



RECOMMENDATIONS TO JOURNALISTS IN HIGHLIGHTING THE TOPIC OF HUMANITARIAN DEMINING

All the topics related to armed conflict in Ukraine have their specifics and challenges. The topic of humanitarian demining is especially sensitive because it pertains to humans lives. When highlighting this topic, the journalists are to be guided by professional standards, Ukrainian legislation and International Law as well as by common sense.

Recommendations for journalists

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Terminology and insight into the problem

Humanitarian demining is a comprehensive topic, and therefore, it requires preliminary mastering of special materials before a journalist starts highlighting any of its components. Among other things, it is also worth getting acquainted with the basic terminology, because much misunderstanding may arise due to the terminology ignorance.



MINE ACTION

Mine action pertains to "... the activities which aim to reduce the social, economic and environmental impact of mines, and ERW including unexploded sub-munitions. Mine action is not just about demining; it is also about people and societies, and how they are affected by landmines and ERW contamination. The objective of mine action is to reduce the risk from landmines and ERW to a level where people can live safely; in which economic, social and health development can occur free from the constraints imposed by landmine and ERW contamination, and in which the victims' different needs can be addressed.

Mine action comprises five complementary groups of activities:

- a) Mine and ERW Risk Education (MRE);
- b) humanitarian demining, i.e. mine and ERW survey, mapping, marking and clearance;
- c) victims' assistance, including rehabilitation and reintegration;
- d) explosives' and munitions' stockpiles destruction; and
- e) advocacy against the use of anti-personal mines (APM).

A number of other enabling activities are required to support these five components of mine action, including: assessment and planning, the mobilization and prioritization of resources, information management, human skills development and management training, quality management (QM) and the application of effective, appropriate and safe equipment.



DEMINING or HUMANITARIAN DEMINING

A system of measures carried out by Mine Action Operators to remove hazards connected with the Explosive Ordnance, including areas' Non-Technical and Technical Surveys, mapping, identification, demilitarization and (or) destruction of explosive ordnance, marking, clearance, post-clearance documentation, community mine action liaison and the handover of cleared land.

At the same time, there are also many other special terms, including the ones, which identify explosive ordnance. If you can't identify the type of an object, but you need to name it in

your material, please consult an expert in this field.

Lower we give an example of a mistake often present in Ukrainian media.

На Донбасі двоє військових підірвалися на міні, один загинув, - штаб ООС

13 серпня, 2020 четвер 14:11

ОПЕРАЦІЯ ОБ'ЄДНАНИХ СИЛ



Поділитися: [f](#) [t](#)

Фото: pressphoto.net

13 серпня в зоні проведення ООС на міні підірвались два військовослужбовця

Про це повідомляє прес-служба Міноборони України.

"13 серпня, внаслідок відхилення від маршруту підірвалися на невідомому вибуховому пристрої два військовослужбовця зі складу Об'єднаних сил. Один з них, на превеликий жаль, загинув, інший отримав поранення", - йдеться в повідомленні.

Пораненого воїна оперативно доставили до госпіталю.

Читайте також: На Донбасі через "необережне поводження зі зброєю" загинув український розвідник, - командування "Північ"

In the heading the journalists mention the word **"mine"**.

Though the Joint Forces Operations Headquarters informed about **"an unidentified explosive device"** (see *The Glossary*).

In pursuit of a clickbait heading the journalists were unspecific in presenting the information.

On the other hand, journalists may not understand what is the difference between "demilitarization" and "destruction" of an explosive ordnance (EO). "Demilitarization" – is only EO blocking, neutralization, while "destruction" stipulates its physical liquidation through bursting, burning or through applying other mechanical influence. Definition of these terms may be found in the Law of Ukraine "On Mine Action In Ukraine".

