

Landmine Monitor 2021



Myanmar/Burma
Country Report
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LANDMINE & CLUSTER MUNITION MONITOR

2021 Landmine Monitor
Myanmar/Burma Country 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. Landmine Monitor assesses the efforts of the international community to resolve the crisis caused by these weapons.

As of 1 November 2021, 164 countries, over 80% of the world's governments, have ratified, or acceded to, the Mine Ban Treaty, however, despite being highly affected by antipersonnel landmine contamination, Myanmar/Burma has not yet joined the convention.

Landmine 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. It is meant to compliment the reporting requirements of countries which have ratified the treaty. Our report seeks to make transparent the state of the landmine crisis, and government policies or practices, in non-signatory states.

Landmine Monitor aims to promote and facilitate discussion within human society in order to reach the goal of ending the suffering caused by antipersonnel landmines, and establishing a landmine free world. Landmine 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 Monitor Myanmar/Burma researcher for 2021 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: Landmine survivor from Kyaukkyi township doing the community work. Photo Credit Zaw Zaw Oo /Humanity & Inclusion

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A provisional government was established in Myanmar after the Armed Forces (known as the Tatmadaw) took control of the country in a coup d'état on 1 February 2021¹. Parliamentarians elected in November 2020 formed a counter government, the National Unity Government, which currently holds Myanmar's seat at the United Nations (UN).

Mine Ban Policy

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has not acceded to the Mine Ban Treaty.²

Representatives of Myanmar have expressed interest in the Mine Ban Treaty, but no steps have been taken to accede to it.³ Myanmar representatives have often stated that officials are studying the Mine Ban Treaty with a view to the country joining in the future.⁴

In November 2020, Myanmar told States Parties that it “attentively” follows the work of the treaty, which it said plays “an important role in ending the human suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel land mines.”⁵ The representative did not indicate whether Myanmar is actively working towards accession.

Previously, in May 2018, Myanmar's Minister for International Cooperation, U Kyaw Tin, stated that Myanmar would consider joining the treaty after the successful implementation of a nationwide ceasefire agreement by all parties in Myanmar's internal conflict.⁶

Myanmar's armed forces and opposition non-state armed groups (NSAGs) both use antipersonnel landmines.

Myanmar abstained from voting on UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 75/52 on 7 December 2020, which promotes universalization of the Mine Ban Treaty. Myanmar has abstained from voting on the

1. Initially called the State Administrative Council (SAC) with the Commander-in-Chief of the Tatmadaw, Min Aung Hlaing, as Chairman, the post-coup government was rebranded on 1 August 2021 as the Provisional Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
2. 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.
3. In November 2019, Myanmar's former 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.” Statement of Myanmar, Mine Ban Treaty Fourth Review Conference, Oslo, 26 November 2019.
4. 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.
5. Statement of Myanmar, Mine Ban Treaty Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties, held virtually, 16 November 2020.
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 (APMBC) 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. Monitor meeting 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 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.

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annual UNGA resolution supporting the treaty since 1997.⁷

Myanmar did not participate in the Ottawa Process meetings in 1996–1997 that created the Mine Ban Treaty, even as an observer. Since then, it has attended several meetings of the Mine Ban Treaty as an observer, including the Fourth Review Conference in Oslo in November 2019.⁸ Most recently, Myanmar participated in the treaty's Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties, held virtually in November 2020, and made a statement.

