

LANDMINE & CLUSTER MUNITION MONITOR



Myanmar/Burma
Country Report
December 2020

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2020 Landmine Monitor
Myanmar/Burma Country Report
Includes 2020 Cluster Munition Monitor report

Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor provides research for the *International Campaign to Ban Landmines* and the *Cluster Munition Coalition*. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) formed in 1992 to rid the world of the scourge of the anti-personnel landmine. The ICBL is a network of over 1,300 non-governmental organizations in 70 countries, and received the Nobel Peace Award in 1997. The Cluster Munition Coalition is an international civil society campaign working to eradicate cluster munitions, prevent further casualties from these weapons and put an end for all time to the suffering they cause.

Landmine Monitor documents the implementation of the 1997 *Ottawa Convention*, or the *Mine Ban Treaty*. **Cluster Munition Monitor** documents the implementation of the 2008 *Convention on Cluster Munitions*. Both Landmine Monitor and Cluster Munition Monitor assess the efforts of the international community to resolve the crisis caused by these weapons.

As of 1 November 2020, 164 countries, over 80% of the world's governments, have ratified, or acceded to, the *Mine Ban Treaty*. Also as of 1 November 2020, 123 countries have signed, ratified, or acceded to, the *Convention on Cluster Munitions*. **Myanmar/Burma has not yet joined either convention.**

Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor is not a technical treaty verification system or a formal inspection regime. It is an effort by ordinary people to hold governments accountable to non-use of antipersonnel landmines and cluster munitions. It is meant to compliment the reporting requirements of countries which have ratified the treaties. Our reports seek to make transparent the state of the landmine and cluster munition crisis, and government policies or practices, in non-signatory states.

Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor aims to promote and facilitate discussion within human society in order to reach the goal of a landmine and cluster munition free world.

Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor works in good faith to provide factual information about the issue it is monitoring in order to benefit the world as a whole. It is critical, but constructive in its documentation and analysis.

Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor Myanmar/Burma researcher for 2020 was Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan. The Monitor is grateful to all the organizations and individuals who provide information for this report each year, and acknowledge their contribution within the report.

We encourage contributions which provide accurate documentation on these issues. Please contact us at: burma@icblcmc.org. If you have corrections regarding the contents of this report please write: monitor@icblcmc.org

Cover Photo: Deputy Manager of the Kawkareik Victim Assistance Centre providing repair to a prosthetic. Photo Credit Mi Mi Khaing /Humanity & Inclusion



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Policy

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has not acceded to the Mine Ban Treaty.¹

Myanmar continued to express its support for the Mine Ban Treaty in the reporting period, but did not take any steps to accede to it. Myanmar's armed forces claim to use antipersonnel landmines on a limited basis. (*See Use section below*).

In November 2019, at the Mine Ban Treaty's Fourth Review Conference in Oslo, Myanmar's Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Win Myat Aye, stated, "Myanmar recognizes the importance of the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention in putting an end to the suffering and human casualties caused by anti-personnel mines, in saving lives and in returning hope and human dignity. We also believe that universalization of the convention is vital in reducing humanitarian harms. Building lasting peace is the most fundamental and important task in the process of stopping future use of anti-personnel mines."²

At the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 6 November 2019, Myanmar reiterated that relevant officials were reviewing the Mine Ban Treaty to gain a better understanding of it with a view to the country joining in the future. Myanmar added that disarmament matters are part of the current peace process negotiation and that capacity constraints also prevent Myanmar from joining the convention.³

In November 2018, Myanmar stated that the peace process is the "highest priority." It also stated that it "would like to encourage relevant international organizations and the states parties to further strengthen cooperation with the countries which are not yet ready to accede to the Convention by providing more necessary technical assistance which we believe will facilitate them to join the Convention expeditiously."⁴

Previously, in June 2018, a Myanmar Ministry of Defense official told the ICBL that key stakeholders, particularly the military, were reviewing the possibility of Myanmar's accession to the Mine Ban Treaty.⁵ However, in May 2018, Myanmar's Minister for International Cooperation, U Kyaw Tin, told the treaty's special envoy, Prince Mired Raad Zeid Al-Hussein of Jordan, that Myanmar would consider joining the treaty after the successful implementation of a nationwide ceasefire agreement by all parties.⁶

¹ The military junta that previously ruled the country changed its name from Burma to Myanmar. Many ethnic groups in Myanmar, and a number of other countries, still refer to the country as Burma. Internal state and division names are given in their common form, or with the ruling Union Solidarity Development Party (USDP) designation in parentheses, for example, Karenni (Kayah) state. Since 2009, the Monitor has used township names according to the UN Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU). For more information, see the [MIMU website](#).

² [Statement of Myanmar](#) (segment on Universalization), Mine Ban Treaty Fourth Review Conference, Oslo, 26 November 2019.

³ Myanmar, Explanation of Vote on Resolution L.45, 74th Session, UN General Assembly (UNGA) First Committee, New York, 6 November 2019. UNGA, Official Records, [A/C.1/74/PV25](#), p. 1. This is virtually the same as its statement the previous year. Myanmar, Explanation of Vote on Resolution L.53/rev.1, 73rd Session, UNGA First Committee, [Audio Record of 31st Meeting \(at 19 mins.\)](#), New York, 8 November 2018. See also, Myanmar, Explanation of Vote on Resolution L.40, 72nd Session, UNGA First Committee, New York, 31 October 2017. UNGA, Official Records, [A/C.1/72/PV26](#), pp. 18–19/29.

⁴ [Statement of Myanmar](#), Mine Ban Treaty Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 30 November 2018.

⁵ ICBL/Landmine Monitor meeting with U Min Htike Hein, Assistant Secretary, Union Minister Office for Defence, Ministry of Defence, Naypyitaw, 29 June 2018.

⁶ "[Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin receives Prince Mired Ra'ad Al-Hussein, Special Envoy of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction \(Ottawa Convention\)](#)," *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 30 May 2018; and Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention press release, "[Mine Ban Convention Special Envoy to visit Myanmar](#)," 24 May 2018. In June 2017, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense officials told the ICBL that the government was actively considering acceding to the Mine Ban Treaty, but could not provide an estimated timeline for when Myanmar might join. Landmine Monitor meetings with Kyaw Moe Tun, Director of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Naypyitaw, 26 June 2017; and with Lt. Col. Myo Win Aung, Judge Advocate General's

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Myanmar abstained from voting on annual UNGA Resolution 74/61 on 12 December 2019, which promotes universalization of the Mine Ban Treaty. Since 1997, Myanmar has abstained from voting on this annual resolution supporting the treaty.⁷

Myanmar has participated as an observer in several Meetings of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty, most recently in November 2019 at the Fourth Review Conference in Oslo where it provided a statement on universalization.⁸ Myanmar participated in intersessional meetings of the Mine Ban Treaty in Geneva in 2013–2014, 2016, and 2019.

At the Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties in December 2018, Myanmar's delegation responded to allegations of landmine use by Myanmar government forces.⁹

In April 2019, Myanmar also attended a regional seminar on the landmine ban treaty organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Lao PDR Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vientiane.¹⁰

In March 2020, the Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar called on the government and ethnic non-state armed groups operating in border areas to immediately halt landmine use, and for the government to join the Mine Ban Treaty.¹¹

In December 2019, Mine-Free Myanmar¹² (an initiative launched by the ICBL in 2003 to promote the landmine ban in Myanmar, including by calling for a halt to use of antipersonnel mines) held a press conference in Yangon to launch *Landmine Monitor 2019's* country report on Myanmar and distributed 1,200 Burmese-language translations of the report.¹³ In December 2019 and September 2020, Landmine Monitor worked with the UN's Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU) to produce and disseminate infographics outlining the impact of landmines in Myanmar and the impact of landmine casualties on the health system in Myanmar respectively.¹⁴

office, Ministry of Defense, Naypyitaw, 26 June 2017. In July 2012, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, U Wunna Maung Lwin, stated that Myanmar was considering acceding to the Mine Ban Treaty. Mine Ban Treaty Implementation Support Unit (ISU) press release, "[Myanmar seriously considering landmine treaty as part of its state reforms](#)," 12 July 2012.

⁷ In 1996, Myanmar voted in favour of a UNGA resolution calling on governments to pursue an international agreement banning antipersonnel landmines but abstained once the Mine Ban Treaty opened for signature in 1997. "[Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction](#)", UNGA Resolution 74/61, 12 December 2019.

⁸ Myanmar previously attended Mine Ban Treaty Meetings of States Parties in 2003, 2006, and 2011–2013. It did not participate in the Mine Ban Treaty Review Conferences held 2004, 2009, or 2014.

⁹ Myanmar stated that it had begun joint-patrols with Bangladesh along their shared border in August 2018, and claimed that since the institution of these patrols, no landmine casualties had been reported. [Statement of Myanmar](#), Mine Ban Treaty Seventeenth Meeting of State Parties, Geneva, 26 November 2018.

¹⁰ "[Experts Discuss Landmine-related Risks At A Regional Seminar](#)," *Lao News Agency*, 2 May 2019. The seminar covered landmines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war.

¹¹ Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, "[Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar](#)," A/HRC/43/59, 4 March 2020. The report recommended that Myanmar "Immediately stop laying landmines; ratify the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction; clear mines and unexploded ordnance in accordance with international standards; mark and fence mine areas; and carry out systematic mine-risk and education activities."

¹² The ICBL initiative was initially known as "Halt Mine Use in Burma/Myanmar." See, [Mine-Free Myanmar website](#).

¹³ Mine-Free Myanmar, "[Myanmar/Burma Country Report released at press conference in Yangon 19 December 2019](#)," 20 December 2019. Audio record of the press conference.

¹⁴ "Townships with Suspected Landmine/ERW Contamination according to reported Landmine/ERW Casualties in Myanmar 2019," UN Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU), 1 July 2020. An infographic provides a 12-year overview of data from Landmine Monitor Reports (2007–2019). [MIMU](#) reported to the Landmine Monitor that the landmine infographic has been one of their most requested products.

Production, stockpiling, and transfer

Myanmar Defense Products Industries, known as “Ka Pa Sa”, is a state enterprise located at Nyaung Chay Dauk in western Pegu (Bago) division that produces fragmentation, bounding, and antipersonnel blast mines, including mines with low metal content.¹⁵ In September 2016, government authorities in Myanmar confirmed that landmines were still being produced.¹⁶

Myanmar has also imported or otherwise received, obtained, and used antipersonnel mines manufactured in China, India, Italy, Russia (and the former Soviet Union), and the United States (US), as well as mines of unknown origin.¹⁷

There is no publicly available information on the types or quantities of antipersonnel mines in government possession. In November 2019, a non-state armed group in northern Shan state published photographs of Ka Pa Sa made MM-2 antipersonnel landmines. The numbers stenciled on the mines indicated that they had been manufactured in 2018.¹⁸

Myanmar is not known to have exported antipersonnel mines.¹⁹

Production, transfer, and stockpiling by non-state armed groups

Various non-state armed groups (NSAGs) in Myanmar have produced improvised antipersonnel mines, including the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), and the Democratic Karen Benevolence Army (DKBA). It is believed that most other NSAGs in Myanmar have the capacity to manufacture improvised mines.

NSAGs have manufactured improvised blast and fragmentation mines from locally available materials. Victim-activated improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are considered improvised antipersonnel mines prohibited by the Mine Ban Treaty. Allegations of use of non-detectable mines are unable to be confirmed.²⁰ In 2020, the Monitor received credible evidence of manufacture of persistent antipersonnel landmines by NSAGs.²¹

Some NSAGs have also made Claymore-type directional fragmentation mines and antivehicle mines with antihandling devices.

NSAGs in Myanmar have also acquired mines by removing mines laid by Myanmar’s armed forces (known as the Tatmadaw), seizing Tatmadaw stocks, and, by obtaining them from the clandestine arms market.²²

¹⁵ Myanmar produces five types of antipersonnel landmines. The MM1, which is modeled on the Chinese Type-59 stake-mounted fragmentation mine; the MM2, which is similar to the Chinese Type-58 blast mine; the MM3, which is a bounding mine; the MM5, which is a Claymore-type directional fragmentation mine; and the MM6, which is a copy of the US M14 plastic mine. Myanmar also produces the MM4, which is an antivehicle mine.

¹⁶ Htoo Thant, “[Tatmadaw insists landmine use kept within reasonable minimum](#),” *Myanmar Times*, 13 September 2016.

¹⁷ See, *Landmine Monitor Report 2004*, p. 938. The mines include: Chinese Types-58, -59, -69, -72A; Soviet POMZ-2, POMZ-2M, PMN-1, PMD-6; US M14, M16A1, M18; and Indian/British LTM-73, LTM-76.

¹⁸ The allegation and [photographs](#) were published on a [Facebook page](#) associated with the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS), 3 December 2019.

¹⁹ In 1999, Myanmar’s representative to the UN stated that the country was supportive of banning exports of antipersonnel mines, however, no formal moratorium or export ban has been proclaimed. See, *Landmine Monitor Report 2000*, p. 469.

²⁰ In October 2017, photographs were republished on several [social media sites](#) showing an unknown non-detectable antipersonnel mine, alleged to be of Chinese origin, in use by the Kachin Independence Army (KIA).

²¹ Photographs of an improvised mine in northern Shan State which did not require batteries, but was percussion activated. The mine is said to have been manufactured by the Shan State Army-South (SSA-S), but the Monitor was not able to confirm this allegation. Information provided by informant who requested anonymity.

²² *Landmine Monitor Report 2009* identified the presence of US-made M26 bounding antipersonnel mines in Myanmar but could not identify the source or the user. In 2010, a confidential source indicated that the KNLA had received many M26 mines from the Royal Thai Army in the past, before Thailand joined the Mine Ban Treaty. See, *Landmine Monitor Report 2009*, p. 1013.

Use

Since the publication of its first annual report in 1999, the Landmine Monitor has every year documented use of antipersonnel mines by the Tatmadaw and by various NSAGs in Myanmar.

