

"I think that the job of MAG is very important. They consider the life of the village. They work so that no other families have to suffer accidents."

—Nguyen Thi Thi Uyen, Quang Tri Province, Vietnam



Winter 2011

Greetings MAG Supporters:

I am very excited to be sending you our January to March 2011 newsletter. For those of you who have seen our newsletter in the past, I think that you will notice some changes. We want to make sure we are educating you to fully understand the issues involved in mine action around the world so that you can continue to be a champion for this cause within your community.

While MAG continues to be very busy thanks to our support from governments around the world, including the US Department of State, Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement, and individual donors, the problem facing countries globally is significant as they try to dispose of weapons that plague them years after wars have ended. And for many of these countries that rely on agriculture as one of the main sources for economic growth, the situation is even more urgent. So please continue to read about our work and visit our website and spread the word. Raising awareness is critical to lifting people around the world out of poverty. Through your support, we can help people farm their land, go to school and travel on roads —safely and without fear.

Thank you and please feel free to reach out to us at MAG America.

Best Regards,

Jennifer Lachman
Executive Director

Q: I know that MAG helps remove landmines. Does MAG conduct other operations?

Despite our name (Mines Advisory Group), MAG's work is about much more than landmines. Following conflict, not only do abandoned mines remain in the ground, but artillery or air-dropped munitions can fail to detonate on impact, leaving dangerous items scattered in and around communities (we call these unexploded ordnance, or UXO). Furthermore,

Mine Ban Treaty, which prohibits the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines. The Mine Ban Treaty has significantly decreased the use of landmines worldwide, successfully stigmatized this weapon, and contributed to a global reduction in casualty figures. However, even if every country signed the Mine Ban Treaty tomorrow, MAG would unfortunately still have a lot of work to do! An estimated 70 countries are plagued by landmines that have



stockpiles of weapons and munitions are sometimes abandoned and frequently left unsecured, creating an availability of arms that can be used to refuel conflict in unstable countries or regions. MAG works to reduce all of these threats.

Q: If landmines were banned in 1997, why do you have to respond to these modern conflicts?

156 countries have now signed The

been laid in years past, with Angola, Cambodia, Iraq and Afghanistan among those most highly contaminated. Furthermore, even if governments cease the use of landmines, non-state actors, who cannot sign international treaties and do not honor treaties signed by their governments, are still confirmed to be using landmines in six countries—Afghanistan, Colombia, India, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Yemen. Lastly, despite the decreased use of landmines, UXO and small arms

and light weapons (SALW) continue to present a real threat to communities in conflict-affected countries.

Q: Since MAG receives a majority of its funding from governments, why is it important for individuals to donate and be active in this issue?

The majority of MAG's funding is sourced from government grants, and MAG is grateful for the generous support it receives from these donors. However, with over 70 countries affected by landmines and UXO and still more than 4,000 people being killed or injured each year as a result, governments can't solve the problem alone. Thankfully, MAG America also receives support from individuals. Most of our income coming from governments is project-specific, whereby the funds can only be spent on predetermined projects and activities. Therefore, donations are particularly important to MAG, because we use this money where it is needed most. This could be in providing emergency response as soon as a conflict has ceased, or continuing to fund one of MAG's vital

field programs where grant funds are no longer available. Public donations also enable MAG to start up new programs in countries not yet supported by grants. All donations from the public are critical to addressing the challenges faced by countries that suffer from remnants of war.

Q: I do not have much to give and this problem seems so big. Will my \$20 really make a difference?

Every dollar MAG receives is used to help save lives and build futures in conflict-affected countries. We know that some people only have small amounts to give. This money, however, can be combined with money from other Americans who are disgusted that this problem of landmines and other remnants of war still plagues so many countries. And the money we raise in America can be combined with money MAG raises around the world. So please help us to raise awareness of landmine action and, if you can, please donate to help us continue this work.

saves lives builds futures



[Photos: J.B. Russell]

MAG CASE STUDY IN ANGOLA

Helping conflict-affected communities to escape poverty

Along with thousands of other Angolans, 48-year-old Jurindo Hishika, his wife and their five children fled his homeland during the last years of his country's civil war.

