

PRESS RELEASE

Embargoed until 10am CET, 10 November 2021

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New Report | Global mine clearance delays and elevated casualties define year greatly disrupted by the pandemic

Geneva, 10 November 2021 -- Released today, [Landmine Monitor 2021](#) finds that clearance work remains behind target in most affected States Parties while exceptionally high numbers of casualties from landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) were registered in 2020. New use of antipersonnel landmines, including improvised types, was limited to a handful of countries and mostly by non-state armed groups. The report also shows how the pandemic disrupted mine action efforts with the temporary suspension of demining operations and face-to-face risk education sessions, and created new challenges in accessibility to and supply of assistance to victims. The report is launched in advance of the Nineteenth Mine Ban Treaty Meeting of States Parties, from 15 to 19 November, hosted by the Netherlands.

“The continued high number of casualties and disappointingly slow clearance outputs highlight serious and persistent challenges to treaty implementation,” said Marion Loddo, Monitor Editorial Manager and final editor of *Landmine Monitor 2021*. “If we are to reach a mine-free world, states must redouble their efforts toward speedy implementation of their obligations and a much more efficient distribution of resources among all affected states and territories.”

2020 saw high numbers of recorded casualties caused by landmines and ERW. This was mostly the result of increased armed conflict and contamination with mines of an improvised nature observed since 2015. At least 7,073 people were killed or injured in 54 countries and areas, with mines—including improvised types—responsible for the majority of all casualties (4,352, 62%). The 2020 total marks more than a 20% increase from the casualties recorded in 2019 (5,853) and is more than double the lowest annual recorded total (3,456 in 2013). Non-signatory Syria recorded the highest number of annual casualties, followed by State Party Afghanistan.

The Mine Ban Treaty, which became international law in 1999 and today has 164 States Parties, bans the use of landmines that detonate due to human contact, also known as “victim-activated antipersonnel mines.” Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) that can be activated by the presence, proximity, or contact of a person—also called “improvised antipersonnel landmines”—are banned under the treaty and are equally addressed by States Parties through specific actions.

“More people were killed and wounded by landmines due to a few countries with ongoing conflicts, but the needs of victims are not being met globally,” said Loren Persi, Impact editor of *Landmine Monitor 2021*. “Progress in assistance slowed in many countries, and pandemic restrictions mean that greater support must be given through adequate health, rehabilitation, and livelihoods.” he added.

Landmine Monitor 2021 shows how civilians remain the primary victims of these indiscriminate weapons. In 2020, they accounted for 80% of all casualties whose status was recorded (4,437). At least half of all civilian casualties were children.

The mine clearance outputs are seen in the context of the aspirational 2025 target set by states at the 2014 Maputo Review Conference for a mine-free world. Since 1999, more than 30 countries have reported clearance of all mined areas on their territory, most recently Chile and the United Kingdom. According to *Landmine Monitor 2021*, at least 60 countries and other areas, are known to be contaminated by antipersonnel mines, including 33 treaty members.

Several States Parties reported that the pandemic presented challenges to demining operations in 2020. Still, they demonstrated perseverance and adaptation to ensure mine action could continue wherever possible. States Parties reported clearing nearly 146km² of land, with more than 135,000 antipersonnel mines destroyed. This represents a 6% decrease from the reported 156km² cleared and a 10% increase from the 122,270 mines destroyed in 2019.

“It seems likely that many States Parties will not meet the aspirational target of achieving clearance by the end of 2025. To date, just eight States Parties appear to be on target to meet their clearance deadlines,” said Ruth Bottomley, Impact editor of *Landmine Monitor 2021*. “The COVID-19-related restrictions have contributed to some uncertainty over meeting deadlines, but a few States were also making slow progress prior to the pandemic.”

Only one state—Myanmar, not party to the treaty—was confirmed to have used antipersonnel landmines during the Monitor reporting period from mid-2020 through October 2021. During that same time, non-state armed groups were found to have used antipersonnel mines in at least six countries: Afghanistan, Colombia, India, Myanmar, Nigeria, and Pakistan. Additional allegations could not be confirmed by the Monitor.

“New use of antipersonnel mines by states remains relatively rare and only by one state outside the treaty this year,” said Mark Hiznay, Ban Policy editor of *Landmine Monitor 2021*. “However ongoing use of mines by non-state armed groups is particularly worrisome and more can be done to prevent anyone from using these weapons,” he added.

Yet, despite new and recurring obstacles, some progress was made to put an end to the suffering caused by landmines through the ban treaty.

The destruction of antipersonnel mine stockpiles continues to be one of the great treaty successes. To date, 94 States Parties have destroyed more than 55 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines, including more than 106,500 destroyed in 2020. These mines will never claim any victims or require clearance. Sri Lanka is the latest state to have completed destruction of its stockpile in 2021.

In the face of pandemic related restrictions, risk education has been a clear example of the enormous capacity for adaptation by the mine action community. Operators implemented and expanded digital and online methods to deliver risk education and save lives. Local networks of community volunteers also continued to provide safety messages when risk education teams were unable to do so.

Lastly, the 2021 report documents the strong spirit of cooperation built over the year as demonstrated by the US\$5.2 billion provided by international donors since 2010, 10% of which was provided in 2020 with 33 donors contributing \$565.2 million in support of mine action activities in 44 affected states and other areas, a similar level of support compared to 2019.

Ends

More Information

About the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor

The Monitor is the civil society initiative providing research and monitoring for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC). The ICBL was awarded the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize for its work to eradicate landmines.

Landmine Monitor 2021 is released by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) in advance of the Mine Ban Treaty Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties taking place in 15–19 November. The 23rd annual edition provides a global overview of efforts to universalize and fully implement the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, ensure clearance of mine contaminated areas, deliver risk education to affected communities, and assist victims of these weapons. More generally, the report assesses the international community's response to the global landmine situation, focusing on calendar year 2020 with information included up to October 2021 where possible.

www.the-monitor.org | twitter.com/MineMonitor

About the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, commonly referred to as the Mine Ban Treaty, was adopted on 18 September 1997 and entered into force on 1 March 1999.

The treaty bans the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of antipersonnel mines. It is the most comprehensive international instrument for eradicating landmines and deals with everything from mine use, production and trade, to victim assistance, mine clearance and stockpile destruction. Currently there are 164 States Parties to the treaty and one signatory—the Marshall Islands—that has yet to ratify.

www.apminebanconvention.org

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