New use by government forces

At the Mine Ban Treaty's Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties in November 2018, a Myanmar government representative claimed that allegations it had used landmines along the border with Bangladesh were without merit, and that joint patrols with Bangladeshi border forces encountered no mines.²³

However, in July 2019, an official at the Union Minister Office for Defence stated to the Monitor that "since the start of the civilian era, the Tatmadaw no longer use landmines", but qualified their comment by stating that in some instances landmines are still used. Specifically, he said, "In border areas, if the number of Tatmadaw is small, they will lay mines around where they reside, but only if their numbers are small. Mines are also laid around infrastructure such as microwave towers. If these are near villages, we warn them. If there is a Tatmadaw camp in an area controlled by an ethnic armed group where they are sniped at and harassed, they will lay mines around the camp."²⁴ Previously, in September 2016, Deputy Minister of Defence Major General Myint Nwe informed the Myanmar parliament that the army continues to use landmines in internal armed conflicts.²⁵

Since mid-2018, fighting between Tatmadaw forces and the Arakan Army (AA), a NSAG operating in Rakhine state, has intensified.²⁶ The AA has regularly published photographs online of antipersonnel landmines produced by state-owned Ka Pa Sa, including MM2, MM5, and MM6 antipersonnel mines among other seized weaponry.²⁷ While these photographs do not specifically identify new landmine use, they do indicate that antipersonnel mines are part of the weaponry of frontline Tatmadaw units.

Claims of new mine use by government forces during the reporting period include:

- In June 2020, a villager in western Hpapun Township, Kayin state, was killed by a mine laid by the KNLA near a Tatmadaw post. The mine had been laid due to an increase in tensions between the KNLA and the Tatmadaw.²⁸ In May 2020, villagers in northern Hpapun Township of Kayin state alleged that Tatmadaw soldiers from Infantry Battalion

²³ [Statement of Myanmar](#), Mine Ban Treaty Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 30 November 2018. The statement said "...the security forces of Myanmar and Bangladesh have been conducting coordinated patrol along the border in the west of Myanmar. Coordinated patrol has been made for 19 times so far since August of this year. No incidents of landmines casualty have been reported in the area. Such accusation without concrete evidence will not help facilitate countries to join the convention."

²⁴ Landmine Monitor meeting with U Min Htike Hein, Assistant Secretary, Union Minister Office for Defence, Ministry of Defence, in Naypyitaw, 5 July 2019.

²⁵ ["Pyithu Hluttaw hears answers to questions by relevant ministries,"](#) *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 13 September 2016. The deputy minister stated that the Tatmadaw used landmines to protect state-owned factories, bridges and power towers, and its outposts in military operations. The deputy minister also stated that landmines were removed when the military abandoned outposts, or warning signs were placed where landmines were planted and soldiers were not present.

²⁶ New landmine casualties in areas of conflict between the Tatmadaw and the Arakan Army (AA) not previously known to have landmine contamination also indicate new use, by either the AA, the Tatmadaw, or both. In January 2018, Indian authorities blamed landmine casualties occurring on its border with Myanmar, in Mizoram state, on either the Tatmadaw or the AA, both of whom were operating in the area. ["Man hurt in Mizoram IED blast,"](#) *The Telegraph*, 18 January 2018.

²⁷ See, AA, [Battle News](#), undated. Photographs of MM2, MM5 and MM6 mines, among other weapons allegedly captured in June and March 2020, and in December, November and October 2019. See also, Mine Free Myanmar, ["Allegedly Seized Mines Displayed by Arakan Army,"](#) 18 April 2019.

²⁸ "Karen Human Rights Group Submission to Landmine Monitor," August 2020, unpublished. The villager, who eventually died from his injuries, stated that he knew the placement of the mines as he had been informed by the KNLA, however forgot about them on his return.

19 and Light Infantry Battalions 340, 341, and 434, operating under Hpapun Operations Command, emplaced mines at the eastern part of their military base along a major road.²⁹

- On 7 January 2020, near Teik Tu Pauk village in Kyauk Yan village Tract, in Buthidaung Township of Rakhine state, several children and an adult were killed or injured by mines that villagers indicated had been laid by the Tatmadaw. Previously, the Tatmadaw had made a temporary camp and left chopped dried bushes from an area they had cleared. A teacher and his students went to the area to harvest the dried bushes for firewood for cooking. The villagers said that soldiers did not warn them that mines had been laid around the temporary camp. Once they began to collect the branches, the group stepped on mines, killing four and injuring three people.³⁰ In September 2020, another villager from Hpo Kaung Chaung village, Buthidaung township, Rakhine state, stepped on a mine while collecting firewood from the site of a temporary Tatmadaw camp which had been vacated earlier in 2020.³¹
- In November 2019, the Shan State Army-South (SSA-S) published photographs of MM2 antipersonnel mines which they claimed had been laid by the Tatmadaw's Brigade 99 near Wan Wah village of the Murg Mu region in Namtu Township, northern Shan state. The SSA-S alleged that after clashes between the Tatmadaw and other NSAGs, the Tatmadaw began to lay landmines on farmland outside the villages and near the woods where they thought rebel groups would be injured by them.³²

It is often difficult to ascribe specific responsibility for mine incidents in Myanmar to a particular armed group, however in every month in early 2020 villagers reported landmine casualties in areas where armed conflict had recently occurred. Examples of such incidents include:

- On 19 January 2020, a villager was injured in an area where the Tatmadaw and the AA had clashed in Ponnagyun township, Rakhine state. The perpetrator could not be determined.³³
- On 29 February, 11 March and 5 May 2020, landmine incidents caused injuries to villagers in areas near Ah Lae Sakhan village, Ye Phyu township, in the southern Tanintharyi region.

These were among the latest in a string of casualties which began in October 2018 in an area under dispute between the Karen National Union (KNU) and the New Mon State Party (NMSP), both signatories to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). Both of these NSAGs have denied using landmines and accused the other of having done so. Local activists informed the Monitor that the incidents involved improvised mines but could not attribute responsibility for the use:³⁴

- In March 2020, two villagers were killed by a landmine near Kham Sar village in Kyaukme township, northern Shan state. Armed conflict between the Tatmadaw, the

²⁹ "Karen Human Rights Group Submission to Landmine Monitor," August 2020, unpublished. The villagers state that the Tatmadaw had issued verbal warnings to avoid the area.

³⁰ Monitor interview with villagers who requested anonymity. Families of the injured were each required to pay 20,000 Kyat (US\$20) per day to the hospital so that the injured would be cared for by the doctors and nurses.

³¹ Monitor interview with villagers who requested anonymity.

³² Allegation [and photographs](#) were published on a [Facebook page](#) associated with the RCSS, 3 December 2019.

³³ "9 people wounded in Arakan landmine explosions," *Narinjara News*, 20 January 2020.

³⁴ "Two villagers from Ye Phyu Township severely wounded in landmine blasts," *Mon News Agency/Burma News International*, 14 March 2020. See also, Lawi Weng, "Civilian Injured by Landmine as Mon, Karen Armed Groups Trade Blame," *The Irrawaddy*, 5 May 2020. Details also based on Monitor interviews with informants who wished to remain anonymous.

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SSA-S and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) had previously occurred in the area and it is therefore uncertain which actor may have been responsible.³⁵

- On 5 April 2020, a villager in Motesoe Chaung village of Rathedaung township, Rakhine state, was killed by a mine in an area where clashes between the Tatmadaw and the AA were a frequent occurrence.³⁶
- On 24 May 2020, one villager was injured by a mine, and a second was injured while coming to his aid in an area where Tatmadaw and AA fighting had occurred in Ponnagyun township, Rakhine state, but villagers did not know who laid the mine.³⁷ In July 2020, the abbot of a Buddhist monastery was killed when he triggered an antipersonnel landmine while cleaning the grounds. Villagers said Tatmadaw soldiers frequently stayed in the monastery grounds but that the TNLA also was based in the area. Villagers called on both groups to remove their mines from the area.³⁸
- In August 2020, one child was killed and five were injured after finding a landmine and playing with it. Villagers said Tatmadaw soldiers had previously stayed in the house where the incident occurred.³⁹

At the Fourth Review Conference in November 2019, attended by delegations from both Myanmar and Bangladesh, the Bangladeshi delegation urged:

“Myanmar to impose moratorium on the use, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines. We also urge Myanmar to continue its work on victim assistance involving all affected communities in fully transparency, and to meaningfully engage with non-state armed groups allegedly using and stockpiling anti-personnel mines within its territory. These measures would be critical for creating an environment conducive to the safe and dignified return of the forcibly displaced Rohingya to their homes in Rakhine State. On its part, Bangladesh remains available to work together with Myanmar to share our experience of stockpile destruction and expertise in mine action as a lead contributor to UN peacekeeping operations. We reiterate our deep concern over Myanmar’s continued use of anti-personnel mines...Our border management authorities recorded anti-personnel mine related accidents within Myanmar territory along our borders even as recently as in September and November 2019, leading to several civilian fatalities and injuries. The UN Fact-Finding Mission had been categorical about the reported use of anti-personnel mines by Myanmar armed forces in at least two States.”⁴⁰

Myanmar’s representatives made no comment on Bangladesh’s offer of assistance or its suggestion of a moratorium on use, as the Myanmar observer delegation was no longer in the room.

Landmine casualties continued to be reported on the Myanmar side of the border with Bangladesh. On 16 March 2020, a Rohingya refugee living in a refugee camp on the border was killed while collecting firewood in the ‘no man’s land’ between Maungdaw township adjacent to Bandarban district.⁴¹

³⁵ Lawi Weng, “[Landmine Kills Two Shan Civilians in Northern Myanmar](#),” *The Irrawaddy*, 12 March 2020.

³⁶ “[Rathedaung man killed by landmine](#),” *Development Multimedia Group/Burma News International*, 9 April 2020.

³⁷ “[Mro ethnic villagers injured in Ponna Kyaut landmine blasts](#),” *Narinjara News*, 25 May 2020.

³⁸ “[Buddhist Abbot And Villager Killed By Landmine](#),” *Shan Herald News Agency/Burma News International*, 17 July 2020.

³⁹ “[One Child Dead and Five Injured in Northern Shan State Landmine Blast](#),” *Network Media Group/Burma News International*, 4 August 2020.

⁴⁰ [Statement of Bangladesh](#), Mine Ban Treaty Fourth Review Conference, Oslo, 27 November 2019.

⁴¹ Abdul Azeez, “[Rohingya man killed in landmine explosion](#),” *Dhaka Tribune*, 18 March 2020.

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In June 2018, the Human Rights Council's Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar (IIFMM) reported, following their investigations into mine use allegations in September 2017, that:

“...it had ‘reasonable grounds to conclude that landmines were planted by the Tatmadaw, both in the border regions as well as in northern Rakhine state, as part of the ‘clearance operations’ with the intended or foreseeable effect of injuring or killing Rohingya civilians fleeing to Bangladesh. Further, it seems likely that new antipersonnel mines were placed in border areas as part of a deliberate and planned strategy of dissuading Rohingya refugees from attempting to return to Myanmar.’”⁴²

In June 2018, the 20th Battalion of the KIA shared photographs with the Monitor that it said showed landmines its forces cleared from the villages of Gauri Bum, Man Htu Bum, and Uloi Bai in Danai township. The photographs showed around 80 antipersonnel mines, all M14 and MM2 types, with marking indicating Myanmar manufacture. The KIA alleged that Tatmadaw forces had laid these mines in April and May 2018, when government forces left villages after occupying them. The KIA stated that two of their soldiers were injured while clearing the mines.⁴³

The Monitor subsequently showed the photographs to an official at the Myanmar Ministry of Defence in June 2018 and requested comment. The official noted that one mine shown in a photograph was an antivehicle mine and said that government forces do not use antivehicle mines against insurgents as the NSAGs do not use vehicles. He said that the antipersonnel mines could be copies of Myanmar-made mines that a NSAG planted, as he said the Tatmadaw does not leave landmines behind after an operation.⁴⁴

Previously, in September 2017, Landmine Monitor, and several other organizations independently, published evidence that showed Myanmar government forces were using antipersonnel landmines along the country's border with Bangladesh. The mine use began in late August 2017, when Myanmar forcibly expelled hundreds of thousands of Myanmar's Rohingya citizens across the border into Bangladesh. The Monitor reported that newly mined areas at that time were located between Maungdaw township in Myanmar and Bandarban district in Bangladesh, at two major land crossing routes between the countries.⁴⁵

Past use of antipersonnel mines along this border has been documented in previous Landmine Monitor reports.⁴⁶

⁴² Human Rights Council, “[Report of the detailed findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar](#),” A/HRC/39/CRP.2, 17 September 2018, p. 288.

⁴³ Thein Zaw, “[Two villagers injured by a landmine explosion in Paletwa](#),” *Narinjara News*, 9 September 2019.

⁴⁴ Human Rights Council, “[Report of the detailed findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar](#),” A/HRC/39/CRP.2, 17 September 2018, p. 288.

⁴⁵ According to the Monitor, local researchers interviewing and assisting displaced Rohingya civilians as they crossed into Bangladesh on 28 August 2017 saw an army truck arrive on the Myanmar side of the border from which they witnessed Myanmar government soldiers unloading three crates. They said the soldiers removed antipersonnel landmines from the crates and placed them in the ground, later returning at night to place more mines. According to these researchers, the mines were emplaced within Taung Pyo Let Yar village tract of Maungdaw township, adjacent to border pillar No. 31 in Bangladesh, an area that demarcates the beginning of the land border between Bangladesh and Myanmar. Email and phone interviews with researchers working with an NGO, who wish to remain anonymous, 17 September 2017.

