

World: Landmine Monitor 2015

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Rebel use of landmines and global mine casualties rise; but more land is cleared of landmine contamination

(Geneva, 26 November 2015): Landmines were used by non-state armed groups in more countries than in the previous nine years and recorded casualties rose globally in 2014, but still were at their second lowest level, as the vast majority of countries abided by the global norm banning the weapons, according to Landmine Monitor 2015. This latest annual report of the Nobel Prize-winning International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) was released today in Geneva.

“While the world has made great progress, the past year has seen disturbing steps backward in terms of new use of and casualties from landmines,” said Jeff Abramson, program manager of the Monitor initiative and final editor of Landmine Monitor 2015. “Remaining mine fields need to be cleared at a greater pace and more done to prevent armed actors from resorting to these weapons if we are to end the scourge of landmines,” Abramson added.

From October 2014 to October 2015, non-state armed groups used antipersonnel mines or victim-activated improvised explosive devices (IEDs) acting as antipersonnel mines in at least 10 countries: Afghanistan, Colombia, Libya, Myanmar, Pakistan, Syria, and Yemen, as well as Iraq, Tunisia, and Ukraine. The last three were not included in last year's report and the Monitor had not recorded such a high number since 2006.

“The new use of antipersonnel mines by non-state armed groups in conflicts in Ukraine and Yemen and the continuing large-scale use of victim-activated IEDs in Afghanistan and Iraq are particularly worrisome,” said Mark Hiznay, senior researcher at Human Rights Watch and ban policy editor of Landmine Monitor.

Use by governments remained low, however, with confirmed new use in 2014-2015 of antipersonnel mines by government forces in Myanmar, North Korea, and Syria—all states not party to the Mine Ban Treaty. That treaty, which became international law in 1999 and today has 162 States Parties, bans the use of mines that detonate due to human contact, also known as “victim-activated,” and thereby encompasses IEDs that act as antipersonnel mines.

A sharp increase in casualties due to victim-activated IEDs in Afghanistan drove a rise in the global number of recorded casualties caused by mines and other explosive remnants of war in 2014—to 3,678, up from 3,308 recorded in 2013. The total, however, was the second lowest since the Monitor started recording casualties in 1999, and the long-term trend remained downward.

“This rise in casualties, after so many years, highlights the absolute need for safeguarding all the principles of the Mine Ban Treaty, both during and after conflict,” said Loren Persi, casualties and victim assistance editor of Landmine Monitor. “Countries must live up to their commitments to assist the hundreds of thousands of landmine survivors, by applying the same level of intensity and precision that they use removing landmines from the ground,” added Persi.

In 2014, there was an average of ten victims per day, compared to the 25 each day reported in 1999. As in previous recent reports, the vast majority of the recorded casualties were civilians (80%). The Monitor reports that there have been at least 225,000 landmine survivors over time, but expects the number to be much higher.

More contamination cleared but financial support down for a second year

In September 2015, Mozambique declared itself mine-free, ending a long legacy of landmine contamination. It is the 28th State Party to complete landmine clearance since the treaty entered into force. Yet, 57 countries (33 of which are treaty members) and four other areas (Kosovo, Nagorno-Karabakh, Somaliland, and Western Sahara) are known to have mine contamination.

In 2014, at least 200km² of mined areas were reported cleared—up from 185 km² in 2013—destroying more than 230,000 antipersonnel mines. The mine action programs in Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Croatia continued to account for the large

majority of area cleared worldwide.

"The pace of clearance, however, lagged behind the goal set last year at the treaty's Third Review Conference of completing clearance in all States Parties by 2025," said Amelie Chayer, ICBL's government liaison and policy manager. "Of the 33 States Parties that have confirmed landmine contamination, 27 have been granted at least one extension period, as allowed under the treaty. However, only three appear to be on track to meet their clearance deadlines," added Chayer.

Donors and affected states contributed US\$610 million in international and national support to mine action in 2014, the majority of which was targeted toward clearing contamination and educating those at risk. This was a decrease of \$30 million compared to 2013, and the second year of decline from the record level of \$681 million in 2012.

In 2014, a total of 42 states and three other areas received \$417 million in support from donors, and 13 affected states provided \$194 million in national support to their own mine action programs. International support to Afghanistan, which remained the top recipient by far, dropped from \$68 million in 2013 to \$49 million in 2014. Appropriations to mine action within peacekeeping obligations, however, rose 10% in 2014, to reach a total of \$166 million.

Additional key findings from the report include:

- In 2014, children accounted for 39% of all civilian casualties where the age was known. Women and girls made up 12% of all casualties where the sex was known, the same as in 2012 and 2013.
- Most States Parties with significant numbers of mine victims made considerable progress in victim assistance, but still face many challenges.
- Collectively, States Parties have destroyed more than 49 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines, including more than 530,000 destroyed in 2014, with Finland being the most recent country to complete destruction.
- Belarus, Greece, and Ukraine remain in violation of the treaty after having failed to complete the destruction of their stockpiles by their four-year deadline. Belarus and Greece had a deadline of 1 March 2008, while Ukraine had a deadline of 1 June 2010.
- For the past decade, the global trade in antipersonnel mines has consisted of a low level of illicit and unacknowledged transfers, but the appearance of mines in Sudan, Ukraine, and Yemen indicates that some form of market for, and trade in, antipersonnel mines exists.
- Down from a total of more than 50 producing states before the Mine Ban Treaty's existence, currently only 11 countries are identified as potential producers of antipersonnel mines and active production may be ongoing in as few as four countries: India, Myanmar, Pakistan, and South Korea. (Note: Singapore may soon be removed from the list of 11 potential producers. The last known company to manufacture landmines in that country indicated on 11 November that they would no longer do so.)

###ENDS

About the Monitor:

Landmine Monitor 2015 is released by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines in advance of the Mine Ban Treaty's Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties, taking place at the United Nations in Geneva from 30 November–4 December. More detailed country-specific information is available in online country profiles, while the overviews in the report provide global analysis and findings. The report focuses on calendar year 2014, with information included up to November 2015 in some cases.

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 four non-governmental organizations: DanChurchAid, Handicap International, Human Rights Watch, and Mines Action Canada.

Links:

- Landmine Monitor 2015 landing page, including new maps - <http://www.the-monitor.org/engb/reports/2015/landmine-monitor-2015.aspx>

- ICBL website - <http://www.icbl.org/>
- Mine Ban Treaty - <http://www.apminebanconvention.org/>
- Images for media - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/minefreeworld/collections/72157629467825119/>
- ICBL Facebook - <http://www.facebook.com/minefreeworld>
- ICBL Twitter - <https://twitter.com/minefreeworld>
- ICBL Youtube - <http://www.youtube.com/user/ICBLnetwork>
- Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor Twitter - <https://twitter.com/MineMonitor> For more information or to schedule an interview, contact:
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- Jeff Abramson, Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor Coordinator, United States (EST), Mobile 1-646-527-5793 and Geneva, +41-77-450-81-06 or email jeff@icblcmc.org

Attachments

- http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Landmine-Monitor-2015_finalpdf.pdf

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