In December 2020, Mine-Free Myanmar (an initiative launched by the ICBL in 2003 to promote the landmine ban in Myanmar) held a virtual press conference in Yangon to launch Landmine Monitor 2020 and distributed 1,200 Burmese-language translations of the Monitor country update on Myanmar.⁹ In 2020, Landmine Monitor and the UN's Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU) produced an updated map of the country's mine-affected areas and infographics showing the impact of landmines.¹⁰

Production, transfer, and stockpiling

Myanmar Defense Products Industries, known as Ka Pa Sa, is a state enterprise located at Ngyaung Chay Dauk in western Pegu (Bago) division that produces antipersonnel landmines.¹¹

NSAGs operating in Myanmar often publish photographs showing antipersonnel mines produced by state-owned Ka Pa Sa and held by frontline Tatmadaw units for use. In 2020, the Arakan Army (AA), a NSAG operating in Rakhine state, published photographs showing MM2, MM5, and MM6 antipersonnel mines made by Myanmar Defense Products Industries.¹² In May 2021, the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and Arakan National Council (ANC) displayed MM2 antipersonnel mines obtained after their forces seized a Tatmadaw military base in Kayin state near the border with Thailand.¹³ In August 2021, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) displayed MM5 and MM6 antipersonnel mines captured after fighting with the Tatmadaw in eastern Muse township.¹⁴

In November 2019, a NSAG in northern Shan state published photographs showing MM-2 antipersonnel mines made by Myanmar Defense Products Industries with markings indicating that the mines were manufactured in 2018.¹⁵

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 75/52, 7 December 2020.

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. Myanmar participated in intersessional meetings of the Mine Ban Treaty in Geneva in 2013–2014, 2016, 2019 and in June 2021.

9. The ICBL initiative was initially known as "Halt Mine Use in Burma/Myanmar." See, Mine-Free Myanmar website.

10. Mine-Free Myanmar, "Updated Landmine Hazard map and Landmine Infographic," 1 December 2020; and "Townships with Suspected Landmine/ERW Contamination according to reported Landmine/ERW Casualties in Myanmar 2019," MIMU, 1 July 2020. An infographic provides a 12-year overview of data from Landmine Monitor Reports (2007–2019). MIMU reported that the infographic has been one of their most requested products.

11. 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 low metal content antipersonnel mine. Myanmar also produces the MM4, which is an antivehicle mine.

12. See, AA, "Battle News," undated. Photographs feature MM2, MM5, and MM6 mines, among other weapons allegedly captured by the AA during 2020. See also, Mine-Free Myanmar, "Allegedly seized mines displayed by Arakan Army," 18 April 2019.

13. Mine-Free Myanmar, "Antipersonnel landmines found at Tatmadaw frontline military outpost," 9 May 2021.

14. "15 Myanmar Junta Soldiers Reported Killed in Shan State," The Irrawaddy, 31 August 2021. While these mines were captured before use, they were reportedly in a lightly armed frontline base. This is the type of situation where the Myanmar military has stated to the Monitor that it uses mines.

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

Myanmar has imported or otherwise received, obtained, and used antipersonnel mines manufactured in China, India, Italy, Russia or the former Soviet Union, and the United States (US).¹⁶ Myanmar is not known to have exported antipersonnel mines.¹⁷

There is no publicly available information on the types or quantities of antipersonnel mines stockpiled by the government.

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

Various NSAGs in Myanmar have produced antipersonnel mines, including the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), and the Democratic Karen Benevolence Army (DKBA). These and other NSAGs have manufactured improvised blast and fragmentation mines from locally available materials. If victim-activated, such improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are considered to be antipersonnel mines prohibited by the Mine Ban Treaty. Some NSAGs have also produced Claymore-type directional fragmentation mines and antivehicle mines equipped with antihandling devices. The Monitor has received credible evidence that NSAGs in Myanmar have continued to produce improvised antipersonnel mines in 2020–2021.¹⁸

NSAGs in Myanmar have also acquired landmines by removing them from mined areas, seizing Tatmadaw stocks, and obtaining them from the clandestine arms market.¹⁹

Use of Antipersonnel Landmines

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

New use by government forces

Myanmar government officials have acknowledged ongoing landmine use by the country's Armed Forces. In July 2019, an official at the Union Minister Office for Defence told the Monitor that landmines are still used by the Tatmadaw in border areas and around infrastructure.²⁰ In September 2016, the Deputy Minister of Defence, Major General Myint Nwe, told the Myanmar parliament that the army continues to use landmines in internal armed conflicts.²¹

16. See ICBL, *Landmine Monitor Report 2004: Toward a Mine-Free World* (New York: HRW, October 2004), p. 938. The mines include Chinese Types-58, -59, -69, and -72A; Soviet POMZ-2, POMZ-2M, PMN-1, and PMD-6; US M14, M16A1, and M18; and Indian/British LTM-73 and LTM-76.

