

MYANMAR/BURMA¹

2008 Key Data

Mine Ban Treaty status	Not a State Party
Use	Government and NSAG use continued in 2008 and 2009
Contamination	Antipersonnel and antivehicle mines, ERW
Estimated area of contamination	Extensive
Casualties in 2008	721 (2007: 438)
Estimated mine/ERW survivors	Unknown but at least 2,019
Support for mine action in 2008	\$1 million (2007: \$185,000)

Ten-Year Summary

The Union of Myanmar has remained outside efforts to ban antipersonnel mines. Government forces and armed ethnic groups have used antipersonnel mines regularly and extensively throughout the last decade. Between 2003 and 2007, six insurgent groups agreed to ban antipersonnel mines. Myanmar remains one of the few countries still producing antipersonnel mines.

Continuing hostilities between the Myanmar government and ethnic minority armed opposition groups have increased mine contamination, but political conditions have not permitted any humanitarian mine clearance program. The precise extent of mine or explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination, although significant, remains unknown.

Landmine Monitor identified 2,325 casualties (175 killed, 2002 injured, and 148 unknown) from 1999 to 2008. Despite this high level of casualties, mine/ERW risk education was either non-existent or inadequate in areas with reported casualties. Assistance to mine/ERW survivors and persons with disabilities in Myanmar is marginal due to many years of neglect of healthcare services by the ruling authority. Myanmar governing authorities have not developed a victim assistance program or strategy.

Mine Ban Policy

Myanmar has not acceded to the Mine Ban Treaty. Myanmar was one of 18 countries that abstained from voting on UN General Assembly Resolution 63/42 on 2 December 2008, which called for universalization of the Mine Ban Treaty. It has abstained on similar annual resolutions since 1997.

Myanmar has rarely participated in Mine Ban Treaty-related meetings, but did attend the Bangkok Workshop on Achieving a Mine-Free South East Asia, from 1–3 April 2009. This was the second in a series of regional meetings convened in the lead-up to the treaty's Second Review Conference. At the workshop Myanmar stated, "Myanmar believes that the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines created the deaths and injuries to the innocent civilians in the affected areas. Transfers and exports of antipersonnel mines contribute to their proliferation and increase chances of an indiscriminate use consequently. Therefore, Myanmar maintains that a step-by-step approach would be most appropriate way to deal with the issue. We also believe that the transfer and exports of anti-personnel mines should be addressed together with the total ban on

¹ The military junta ruling the country changed the name from Burma to Myanmar. Many ethnic groups within the country and a number of states still prefer to use the name Burma. Internal state and division names are given in their common form, or with the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) designation in parentheses, for example, Karenni (Kayah) state.

use of anti-personnel mines.... To establish mine control scheme in the remote and delicate areas, peace is the most essential element for us.”²

Myanmar did not attend as an observer the Ninth Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty in Geneva in November 2008 or the intersessional Standing Committee meetings in May 2009.

Myanmar is not party to the Convention on Conventional Weapons and has not signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

In March 2009, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar (UN Special Rapporteur) drew attention to the use of antipersonnel mines as a serious threat to the lives of villagers. The UN Special Rapporteur called for a moratorium on the use of landmines and accession to the Mine Ban Treaty, and encouraged authorities to seek international support for mine clearance and victim assistance.³

The Halt Mine Use in Burma campaign, which was launched by the ICBL in 2003, distributed 1,200 copies of the Burmese-language translation of the Myanmar chapter of *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*. In 2009, Landmine Monitor collaborated with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to produce a general map of townships with known mine pollution.⁴

Use

The Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw) and non-state armed groups (NSAGs) have used antipersonnel mines consistently throughout the long-running civil war and continued to use mines in 2008 and 2009.

The UN Special Rapporteur has reported on the use of landmines, citing among other evidence, a meeting with a 13-year-old boy who had been blinded by an antipersonnel mine, and who explained how mines had been laid near his village.⁵

The Free Burma Rangers (FBR), an organization that supports 49 teams⁶ providing medical and other assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) in some conflict areas, has reported numerous specific incidents of use of antipersonnel mines by the Myanmar Army. For example, it reported that on 7 January 2009 army units laid six landmines between Bu Koh and Gay Loe villages in southern Karenni (Kayah) state.⁷

The FBR reported that in 2008, the Myanmar Army’s Military Operations Command 10 was responsible for the following: on 5 September 2008, troops on patrol laid landmines in the Hsaw Wah Der area;⁸ on 3 May 2008, the Myanmar Army’s Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) 364 laid landmines in Sho Ko village;⁹ and on 13 April 2008, troops from LIB 363 placed numerous landmines in Ler Ker Der Kho, K’Yeh Yu, Sho Koh, Pra Mu Der, Haw Law Gaw Lu Der, and

² Statement by Kyaw Swe Tint, Director-General, International Organizations and Economic Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangkok Workshop on Progress and Challenges in Achieving a Mine-Free Southeast Asia, 3 April 2009.

³ UN General Assembly, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar,” A/HRC/10/19, 11 March 2009, para. 63, www.ohchr.org. The Special Rapporteur noted that the government has justified its refusal to join the Mine Ban Treaty on the basis that rebels still use antipersonnel landmines, but asserted that “violations of international humanitarian law by one party to a conflict is no justification for non-compliance by other parties” (para. 97(c)).

