



Press Release

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Strong global mine ban norm marred by improvised mines trend and high civilian casualties raising alarm as states meet in Oslo to agree mine-free 2025 actions

Mine Ban Success

Only one state not party to the Mine Ban Treaty—Myanmar—and a small number of non-state armed groups used landmines in 2018 according to *Landmine Monitor 2019*. The findings point to the resounding success of the treaty since it entered into force 20 years ago and to the global stigma against use of the weapon. Today there are 164 States Party to the Mine Ban Treaty and a *de-facto* moratorium on the production and use of the weapon among most countries in the world.

“The 20-year record of the Treaty is more than impressive. We believe it is the most successful disarmament and humanitarian treaty ever. It has created a strong stigma against the weapon that affects even those who have not joined, and it has made a tremendous difference on the ground in mine-affected communities. It has saved tens or even hundreds of thousands of lives, limbs, and livelihoods,” said Human Rights Watch Arms Division Director and Monitor Ban Policy Contributor, Steve Goose.

Troubling Casualty Trend

As the global mine ban norm progresses, an upswing in casualty rates since 2015 marks a disturbing trend. The Monitor reports that 2018 was the fourth year in a row with exceptionally high numbers of recorded casualties due to landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). This includes improvised types that act as antipersonnel mines (also called improvised mines), cluster munition remnants, and other ERW.

In 2018, Landmine Monitor recorded 6,897 people killed or injured by mines and ERW. Armed conflict and large-scale violence, particularly in Afghanistan, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, Syria, and Ukraine, heavily influenced the high level of casualties recorded. Accurate data gathering for active conflicts, however, remains challenging and casualties almost certainly exceeded those reported.

“The continued high casualty rates in 2018 following years of life-saving Treaty success is a call to action as States meet next week for the twenty-year Review Conference in Oslo,” said Monitor Victim Assistance Specialist, Loren Persi.

Startlingly, the 2018 casualty total was nearly double the lowest number of annual casualties recorded by Landmine Monitor—3,457 casualties in 2013. For the third consecutive year, the highest number of annual casualties recorded was caused by improvised mines (3,789), while

2018 also marked the most improvised mine casualties recorded to date.

“The Mine Ban Treaty has shown incredible impact in stigmatizing the weapon among states and thus reducing casualties, however the rising casualty trend related to non-state armed group use of improvised mines means we must refocus mine action efforts including mine risk education (MRE),” said ICBL-CMC Director Hector Guerra.

As in previous years, the vast majority of recorded landmine/ERW casualties during the 2018–2019 reporting period were civilians (71%) where their status was known. Children accounted for 54% of all civilian casualties where their status was known. The child casualty rate represents a 12% increase over the past two reporting years according to the *Landmine Monitor 2019* report.

The Monitor has recorded more than 130,000 mine/ERW casualties since its global tracking began in 1999, including some 90,000 survivors.

Support for Mine Action

Donors and affected states contributed nearly US\$700 million in combined international and national support for mine action in 2018. This represents a decrease in combined support of some \$95 million compared with 2017, while international support decreased by approximately \$53 million. This is still the second-highest combined total for international and national mine action funding ever reported by the Monitor. This funding was concentrated in five states—Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Croatia, and Lao PDR—which received 55% of all international support for mine action.

Similarly, while international donor support for victim assistance in 2018 increased by \$17 million overall, half of all dedicated victim assistance funding went to just four countries: Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, and Syria, the Monitor report found. A continuous decline was recorded for most other recipients, jeopardizing the sustainability of essential programs, despite the life-long needs of victims.

Contamination and Clearance

Fifty-nine states and other areas are contaminated by antipersonnel mines as of October 2019 according to *Landmine Monitor 2019* data. Contamination includes new use of antipersonnel mines reported in States Parties Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Yemen in 2018.

Massive antipersonnel mine contamination (defined by ICBL-CMC as more than 100km²) is believed to exist in States Parties Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Chad, Croatia, Iraq, Thailand, Turkey, and Yemen. One state not party, Azerbaijan, and one other area, Western Sahara, are also believed to have extensive contamination.

