



Press Release

Mine clearance activities to commence in Panj district



In accordance with an urgent request from the Hukumat of Panj district, Tajikistan Mine Action Centre (TMAC) has been asked to conduct clearance activities in the minefields around water irrigation canals in the district. The communities in proximity to the irrigation canals and particularly affected by the threat of landmines/UXOs are: Kirov and Utrabulok, in jamoat Kuldimon; Faizobod-qal'a in jamoat Namuna and the Tugul border post.

Due to the threat of landmines around them, the water irrigation canals (formerly used to direct farming water to the Panj River) are currently unused. As the result, water levels in surrounding farms have risen significantly and vast agricultural fields are currently flooded. In addition to the risk of landmines to the local population, the farmers cannot cultivate the land even though they continue to pay taxes on them. In addition, flooded land has become a fertile breeding ground for insects and mosquitoes which have increased the likelihood of the spread of infectious diseases including malaria. This situation has had disastrous consequences on the regional economy and the health system.

It is expected that once the area around irrigation canals has been cleared, the water used for farming can be rerouted through the canals to the Panj River so that water levels can subside and the land can be prepared for cultivation.

Given the humanitarian value and the urgency attached to this project, TMAC has drawn up a clearance plan for this high priority task and will commence demining activities in the area at the end of February 2007.

Since the start of 2007, favorable weather conditions in the south of the country have permitted the possibility of bringing forward the start of the mine clearance working season. TMAC is currently exploring the possibility of commencing clearance activities in some areas before the start of the spring.

Tajikistan Mine Action Centre