

19/11/07 AM



***Eight Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty
Dead Sea, 18-22 November 2007***

Agenda Item 11c: Clearing Mined Areas

COMMENTS BY

Jordan Delegation

*Thank you Mr. President
Your Royal Highness
Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen....*

It gives me great pleasure to address the 8th Meeting of States Parties on the shores of the Dead Sea. As Director of the NCDR, I would like to welcome everyone, and hope your stay in our country is both enjoyable and productive. *Ahln Washahlan (sp?)*.

I would like to take only a few minutes of your time to describe how Jordan has attempted to fulfill its Article 5 obligations, and what it plans to do to become free of landmines by the year 2009.

For ease and clarity, I will respond in order, to the questions for considerations made available to the States Parties in the lead-up to the 8MSP. I would like to state at the outset however, that some of the suggested questions do not apply to the case of Jordan, therefore I will limit my comments to questions 1 thru 5.

Lastly, my comments will cover the past 7 month period only, as I updated the Co-Chairs on *Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education, and Mine Action Technologies* this past April in Geneva and therefore do not want to repeat what is already part of the official record.

In response to Question One: *What are our plans for ridding Jordan of landmines?*

I believe we have reported our plans to ensure compliance on many other occasions, and will therefore not take up valuable meeting time repeating them here today. Suffice to say we are geared towards trying to finish the job by our 2009 deadline using the many strong relationships we have with the Government, Army, and international community.

Mr. President, there is one new matter that I would like to brief you on, and that is on Jordan's efforts at '**cancelling**' SHAs, and thereby avoiding the high costs associated with actual clearance. Through

the work of a *Joint Cancellation Committee*, and based on findings from our Landmine Retrofit Survey, we have been able cancel 23.6 million m² in 2007 that were at one time suspected hazardous areas. By inspecting the SHAs and consulting a number of different information sources, maps, and undertaking field visits we have been able to save a considerable amount of time, money, and effort. The result is that we can report that by the end of 2007 will have approximately 12 million m² of SHA remaining.

As for Question Two: *Progress in the Implementation of the National Demining Plan*

I am very happy and proud to announce to you today that since April we have made significant progress on this front. There are two major on-going operations I would like to update you on:

- **First**, the Wadi Araba/Aqaba project being executed by NPA in the southern third of the country will be completed by year's end. Using innovative clearance techniques, the project will have concluded by clearing 52,000 mines, 12 millions m², and all this 9 months ahead of schedule. Since April, NPA has lifted around 15,000 mines and cleared approximately 1 million m² of ground
- **Second**, mine clearance being carried out by our Royal Engineering Corps has also progressed well. Since April the REC has cleared approximately 3,000 and cleared 425,000 m² of land. We anticipate that the REC will complete all major mine clearance in the Jordan Valley by the end of 2007.

In reply to Question Three: *What work remains?*

Mr. President, we have one large demining task remaining along our northern border. The mine-belt stretches for 104km and is technically challenging, however we have conducted a preliminary Survey and Desk Assessment of the minefields, and last week we began the

actual Technical Survey process which should be completed by mid-December.

The Northern Border Clearance Project (NBCP), as we have named it, represents the *final* phase of the NCDR's long-term strategy to demine Jordan. When completed, approximately 12 million m² of land will be released; the risk of mine accidents for a local population of 50,000 will be removed, and Jordan will have fulfilled its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention.

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As for Question Four: Barricades to Implementation

- We do not foresee any major problems in implementing this final stage of the demining process in the country.

Lastly, Question Five: Contributions of the Government of Jordan

The Government of Jordan continues to take its Article 5 obligations seriously, and since April 2007 has committed US\$ 2.8 million through the military for mine clearance and support for the general running of the NCDR. We also have a good operational relationship with the military, Civil Defence, Royal Geographical Centre, and the Royal Medical Services who all have seconded staff to the NCDR to help on inter-governmental coordination issues.

Mr. President, I have tried to keep my comments brief and focused on what we have accomplished since the intersessional meetings held in Geneva last March.

I do hope it has helped shed some light on the situation in Jordan and would be happy to answer any follow-up questions that you might have.

Thank You Mr. President. Shukran