



Press Release



Mine Accident in Shul

On Monday 21 August 2006 at 6:16 am in a dangerous minefield located on top of mount Mandalul near the village of Shul in the Rasht Valley, an anti-personnel mine exploded during a routine demining operation. As the result of this explosion a young deminer, who is a soldier of the engineering battalion of the Ministry of Defence of Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Mehrali Mulomurodov Sheralikhanovic was seriously injured. Nineteen years-old Mehrali was born on 2 May 1987 and is a resident of Ashkashimi region of the Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO), in the Pamirs mountains.

After an emergency operation conducted in the Central Hospital of the Rasht Valley, he was transferred to Dushanbe by Helicopter and was placed in the care of one of the central hospitals for further medical assistance.

According to the medical experts who are responsible for conducting surgical operations and further examination, it was declared that unfortunately Mr. Mulomurodov has lost sight in both his eyes. He is currently in a difficult but stable condition and remains under intensive medical care.

Latest reports from the hospital say that the injured man's parents have arrived in Dushanbe to see their son at the hospital. Doctors continue to keep him under sedative, as when he's not sleeping he's crying out and tries to get up. He remains in the recovery room with breathing, blood pressure, and pulse is normal, however his condition in general still assessed as severe.

In order to discover the causes and circumstances surrounding this incident, a Board of Inquiry has been assembled by the Tajikistan Mine Action Centre (TMAC) and was dispatched to the region on Tuesday 22 August 2006 to commence its fact-finding mission.

Regretfully, this is the second such incident this year which has resulted in deminer casualties. On 19 April 2006, French Warrant Officer Giles Sarrazin was killed in a mine accident and a Tajik deminer, Azam Asrorov was injured at the same time.

In spite of these unfortunate incidents, demining operations in the Republic of Tajikistan continue. Four groups of deminers have been working tirelessly in various regions of the country since the beginning of this year's demining season in April.

Since the beginning of the programme, more than 260,000 square metres of land have been cleared. These demining operations have also led to the discovery and eventual destruction of more than 2,000 planted mines and more than 700 pieces of unexploded ordnance.

The national mine action programme in Tajikistan is supported by international donations but continues to falter due to insufficient support and inadequate funding.

Jonmahmad Rajabov

TMAC Manager