⁴ See map on ICBL website, www.icbl.org.

⁵ UN General Assembly, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar,” A/63/341, 5 September 2008, paras. 57, 60 and 102(c), www.ohchr.org. See also, UN General Assembly, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar,” A/HRC/10/19, 11 March 2009, para. 63, www.ohchr.org.

⁶ Interview with FBR, in Bangkok, 26 February 2009.

⁷ FBR, “Pictures of Oppression: Attacks, Displacement and Oppression in Karen and Karenni States,” 19 January 2009, www.freeburmarangers.org. Burma has states and divisions, which are virtually identical sub-state level administrative districts. States are the “home area” of ethnic groups, and are always named after one; other areas which are not seen as the home area of a specific ethnic group are called divisions.

⁸ FBR, “Killing of Villagers, Deadly Landmines, and Women Forced to Work for the Burma Army,” September 2008, www.freeburmarangers.org.

⁹ FBR, “Burma Army Attacks Villages in Eastern Burma as they Obstruct Relief to Cyclone Victims in the South,” 29 May 2008, www.freeburmarangers.org.

Naw Kwe Koh villages and in the trails and farms surrounding them.¹⁰ According to the FBR, all these operations resulted in civilian injuries or deaths from the mines.

According to the Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG), in July 2008, members of LIB 256 warned villagers in the Mae Wah tract of Hpapun township not to travel outside their villages to farm their fields because the battalion had planted landmines on the road leading to the fields. Some days later, a villager's cow was injured by one of these mines.¹¹

According to an official document obtained by Landmine Monitor, Northern Commander Major General Soe Win instructed troops in November 2008 to counter insurgent attacks by using landmines.¹²

During late 2008, tensions increased between Myanmar and Bangladesh, resulting in the movement of troops to the border. While there were some allegations of new mine laying by the army, Landmine Monitor investigations could not confirm any new use of mines during the mobilization.

State production, transfer, and stockpiling

Myanmar Defense Products Industries (Ka Pa Sa), a state enterprise at Ngyaung Chay Dauk in western Pegu (Bago) division, produces fragmentation, blast, and non-detectable antipersonnel landmines.¹³ Authorities in Myanmar have not provided any information on the types and quantities of stockpiled antipersonnel mines.

Landmine Monitor has reported that, in addition to domestic production, Myanmar has obtained and used antipersonnel mines of Chinese, Indian, Italian, Soviet, United States, and unidentified manufacture.¹⁴ Two mine types not previously known to have been used in the country were identified in this reporting period: the US-made M26 bounding antipersonnel mine and the Italian-made VAR40 non-detectable antipersonnel mine.¹⁵ It is not known when or how the mines were obtained.

Myanmar is not known to have exported antipersonnel mines, but has no formal moratorium or export ban in place.

Non-state armed group use, production, transfer, and stockpiling

Many ethnic rebel organizations exist in Myanmar. Landmine Monitor has identified at least 17 NSAGs that have used antipersonnel mines since 1999. Some of these groups have ceased to exist or no longer use mines.

Six current and former armed opposition groups have unilaterally renounced the use of antipersonnel mines by signing the Deed of Commitment administered by the NGO Geneva Call.¹⁶ These include the Chin National Front/Army (CNF/A), which Landmine Monitor had

¹⁰ FBR, "As Thousands Suffer the Effects of Cyclone Nargis, Villagers Suffer Continued Brutality by the Burma Army in Karen State," 9 May 2008, www.freeburmarangers.org.

¹¹ KHRG, "List of landmine-related incidents, January 2008 to February 2009," February 2009, prepared for Landmine Monitor.

¹² Myanmar Army, "Northern Command Divisional Commanders Briefing for the 2nd 4 months period as instructed by the Chief of Command," Official minutes, Mykina, November 2008. Obtained unofficially by Landmine Monitor and translated from Burmese.

¹³ Myanmar produces the MM1, which is modeled on the Chinese Type-59 stake-mounted fragmentation mine; the MM2, which is similar to the Chinese Type-58 blast mine; a Claymore-type directional fragmentation mine; and a copy of the US M14 plastic mine.

¹⁴ See *Landmine Monitor Report 2004*, p. 938. The mines include: Chinese Types-58, -59, -69, -72A; Soviet POMZ-2, POMZ-2M, PMN, PMD-6; US M14, M16A1, M18; and Indian/British LTM-73, LTM-76.

¹⁵ KHRG, "News Bulletin, #2008-B11," 20 October 2008, p. 2, www.khr.org; photographs provided by email from Stephen Hull, Researcher, KHRG, 10 December 2008; and FBR, "Burma Army Using New Landmines Against Villagers in Northern Karen State," 19 December 2008, www.freeburmarangers.org. Identification of the mine type in both cases was done by Landmine Monitor.

