The war between Iran and Iraq, and other military action since, have left a painful legacy for the predominantly Kurdish population of northern Iraq. The mountains and valleys of the region have been littered with landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). These items are claiming lives, causing injuries, and making social and economic reconstruction difficult, and sometimes impossible. Established populations must struggle against the restrictions landmines place on their use of land and therefore on their local economy. Refugees returning from Iran, and people displaced within northern Iraq, are finding their return home blocked by the debris of the conflict that forced them to leave.

In 1992 MAG started a humanitarian mine action programme in northern Iraq. It was the first of MAG’s programmes. It is also MAG’s largest programme, currently employing nearly 600 Kurdish staff. The programme is having a major impact. Half a million mines and items of ordnance have already been cleared and rates of death and injury have fallen considerably during MAG’s involvement in the region. Even so, the problems of landmine and UXO contamination are still severe.

This report highlights a number of issues regarding the continuing problems in the region. It provides case studies that give an insight into the social and economic impact landmines have on communities and individuals. The report also provides information on the humanitarian mine action work of MAG, and appeals for continued support for mine action in this region.
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The Problem of Landmines

Landmines are victim activated — they are inherently indiscriminate, unable to distinguish between soldiers and civilians, adults or children. Landmines remain even when the conflict has ceased or the fighting has moved elsewhere. They continue to kill and maim people who are simply engaging in everyday tasks. Landmines remain lethal for generations and are particularly threatening to the poorest communities because of their reliance on the land. They force people to take the physical risk of entering potentially or actually mined land in order to meet their economic needs. Rising poverty can increase the pressure to enter mined areas in search of cultivable land or economic resources. This often results in death or injury — leading to further impoverishment and economic hardship. Mine injuries, therefore, can be a product and a cause of poverty at a family or community level.

The survivors of landmine accidents are often left socially and economically marginalised. They can struggle to find employment, marriage becomes unlikely, and many mine-contaminated countries lack the resources to support their social and economic reintegration.
MAG has been working in northern Iraq since 1992 and the operation has grown and developed into MAG’s biggest Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) programme. MAG has trained local staff in a variety of disciplines, including minefield survey, landmine clearance, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), community liaison and mine awareness. These disciplines have been continually refined as MAG has incorporated lessons learnt in the field to adapt and improve the delivery of HMA to mine and UXO affected communities.

MAG conducted one of the largest minefield demarcation programmes in the world throughout the region between 1992 and 1996. All mine action agencies now operating in the region make use of the results of this demarcation work to assist in the implementation of their minefield clearance operations. Early in the programme MAG also trained and deployed specialist EOD teams to tackle the widespread threat of UXO. Unexploded mortars, shells and bombs can all pose a threat if moved or tampered with.

From the start of the programme MAG has liaised closely with populations at risk. Mine awareness education is conducted with villages, schools, non-governmental organisations, local authorities, colleges and hospitals. As part of the development of its mine awareness work MAG pioneered the use of a ‘Child-to-Child’ approach using children to teach their peers and adults about the dangers of mines and UXO (see page 12). Since 1998 MAG has been working with local institutions, particularly the primary schools and village-based mullahs (religious leaders) to increase the sustainability of mine awareness delivery. MAG’s programme is now an official part of the school curriculum.

MAG also created a Data Coordination Unit that maintains computerised records of mine casualties, MAG’s own activities and the numbers of mines and UXO destroyed (see page 10). To ensure that MAG’s work is directed towards the most vulnerable populations, and will use minimum resources to maximum effect, effective prioritisation is vital. This process relies on the availability of a wide range of data, including the perspective of the affected communities themselves.

MAG has gathered data that allows it to determine the nature and impact of

Left: An EOD operator prepares shells for demolition at Sarcan village in Penjwen District.
the landmine and unexploded ordnance problem in over 750 of the worst affected villages. Key assessments are made of both the current risks posed (in terms of the loss of life and limb) and the socio-economic rewards that can be expected to result from removing the threat of mines and UXO in any given area. These assessments involve the people in assessing their own needs - whether it is arable or pasture land, paths between villages, or access to water sources that are mined. The continuous process of information exchange between MAG and the communities it works with is formalised under the concept of community liaison.

From 1999 MAG adopted the concept of small-scale, multi-skilled teams to respond in a flexible and comprehensive manner to the needs of mine and UXO affected people. These are called Mine Action Teams (MAT). The MAT integrates demining, explosive ordnance disposal and community liaison skills to allow it to respond to the target community’s specific needs. Once a task is prioritised MAG deploys one of its MATs.

