towers in the north.

- The Explosives Inspectorate of the Namibian Police are undertaking EOD work in the north, they also work with other ministries to establish a Public Information Campaign to reduce the risks people take with unexploded ordnance and landmines.

1991 Namibian Blasting Agents is formed to undertake a commercial contract to clear the minefields around the Ruacana power line.

1995 Local concern about the removal of fences and subsequent accidents in the military minefields abandoned by the SADF creates pressure for these areas to be cleared.

- The United States of America and the Namibian Government sign a memorandum of cooperation which provides the basis for future demining in the country.

- The USA Special Forces train Namibian Defence Force personnel to clear the minefields around the military bases.

1998 The USA and the Namibian Defence Force begin work clearing the 'berms' left by Namibian Blasting Agents clearance of the Ruacana power lines.

MAP OF NAMIBIA WITH MARKERS FOR OSHAKATI, ONDANGWA, TUSEMB, GROOTFONTEIN, WINDHOEK, OPUWO, RUACANA, AND UXO CONTAMINATED AREAS AND POWERLINES.
STATISTICS:
The Police Explosives Unit is the only substantial source of data on explosives accidents in Namibia. Their collated information would provide a strong basis for the rational prioritisation of demining and explosive ordnance disposal resources.

It is clear from this data that unexploded ordnance (UXO) accounts for far more accidents than anti-personnel and anti-tank landmines. In addition, it can be seen that the young are particularly at risk.

There has been an overall decline in the rate of UXO accidents. This results from the destruction of many items of UXO in populated areas and the increased awareness of the risk due to the public information campaign. Salvaging scrap metal from unexploded ordnance was a common cause of accidents. Since 1996 the Namibian Police have successfully outlawed the trade in scrap from explosive ordnance and this appears to have had an important role in further reducing the number of accidents.

It is hard to present any real evaluation of the statistics for anti-personnel mine accidents because the figures involved are so low. The higher figures in 1991 and 1992 are somewhat artificial because one third of accidents in this period happened to deminers. The last two accidents, in 1995 and 1996, occurred inside cleared minefields.
Over 85% of the people killed or injured by explosive items in Namibia since 1989 were victims of unexploded ordnance (UXO) rather than landmines. This debris of the ground fighting between the SADF and SWAPO is widespread across the north of the country. Some areas show a particularly high concentration of accidents and UXO reports. In the mountainous northwest of Kaokoland, in Owamboland around Oshakati, and in the north-east around Rundu and out to Caprivi, UXO contamination is particularly heavy. The Mangetti area contained infiltration routes for troops coming in from Angola — this area is very sparsely populated and is possibly more heavily contaminated than current data indicates. Ordnance can also be found around former SADF camps near Grootfontein, Okahandja and Osoma. Due to the SADF’s rapid withdrawal, it would seem that stockpile demolition procedures were not always particularly thorough — resulting in many unexploded items left behind. With ordnance present over
"Three children were killed and a fourth injured when they played with a 40mm rifle grenade that they found lying on the surface."

Local people are exasperated by the level of contamination on the Kwambi Plain.

such a large area, the small Police Explosives Unit has been stretched over great distances whilst responding to community requests for assistance.

Between 1989 and 1997 the Namibian Police Explosives Unit destroyed 266,140 items of all types of unexploded ordnance. This unit is responsible for the destruction of UXO and has undertaken this extensive explosive ordnance disposal programme with severe financial and logistical limitations. They lack the vehicles, staff and provincial operations bases that would be needed to tackle the problem effectively. In June 1998 they had a backlog of over 600 UXO reports from across the north of the country.

Specific areas of heavy UXO contamination include the extensive South African Defence Force firing ranges. One such firing range is creating problems for a northern community’s plans for development. They are establishing a nature park and have support for their project from the government and many significant conservation non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Unfortunately the heavy unexploded ordnance contamination will need to be addressed before these plans can come to fruition.

