

**ZIMAC UPDATE TO THE MEETING OF THE STANDING
COMMITTEES ON THE AP MINE BAN CONVENTION IN
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND: 20-24 JUNE 2011**

1. Since the granting of the ²⁴~~22~~ month extension period in November 2010, there has not been much progress on the resurveying of the known minefields and actual mine clearance in Zimbabwe.
2. Mine clearance is progressing at the usual slow pace owing to inadequate funding and other necessary resources. The Government of Zimbabwe from its own coffers only managed to allocate USD 150 000 for demining operational costs for the 2011 financial year. Though this amount may appear to be insignificant for this purpose, it should however be pointed out that this is a major commitment considering the economic challenges that the country is currently experiencing. Efforts are underway to engage the international community with a view to boosting the existing Government capacity to meaningful levels.
3. Currently our deminers are deployed on the 53 kilometre double stretch minefield located in the South Eastern part of the country bordering South Africa and Mozambique. To date, a total of 20 kilometres of that minefield has been cleared and over 5 000 AP mines have been recovered and destroyed. Of this figure 800 were recovered and destroyed this year from April to date.
4. Some progress has been made so far at local level in terms of mine action. In this regard, on 13 June 2011, a team comprising the Chairman of the National Mine Action Authority of Zimbabwe (NAMAZ), the Director of the Zimbabwe Mine Action Centre (ZIMAC) and other officials met and discussed Mine Action issues with honourable members of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs and Defence. The purpose of the meeting was to conscientise the members of the negative impact of landmines in the country so that they can also be involved in the sourcing of resources and other forms of assistance.
5. Some International Organisations, namely UNDP, ICRC and HALO Trust have shown interest in assisting the country in dealing with this humanitarian problem or challenge. It is our hope that these efforts will materialise.

- a. On 21 March 2011, the Chairman NAMAZ and Director ZIMAC held a meeting with a UNDP representative in order to chat the way forward in terms of mine action in the country.
- b. An ICRC delegate visited one of the minefields in the Northern Eastern part of the country on 03 May 2011. The purpose of the visit was to carryout 'an independent survey' on the impact of landmines to the local populace. The ICRC is yet to give feedback on the outcome of their survey.
- c. On 27 May 2011, the President of HALO Trust accompanied by his local representative and staff from the Japanese Embassy visited the same area visited by ICRC. The purpose of the visit was to acquaint themselves on the magnitude and impact of the landmine problem in Zimbabwe.
- d. On 28 May 2011, the same team less the Japanese staff visited one of the Eastern Boarder Post areas which is also affected by landmines. HALO Trust has shown a lot of interest in doing demining and minefield survey in Zimbabwe. The Organisation has submitted a draft copy of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to NAMAZ. The draft copy is still with the Legal Department. Hopefully the MOU will be signed soon.
- e. Efforts are at an advanced stage towards reviving the operations of NAMAZ which had been rendered almost inactive by the country's economic challenges. A NAMAZ meeting to map the way forward is scheduled for sometime during the month of July 2011.

FUTURE PLANS

6. ZIMAC has the following plans:-
 - a. To relocate from its current location in a cantonment area to a place outside the cantonment where it will be easily accessible by all.
 - b. To establish another demining Squadron that will complement the efforts of the existing one subject to availability of additional equipment and other resources.

c. To conduct the resurvey of all known minefields and Suspected Hazardous Areas (SHAs).

d. To continue with mine clearance and other explosive remnants of war as well as mine risk education.

8. However the plans are hinged on the availability of funding which the Government of Zimbabwe alone may not be able to effectively provide due to other pressing commitments and economic constraints.

9. Regardless of the current state of affairs, Zimbabwe remains fully committed to the implementation of the provisions of the AP Mine Ban Treaty and welcomes any form of assistance that will enable her to accomplish this task to ensure that she realises her dream of a mine-free country.