¹⁶ The Lahu Democratic Front (LDF), Palaung State Liberation Army (PSLA), and Pa'O Peoples Liberation Organization (PPLO)/Pa'O Peoples Liberation Army (PPLA) renounced use in April 2007. The Chin National Front (CNF)/Chin National Army (CAN) renounced use in July 2006. The Arakan Rohingya National Organization (ARNO) and the National United Party of Arakan (NUPA), both now militarily defunct, renounced use in December 2003. See Geneva Call, "NSA Signatories," www.genevacall.org.

identified as both a producer and user of antipersonnel mines.¹⁷ In 2008, the CNF/A told Geneva Call that it had completely destroyed its stockpile of mine components.¹⁸

On 8 February 2009, Colonel Yawd Serk, leader of the Shan State Army (SSA) South, is reported to have stated, “The SSA don’t use landmines. They only endanger both ourselves and our people. Only the Burma Army uses them.”¹⁹ Landmine Monitor has received many reports that the SSA has used mines both during operations and for perimeter defense of their camps. Requests to the SSA from Landmine Monitor for clarification of the statement were not answered.

General Saw Mutu Say Pho, Commander-in-Chief of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), confirmed to Landmine Monitor in February 2009 that the KNLA has used landmines and would continue to do so. He stated that the KNLA was increasing its use of command-detonated mines.²⁰

Use

Armed conflict between different ethnic armed groups and the army appeared to decline during 2008 and early 2009, but the KNLA, the Karenni Army, and the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) continued to use antipersonnel mines. The Landmine Monitor believes at least a dozen other armed groups, some with non-hostility pacts with the ruling authorities, continue to possess mines, have not renounced use, and may make limited use of the weapon.

The Myanmar Army stated that it recovered mines from surrendering soldiers from the SSA during 2007 and blames most mine casualties on use by insurgents.²¹ In April 2009, both the SSA and KNLA denied allegations by the government that they were primarily responsible for mine use in the country.²²

A Karen development organization stated that the KNLA had laid mines along a road in central Karen (Kayin) state in early 2009. Villagers caught in fighting between the KNLA and DKBA protested in October 2008 when KNLA forces operating in Dta Greh township, Pa’an district, wanted to deploy landmines in order to obstruct the DKBA’s operations. The villagers feared retribution from the DKBA if they were injured by KNLA mines in the vicinity of their villages. The KNLA agreed not to plant landmines in the area.²³

On 11 October 2008, the DKBA laid landmines in a village close to the Thai border after an attack. A Thai soldier was wounded by a landmine from this attack when his unit inspected damage to the area.²⁴

Production, transfer, and stockpiling

Landmine Monitor has previously reported that the KNLA, DKBA, Karenni Army, and the United Wa State Army have produced blast and fragmentation mines. Some also make Claymore-type directional fragmentation mines, mines with antihandling fuzes, and explosive booby-traps. Armed groups in Myanmar have also acquired mines by lifting army-laid mines from the ground, seizing army stocks, and from the clandestine arms market.²⁵ Although some former combatants have non-hostility pacts with the ruling authorities, they have not disarmed

¹⁷ See *Landmine Monitor 2008*, p. 945.

¹⁸ Geneva Call, “Geneva Call Annual Report 2008,” p. 18, www.genevacall.org; email from Nicolas Florquin, Program Officer, Geneva Call, 23 June 2009. The components included TNT, gelatin sticks, detonators, and bamboo casings; the amounts are not known. In November 2007, Geneva Call reported that the CNF was carrying out an inventory of its stocks and preparing for destruction.

¹⁹ “SSA says no child soldiers,” *Shan Herald Agency for News*, 10 February 2009, www.shanland.org.

²⁰ Interview with Gen. Saw Mutu Say Pho, Commander-in-Chief, KNLA, 13 February 2009.

²¹ “37 exchange arms for peace,” *New Light of Myanmar*, 1 August 2008, www.burmalibrary.org.

²² Lawi Weng, “Insurgents to Blame for Landmine Casualties: Junta,” *Irrawaddy*, 3 April 2009, www.irrawaddy.org.

²³ KHRG, “Insecurity amidst the DKBA-KNLA conflict in Dooplaya and Pa’an Districts,” 6 February 2009, www.khrg.org.

²⁴ FBR, “Villager Killed and More than 200 Displaced by New Attacks in Central Karen State,” 14 October 2008, www.freeburmarangers.org.

²⁵ See *Landmine Monitor Report 2004*, pp. 939–940.

and some still possess antipersonnel mines.²⁶ The Palaung State Liberation Army, which has a non-hostility pact with the ruling authorities, turned in 35 mines in 2008 as part of a wider surrender of arms.²⁷

Scope of the Problem

Contamination

Landmines in Myanmar are concentrated on its borders with Bangladesh and Thailand, and in eastern parts of the country as a result of post-independence struggles for autonomy by ethnic minorities. Some 23 townships in Chin, Karen, Karenni, Mon, Rakhine, and Shan states, as well as in Pegu and Tenasserim (Tanintharyi) divisions²⁸ suffer from some degree of mine contamination, primarily from antipersonnel mines. Karen state and Pegu division contain the most heavily mine-affected areas. Myanmar is also affected by ERW, including ordnance used in World War II.²⁹

Ethnic minority communities in eastern states bordering Thailand and humanitarian organizations reported that government troops continued to use mines in 2008 and 2009 as part of an offensive against minority anti-government armies, adding to the problem in what was already believed to be the most mine-affected part of the country.³⁰

No estimate exists of the extent of contamination, but Landmine Monitor has identified mined/hazardous areas in the following townships during 2008 or early 2009: every township in Kayin (Karen) state: Thandaung, Hlaingbwe, Hpapun, Myawady, Kyain Seikgyi, and Kawkareik; Mese, Hpasawang, Loikaw, and Demoso townships in Kayah (Karenni) state; Thanbyuzayat, Thaton, and Ye townships in Mon state; Tantabin, Kyaukkyi, and Shwekyin townships in Bago (Pegu) division; Maungdaw township in Rakhine state; Mongpan, Mawkmai, Hsihseng, and Tachilek townships in Shan state; and Thayetchaung, Thanintharyi, Dawei, Bokepyin, and Yebyu townships of Tenasserim division.