In northern Iraq the MAT consists of 18 deminers which can form six 3-man sub-teams. Within the MAT at least two deminers are trained to Team Leader standard so that the team can be sub-divided to respond to smaller tasks as required. A Team Leader - an experienced on-site supervisor and manager of operations - leads the MAT. There is also a Medic who is trained and equipped for the treatment of trauma injuries. Medics serve regular rotations in local hospitals to ensure their practical skills remain current.

The range of tasks that the MAT can respond to is very wide, from quick impact emergency tasks, such as the clearance of paths to water sources or the removal of stockpiles of UXO, to the larger scale clearance work needed to return tracts of land to poor communities. The task of completely removing the threat posed by mines and UXO in northern Iraq remains a long-term one. As the work continues, MAG has developed its MAT approach through lessons learnt in the field over the last years, and believes it is the most efficient and effective way to rapidly provide tangible benefits to mine and UXO affected communities.
Assisting returnees

KEY ISSUES:
- Refugees returning to a landmine & UXO contaminated environment
- Helping people to live with landmines

After some 20 years as refugees Kurdish families re-enter their homeland at the bleak border crossing of Hajihomoran on the Iran-Iraq border. Most left Iraq after Mullah Mustafa Barzani’s uprising against the Iraqi Government in 1974-75. The rebellion collapsed and an estimated 250,000 Kurds fled to Iran. Many returned within the first two months after the Government of Iraq offered an amnesty to those who had joined the rebellion. Others stayed in Iran and lived there until the current refugee repatriation process began in 1996. Since then there has been a steady flow of people back into northern Iraq. The children born and raised in the refugee camps have never been to northern Iraq and they have never lived in an environment contaminated with landmines.

Laden with their possessions, the majority of families walk down to a small cluster of buildings 200 metres from the Iranian checkpoint. Here bureaucratic requirements must be fulfilled in order for them to obtain continued support within northern Iraq. They are vitally in need of this support because crossing the border is not the end of their journey. Some villages have been bulldozed or occupied by other families, and many more are littered with landmines and unexploded ordnance. Most of the refugees cannot return immediately to their former homes and stay at a camp until arrangements can be made for their relocation.
Refugees and displaced people are particularly vulnerable to the threat of landmines. Poor and landless, they are often pushed to the margins of society and the economy. Through economic necessity, they are likely to be under pressure to use land that may be mined. Furthermore, refugees may be unfamiliar with the appearance of landmines and unexploded ordnance and will lack knowledge of the landmine threat in local areas.

MAG began a project to assist the returnees in 1996 by providing Mine Awareness education for these displaced families, helping people to live more safely in a landmine contaminated environment. Presentations are given separately to men, women and children.

The picture above shows MAG's Farsi Mine Awareness Team offering their presentation in the Iranian language, the one the refugees are now most familiar with. They explain the signs used to warn of the presence of landmines. They discuss 'natural mine signs' - such as unused land or piles of stones - that could indicate that people are avoiding an area due to landmine contamination. The team have posters and dummy mines that they show to the different groups so that they can familiarise themselves with the items they may find around their homes and fields. MAG also shows them pictures of landmine victims - grim testimonies to the severity of the problem.

Parwin, one of MAG's field officers, was herself a refugee and returned from Iran four years ago to find her former home destroyed and mined. She understands the problems these refugees face. As well as working at the refugee reception centre, Parwin translates the materials that MAG produces into Farsi so that they can be used by the children. This is vital to prevent a vulnerable group from being further disadvantaged.

MAG coordinates its work with the local authorities that are responsible for organising the returnees through its Returnee Bureau. This includes training the Bureau's staff and arranging for follow-up presentations to the people once they are resettled in their home communities.

MAG's Mine Action Teams are also working to destroy the landmines that currently make so many of these villages uninhabitable. By returning safe land to mine-affected populations, and clearing land for refugees and displaced people, MAG is rebuilding the foundations of communities across northern Iraq.
Wilyawa village has been destroyed and only half rebuilt. The people of the village were forcibly moved away during the Iraqi Government's Anfal campaign against the Kurds in the late 1980's. Some people went to collective towns in the Barzan valley, others to Suleimaniyah.