⁴⁶ A massive outflow of Rohingya people, nearly a quarter of a million, from northern Rakhine State, occurred in 1991 and 1992. Following widespread condemnation of Burma at the time by the Muslim world, Myanmar's armed forces emplaced a significant minefield along the entire length of its border with Bangladesh. Bangladeshi officials and humanitarian workers stated at the time that Burma's boundary minefield was laid for the purpose of deterring further flight out of the country by the Rohingya, and also to harass cross border movement by several Rohingya and Rakhine non-state armed groups active at that time. See, *Landmine Monitor 2000*, “[Burma Country Report](#).” In the early 1990s, several armed groups operated near the border, including the Rohingya Solidarity Organization, the

Atrocity/forced labor mine clearance

Landmine Monitor has found evidence that military forces in Myanmar have continued the practice of using civilians as ‘guides’ to walk in front of Tatmadaw units in mine-affected areas, effectively making them human mine sweepers. This is a grave violation of international humanitarian and human rights law.⁴⁷ Forced labor that compels people to take part in work directly related to a military operation is a violation of customary international humanitarian law, including in non-international armed conflicts.

In January 2020, a man from Kyaukphyu village, in Shan state’s Lashio township, was reportedly forced by the Tatmadaw to work as a guide and porter, and stepped on a landmine while carrying supplies for the military, losing his right leg.⁴⁸

In October 2019, a farmer from Apauk Wa village in Kyauktaw township, Rakhine state, was killed during an incident involving a mine after he was forced by the Tatmadaw to serve as a guide. His wife claims that when a landmine exploded the soldiers shot him in the subsequent chaos, however the military claimed he died in the blast.⁴⁹

The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) reported that Aung Lun, aged 45, from Paletwa township in southern Chin state was killed by a landmine while being forced to serve as a guide for Tatmadaw patrol from LIB 544 at the front line with the AA near the Bangladesh border on 25 February 2019.⁵⁰ Two other villagers who were also being forced to guide the Tatmadaw patrol were uninjured, however two soldiers in the patrol were also injured in the blast. The CHRO reported that the Tatmadaw offered US\$1,000 in compensation to the family of the victim, but said that the practice of the Tatmadaw using villagers as guides was increasing in the context of the Paletwa conflict.⁵¹

In July 2019, an official at the Union Minister Office for Defence stated to the Landmine Monitor that claims of forced labour by the Tatmadaw in mined areas are fabricated. He noted that the Tatmadaw has firm policies against forced labour in place. He stated that insurgents will hide their weapons and attempt to blend in with the local population, and if caught will say they are being taken for forced labour. He dismissed allegations that military units take local people as guides, stating that each military unit has GPS and knows the terrain better than locals.⁵²

In March 2020, the ICBL provided a submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on Myanmar at the 37th session of the UPR Working Group of the Human Rights Council. The submission contained reports, recorded by the Landmine Monitor, of the Myanmar military forcing civilians to guide military units and carry equipment for the military in areas where the danger of antipersonnel mines exists—on some occasions using civilians as human minesweepers.⁵³

Arakan Rohingya National Organization, the AA, and the Arakan Liberation Army. Further mine laying occurred in later years. See, Landmine Monitor, “Country Profile: Myanmar/Burma: Ban Policy,” for [2013](#), [2014](#), and [2015](#).

⁴⁷ Over the past two decades, Landmine Monitor has reported disturbing evidence that the Myanmar military has forced civilians to clear antipersonnel mines without training or protective equipment or forced civilians to guide or carry equipment for the Tatmadaw in mined areas. Such activities constitute a threat to the right to life, liberty, and security of person. During Myanmar’s first Universal Periodic Review of its human rights record, in 2011, the ICBL provided a [submission](#) detailing the use of human minesweepers.

⁴⁸ “[Landmine Injuries On the Rise in Northern Shan State](#),” *Network Media Group/Burma News International*, 30 January 2020.

⁴⁹ “[Farmer killed as he was forced to guide soldiers](#),” *Narinjara/Burma News International*, 21 October 2019.

⁵⁰ “[Civilian Injured by Landmine on Burma-India Border](#),” *Burma News International*, 19 March 2019.

⁵¹ Email to Landmine Monitor from Sang Hnin Lian, Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO), 17 April 2019.

⁵² Landmine Monitor meeting with U Min Htike Hein, Ministry of Defence, in Naypyitaw, 5 July 2019.

⁵³ Email from Diana Carolina Prado Mosquera, Advocacy and Campaigns Manager, ICBL, 23 March 2020.

Use by non-state armed groups

Many NSAGs have used antipersonnel mines in Myanmar since 1999. In late 2019 and early 2020, there were allegations of new use by the AA, the KNLA and likely other groups.⁵⁴

Frequently it is difficult to ascribe specific responsibility for an incident to a particular combatant group. For example, in August 2019, in northern Shan state, the Tatmadaw engaged in sustained armed conflict with three members of the Northern Alliance—the TNLA, Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), and the AA—near Maw Harn village in Kutkai township. Subsequently a resident of Maw Harn village was injured by a landmine. The villagers said there had been no landmines in the area prior to the conflict, but do not know which group was responsible.⁵⁵

Most allegations of new use were reported in Kayin, Rakhine, and Shan states:

- In late 2019, KNLA fighters emplaced mines in Hpapun Township of Kayin State to halt work on the controversial Hatgyi Dam on the Salween River, resulting in injury of a local villager in February 2020.⁵⁶
- In March–April 2020, the KNLA’s 3rd Company used mines in Hpapun Township of Kayin state during armed conflict with the Tatmadaw which led to the injury of a villager in May 2020.⁵⁷
- In July 2019, in Hpapun township of Kayin state, the Karen National Defence Organisation (KNDO) laid mines in Bu Ah Der village tract, reportedly to defend against attack by the Tatmadaw.⁵⁸
- In May 2019, in Hlaingbwe township of Kayin state, a DKBA officer from Meh Pru village tract ordered his soldiers to plant more landmines in seven nearby mountainous villages to protect their area.⁵⁹

In 2011, Myanmar’s government announced its intent to conclude peace agreements with NSAGs operating in the country. On 15 October 2015, eight ethnic armed groups signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) with the government, committing to “end planting of mines” and “cooperate on the process of clearing all landmines.” All the groups—two factions of the KNU, the Restoration Council for Shan State (RCSS), the Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), the Pa-O National Liberation Organization (PNLO), the All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF), the Chin National Front (CNF), and the DKBA—had previously used landmines.⁶⁰ In February 2018, the NMSP and the Lahu Democratic Union (LDU) joined the nationwide ceasefire accord, bringing the number of ethnic armed groups in the agreement to 10.⁶¹ In April

⁵⁴ There are also allegations of use by the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), the Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North (SSPP/SSA-N) and the Restoration Council Shan State/Shan State Army-South (RCSS/SSA-S) in their operations against Myanmar armed forces during the reporting period.

⁵⁵ “[Kutkai Villager ‘Seriously Injured’ by Landmine](#),” *Burma News International*, 20 September 2019.

⁵⁶ “Karen Human Rights Group Submission to Landmine Monitor,” August 2020, unpublished. The villager who was injured while hunting near the area stated he was aware of the verbal warnings issued by the KNLA prior to laying the landmines, but felt it was safe as he had been hunting in the area previously.

⁵⁷ “Karen Human Rights Group Submission to Landmine Monitor,” August 2020, unpublished. The villager who was injured while collecting thatch near the area stated he was aware that the KNLA had laid landmines but thought it was safe as he had collected thatch there before.

⁵⁸ “Karen Human Rights Group Submission to Landmine Monitor,” September 2019, unpublished.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ “[Peace Deal Signed](#),” *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 16 October 2015, p. 1. Each of the political organizations that signed the ceasefire agreement has an armed wing. The armed wing of the KNU factions is the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA); the armed wing of the RCSS is the Shan State Army-South (SSA-S); the armed wing of the ALP is the Arakan Liberation Army (ALA); the armed wing of the PNLO is the Pa-O National Liberation Army (PNLA); and the armed wing of the CNF is the Chin National Army (CNA). The other two groups listed have the same name as their armed organizations.

⁶¹ “[Two ethnic armed groups sign ceasefire agreement in Nay Pyi Taw](#),” *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 14 February 2018.

2019, Deputy Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung claimed that the prevalence of mines was a consequence of NSAGs that had failed to join the NCA.⁶²

In the past, some NSAGs and former NSAGs in Myanmar unilaterally renounced antipersonnel mine use by signing the Deed of Commitment administered by the Swiss non-government organization (NGO) Geneva Call.⁶³ The Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF) signed the Deed of Commitment in 2007 and its armed wing, the TNLA, has previously promised to refrain from mine use.⁶⁴ In June 2017, the TNLA denied allegations of new mine use and affirmed that the TNLA has not used landmines since signing the Deed of Commitment.⁶⁵

Responses to new landmine use

Previously, various Myanmar government officials have either admitted or denied that government forces are using antipersonnel landmines. In July 2019, an official at the Union Minister Office for Defence stated to the Monitor that “since the start of the civilian era, the Tatmadaw no longer use landmines” but qualified the comment by stating that in some instances, landmines may still be used. Specifically, he said:

“In border areas, if the number of Tatmadaw is small, they will lay mines around where they reside, but only if their numbers are small. Mines are also laid around infrastructure such as microwave towers. If these are near villages, we warn them. If there is a Tatmadaw camp in an area controlled by an ethnic armed group where they are sniped at and harassed, they will lay mines around the camp.”⁶⁶

Myanmar in 2018 had stated that “the Myanmar Armed Forces is no longer using the landmines while safeguarding the life and property of its people in internal conflicts.”⁶⁷ However, in June 2018, an official at the Union Minister Office for Defence told the Monitor that the Tatmadaw is still using antipersonnel landmines, but said the use is strictly for “self-defense” purposes and always “well-mapped.”⁶⁸

Myanmar’s NSAGs tend to blame government forces, or each other, for using antipersonnel mines.⁶⁹ However, the KIA defended its production and use of improvised landmines when Information Chief Colonel Naw Bu said in a January 2018 media interview that the KIA use antipersonnel mines “on paths approaching our frontline camps and around our headquarters.” He justified the use, stating, “We only plant mines in the conflict area and do not plant mines in places where civilians move.”⁷⁰

The use of landmines in Myanmar has been widely condemned.

⁶² Lei Lei, “[Landmines Strike 10 Civilians in a Single Town in Myanmar’s Shan State](#),” *The Irrawaddy*, 27 September 2019.

⁶³ In the past, a few armed groups and former armed groups, unilaterally renounced the use of antipersonnel mines by signing the Deed of Commitment administered by the Swiss NGO, Geneva Call. The Chin National Front/Chin National Army renounced use in July 2006. The Arakan Rohingya National Organization and the National United Party of Arakan, both now militarily defunct, renounced use in October 2003. The Lahu Democratic Front (LDF), Palaung State Liberation Army (PSLA), and Pa-O People’s Liberation Organization/Pa-O People’s Liberation Army (PPLO/A) renounced use in April 2007. In June 2010, Geneva Call noted that LDF and the PPLA had disbanded.

⁶⁴ Since 2014, Geneva Call has been pursuing inquiries about allegations of mine use made against the TNLA. See, Geneva Call, “[Burma/Myanmar: Geneva Call urges an end to mine use in northern Shan State](#),” 14 July 2016.

⁶⁵ Amnesty International, “[All the Civilians Suffer: Conflict, Displacement and abuse in Northern Myanmar](#),” 14 June 2017, p. 44.

⁶⁶ Landmine Monitor meeting with U Min Htike Hein, Ministry of Defence, in Naypyitaw, 5 July 2019.

⁶⁷ [Statement of Myanmar](#), Mine Ban Treaty Sixteenth Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 21 December 2017.

⁶⁸ Landmine Monitor meeting with U Min Htike Hein, Ministry of Defence, in Naypyitaw, 29 June 2018.

⁶⁹ Lawi Weng, “[3 Civilians Reportedly Killed by Landmines in Shan State in June](#),” *The Irrawaddy*, 8 July 2018.

⁷⁰ Nang Lwin Hnin Pwint, “[Mined areas increase to 11 Townships](#)” (translated from Burmese by the Monitor), *The Irrawaddy*, 13 January 2018.

In March 2020, the Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar called on the government of Myanmar and ethnic armed groups to immediately halt mine use, and for the government to join the Mine Ban Treaty.⁷¹

In June 2020, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict stated, "I am alarmed by the sharp increase in the number of incidents of killing and maiming, including by anti-personnel mines", and called attention to anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) as the second highest cause of child casualties in Myanmar. The Special Representative urged Myanmar to join the Mine Ban Treaty.⁷²

In August 2019, the Human Rights Council reported on how the presence of landmines has impeded the safe return of displaced persons in Kachin and Shan states.⁷³

On 1 March 2019, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet condemned the use of antipersonnel landmines in Myanmar by both the government forces and by NSAGs.⁷⁴

Bangladesh, a State Party to the Mine Ban Treaty, has regularly condemned the use of antipersonnel landmines by Myanmar (*see Ban Policy section*).⁷⁵ Previously, at the UN on 21 September 2017, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, stated, "We are horrified to see that the Myanmar authorities are laying landmines along their stretch of the border to prevent the Rohingya from returning to Myanmar."⁷⁶ There is no evidence to indicate that Bangladesh has laid antipersonnel mines on its side of the border. On 2 October 2017, during a high-level meeting between Bangladesh and Myanmar authorities, Bangladesh's Home Minister, Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, reportedly asked Myanmar's military to stop laying landmines along the border with Bangladesh. She told media that, "I raised the issue of planting land mines along the zero line. I clearly told the honorable minister that, according to international law, Myanmar cannot plant land mines along the border. This is illegal."⁷⁷

Impact of antipersonnel landmines

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar⁷⁸ is heavily mine-affected as a result of conflicts between the Tatmadaw (government forces) and numerous non-state armed groups (NSAGs) affiliated with ethnic minorities. Armed conflict in border regions has persisted since Myanmar's independence in 1948. Mined areas are located adjacent to borders with Bangladesh, China, India and Thailand. New mines continue to be laid by both the Tatmadaw and NSAGs. The full

⁷¹ UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), "[Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar](#)," A/HRC/43/59, 4 March 2020. The report recommended Myanmar "Immediately stop laying landmines; ratify the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction; clear mines and unexploded ordnance in accordance with international standards; mark and fence mine areas; and carry out systematic mine-risk and education activities."