Hailing from Angola's eastern Moxico province, Mr. Hishika's family was surrounded by violence during the conflict. Much of the heavy fighting between rebel group National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and Angolan government forces erupted in that region during UNITA's last stand. For their own safety they had to flee. In 2002, close to Chifoio village in Moxico, UNITA's leader Jonas Savimbi was killed, eventually leading to the end of Angola's devastating civil war. Eager to restart their lives, Mr. Hishika and his family were finally able to leave the Zambian refugee camp they had fled to and return home. But when they got back to the village they found the area heavily contaminated by deadly landmines.



A MAG Community Liaison team talks to villagers in Chifoio.

While the problem of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) posing a lethal barrier to development is a global one, in Angola, one of the most heavily landmine-contaminated countries in the world, the problem is extreme. A survey conducted in 2007 shows an estimated 2.4 million Angolans are still at risk from landmines, with many of the country's regions contaminated. Throughout the country people like Mr. Hishika began trying to rebuild their lives in extremely dangerous conditions.

MAG aims to improve development prospects for as many Angolans as possible, enabling them to use all the tools at their disposal to improve their own socio-economic prospects, and rebuild the livelihoods they lost during the civil war.

One of the first steps to achieving this was to focus on clearing key roads in Moxico, vital for increased trade, safe return of refugees from across Angola's borders, and improved infrastructure. As MAG's clearance teams were busy working on clearing one of the main routes through the province, they arrived at Chifoio, about 180 kilometers from the town of Luena. Immediately, the residents asked MAG to clear their land too.

People like Mr. Hishika and his family had re-settled in Chifoio but, having seen people killed by mines, had for years been too fearful to expand their livelihoods or to use the fertile but deadly land surrounding their village. He remembers the impact this had: "The clearance has allowed us to return to our homes and to begin rebuilding our lives after so many years of absence. Someone from the village who was digging earth to make bricks for building a house found two landmines so we know there was danger. We are safe in our village now, but we are still afraid to move outside

because of landmines. We are very eager for MAG to do more and clear the areas surrounding the village."

Mr. Hishika's request to clear land surrounding the village, not only the village itself, illustrates how landmines and other dangerous remnants of conflict directly prevent communities' development. Economic growth is limited when landmines prohibit land to be used for productive purposes, whether that purpose be roads, farmland, or schools. Also, village expansion is stunted. Expanding communities are a draw for refugees eager to restart their lives and build a business, but landmines restrict that natural growth. MAG's goal is more than ridding the land of these atrocious unexploded ordnances. MAG's mission is to enable communities to grow and prosper and finally put these conflicts in their past where they belong.

From January to November 2010, MAG cleared 891,605 square meters of land in Moxico. 50% of this land will be used for agriculture, 25% for resettlement, 20% for roads, and 5% for schools, religious sites and other development purposes.

"The clearance has allowed us to return to our homes and to begin rebuilding our lives after so many years of absence."

—Jurindo Hishika (left, with his family)



AP mine

Understanding MAG's Work: Installment One – Understanding Landmines and Cluster Munitions

While MAG's primary function is to destroy deadly remnants of war, our purpose is to promote development in communities. When fighting has ceased, armies leave but there is no one left to protect people from landmines, unexploded ordnance (UXO), and unattended weapons and munitions. MAG focuses on removing weapons in the areas that limit resettlement or development by ensuring the safety of locals and granting them access to roads, schools and other community centers such as clinics.

MAG often gets questions about how we do our job, because for many Americans landmines and unexploded ordnance seem like they belong in the movies. Sadly, cluster munitions are a reality in many countries and MAG's work to identify and clear these items is dangerous. To minimize the danger for our international and local staff, MAG follows strict procedures and safety standards and over the next several newsletters we will introduce these procedures to you. To start, we would like to educate you on the weapons that MAG staff face every day.