The buildings of Wilyawa, like many others in the area, were flattened by bulldozers during Anfal. The remains of the old village are visible up the hillside – patches of grey stone rubble with just an occasional wall still standing. The new houses are built into the steep slope. They are traditional Kurdish houses with stone walls supporting flat earth roofs, many of which have a covering of grass.

Thirteen families came back to Wilyawa in 1991, given confidence by the 'safe haven' established by the United Nations after the Gulf War. They had struggled with unemployment and poverty in Suleimaniyah. Landmines now mean the village cannot support its original population and there are still 30 families waiting to return. Landmines have made the rebuilding of Wilyawa very difficult. The village headman explains the problems that they have faced:

"There have been mine accidents. One man lost an arm, another has lost a leg. Both of them returned to Suleimaniyah. It is hard for landmine survivors to work in the countryside. I am sorry to say that they went back to the city to beg. It is terrible for them."

"Four men have been killed around the village and this has left many problems for their families. One woman was left to look after three children. They cannot support themselves. Nobody will employ women who have lost their hus-

KEY ISSUES:
- Impact of landmines on social and economic reconstruction: the poverty cycle.
- The benefits of landmine clearance.
bands and it is hard for them to work on the land. The villagers try to help these families - we farm their land and make sure they get enough food."

The economy of the village has been restricted by landmines and by the villagers' lack of money. The pastureland is mined so animals are kept on potentially good arable land. The villagers were too poor to buy animals when they left Suleimaniyah and rich men in the city own most of the sheep and goats in the village. One villager might own only five animals of the 100 that they herd. Because the villagers own so few of their animals they cannot afford to sell any more to pay for tractor hire.

"The amount of land we can cultivate is limited by the amount of money that we can afford to spend on tractor hire. More animals would mean more money and more money means more cultivation. If we could cultivate more land the village could support more people."

Although the villagers can grow a variety of crops, including tobacco, wheat and barley on the flatter land and grapes on the slope, the villagers cannot develop their economy. It is a long way to a good market and poor transportation and rough roads mean that produce is often damaged by the time it reaches Chwarta. There is not enough irrigated land to grow tobacco on a large scale.

Eight minefields originally surrounded the village of Wilyawa. Of these, some are so large that in the short-term it will only be feasible to clear those parts of them that are agreed to be most beneficial to the population. Part of the minefield above the village that was under clearance in March 1998 (pictured) was completed in May 1999. Just over 100,000 square metres of the total of almost 850,000 square metres were cleared, with 2,110 mines destroyed. Evaluating the success of this clearance in February 2000 MAG found that the area was now being used by all families in the village for grazing, collecting plants and for access to other land. As anticipated the villagers reported that they had increased their livestock holdings. A small part of the land is also being used to cultivate tomatoes. In addition MAG completely cleared one other small minefield in the area (just over 42,000 square metres) in October 1999 and is currently working in a third. Perhaps the most striking thing about these minefields is the very high concentration of mines found in them.

By effectively prioritising clearance work MAG clears mines from land that will provide the greatest benefit to the population. Good prioritisation requires accurate information about the kinds of problems that exist and the specific needs of the community. Through the community liaison process (see also page 3) and MAG's flexible MAT approach, humanitarian mine clearance really does make a tangible difference.
A rapid response

MAG has destroyed most of the unexploded ordnance (UXO) lying on the ground or stockpiled in northern Iraq. However, smaller-scale caches continue to pose a threat, especially in the more remote villages. These emergency needs are undertaken as Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) tasks, by subteams deployed from a Mine Action Team. MAG is able to provide a rapid response to specific requests that require a demining and/or EOD capability. This capacity underlines the flexibility of the MAT concept and MAG’s ability to address the whole range of problems caused by landmines and UXO.

Requests for EOD tasks can come from a number of sources, including the local authorities, MAG’s own field teams (particularly the mine awareness teams that have frequent contact with the villages), other international agencies and the communities themselves. The tasks are typically small-scale, such as stockpiles and small groups of mines or UXO near to a village or frequently-used path. The following examples illustrate the range of emergency tasks the MATs have to tackle every day.

Whilst building a dam near Dohuk, mines were found in soil that had been transported to the area for the construction. A MAG team travelled out to Dohuk from Dyana to excavate the mound of earth and destroy the mines in it.

