



Press release

Landmine Monitor 2020 report

5,500 killed or injured by landmines in 2019: An unacceptably high number of victims

For immediate release

Ottawa, 12 November 2020. Published today, the Landmine Monitor 2020 reports for the fifth consecutive year of exceptionally high casualties caused by landmines, particularly explosive remnants (ERW) and improvised mines. The Monitor recorded 5,554 mine casualties in 2019. 80% of them are civilians - children representing 43% of the civilian casualties. This high figure is mainly due to intense armed conflicts in Afghanistan, Nigeria, Syria and other conflict areas. HI calls on States – that will gather online from 16 to 20th of November for the annual landmine conference - to enforce international humanitarian law and to put pressure on belligerent parties to end the use of these barbaric weapons. As the COVID pandemic challenges humanitarian mine action in many countries, HI also calls on States to maintain efforts to adapt activities to public health restrictions in order to free the world of mines.

High number of casualties for five consecutive years

- The Landmine Monitor 2019 report measures the impact of the Ottawa Treaty, which bans the use, production, transfer and stockpiling of anti-personnel mines for calendar year 2019, with information included up to October 2020 when possible.
- The report reveals that the number of new casualties of landmines and explosive remnants of war **reaches 5,554 in 2019** and remains high for the fifth year in a row (6,897 in 2018, 7,253 in 2017, 9,439 in 2016 and 6,971 in 2015). The 2019 total is still 60% higher than the lowest determined annual number of 3,457 casualties in 2013. There was an **average of 10 casualties per day in 2013; in 2019, the rate rocketed to 15 casualties per day**. The Monitor underlines that casualties go unrecorded in many states and areas, meaning the true casualty figure is likely significantly higher.
- For the fourth successive year, in 2019, the highest number of annual casualties was caused by improvised mines: From the total of 5,554 mine casualties recorded in 2019, **2,994 people were killed or injured by improvised mines**.
- **Though mainly used by non-state armed groups**, improvised landmines fall within the scope of the Ottawa Treaty and its prohibition of the use of any indiscriminate weapons. **Dialogue with some non-state armed groups to convince them to abandon such practices and to commit to the Treaty is possible**. Mine clearance – which is an obligation of the Ottawa Treaty - is a way to deny these groups access to weapons and munitions as many improvised mines are made using disposed of explosives or remnants of them.
- The vast majority of people killed by anti-personnel mines are civilians: **80% of casualties were civilians in 2019 (4,466), of whom 43% were children (1,562)**. Explosive remnants caused the most child casualties (756, or 49%).

- In 2019, the majority of new casualties of landmines and explosive remnants of war were recorded in Afghanistan (1,538), Syria (1,125), Myanmar (358), Mali (345), Ukraine (324), Yemen (248), Nigeria (238) and Iraq (161). Mine casualties were recorded in **50 States and five territories** around the world.

New reported uses

- The Landmine Monitor confirmed new uses of anti-personnel mines by government forces in Myanmar between October 2019 and October 2020. Non-State armed groups also used landmines, including improvised mines, in at least **six countries**: Afghanistan, Colombia, India, Libya, Myanmar, and Pakistan. The Monitor also says there were as yet unconfirmed allegations of new mine use by non-state armed groups in 12 countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Egypt, etc.).
- These uses have caused high-level contamination that will endanger the lives of thousands of people over the long-term. A total of **60 States and territories have been contaminated by mines and explosive remnants of war** around the world.

Impact of COVID on Mine Action

- Measures against COVID-19 had a serious impact on mine action in 2020: Restrictions prevented survivors and other persons with disability from accessing services they needed (rehabilitation, social services, etc.) in several mine-affected countries. Clearance was temporally suspended as well as risk education sessions that were adapted to constraints and restrictions against the pandemic.

Quotes - HI Advocacy Director Anne Héry

- **Quote 1:** “Large numbers of casualties are still driven by relatively few countries with intensive armed conflicts, involving the large-scale use of improvised mines, like Afghanistan, Syria, Mali, etc. Mines kill or cause complex injuries, often with serious disabling sequelae, and serious psychological trauma. The disability caused by mines - often following the amputation of a lower limb - is accompanied by social stigmatisation. Add to this the challenge of finding work, and it becomes difficult for survivors to return to normal life. We must constantly remind all parties to conflicts that the use of these weapons is banned and that international law must be respected.”
- **Quote 2:** “In recent years, we have witnessed an alarming upsurge in the number of casualties. Our work against landmines is not over. We must defend the application of the Ottawa Treaty and advocate for the support of victims, while we face new challenges with the use of improvised landmines. We still need the support of citizens to completely eradicate landmines from the earth.”
- **Quote 3:** “The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted mine action in 2020. Mine clearance, risk education – which is often based on face to face sessions – and victim assistance were temporarily suspended in many countries and had to be adapted to COVID restrictions. Funds initially dedicated to mine action were also reallocated to COVID. As millions of people in 60 states and territories are still living under the threat of mines, States must maintain their commitment in the fight against landmines in order to reach a world free of mines in 2025.”

The Ottawa Treaty bans the acquisition, production, stockpiling, trade and use of anti-personnel mines. The treaty was opened for signing on 3 December 1997. It entered into force on 1 March 1999. A total of 164 States are party to the treaty and one **state** (the Marshall Islands) has signed but not ratified the **treaty**.

HI is an independent international aid organisation. It has been working in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster for almost 40 years. Working alongside persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, our action and testimony are focused on responding to their essential needs, improving their living conditions, and promoting respect for their dignity and basic rights. Since it was founded in 1982, HI has set up development programmes in more than 60 countries and intervenes in numerous emergency situations. The network of eight national associations (Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States) works constantly to mobilise resources, jointly manage projects and to increase the impact of the organisation's principles and actions. HI is one of six founding organisations of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), the co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997 and the winner of the Conrad N. Hilton Award in 2011. HI takes action and campaigns in places where "living in dignity" is no easy task.

Learn more: www.hi-canada.org

Press contact

Gabriel Perriau

Communication Officer

g.perriau@hi.org