

Victim assistance challenges and action points Regional approaches

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Each State Party with mine victims in areas under its jurisdiction or control, **taking into account its own local, national and regional circumstances**, will do its utmost to strengthen local capacities, enhance coordination with subnational entities as relevant and appropriate, and increase availability of and accessibility to appropriate comprehensive rehabilitation services, economic inclusion opportunities and social protection measures for all mine victims.

Maputo Action Plan, Action #15

While each State Party has its own victim assistance challenges, there are some notable similarities among the States Parties in geographical regions with respect to trends in key areas requiring improvement. Mine Ban Treaty States Parties can use regional and sub-regional strategies and structures to improve victim assistance by sharing good practices and expertise. They can also use regional events to allow people working on various types of assistance¹ and coordination to meet and communicate their progress, needs, and challenges.

Such opportunities can be found during regional consultations on the implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), as well as through regional bodies and instruments such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States (Arab League), the Organization of American States, and the African Union, as well as sub-regional communities such as the East Africa Community (EAC), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

The following summary of challenges and action points focuses on States Parties striving to enhance victim assistance efforts through regional mechanisms and cooperation. Such approaches are consistent with Maputo Action Plan Action #15. This report addresses the 31 States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty with significant numbers of mine/explosive remnants of war (ERW) survivors in need of assistance.² Individual country profiles available online include a list of action points to address gaps and challenges, which are drawn directly from information reported to the Monitor.³



Asia (Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Central Asia)

Mine Ban Treaty State Party	CRPD Ratification	Regional Strategy
Afghanistan	18 September 2012	ESCAP Incheon Strategy, Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022
Cambodia	20 December 2012	ESCAP Incheon Strategy, Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022; ASEAN, Bali Declaration (2011)
Tajikistan*	No	ESCAP Incheon Strategy; Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022
Thailand	29 July 2008	ESCAP Incheon Strategy, Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013–2022; ASEAN, Bali Declaration (2011)

* In order to align with regional instruments, Tajikistan is grouped here in a different region than it is in *Landmine Monitor 2015*.

Challenges

- Quality of physical rehabilitation services and psychological support is inadequate for the needs of many survivors.⁴
- Survivors in rural and remote communities face challenges accessing services.
- Survivors lacked opportunities to improve their economic conditions.
- Decisions about services are sometimes being made without meaningful participation of survivors.

Action points

- Expand access to physical rehabilitation needs, particularly in provinces lacking services or where traveling to receive rehabilitation is difficult for survivors.
- Prioritize accessibility, particularly for services and for public buildings.
- Expand economic opportunities for survivors, indirect victims, and other persons with disabilities in rural areas.
- Provide psychological support, including peer support in particular to new survivors as well as those who have been traumatized in the past and live in isolation.
- Devote resources to reach survivors where they live, as survivors in remote and rural areas continue to face obstacles to access adequate assistance.
- Ensure that meaningful participation of survivors is increased at all levels and enhance representation of local survivors' networks in coordination and decision making.

Africa (Continental)

Mine Ban Treaty State Party	CRPD Ratification	Regional Strategy
Algeria*	4 December 2009	Continental Plan of Action for the African Decade of Persons With Disabilities, 2010–2019
Angola	19 May 2014	
Burundi	22 May 2014	
Chad	Signed	
DR Congo	30 September 2015	
Eritrea	No	
Ethiopia	7 July 2010	
Guinea-Bissau	Signed	
Mozambique	30 January 2012	
Senegal	7 September 2010	
Somalia	No	
South Sudan	No	
Sudan	24 April 2009	
Uganda	25 September 2008	
Zimbabwe	29 September 2013	

** In order to align with regional instruments, Algeria is grouped here in a different region than it is in Landmine Monitor 2015. Algeria is also in the Arab League.*

Challenges

- Lack of funding is affecting the quality of services to survivors. Those services that are in place are inadequate, while development/disability resources are proving insufficient to make up the shortfall.
- Access to, and quality of, rehabilitation and prosthetic services need improvement.
- Identification of survivors remains a challenge in many states.
- Prevalent lack of accessibility remains a barrier to full participation in public life for many survivors and persons with disabilities.

Action points

- Plan and undertake survivor identification and needs assessment.
- Enhance victim assistance coordination and align with disability-rights coordination.
- Ensure the sustainability of physical rehabilitation by coordinating government investments in the sector; improve quality and quantity of rehabilitation facilities and professional capacity.

- Create economic inclusion opportunities for survivors and other persons with disabilities and adapt mainstream economic inclusion programs to include survivors and persons with disabilities in physically accessible facilities.
- Increase the capacity of survivors’ organizations that have been shown to have a critical role in facilitating access to mainstream services; train survivors and other persons with disabilities to advocate for equal opportunities and increased access to assistance.
- Ensure that broader programs, such as international cooperation for post-conflict reconstruction and political stabilization efforts, reach the most vulnerable members of society, including survivors, other persons with disabilities, and indirect victims.

