

Landmine Impact Survey

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN



Certified by the United Nations Certification Committee

**Implemented by the Survey Action Center and
the International Eurasia Press Fund**

Executive Summary

PROJECT ABSTRACT

The *Landmine Impact Survey* report summarizes the results of a socioeconomic survey of the effects of landmines and unexploded ordnances (UXO) on communities in the Republic of Azerbaijan. This survey was conducted from September 2002 to June 2003. This document is only one in a series of reports which collectively constitute the *Global Landmine Survey* initiative. This initiative aims to catalog the socioeconomic impacts caused by landmines and UXO and to store this data in a manner that supports strategic national planning and resource allocation decisions. The report on Azerbaijan is designed to be read in conjunction with a document entitled the *Global Landmine Survey Initiative*, which describes the global project as well as the general methodologies used to conduct impact surveys.

Funding for this survey has been provided by the European Community.



Quality assurance monitoring has been independently provided by UNMAS/UNOPS.



Foreword

The Azerbaijan Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) Project was aimed at producing quality data, to internationally recognized standards, to improve mine action management and enhance the capacity to eliminate or minimize the impact of landmines on communities and internally displaced persons in Azerbaijan.

The Survey Action Center (SAC) executed and a national NGO, International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF), implemented the survey under the auspices of the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA), the responsible national agency for planning, coordination and monitoring of all mine related activities in support of rehabilitation and reconstruction of war-torn territories and their development in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The survey was conducted in accordance with the principles and operating protocols established by the Survey Working Group.

The European Community funded the survey. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided technical support and material assistance. The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) provided a quality assurance monitor to assist with the certification process.

The LIS was conducted from September 2002 to June 2003. The survey was not conducted in the areas occupied by Armenia, the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan, or other discrete locales where military or local authorities did not allow access.

Hereby, we would like to emphasize that the survey covered all communities to a high degree of confidence. The survey achieved its objectives to provide Azerbaijan and international donors with quantifiable, standardized data regarding the impact of landmines and unexploded ordnance upon communities in that country, to provide national authorities in Azerbaijan with the capacity to plan and prioritize scarce resources with maximum effect, allowing planners to focus national strategies for landmine risk education, technical survey, victim assistance, training, and clearance. The community impact scoring and community clustering schemes have been developed based on thorough discussions with ANAMA.

Cranfield Mine Action (CMA) facilitated the strategic planning exercise (2-6 June 2003) and the workshop (24-27 November 2003) targeted at working out an Azerbaijan Strategic Plan for Mine Action. During these sessions, the history of mine action in Azerbaijan has been summarized, local mine clearance capacity has been quantified and FREEWAY planning software and LIS data usage in long term mine action planning has been demonstrated. As a result, the Azerbaijan five-year Strategic Plan for Mine Action has been developed with the LIS and other relevant information taken into account.

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Director of ANAMA

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Introduction

Growing out of the wide collaborative efforts of the International Treaty to Ban Landmines, Landmine Impact Surveys (LIS) are executed to meet the needs of the international humanitarian mine action community, including donors, national authorities and mine action implementers.

The overall LIS vision is to “facilitate the prioritizing of human, material and financial resources supporting humanitarian mine action at the national, regional and global levels.” To fulfill this vision, Landmine Impact Surveys are executed across the globe to the same rigorous standard.

Landmine Impact Surveys provide the three major partners of mine action—national authorities, donors and implementing agencies—with a common dataset. This data, as collected during the impact survey, offers clear improvements over past efforts in that it:

- Defines the entire problem in terms of scale, type, location, hazard and socio-economic impacts experienced by local communities
- Improves national planning efforts by allowing for clear prioritization of resources
- Fosters development of national plans with well-defined immediate intermediate and end-state objectives
- Establishes baseline data for measuring performance

In sum, this implies nothing short of a major revision of how mine action programs are managed and how resources for such programs are allocated. Impact surveys are the first and most vital step in the overall transformation of humanitarian mine action. Impact surveys improve the quality of information available to support management decision making at all levels. The findings and information presented in this report are stored in the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database and are intended to be descriptive in nature, providing the most comprehensive picture of the nature of the mine and UXO threat experienced by communities in Azerbaijan. While essential for national planning, this report is not a substitute for a national plan. It does not relieve national authorities or mine action professionals from their collective responsibility to gain a full understanding of the results of the survey and to use these results to set priorities, mobilize funding and allocate mine action resources in the most effective and rational manner. The survey has transformed the unknown into information and knowledge. The challenge now is for others to use this knowledge to bring about positive, constructive action.