Another former firing range is just outside Oshakati. The flat Kwambi Plain, littered with the wrecks of vehicles that were used as targets, is seeded with a wide range of different explosive items. It is an expansive area of grazing land for the populations on the outskirts of Oshakati town. In the dry season, when the grass is thin and sparse, it is easy to see the mortars that protrude from the ground and the rifle-grenades that lie on the surface. Local people say that the lush grass of the wet season makes the area much more dangerous.

Above: Local people have covered an unexploded mortar with scrap metal to stop their children from finding it.
Local people have covered over many of the most prominent items with bits from the mangled target-vehicles. These coverings are to keep the children off the items and to make them easier to find when the Police Explosives Unit arrives to destroy them. Thousands of items have already been destroyed on the Kwambi Plain. Despite this work, there are many items still visible on the surface and many more must be buried in the ground.

The local people are afraid for their children and for their livestock. A local leader, who lives on the fringe of the plain, explains some of the problems:

"The whole area is infested with explosives. Close to the trees we always find items – even though they are rusty they are still harmful. We advise people to report them so that people with expertise can make them safe. People often find the items when they are looking for wood and palm-leaves to fashion the traditional homesteads. We are lucky that community spirit is very strong here and so information on dangerous items passes quickly between the people."

"The police have helped us by destroying many items here but they cannot destroy them as quickly as we are finding them. It can be frustrating but we understand the limitations they face."

"These unexploded weapons are a problem that results from the war. It was a very fierce war that encouraged the use of lethal weapons. We have peace now and in my childhood we never had that. The last thing we want now is to have people suffering from the remnants of this war. We are striving for an end to the suffering that landmines and explosives cause."

"I know that the situation in Namibia is not as severe as it is in some other countries - some other countries are so highly infested - but it is still a problem for Namibian people. If it is you or your children that have the accident then how much more severe can the problem be?"

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The population density in Namibia is relatively low and this has contained the human impact of the unexploded ordnance. However, children have suffered disproportionately high rates of injury as a result of the UXO contamination. Whilst the frequency of accidents amongst adults has dropped since the early 1990s, the frequency amongst people under 21 has remained relatively constant. Since 1989 young people have made up 63.5% of those killed or injured by UXO. This is mirrored in other countries suffering from substantial UXO contamination. It typically results from the curiosity with which children

**Gabriel Iyambo**

After school on 23 June 1998, four children had gone to fetch water from the well near the village of Eendombe. While they were picking wild fruit, eemanyi, from an Eemwandi tree, Gabriel came across a "thing like a gun which was round."

According to Taina and Naimi, who were also injured in the accident, Gabriel knew that it was an item of unexploded ordnance but told the girls that it had been defused and was no longer dangerous. "We told him to throw it away, but he kept on playing with it." After picking fruit, the girls went back to the well and as they drew water an explosion occurred. They saw Gabriel bleeding on the ground and realised that they were bleeding themselves. The girls had suffered shrapnel injuries to their legs and stomachs.

Gabriel Iyambo lost his right hand and two fingers from his left hand when the nose fuse of a 60mm mortar he had found exploded. He has a gaping wound in his right thigh, puncture wounds across his body and shrapnel in his head. In the photograph he identifies the type of ordnance that he found.

According to Taina and Naimi, there are many such explosive devices in their area and many have been destroyed in the past. Up until this incident nobody had been hurt.
approach unfamiliar items in their environment. In addition, children seeking to gain social status amongst their peer group will sometimes take risks with items that they know to be dangerous.

UXO contamination in Namibia could be effectively addressed by adequately equipped, specialised teams working from operations bases in the most heavily contaminated areas. Such teams would provide a reliable response to community requests for assistance. Community Awareness personnel, who can work to help affected populations reduce the risks that they are taking, could be integrated with these teams to ensure that awareness messages were being disseminated in the areas where they are needed most.

