



MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
GOOD MORNING / GOOD AFTERNOON
MY NAME IS Ali YILDIRIM, from Turkish General Staff.
AND I AM HERE TO GIVE 3-MINUTE BRIEFING ON TURKEY'S
DEMINING ACTIONS.



IDENTIFYING THE MINED AREAS

Along its eastern and southeastern national borders and around some security installations, Turkey has APLMs emplaced in 1957 and 1959 in order to prevent the illegal border crossings, as well as those laid by PKK / KONGRA-GEL terrorist organization where as their locations are not known precisely at the moment.

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DEVELOPING NATIONAL PLANS (1)

The objective of Turkey's Demining Program is to;

- Clear the Emplaced APLMs by 2014 and destroy the Stockpiled ones by 2008.
- Complete the Mine & Ordnance Disposal Facility in 2006.
- Use Modern Demining Equipment for Southern Border.
- Continue the physical clearance in other regions.

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The objective of Turkey's mine clearance program is to clear the emplaced ones by the year 2014 and to destroy the stockpiled ones by 2008. The work initiated to use modern demining equipment is ongoing. Upon the completion of preparations, the southern border minefields will be cleared with modern demining equipment. The actual destruction of stockpiled mines was planned to take effect after the completion of Mine & Ordnance Disposal Facility in 2006.



DEVELOPING NATIONAL PLANS (2)

In coordination with local agencies and authorities, aforesaid plan aims;

- The humanitarian and economical reasons,
- Contribution to economy by using cleared areas for agricultural purposes,
- Offering new employment opportunities,

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While making aforesaid plans, the humanitarian aspects and the economical reasons were taken into consideration. For the upcoming years, before 2014, it's aimed to clear and destroy all the APLMs and thus to contribute to local economy by using cleared areas for agricultural purposes. This would obviously help offering new employment opportunities in the region. The plans are coordinated with local agencies and authorities.



IMPLEMENTING NATIONAL PLANS

- Southern Border Mine Clearance Project, initiated by the government.
- The project involves Modern Demining Equipment.
- Physical Demining continues in other regions.
- A company and 11 teams are engaged.
- Demining inventory holds mine detectors, physical demining equipment, mine detection dogs and classical demining machines.

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Turkish Government has already initiated the Syrian Border Mine Clearance Project. This program involves both the clearance of mines and cultivation of the land. Since time urges, modern demining equipment will be used in order to clear the area as soon as possible. Minefields in the other regions are being cleared physically as initiated before. Currently a demining company of 75 men strong and 11 demining teams (18 man strong each) are currently working in the region. These units hold mine detectors, physical demining equipment, mine detection dogs, classical demining machines and protective gear within their inventory list.



REDUCING RISK TO POPULATION

- The mine fields are secured with perimeter fence and warning signs accordingly.
- Security Units do safety notifications by on-site visits.
- Terrorist mines keep challenging people due to unknown locations.
- Security Units secure / clear terrorist mines as detected.
- Thus, public can only be warned of the potential risk in some rural areas.

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The minefields in demining regions are secured with perimeter fence and marked with warning signs accordingly. Besides, the border minefields are kept within the military restricted/security zones, which are defined by laws and announced to public by security units. The security units are notifying the public in mined regions by conducting visits. Although the location of mines emplaced by PKK / KONGRA-GEL terrorist organization are not known precisely, they are being secured / cleared as detected. Thus, in some certain regions, the public can only be warned of the potential danger caused by terrorist mines.



MEASURING PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION

In 2004:

- 1.225 APLMs removed physically (16.065 by now).
- 15.500-m² area cleared by classical demining machines (64.000m² up to now).
- 16.000 APLMs (%0.5 of stockpiled) retained for training purposes.
- Armed Forces Rehab. Center serves both Civilian and military mine victims.
- 123 people were treated in 2004.

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The APLM clearance activities with physical and mechanical means are currently on going. As reported in April, thru the year 2004, 1.225 APLM were physically removed and destroyed, and 15.500-m² areas were cleared of APLMs by classical demining equipment. So far, the total number of APLM removed, has reached to 16.065 and the total area cleared of APLM came up to 64.000m². The Turkish Armed Forces plan to retain 0.5 % of the stockpiled APLMs (16.000) for training purposes. The figure of retained APLM will be reassessed as downsizing process of the armed forces progresses. In terms of helping mine victims, Armed Forces Rehabilitation Center offers service to both military and civilian casualties. During 2004, 123 people were treated at the facility.



CONCLUSION

Turkey;

- Welcomes any close cooperation for demining,
- Is determined to fulfill its obligation by the timeline set up by the convention.

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Finally, while continuing its demining activities, Turkey is willing to share its experiences with other states and is determined to fulfill its obligations within the period of time foreseen by the treaty.