Landmine Monitor has also identified additional suspected hazardous areas in Hakha, Htantlang, Kanpetlet, Madupi, and Paletwa townships of Chin state; Bawlakhe and Shadaw townships of Karenni state; Buthidaung township of Rakhine state; and Namhsan, Namtu, and Nanhkan townships in Shan state.³¹

Casualties³²

In 2008, at least 721 new mine/ERW casualties were reported in Myanmar (89 killed and 632 injured), based on state and independent media reports, information provided by NGOs and other organizations, and some records obtained by Landmine Monitor.

²⁶ About a dozen armed organizations have agreed verbally to cease hostilities with the SPDC. Although frequently referred to as “ceasefire groups,” none have signed a formal ceasefire protocol leading to a negotiated settlement. All maintain their arms, including any stockpile of antipersonnel landmines.

²⁷ Interview with Mai Aik Pone, General Secretary, Palaung State Liberation Front, 20 February 2009.

²⁸ Burma has states and divisions, which are virtually identical sub-state level administrative districts. States are the “home area” of ethnic groups, and are always named after one; other areas which are not seen as the home area of a specific ethnic group are called divisions.

²⁹ Mann Thar Lay, “Mandalay workers uncover WWII bomb,” *Myanmar Times*, Volume 23, No. 455, 26 January–1 February 2009, www.mmtimes.com.

³⁰ See Use section of this report.

³¹ Survey conducted by Landmine Monitor between February and May 2009. Data sources included casualty information, sightings of mine warnings and use reports by NGOs and other organizations, and interviews with field staff and armed forces personnel. Survey included casualty data from January 2007 to present and other informants from January 2008 to present.

³² Unless noted otherwise, Landmine Monitor analysis of 24 media reports published by the *New Light of Myanmar* between 1 January and 31 December 2008; interview with staff from the Back Pack Health Worker Team, Mae Sot, 26 March 2008; information from published and unpublished sources, provided by email from KHRG, 4 March 2008; and information provided by the ICRC’s War Wounded Program.

Landmine Monitor obtained more detailed information about the 213 civilian casualties (30 killed and 183 injured) than the military casualties. Most of the civilian casualties were male (172), including six boys; 12 were female, including two girls; and 29 were of unknown gender. Antipersonnel mines caused the vast majority of civilian casualties (191), antivehicle mines caused 11, and unknown or unconfirmed devices caused 11. For the majority of civilian casualties, the activity at the time of incident was unknown (154). Where the activities were known, the most common were collection of water or forest products (21), travel (15), agricultural activity (9), and portering or forced labor (8). At least two civilians were injured by antipersonnel mines during “atrocious” demining—the use of forced labor for mine clearance—in 2008.³³

Throughout 2008, media articles appeared in the *New Light of Myanmar*, the newspaper run by the ruling authority, providing details for 34 mine/ERW casualties. The KHRG reported 18 new mine casualties in 2008 from the areas of the country they monitored.³⁴ The ICRC’s War Wounded Program reported 71 mine survivors. In July 2008, a medic working with Back Pack Health Worker Teams was injured by an antipersonnel mine while traveling in Hsihseng township in southern Shan state. He was taken to Mae Hong Son hospital in Thailand to receive treatment. Another organization supported him financially to receive a prosthetic.³⁵

Landmine Monitor received information on 508 military casualties in 2008 (59 killed and 449 injured). In previous years Landmine Monitor has not received reports of military casualties from the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). During a military briefing for the ruling authority soldiers, the Northern Command Divisional Commander, Major General Soe Win, stated that from January to April 2008, 18 soldiers died and 174 were injured in 171 landmine incidents; and from May to August 2008, nine soldiers died and 97 were injured in 94 landmine incidents. The commander warned soldiers to be more vigilant for insurgent-laid mines during operations.³⁶ One news report placed the number of military personnel who have lost limbs over the past two decades in combat near to 10,000, stating, “Most of the soldiers were injured by landmines.”³⁷

The reported number of mine/ERW casualties in 2008 is an increase compared to the 438 casualties reported in 2007 (47 killed, 338 injured, and 53 unknown), and the 243 casualties reported in 2006 (20 killed and 223 injured). It is not possible to reach firm conclusions from this data about trends in casualty figures due to the lack of systematic data collection, the reluctance of all combatant groups to share information for security reasons, and the restrictions on local and international organizations on movement, surveying, and access to many mine/ERW-affected areas.³⁸