The technical skills needed to undertake such a programme already exist in Namibia. These skills need to be structured and developed so as to receive the funding that they need to tackle the problem. The Explosive Unit’s police status is sometimes a problem when interacting with local communities. People can be suspicious and sometimes run away when they see the police license plates. If a more community based explosive ordnance disposal programme is to be undertaken these teams may need to develop an independent civilian identity.
The South African Defence Force (SADF) established minefields around its eight military bases and two water towers in northern Namibia.

These minefields contained R2M2 and R1M1 minimum metal anti-personnel blast mines laid on top of metal discs to assist detection. The minefields were marked and fenced and the location of the mines mapped. These seem to represent as responsible a use of anti-personnel mines as the weapons allow. Unfortunately the SADF destroyed the advantages of this mapping by attempting to clear the mines before they left the country in 1989. In doing so they have provided a good example of the difference between military and humanitarian standards in landmine clearance.

In 1989, the SADF used a 'gridroller' (a metal framework roller) attached to a battletank to drive over the minefields in an effort to destroy the mines. Mines were destroyed but, in the soft-ground of the wet season, this method resulted in unexploded mines being pushed some 30cm down into the ground. Mines were dislodged from their metal location discs, tilted on their sides and left undestroyed and harder to detect. SADF reports indicate that this partial level of clearance was accepted from the onset. The presence of a large tree in one minefield is cited as a reason for their being unable to destroy all of the mines. The SADF knew from their records that not all of the mines had been destroyed and never suggested that the areas were now safe. They did not remove the minefield fences and marking and subsequently they handed over the minefield information to the Namibian Defence Force (NDF).

With the withdrawal of the SADF, local people took down sections of fencing. This lead to people and cattle entering the minefields and accidents occurred. Understandably, these accidents generated local concern and demands for the minefields to be dealt with effectively. In 1992 there were already reports and assessments by Namibian officials suggesting that the minefields would be disproportionately difficult and expensive to clear (due to their disturbance by the SADF) and that it would be better to fence and monitror them. Furthermore, these reports emphasised that, viewed from a national perspective, the uncleared minefields were causing nowhere near the number of accidents caused by unexploded ordnance.

The perception that these minefields needed to be cleared persisted, however, and this work became the first priority for the newly established Namibian Demining Programme — a programme supported financially and technically by the US Government.

A Memorandum of Cooperation between the US and Namibia was signed in 1995 establishing a relationship that would work towards the removal of landmines and UXO from the country. The American Special Forces trained and equipped NDF deminers and started clearing the minefields around the former military bases. Mine-clearance machines were used despite their previous failures and extensive detector clearance was carried out.

Clearance of these minefields was problematic. On 22 December 1995 a nine year-old boy, Absolom Luuwa lost his leg in an accident in Ruacana minefield after the area had been cleared. In Etale minefield, on 23 February 1996, fifteen year-old Frederick Nanjedi was injured by a mine that he found. During October 1997, a unexploded R2M2 anti-personnel mine was found at a depth of 30cm when a sewerage tench was dug in Ruacana minefield.

This has caused something of a crisis of confidence: plans for commercial development on some of the minefields have been halted and many remain fenced off.

The cause of this failure to return safe land in which people can have confidence is substantially due to the difficulties left by the SADF. These difficulties were, however, mentioned in reports prior to clearance which suggested (perhaps excessively negatively) that these areas could never be made completely safe and would always have to be fenced off.
THE PYLONS

During the early 1980s the SADF laid small minefields around the northern pylons of the electricity line running south from the Ruacana hydroelectric power station. The power line runs for 180km and has 401 pylons. The SADF's aim was to protect the pylons from sabotage by combatants of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN). The minefields were 30x30m square and contained two types of anti-personnel landmines — the J69 bounding fragmentation mine (South African copy of the V69) and the R1M1 blast mine. The danger that these minefields posed to the workers of the electricity company (SWAWEK) and the people and cattle living in the surrounding area made their clearance important. Fencing had been removed in many areas and the cattle of the local herders were frequently being killed on entering the minefields. SWAWEK sought assistance from the South African and then the Namibian Governments but they were unable to help. In March 1991, SWAWEK contracted the newly formed company, Namibian Blasting Agents, to undertake the work of destroying the landmines around the pylons.