17. 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: Toward a Mine-Free World*, (New York: HRW, August 2000), p. 469.

18. 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. The same mine was reported to have been cleared by Shan State Army-North (SSA-N) rebels in May 2021, according to a video news report posted on Facebook by Shwe Phee Myay News Agency.

19. *Landmine Monitor 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: Toward a Mine-Free World* (Ottawa: Mines Action Canada, October 2009), p. 1,013.

20. The official 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." Monitor meeting with U Min Htike Hein, Assistant Secretary, Union Minister Office for Defence, Ministry of Defence, Naypyitaw, 5 July 2019.

21. "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 mines were planted and soldiers were not present.

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

- On 29 September 2021, one civilian was killed and two injured in Kayah state after they returned to a village following a raid by the Tatmadaw. A local militia said it had found 30 landmines left by the military.²²
- On 25 September 2021, an employee of a military-owned telecommunications company was seriously injured after stepping on a landmine placed outside a cell phone tower near Nant Hwe village in Muse township. This occurred after allegations that the Tatmadaw was mining the bases of mobile phone towers in response to a string of attacks by local militia groups.²³
- On 17 August 2021, a male farmer was injured by a landmine outside a Tatmadaw base at Usoung-taung village, in Kyauktaw township of Rakhine state. According to locals, the area was commonly used by farmers and there had been no mine incidents in the area before.²⁴
- On 9 August 2021, villagers from Myi Tung Mare village, in Bhamo township, Kachin state, claimed that the Tatmadaw had planted a mine which killed a child tending cows near a Tatmadaw base.²⁵
- On 29 July 2021, two men were killed by a landmine emplaced where Tatmadaw soldiers had camped two days previously outside Thitnyinaung village, in Pauk township in the Magway Region.²⁶
- On 8 June 2021, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar stated that he had received reports of mines laid by the Tatmadaw on public roads in Kayah state, in an apparent effort to blockade aid intended for displaced persons.²⁷
- On 1 June 2021, Myanmar Border Guard Force Unit 1014, under the command of the Tatmadaw, reportedly laid landmines in agricultural fields in Hpapun township in Kayin state, which killed one villager and wounded another.²⁸
- Also in June 2021:
 - A civilian casualty occurred after Tatmadaw Infantry Brigade 142 reportedly laid mines around its base near Dawt Hpong Yang, in Momauk township in Kachin state.²⁹
 - A local militia in Mindat township, Chin State, alleged the Tatmadaw forces were responsible for mine use which led to the death of a local child near Shat village.³⁰
- In May 2021:
 - A Tatmadaw informant said the military had laid mines in three locations of Hakha township, in Chin state.³¹

22. "Myanmar Junta Accused of Targeting Civilians with Landmines", The Irrawaddy, 29 September 2021.

23. "A staff who came to fix Mytel phone tower at Muse Township lost his feet after stepping on a landmine", Eleven Myanmar, 29 September 2021. See also, "Security forces today laid mines by a Mytel tower in Mogok, Mandalay Region, according to local residents who had been ordered by the military troops involved to evacuate their homes." Democratic Voice of Burma, 15 September 2021.

24. "In Kyauktaw, a villager stepped on a landmine and lost one of his legs," Myanmar Now, 18 August 2021.

25. "A teenager was killed when he stepped on a landmine planted by the military council," Burma News International (BNI), 9 August 2021.

26. "Two people were killed when a landmine exploded on Kyee Ngo Mountain," Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) Myanmar, 30 July 2021.