If you don't understand what a term means, you'd better ask to explain. Because this is important not only for a journalist, but primarily

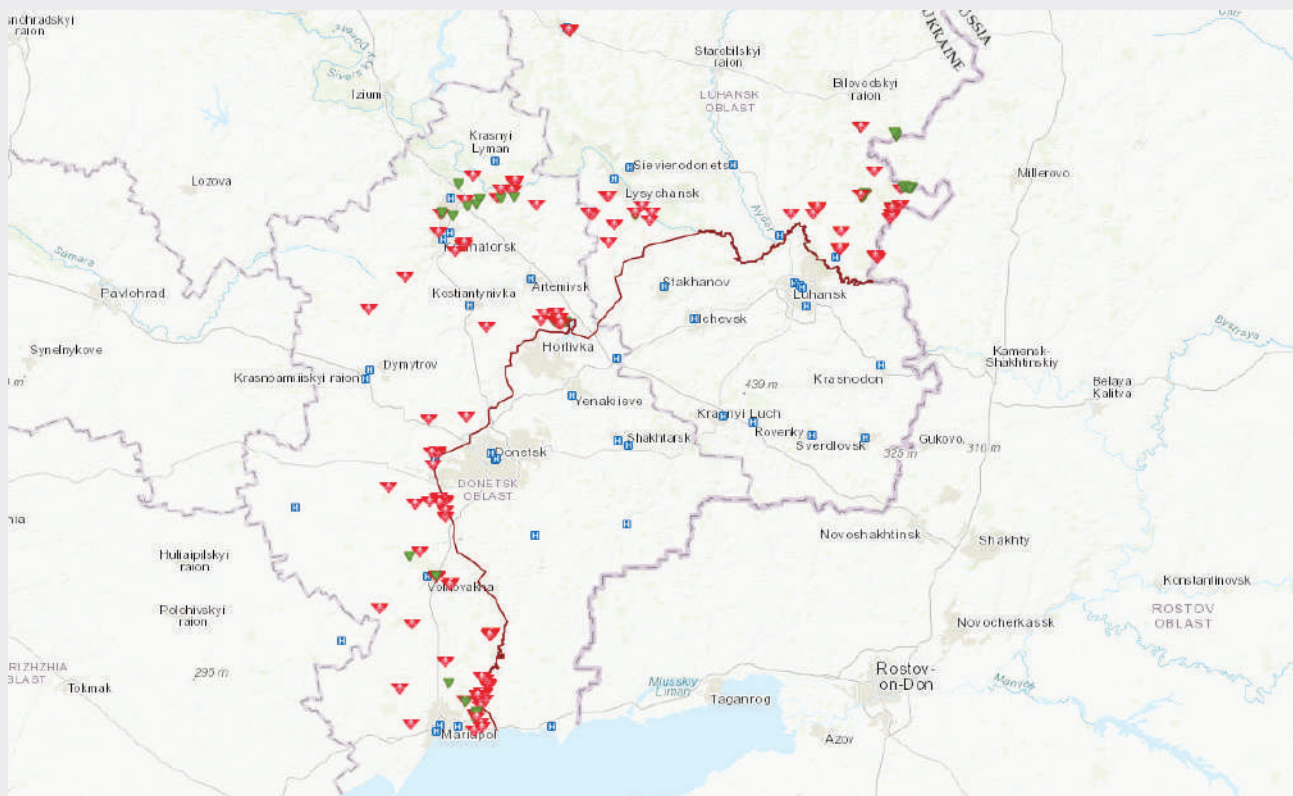
for the audience. If you don't know anything (it is normal! You are not able to know everything!), your duty is to ask competent people to be able to explain it to your audience as well. **Be unashamed to read laws and other documents, which may also help you understand any issue.**

Also, it is worth remembering, that media are to be partners with the organizations which perform humanitarian demining by timely informing local population about hazardous areas and by helping them in public awareness raising to handle explosive ordnance.

Using statistics

Any statistics – are not just figures. As, for example, fates of specific people lay behind the figures of explosive ordnance victims.

Media often contain considerable amount of incorrectly presented data due to inattentiveness of the editorial boards and their failure to follow simple checking rules. Don't use data from unknown or dubious data sources. You'd better use data from official state establishments and international organizations, which deal with the issues of humanitarian demining.



For example, **"Interactive map of areas contaminated with mines and explosive ordnance"**, developed by the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense with the assistance of Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining and the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine will be of help. Here is the link: <https://mod-ukr.imsma-core.org/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d1fc9330a4964cc793dac7894c725fa3>

It's important to be sure, that the data have not become outdated yet. In other words, the time when the data were collected, is of great value. If different organizations have different data (e.g., the number of killed or victimized due to

explosive ordnance, or the size of the contaminated area), it's worth presenting all the available data stressing the fact that uniform specific information is lacking.