Americas

Mine Ban Treaty State Party	CRPD Ratification	Regional Strategy
Colombia	10 May 2011	Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (ratified December 2003)
El Salvador	14 December 2007	Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (ratified January 2002)
Nicaragua	7 December 2007	Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (ratified July 2002)
Peru	30 January 2008	Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (ratified July 2001)

Challenges

- The number of designated victim assistance focal points in governments has been decreasing, weakening linkages between international commitments and local activities.
- Laws and policies have not been implemented consistently and comprehensively.
- Survivors and other persons with disabilities in rural areas faced extra difficulties accessing services.
- Access both to mainstream and specialized services required significant improvement.
- There was a lack of economic inclusion opportunities.
- Persons deemed to be conflict victims, including survivors and some indirect victims, were provided a privileged status and resources above those available to some other persons with disabilities.

Action points

- Dedicate resources to the full implementation of legislation, policies, and programs, including those promoting the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Ensure survivors, their families, and communities living in rural areas have the means to access their rights, including services and reparation.
- Develop peer support networks for survivors, their families, the families of those killed, and persons with disabilities and sustain programs offering psychological support and income-generating projects to survivors, other victims, and others with similar needs with national resources.
- Promote survivors and their representative organizations' participation in coordination and planning of disability-related initiatives.
- Ensure that all mine/ERW survivors and other persons with disabilities have equal access to programs and services.

Europe

Mine Ban Treaty State Party	CRPD Ratification	Regional strategy
Albania	11 February 2013	Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006–2015
Bosnia and Herzegovina	12 March 2010	Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006–2015
Croatia	15 August 2007	European Disability Strategy 2010–2020/Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006–2015
Serbia	31 July 2009	Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006–2015
Turkey	28 July 2009	Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006–2015; ESCAP, Incheon Strategy

Challenges

- Bureaucratic barriers and lack of information reduces the availability and accessibility of assistance provided to mine/ERW survivors by states and NGOs.
- Unequal benefits and services for military survivors and veterans with disabilities compared to civilian survivors and other persons with disabilities meant that the latter were not receiving assistance and rehabilitation to the available standards.
- Legislation and regulations against discrimination and ensuring accessibility were not adequately implemented.

Action points

- Identify and evaluate the needs of persons with disabilities who live in remote rural areas, including survivors.
- Regularly update data used to improve victim assistance coordination and access to services for survivors and other persons with disabilities.
- Replicate affordable local prosthetics and rehabilitation services in areas with needs.
- Ensure that survivors' representative organizations have adequate resources to participate in all relevant fora and to carry out activities that fill gaps in government services, including peer support outreach and targeted psychological support.
- Address discrimination in order to ensure that all categories of civilians with disabilities receive adequate assistance on an equal basis with others.
- Simplify the bureaucratic procedures that prevent survivors from accessing benefits.

Middle East

Mine Ban Treaty State Party	CRPD	Regional Mechanism
Iraq	20 March 2013	Arab League
Jordan	31 March 2008	
Yemen	26 March 2009	

Challenges

- Many survivors were not yet registered to receive benefits.
- Female and male mine/ERW survivors did not have equal access to all services and benefits.
- Survivor participation in victim assistance coordination and planning needed improvement to ensure that services address their particular needs.

Action points

- Develop central data collection mechanisms on casualties and the needs of victims and persons with disabilities to improve planning of victim assistance.
- Adopt and implement action plans on disability that are inclusive of survivors, developed in collaboration with NGOs and survivors.
- Ensure that all victims are registered and therefore able to receive pensions (if provided) and other benefits; an estimated one-third of all victims were unregistered.
- Ensure equal access to all services and benefits for both male and female mine/ERW survivors.
- Increase participation and include survivors in the planning and coordination of all aspects of victim assistance and disability issues.

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- Ensure that government victim assistance programs contain provisions for economic inclusion and psychological support including peer support, as well as medical assistance and physical rehabilitation.
- Increase awareness about rights of survivors and other persons with disabilities.

¹ For more information on implementation of victim assistance commitments and obligations, see Handicap International, “How to Implement Victim Assistance Obligations, Under The Mine Ban Treaty or the Convention on Cluster Munitions: Concrete actions to improve the quality of life of victims and persons with disabilities,” August 2013, www.hiproweb.org/fileadmin/cdroms/VictimAssistance/Fact_Sheets/Hi-FactSheets-HD.pdf,

² The Monitor reports on the following 31 Mine Ban Treaty States Parties in which there are significant numbers of survivors: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo), Croatia, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Jordan, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, Senegal, Serbia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Yemen, and Zimbabwe. This list includes 29 States Parties that have indicated that they have significant numbers of survivors for which they must provide care as well as Algeria and Turkey, which have both reported hundreds or thousands of survivors in their landmine clearance deadline extension request submissions (Mine Ban Treaty Article 5).

³ Summary action points based on findings are found at the top of each profile. See country profiles available on the Monitor website, www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/our-research/country-profiles.aspx.

⁴ A “survivor” is a person who was injured by mines/ERW and lived.