



# LANDMINE & CLUSTER MUNITION MONITOR



*The Monitor provides research and monitoring for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Cluster Munition Coalition.*

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## \*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*

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### Alarm at mine victim rise

#### **Landmine report finds global casualties at 10-year high while clearance funding hits 10-year low; but progress toward a mine-free world continues**

(Washington, DC, 22 November 2016): New use of antipersonnel mines by states is extremely rare due to the ongoing success of a ban treaty encompassing more than 80% of all countries. However, according to *Landmine Monitor 2016*, armed conflict in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen created harsher conditions for the victims and contributed to a sharp spike in the number of people killed and injured in 2015 by mines, including improvised devices that are triggered in the same way, and other explosive remnants of war (ERW). This latest annual report of the Nobel Prize-winning International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) was released today.

“The decade-high number of new casualties caused by landmines and unexploded ordnance, and the continued suffering of civilians, more than a third of whom were children, proves again that these indiscriminate weapons should never be used by anyone,” said Loren Persi, casualties and victim assistance editor of *Landmine Monitor*. “Assistance is essential for those people and communities victimized by landmines in countries that were already struggling to meet their needs,” Persi added.

For calendar year 2015, the Monitor recorded 6,461 mine/ERW casualties, marking a 75% increase from the number of casualties recorded for 2014 and the highest recorded total since 2006 (6,573). The sharp increase is mainly attributed to more casualties recorded in armed conflicts in Libya, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen. The increase also reflects greater availability of casualty data, particularly from unique systematic surveys of persons injured in Libya and Syria last year. The vast majority of recorded landmine/ERW casualties were civilians (78%) where their status was known—a finding similar to the high civilian casualty rate in previous years. Despite the overall increase, declining casualty rates were recorded in more states and areas (34) than were increases (31).

“At a time when casualties are increasing, it is worrying to find decreasing international and national support to clear mine-contaminated land and assist landmine victims,” said Jeff Abramson, program manager of the Monitor initiative and final editor of *Landmine Monitor 2016*.

Thirty-five donors contributed \$340.1 million in international support for mine action to 41 states and three other areas—a decrease of almost \$77 million from 2014 and the first time since 2005 that international support fell below \$400 million. Fourteen affected states reported providing \$131.2 million in national support for their own mine action programs, a decrease of \$62 million compared with 2014. Combined, donors and affected states contributed approximately US\$471.3 million for mine action in 2015, a decrease of \$139 million (23%) from 2014. 2015 was the third year in a row of declining support and lowest level since 2005.

In 2016, donors hosted three international pledging conferences, during which they committed resources to support mine action activities, especially in Colombia and Iraq, as well as the treaty’s implementation support unit in Geneva. Separately, new pledges were also announced for clearance efforts in Lao PDR.

“Mine action” comprises the clearance of mined area, destruction of stockpiles of landmines, assistance to victims of landmine explosions, mine risk education, and advocacy.

“It is encouraging to see special pledges made this year to address funding issues, but it is too early to determine whether they will turn around the trend in declining support,” Abramson added.

#### *Landmine use occurs in a limited number of countries, clearance continues*

New use of antipersonnel mines by states remains a relatively rare phenomenon, with Myanmar, North Korea, and Syria—all states not party to the Mine Ban Treaty—again having the only government forces actively planting the weapons during the past year (October 2015 to October 2016). Over that time, non-state armed groups used antipersonnel mines, including victim-activated improvised mines, in at least 10 countries: Afghanistan, Colombia, Iraq, Libya, Myanmar, Pakistan, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen, as well as Nigeria—the only country joining last year’s list.

The Mine Ban 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 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) that act as antipersonnel mines, also called improvised mines.

“The continued use of antipersonnel mines by non-state armed groups in today’s conflicts, particularly victim-activated improvised mines, flies in the face of the widespread international rejection of this weapon,” said Mark Hiznay, associate director of the arms division at Human Rights Watch and ban policy editor of Landmine Monitor.

In 2015, countries continued to make previously mined areas safe for use, reporting at least about 171 km<sup>2</sup> of land cleared of landmines among the 60 countries (36 of which are treaty members) and four other sovereignty-disputed areas that are known to have mine contamination. As in recent years, the largest clearance of mined areas in 2015 was achieved in Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Croatia, which together accounted for more than 70% of recorded clearance.

While 26 States Parties have completed their clearance obligations since the Mine Ban Treaty came into force in 1999, only four of the remaining States Parties appear to be on track to meet their treaty-mandated clearance deadlines (Algeria, Chile, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Ecuador).

Ukraine is in violation of the Mine Ban Treaty due to missing its 1 June 2016 deadline for mine clearance without having requested a deadline extension.

In 2014, treaty members set a shared goal of completing landmine clearance by 2025. “This report’s findings should spur all states to commit the national and international resources necessary to achieve their collective ambition of creating a mine-free world by 2025,” said Abramson.