Involving experts

When highlighting the topic of humanitarian demining, it's necessary to be careful in selecting the experts. Such experts could not be people, who have no professional connection with the problematics, as, for example, political analysts.

When inviting experts, several rules need to be observed:

1. Experts should be competent. The criteria used for selecting experts are as follows:
 - a) expedient previous experience;
 - b) non-commitment as regards the topic;
 - c) absence of the conflict of interests.
2. It's important to consider the balance of thoughts (in cases of highlighting complicated and conflicting issues), because experts also might have different points of view in the considered problematics.
3. It's important to name experts' titles correctly (therefore, specify with those, who you are interviewing, how correctly they should be presented to the audience). Independent Media Council stressed in its recommendations, that "failure to provide information about an expert, his/her incomplete titles statement, could be considered as deliberate infringement of ethical norms, because it prevents the audience to receive full information about the expert and allows for manipulating opinions".
4. It's worth to be careful in providing quotations – they should be precise, not wrenched out of context (context has a very big importance).

The following entities could be experts:

- Ukrainian government officials, responsible for humanitarian demining (e.g. Department of Environmental Safety and Mine Action at the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense; Special Rapid Response Centre (SRRC) of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU); the State Special Transport Service of Ukraine; engineer units of the Ukrainian National Police, the National Guard and the Security Service; State Company "Ukrobo-ronservice" (international UNOPS/MAU accreditation);
- International organizations' representatives, who deal with humanitarian demining, e.g., The HALO Trust, Danish Demining Group (DDG), Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD), or support the development of regulatory legal framework for the humanitarian demining system, or who provide material and logistical assistance, enable training of Ukrainian specialists (e.g., the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine, United Nations Development Program, Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining);
- Representatives of Ukrainian NGOs, which perform humanitarian demining (e.g., "Demining Solutions");
- In separate cases - people's deputies or government officials, if an issue concerns legislation development / correction in this sphere, or when adopting a budget (in general, we have to remember that politicians are not to be invited as experts, because they represent a specific political force and could be biased in presenting the topic);
- Analysts of Ukrainian or international think tanks, who on the permanent basis track these issues (in this case, it is necessary to be sure, that a think tank is of reliable reputation and its experts are competent enough).

In journalists' materials it is necessary to differentiate between **Experts** and **Heroes**.

Deminers, engineers, local citizens, victims of explosions and their families, etc., could be **Heroes**. While Experts provide competent opinion, explain a problem. **Heroes** are people,

the life stories of whom you want to relay. In 2017 Independent Media Council developed Recommendations regarding the principles of inviting guests and captioning experts in information-analytical journalism, the reference to which is presented lower in *Reference/Supplementary documents*.

Recommendations for interviewing victims and their families

Humanitarian demining topic – is not just mere statistics and data or official information. People, who in one way or another suffered from explosive ordnance, or relatives of those killed, might become heroes of journalists' materials. Therefore, communication with such people requires a specific approach. Such people have suffered their trauma and we must remember, that during the interview you make them experience the same trauma again. Therefore, a journalist in such cases has to be sensitive and emphatic.



BASIC RULE – DO NOT HARM!

It is totally out of question that people, who suffered a trauma, might be subjected to discrimination or stigmatization (when someone tries to impose the opinion: "It's you, who are to blame, why did you go there or took into your hands an explosive ordnance?"). Also a journalist, who communicates with victims, has to understand the concept of a trauma and what psychological consequences it might bear, be sensitive and not to cross ethical boundaries. NGO "Ukrainian media and communication institute" developed a manual "How To Teach Conflict-Sensitive Journalism", which contains the following key recommendations regarding communication with people, who suffered a trauma [5].



WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE, WHO SUFFERED A TRAUMA, IT IS IMPORTANT TO:

- Adequately motivate a hero to agree to have interview with you, provide him/her with all the necessary information;
- Carefully prepare yourself for the interview;
- Correctly, softly, emphatically advise a person to share his/her life story;
- Sympathize and show empathy;
- Be sincere, don't be afraid to specify facts and ask to repeat;
- Know basics of psychologic crisis intervention;
- Have basic contacts, where to refer a hero, if he/she requires support and solace: psychologists, who deal with exactly this type of traumas, support groups, volunteers;
- Provide a text /footage for his/her approval before publishing;
- Be able to reduce communication with a hero to a minimum softly and in due time;
- Develop emotional intellect and sensitivity;
- Be patient, tolerant, unbiased.



