



MAG Community Liaison Officers Loges and Ganga interview community members from Koolankulam village currently living in Murungapitti Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Mannar District as part of mine action survey

SUMMARY

Reporting Period: 01 February - 30 April 2009

Activities & Outputs Summary:

- **Commenced operations in support of IDP returns in northern Sri Lanka**
- **Completed 8 survey tasks in Mannar District**, including survey of 5 villages in support of the planned return of families displaced by conflict
- **Search and clearance of a total of 58,773m² of land** through a combination of Battle Area Clearance, manual and mechanical techniques in Batticaloa District
- **Removal of 12 anti-personnel mines and 3 items of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)**
- **These activities benefitted a total of 1,060 families**

Impact Summary:

MAG began survey activities during the reporting period in northern Sri Lanka, which will enable families displaced by the conflict to return to their home villages. Mine action survey and clearance has been identified by UNHCR and the Government of Sri Lanka as a key prerequisite of return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the north. Clearance teams continued to be deployed in the eastern district of Batticaloa, thereby contributing to the post-conflict development of the region, supporting the peace-building process and encouraging economic regeneration through access to land for sustainable livelihoods.

ACTIVITIES

Northern Sri Lanka

The vast numbers of IDPs now arriving from the conflict zone in the far north of the country are currently being housed in camps, primarily in Vavuniya District. The Government of Sri Lanka has stated that it plans to resettle 80% of these to their home areas by the end of 2009. The Government and UNHCR have stated that mine action survey and clearance is a prerequisite of this returns process.

MAG received authorisation and formal tasking to undertake survey and clearance in support of return of IDPs in Mannar District. With support from Stichting Vluchteling, the Netherlands Refugee Foundation, survey was completed in 5 villages during April, and the reports concluded that no clearance activity was necessary and the IDPs were free to return home.

Activities are being coordinated with a range of stakeholders, including the Government of Sri Lanka, UN agencies, and other local and international organisations.

MAG is now actively seeking funding to expand capacity and deployment in the north for emergency mine action survey and clearance

Eastern Sri Lanka

All operational activities in the east continued to be undertaken from the base in Batticaloa. During February to April, MAG's manual teams have been working on one large task area called in Kajuwatta North, Batticaloa District. The teams have completed clearance of 3,955m² using the raking method. The teams also completed 2,200m² of sub-surface Battle Area Clearance and 20,828m² of visual clearance.

The Japanese Government continued to support the programme by funding the mechanical clearance component. Two Bozena-B4 mechanical flails were deployed in an integrated fashion with the manual clearance teams undertaking ground preparation and verification of low risk areas within clearance tasks. During this period the Bozena teams completed 31,790m². During May, the programme plans to relocate one of the Bozena machines to the north in support of clearance operations there.

A total of 12 anti-personnel mines and 3 items of UXO were cleared by the manual and mechanical teams.

The Community Liaison (CL) team members in the east focussed on interviewing IDPs and other local people in Batticaloa District to determine future land use on current tasks, together with completing post-clearance reports on previous task sites.

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- *Embassy of Japan, Colombo*
- *Stichting Vluchteling*
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- *Hurvis Foundation*

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