Landmine Monitor identified at least 2,325 casualties (175 killed, 2,002 injured, and 148 unknown) between 1999 and 2008.³⁹

Casualties continued to be reported in 2009, with 19 casualties (two killed and 17 injured) as of 31 May 2009. The two fatalities were adult men. Of those injured, 13 were adult men, two were boys, and two were adult women. All reported incidents were caused by antipersonnel mines. Eight incidents occurred when collecting water or forest products, six during travel, four during portering or forced labor, and one during agricultural activity. The *New Light of*

³³ KHRG, “Mortar attacks, landmines and the destruction of schools in Papun District,” 22 August 2008, www.khrgh.org; and FBR, “Lives Lost and Homes Destroyed: Villagers Suffer Under the Brutal Oppression of the Burma Army,” 4 April 2008, www.freeburmarangers.org. For more information on “atrocious” demining, see *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, pp. 948–949.

³⁴ KHRG, “List of landmine-related incidents, January 2008 to February 2009,” February 2009, prepared for Landmine Monitor.

³⁵ Survey conducted by Landmine Monitor between February and May 2009.

³⁶ Myanmar Army, “Northern Command Divisional Commanders Briefing for the 2nd 4 months period as instructed by the Chief of Command,” Official minutes, Mykina, November 2008. Obtained unofficially by Landmine Monitor and translated from Burmese.

³⁷ Min Lwin, “Burma’s Disposable Soldiers,” *Irrawaddy*, 24 July 2008, www.irrawaddy.org.

³⁸ See *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, p. 950; and *Landmine Monitor Report 2007*, p. 803.

³⁹ See previous editions of Landmine Monitor.

Myanmar reported seven of the casualties. The newspaper stated one of the incidents took place in the Mon state, and the remainder in Pegu division.⁴⁰

Casualties result from gathering food and jungle produce, collecting wood, traveling, agriculture, portering, and forced labor.⁴¹

Program Management and Coordination

There is no functioning mine action program in Myanmar.

Victim assistance

There is no national strategy or guidelines for victim assistance (VA) in Myanmar. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement is responsible for disability issues. Myanmar's fifth National Health Plan (2007–2011) includes activities that should benefit persons with disabilities, including mine/ERW survivors. No information is known about the plan's implementation process and monitoring.⁴²

Data collection and management

No official or systematic data collection of mine/ERW casualties has been established in Myanmar. The ruling authority collects some general health information through hospitals and health centers, but does not differentiate mines and ERW from other causes of traumatic injuries.⁴³

Several organizations working in mine/ERW-affected areas collect a limited amount of data on mine/ERW casualties where they operate but there is no common data collection standard or unified database for verification and elimination of duplicate reports. Under-reporting is likely, due to the limited scope of data collection and a lack of access to conflict-affected areas.⁴⁴ The systematic collection of casualty data also remained difficult due to the SPDC restrictions introduced in 2006 prohibiting the involvement of international NGOs in surveys not authorized within their original contracts.⁴⁵

Demining and Battle Area Clearance

No humanitarian mine clearance programs are known to exist, although some demining activities have been undertaken on an *ad hoc* basis in Myanmar. The FBR include a course on mine identification and emergency clearance procedures for their relief teams. The most recent training took place in November 2008. Mines encountered on their missions are generally not removed by FBR personnel, but by anti-junta militia. In cases where mines are removed by FBR personnel, they are turned over to anti-junta militias.⁴⁶ The FBR noted that they encountered mines less frequently in 2008 than in 2007 due to a decrease in activity by the Myanmar Army, which withdrew from many outposts in the north of Karen state.⁴⁷

Some sporadic military mine removal and village demining have been reported in previous years.⁴⁸ Landmine Monitor received photographs of Myanmar Army soldiers using probes to manually clear a path between two military camps in Hpapun township in January 2009.⁴⁹

⁴⁰ Landmine Monitor analysis of media reports published by the *New Light of Myanmar* between 1 January and 31 May 2009; and survey conducted by Landmine Monitor during field visit, February to March 2009.

⁴¹ See *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, p. 949.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 953.

⁴³ UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Myanmar," S/2009/278, 1 June 2009, para. 38, www.un.org; and *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, p. 950.

⁴⁴ See *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, p. 950.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ FBR, "Advanced Training Completed by Shan, Kachin, Karenni, and Karen Teams," 2 December 2008, www.freeburmarangers.org.

⁴⁷ Email from FBR, 2 May 2009.

⁴⁸ Some NSAGs and the Myanmar Army have previously reported conducting military demining. In some cases NSAGs remove mines laid by government forces and re-use them.

⁴⁹ Photographs provided by FBR, Bangkok, 25 February 2009.