In Murgasor Valley, a MAT Team performed a controlled demolition of two 250kg aircraft bombs. Further up the valley the team destroyed stockpiles of Valmara V69 mines. The stockpiles had been made by local villagers and contained mines that had been partially burnt and taken apart as well as mines completely intact. The stockpiles had been covered over with a tangle of branches, making them even more difficult to deal with.

The MATs sometimes have to contend with the limited information that a community’s request might contain. A report that there was a booby trapped mine inside an abandoned house revealed a large stockpile of mines and unexploded weapons. As well as live mortars, mines and shells, the house contained a V69 that had been modified to detonate by electric command. This latter device was probably what was being referred to as a booby trap, but there had been no mention of the other items.

By dealing with small-scale but pressing tasks such as these, MATs address communities’ self-identified immediate needs. They provide an efficient deployment of resources, and their mobility and ability to respond rapidly helps to build good relationships between MAG and local communities.

KEY ISSUES:
- Emergency tasks
- Flexibility of MATs
- Demarcation
Above: Fences are put up in mountainous areas around minefields to stop mines dislodged by snow and rain from rolling down onto safe areas.

Left: A MAT member carries a mortar from a water-logged ammunition dump. The dump contained 350 anti-personnel mines, 12 160mm mortars, 30 82mm mortars, 22 120mm mortars, 4 anti-tank mines and 12 recoilless rounds. Soldiers had dumped the items in the crater left by an earlier stockpile demolition.

Demarcation

Communities are often well aware of the approximate whereabouts of mined areas in their immediate environment. Demarcation can be particularly important for people unfamiliar with the area. Hunters, nomads, refugees and urban families out on picnics are all at risk from minefields that local people may be well aware of. Minefield marking is an important way of reducing the risk. MAG's demarcation work is 'adopted' by the local community who ensure that the marking materials are not stolen for their scrap metal value.

The mountains of northern Iraq create an environment in which the landmine threat is always changing. Mines are often carried down from the mountains by streams, so in summer the dry stream beds must be avoided as they are potentially dangerous. Mines laid on mountainsides can be moved by the effects of rain and sliding or melting snow and can roll down steep slopes. Those in the ground may be slowly carried by the natural movement of soil, and by erosion. Landmines have even dropped into trees from overhanging cliffs. In a number of minefields, MAG has built wire-mesh fences and dry-stone walls that stop landmines moving further down the slope, as in the photograph above. The movement of mines is especially dangerous around land that has been cleared or that the local community considers to be safe.
Effective information

KEY ISSUES:
- MAG's computerised data
- Information for prioritisation of activities

From MAG's arrival in the region in 1991 to assess the extent of the landmine problem in northern Iraq, MAG recognised the importance of good quality data to prioritise mine action and to assess the impact of the work on affected populations. Since then MAG has accumulated a vast range of information about the affected communities themselves in addition to the extent of their mine and UXO problems. This information has been organised and structured to form the MAG northern Iraq database. The database is housed in the programme's Data Coordination Unit (DCU) that also analyses the information to ensure it is of practical use in all stages of the programme cycle, from problem identification (including mine and UXO casualty information), to prioritisation and planning, through implementation and on to the evaluation of the work undertaken. It also acts as a support in identifying longer-term and strategic planning issues for the development of the organisation's work.

2,264 individual minefield survey reports from over 750 of the most heavily mine and UXO-affected villages make up the bulk of the information available in MAG's DCU database. This information is supplemented by a number of Advance Team reports that include the prioritisation of the affected communities themselves, gathered through a participatory rural appraisal methodology. This provides the basis on which all work plans and priorities are assessed. The database then keeps a track on all activities undertaken, including awareness and clearance operations, through a system of regular reporting from the field. This information includes a number of quantitative indicators, such as the areas of land cleared and the number of landmines detected and destroyed. These allow the programme to monitor progress against the objectives it sets and also provide basic indicators of effectiveness, such as the ratio of mines detected to land cleared. But this quantitative assessment is only part of the picture and to it is added the qualitative nature of operations and their positive impact through the work of the Training Monitoring & Evaluation Unit and the broader based post-clearance evaluation process.