On 24 April 1991, Ben Tjiume was killed and three other people were wounded as he tried to remove a seriously injured cow from a minefield about 80km south-east of Opuwo. Nine cattle were killed on that day when they wandered into a minefield from which the fencing had been removed. This incident, shortly after Namibian Blasting Agents had begun operations, was a clear indication of the need for the work that they were engaged in.

The J69 bounding fragmentation mines, of which there were 4 to 6 in each minefield, posed the first problem to the clearance teams. This is a powerful mine that can blast metal fragmentation over a wide area and could cause damage to the expensive insulators on the pylons. Namibian Blasting Agents devised a technique whereby they suspended a charge over the mine and blasted the fusing mechanism off the top. The minefield was then rolled with a steel grid-roller to destroy the remaining 25-30 blast mines. The topsoil of the minefield was levelled off, to a depth of 60cm, using a tracked bulldozer and, according to some reports, this soil was then buried in a hole and cov-
ered with clean earth. The current state of some of these mounds, or 'berms', leaves some doubt as to whether the contaminated top-soil was always buried in a hole. It seems likely that in some places the top-soil was just scraped off and left in a mound at the edge of the former minefield area. The minefields were then checked with mine-detectors (specialised metal-detectors) to ensure that they were clear.

In separate incidents in 1991 and 1992, two deminers lost legs when they stepped on anti-personnel mines during this last mine detecting phase of the operation. That some mines had not been detonated by the rollers is in no way surprising. The SADF had used much the same technique in clearing the minefields around the military bases in the north and achieved only partial clearance. The varied ground on which the pylons stand would also pose problems for this method — soft sand can allow mines to be pushed deeper into the ground, large rocks around other pylons would stop the pressure from the roller being transferred onto any mines lying next to them. An investigation by MECHEM, a South African mine clearance company, into some of the problems experienced in Namibia states that:

"The grid roller used in Namibia ... does not exert sufficient ground pressure in sandy conditions to detonate the mines reliably [sic] enough to reach the required clearance standard. The grid size is such that a RIM2 A/P mine can fit into the grid. This can lead to tilting and disturbing of the mine without detonating it. A mine that has been tilted will not be detonated by any pressure exerted on it vertically from the top."

The report also states:

"Bulldozers do not provide the required clearance standard either. It further compounds the issue by creating heaps of soil [berms] contaminated with mines along the perimeter of the minefields. These mines are definitely tilted and submerged to depths exceeding the capabilities of metal detectors."

As time has shown, the berms are also subject to weathering forces. Many are now considerably worn down in size and mines that were once submerged now lie on the surface or have rolled out of the berm altogether.

Fearing that fencing the areas would act as an invitation to local people to steal the fence materials, Namibian Blasting Agents, apparently at the request of SWAWEK, placed a concrete warning pyramid on top of each mound. Evidence of the effects of the environment on these berms can be found in the frequency with which these signs can now be seen on their sides, having fallen from the top of the berm.

The work on the pylons provoked controversy from the onset. When the contract was announced there were questions in the press as to why the most expensive tender had been awarded the contract. In January 1993, after the completion of the project, the Chairman and Managing Director of SWAWEK confirmed that seven mines had been found during construction work on the pylons. One of these mines detonated injuring a power line worker. During August 1993 the Namibian Police investigated complaints from the public in the vicinity of the power lines and, having heard of a number of instances of cattle being killed and injured on the berms, concluded that the earth mounds were very dangerous to the inhabitants of the area.