In the face of this challenge, mine clearance continued to progress in 2018 with at least 140km² of land reported clear of landmines. Over the past five years (2014–2018), overall clearance of landmines among States Parties is estimated to total some 800km², with at least 661,491 landmines destroyed, according to the 2019 Monitor report.

Non-technical and technical surveys by States Parties have contributed greatly to releasing significant amounts of land, over the last five years.

Mine-Free

Thirty-one States Parties, one state not party, and one other area have completed clearance of all mined areas on their territory since the Mine Ban Treaty entered into force in 1999, saving countless lives. Five of those—Algeria, Burundi, Mauritania, Montenegro, and Mozambique—have achieved mine-free status within the last five years.

As of October 2019, 27 States Parties have deadlines to meet their Article 5 mine clearance obligations, before and no later than 2025.

2025 is the aspirational target set by States Parties at the Maputo Review Conference in 2014, for global completion of mine clearance obligations. Four States Parties have deadlines after 2025: Croatia (2026), Iraq (2028), Palestine (2028), and Sri Lanka (2028).

Victim Assistance

In 2018–2019, despite ongoing efforts, most States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty with significant numbers of mine victims lacked suitable resources and practices to fulfill the commitments made in the 2014–2019 Maputo Action Plan.

In most States Parties, some efforts to improve the quality and quantity of health and physical rehabilitation programs for survivors were undertaken according to *Landmine Monitor 2019*. Nevertheless, the need for assisting victims remain great.

“Significant gaps remain in access to employment, training, and other income-generation support activities in many of the States Parties where opportunities for livelihoods are most needed,” said Victim Assistance Specialist, Loren Persi.

Stockpile Destruction

States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty have destroyed more than 55 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines since the Treaty came into force, including more than 1.4 million destroyed in 2018. One state—Oman—completed the destruction of its landmine stockpile in September 2018.

In 1999, all states collectively (both treaty signatories and non-signatories) stockpiled about 160 million antipersonnel mines. Today, the global total of stockpiled antipersonnel mines could be less than 50 million.

Production and Transfer

Forty-one states have ceased production of antipersonnel mines according to the 2019 Monitor report, including four that are not party to the Mine Ban Treaty—Egypt, Israel, Nepal, and the US—demonstrating the strength of the global mine ban norm. However 11 states have yet to disavow future production and are therefore identified by the Monitor as landmine producers.

Landmine Monitor 2019 identifies NSAGs as producing improvised landmines in Afghanistan, Colombia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Tunisia, and Yemen during the reporting period, including mass production of victim-activated IEDs (improvised mines) by Houthi forces in Yemen during the period 2018–2019. There is no evidence, according to the Monitor, of state-to-state transfers of antipersonnel mines over the past 20 years and at least nine states not party to the ban have formal moratoriums on the export of antipersonnel mines.

As countries continue to work to clear mine-contaminated land, the Monitor identifies much that remains to be done, including support for the rights and needs of landmine survivors and their communities.

Countries both within and without the regime are contributing significant resources toward mine clearance and other mine action activities, affirming the impact that this first humanitarian disarmament treaty continues to have after more than two decades.

###ENDS

About the Monitor:

Landmine Monitor 2019 is released by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines in advance of the Fourth Review Conference taking place 25–29 November. Detailed country-specific information is available in online country profiles, while the chapters in the report provide global analysis and findings. The report focuses on calendar year 2018, with information included into November 2019 in some cases. This is the twenty-first annual Landmine Monitor report.

Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor is the research arm of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines - Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC). The ICBL was awarded the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize for its work to eradicate landmines. The Monitor is coordinated by a Monitoring and Research Committee comprised of ICBL-CMC expert staff, research team leaders, and representatives of five non-governmental organizations: DanChurchAid, Danish Demining Group, Human Rights Watch, Humanity & Inclusion, and Mines Action Canada.

Links:

- *Landmine Monitor 2019* landing page, including new maps - <http://bit.ly/LandMineMonitor19>
- ICBL - www.icbl.org
- Mine Ban Treaty - www.apminebanconvention.org
- Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor Twitter - twitter.com/MineMonitor
- ICBL Twitter - twitter.com/minefreeworld
- ICBL Facebook - www.facebook.com/pg/minefreeworld/

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