As a global initiative with a stated goal of standardizing information across countries, Landmine Impact Surveys make a concentrated effort to ensure conformity of methods, procedures and processes. These are based on best practice in the fields of social science research and mine action. To ensure confidence in the results, impact surveys are supported by both internal and external quality

control mechanisms. All surveys executed with the involvement of the Survey Action Center measure and score impacts in impacted communities in a uniform manner. The true value and nature of the impacts, however, cannot be ascertained by a quick tallying of colored dots on a map; instead readers should make a concentrated effort to comprehend all aspects of the landmine problem and then develop plans to address the problem.

MAP 1

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

- Azerbaijan
- Azeri land occupied by Armenia (edge between this area and the rest of Azerbaijan is a non-administrative boundary)
- Nakhchivan (not surveyed)



Executive Summary

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The Azerbaijan Landmine Impact Survey conducted interviews in 643 communities in 18 districts and exclusively identified 480 mine-impacted communities and 163 unique communities in Aghstafa district impacted by unexploded ordnance (UXO). Altogether 970 suspected hazard areas (SHA) were identified. The land contaminated by mines and/or by UXO directly impact the safety and livelihoods of an estimated 514,000 people and has led to the death or injury of 52 people in the last two years. The survey was not conducted in the areas occupied by Armenia, the Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan or other discrete locales where military or local authorities did not allow access (see Map 1, facing page). Preliminary Opinion Collection (POC) identified 47 districts in Azerbaijan as not impacted by landmines. The survey covered all mine-impacted communities to a high degree of confidence in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The data collected during this effort affords extensive opportunities for research, analysis and project planning, and leads to several central conclusions relevant to mine action:

- The survey recorded 51 victims of mine/UXO incidents in 33 communities in the past two years, of which nine were recorded as fatalities. All but two of the victims were male. Nearly 60 percent of mine victims were between the ages of 15-44 and 71 percent of the victims were harmed while farming and herding.
- Eleven communities were identified as highly impacted, 101 were medium impact, and 368 were low impact. High- and medium-impact communities comprise 23 percent of all impacted communities.
- Fizuli and Aghstafa districts reported the largest numbers of victims. Although the number of victims in Fizuli is a reflection of the scale of fighting there, the victims in Aghstafa, on the other hand, are the result of dispersed UXO. Saloglu village alone reports 32 victims killed and 110 injured, although no fatalities and only 2 injuries occurred within the last two years.
- The majority of recent mine/UXO victims were adults engaged in agriculture at the time of the incident. The second leading activity that leads to frequent mine/UXO incidents is tampering with individual mines or pieces of UXO.
- The most prevalent resource blockage is pasture land followed by cropland.
- Forty-five percent of the impacted communities (287) in 13 districts reported some form of mine risk education (MRE) activity within the last 24 months. The most commonly used methodology was posters. Although fewer than one-tenth reported MRE presentations in their schools, educational brochures and booklets were distributed in a third of the communities, including distributions at schools.

- MRE should target more communities impacted by UXO.
- Villages and smaller units (170 or fewer residents), including many farms and seasonal communities, made up 353 of the 643 impacted communities (55 percent). Many of these rural communities lie in former battlefields and along the present front line with occupied areas.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

A Landmine Impact Survey was conducted in Azerbaijan from September 2002 to June 2003. Data collection was conducted between December 2002 and May 2003. The Survey Action Center (SAC) executed and the International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF) implemented the survey under the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) in accordance with the principles and operating protocols established by the Survey Working Group. Cranfield Mine Action facilitated the strategic planning exercise.

The European Community (EC) funded the survey. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) entered into a project agreement with the EC and a contractor services agreement with SAC. UNDP and the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) provided technical support and material assistance. The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) provided a quality assurance monitor to assist with the certification process.

IEPF conducted the survey with 51 national staff during data collection. Field staff consisted of five field supervisors, five field editors and 19 interviewers operating out of field offices in Ganja city, Fizuli and Beylagan. Data collected was entered into the Information Management System for Mine Action at ANAMA in Baku by three data entry staff.