⁷² UN, "[Children and armed conflict Report of the Secretary-General](#)," A/74/845-S/2020/525, 20 June 2020.

⁷³ Human Rights Council, "[Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar](#)," A/HRC/42/50, 8 August 2019.

⁷⁴ OHCHR, "[Mine Ban Convention – 20 years of protection. Celebrating 20 years since the Mine Ban Treaty entered into force](#)," transcript of a speech by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, Geneva, 1 March 2019.

⁷⁵ Bangladesh, "[Statement under Thematic Discussion on 'Conventional Weapons' in the First Committee of the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly on Wednesday, 18 October 2017](#)," New York, 18 October 2017.

⁷⁷ "[Stop Landmines, Airspace Violations, Bangladesh Minister told Myanmar Delegation](#)," *Radio Free Asia*, 5 October 2017.

⁷⁸ Myanmar is divided into states and regions. States are the designated home areas to some of Myanmar's larger ethnic minority groups. Other areas, which are not identified with a specific group, are referred to as administrative regions. The former military junta changed the country's name from Burma to Myanmar in 1989 and also changed the names of some states. Kayin state was previously known as Karen state, while the Bago region was previously known as the Pegu region. Many ethnic groups within the country still prefer to use the name Burma and the former state names. In this country profile, internal state and administrative region names are given in their current form.

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extent of contamination in Myanmar is unknown, but includes improvised landmines, and mines produced in state-owned factories. Contamination impedes the return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). A trend of increasing mine casualties in recent years has been reported by national stakeholders.

In February 2020, a national level meeting was held in Naypyidaw to discuss the formation of a national mine action authority and a national mine action center, which would be established under the oversight of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MoSWRR). The military has undertaken some mine clearance, but operations are not systematic or recorded. Humanitarian mine action operators began arriving in Myanmar from 2012, but are not permitted to clear mines.

Risk education is coordinated by the Mine Risk Working Group (MRWG), led by the Department of Rehabilitation and co-chaired with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). It comprises four state level coordination agencies in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin and Shan states, while in 2019 an agreement was reached to establish a coordination agency in Rakhine state. Risk education focuses on conflict-affected communities in ethnic territories, and particularly targets IDPs and refugees.

For a decade, from 1999–2009, assistance to mine/explosive remnants of war (ERW) survivors and persons with disabilities in Myanmar was marginal due to many years of neglect of healthcare services by the governing authorities. Myanmar's authorities did have a national victim assistance program or strategy. Awareness of the need for victim assistance has increased significantly since around 2012, initially as a result of activities by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In 2013, under an agreement with the government, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) started to support government-run rehabilitation centers, which had been operating without external support since 2007.

Since 2014, the number of victim assistance service providers has increased significantly. More than a dozen organizations, including government departments, the United Nations (UN), international and local NGOs, and community-based organizations are involved in efforts. Specific victim assistance centers were developed and prosthetic services built and improved, including through enhanced mobile services. Localized availability of community-based rehabilitation and vocational training also increased. Coordination improved with the introduction of the National Victim Assistance Technical Group (NVATG) as a sub-working group under the MRWG. Yet overall, essential services remain scarce, particularly for many people in remote rural areas.

Mine action coordination

National mine action management actors	The Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) state that they are responsible for mine clearance within the country
UN Agencies	UNICEF United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Mine action legislation	None
Mine action strategic and operational plans	No current strategy on mine action
Mine action standards	In process of finalizing the Myanmar National Mine Action Standard for clearance in October 2019 International operators currently follow International Mine Action Standards (IMAS)

Myanmar's former military government created a Mine Action Center under the former Myanmar Peace Center in 2013, but it was never fully staffed. Concluding a national ceasefire agreement with NSAGs was a government precondition for proceeding to survey and clearance.⁷⁹ With the change of government after the 2016 election, the Mine Action Center was dissolved. The new government made peace negotiations a priority, at which several participants emphasized the threat of mines and the need for clearance.⁸⁰ A national youth conference in May 2016 had also called on the Tatmadaw and NSAGs to remove landmines.⁸¹ Several civil society groups have also called for mine clearance in recent years.

In October 2019, Myanmar hosted an international workshop attended by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and the Norwegian Presidency to the Mine Ban Treaty to discuss the establishment of a national mine action authority to lead and manage a mine action program in Myanmar.⁸²

In February 2020, a national level meeting was held in Naypyidaw to discuss the formation of a national mine action authority, and a mine action center which would be established under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. The meeting also discussed the Ministry of Defence establishing state and regional level mine clearing groups.⁸³

As of September 2019, the government had not announced a clear strategy on mine action. In January 2018, the Union Joint Monitoring Committee (JMU-C) Secretary, Colonel Wunna Aung, had stated that mine clearance could not begin prior to the building of mutual trust between the government and NSAGs.⁸⁴ In May 2017, Colonel Aung stated that the Tatmadaw

⁷⁹ Roger Fasth and Pascal Simon, "[Mine Action in Myanmar](#)," *The Journal of ERW and Mine Action*, Vol. 19, Issue 2, July 2015.

⁸⁰ See, for example, "[Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong continues](#)," *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 2 September 2016. At the Union Peace Conference (UPC) in September 2016, Daw Wint Wah Tun of the National League for Democracy (NLD) said of her Shadaw township, in Kayah state, that "local people do not feel secure as landmine fields pose a threat to their way of life."

⁸¹ "[Youth Empowerment: Myanmar's young people want an active role in the running of their country](#)," *Mizzima Business Weekly*, 9 June 2016, p. 22.

⁸² Statement of Myanmar, Mine Ban Treaty Fourth Review Conference, Oslo, 25–29 November 2019.

⁸³ Khin Myat Myat Wai, "[Myanmar begins talk on landmine clearing program](#)," *Myanmar Times*, 3 February 2020.

⁸⁴ "[Standard operating procedures for commanders drafted at JMC-U](#)," *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 20 January 2018. Col. Wunna Aung said: "Both sides are still discussing conducting workshops on mines. The NCA includes mine clearance work. But mutual trust needs to be created first so it is still under discussion and mine clearance cannot be implemented yet."

would take the lead on landmine clearance but that international technological and material support would be accepted.⁸⁵

In August 2017, Myanmar's Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, held talks with New Zealand's ambassador regarding assistance between the two states' militaries and mine clearance operations.⁸⁶ The embassy of New Zealand has since funded a mine action coordinator whose primary role is to improve the effectiveness of the sector until a national mine action authority is established. The initiative is reported to be successful in providing a focus for developing procedures.⁸⁷

In October 2019, Myanmar stated that it is in the process of finalizing its National Mine Action Standard for the conduct of systematic mine clearance. Myanmar is working with countries in the region through the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM)-Plus Expert Working Group on Humanitarian Mine Action under the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC).⁸⁸

Since Myanmar does not currently have national mine action legislation or standards, demining organizations have followed IMAS and their own standard operating procedures.

International demining organizations started to arrive in Myanmar in 2012, but operations were not started until later. In 2018 and early 2019, six international demining organizations had offices in Yangon and some in provincial locations: DanChurchAid (DCA), the Danish Demining Group (DDG), The HALO Trust, Humanity & Inclusion (HI), Mines Advisory Group (MAG), and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). These international NGOs conducted risk education and community liaison activities, and community mapping of hazardous areas in some locations.

In 2020, Myanmar has seen a decrease in the number of organizations undertaking mine action. In August 2019, 16 organizations reported 21 mine action projects taking place in 85 townships. Six months later, in February 2020, this had decreased to 13 organizations reporting 13 mine action projects in 77 townships.⁸⁹

Currently all mine action actors retain their own survey results in the absence of a neutral national entity to store hazardous area data, which remains sensitive in view of continuing conflict.

Risk education management and coordination

Government focal points	Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement; Department of Rehabilitation
UN focal point	UNICEF
Coordination mechanisms	MRWG comprised of ministries, international, and national organizations and four state-level coordination agencies. The MRWG takes the lead on risk education and victim assistance
Risk education standards	In development

⁸⁵ Ye Khaung Nyunt, "[Second day of 10th Union Joint Monitoring Committee meeting in Yangon.](#)" *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 5 May 2017.

⁸⁶ "[Senior General meets New Zealand Ambassador.](#)" *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 27 August 2017.

⁸⁷ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Geoff Moynan, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 27 April 2020.

⁸⁸ [Statement of Myanmar](#), UN General Assembly (UNGA) First Committee, Thematic Discussion on Conventional Weapons, New York, 25 October 2019.

⁸⁹ Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU), "[The MIMU 3W: Who does What, Where.](#)" August 2019 and February 2020.

The Department of Rehabilitation in the MoSWRR, leads the MRWG, co-chaired with UNICEF, which is comprised of 10 ministries, 41 international and national organizations, and four state-level coordination agencies (in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, and Shan states).⁹⁰ The group met quarterly in 2019 in Naypyidaw and at state-level. It focuses on risk education with a sub-working group on victim assistance. Topics include humanitarian needs, victim data, recent trends and development, coordination among mine action organizations, and other updates within the humanitarian mine action sector. Data on risk education session delivery is also shared.

In 2019, the MoSWRR endorsed a decision to open a new state-level MRWG in Rakhine state, including a Victim Assistance Technical Group.⁹¹

An MRWG Strategic Workplan for 2020–2021 is being developed, including objectives for victim assistance.⁹²

There is no comprehensive information management system in Myanmar. The MRWG provides mine/ERW incident data every quarter. The data is collected through UNICEF and the MoSWRR networks, mine action operators' databases and from the general administration department and the police.⁹³ However, the data is far from complete and it is recognized that many mine accidents remain unreported because there is no national accident surveillance system in place and limited healthcare facilities in some remote areas.⁹⁴ UNHCR, as the lead for mine action, also keeps a database which all mine action organizations in Myanmar contribute to.⁹⁵

A workshop held in Naypyidaw in 2019 initiated a discussion on victim data and management to continue advocacy efforts towards a national standardized system.⁹⁶

There are currently no risk education standards, but the mine action sector has been invited to help the government draft standards.⁹⁷

Victim assistance management and coordination

Government focal points	MoSWRR, Department of Social Welfare and Persons with Disabilities
Coordination mechanisms	<p>The Department of Rehabilitation in the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, and UNICEF, continued to co-chair the MRWG, which is responsible for victim assistance and other mine action pillars.</p> <p>The NVATG, coordinated by HI, gathers national and international victim assistance actors under the umbrella of the MRWG.</p>

⁹⁰ UNICEF, "[Landmines and explosive remnants of war threaten children and communities across Myanmar](#)," 4 April 2018.

⁹¹ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Fabrice Vandeputte, Regional Programme Director, HI, 14 May 2020.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bishu Mahat, ICRC Myanmar, 15 May 2020.

⁹⁴ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bekim Shala, Country Programme Manager, MAG, 25 May 2020.

⁹⁵ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Geoff Moynan, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 27 April 2020.

⁹⁶ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Fabrice Vandeputte, Regional Programme Director, HI, 14 May 2020.

⁹⁷ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bekim Shala, Country Programme Manager, MAG, 25 May 2020.

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Coordination regularity and outcomes	In 2019, NVATG meetings were held in Yangon, and one victim assistance fund workshop was held in Naypyidaw. Quarterly victim assistance meetings were held in the framework of the MRWG in Kachin, Kayah and Kayin states. ⁹⁸ Organizations of persons with disabilities are taking part in the NVATG and work with the partners on achieving objectives. The Myanmar Federation of Persons with Disabilities (MFPD) is also part of the group but is not actively joining the meetings on a regular basis.
Plans/strategies	Victim assistance objectives are being included in the MRWG workplan 2020–2021. The development of the national strategic plan for the rights of persons with disabilities is being developed under the leadership of a working committee with the support of eight subcommittees, headed by the key social departments and with the participation of representatives from government, organizations of persons with disabilities, and other NGOs. In April 2019, the MoSWRR held a planning meeting and drafted a national strategy in accordance with Myanmar’s obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). ⁹⁹
Disability sector integration	A representative of the MoSWRR reported that Myanmar was taking an integrated approach towards victim assistance, based on the CRPD, in its national disability law and national social protection strategy. ¹⁰⁰
Survivor inclusion and participation	No direct representation of mine/ERW victims, but survivors belong to broader disabled persons organizations that participate in various coordination roles. Although landmines and armed violence increase the numbers of people with disabilities, they tend not to be among those people consulted by policymakers and decision-makers. ¹⁰¹

In June 2015, Myanmar enacted the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law.¹⁰² In July 2018, the MoSWRR released the publication of the rules and regulations for the 2015 law.¹⁰³

In 2014, Myanmar launched a National Social Protection Strategic Plan through the MoSWRR to provide an allowance to all persons certified with a disability.¹⁰⁴ In 2017, and again in 2019, the government announced to the media that it would be disbursing a monthly allowance to persons with disabilities in nine townships across four states as a pilot program with a view to

⁹⁸ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Fabrice Vandeputte, Regional Programme Director, HI, 14 May 2020.

⁹⁹ “[Myanmar drafts national strategy for disabled](#),” *Xinhua*, 4 April 2019.

¹⁰⁰ GICHD, “[Myanmar: Victim Assistance & Mine Risk Education](#),” 17 February 2015. Presentation by Dr. San San Aye, Deputy Director General of the Department of Social Welfare, MoSWRR, at Meeting of National Mine Action Programme Directors, in Geneva, 17 February 2015.