The DCU database is at the heart of decision-making not only for MAG's operations, but also for other humanitarian mine action agencies in the region. It is MAG's database that allowed Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) in 1996 and the United Nations (UNOPS) in 1997 to commence their mine action programmes so quickly, without having to wait on more lengthy Level I surveys and demarcation of high priority mined areas. More recently the local Kurdish authorities and now local demining agencies have begun to rely on this data. Other organisations have also been given free access to the data in order to assist their planning for physical and human rehabilitation efforts for more than a dozen United Nations and non-governmental agencies. In addition the likes of UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent have used MAG's DCU information in order to present the nature and extent of the landmine and UXO problem in the region to an international audience.
Abbas places an explosive charge next to a Valmara V69. Abbas has worked for MAG since the programme was established in 1992 and is now a demining instructor. Although many types of mine have been used in northern Iraq, the Valmara, with its familiar spiked crown of fuse prongs, is one of the most common. When detonated, the body of the mine jumps about a metre into the air before exploding. Over 1000 steel fragments, packed inside the mine, are sprayed outward by the blast. They tear through flesh and bone and can injure people over 50 metres from where the mine was laid. People close to the blast are ripped apart. These mines can kill large groups of people—families may lose many members in a single explosion.
The only permanent solution to the mine problem in northern Iraq is the complete detection and destruction of all landmines, combined with the sincere resolve never to resort to their use again in the future. In the meantime people have to live with the long-term daily risk to life and limb. In order to address this risk MAG has developed a range of mine awareness education activities designed to provide people with the necessary knowledge to live more safely with the presence of landmines and UXO in their environment. The mine awareness programme uses people from a wide range of social groups – teachers, children, mullahs and refugees – to present mine awareness messages in many different contexts. Use of these different groups allows MAG to reach a broad spectrum of the population with messages and presentations tailored specifically to their problems and needs.

The mine awareness programme stresses the need to respect mine signs and minefield marking. It offers advice on what to do if you find a landmine, illustrated through drama and drawings. MAG also campaigns against particularly dangerous practices – such as salvaging metal and explosives from mines, or playing with UXO. Mine awareness develops safer behaviours amongst people living with landmines and UXO.

The mine awareness programme has a very visible presence in the areas it has visited. For example, exhibitions of children’s posters are held in villages, colourful messages are stencilled onto the walls of houses and schools in rural areas.

MAG has undertaken over 3,800 individual mine awareness visits to affected villages and communities. In
1996 MAG also introduced an innovative 'Child-to-Child' component to its awareness programme as a means of delivering vital mine awareness messages through peer groups. From the beginning of 1999 MAG has assisted in institutionalising the provision of mine awareness in northern Iraq through projects working with the Ministries of Education and 'Awqaf' (Endowments/religious affairs).

The teacher-training project seeks to incorporate mine awareness education into the teaching received by all primary school children across the whole of northern Iraq. To achieve this MAG has worked with the Ministries of Education to prepare an agreed curriculum for this teaching and to provide teachers with the necessary skills, knowledge and materials to deliver it. MAG has not only trained over 2,500 primary school teachers, but also Departments of Education supervisors and instructors in the regional Teacher Training Institutes through a 'train-the-trainer' package so that the new teachers will be well supported. The project is backed up by a formal curriculum developed jointly by MAG, UNICEF and the Departments of Education and it is planned that a revised students' textbook will be introduced during the year 2000.

The curriculum has been designed to retain a 'Child-to-Child' focus so that messages learnt in the classroom may be passed on by children to their peers not attending school and even to their parents.

In 1999 500 village-based mullahs were trained to introduce positive awareness messages into their daily work. The mullahs were selected due to the high level of respect in which they are generally held in their village and their ability to reach a particularly high-risk target group through their Friday prayers and sermons (men form the greatest proportion of mine victims in northern Iraq).

As well as these projects that institutionalise mine awareness messages, MAG is committed to responding to the particular needs of other high-risk groups such as returnees and Kurdish and Arab nomads and shepherds who come into the region in search of pasture for their animals during the summer months. The impact of this work is reflected in the reductions in landmine and UXO casualties seen over the period of the programme.

In addition, in order to sustain and build on these improvements, MAG continues to produce a range of general mine awareness materials that are disseminated across the region. To make this work as effective as possible MAG utilises the existing media network, including television, radio and newspapers. Messages are delivered in both of the main Kurdish dialects and Arabic as appropriate.
For many poor people landmines and UXO are a vital economic resource in spite of the danger they pose. The metal can be sold as scrap, providing a little cash for people unable to produce a surplus harvest for sale. The explosive content of mines and ordnance is sometimes used for fishing or is sold at market.