IT IS NOT ADVISABLE TO:

- Use the term "victim" – it would be better to say "a person, who suffered trauma";
- Generalize and insist that all, who are now in the conflict zone, are traumatized people;
- Express pity in whatever way: by words, mimics, behavior. To be empathic – is good, to express pity – no;
- Pressurize a person, manipulate his/her emotions;
- Dig into shocking details;
- Interpret a person's emotions and feelings on behalf of the person;
- Decide on behalf of a person how important or not important were the circumstances, he/she appeared in;
- Willfully dramatize the story;
- Respond aggressively on the aggression.

Recommendations for highlighting the topic of death

The topic of death is even more complicated for a journalist. It may happen, that a journalist appears in the place and at a time, where the tragedy has occurred. What to shoot and what not? What to write about and what not? In what way? Many ethical issues also arise. A number of investigations prove that a shock-content in media may strengthen or provide for developing stress, anxiety, depression and even a post-traumatic stress disorder within the audience.

Psychotherapist Olga Semionova insists, that “unethical journalism from psychological point of view – is potentially traumatizing journalism. Death broadcasted live (and in recording as well) may cause substantial emotional resonance within the majority of the spectators. Such journalists add more stress to psychotherapists’ and psychiatrists’ work. Our emotional sphere is rather vulnerable and fragile, and for some persons such footage would become an overburden” [6].

When you inform about those killed, the following rules should be adhered to:

- The families should not receive the news about their relatives’ deaths from media. Therefore, it is necessary to carefully consider before publicizing the names of those killed;
- Deaths should not be broadcasted live, and they should not be hot news;
- You should not broadcast (neither in pictures or video) mutilated bodies (instead, you can show some belongings of those killed);
- You should not show the last minutes of a wounded person life;
- In case broadcasting of a shocking content is not to be avoided, a warning about such a content must be provided before the broadcasting starts; and in printed and online media such a content should not be on the front page to attract immediate attention.
- Respect towards those killed and their families should be the foundation of any material.

Recommendations for publicizing photos and video

In addition to the fact that photos and video should not be shocking, it is also necessary to remember a number of other important rules:

1. Do not illustrate your humanitarian demining materials with photos or video (see the example below), where **people keep explosive ordnance in their hands** or stay very close to them, even if they are harmless. It's a very bad behavioral pattern, especially for children.

Перший крок до розмінування Донбасу: Рада прийняла закон



Замітки

31 березня Португальська поліція затримала трьох прикордонників за підозрою у вбивстві українця

31 березня Єрмак про відео: Лерос є інструментом, який використовують деякі люди для боротьби з українською владою

31 березня Єрмак розповів про Консультативну Раду

31 березня У київських лікарнях почали тестувати на коронавірус усіх, хто має запалення легень

31 березня Бенедиктова підписала заяву про відставку Трєпака

31 березня Land Rover, Lexus та елітні годинники: що задекларував новий глава МОЗ

2. If you are aware, that children might have access to your materials, find an approach to illustrate them **not to catch children's attention to explosive ordnance**, and not to raise their desire to take them into their hands or play with them.

Ukrainian legislation and international documents

As of today, Ukraine applies the Law “On Mine Action In Ukraine”, adopted by Verhovna Rada on December 6, 2018; the Law “On modification of the Law of Ukraine "On mine action in Ukraine" dated 17.09.2020; and international documents.

International Law in this regard rests on the following documents:

- Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (1997) // https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/-show/995_379#Text
- Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (1980) // https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_266#Text
- Protocol on the Prohibition or Restriction of the Use of Mines, Mine Traps and Other Devices // https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_310#Text
- Protocol on Explosives - Remnants of War to the Convention on the Prohibition or Restriction of the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Cause Excessive Damage or to Have Indiscriminate Effects // https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_c78#Text

United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) is developing standards for planning, implementing and managing demining programs. International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) have been publicized since 2001.