¹⁰¹ International Alert Myanmar and Kachinland Research Centre, “[Conflict impacts on gender and masculinities expectations on people with disabilities in Kachin state: A rapid assessment](#),” December 2018.

¹⁰² Myanmar Law Library, “[Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law No. 30/2015 - Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#),” 2015.

¹⁰³ “[After delay, Disability Rights rules and regulations published](#),” *The Myanmar Times*, 13 July 2018.

¹⁰⁴ The allowance will not be available until the 2015 disability rights law is enacted and a certification process is established by the government. Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, “[Myanmar National Social Protection Strategic Plan](#),” December 2014, p. 53.

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eventual nationwide coverage.¹⁰⁵ In February 2020, a national level meeting was held in Naypyidaw to discuss the formation of a national mine action authority. The report of the meeting stated that the MoSWRR would provide K200,000 (US\$137) and prosthetic limbs for each victim of landmine explosions.¹⁰⁶ Between September 2019 and August 2020, the fund was budgeted for 600 victims.¹⁰⁷

Military veterans with disabilities received benefits on a priority basis, usually a civil service job at equivalent pay. Official assistance to non-military persons with disabilities in principle included two-thirds of pay for up to one year for a temporary disability and a tax free stipend for permanent disability. The amount of additional medical pension for veterans with permanent disabilities is determined by an injury severity scale used by the Ministry of Defense. There are believed to be dozens of army-built community settlements where disabled veterans and their families receive free housing. However, ordinary soldiers with disabilities are often located in remote areas and lack job opportunities or ways of finding extra income.¹⁰⁸

A disability certification and registration process is now being rolled out by the MoSWRR, and is being piloted in two states under the Department of Rehabilitation. People with disabilities will be registered through a nationwide system and will receive a disability card, including classification based on the severity of the disability. It is anticipated that this will create an opportunity for better identification of people with disabilities, greater advocacy for their rights, and the possibility of the provision of social protection funds in the future.¹⁰⁹

In 2019, the ICRC, together with the World Health Organization (WHO), worked with the Ministry of Health to develop a draft strategic plan aimed at strengthening the national rehabilitation sector and making preparations for setting up a steering committee to guide this work.¹¹⁰

A decision was made to develop national victim assistance standards, translated to Burmese from the IMAS victim assistance standards.¹¹¹

Contamination

Landmines	Extent of contamination: Unknown. Includes improvised mines New mine contamination in 2018 and 2019
Cluster munition remnants	No known cluster munition contamination
Other ERW contamination	Extent unknown

Note: ERW=Explosive Remnants of War.

¹⁰⁵ Monthly assistance payments of K16,000 to K30,000, depending on circumstances. A disabled child will get K16,000 per month and a disabled adult up to 64 years old will get K30,000. The project pilot areas are the East Dagon township of Yangon region, Patheingyi and Kangyi Taung townships of the Ayeyarwaddy region, Monywa, Ayeyarwady and Chaung Oo townships of Sagaing region, and Thabon and Paung townships of Mon state. See, “[Pilot project to register disabled people for welfare](#),” *The Myanmar Times*, 1 February 2019; and Htoo Thant, “[Government to start disability payments](#),” *Myanmar Times*, 16 November 2017.

¹⁰⁶ Khin Myat Myat Wai, “[Myanmar begins talk on landmine-clearing program](#),” *The Myanmar Times*, 3 February 2020.

¹⁰⁷ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Fabrice Vandeputte, Regional Programme Director, HI, 14 May 2020.

¹⁰⁸ Gerard McCarthy, “[Veterans’ Affairs in Myanmar’s Reform Process](#),” Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) Perspective Series, No. 78, 5 December 2018; and Htet Khaung Linn, “[On society’s fringes, disabled Tatmadaw veterans languish in poverty](#),” *Myanmar Now*, 11 October 2016.

¹⁰⁹ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Fabrice Vandeputte, Regional Programme Director, HI, 14 May 2020.

¹¹⁰ ICRC, “[ICRC Annual Report 2019](#),” Geneva, 29 June 2020, p. 350.

¹¹¹ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Fabrice Vandeputte, Regional Programme Director, HI, 14 May 2020.

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Some 90 townships (out of a total of 325), in 10 states and regions, are believed to suffer from some degree of mine contamination; primarily antipersonnel landmines. During the past year, contamination has increased in Rakhine state, and in the north. Shan and Kachin states are considered heavily contaminated. Previously, Kayin state and the Bago region were among those with the heaviest mine contamination and highest number of recorded victims.¹¹²

A UN Fact-Finding Mission reported in September 2018 that “despite the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) in October 2015, which committed all signatories to end the use of landmines and cooperate on mine-clearance operations, new landmines continue to be laid.”¹¹³ It cited credible reports that the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed groups had laid landmines and observed that “Tatmadaw soldiers lay landmines in villages they have attacked or after civilians have fled, or on roads frequently used by civilians.”¹¹⁴

New contamination was recorded in 2018 and 2019 in central Rakhine state in several townships previously unknown to suffer contamination by landmines. Other accounts of new contamination due to continuing use by the Tatmadaw and NSAGs in Myanmar were reported throughout 2018 and the first half of 2019. (*See Myanmar Mine Ban Policy profile*).

No formal estimate exists of the extent of landmine contamination in Myanmar but credible reports of mine contamination, casualties or suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) have been reported in the following states and townships:

State/region	Mine-contaminated townships
Kayah state	All seven townships
Kayin state	All seven townships
Kachin state	Bhamo, Chipwi, Hpakant, Injangyang, Mansi, Mogaung, Mohnyin, Momauk, Myitkyina, Shwegu, Sumprabum, Tanai, Tsawlaw, and Waingmaw
Mon state	Bilin, Kyaikto, Mawlamyine, Thanbyuzayat, Thaton, and Ye
Bago region	Kyaukkyi, Shwekyin, Tantabin, and Taungoo
Rakhine state	Ann, Buthidaung, Kyaukphyu, Kyauktaw, Maungdaw, Minbya, Mrauk-U, Myebon, Ponnagyun, Rathedaung and Toungup
Shan state	Hopong, Hsenwi, Hsihseng, Hsipaw, Kengtung, Konkyan, Kutkai, Kyethi, Kyaukme, Langkho, Lashio, Laukkaing, Lawksaw, Loilen, Manton, Mawmai, Mongmit, Mongshu, Mongpan, Mongton, Monghpyak, Mongyai, Muse, Namhsan, Tachileik, Namtu, Nanhkan, Nawngkhio, Pangsang, Tangyan, and Ywangan
Tanintharyi region	Bokpyin, Dawei, Myiek, Tanintharyi, Thayetchaung, and Yebyu
Chin state	Paletwa
Sagaing region	Indaw, Kalewa, Lay Shi

¹¹² Research by Landmine Monitor. Data sources included casualty information, sightings of mine warnings, and reports by NGOs and other organizations of use, as well as interviews with field staff and armed forces personnel. The survey included casualty data from January 2007 through December 2018 and data from other informants from January 2008 through October 2019.

¹¹³ UN, “[Report of the detailed findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar](#),” A/HRC/39/CRP.2, 17 September 2018, p. 95.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p. 95.

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Some contamination is from mines produced by state owned factories. Ka Pa Sa (Defense Products Industries of Myanmar) produce at least five types of antipersonnel landmines, including domestic versions of PMN, POMZ and M-14 type mines. (See *Myanmar Mine Ban Policy section*).

Landmine contamination in Myanmar is frequently cited as a barrier to the return of refugees and internally displaced people. In Kachin state in 2018, IDPs identified landmines as one of the three top obstacles to return to their areas of origin.¹¹⁵ In November 2019, the government launched a “National Strategy on Resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons and Closure of IDP Camps.” While the draft document made no mention of the need to clear landmines,¹¹⁶ at the fourth Mine Ban Treaty review conference in Oslo in November 2019, Myanmar stated that it aimed to start humanitarian demining operations in non-conflict areas as part of the camp closure strategy, and acknowledged that mine action is a precondition for the safe return and resettlement of IDPs.¹¹⁷

In January 2019, the Tatmadaw removed landmines from Nam San Yang village in Kachin state, to allow the return of people displaced by previous armed conflict.¹¹⁸

Myanmar is also affected by ERW, including mortars, grenades, artillery, and air-dropped bombs. Periodic reports appear of ordnance dating to World War II.¹¹⁹ New ERW contamination has been reported in relation to armed conflict in late 2018 and early 2019 in Kachin state.¹²⁰

Casualties

Casualties		
All known casualties by end 2019	The total number of casualties in Myanmar is unknown. The Monitor has recorded 4,981 total mine/ERW casualties (705 killed; 4,158 injured; 118 unknown) up to the end of 2019	
Casualties in 2019 ¹²¹		
Annual total	358	Decrease from 430 in 2018
Survival outcome	89 killed; 269 injured	
Device type causing casualties	295 antipersonnel mines; 5 improvised antipersonnel mines (victim-activated improvised explosive devices, IEDs); nine unspecified mine types; nine undifferentiated mines/ERW, 40 ERW	
Civilian status	335 civilians; 12 Tatmadaw; 11 unknown	
Age and gender	At least 256 male (including at least 33 boys)	At least 55 female (including at least 11 girls)

¹¹⁵ MIMU, “[Durable Peace Programme: Endline Report](#),” May 2018. The Durable Peace Programme is a consortium of seven local and international organizations serving the war-affected population of Kachin State.

¹¹⁶ The Republic of the Union of Myanmar, MoSWRR, Department of Disaster Management, “National Strategy on Closure of IDP Camps” (draft), undated.

¹¹⁷ Statement of Myanmar, Mine Ban Treaty Fourth Review Conference, Oslo, 25–29 November 2019.

¹¹⁸ Ye Mon, “[An unhappy return for IDPs in Kachin State](#),” *Frontier Myanmar*, 22 August 2019.

¹¹⁹ See, for example, “[Unexploded WWII bombs discovered at central Myanmar sports ground](#),” *Coconuts Yangon*, 30 September 2015; and Nay Thwin, “[World War II ordnance kills three](#),” *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 20 March 2012.

¹²⁰ See, for example, this report on an unexploded aerial bomb allegedly from armed conflict in Kachin state in May 2018. Free Burma Rangers, “[Rangers Help Vulnerable Civilians in Kachin State](#),” 8 December 2018.

¹²¹ Unless noted otherwise, the Monitor casualty data for 2018 is from a combined dataset of published and unpublished sources.

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In 2019, there were at least 358 mine/ERW casualties in Myanmar based on information provided by NGOs, UN agencies, the ICRC and other organizations, as well as by state and independent media reports. Although this marked an overall decrease from the annual casualty total for 2018, the number of fatalities was recorded as having increased to 89 in 2019 from 79 the previous year.

The majority of casualties in 2019 (149) were recorded in Shan state, followed by Rakhine state (119), and Kachin state (51).

Despite the presence of a number of mine action actors and although coverage of victim assistance programs increased, no national systematic collection of casualty data occurred. Due to the lack of an official data collection mechanism, the absence of any basic reporting format or means of sharing data, and the varying sources of annual data available to the Monitor, reporting is believed not to reflect the full extent of mine/ERW incidents and casualties in the country.

Media reporting indicates a trend of increasing casualty numbers in recent years. In August 2019, the Department of Rehabilitation in the MoSWRR stated that the number of landmine casualties in Myanmar is increasing yearly: “According to the records of [ARMAC] member countries, social media, and concerned organizations in rural areas, the number of mine casualties has increased yearly. Also, we’ve seen that the rate of disability is increasing.”¹²² On 4 April 2019, Myanmar media stated that although many incidents still go unreported, the MRWG reported mine/ERW casualties had increased from 176 in 2017 to 276 in 2018.¹²³ Differences in the total annual casualty figures given by the MRWG and the Monitor are attributable to the fact that the MRWG seeks to have a general figure available in a shorter timeframe to inform its activities. The Monitor compiles its data over a longer period and its estimates can be considered an amended figure when released at the end of the following calendar year. Neither tally can be considered comprehensive, but each provides the best-known estimates from public sources in light of the lack of any official data.

A study in 2018 found that many IDPs with disabilities in NSAG-controlled areas appeared to have impairments due to mines and conflict-related violence. However, in government-controlled areas, “most” of the persons with disabilities reported that their disabilities were congenital or due to accidents. The study proposed that this may be due to “perceptions that stepping on a landmine can incur charges for ‘destruction of government property’, adding further problems for [persons with disabilities]. This acts as an incentive for landmine victims to blame traffic or other accidents for their disabilities, potentially distorting numbers.”¹²⁴

The number of Tatmadaw and other combatant casualties remains unknown, but is believed to be substantial. A Ministry of Defense official told the Monitor that landmines were the chief cause of death and injury for Tatmadaw troops over any other cause, yet added that if he revealed the figure “it would give a psychological weapon to our enemies.”¹²⁵ Past Monitor reporting indicates that there are a significant number of military casualties, but military records remain unavailable to the public.¹²⁶

¹²² Myat Thura, “[Official warns of rising landmine casualties](#),” *Myanmar Times*, 14 August 2019.

¹²³ UNICEF, “[One out of four casualties of landmine incidents in Myanmar are children](#),” 4 April 2019.

¹²⁴ International Alert, “[Conflict impacts on gender and masculinities expectations on people with disabilities in Kachin state: A rapid assessment](#),” December 2018, pp. 14–15.

¹²⁵ Landmine Monitor meeting with Col. Min Htike Hein, Deputy Permanent Secretary for the Minister of Defense, Ministry of Defense, Naypyidaw, 29 June 2018.

¹²⁶ See, ICBL, [Landmine Monitor Report 2009: Toward a Mine-Free World](#), (Ottawa: Mines Action Canada, October 2009). Unprecedented levels of information on Tatmadaw casualties were received in 2008 from the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) military-led government, when 508 Tatmadaw casualties were identified. Information from this source has not been made available for any other year.

