



# LANDMINE & CLUSTER MUNITION MONITOR FACT SHEET



November 2011

## Victim-activated IED Casualties

In 2010, the year for which complete data was last available, the Monitor recorded increased casualties from improvised explosive devices (IEDs).<sup>1</sup> An antipersonnel IED that is victim-activated—one that explodes on contact by a person—is considered an antipersonnel mine and prohibited under the Mine Ban Treaty.<sup>2</sup> An IED that is command-detonated, where the user decides when to activate the explosion, is not prohibited by the treaty.<sup>3</sup>

The annual global total of casualties from mines, IEDs, and all forms of explosive remnants of war (ERW) declined from 7,328 in 2005 to 4,191 in 2010.<sup>4</sup> However, during this same period, victim-activated IED casualties increased. In 2010, victim-activated IEDs caused 18% of the total casualties where the explosive item type was known (684), the same percentage as in 2009, but a startling increase as compared to 2% in 2005.<sup>5</sup>

To a large degree the high ratio of victim-activated IED casualties compared to previous years can be attributed to the recent increases in recorded IED casualties in Afghanistan. There were 383 victim-activated IED casualties in Afghanistan in 2010, which accounted for over half of the global annual total of IED casualties.

Victim-activated IEDs caused about a third of all casualties in Afghanistan in 2010, the vast majority of whom (83%) were civilians. The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported that “two-thirds of all IEDs used in Afghanistan, and the vast majority that kill civilians, are designed to be triggered by a weight of between 10–100 kilograms,” which places them clearly within the definition of

*The majority of IEDs used in Afghanistan are designed to be triggered by “the weight of a human being, and in many cases that of a child.”*

UNAMA

<sup>1</sup> IED: An explosive device placed or fabricated in an improvised manner and designed to destroy, incapacitate, harass or distract. It may incorporate military explosive items, but is often devised from non-military components. Available information indicates that the fuzing of nearly all victim-activated IEDs allows them to be activated by a person as well as a vehicle. It was not possible to distinguish between the types of victim-activated IEDs in casualty data as there is no clear means of determining the sensitivity of fuses.

<sup>2</sup> The use, production, transfer and stockpiling of victim-activated antipersonnel IEDs are prohibited under the Mine Ban Treaty. According to the Mine Ban Treaty definition, an antipersonnel mine is a munition “designed to be exploded by the presence, proximity or contact of a person...” In contrast, antivehicle mines, also referred to as “anti-tank mines,” have a larger explosive charge than antipersonnel mines and are designed to be detonated by the presence, proximity or contact of a vehicle as opposed to that of a person. These mines are not prohibited under the Mine Ban Treaty unless the fusing allows them to be activated by a person.

<sup>3</sup> Casualties from command-detonated EIDs were not included in Monitor reporting of mine/ERW casualties. Mine and ERW casualties recorded by the Monitor are only those people who have been killed or injured by an explosive device that is activated by the victim and unintentionally, not including casualties by strikes, or any other kind of direct attack during intentional use.

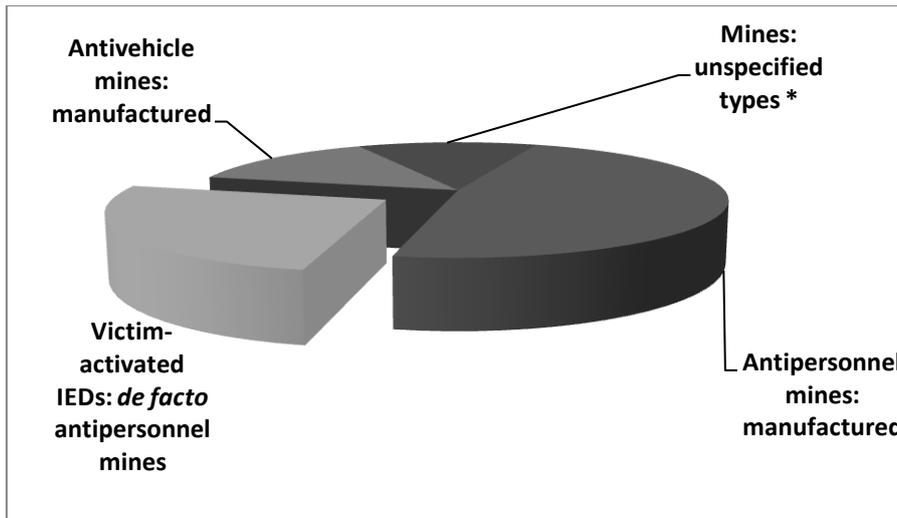
<sup>4</sup> A similar number of casualties were reported in 2010 and 2009. The Monitor had reported a total of 3,956 casualties for 2009. However, based on updated casualty data collected in 2011, the 2009 figure has been revised to 4,010.

<sup>5</sup> Differentiation of victim-activated IED casualties in global data began in 2005. During the period the Monitor recorded the portion of victim activated IED casualties as 18% in 2009; 3% in 2008; 10% in 2007; and 5% in 2006. Despite a widely reported rise in casualties among foreign military from victim-activated devices in 2008, unclear use of terminology in media reports for Afghanistan, Iraq and other key countries made it especially difficult to identify victim-activated IED casualties during that year. As such, it is believed that the low IED casualty total reported in 2008 was an anomaly.

an antipersonnel mine in the Mine Ban Treaty.<sup>6</sup> Most of these victim-activated IEDs, however, have around 20kg of explosive, about twice the explosive charge of a standard antivehicle mine, giving people exposed to their detonation little chance of survival, UNAMA reported.<sup>7</sup>

Other countries with victim-activated IED casualties in the global total for 2010 included: Afghanistan, India, Iraq, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, Russia, Thailand, and Yemen. Victim-activated IED casualties also occurred in Colombia, Myanmar/Burma and Turkey, but were not differentiated from casualties caused by other victim-activated explosive items.

