



Understanding victim assistance and the challenges and lessons learnt

Victim Assistance Parallel Programme

The Tirana Workshop on Achieving a Mine-Free South Eastern Europe

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Victim assistance in the context of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

First multilateral disarmament treaty that aimed to assist the victims

- Not clear what needed to be done?
- How this should be done?
- Who was ultimately responsible?



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Victim assistance in the context of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

- *Victim assistance* has been defined by the States Parties to include:
 - Understanding the extent of the challenge faced (e.g. data collection)
 - Emergency and ongoing medical care
 - Physical rehabilitation
 - Psychological support and social reintegration
 - Economic reintegration
 - Relevant laws and public policies



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Victim assistance: principles

- **victim assistance efforts should not exclude any person injured or disabled in another manner**



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Victim Assistance

26 States Parties have indicated that they are responsible for significant numbers of landmine survivors:

- Afghanistan
- Albania
- Angola
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Burundi
- Cambodia
- Chad
- Colombia
- Croatia
- DRC
- El Salvador
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Guinea Bissau
- Iraq
- Jordan
- Mozambique
- Nicaragua
- Peru
- Senegal
- Serbia
- Sudan
- Tajikistan
- Thailand
- Uganda
- Yemen

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Victim assistance: understandings

- **Ultimate responsibility of meeting the rights and needs of survivors within a particular state rests with that state**



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Victim assistance: understandings

- Victim assistance should be integrated into broader healthcare, rehabilitation, development, disability and human rights contexts



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Victim assistance in international humanitarian law

- Victim assistance framework is relevant for victims of all types of weapons and other traumatic injuries



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Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



- **New standard by which to measure victim assistance efforts**
- **More systematic, sustainable and human rights based approach to victim assistance**



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Challenges



- **Access to appropriate healthcare and rehabilitation facilities**
- **Affordability**
- **Improving and upgrading facilities**
- **Opportunities for employment and income generation**
- **Capacity building and on-going training**
- **Raising awareness**
- **Effective social welfare system and legislation**
- **Sufficient funding**
- **Coordination of donor support**
- **Support to local NGOs and agencies**



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Other challenges



- ❑ **Translating increased understanding on victim assistance into tangible improvements in the quality of daily life of mine victims on the ground**
- ❑ **Limited capacity within State and non governmental structures**
- ❑ **Limited or lack of inclusion of survivors and other persons with disabilities**
- ❑ **Lack of long-term sustainability of services**
- ❑ **Limited implementation of policies, plans and laws**
- ❑ **Low priority given to disability issues**



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Lessons learnt



- ❑ **Victim assistance provisions of a disarmament convention should not raise concerns about new obligations**



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Lessons learnt



- ❑ **Victim assistance must be seen as a set of concrete actions for which specific States hold ultimate responsibility**



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Lessons learnt



- ❑ **Victim assistance is a process that involves a rights based, holistic and integrated approach**



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Lessons learnt

- ❑ **Success in victim assistance means understanding victim assistance in the broader contexts of development**
- ❑ **Part of existing State responsibilities in the areas of healthcare, rehabilitation, social services, education, employment, and human rights**



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Lessons learnt

- ❑ **Value of inclusion and the active participation of mine victims and other persons with disabilities in the development, implementation and monitoring of policies, plans, and programs**



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Thank you!



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