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The total number of casualties in Myanmar is unknown. The Monitor has recorded annual casualty figures of 4,981 mine/ERW casualties (705 killed; 4,158 injured; 118 unknown) between 2000 and the end of 2019.

Clearance operators

National	International (non technical survey)
Tatmadaw engineers	DDG MAG The HALO Trust

Clearance in 2019	The Tatmadaw conducted some mine clearance but operations currently use unknown standards. The amount of land cleared in 2019, and the number of antipersonnel mines destroyed, is not reported.
Progress	Myanmar is part of the ADMM-Plus Expert Working Group on Humanitarian Mine Action under the ARMAC. No mine clearance is permitted by NGOs. Limited non-technical survey has been permitted since 2016.

Survey

In July 2020, the Landmine Monitor and the Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU) produced a country map of townships with SHAs and an infographic on the impact of mine use in Myanmar.¹²⁷

Some international mine action actors were authorized to conduct non-technical survey in some locations beginning in 2016. Non-technical survey by MAG, DDG, DCA and The HALO Trust continued in 2018 and 2019. They have so far been unable to carry out surveys across an entire state, which would enable them to determine a baseline level of contamination.

In January 2020, the mine action sector gained permission to deploy technical teams to commence marking and fencing operations in accordance with IMAS.¹²⁸ The Department of Rehabilitation has asked the mine action sector to prioritize technical survey, marking and fencing of areas identified for returns and resettlement of IDPs in Kachin state.¹²⁹

The HALO Trust reported undertaking non-technical survey in Tahndaunggyi and Hlaingbwe townships in Kayin state, and in Lashio, Muse, Kutkai and Kyaukme townships in Shan state. Forty-nine SHAs were identified in 2019, and a further nine up to March 2020. The HALO Trust also marked 16 SHAs with danger signs, while a further seven SHAs were marked in the period up to March 2020.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ MIMU, “Townships with Suspected Landmine Contamination (2019) and Casualties in Myanmar (Jan-Dec2019)”, 2020. The infographic provides an 11-year overview of data from the Landmine Monitor (2007–2017). The infographic was also made available in [Burmese language](#). MIMU reported to the Landmine Monitor that the landmine infographic has been one of their most requested products.

¹²⁸ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bekim Shala, Country Programme Manager, MAG, 25 May 2020.

¹²⁹ Durable Peace Programme, “[Mine Risks in IDP Return and Resettlement Sites in Kachin State: Baseline Survey Results from DPP-MAG Joint Deployments](#),” briefing paper, June 2020.

¹³⁰ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Geoff Moynan, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 27 April 2020.

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In 2019, MAG undertook non-technical survey in 36 townships and village tracts.¹³¹ MAG had not commenced marking operations in Myanmar but planned in 2020 to commence such activities when COVID-19 restrictions had been lifted and additional funding sourced.

In June 2020, MAG, working under the auspices of the Durable Peace Program, conducted a baseline survey of 59 village resettlement sites in Kachin state. Of the villages surveyed, 70% reported direct evidence of contamination and a further 20% reported indirect evidence. The target villages were selected because they were identified by the Myanmar government and/or by local humanitarian actors as potential sites for IDP return and resettlement.¹³²

HI did not conduct non-technical survey in 2019 or in early 2020, although planned to start survey from September 2020.¹³³

Clearance

In July 2019, a representative of the Ministry of Defense stated to the Landmine Monitor that the Tatmadaw is clearing mines because it is their duty. He stated that military personnel are sent to the frontlines for five to six months, and are sent to military schools, where among other things, they learn to clear mines. He added, “We clear mines around the villages, and the villagers thank us for saving them from the mines planted by the Ethnic Armed Organizations.” In 2018 there was little conflict and the Tatmadaw could move freely due to the ceasefire and carry out more demining activities.¹³⁴

In October 2018, Myanmar stated that the military together with several NSAG signatories of the NCA, had engaged in humanitarian demining in Kayin state, and that since 2011 more than 36,000 landmines and ERW were cleared.¹³⁵ State media report military clearance during armed conflict periodically.¹³⁶

In January 2019, the military announced localized mine clearance in advance of resettlement of some families in Nam San Yang village, Wiangmaw township, Kachin State.¹³⁷ Landmine Monitor previously reported that mines had been laid in this area by the Tatmadaw in September 2018. A November 2019 assessment in Nam San Yang by a Kachin-based NGO found that the “Tatmadaw has provided some demining services by clearing household compounds with a bulldozer, this service has been provided only to those who have household registration certificates... landmines is a major risk for people returning to Nam San Yang and has resulted on large areas of the surrounding farmland being designated as restricted areas.”¹³⁸ However,

¹³¹ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bekim Shala, Country Programme Manager, MAG, 25 May 2020.

¹³² Durable Peace Programme, “[Mine Risks in IDP Return and Resettlement Sites in Kachin State: Baseline Survey Results from DPP-MAG Joint Deployments](#),” briefing paper, June 2020.

¹³³ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Fabrice Vandeputte, Regional Programme Director, HI, 14 May 2020.

¹³⁴ Landmine Monitor meeting with U Min Htike Hein, Assistant Secretary, Union Minister Office for Defence, Ministry of Defence, Naypyidaw, 5 July 2019.

¹³⁵ [Statement of Myanmar](#), UNGA First Committee, Thematic Discussion on Conventional Weapons, New York, 25 October 2019.

¹³⁶ See, for example, “[Tatmadaw column captures AA member dead after landmine attack](#),” *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 11 May 2019, p. 11.

¹³⁷ “[Seventeen Kachin IDP Families Return Home](#),” *Kachin News Group/Burma News International*, 4 February 2019.

¹³⁸ Dan Seng Lawn, “[Safe and Dignified Returns? A Rapid Assessment of the Experiences of Returned Internally Displaced Persons in Nam San Yang Village, Kachin State, Myanmar](#),” USAID/Kachinland Research Centre, 12 December 2019.

since resettlement of the initial families, some mine casualties have occurred in Nam San Yang.¹³⁹

In March 2020, villagers in Nam San Yang complained that landmines remain a prominent threat in the area where they now live.¹⁴⁰ In July 2020, the Tatmadaw returned to the area and removed mines from 100 acres of farmland.¹⁴¹ In August 2020, Tatmadaw spokesperson Brigadier-General Zaw Min Tun told a journalist in Myanmar that the Nam San Yang return had been a success and that the military planned to expand its IDP return activities and would assist with transportation and landmine clearance operations.¹⁴² In May 2018, in Kachin state, people in IDP camps identified landmines as one of the three top obstacles to return to their areas of origin, according to the Durable Peace Programme Consortium report.¹⁴³

In a high-level meeting to discuss border security issues in January 2020, Bangladesh again raised its concerns regarding mines laid and the resulting casualties on the Myanmar side of their shared border. Bangladeshi officials requested Myanmar's authorities to remove all mines to prevent any further casualties. At the conclusion of the meeting, Brigadier General Myoe Than of the Myanmar Police Force, who led the eight-member delegation from Myanmar, alleged, *"There are a number of insurgent groups along the shared border. The IEDs might be planted by those groups, not by the Myanmar troops."* Director General Major General Md Shafeenul Islam, who headed the 14-member Bangladeshi delegation, stated that IEDs or landmines are dangerous for the border troops of both countries. He added that border roads will be constructed along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border and said that the *'Myanmar representative team has assured that the IEDs will be removed before the construction of the roads.'*¹⁴⁴

In January 2020, the Tatmadaw closed an IDP camp in Myebon township, Rakhine state, to clear landmines in the area. A statement reportedly issued by the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, stated that the military had asked camp residents to leave to prevent them from being injured by landmines, and that they had already deactivated a mine 20 meters from the camp. Camp officials stated that Tatmadaw soldiers then torched temporary shelters at the camp, causing about 400 of the 500 people living there to flee in fear. The camp administrator said the soldiers *"told us they didn't want to see us there the next morning, and not to blame them if something happened to us."*¹⁴⁵ It is not known if any further mine clearance occurred near the site.

Humanitarian mine action organizations have not been permitted to conduct clearance by either the government or ethnic minority authorities, and this remains the case as of April 2020.

In December 2019, the Free Burma Rangers (FBR), who provide medical assistance to people in war-affected communities, graduated 99 new recruits with Relief Team Training, which includes, among other skills, emergency mine removal at their training camp in Kayin

¹³⁹ ["More Than One Year After IDPs Return to Nam San Yang, Burma Army Removes Landmines From Their Farmland,"](#) *Kachinland News*, 3 August 2020.

¹⁴⁰ ["Returned IDPs Demand Landmines Be Removed From Nam San Yang,"](#) *Kachin News Group/Burma News International*, 25 March 2020.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.; See also, ["More Than One Year After IDPs Return to Nam San Yang, Burma Army Removes Landmines From Their Farmland,"](#) *Kachinland News*, 3 August 2020.

¹⁴² Ye Mon, ["An unhappy return for IDPs in Kachin State,"](#) *Frontier Myanmar*, 22 August 2020.

¹⁴³ MIMU, ["Durable Peace Programme: Endline Report,"](#) May 2018. The Durable Peace Programme is a consortium of seven local and international organizations serving the war-affected population of Kachin State.

¹⁴⁴ Muktadir Rashid, ["Landmine, Yaba issues on agenda,"](#) *New Age*, 3 January 2020; ["Border Crimes in Focus,"](#) *New Age*, 6 January 2020; and ["Remove all IEDs, landmines along the border,"](#) *Daily Star*, 9 January 2020.

¹⁴⁵ Khin Myat Myat Wai, ["Myebon camp in Rakhine closed for landmine clearance, Tatmadaw says,"](#) *Myanmar Times*, 29 January 2020.

state.¹⁴⁶ The FBR provide medical and food assistance to people fleeing or injured by armed conflict, including mine victims, and provided such assistance in Rakhine state in December 2019 after fighting between the Tatmadaw and the Arakan Army.¹⁴⁷ Eight of their relief teams reported encountering landmines while undertaking their activities in Kayin, Shan, Kachin, Chin and Rakhine states.

Deminer safety

An incident that occurred during military training in landmine safety, in May 2019, resulted in 11 casualties. It was reported that the incident took place during a training session organized to teach police officers in the Mandalay region about landmine safety, detection and the different types of mines. A media report stated that as a part of the training, a police sergeant was supposed to step on a sample M14 plastic landmine while other trainees disarmed the landmine and save him. Brigadier-General Zaw Min Tun, spokesperson of the Tatmadaw's True News Information Team, stated that the training was conducted by a technician from the military, explaining "We heard that the trainer mistakenly brought a real landmine with the training sample landmines and that a trainee stepped on it and it exploded." He said, "normally, real landmines and samples are differentiated by color, however there can be mistakes. We are doing further investigations on this incident."¹⁴⁸

In January 2020, the battalion commander of Tatmadaw Light Infantry Battalion 708 was killed while attempting to remove an antivehicle mine laid by the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) in Hpapun township, Kayin state.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ FBR, "[FBR: US Congressman Attends Graduation of 141 Rangers at Tha U Wah Training Camp](#)," 31 December 2019.

¹⁴⁷ FBR, "[Rangers Document Human Rights Abuses and Help Civilians Caught in Conflict in Arakan State](#)," 26 December 2019.

¹⁴⁸ "[Mandalay Police Officer Seriously Injured in Landmine Training](#)," *The Irrawaddy*, 21 May 2019.

¹⁴⁹ "Karen Human Rights Group Submission to Landmine Monitor," August 2020, unpublished.

Risk Education

Name of organization	Type of activity
Government	
Department of Education	Listed as providing risk education in Kayin state. ¹⁵⁰
National NGOs	
The Committee of Internally Displaced Karen People and the Karen Teachers Working Group	A cross-border organization established in 1998 to raise awareness of the plight of internally displaced Karen/Kayin people. Provides risk education in addition to other humanitarian assistance and advocacy. ¹⁵¹
Karen Development Network	Community-based risk education.
The Karenni Social Welfare and Development Center	Founded in 1996 in response to the impact of conflict on the lives of Karenni people. Founded the Karenni Mine Risk Education Group in 2006 which provides risk education and assistance, and also collects victim data. ¹⁵²
Local Development Network	Community-based risk education.
Ta'ang Students and Youth Union	Trains Ta'ang youth in issues including human rights awareness, democracy, women's rights, democratic leadership, data collection, land confiscation, health and education. ¹⁵³
Nyein (Shalom) Foundation	Nyein Foundation has been active in the peace-building process and peace education. ¹⁵⁴
Wunpawng Ninghtoi	Founded by Kachin-based churches, community-based committees and local NGOs in June 2011, Wunpawng Ninghtoi implements activities and projects to protect and assist IDPs who escaped conflict. Activities in addition to mine risk education include child protection, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) related matters, emergency education and women's income generation. ¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ MIMU, "[Myanmar, Who/What/Where, Mine Action](#)," 23 August 2020.

¹⁵¹ Land Portal, "[Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People](#)," undated.

¹⁵² See, [Karenni Social Welfare and Development Center](#) website.

¹⁵³ Durable Peace Programme, "[Ta-ang Student Youth Union \(TSYU\)](#)," undated.

¹⁵⁴ Durable Peace Programme, "[Nyein \(Shalom Foundation\)](#)," undated.

¹⁵⁵ Durable Peace Programme, "[Wunpawng Ninghtoi \(WPN\)](#)," undated.