Additional key findings from the report include:

- The Monitor recorded but could not independently verify allegations of new mine use in States Parties Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Philippines, and Tunisia, or in states not party Iran and Saudi Arabia.
- The number of countries confirmed with mine contamination rose in 2015. The increase is due to new use of antipersonnel mines, including improvised mines, in Nigeria, and to the acquisition of new data on pre-existing contamination in Palau and Mozambique.
- The amount of land recorded as cleared of contamination (171 km<sup>2</sup>) in 2015 decreased from an estimated 201 km<sup>2</sup> in 2014. It is not possible to attribute the 2015 decrease in clearance to a single cause, but the severe reduction in funding available for mine action probably played a major role.
- States Parties Niger and Peru are awaiting approval of landmine clearance extension requests at the Fifteenth Meeting of States Parties, in November 2016.

- In 2015, children accounted for 38% of all civilian casualties where the age was known. Women and girls made up 14% of all casualties where the sex was known, a slight increase compared to recent years.
- Most States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty with significant numbers of mine victims suffered from a lack of adequate resources to fulfill the victim assistance commitments of the 2014–2019 Maputo Action Plan. Approximately two-thirds of these States Parties had active coordination mechanisms or relevant national plans in place to advance efforts to assist mine victims and uphold their rights.
- Collectively, States Parties have destroyed more than 51 million stockpiled antipersonnel mines, including more than 2.1 million destroyed in 2015.
- 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.
- A *de facto* global ban on the state-to-state transfer of antipersonnel mines has been in effect since the mid-1990s, but the use of factory-produced antipersonnel mines in States Parties Yemen and Ukraine, where declared stockpiles had been destroyed, indicates that some illicit transfers have occurred either internally among actors or from sources external to the country.
- 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, but just four are most likely to be actively producing, namely India, Myanmar, Pakistan, and South Korea.

###ENDS

#### **About the Monitor:**

*Landmine Monitor 2016* is released by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines in advance of the Mine Ban Treaty's Fifteenth Meeting of States Parties, taking place in Santiago, Chile, from 28 November–1 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 2015, with information included up to November 2016 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:**

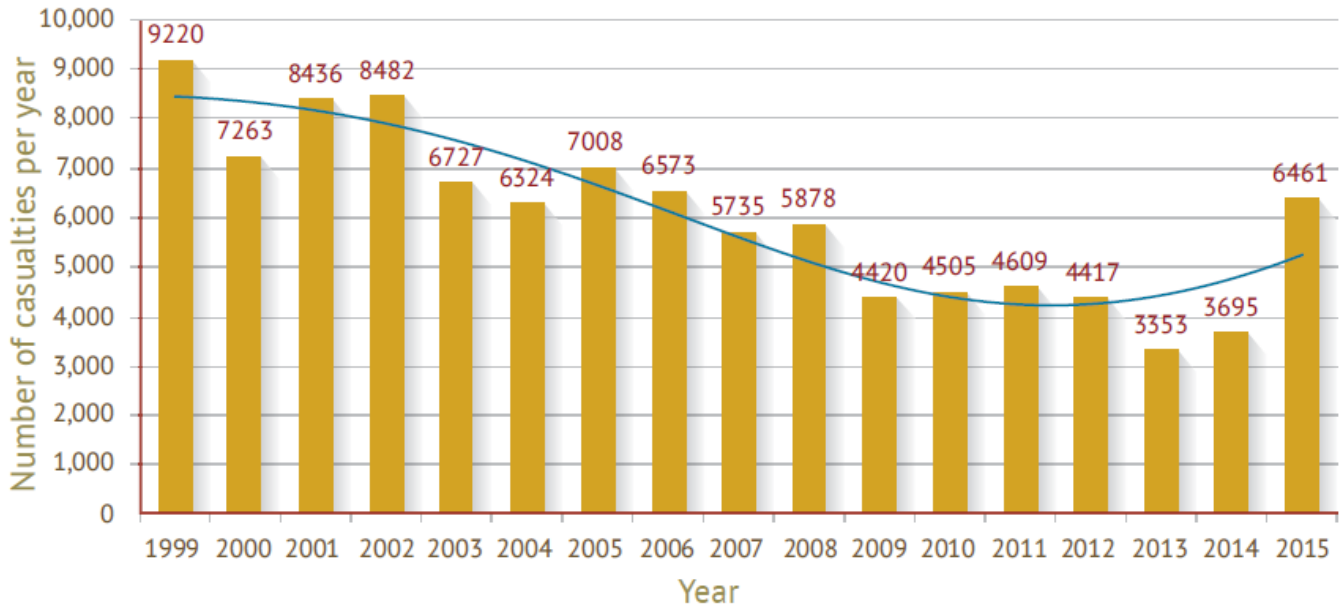
- *Landmine Monitor 2016* landing page, including new maps - <http://www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2016/landmine-monitor-2016.aspx>
- Monitor factsheets - <http://the-monitor.org/en-gb/our-research/factsheets/2016.aspx>
- ICBL website - <http://www.icbl.org/>
- Mine Ban Treaty - <http://www.apminebanconvention.org/>
- Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor Twitter - <https://twitter.com/MineMonitor>

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Key charts from *Landmine Monitor 2016*

Number of mine/ERW casualties per year (1999–2015)



International support for mine action: 2005–2015