Photographs by the KHRG show M14-type mines manufactured by Myanmar Defense Products Industries being removed by the KNLA in April and August 2008.⁵⁰ During 2008, the Karen National Union (KNU) received hand-held metal detectors from the NGO Gemeinsam gegen Landminen Austria (GGL-A), and a volunteer from GGL-A assisted in training KNU personnel in their use.⁵¹

The Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People (CIDKP) started a one-year demining project in May 2008, supported by GGL-A. CIDKP trained six demining teams of three deminers each and planned to deploy them for two months tackling demining tasks determined by CIDKP. GGL-A agreed to provide a total of €20,000 (US\$29,452) for the project, including the cost of metal detectors, but it suspended payments before completing disbursement pending receipt of progress reports from CIDKP. GGL also provided support for risk education (RE) conducted by CIDKP.⁵²

The CNF/A reported that it cleared and destroyed mines that it had planted in the border area between Myanmar and India, including 1,600–1,800 mines removed from three sites. The CNF/A provided details of the amount of stockpiled components (TNT, gelatin sticks, detonators, and bamboo casings) that it destroyed.⁵³

“Atrocity” demining⁵⁴

The UN Special Rapporteur described as “particularly worrying” the “reported practice of human minesweepers, whereby civilians are forced by the military to clear brush in suspected mined areas or to serve as porters for the military in areas where there is a mine hazard. According to reports, civilians have been requested to remove mines without training or protective equipment, or to repair fences in mined areas; serious casualties have been reported.”⁵⁵ In previous years, Landmine Monitor received credible reports of civilians being forced by the military to undertake these activities.⁵⁶

A Karen village woman told the KHRG in June 2008 how the Myanmar Army’s LIB 343 forced her and others to carry supplies to the Gk’Hee Gkyo military camp in Hpapun township despite their refusal because of the mine danger. On 9 June 2008, one porter was injured by a landmine and died the same day after the military insisted on taking him to the camp instead of a hospital.⁵⁷ Saw Bpo Heh, a 35-year-old resident of Bpaw Baw Hta village, died of landmine injuries after DKBA Battalions 907 and 999 entered his and nearby villages on 22 February 2008, and forced residents to serve as guides and porters along local trails.⁵⁸

The FBR reported in January 2008 that villagers near the road between Busakee army camp and Ler Mu Plaw camp (between Hpapun and Thandaung townships) had faced almost daily army demands for labor as minesweepers, road-clearers, and porters.⁵⁹ Also in January, a man who was captured and forced to porter for the Myanmar Army escaped and ran into the jungle only to step on a landmine. He was discovered and treated by KNU medics.⁶⁰

⁵⁰ KHRG, Photos B 123, 124, and 125, www.khrg.org.

⁵¹ Information provided by humanitarian field worker requesting anonymity, Mae Sot, 23 February 2009.

⁵² Telephone interview with Rita Eyi, GGL-A, 3 July 2009.

⁵³ Email from Nicolas Florquin, Geneva Call, 23 June 2009.

⁵⁴ The term “atrocity” demining is used by Landmine Monitor to describe forced passage of civilians over confirmed or suspected mined areas or the forced use of civilians to clear mines without appropriate training or equipment. “Atrocity” demining is sometimes referred to in human rights reports as “human mine sweeping.”

⁵⁵ UN General Assembly, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar,” A/HRC/10/19, 11 March 2009, para. 63, www.ohchr.org.

⁵⁶ See *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, pp. 948–949; *Landmine Monitor Report 2007*, pp. 801–802; *Landmine Monitor Report 2006*, pp. 862–863; *Landmine Monitor Report 2005*, pp. 683–684; and *Landmine Monitor Report 2004*, pp. 942–943.

⁵⁷ KHRG, “Mortar attacks, landmines and the destruction of schools in Papun District,” 22 August 2008, www.khrg.org.

⁵⁸ FBR, “Lives Lost and Homes Destroyed: Villagers Suffer Under the Brutal Oppression of the Burma Army,” 4 April 2008, www.freeburmarangers.org.

⁵⁹ FBR, “Burma Army troops kill villagers and IDPs as they mass troops with over 90 battalions now in northern Karen State, Burma,” 10 January 2008, www.freeburmarangers.org.

⁶⁰ FBR, “Children on the Move, the Cost of Oppression,” 18 February 2008, www.freeburmarangers.org.

Risk Education

Despite a large mine problem and significant mine/ERW casualties, mine/ERW RE is either non-existent or inadequate in areas with reported casualties. Limited activities are carried out by Karen state by the CIDKP, in Tenasserim division by the Karen Department of Health and Welfare (KDHW) and in Karenni state by the Karenni Social Welfare and Development Centre (KSWDC).⁶¹

There are no state-run RE activities, although “beware mines” signs have been placed by authorities in some parts of the country.⁶²

NGO activities in 2008⁶³

Organization	Type of activity	Geographic location	No. of beneficiaries
CIDKP	RE delivered through 6 teams	Karen state	9,658 (3,111 women, 3,390 men, and 3,157 children)
KDHW	RE delivered through 4 teams	Tenasserim division	2,298 (650 women, 548 men, and 1,100 children)
KSWDC	RE delivered through 3 teams	Karenni state	2,581 (767 women, 1,393 men, 421 children)

RE in Myanmar has been very limited throughout the last 10 years. Several international NGOs conducted needs assessments to explore the possibility of establishing a program, but have only conducted very limited activities. Several national NGOs have conducted limited activities, which increased in 2006.⁶⁴

Victim Assistance

The total number of mine/ERW survivors is unknown, but at least 2,019 survivors have been identified since 1999.⁶⁵ Adequate medical care was not available to survivors and persons with disabilities in 2008. The ruling authority reportedly directed less than 3% of the national budget annually to healthcare, resulting in limited services for the population generally.⁶⁶ The *New Light of Myanmar* carried several reports of assistance to new mine casualties in 2008, although the type of assistance was not mentioned.⁶⁷ Continuing regime restrictions impeded the ability of some international organizations to provide assistance and protection to populations, particularly within contested areas.⁶⁸

⁶¹ RE activities in Karen state by CIDKP, in Tenasserim division by the KDHW and in Karenni state by the KSWDC are supported with technical assistance by a Danish NGO. RE data by CIDKP, KDHW, and KSWDC provided to Landmine Monitor by a Danish NGO, 17 June 2009.