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Myanmar Heart Development Organization (MHDO)	MHDO was founded in June 2006 by eight volunteers.
Red Cross: Myanmar Red Cross Society	Community-based risk education.
International NGOs	
DanChurchAid (DCA)/Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)	As part of a program to address natural disasters and the impacts of conflict, DCA/NCA builds safer communities through risk education. ¹⁵⁶ Works in the Bago region, as well as in Chin, Kayah, Kayin, Mon, and Shan states.
Danish Refugee Council (DRC)/Danish Demining Group (DDG)	DRC/DDG operates mine risk education teams. It plans to complement its non-technical survey work in Kayah and Shan states with risk education. ¹⁵⁷ Works in Kachin, Kayah and northern Shan states.
The HALO Trust	Works in Kachin, Kayin and northern Shan states with partners Never end Tomorrow (NET), an ethnic Kachin organization, and South Shan Youth Capacity Building Centre (SSYCBC), an ethnic Shan organization. The Halo Trust has trained 750 community implementers in mine risk education and first aid.
Humanity & Inclusion (HI)	Training of protection and education implementing partners in Kachin state. ¹⁵⁸ Also works in eastern parts of the Bago region, and Kayin state.
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	The ICRC provides emergency risk education to prevent immediate casualties through short-term interventions; community-based risk education through Myanmar Red Cross Society volunteers; and risk education in schools. The ICRC also provides risk education training to community volunteers, and risk awareness sessions for other humanitarian organizations. ¹⁵⁹
Johanniter International Assistance (JOIN)	JOIN provides risk education through partners as part of broader assistance focusing on WASH related matters, nutrition, health, and disaster preparedness. ¹⁶⁰
Mines Advisory Group (MAG)	Mine risk education is an integrated part of MAG's community liaison activities in villages and IDP camps, delivered by teams of two community liaison officers. MAG had three implementing partners in 2019–2020 and was contracted by the Durable Peace Programme to deliver mine risk education capacity support to 14 local organizations. MAG works in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, and northern and southern Shan states, and in the Tanintharyi region.

In 2019, it was reported that 280,000 people in affected areas received mine risk education.¹⁶¹ UNICEF trained 889 teachers, 67 social workers and 107 NGO staff in providing risk education.

¹⁵⁶ DCA, “[DCA and NCA in Myanmar](#),” undated.

¹⁵⁷ DDG, “[Where We Work: Myanmar](#),” undated.

¹⁵⁸ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Fabrice Vandeputte, Regional Programme Director, HI, 14 May 2020.

¹⁵⁹ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bishu Mahat, ICRC Myanmar, 15 May 2020.

¹⁶⁰ JOIN, “[International Assistance in Myanmar](#),” undated.

¹⁶¹ Statement by Myanmar at the Mine Ban Treaty Fourth Review Conference, Oslo, 25–29 November 2019. Meanwhile, HALO Trust reported providing risk education that benefited 8,188 men, 10,715 boys, 11,461 women and 11,702 girls. ICRC reported providing risk education that benefited 17,217 men, 12,112 boys, 23,378 women

As of August 2019, at least nine organizations implemented 13 risk education projects in Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Mon, and Shan states, and also in the eastern Bago and Tanintharyi regions. In addition, UNICEF supported risk education in Shan, Mon, Kayin and Kachin states, and in the Bago region. UNHCR supported risk education in Kayin state and in the Tanintharyi region.

A UNICEF factsheet shows the states which received the most risk education coverage from 2016–March 2020 (quarter 1) were Kachin, Kayin, Shan, Kayah and Rakhine.¹⁶²

In 2019, the majority of operators delivered risk education in rural areas and particularly to IDPs in camps and host communities. MAG, The HALO Trust, and the ICRC reported delivering safety briefings to NGOs, government officials and teachers. UNICEF provided risk education training to teachers, social workers and NGO staff. MAG and the ICRC reported delivering risk education in schools in 2019. While schoolteachers have received risk education training in some areas, risk education is not integrated into the national curriculum.

In 2016, a common mine risk education toolkit was field tested and approved by the government. DCA and UNICEF also developed an app in 2017 as part of the toolkit jointly developed by DCA, UNICEF and the MRWG with support of the MoSWRR.¹⁶³

The types of ordnance covered in risk education included antipersonnel mines and antivehicle mines, improvised mines and other ERW. There are emerging reports of the use of antivehicle mines in Rakhine and southern Chin states, where the Tatmadaw is fighting the Arakan Army.¹⁶⁴

Face-to-face sessions remain the primary means for delivering risk education, although teams from The Halo Trust carry a PA system, and in northern Myanmar MAG teams deliver safety messages through radio as a complimentary measure.¹⁶⁵ Risk education is delivered as a standalone activity in Myanmar due to the lack of permission to conduct landmine clearance, although it is sometimes integrated with non-technical survey. MAG plans to integrate risk education with technical survey once it begins operations.

MAG is contracted by the Durable Peace Programme (DPP), funded by the European Union (EU), in Kachin and northern Shan states to deliver ‘training of trainers’ programs and capacity support to help 14 NGOs integrate mine risk education into their ongoing humanitarian interventions. The partner agencies co-design risk education activities based on their capacity, with MAG providing training, support with planning and materials, and quality assurance.¹⁶⁶

IDPs and returnees are a key target group for risk education in Myanmar. While displaced in camps or host communities, they also return to their villages of origin to check on livestock, property and farmland, and even to farm. HI reported that both women and men, with and without disabilities, sought income and livelihood activities outside of IDP camps in areas controlled by NSAGs in Kachin state.¹⁶⁷

There is a lack of information on safe and unsafe areas due to a lack of warning signs and limited local knowledge of newly contaminated areas.¹⁶⁸

and 13,385 girls. MAG reported providing risk education that benefited 8,917 men, 6,954 boys, 9,021 women and 7,461 girls.

¹⁶² UNICEF, “[Mine Action in Myanmar Fact Sheet \(as of 31st March 2020\)](#),” April 2020.

¹⁶³ GICHD, “[Review of New Technologies and Methodologies for Explosive Ordnance Risk Education \(EORE\) in challenging contexts](#),” August 2020.

¹⁶⁴ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Geoff Moynan, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 27 April 2020.

¹⁶⁵ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Geoff Moynan, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 27 April 2020; and by Bekim Shala, Country Programme Manager, MAG, 25 May 2020.

¹⁶⁶ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bekim Shala, Country Programme Manager, MAG, 25 May 2020.

¹⁶⁷ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Fabrice Vandeputte, Regional Programme Director, HI, 14 May 2020.

¹⁶⁸ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bishu Mahat, ICRC Myanmar, 15 May 2020.

Adult males often hunt and forage for food in forests far from their homes and where they may be unaware of the risks. This results in a disproportionately high number of adult male casualties who take risks largely out of desperation or economic necessity.

While adult males are considered the most at-risk group due to their roles in livelihood activities, UNICEF data shows they have received less risk education. Data for 2016–March 2020 shows that of the 1,050,725 people reached, 81% were women and children.¹⁶⁹

MAG reports that it targets men for risk education due to their higher exposure to mine risk as a result of livelihood activities. Given that men are often working outside of the village during the day when risk education sessions are delivered, MAG is providing risk education at night and at weekends to better reach them.¹⁷⁰

Displaced children are at heightened risk because they live close to conflict-affected areas and play in unsafe environments. HI reported that in IDP camps, there are not enough school teachers to support the provision of risk education, particularly in remote areas. Most risk education for children takes place out of school.¹⁷¹ In December 2018, MAG collaborated with Clowns without Borders and its national chapter ‘Clown Me In’ to deliver fun, interactive risk education sessions for children.

Reaching remote areas and some ethnic minority groups is difficult due to restrictions in access. International NGOs work with local partners to better reach remote communities, although access to politically sensitive areas is not always granted.

Varied languages and dialects also pose challenges for the provision of risk education and the development of appropriate risk education materials.¹⁷²

Major developments in 2019

In 2019, a mine risk education app for Myanmar was developed by MAG with the MRWG. It can be used on smartphones and computers and provides key risk education messages for different age groups, with games, lessons, and questions and answers to increase knowledge.¹⁷³ As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, DDG adapted its risk education by developing online risk education sessions that can be implemented in IDP camps and in communities. The sessions can be run on online platforms commonly used in Myanmar, such as Viber, Facebook, Messenger and Skype.¹⁷⁴

Risk education material is being developed by HI to be inclusive of persons and children with disabilities, including the use of plain and simple language, radio broadcasting, and the use of accessible fonts and colors.¹⁷⁵

ICRC provided emergency risk education through community volunteers and village leaders in Pha Kant township in Kachin state in 2019.¹⁷⁶ The HALO Trust delivered emergency risk education to IDPs in August 2019 following an outbreak of conflict in northern Shan state.¹⁷⁷

¹⁶⁹ UNICEF, “[Mine Action in Myanmar Fact Sheet \(as of 31st March 2020\)](#),” April 2020.

¹⁷⁰ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bekim Shala, Country Programme Manager, MAG, 25 May 2020.

¹⁷¹ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Fabrice Vandeputte, Regional Programme Director, HI, 14 May 2020.

¹⁷² Response to Monitor questionnaire by Geoff Moynan, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 27 April 2020.

¹⁷³ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Fabrice Vandeputte, Regional Programme Director, HI, 14 May 2020.

¹⁷⁴ DDG, “[Virtual Mine Risk Education in Myanmar](#),” 10 June 2020.

¹⁷⁵ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Fabrice Vandeputte, Regional Programme Director, HI, 14 May 2020.

¹⁷⁶ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bishu Mahat, ICRC Myanmar, 15 May 2020

¹⁷⁷ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Geoff Moynan, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 27 April 2020.

In 2020, HI plans to conduct community risk education through a local partner in IDP camps in both government-controlled and NSAG-controlled areas of Kachin state. HI also plans to initiate a ‘training of trainers’ program for school teachers in five IDP camps, and also support ‘education in emergency’ partners working with teachers to provide risk education in the school curriculum.

In January 2020, The HALO Trust provided training to staff of the Rakhine Ethnic Congress in risk education and first aid, so that they could pass on their knowledge to communities in Rakhine that have been affected by conflict between the Tatmadaw and Arakan Army.

Marking

The Tatmadaw has created its own warning signs and fenced some known mined areas, however it is not known how systematic such activities are.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ Landmine Monitor interview with photojournalist accompanying Tatmadaw clearance engineers in Kayin State in August 2015. Signs were placed near a site of armed conflict between a Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) splinter group and the Tatmadaw in Hlaing-Bwe township during reported clearance. Photographer provided a photograph of the signs to the Monitor on 3 August 2018. He said the truck in which he traveled with the Tatmadaw had many of the mine warning signs. Also, in November 2018, in eastern Bago region, after a mine incident near a school in Tha Pyay Nyunt village, Tatmadaw soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion 8/53 fenced the area to make it inaccessible. Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG), “KHRG Submission to Landmine Monitor,” September 2019, unpublished.

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Victim Assistance

Name of organization	Type of activity
Government	
Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement	Socio-economic and rehabilitation services; vocational training school for adults with disabilities, including mine/ERW survivors
Ministry of Health and Sports	Prosthetic centers and two orthopedic hospitals
Ministry of Defense	Prosthetics provided through three centers
National NGOs	
Nu Daw Mya Yi Foundation	Periodic prosthetic work camp in Yangon in conjunction with Jaipur Foot of India
Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People	Prosthetic production at the Kho Kay Prosthetic Clinic, in Hpapun, Kayin state
Karen Health and Welfare Department	Medical first-aid assistance and amputation surgeries
Karenni Health Workers Organization	Prosthetics in Loikaw, Kayah state
Karuna Mission Social Solidarity	First-aid and immediate assistance
Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association	Disability rights advocacy; production of assistive devices; encouraging economic inclusion through employment
International NGOs	
Association for Aid and Relief Japan	Vocational training; community-based rehabilitation; referral system; survivor rights/advocacy
Exceed Worldwide	Operates the prosthetic workshop at the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Yangon; financially supports Myanmar School of Prosthetics and Orthotics, and a prosthetic workshop in Mandalay
Leprosy Mission– Myanmar	Rehabilitation and prosthetics
DDG/DRC	Direct assistance in the form of medical and rehabilitative care and referrals for mine/ERW survivors in Kachin state
HI	Community-level data collection; mapping of services and barriers; assessment and referral; psychosocial support; socio-economic inclusion; repairs of mobility devices; coordination of assistance and advocacy on survivors/victims' needs; capacity-building of the Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association; supporting victim assistance centers
World Education	Physical rehabilitation; economic inclusion; access to medical and vocational funds; coordination of assistance and advocacy on survivors/victims' needs

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ICRC/Myanmar Cross Society	Red	Support to four rehabilitation centers: one center under the Myanmar Red Cross Society in Hpa-An, and three centers under the Ministry of Health and Sports in Mandalay, Myitkyina and Kyaing Tong; prosthetic outreach for remote areas
UNHCR		Discretionary funds for financial assistance to cover medical costs of war victims/landmine survivors and rehabilitation, including transport; economic inclusion through livelihood program

Major Developments in 2019

Traumatic injuries are the main cause of illness and the third-highest cause of death in Myanmar. There are few physicians trained in emergency medicine, and they are generally not located in rural areas, which also lack a nationwide ambulance service able to care for patients on the way to a medical facility. Medical facilities in Myanmar's three major cities lack emergency response capacity: Yangon, Mandalay, and Naypyidaw have only one emergency room each.¹⁷⁹

Access to rehabilitation services is often not available to persons with disabilities in Myanmar, especially those living in rural areas. Existing physical rehabilitation centers cover only 10% of the country's needs. Most centers are in the larger cities and travel expenses are prohibitive.¹⁸⁰

Since 2017, HI has led a partnership with the Karen Department of Health and Welfare (KDHW) and provides support in both government-controlled and NSAG-controlled areas of Kachin state.¹⁸¹ The KDHW, which is the health department of the Karen National Union (KNU), reported that a training course was provided to health workers, but more trained medics were needed to provide healthcare services in KNU-controlled areas.¹⁸² In 2019, HI increased support to medical care using a social fund.¹⁸³

In Kachin, Rakhine and Shan states, the ICRC supported health centers and satellite posts, including facilities in areas controlled by NSAGs.¹⁸⁴ Hospitals and other health facilities in Rakhine state, including mobile health units, provided healthcare for IDPs and other violence-affected people with ICRC support.¹⁸⁵ The ICRC continued supporting five physical rehabilitation centers and included physical rehabilitation in its Rakhine humanitarian response.¹⁸⁶ In 2019, the ICRC was unable to support a sixth center in Mandalay.¹⁸⁷ The ICRC trained national Red Cross volunteers to use the Service Users Referral System program for rehabilitation, and provided training for rehabilitation professionals and managers.¹⁸⁸

¹⁷⁹ Susan Becker, "[Progress towards health systems strengthening in Myanmar](#)," *Journal of Global Health Reports*, Vol. 2, 30 March 2018.