Cleared objects can be broken down into three types:

AP Mines:

Anti-personnel mines are small mines which are designed to injure people. There is usually enough explosive in the mine to blow up a person's foot or cause enough damage to amputate a leg. It is important to note that these are not designed to kill because if a soldier is hurt, another must come to their aid. This, in effect, takes out more soldiers. However, anti-personnel mines can lie dormant for years after fighting has stopped and are a direct threat to innocent men, women and children. They are usually activated by direct pressure from above or by a wire connected to the mine.

Some landmine models are made with no metal, making detection even more difficult and requiring increased manual intervention to ensure 100% clearance has occurred in a given area.

AT Mines:

Anti-tank mines are larger and come with a bigger explosive charge with the intent of severely damaging tanks and other armored fighting vehicles. Most will detonate under an applied pressure of between 350-750 pounds, so they are not designed to detonate when stepped on by a person.

Cluster Munitions:

Cluster munitions are explosive weapons that can either be air dropped or ground launched and eject hundreds of smaller munitions called bomblets. They are designed to kill enemy personnel and destroy vehicles. There are multiple variations of cluster munitions with some intended to explode when fired and others that only distribute the bomblets when fired to essentially use the bomblets as landmines.

There are two significant dangers with cluster munitions: they are known to have high failure rates, meaning the bomblets are live but fail to detonate in the air and cluster munitions have a very large area of affect—often the size of 2 or 3 football fields. When they do not detonate which happens with over 5% of the bomblets distributed up to recorded cases of 15%, they fall to the ground where they can be handled by local communities. Children are particularly vulnerable as these bomblets are mistaken for toys because they can fit in the palm of your hand and are often painted bright colors to make them visible on the ground to support detection.

From left to right: M42/M46, MZD2, BLU-63 and M77



(Photo taken by DanChurchAid/Jawad Metni)

In our next edition of the newsletter, we will talk about the teams that we deploy to support MAG's work in the field, the majority of which are locals who we hire and train to be medics, clearance specialists, and community liaisons. By hiring locals, often landmine survivors and women, we can create paying jobs and create a local capacity to do this life saving work.



ANGOLA

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Angola is a country in southwestern Africa that has been the victim of a 27-year-long civil war, ending in 2002, and is still recovering. The civil war was fought between the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Because of the communist and anti-communist ideologies of the opposing sides, Angola got dragged into the larger Cold War sentiment pervasive in the 1970s, gaining support from Cuba and the former Soviet Union. The war was responsible for over 1 million deaths, 4.5 million internally displaced people, and another 500,000 refugees. At the end of the civil war, a formal government structure was laid out with a President, a Vice President, and a Council of Ministers. However over time more control has been placed in the President with no checks and balances to limit presidential power.

One major by-product of the war, that has had significant cultural and economic implications, is landmine contamination. Land mines and other unexploded ordnance (UXO) literally cover the desert land of Angola.

Since 2007, Angola has become one of the world's fastest-growing economies with an average GDP growth rate of 20% between 2005 and 2007. The primary factor fueling growth is oil exports. Additionally, Angola is the world's largest diamond producer. However, the problem of poverty occurring in this country is still acute as much of the control over those

natural resources sits in the hands of the privileged elite, or has fueled gangs committing horrible atrocities and conscripting children to ensure control over these natural resources, particularly diamonds.

Before the wars, Angola, with its fertile land, was a major exporter of bananas, coffee, and sisal, and contains an abundance of forest land. Landmines, however, have destroyed the farming base and have driven people into the cities. Many small scale farmers are trapped in poverty, with no other line of work or income. As a result, Angola is still considered one of the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa with 68% of the population living below the poverty line of \$1.70 per day and 28% living in extreme poverty on less than \$0.70 per day. This poverty has resulted in also some of the worst health indicators as well; average life expectancy is only 40 years, the infant mortality rate is 154 per 1,000 live births, and the under-5 mortality rate is a staggering 260 per 1,000 live births.

