

What Is Mine Action?

Mine action entails more than removing landmines from the ground. Mine action encourages a wide range of services aimed at eliminating threats and assisting the people who have fallen victim to landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). Affected states, with the support of the international community, have achieved progress in addressing the threat of mines and ERW, including cluster munitions.

In many countries ERW pose an even greater threat to people's safety than landmines. ERW comprises unexploded ordnance - bombs, mortars, grenades, missiles, cluster munitions or other devices - that fail to detonate on impact but remain volatile and can kill if touched or moved - and abandoned explosive ordnance.

There are five components or "pillars" of mine action:

Locating, removing and destroying landmines and ERW and marking or fencing off contaminated areas. Providing mine-risk education to help people understand the risks they face, promote behavioural changes and learn how to stay out of harm's way.

Providing medical assistance and rehabilitation and reintegration services to victims, including vocational training and employment opportunities.

Advocating for a total ban on antipersonnel landmines and to promote the development of and compliance with international legal instruments that address the problems of landmines and ERW.

Assisting countries destroy their stockpiles of landmines.

Mine action is evolving. Mine action actors – UN and partners alike – are increasingly requested to respond to the security and humanitarian hazards posed by various explosive devices by providing assistance, such as weapons and ammunition stockpile management, and Improvised Explosive Devices risk and awareness training.

Who is responsible for mine action?

Primary responsibility for mine action lies with the governments of mine-affected countries. The United Nations provide support through 12 UN departments, programmes, funds and agencies that provide various types of services. Some of these UN bodies target their services to a particular group of people, such as refugees, or to a special circumstance, such as a humanitarian crisis, and still others focus on a particular pillar of mine action. The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), established by the UN General Assembly in 1997, is the coordinator of mine action in the UN.

UN vision

The vision of the United Nations is a world free of the threat of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW), including cluster munitions, where individuals and communities live in a safe environment conducive to development and where the human rights and the needs of mine and ERW victims are met and survivors are fully integrated as equal members of their societies.

The United Nations works with affected states to reduce the threat and impact of mines and ERW, including cluster munitions, on peace and security, humanitarian relief, human rights, and socio-economic development; It does so in partnership with civil society, the private sector, international and regional arrangements, and donors with an aim to secure levels of prevention and protection for individuals and communities, at which point UN mine action assistance is no longer requested.

Facts & figures

(Please note consolidated figures for 2015 unfortunately not released until fall 2016)

Number of explosive hazards lying in wait:

UNKNOWN

More important is their impact on lives and livelihoods.

Number of states and areas reporting new victims of landmines and explosive remnants of war in 2014:
54 states and 4 other areas.

As of end of March 2016, number of countries that have ratified or acceded to:

■ The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention	162
■ The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons	122
■ The Convention on Cluster Munitions	98
■ The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	162

Number of casualties reported in 2014:

3,678 (10 per day, 1 every 2 hours), a 12% **INCREASE** from 2013

International funding for mine action in 2014:

USD 417 million, a USD 23 million **DECREASE** from 2013

Contributions to the biggest recipient: Considerable drop in support to mine action activities in Afghanistan from USD 67.5 million in 2013 to USD 49.3 million in 2014, although it is still 30% higher than funding received by the second biggest recipient (Lao PDR: USD 37.3 million).

Top 5 mine action donors in 2014

USA, EU, Japan, Norway and the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Top 5 recipients in 2014

Afghanistan, Lao PDR, Iraq, Angola and Cambodia

Funds appropriated by the United Nations Security Council for mine action operations: USD 166 million through 10 peacekeeping operations in 2014, a 10% increase from 2013.

"I call on those States in a position to do so to fund the mine action component of the United Nations humanitarian response and to support increased mainstreaming of mine action in humanitarian planning, funding appeals and relevant Security Council resolutions and mandates."

- **Ban Ki-moon**

Frequently asked Questions:

April 4, International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action

What is the history of the Day?

On 8 December 2005, the General Assembly declared that 4 April of each year shall be observed as the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action. The declaration creates an opportunity to draw the attention of public opinion each year to the problem of landmines and explosive remnants of war and the efforts to eliminate them. It was first observed on April 4, 2006.