Довідкові/допоміжні документи:

- International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) (Ukrainian translation) // Link: <https://www.osce.org/uk/ukraine/149461>
- Ukrainian Law “On Mine Action In Ukraine” // Link: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2642-19#Text>
- A B C. Armed conflict in terms (Guide for Ukraine) /Dutsyk D., Chernysh V., Voronina V., Riuche N., Moroz I., Paperniyak O., Kalupaha I.; Kyiv: Ministry for Reintegration of The Temporarily Occupied Territories, 2019 // Link: <https://mtot.gov.ua/files/uploads/8b5c1540-a1ae-11e9-9b89-731f32e113d5.pdf>
- International Media Council Recommendations On The Principles Of Inviting Guests And Captioning Experts In Information And Analytical Journalism // Link: <https://mediarada.org.ua/recommendations/2/>
- Psychology of an interview. How to speak with people who suffered a trauma [pp.89-96]. From UMCI handbook “How to teach conflict sensitive journalism” // Link: <https://www.slideshare.net/UMCI18/conflict-journalism-a4l-small/UMCI18/conflict-journalism-a4l-small>
- How to save audience from traumatization. About death and violence in footage [pp.96-102] / UMCI handbook “How to teach conflict sensitive journalism” // Link: <https://www.slideshare.net/UMCI18/conflict-journalism-a4l-small/UMCI18/conflict-journalism-a4l-small>

RECOMMENDATIONS To International Organizations' Press-Services And Communication Managers, Who Deal With Humanitarian Demining In Ukraine, As Regards Their Work With Media



Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe
Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine

Press-services or communication services should consider specifics of editorial offices work in general and work of journalists in particular. It would prevent unnecessary conflicts or extra tension. To ensure efficient communication with media and journalists the following should be considered:

1. **How the media, with which you have contact, operate.** If it is a TV-channel, it is necessary to know when news releases are broadcasted, what is the editor, journalists; if it is a printed media, frequency of its publishing should be known. Also time, required by the journalists to arrange properly the materials, should be considered. It would provide for correct planning of a meeting and ensure that materials are not obsolete. Your Press-Service should have a working schedule of the media with which you cooperate most often. It would help ensure operational information sharing and providing locals with news on hazards.
2. **Media are not obliged to publicize press-releases.** Good editorial board would never publicize a press-release word-for-word. A press-release for journalists is only a supplementary source, which could be referred to. In any case, they would be interpreting your data. Therefore, please formulate your information piece in press-releases or any other of your publications in such a way, that undertones and/or inconsistencies are avoided. Then, it would be harder to manipulate with the information.
3. **Journalists require quick reaction, they can't wait long for comments and interviews.** Therefore, it is desirable that you have a professional, who is authorized to communicate with journalists rapidly, avoiding unnecessary red tape.
4. You should not refuse journalists to receive comments or information. Such vacuum will certainly be filled by journalists in their own way. And not always it would agree with your needs and public interests. Generally speaking, informational gaps are filled with fake-news and disinformation, with which it is harder to deal with later. To provide a professional commentary, you may spend 10 min., but to rebut a myth, which was negligently disseminated by someone, you may require more than a year.
5. **Journalists are not experts in your topic and they should not be the experts** (they have another function). Therefore, in simple terms continue explaining them different complicated issues, terminology or specifics of the work, population needs, etc. It's mandatory to do it every time, when you communicate with a new journalist.
6. **Your interview or comment will never be publicized in full.** Firstly, all the journalists are limited in the volume of information they can provide for the audience; for TV-broadcasting, time metering is important (ask the journalist, how many minutes, or better seconds of your speech he/she is planning to broadcast – this will orient you on what the most important should be said); online and printed media have limitations as regards the number of printed characters. Secondly, all journalistic materials are subject to editing (it is especially typical for online and printed media).
7. **In modern times, the majority of editorial boards are of multi-media and convergent type, and they direct their contents to different types of audience.** Therefore, the material could be differently presented on different platforms and for different audience.
8. **Very often online editorial boards and printed media are lacking funds to buy qualitative photos.** Therefore, alas, they often take the pictures from one other without stating the authorship or the picture source and with no consideration of ethical aspects (it could be en-masse observed in internet). If you have qualitative photo or video pertaining to the topic, please share them with other editorial boards.

Glossary

MINE ACTION

activities which aim to reduce the social, economic and environmental impact of mines, and ERW including unexploded sub-munitions.