Demining is once more being undertaken on the minefields along the power lines. The US Government have brought over a 'Berm Processor' — a US manufactured machine to clear the mines that remain after the use of other mechanical

The initial use of inappropriate clearance techniques has ultimately prolonged the period over which local populations are being exposed to danger.
clearance equipment. This is part of the US-Namibian Humanitarian Demining Mission which is working in partnership with the Namibian Defence Force. A US 'concept brief' for this phase of the mission states that:

"We expect the berm sifter to have varying degrees of success in 60% or more of the mined areas. We believe that it will definitely speed up the process and will be an asset. However, it will work best when used in conjunction with other heavy earth moving equipment."

The document suggests that the majority of demining money allocated for Namibia should go directly towards the berm clearing project. These berms certainly pose a humanitarian threat and need to be dealt with effectively but it is a shame that humanitarian funds are now having to be used to finish a job that SWAWEK has already paid over 3 million Rand to have done (over US$1 million in 1991). It is particularly disappointing when we remember that UXO rather than anti-personnel and anti-tank landmines have consistently claimed over 87% of the UXO/mine victims in Namibia.

The initial use of inappropriate clearance techniques has ultimately prolonged the period over which local populations are being exposed to danger. The decision to abandon the minefield fencing reflects a commonly cited belief within Namibia that it is impossible to stop the local population from removing minefield fences. Clearly it is preferable to make the areas safe but, if for some reason this cannot be done, then every effort should be made to secure the local people against the danger that they face. By working with local communities to involve them in the marking and fencing process, responsibility for the upkeep of fences can be given to the people who will benefit from their existence. Many of the failings of the demining work done in Namibia took place in the early days of humanitarian mine action and were made by people with little experience of the community based approaches being developed by humanitarian rather than commercial or military agencies. The specialised community engagement skills that can achieve this respect for fence materials have never been developed as part of any Namibian demining programme.

The uncertain state in which all the Namibian minefields have been left shows quite clearly a need for quality control methods to check the safety of the cleared land. This need was recognised in the US Ambassador's speech of 14 May 1998:

"A final, but important issue, that must be tackled is the quality control of the minefields. Before land can be turned over to productive use, we must certify, to an international standard, that demining has been successful."

Independent and thorough quality control will be vital to the establishment of confidence in the land that has been demined.
Some of the communities in Ruacana district are suffering from both widespread unexploded ordnance contamination and the continuing presence of landmines around the electricity pylons. The Himba people are semi-nomadic pastoralists— they herd cattle and goats and set up a new corral when the grazing in their area becomes depleted. Most of their garments are made from the leather of the animals that they herd; they drink the milk, eat the meat and rely on the sale of the animals to get money.

The Himba group photographed here are from Otjoruti to the south of Ruacana. The unexploded ordnance that contaminates their environment has cost these people the life of one child and has injured another. The area where they live is near a former SADF military base. According to local people, the SADF frequently fired mortars and grenades randomly into the surrounding countryside. The environment is littered with explo­sive ordnance. One of these items was found by a group of children.

Mberamgura Muheke is the father of the boy who was killed. He is still very distressed at what happened:

"I wasn't here when the accident took place but other people have told me how it happened. Karenge was one of a group of children who found an unexploded grenade. An older girl, Wakarorwa, told them not to play with it so they hid it. A month later Karenge was with three other children and they found the grenade again."

"Out of curiosity he was trying to open it. He threw it against a tree but nothing happened. Then he squatted down to hit it with a rock and it exploded."

"I feel very bad about the situation but there is nobody here who can do anything about it. We have lost cattle to the mines and a child to the unexploded ordnance. Our traditional leaders have told us about the dangers of these items but we worry about our children when we are not with them."

Eleven year-old Karenge Muheke had found a 40mm rifle grenade. The blast tore off both of his lower arms, split open his abdomen and ripped much of the flesh off his legs. He also had numerous puncture wounds from shrapnel. Karenge managed to slowly roll his mutilated body over 30 metres from the point of detonation to the place where he eventually died.