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

The survey covered all mine suspected communities to a high degree of confidence in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Preliminary Opinion Collection (POC) indicated that 26 districts of the non-occupied part of Azerbaijan are impacted by landmines and UXO. This survey confirmed that 18 of these districts, slightly more than one-quarter of the country, had landmine/UXO contamination. The survey was not conducted in Yardymly district, in the Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan, or in the areas occupied by Armenia. A total of 643 communities were found to be mine/UXO impacted and 970 suspected hazard areas were identified. Fifty-five percent of the impacted communities are in Fizuli and Aghstafa, while 59 percent of the SHAs are in these two districts. One large cluster in Aghstafa, which includes 163 communities representing the Saloglu contamination area, is from a single military training facility and large arms depot that was destroyed when the Soviet army withdrew in 1991. In addition, 327 SHAs were identified as having UXO with low impact that could be targeted for immediate spot clearance. Fifty-one victims in the past 24 months were identified.

IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

A scoring mechanism categorizes communities by their degree of mine/UXO impact. Indicators for this mechanism include the number of victims within the past 24 months, blocked access to resources and the type of contaminating munitions. Based on this mechanism and with 163 survey sites clustered for reporting and analysis to form one community around Saloglu village, the survey scored 11 communities as 'high impact' (2 percent), 101 as 'medium impact' (21 percent), and 368 as 'low impact' (77 percent) in the surveyed regions for a total of 480 communities. For reporting and analysis purposes 163 survey sites in Aghstafa were clustered to form one community around the Saloglu village. The mean population of these 163 sites is 8 and they are impacted by UXO only. This clustering has been done in order to recognize these sites as not being individual conflict areas but rather one area impacted both by an explosion in 1991 at the Soviet ammunition depot and by training at an adjacent military range in the 1970s.

IMPACT ON SECTORS

The survey collected information regarding the types of resources that are denied to individuals and communities because of mine/UXO contamination in the surveyed area. The communities most frequently reported pasture as an economic resource blocked by contamination. Cropland was the second most frequently mentioned. Drinking water and other infrastructure such as hospitals and schools were mentioned less frequently by the communities reporting these blockages.

MINE INCIDENTS

The survey recorded 51 victims of mine/UXO in 52 incidents in 33 communities in the past two years, of which nine were recorded as fatalities. All but two of the victims were male. Nearly 60 percent of mine victims were between the ages of 15-44 and 51 percent of victims were harmed while farming and herding, while tampering was the third leading activity when incidents occurred. The only two female recent victims were reported to have been herding and farming, respectively, when the incidents occurred. All of the recent victims were civilians. In general terms, the typical profile of an average victim in Azerbaijan is a male adult engaged in agriculture.

The survey also identified 1,164 victims previous to the 24-month period. Of these, 436 were fatalities and 728 survived the incidents.

CAUSALITY

Over three quarters (77 percent) of all recent victims live in the four districts of Fizuli, Tovuz, Aghstafa and Gazakh. Due to the low number of victims compared to the total number of communities, however, there is an insufficient volume of data to analyze and generate conclusions regarding causal factors that determine mine impact and the probability of mine incidents in a given community.

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE

The budget of US\$1,500,000 for the survey was developed following the SAC advance survey mission in December 2000. In August 2002, the budget was revised to US\$1,236,000 to reflect the revised estimated number of communities affected by the landmines. Funds expended by the United Nations to cover the costs of the quality assurance monitoring and certification are not reflected in these figures.

CONCLUSION

The results of the survey indicate that Azerbaijan suffers from extensive landmine and UXO contamination in the war-torn districts along the cease-fire line and the border with Armenia, especially in the Fizuli district. UXO contamination is extensive throughout the Aghstafa district. Spot clearance tasking can partially reduce the impact of UXO contamination in Aghstafa. Increased MRE and targeting herders and farmers are recommended. The Landmine Impact Survey provides Azerbaijan with the information it needs to put in place a program that will one day free it from the fear of landmines. Given sustained funding support, these initiatives will allow Azerbaijan to free itself from the most adverse consequences of mines and UXO within a reasonable amount of time.

SPECIAL NOTE

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Community. The views expressed herein are those of the Survey Action Center, IEPF and ANAMA and do not in any way reflect the official opinion of the European Community or the United Nations.

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