⁶² Photographic and verbal reports collected by Landmine Monitor, Yangon, 2–6 February 2009.

⁶³ Data on RE by CIDKP, KDHW, and KSWDC provided to Landmine Monitor by a Danish NGO, 17 June 2009.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ This is based on 2,002 injured casualties between 1999 and 2008, plus 17 injured casualties in 2009 (see Casualties section). See previous editions of Landmine Monitor.

⁶⁶ Allison J. Richard, *et al.*, “Essential trauma management training: addressing service delivery needs in active conflict zones in eastern Myanmar,” *Human Resources for Health* 2009, 7:19, p. 3, www.human-resources-health.com.

⁶⁷ Landmine Monitor analysis of 24 media reports published by the *New Light of Myanmar* between 1 January and 31 December 2008.

⁶⁸ ICRC, “Annual Report 2008,” Geneva, May 2009, p. 193, www.icrc.org; and *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, p. 952.

No official information on military assistance to soldiers injured by mines/ERW was provided to Landmine Monitor for 2008. A media report that interviewed a mine-injured military veteran stated disabled veterans received a monthly stipend of MMK10,000 (about \$9.50). The article reported the housing allowance had been withdrawn for injured military veterans and since the end of 2007, disabled veterans (most of whom were reported to have been injured by landmines) were no longer allowed to live indefinitely in military quarters.⁶⁹

Physical rehabilitation, orthopedic surgery, and prosthetics were available to some mine/ERW survivors through rehabilitation centers in 2008, both within Myanmar and in Thailand near the border. The Ministry of Health was responsible for medical rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. It ran three physical rehabilitation centers independently and three centers with the Ministry of Defense.⁷⁰ The National Rehabilitation Hospital provided prosthetics free of charge. The Shwe Min Tha Foundation assisted persons with physical disabilities to access medical care by covering incidental costs, such as transportation to medical centers and food. However, the foundation was unable to support all those who requested assistance due to a lack of funding.⁷¹ The six government-operated rehabilitation centers provide 4,225 people with physical rehabilitation services.⁷²

After it suspended full operational support to the six rehabilitation centers run by the ruling authority in June 2007, the ICRC in 2008 supplied the centers with sufficient equipment to continue meeting clients' needs.⁷³ The ICRC Physical Rehabilitation Programme, with the Myanmar Red Cross Society, provided management training and financial and technical support to the Hpa-an Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Centre in 2008. Located in the most mine-affected area of the country, the center provided services for 1,194 clients in 2008.⁷⁴ In total, all seven rehabilitation centers provided 1,867 prostheses (1,291 to mine/ERW survivors) and 1,204 orthoses (eight to mine/ERW survivors).⁷⁵

Since 2002, Clear Path International (CPI) has provided prosthetics, physical therapy, and socio-economic services to mine/ERW survivors along the Thai-Myanmar border. Prosthetics and physical therapy were provided at four workshops in 2008—two based in Thailand and two in Myanmar. Of those in Myanmar, the Loi Kaw workshop in Karenni state was permanently staffed in 2008, providing approximately 100 prosthetics.⁷⁶ Help without Frontiers (Helfen ohne Grenzen, HoG) worked in 2008 with CPI and the Shan Health Committee to develop two prosthetic workshops in Shan state.⁷⁷ Two private companies also provided commercial prosthetic services.⁷⁸ CPI believes they assisted approximately 160 survivors in Myanmar in 2008.⁷⁹

The Back Pack Health Worker Teams provided primary and emergency medical care to people in rural areas and conflict-affected regions, including services to 22 mine/ERW casualties in 2008.⁸⁰ The FBR trained and supported 49 mobile teams that provide medical and other humanitarian assistance to IDPs in some conflict areas.⁸¹ The provision of healthcare to many populations in contested areas of Myanmar remained limited due to the high level of

⁶⁹ Min Lwin, "Burma's Disposable Soldiers," *Irrawaddy*, July 24 2008, www.irrawaddy.org.

⁷⁰ See *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, p. 953.

⁷¹ Interview with Myat Thu Winn, Director, Shwe Min Tha Foundation, Yangon, 6 February 2009.

⁷² ICRC, "Physical Rehabilitation Programme: Annual Report 2008," Geneva, May 2009, p. 41, www.icrc.org.

⁷³ The ICRC suspended the majority of operations in Myanmar in June 2007 in response to the SPDC's significant and repetitious violations of international humanitarian law. See ICRC, "Physical Rehabilitation Programme: Annual Report 2008," Geneva, May 2009, p. 41, www.icrc.org.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*; and ICRC, "Annual Report 2008," Geneva, May 2009, p. 193, www.icrc.org.

