

Press Releases: Celebrating 20 Years of U.S.-Slovenian Collaboration on Humanitarian Demining Efforts

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
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The Embassy of Slovenia is hosting an event at the United States Diplomacy Center at 11:00 am on Friday, September 28 to recognize 20 years of American support for the Slovenian government-led nonprofit organization ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF). ITF is dedicated to reducing threats from landmines and other explosive remnants of war and to facilitating safety and long-term development in conflict-affected communities.

President Borut Pahor of Slovenia will attend and give remarks as will Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Elisabeth Millard, with a reception to follow. The event is accompanied by a photo exhibit of ITF's work around the world that will be on display in the Diplomacy Center from September 24 through October 1.

ITF was formed in 1998 to help Bosnia and Herzegovina implement the Dayton Peace Agreement. Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former Slovenian Foreign Minister Boris Frlec agreed to its establishment as a key component of the peace settlement, placing the war torn region on the road to recovery by clearing landmines and assisting landmine survivors in the wake of the 1992-1995 Bosnian War.

Since then, the United States has invested \$220 million in conventional weapons destruction (CWD) projects managed by ITF around the world through the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. ITF has proven particularly valuable in Southeast Europe, using its intimate knowledge of the region to deliver quality, cost-effective, and timely results. It also has assisted young victims in the Middle East to receive advanced medical care in Slovenia (funded in part by the U.S.), facilitated U.S.-funded cluster munitions clearance in south Lebanon, and worked with Libya to establish a national mine action authority. In Afghanistan, the U.S. and ITF are supporting the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC), Afghanistan's national humanitarian mine action authority, with conducting quality assurance reviews of internationally-

funded clearance sites.

With the early support of the United States, ITF has grown over the past 20 years to operate in 31 countries around the world, clearing of more than 139 million square meters of mine-affected land, protecting civilians in fragile and recovering states, and opening a path to stability and prosperity.

For media inquiries, please contact Mary Kane at KaneM@state.gov.

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