**Landmine casualties by type causing incidents in 2010**



\* Mines, unspecified types: unclear if a mine or IED, if antipersonnel or antivehicle; does not include command-detonated IEDs and mines.

## IED Casualties in 2010

The Monitor identified 4,191 casualties occurring in 2010 that were caused by victim-activated explosive items. In many countries/areas, numerous casualties go unrecorded and thus, the true casualty figure is likely significantly higher. Explosive items which caused casualties were: mines, including victim-activated IEDs; cluster munition remnants; other ERW and unknown explosive items.<sup>8</sup>

For 3,769 casualties in 2010 the item type that caused the casualty was known.<sup>9</sup> Of these at least 684 were caused by victim-activated IEDs. However, the actual figure is likely

<sup>6</sup> UN, “Afghan civilian deaths rise, insurgents responsible for most casualties – UN,” 14 July 2011, [www.un.org](http://www.un.org).

<sup>7</sup> UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, “Afghanistan, Mid-Year Report 2011, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,” Kabul, July 2011, p. 16. Victim-activated IEDs used in Afghanistan are often called pressure plate IEDs.

<sup>8</sup> At least 1,155 people were killed and another 2,848 people were injured; for 188 casualties the outcome of the incident was unknown. Figures include individuals killed or injured in incidents involving devices detonated by the presence, proximity, or contact of a person or a vehicle, such as all antipersonnel mines, antivehicle mines, abandoned explosive ordnance, unexploded ordnance, and victim-activated IEDs. Not included in the totals are: estimates of casualties where exact numbers were not given; incidents caused or reasonably suspected to have been caused by remote-detonated mines or IEDs that were not victim-activated; and people killed or injured while manufacturing or emplacing devices.

<sup>9</sup> For 422 casualties, the explosive item type was not known. A significant reevaluation of the percentage of casualties for which the explosive item was unknown in 2009 was made in 2011. The change was largely due to the inclusion of Colombian casualties as casualties caused by antipersonnel mines (and/or *de facto* antipersonnel

much higher. Mines, when defined to include antipersonnel mines, victim-activated IEDs, antivehicle mines, and mines of unspecified types, caused the most casualties in 2010, at 2,671. ERW, including cluster munition remnants, caused 1,038 casualties.

**Landmine casualty statistics: 2009**

Mine types	Casualties in 2010
Antipersonnel mines: manufactured	1,275
Victim-activated IEDs: de facto antipersonnel mines	684
Antivehicle mines: manufactured	375
Mines: unspecified types (including both manufactured mines and IEDs)	337

The 1,275 casualties caused by antipersonnel mines in 2010 included 505 casualties for Colombia. These casualties were registered by national authorities as having been caused by antipersonnel mines, although it is widely accepted that they are mostly caused by improvised mines made by non-state armed groups (NSAGs) and other victim-activated IEDs constructed to act as mines. In 2010, Colombia had the second highest number of mine/ERW casualties globally, after Afghanistan. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that IEDs are frequently used in Colombia, but incidents are not consistently differentiated.<sup>10</sup> Among other uses, IEDs are laid to protect coca fields targeted by Colombia’s manual illicit crop eradication program; manual eradicators are civilians who are accompanied by security personnel.<sup>11</sup> Although there were fewer civilian casualties in Colombia overall in 2010, the ratio of manual illicit crop eradicators among adult civilian casualties almost doubled to 43% in 2010 from 23% in 2009.

*“Although there is no systematic record of accidents by Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), the use of these cheaper and more difficult-to detect devices is frequent.”*

*UN OCHA-Colombia*

It is likely that victim-activated IEDs accounted for many of the casualties of antipersonnel mines and unspecified mines in **Myanmar** in 2010. It is also possible that some of the casualties of unspecified mines in **Turkey** in 2010 included victim-activated IED casualties. Historically there have been cases of victim-activated IED use in the **Philippines**, but none could be identified for 2010.

The increased use of IEDs is linked to the halt in trade and production, and the destruction of stocks, brought about by the Mine Ban Treaty. Compared to a decade ago, very few NSAGs today have access to factory-made antipersonnel mines. Some NSAGs have access to the mine stocks of previous regimes, but most armed groups still using mines today craft their own improvised devices. The mines produced by NSAGs are sometimes equivalent to factory-made mines. In other cases victim-activated IEDs contain larger explosive charges and function as massive antipersonnel mines. IEDs are often cheap to produce and may sometimes be more difficult to detect than factory-made mines.

In many countries where armed violence is prevalent, media reporting or the available data does not clearly identify the type of explosive item causing casualties. The term “landmine” is often used both for victim-activated and command-detonated IEDs. The

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mines). Previously, these casualties had been included among those casualties for which the item was unknown because of uncertainty regarding the type of explosive items recorded.

<sup>10</sup> UN OCHA, “Colombia: Humanitarian Trends: January – June 2011,” Undated but 2011.

<sup>11</sup> ICRC, “ICRC weapon contamination programming Colombia: Activities and results achieved in 2010,” Undated but 2011.

Monitor reviews all relevant reporting, and casualties caused or reasonably suspected to have been caused by IEDs that were not victim-activated are not included in the annual total. Most IEDs used in countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq in past years were identified as command-detonated devices targeting vehicles, sometimes called roadside bombs, but in 2011 the UN reported that NSAGs in Afghanistan had shifted tactics to increased use of victim-activated pressure plate IEDs.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Press conference comments by Georgette Gangnon, Director of Human Rights, UNAMA, Kabul, 14 July 2011.