This Himba group are also at risk because the minefields around the Ruacana power line are still not safe. They have lost numerous animals around the pylons and such losses have a serious impact on people so dependent on livestock. They have moved further from the power line out of fear for the safety of their children.

The children have found mines at the pylons whilst herding their cattle. They point to a small R2M2 anti-personnel blast mine that has probably rolled out of the 'berm' left by the clearance machines. It is bleached by the sun but still as dangerous as when it was first laid (photo, page 1). The rural populations who live along the power line have been let down by the clearance work that has been carried out here. They should have been the foremost beneficiaries of the project yet areas are still contaminated and there is no fencing to keep children and animals on safe land. The groups who must live in danger have not been involved in the process of developing strategies to make these areas safe.

Populations such as these, who cover large areas of land herding their goats and cattle, are particularly at risk from the UXO that contaminates northern Namibia. It is not easy for them to report items that they find. The lack of resources to respond to these reports leaves them with little confidence that any action will be forthcoming. Investment is needed to build confidence in such communities that the problems they face can be tackled effectively.
A South African rifle grenade – one of the items of unexploded ordnance that cause accidents across northern Namibia.
In all of the countries where MAG works, attempting to salvage scrap metal from unexploded ordnance causes accidents amongst poor populations. In Namibia, the unexploded ordnance in the north of the country, and items brought across the border from Angola, have in the past provided a dangerous economic resource. Namibian and South African scrap dealers were buying up aluminium and brass from former conflict zones. They were also offering money to people in these areas to collect scrap metal for them. Such economic incentives inevitably lured people into taking risks with unexploded ordnance. Such incentives were also in direct opposition to the Namibian efforts to warn the population of the dangers of even touching such potentially dangerous items.

From 1994 to 1997 the Namibian Police successfully prosecuted prominent scrap dealers who had been promoting and profiting from this trade. The Police even managed to secure a change in the law so as to give them greater powers to address this sort of problem. These moves developed out of an awareness within the police that these economic incentives needed to be removed if people in rural areas were to be made safe from unexploded ordnance.
Conclusion

The problems that remain in Namibia can be dealt with effectively. An adequately funded and resourced explosive ordnance disposal capacity could work with the affected communities to tackle the threat from UXO. The skills needed to undertake this work already exist within Namibia. Mines Advisory Group (MAG), a non-profit making organisation, will offer what assistance it can to develop this existing capacity further.

The most striking point of concern at present is that the prioritisation of humanitarian resources does not develop from a rational assessment of the situation. It would seem natural to address the problem that is consistently generating the greatest number of casualties as a matter of first importance. This has not and still is not being done. The country's explosive ordnance disposal capacity has received a very small proportion of the 30 million Namibian dollars so far spent on demining.

Whilst this report highlights areas of concern, lessons can be learned and mistakes can be put right. The Namibian Police Explosives Unit and MAG are designing a constructive approach to UXO contamination. MAG will conduct a general survey which will provide the basis for planning future action. By working with affected communities, and utilising data that is gathered, a programme will be developed to address the real needs of the Namibian people.

MAG in Namibia:

MAG is looking at ways in which it can help to reduce the threat of UXO to the Namibian people. MAG will be seeking permission from the Namibian authorities to conduct a general survey of UXO and landmine contamination in the country. From this, MAG will be better able to determine how any future work in the Namibia could be structured.

MAG would work to provide institutional strength to the authorities currently conducting explosive ordnance disposal in the country. Specialist personnel could provide advice on all aspects of programme structure and operating procedures. Through a partnership agreement, MAG could use its experience of running humanitarian mine action programmes internationally for the benefit of the Namibian people.

Many thanks to Anti-Landmijn Stichting for funding this work.

An R2M2 anti-personnel mine lies partially destroyed on the Kwambi plain.