Mine action comprises five complementary groups of activities:

- a) mine and ERW risk education (MRE);
- b) humanitarian demining, i.e. mine and ERW survey, mapping, marking and clearance;
- c) victim assistance, including rehabilitation and reintegration;
- d) explosives stockpiles destruction; and
- e) advocacy against the use of anti-personal mines (APM).

MINE

munition designed to be placed under, on or near the ground or other surface area and to be exploded by the presence, proximity or contact of a person or a vehicle

ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE (APM)

a mine designed to be exploded by the presence, proximity or contact of a person and that will incapacitate, injure or kill one or more persons

EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR (ERW)

Unexploded Munition and Abandoned Explosive Ordnance (AXO)

UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE (UXO)

explosive ordnance that has been primed, fused, armed or otherwise prepared for use or used. It may have been fired, dropped, launched or projected yet remains unexploded either through malfunction or design or for any other reason

UNEXPLODED MUNITION

explosive ordnance that has been primed, fused, armed or otherwise prepared for use or used. It may have been fired, dropped, launched or projected yet remains unexploded either through malfunction or design or for any other reason

CONTAMINATED AREA

an area (water area), that contain explosive ordnance (Law of Ukraine "On Mine Action")

CONFIRMED HAZARDOUS AREA (CHA)

refers to an area where the presence of mines/ERW contamination has been confirmed on the basis of direct evidence of the presence of mines/ERW

SUSPECTED HAZARDOUS AREA (SHA)	an area where there is reasonable suspicion of mines/ERW contamination on the basis of indirect evidence of the presence of mines/ERW
.....	
CANCELLED AREA (CANCELLED LAND)	A defined area concluded not to contain evidence of mines/ERW contamination following the non-technical survey of a SHA and demined hazardous areas
.....	
REDUCED LAND (M²)	A defined area concluded not to contain evidence of mines/ERW contamination following the technical survey of a SHA/CHA
.....	
DEMINED/CLEARED AREA (CLEARED LAND, M²)	A defined area cleared through the removal and/or destruction of all specified mines/ERW hazards from mines and ERW to a specified depth
.....	
DEMINER	a man or a woman qualified and employed to undertake demining activities on a demining worksite.
.....	
DEMINING OPERATOR	any enterprise, establishment or organization irrespective of their ownership form and legal structural status (Law of Ukraine "On mine action")
.....	
DEMINING (HUMANITARIAN DEMINING)	activities which lead to the removal of mines/ERW hazards, including technical survey, mapping, clearance, marking, post-clearance documentation, community mine action liaison and the handover of cleared land. Demining may be carried out by different types of organizations, such as NGOs, commercial companies, national mine action teams or military units. Demining may be emergency-based or developmental
.....	
BATTLE AREA CLEARANCE (BAC)	the systematic and controlled clearance of hazardous areas where the hazards are known not to include mines
.....	
NON-TECHNICAL SURVEY (RECONNAISSANCE)	collection and analysis of data, without the use of technical interventions, about the presence, type, distribution and surrounding environment of mines/ERW contamination, in order to define better where mines/ERW contamination is present, and where it is not, and to support land release prioritization and decision-making processes through the provision of evidence

TECHNICAL SURVEY

collection and analysis of data, using appropriate technical interventions, about the presence, type, distribution and surrounding environment of mines/ERW contamination, in order to define better where explosive ordnance contamination is present, and where it is not, and to support land release prioritization and decision making processes through the provision of evidence

LAND RELEASE

in the context of mine action, the term describes the process of applying “all reasonable effort” to identify, define, and remove all presence and suspicion of mines/ERW through non-technical survey, technical survey and/or clearance/demining. The criteria for “all reasonable effort” shall be defined by the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA)

MARKING

emplacement of a measure or combination of measures to identify the position of a hazard or the boundary of a hazardous area. This may include the use of signs, paint marks etc., or the erection of physical barriers

MINE RISK EDUCATION (MRE)

activities which seek to reduce the risk of injury from mines or ERW by raising awareness of men, women, and children regarding mines hazards in accordance with their different vulnerabilities, roles and needs, and by promoting behavioral change including public information dissemination, education and training, and community mine action liaison

VICTIMS

persons either individually or collectively, who have suffered physical, emotional and psychological injury, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights through acts or omissions related to the use or the presence of explosive ordnance, or members of the families of the individuals, who were killed by explosive ordnance (Law of Ukraine “On Mine Action”).

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