Who commemorates the Day?

Governments, nongovernmental organizations and individuals are encouraged to take advantage of the Day to raise awareness about mine action.

What is the significance of "mine action" in the name of the Day?

The Day is not only about landmines, it is also about "mine action", and that includes all steps taken by the international community to eliminate the threat of landmines as well as other explosive remnants of war including cluster munitions, namely clearance, stockpile destruction, risk education, victim assistance and advocacy.

What are the key UN messages about landmines, explosive remnants of war and mine action?

- The theme for this year's Day -- "Mine action is humanitarian action" -- highlights the intrinsic humanitarian impact of mine action; protecting civilians by reducing the threat of landmines and other explosive hazards or facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The United Nations is playing a vital role in freeing the world from the threat of mines and other explosive remnants of war, meeting the needs of victims and survivors and ensuring their human rights. Last year alone, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) destroyed 168,000 explosive remnants of war and 10,000 landmines, cleared 64 square kilometres of land and 4,000 kilometres of roads, constructed 33 weapons and ammunition storage facilities, provided risk education to over 2,639,000 people from mine and ERW-affected communities, assisted 22,000 victims, delivered training to 3,500 healthcare workers, teachers and police and military personnel, conducted rapid response/technical support interventions in Cyprus and Iraq and responded to the Syrian crisis from southern Turkey.

Landmines and explosive remnants of war kill and injure people every day. These devices

- continue to deny access to productive land, delay deployment of peacekeepers and humanitarian workers, and endanger refugees and internally displaced persons.

Victims of landmines and other explosive remnants of war confront life-long challenges and need

- immediate attention and long-term support.

The United Nations urges universal adherence to, and implementation of, all relevant treaties,

- especially the Antipersonnel Mine-Ban Convention, all protocols of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

UNMAS Fact Sheet 2015

With 17 programmes in conflict and post-conflict areas, 176 international and 426 national employees and over 12,500 national staff employed through its funding, UNMAS achieves tremendous results. In 2015 alone, UNMAS has:

- Destroyed 168,000 explosive remnants of war (ERWs) and 10,000 landmines
- - Cleared 64 square kilometres of land and 4,000 kilometres of roads
- - Constructed/rehabilitated 33 weapons and ammunition storage facilities for national authorities
- - Provided risk education to over 2,600,000 people from mine- and ERW-affected communities
- - Provided assistance to 22,000 victims of explosive hazards
- - Trained 3,500 healthcare workers, police, teachers and military personnel
- - Launched rapid response interventions/response in Cyprus and Iraq and response to the Syrian crisis (southern Turkey)

Some of UNMAS accomplishments:

Abyei (UNISFA) - UNMAS released 590,898 sqm of land through battle area clearance and destroyed 3,001 ERW items and 636 kilograms of small arms ammunition (SAA) from July 2014 to December 2015. It also provided mine risk education (MRE) to 45,000 men, women, boys and girls.

Afghanistan (MACCA) - In its 25 years of service, coordinated by UNMAS since 2002, the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) has released 2,186 square kilometres of land and destroyed 18,058,220 items of unexploded ordnance (UXO). As a result, the number of recorded civilian casualties of mines and ERW has dropped from an average of 16 a day in 1998 to less than one a day in 2015.

Central African Republic (MINUSCA) - In 2015, UNMAS retrieved and safeguarded six tons of ammunition and explosives from an ex-combatant camp and 2,134 ammunition items. 5,158 risk education sessions were delivered to 155,652 beneficiaries.

Colombia - Since 2010, UNMAS has provided advice and technical assistance to the Colombian National Mine Action Authority (DAICMA) to develop an effective and efficient framework to manage the humanitarian mine action sector, including training, coordination, strategic planning and development of national standards. UNMAS current activities focus on preparing the humanitarian mine action sector to respond to current and future needs, including an important expansion following the signing of a peace agreement. With support from UNMAS, 7,663 m² of land have been cleared in Colombia.

Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) - Since its deployment in Côte d'Ivoire in 2011, UNMAS has performed over 300 rapid responses, leading to the clearance and destruction of 16,639 items of explosive hazards and over 234 tons of unserviceable and expired ammunition; has built and rehabilitated 193 weapon and ammunition storage facilities across the country; and has collected and registered over 20,000

weapons and 28,233 items of ammunition in support to disarmament operations. Most importantly, UNMAS has developed a national capacity able to manage explosive hazards, by providing specialized training to hundreds of members of the Army, Gendarmerie and Police in Ammunition Management, Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Improvised Explosive Device Defeat, including through training-of-trainers.

Darfur (Sudan) (UNAMID) - Since 2005, UNMAS has destroyed 12,559 items of UXO and 1,971,173 items of SAA and provided risk education to 767,443 people.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) - Since July 2015, UNMAS has destroyed 348 ERWs and 5,428 rounds of SAA through 209 explosive ordnance disposal spot tasks in support of MONUSCO. It also undertook stockpile destruction of 2,621 munitions, 170,279 SAA and 244 weapons. In addition, UNMAS reached 88,639 beneficiaries (including an estimated 28,924 internally displaced persons) through 1,411 risk education sessions and delivered multimedia messages (sms, radio, video and leaflets) to approximately 23,904,946 beneficiaries.

Lebanon (UNIFIL) - Thanks to UNIFIL demining teams trained, monitored and supported by UNMAS, approximately 4.8 square kilometres of contaminated land have been cleared and more than 35,000 mines and UXO have been destroyed in Southern Lebanon to date.

Libya (UNSMIL) - Since March 2011, UNMAS has cleared a total of 384,310 assorted ERW devices and approximately 54 tons of SAA across Libya. It provided risk education to over 32,622 Libyans in 2015.

Mali (MINUSMA) - To date, UNMAS has released 438,939 square metres of land and destroyed 104 ERWs and over 300 tons of obsolete, unsafe and unserviceable ammunition. Risk education has been delivered to 72,271 civilians, physical rehabilitation to 224 patients (including 126 in physiotherapy and 98 with prosthetics) and socio-economic support (income generating activities) to 160 persons.

Somalia (UNSOM) - UNMAS supported AMISOM, a 22,000-strong AU peacekeeping intervention, which was targeted by over 140 IEDs in 2015. Last year alone, it trained and mentored 89 members of the Somali Police who, in turn, destroyed over 1,550 items of ERWs and conducted over 55 post-blast IED investigations. It also trained and equipped the Somali Security Services, enabling them to mark and make records of over 4,000 state-owned weapons.

South Sudan (UNMISS) - As of December 2015, UNMAS has released 23.3 million square meters of land, opened a total of 3,403 kilometres of road and coordinated mine risk education for 684,426 people.

State of Palestine - To date, UNMAS has surveyed and cleared 246 sites, including schools; and has provided training to 10,000 UN staff, humanitarian workers, IDPs, engineers, construction workers and other at-risk populations. It continues to monitor the ERW demolition processes and has ensured the safe destruction of over 2,300 items of ERWs, including aircraft bombs.

Sudan (excluding Darfur) - As of January 2016, UNMAS has released a total of 95.4 square kilometres of dangerous areas for productive use and has found and destroyed 10,057 anti-personnel mines and 3,156 anti-tank mines and 65,513 UXO items. It has also provided mine risk education to 3.1 million people.

Syria - UNMAS has been coordinating the work of international organisations conducting clearance in Syria since August 2015. In Kobane, this work resulted in the destruction of 364 items of ERW weighing almost 7 tonnes. Moreover, 17 houses, three schools, one hospital, four playgrounds and 21 shops were searched, cleared and returned to the community. Mine risk education has been provided to 110,000 people inside Syria.

Territory of Western Sahara (MINURSO) - Since 2008, UNMAS has released 49,765,987 square metres of hazardous areas to local communities. 7,792 items of UXO, 5,775 SAA and 20,523 cluster bomb units have been removed and destroyed. Over 30,000 beneficiaries (local populations and nomads) have received mine risk education.