

OAS Update

Mine Action Support Group Meeting

April 29, 2024

Colombia

Within the framework of its Total Peace policy undertaking, the Colombian government is moving forward with efforts to access communities that have thus far not received mine action services, with urgent Risk Education, Demining and Explosive Ordnance Disposal. A political and technical dialogue has allowed new progress to be achieved in the country's mine action sector, in terms of reaching previously-inaccessible communities and identifying their urgent needs so that a rapid response can be achieved. Policies and regulations have been modified in order to make this effort possible.

Demining operators are increasingly facing challenges related to security in Colombia, which are severely hampering their ability to carry out their work in some areas of the country. Developing new models of liaison with affected communities, and attempting to leverage humanitarian space to operate through dialogue, will be an important aspect of achieving progress towards Colombia's land release targets. New methodologies are currently being developed within the sector in order to implement this strategic direction.

Combined with this effort is the fact that on-going peace negotiations in the country are raising the profile of negotiations on demining efforts. An example of this is a recent commitment was given during negotiations with the government by a faction of the armed group known as the Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (ELN). The commitment in March 2024 to support demining efforts in the department of Nariño was achieved. It is hoped that this experiment in bringing demining to conflict areas will be able to be replicated in other areas of the country and supported by humanitarian and development efforts that will support peace.

Ecuador and Peru

The OAS continues to work with Ecuador and Peru to support both countries in their efforts to complete clearance of their shared border. Both countries are continuing to make progress, however, much needed resources to complete the work have not yet been forthcoming. Some smaller initiatives to carry out assessments of remaining areas, and to find ways of speeding up this work have been carried out, but the necessary operational resources and equipment remains. This key partnership could allow the completion of this demining work, and two more States Parties to the AP Mine Ban Convention to meet their Convention obligations.