27. UN Special Rapporteur Tom Andrews (RapporteurUn), "Mass deaths from starvation, disease and exposure could occur in Kayah State after many of the 100,000 forced to flee into forests from junta bombs are now cut off from food, water and medicine by the junta. The international community must act. My full statement below." 8 June 2021, 11:41 UTC. Tweet. See, press release attached to tweet: "UN Special Rapporteur Calls for Immediate Action to Avoid Massive Loss of Life in Kayah State, Myanmar."

28. "Children Orphaned, Civilians Dead from Landmines, and Villager Shot by Burma Army in Karen State," Free Burma Rangers, 13 June 2021.

29. "Burma Army Plants Landmines Around Kachin State Town," Kachin News Group, 15 June 2021.

30. "Chin Teenager Killed by Myanmar Junta Landmine," The Irrawaddy, 25 June 2021.

31. Chin World Media (media_chin), "Chinland Defence Force (Hakha) issued statement urging the military council to take responsibility for the death of Pu Tler Ling, 60, and claiming soldiers planted landmines around the Hakha town. #WhatshappeningInMyanmar." 12 May 2021, 13:26 UTC. Tweet. See, press release attached to tweet.

- Villagers in Kutkai township in Shan state alleged that Tatmadaw forces had laid mines near Namparchi village.³²
- The Tatmadaw reportedly laid MM6-type mines along the Kyaukkyi-Hsaw Hta road in the Eastern Bago Region, during resupply operations.³³
- The Tatmadaw reportedly laid mines to prevent entry to farms near Mae Klaw village in Hpapun township, Kayin state.³⁴
- In April 2021, Tatmadaw Light Infantry Brigade 434 reportedly laid mines near Boh Hta village, in Hpapun township in Kayin state.³⁵
- Between February and May 2021, the Tatmadaw reportedly laid mines on the road outside their base in Me Waing village in Hpapun township, Kayin state, according to villagers.³⁶
- Not previously reported, in May 2020, Tatmadaw Light Infantry Brigade 434 reportedly emplaced mines around its base near the border with Thailand in Hpapun township, Kayin state.³⁷

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

- In July 2021:
 - A child was injured by a mine in Ponnagyun township, Rakhine state, in an area where the Tatmadaw and the AA had clashed recently.³⁸
 - A man was killed by a mine in Kyaukme township, Shan state, where multiple armed groups operate. It was not possible to determine which NSAG laid the mine.³⁹
- In June 2021, in Hpapun township in Kayin state, recently laid mines wounded two local people, but it was unclear which group had emplaced the mines.⁴⁰
- In May 2021, villagers fleeing armed conflict between Tatmadaw forces and KNLA rebels outside Meh Klaw saw mines laid near the side of the road to Kamarmaung, but it was not known who laid them.⁴¹ In August 2020, a child was killed and five injured after handling a mine that was found in a house where Tatmadaw soldiers had previously stayed.⁴²

32. "New clashes break out between KIA, regime forces in northern Shan State," Myanmar Now, 18 May 2021.

33. Information provided to the Monitor on 24 June 2021. Battalions 706, 707, and 708, and Mobile Operations Command 4, moved supplies through the area and laid mines on 28 May 2021. Over the next two weeks, KNLA rebels found and removed MM6-type mines.

34. Information provided confidentially to the Monitor on 11 May 2021. On 4 May, Mobile Operations Command 8, and Infantry Battalion 19, laid landmines around Bo Hta village in Mae Klaw village tract, which prohibited access for villagers to a path to their paddy field.

35. "Karen Human Rights Group Submission to Landmine Monitor," August 2021. On 13 April 2021, Tatmadaw based at Hpapun marched to Boh Hta and planted landmines, leading to the death of livestock.

36. "Karen Human Rights Group Submission to Landmine Monitor," August 2021. Tatmadaw forces at Me Waing planted mines on a road used to travel to farming and hill fields, resulting in a man losing his leg in a mine blast.