Bapir Karda’s story provides a good illustration of the pressures that drive people to salvage from mines or ordnance. Bapir has been injured twice by mines whilst gathering scrap metal on the mountainside behind his home. He triggered a V69 that tore a hole in his stomach. Two of his friends died in this accident. Two years later he lost three fingers and an eye whilst taking apart a blast mine. Bapir’s children have also collected unexploded ordnance. In 1995 his eldest son brought an 82mm mortar back to the house and attempted to remove the aluminium from the fuse. The mortar detonated and the explosion killed four of Bapir’s children and wounded two others. His daughter, Bafreen, and son, Asmal, still live with their father – bearing the scars of the accident that killed their brothers and sisters. Removing the saleable scrap metal from UXO is extremely dangerous in itself; additionally the activity of gathering UXO often leads people into mined areas.

Despite this devastation, Bapir has remained dependent on the income that scrap metal can provide. He has a small store of mortars under a corrugated iron sheet outside his house. Inside his house he has large artillery shells, live fused mortars and assorted scraps of ammunition.

Bapir and his family were relocated to Durband village during the Iran-Iraq war and their home village to the south was destroyed. They have no arable land in Durband and only part-ownership of 18 goats and two cows. The animals provide milk, yogurt and cheese for two large families but they do not cover other subsistence needs and cannot be sold for cash. Selling the animals is the only way in which Bapir can raise money but the revenues need to be shared between the group of owners. Selling too many animals would deplete the group’s few resources.

“What else can I do? I have nothing. All I have is what I can gather from the mountains. Poverty has led to all this. It has killed my children. If MAG hadn’t taken me to hospital I would have died on the mountainside after my first accident. And after all this I am still collecting these weapons from the mountains because I can see nothing else.”

MAG has referred Bapir to the World Food Programme and has destroyed the ordnance that he had collected. By referring people to agencies able to offer economic assistance, MAG can help to break the dependence on ordnance that Bapir expresses so desperately. With the support of the local authorities, MAG is also running a campaign across the region warning of the dangers of UXO salvaging and urging people to abandon the practice.
"I had seen mines on the hillside and had heard about how the explosives can be used for fishing – detonating it in the water to kill the fish. The first time I did it it worked. The second time I tried with a VS50 mine, it blew up when I was trying to get the explosives out."

Rahman Muhammed (left) lost his eye and right hand and received fragmentation wounds across his body. Fishing with explosives is a common practice in many mine contaminated countries. The familiarity that comes from living amongst landmines and explosives can erode people’s sense of the threat that they pose.
Hassan Ali Khangar, pictured in hospital one month after his accident in March 1998, is a famous Kurdish singer. He detonated a V69 (photo right) whilst hunting in the mountains with friends. "I was so desperate when I had my accident, that if I had had a weapon, I would have killed myself. Landmines are a crime against the people here. When I recover I will make a film about my accident. I am writing songs for the Ban Landmines Festival – songs that tell of the horror of landmines."
## Conclusion

In a region in which internal conflict recurs, which is under UN sanctions and which is facing an uncertain political future, MAG has built up a team of 600 skilled local people working to rebuild the physical and social foundations of their communities. MAG has continued working through military and political crises and has provided a stable structure in a region where people have little faith in the permanence of institutions or external assistance. MAG's perseverance in the region has been rewarded with the support and confidence of the mine-affected communities. This and the support of international donors has made MAG's work in the region possible.

Since beginning its work in northern Iraq MAG has sought to increase the skills and abilities of its local staff to plan, manage and implement mine action activities. This capacity-building approach has allowed the programme to dramatically reduce the number of expatriate staff required. MAG has also provided the basis upon which further mine action efforts have been built, including the United Nations mine action programme that was established in 1997. Technical developments have been made to improve the clearance process, including the trialling of new equipment and current development of a locally produced mechanical aid.

MAG looks forward to continuing its support in the region and hopes international donor funding will allow this life-saving work to be sustained.

MAG would like to thank the donors who are funding this work, notably:

- Anti-Landmijn Stichting, Netherlands
- The British Department for International Development (DFID)
- SCIAF (Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund)
- Stichting Vluchteling/Dutch Government
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
- Swedish Peace and Arbitration Service
- and the many other institutions and individuals who have supported us.

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**APPEAL FOR FUNDS**

MAG needs funding that will allow it to respond to the real needs of mine-affected populations. For further information about funding MAG's work, please contact MAG at the address overleaf.

Credit card donation line: 0800 0723 999