Hopefully, the remembered hardships caused by the economic instability of the 1990s and the conflicts that have beleaguered this country continue to encourage reform. Commitment to removing the landmines and unexploded ordnance in Angola is critical to broadening the economic base and creating an economically viable middle class that can participate in political reform in the country.

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South Carolina explorer to become first recorded U.S. citizen to walk coast to coast across Africa

In April 2011, Julian Monroe Fisher, a veteran explorer and anthropologist, will embark on the most challenging adventure of his career yet: to traverse the African continent on foot—something that no American, and possibly no other solo expedition, has ever undertaken before.

Walking from east to west, Julian's EQUATORIA - A Walk Across Africa expedition will see him set off from Pemba, Mozambique and the Indian Ocean, at sunrise on 30 April. His destination, three months later, is Lobito, Angola, and the Atlantic coast.

On his 4,000 mile journey Julian will gather audio and visual ethnographical content about the Yao or waYao

indigenous people who live in northern Mozambique and Malawi. He will also be researching efforts to stop poaching in the South Luangwa National Park in Zambia.

Additionally, Julian hopes to raise awareness of MAG's lifesaving work and the ongoing impact of landmines on some of the world's poorest people, not only in Africa, but everywhere. During his hike across five countries, he will gather stories from hundreds of communities and thousands of people, whose daily lives are put at risk from deadly remnants of conflict.

"Unfortunately, wars and conflicts exist, and while countries have worked to ban weapons whose sole purpose is to maim, landmines and other remnants of war are horrifying by-products," explained Julian. "So until all people can learn to live together peacefully, it's left to organizations like MAG to clean up the remnants of war that continue to kill people long after the peace treaties have been signed and the warriors have all gone home."



Walk Across Africa



THE ROUTE

Julian's walk will take him across Mozambique, where at least 2,399 people have been killed or injured by landmines left over from 30 years of civil war, which ended in 1992.

Crossing the border, Julian will enter the smallest of the countries along the route, Malawi, whose borders have been mined during conflict, and then walk into Zambia, a country where contamination from landmines is low, but where many areas are affected by unexploded ordnance (UXO).

Next, Julian's trek will take him into Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a country where millions of people are still devastated daily from conflict – both as a result of ongoing violence between warring groups in the east and decades of civil war.

MAG has been working in DRC since 2004, clearing and destroying thousands of remnants of conflict, including more than 100,000 small arms and items of ammunition, as the only NGO granted access by national authorities to stockpiles.

Finally, Julian will walk across Angola, one of the most landmine-contaminated countries in the world, where MAG has been working to improve lives since 1994.

Please follow Julian's journey by joining his Facebook group or visiting www.walkacrossafrica.org

Consider a Business Sponsorship or Register Now!

MAG America will host its second annual MAG America Open on June 6, 2011
at the Greendale Golf Course in Alexandria, Virginia

Monday, June 6, 2011

Shotgun Start 8:00 am
Greendale Golf Course
6700 Telegraph Road
Alexandria, VA 22310
703 971-6170

Prizes for:
1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place
Longest Drive
Closest to Pin

\$85.00 Per Entrant
Catered Lunch by Scarboro Affair

We still have both opportunities for people
to register for the golf event and sponsorship
opportunities for businesses.

Interested Sponsors or Questions:
Contact Pat Patierno, Tournament Coordinator
dpatierno@cox.net
571-238-1483



Consider a Business Sponsorship or Register Now!
corporate sponsorships starting at only \$250.

Registration - Return by May 27, 2011

Name: _____

Email address: _____

Telephone: _____

Are you part of a pre-arranged Foursome

Yes No

If so, what are the names of the three others in your group?

One Registration Form per Each Individual Entrant.

Checks in the amount of \$85.00 made payable to MAG America
Return to Pat Patierno, 4310 Mission Court, Alexandria, VA 22310

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