¹⁸⁰ ICRC, "[Physical Rehabilitation Programme: 2018 Annual Report](#)," Geneva, 2019, p. 45.

¹⁸¹ HI, "[HI – Federal Information – Country Card – Myanmar – 2018 09 – EN](#)," September 2018.

¹⁸² "[Health workers are still needed in KNU areas, KDHW says](#)," *Karen Information Center/Burma News International*, 5 September 2018.

¹⁸³ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Fabrice Vandeputte, Regional Programme Director, HI, 14 May 2020.

¹⁸⁴ ICRC, "[Annual Report 2017](#)," Geneva, 13 June 2018, p. 327.

¹⁸⁵ ICRC, "[Annual Report 2018](#)," Geneva, 19 June 2019, p. 366.

¹⁸⁶ ICRC, "[Physical Rehabilitation Programme: 2018 Annual Report](#)," Geneva, 2019, p. 45.

¹⁸⁷ ICRC, "[Annual Report 2019](#)," Geneva, 29 June 2020, p. 349.

¹⁸⁸ ICRC, "[Physical Rehabilitation Programme: 2019 Annual Report](#)," Geneva, 3 July 2020, p. 47.

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As of March 2020, the Prosthetic Department of the Mao Tao Clinic (MTC), in Mae Sot—a Thai town on the border with Myanmar—which had previously provided prosthetics solely to people from Myanmar, ceased operation. It shifted its remaining equipment to a KDHW-run clinic in Klo Yaw Lay village, in Hpapun township, Kayin state. In 2019, the MTC delivered 76 prosthetics to patients from Myanmar.¹⁸⁹

Most mine/ERW survivors have had to abandon their traditional professions, making vocational training and other alternative livelihood solutions necessary.¹⁹⁰ DRC-DDG provided livelihood interventions to assist communities affected by conflict and mines/ERW, and provided mine/ERW victims with skills-development training in business, as well as agriculture-oriented support.¹⁹¹

The Association for Aid and Relief-Japan (AAR-Japan), continued to provide vocational training for persons with disabilities at its center in Yangon.¹⁹² The Myanmar Center for Responsible Business and AAR-Japan held a multi-stakeholder meeting with the support of the Department of Rehabilitation in the MoSWRR to obtain feedback on a draft handbook on employment of persons with disabilities.¹⁹³

HI ran the United States-funded Humanitarian Mine Action in Burma: Inclusive Socio-economic Development and Human Security for All project in three townships in Kayin state and the east Bago region, in partnership with the Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association (MPHA).¹⁹⁴ HI continued to build the project management skills of the MPHA in order to sustain survivor assistance throughout the region.¹⁹⁵

The ICRC and/or the National Society provided material assistance for people affected by conflict and other violence in Kachin, Rakhine, and Shan states. The ICRC faced restrictions in providing cash income support to violence-affected households in northern Rakhine state and adjusted by distributing household essentials and agricultural input.¹⁹⁶ In 2019, the ICRC organized the second Wheelchair Basketball Workshop in Myanmar, and referred people with mobility impairment to sports activities, microeconomic initiatives, and vocational training.¹⁹⁷

World Education supported self-help groups across Bago region and Kayah state. It compiled, translated, printed, and distributed service provider directories in Kayah and Mon states.¹⁹⁸

According to UNICEF reporting, 87% of children with disabilities did not visit a doctor and 20% said they were bullied at school.¹⁹⁹

No new needs assessment activities were reported.

¹⁸⁹ Landmine Monitor interview with Naw Annie Po Moo, Director of Operations, MTC, 28 January 2020. The Prosthetics Department, and the new operations in Klo Yaw Lay clinic, receive financial support from Together Against Landmines (Gemeinsam gegen Landminen, GGL), an NGO based in Austria.

¹⁹⁰ DDG, “[DDG Study Aims to Counter Rise in Victims from Mines in Myanmar](#),” 16 January 2018.

¹⁹¹ DRC/DDG, “Factsheet Kayah State, 2018,” 2018.

¹⁹² AAR-Japan, “Annual Report 2018: April 2018-March 2019,” 2019, p. 17.

¹⁹³ Myanmar Center for Responsible Business, “[Workshop to Consult Government Departments on the Draft Handbook on Employment of Persons with Disabilities](#),” 23 August 2018.

¹⁹⁴ HI, “[HI – Federal Information – Country Card – Myanmar – 2018 09 – EN](#),” September 2018.

¹⁹⁵ HI, “[Humanity & Inclusion in Myanmar](#),” undated.

¹⁹⁶ ICRC, “[Annual Report 2018](#),” Geneva, 19 June 2019, p. 368.

¹⁹⁷ ICRC, “[Physical Rehabilitation Programme: 2019 Annual Report](#),” Geneva, 3 July 2020, p. 47.

¹⁹⁸ Email from Khin Mar Aung, Director, World Education Myanmar, 25 October 2018.

¹⁹⁹ UNICEF, “[Children with disabilities: Ensuring inclusive policy and action to provide access to services](#),” undated.

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In 2019, 10 donors contributed US\$6.3 million to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for mine action; this is similar to the annual level of funding received in 2015–2017.²⁰⁰

All international contributions went to non-technical survey, risk education, or victim assistance activities through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and other non-governmental organizations.

International contributions: 2019²⁰¹

Donor	Sector	Amount (national currency)	Amount (US\$)
Japan	Risk education and victim assistance	¥325,176,898	2,982,727
United Kingdom	Risk education	£796,463	1,016,924
Switzerland	Risk education and victim assistance	CHF738,500	743,182
Norway	Risk education and survey	NOK3,500,000	397,723
Sweden	Risk education and survey	SEK3,345,000	353,579
Australia	Risk education	A\$435,378	302,675
European Union	Risk education	€255,719	286,252
Luxembourg	Victim assistance	€76,500	85,634
Ireland	Survey	€70,000	78,358
Denmark	Risk education	DKK192,000	28,784
Total			6,275,838

Since 2015, international mine action assistance to Myanmar has totaled more than \$28 million, representing an average of \$5.7 million per year.

Summary of international contributions: 2015–2019²⁰²

Year	International contributions (US\$)
2019	6,275,838
2018	2,872,606
2017	6,725,763
2016	6,525,640
2015	6,240,315
Total	28,640,162

²⁰⁰ [Australia Convention on Cluster Munitions Article 7 Report](#), Form I, 3 January 2020; response to Monitor questionnaire by Natascha Hassan Johns, Head of Section, Denmark Ministry of Foreign and Ministry of Defence, 26 June 2020; [Ireland Mine Ban Treaty Article 7 Report](#), Form J, 30 March 2020; [Japan Mine Ban Treaty Article 7 Report](#), Form J, 30 March 2020; response to Monitor questionnaire by Steve Hoscheit, Desk Disarmament, Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 4 May 2020; email from Ingrid Schøyen, Senior Advisor, Humanitarian Affairs, Norway Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 5 June 2020; [Sweden Mine Ban Treaty Article 7 Report](#), Form J, 2020; email from Kajsa Aulin, Assistant Health Affairs and Disarmament, Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations in Geneva, 24 September 2020; [Switzerland Convention on Cluster Munitions Article 7 Report](#), Form I, 28 April 2020; and [United Kingdom Mine Ban Treaty Article 7 Report](#), Form J, 2020.

²⁰¹ Average exchange rates for 2019: A\$1=US\$0.6952; DKK6.6703=US\$1; €1=US\$1.1194; NOK8.8001=US\$1; £1=US\$1.2768; SEK9.4604=US\$1; CHF0.9937=US\$1; and ¥109.02=US\$1. US Federal Reserve, "[List of Exchange Rates \(Annual\)](#)," 2 January 2020.

²⁰² See previous Monitor reports.

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Ten-Year Review: Non-signatory Myanmar has expressed interest in the convention, but has not taken any steps to join it. Myanmar last participated in a meeting of the convention in 2013. It abstained from voting on a key United Nations (UN) resolution promoting the convention in December 2019.

Myanmar has stated that it has never used, produced or transferred cluster munitions.

Policy

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has not acceded to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.²⁰³

At the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in November 2019, Myanmar said it would like to join the convention, but could not accede until it had concluded a nationwide peace agreement with non-state armed groups.²⁰⁴ Previously, in 2017, Myanmar said it was reviewing its position on joining the convention, which it said aims to “prevent the indiscriminate use” of cluster munitions that can lead to “vulnerability and serious humanitarian impact.”²⁰⁵

Myanmar participated in a regional meeting of the Oslo Process that created the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Vientiane, Lao PDR in October 2008. It also attended a regional conference on the convention held in Bali, Indonesia in November 2009.

Myanmar has participated as an observer in meetings of the convention, but not since 2013.²⁰⁶ Myanmar was invited, but did not attend, the Ninth Meeting of States Parties in Geneva in September 2019.

Myanmar has attended regional workshops on the convention, such as one hosted by the Philippines in Manila in June 2019 and another held by Lao PDR in Vientiane in April 2019.²⁰⁷

In December 2019, Myanmar abstained from voting on a key UNGA resolution that urged states outside the Convention on Cluster Munitions to “join as soon as possible.”²⁰⁸ Myanmar has abstained from voting on the annual UNGA resolution promoting the convention since it was first introduced in 2015.

Myanmar is not a party to the Mine Ban Treaty nor the Convention on Conventional Weapons.

²⁰³ The military regime changed the name of the country from Burma to Myanmar in 1989, but many ethnic groups in the Myanmar’s border areas and a number of countries still prefer to use the name Burma.

²⁰⁴ Myanmar, Explanation of Vote on Resolution A/C.1/L.46, UN General Assembly (UNGA) First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 6 November 2019. Myanmar has previously indicated that it is considering joining the convention.

²⁰⁵ Myanmar, Explanation of Vote on Resolution L.41, 72nd Session, UNGA First Committee, New York, 31 October 2017, UNGA, Official Records, A/C.1/72/PV26, pp. 18–19/29. Myanmar has made similar statements on previous occasions. See, [statement of Myanmar](#), UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 15 October 2015; [statement of Myanmar](#), UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 30 October 2013; and [statement of Myanmar](#), UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 24 October 2012.

²⁰⁶ Myanmar participated as an observer in the convention’s annual Meetings of States Parties in 2010 and 2012 and intersessional meetings in 2013. Myanmar did not attend the First Review Conference in Dubrovnik in September 2015.

²⁰⁷ Regional Seminar on Landmines, Cluster Munitions and Explosive Remnants of War, Vientiane, Lao DPR, 29–30 April 2019. See, [“Experts Discuss Landmine-related Risks At A Regional Seminar,” Lao News Agency](#), 2 May 2019; and [“Asia-Pacific Workshop on CCM Universalization,”](#) Convention on Cluster Munitions Quarterly Newsletter, April 2019.

²⁰⁸ [“Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions,”](#) UNGA Resolution 74/62, 12 December 2019.

Use, production, transfer, and stockpiling

Myanmar told a regional meeting in 2009 that, “we do not use cluster munitions, develop, produce, otherwise acquire, retain or transfer to anyone, directly or indirectly, nor assist, encourage or induce anyone to engage in any activity prohibited under this Convention.”²⁰⁹

Myanmar has denied using cluster munitions. In 2015, it said “cluster munitions were never used in...operations” by its armed forces, known as the Tatmadaw.²¹⁰

The Kachin Independence Army (KIA), a non-state armed group, alleged that the Tatmadaw used an old weapon that is similar in design to a modern cluster munition near the town of Laiza, in Kachin state, on 26 January 2013.²¹¹ The “adapter” and 20-pound fragmentation bombs shown in photographs reviewed by Human Rights Watch (HRW) may meet the definition of a cluster munition under the Convention on Cluster Munitions.²¹²

Myanmar possesses 122mm Type-81 and Type-90B and M1985 240mm surface-to-surface rocket launchers, but it is not known if the ammunition used for these weapons includes versions with submunition payloads.²¹³

²⁰⁹ Statement by Ye Minn Thein, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Conference on the Promotion and Universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Bali 16 November 2009.

²¹⁰ [Statement of Myanmar](#), UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 15 October 2015.

²¹¹ “[Burma army uses cluster bombs to take key KIO position near Laiza](#),” *Kachin News Group*, 26 January 2013. On 19 April 2013, the deputy secretary of the Kachin National Council (KNC) provided photographs to the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) showing an unknown type of air-dropped bomb that it said, “confirmed that the World War-Two era 20 pound fragmentation bombs were used during the airstrikes in the KIA’s strategic outposts between 14 December 2012 and 8 January 2013 by the Myanmar Air Force.” According to the KNC, “this type has never been used in Burma’s civil war before.” The photographs were contained in an email sent to the CMC by Hkun Htoi, Deputy Secretary, KNC, 19 April 2013.

²¹² There is evidence that Myanmar government forces mounted six fragmentation bombs to the adaptor, which then separated from the rack when dropped from the air. Photographs show a metal tubular rack that appears to be similar in design to the United States-produced M1 cluster adapter. The small fragmentation bombs are of a more modern design and marking than World War II-era munitions. A military officer who requested anonymity confirmed that the weapon was manufactured in Myanmar; additionally, a former military ordnance officer confirmed that the markings on the weapons were those used by Myanmar’s armed forces.

²¹³ “[Myanmar Defense Weapons](#),” 20 March 2014. English translation from Hla Oo’s Blog, “[Burma Army’s MRLS or Multi Rocket Launcher Systems](#),” 23 March 2014.