

**National Center for Environmental Health  
Division of Emergency and Environmental Health Services**

## **War-related Injury Prevention**

### **What Is the Public Health Issue?**

- In the 20th century, 72 million deaths (nearly half of which were civilians) occurred in 25 conflicts worldwide.
- From 1987 through 1997, 2 million children were killed and 4–5 million children were seriously injured during armed conflict.
- Each year in Afghanistan (one of the most heavily landmined countries in the world), 2,000–3,000 people are killed or injured by landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO); about two people per 1,000 are permanently disabled.
- In recent years, frequency of rape and sexual violence has increased during and after conflicts. During the conflict in Bosnia in the early 1990s, estimates of the number of women raped ranged from 10,000 to 25,000.



### **What Has CDC Accomplished?**

CDC has

- provided support to the Landmine Survivors Network (LSN) for the past 5 years. LSN programs help people in war-affected countries to facilitate socioeconomic reintegration of landmine survivors and help survivors of traumatic limb-loss to recover from their injuries.
- helped establish postconflict injury surveillance programs in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Colombia, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, and Mozambique with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). Emergency room-based surveillance systems were established to track both fatal and nonfatal injuries to provide data that would help identify risk factors and develop injury intervention programs.
- implemented the largest nationwide war-related mortality, injury, disability, and mental health survey in Afghanistan in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, the International Rescue Committee, and the Mine Clearance Planning Agency of Afghanistan. Data collected from more than 6,000 people have been used to establish national estimates of mortality, injury, disability, and mental health status.
- organized a war-related injury and public health conference with the Seventh World Injury Conference in Vienna in June 2004. CDC sponsored 30 scholarship candidates from conflict settings to participate in this workshop about landmines, unexploded ordnance, small arms, sexual violence, surveillance, and survey methodology.

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## War-related Injury Prevention, Continued

- organized and conducted, at UNICEF's request, an epidemiology training course to provide select mine-risk educators with the skills necessary to incorporate epidemiology and other public health practices into the development and evaluation of mine-risk education and other prevention programs.

### What Are the Next Steps?

CDC will

- assist UNICEF in the evaluation of several mine-risk education programs to determine their effectiveness in teaching people to identify and avoid landmine/UXO injuries,
- initiate efforts to measure the impact of sexual violence in the context of war through surveillance and surveys in conflict and postconflict settings, and
- continue to provide technical assistance to the United Nations and other nongovernmental organizations in their efforts to prevent war-related injuries.

For information about this or other CDC programs, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/programs>.

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