37. "Karen Human Rights Group Submission to Landmine Monitor," August 2021. Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) researchers were informed by a Thai villager hired by Tatmadaw Light Infantry Brigade 434, who had warned him about the landmines they had planted.

38. "Teenage boy steps on landmine, loses leg in Ponnagyun Township," Myanmar Now, 22 July 2021.

39. Nang Seng Nom, "Farmer Killed from Landmine Explosion," Shan Herald Agency for News, 30 July 2021.

40. "Karen Human Rights Group Submission to Landmine Monitor," August 2021. KHRG researchers were told it was an improvised mine. In the second incident, a 'local armed group' had warned villagers not to go to the area. In the July incident, local authorities had given a warning which had been forgotten by the villager who was injured.

41. "Karen Human Rights Group Submission to Landmine Monitor," August 2021. On 3 May 2021, villagers from Nah Koo Nah village, in Meh Klaw village tract, fled due to skirmishes between KNLA rebels and the Tatmadaw occurring close to the village. Around 70 to 80 villagers (12 households) fled to Kamarmaung town, during which they noticed landmines laid along the road leading to Kamarmaung.

42. "One Child Dead and Five Injured in Northern Shan State Landmine Blast," BNI, 4 August 2020.

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- In July 2020, an Abbot was killed by an antipersonnel mine laid within the grounds of a Buddhist monastery, frequented by both Tatmadaw and Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) forces.⁴³
- On 24 May 2020, a villager was injured by a mine, and a second was injured while coming to his aid, in an area where fighting between Tatmadaw troops and AA rebels had occurred in Ponnagyun township, Rakhine state, but villagers did not know who laid the mine.⁴⁴
- On 5 April 2020, a villager in Motesoe Chaung village in Rathedaung township, Rakhine state, was killed by a mine in an area where clashes between the Tatmadaw and AA rebels were a frequent occurrence.⁴⁵

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 to detonate mines. This is a grave violation of international humanitarian and human rights law.⁴⁶

Several examples of this heinous practice were recorded during the reporting period:

- In September 2021, two farmers were reportedly forced to walk in front of a Tatmadaw column in Pekon in Shan state, in an area is known to be contaminated by landmines.⁴⁷
- In September 2021, Tatmadaw soldiers seized a woman in Paing Kalan Done village tract in Kawka-reik township, Kayin state, and forced her to walk in front of them as they entered KNLA territory.⁴⁸
- In August 2021, Tatmadaw Light Infantry Battalions 341 and 410, from the Ler Toh camp in Hkaw Poo village tract, in eastern Hpapun township, Kayin State, seized three women and forced them to carry materials and equipment, using them as human shields.⁴⁹
- In March 2021, The New York Times reported that Tatmadaw troops in Rakhine state abducted several men from a village in April 2020 and ordered them to walk ahead of their column. One man died when he stepped on a mine. Another man who was wounded by the mine was reported to have said, "It is very clear that they used us as human land mine detectors."⁵⁰
- On 24 January 2020, a man was injured by a mine after the 88th Division of the Tatmadaw took him from Naw Swit village in Kaungkalaung village tract, Namsan township, in the Ta'ang (Palaung) Autonomous Region, and forced him to walk in front of soldiers.⁵¹

43. "Buddhist Abbot and Villager Killed By Landmine," BNI, 17 July 2020.

44. "Mro ethnic villagers Injured in Ponna Kyaut landmine blasts," Narinjara News, 25 May 2020.

45. "Rathedaung man killed by landmine," BNI, 9 April 2020.

46. 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. See Human Rights Council, Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Tenth Session, "Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15(c) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1," 18 October 2010.

47. "Burma Army Uses Farmers as Human Shields In Pekon Township," Shan Herald Agency for News, 7 September 2021. "The soldiers used the farming couple as human shields. People try to flee their villages as soon as the soldiers arrive, because this kind of thing is common in our area," a villager told the news agency.