⁷⁶ Email from Melody Mociulski, South East Asia Program Director, CPI, 18 June 2009. For more information on CPI activities in Thailand, see the report on Thailand in this edition of *Landmine Monitor*.

⁷⁷ Emails from Karl Förster, Director, HoG, 9 May 2009 and 9 June 2009.

⁷⁸ Interview with Myat Thu Winn, Shwe Min Tha Foundation, Yangon, 6 February 2009.

⁷⁹ Email from Melody Mociulski, CPI, 18 June 2009.

⁸⁰ BPHWT, "Annual Report 2008," p. 36, www.backpackteam.org.

⁸¹ FBR, "Free Burma Rangers," www.freeburmarangers.org; and interview with FBR in Bangkok, 26 February 2009. For information on BPHWT and FBR, see *Landmine Monitor Report 2006*, pp. 866–867.

danger to the workers themselves from armed conflict, the presence of mines/ERW, and risk of imprisonment.⁸²

There are no known psychosocial services available to mine/ERW survivors in Myanmar, although limited services were available in Thailand near the border with Myanmar.⁸³ The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement facilitated socio-economic and rehabilitation services, including the running of the Vocational Training School for Adult Disabled. Many of the school attendees were mine/ERW survivors.⁸⁴ The Association for Aid and Relief Japan provided vocational training for 91 people in 2008, including 13 mine/ERW survivors.⁸⁵ CPI developed three farms to provide income for mine/ERW survivors. Two farms are located on the Myanmar-Thailand border, one near the Loi Kaw Wan IDP camp and another near the Loi Tai Leng IDP camp, both in Shan state. The third farm is near the Khung Jor refugee camp in Thailand. In 2008, each farm had approximately 15 beneficiaries.⁸⁶ HoG supported the development of five fishponds at Loi Kaw Wan in 2008.⁸⁷

In Thailand, medical care was provided to mine/ERW survivors from Myanmar at clinics in refugee camps and public district hospitals in the border provinces with Myanmar. The Mae Tao Clinic (MTC), Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders), International Rescue Committee, Malteser International-Germany, and other aid organizations provided emergency medical referral to mine/ERW survivors in these border provinces.⁸⁸ In 2008, 219 persons with disabilities from central Myanmar and its border areas with Thailand traveled into Thailand to receive prostheses from the MTC Prosthetic Center. Eighty-six percent of those receiving prosthetics (188 people) were landmine survivors.⁸⁹ HoG and CPI provided financial support for the production of around 200 prostheses in 2008 to MTC, some surgery supplies, and training for technicians.⁹⁰ In 2008, six new prosthetic technicians, all mine survivors, graduated from the MTC Prosthetics Department training program. All returned to Myanmar and work in prosthetic centers run by independent health and welfare sections of ethnic communities.⁹¹ Handicap International also operated prosthetics workshops within refugee camps in Thailand for mine/ERW survivors from Myanmar.⁹² Since 2006, no new reports have been received by Landmine Monitor of mine/ERW survivors from Myanmar receiving medical care in Indian or Bangladeshi facilities.⁹³

In 2008, no active discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, access to healthcare, or provision of other state-run services was reported. However, there was inadequate state funding for services to assist persons with disabilities. The majority of persons relied on their families to provide for their welfare. Discrimination against persons with disabilities was reported.⁹⁴

Myanmar had not signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities or its Optional Protocol as of 1 July 2009.

⁸² BPHWT, "Annual Report 2008," p. 6, www.backpackteam.org.

⁸³ See report on Thailand in this edition of Landmine Monitor.

⁸⁴ Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability, "Current Situation of Persons with Disabilities," 10 October 2008, www.apcdproject.org; and see *Landmine Monitor Report 2008*, p. 952–953.

⁸⁵ Email from Sayako Nogiwa, Director, Myanmar Project, AAR Japan, 11 March 2009.

⁸⁶ Email from Melody Mociulski, CPI, 18 June 2009.

⁸⁷ Emails from Karl Förster, HoG, 9 May 2009 and 9 June 2009.

⁸⁸ See report on Thailand in this edition of Landmine Monitor.

⁸⁹ Email from Eh Thwa Bor, Administrative Officer, Mae Tao Clinic, 18 March 2009; and see report on Thailand in this edition of Landmine Monitor

⁹⁰ Emails from Benno Röggla, Chair of the Board, HoG, 10 March 2009 and 11 March 2009; and email from Melody Mociulski, CPI, 18 June 2009.

⁹¹ Email from Eh Thwa Bor, Mae Tao Clinic, 18 March 2009.

⁹² See report on Thailand in this edition of Landmine Monitor.

⁹³ Landmine Monitor researchers in Bangladesh and India monitor for reports of Myanmar citizens seeking services for landmine injuries.

⁹⁴ US Department of State, "2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Burma," Washington, DC, 25 February 2009.

Support for Mine Action

In 2008, two countries, Spain and Denmark, reported contributing \$1,020,134 (€692,743) to mine action and VA in Myanmar, a significant increase compared to the \$183,800 reported for 2007.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Spain Article 7 report, Form J, 30 April 2009; and email from Mads Hove, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2 March 2009.