48. Karen Women's Organization (KWO) and KHRG press release, "The Karen Women's Organization and the Karen Human Rights Group Condemn the Burmese Junta's Use of Women as Human Shields," 3 September 2021.

49. Ibid. The women were forced to march until they reached Kyaw Hta Loh River, where they were released after sustaining injuries.

50. Richard C. Paddock, "'It's Better to Walk Through a Minefield': Victims of Myanmar's Army Speak," The New York Times, 9 March 2021.

51. Ta'ang Women's Organization (TWO) Facebook post, 28 January 2020. Two villagers were taken to guide but not released for two days. The one made to walk in front stepped on a mine. See also, Network for Human Rights Documentation-Burma, "Overview of the Human Rights Situation in Burma: January–June 2020," p. 32

Bangladesh border

In September 2017, Landmine Monitor and other organizations independently published evidence showing that Myanmar government forces were using antipersonnel landmines along the border with Bangladesh.⁵² A June 2018 report by the Human Rights Council's Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar investigated mine use allegations, and said 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."⁵³

At the Mine Ban Treaty's Fourth Review Conference, in November 2019, Bangladesh called on Myanmar to "impose moratorium on the use, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines." It reiterated "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."⁵⁴ In February 2021, two workers hired to repair the border fence between Bangladesh and Myanmar were injured by landmines.⁵⁵

In November 2018, a Myanmar government representative told States Parties that claims its forces used landmines along the border with Bangladesh were "without merit" and said that joint patrols with Bangladeshi border forces had encountered no mines.⁵⁶ Myanmar denied its involvement in mine use on the Bangladesh border again in October 2020.⁵⁷

Use by non-state armed groups

Numerous NSAGs have used antipersonnel mines in Myanmar since reporting started in 1999.

With at least 20 NSAGs fighting in Myanmar, it is difficult to ascribe responsibility for mine use to a specific group. For example, in August 2021, in Shan state, both the Restoration Council Shan State/Shan State Army-South (RCSS/SSA-S), and the Tatmadaw, engaged in armed conflict with three members of the Northern Alliance—the AA, MNDAA, and TNLA. After this fighting, new civilian landmine casualties occurred near conflict areas.⁵⁸

52. 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 the researchers, mines were emplaced in Taung Pyo Let Yar village tract, in Maungdaw township, adjacent to border pillar No. 31 in Bangladesh, an area that demarcates the start of the land border between Bangladesh and Myanmar. Monitor email and phone interviews with NGO researchers, who asked to remain anonymous, 17 September 2017.

53. 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.

54. Statement of Bangladesh, Mine Ban Treaty Fourth Review Conference, Oslo, 27 November 2019.

55. Kyaw Myo Aung "Workers at border fence repair site in Maungdaw severely injured in landmine encounter," Development Media Group (DMG), 23 February 2021.

56. 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."

57. Statement of Myanmar, General Debate, First Committee, UN General Assembly 75th Session, 19 October 2020.

58. For example, in August 2021, two internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Kyaukme township stepped on a mine after leaving an IDP camp to forage for food. RCSS, TNLA, and Shan State Progress Party (SSPP) forces had all previously fought in the area. See, "IDPs Wounded By Landmine In Kyaukme Township," BNI, 18 August 2021.

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Since the military coup in February 2021, several local militia groups, known as People's Defense Forces (PDF), have been established. Local media reported the use of 'landmines' by such groups, but it is not possible to determine if the devices are victim-activated or command-detonated.⁵⁹

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

- In August 2021, the PDF in Pekon township, Shan state, claimed that its use of landmines had caused several Tatmadaw casualties.⁶⁰
- In July 2021, a mine reportedly laid by KNLA Battalion 102 killed one person in Hpapun township, in Kayin state.⁶¹
- In July 2021, a combined Katha PDF and Kachin Independence Army (KIA) force claimed that its use of landmines had caused Tatmadaw casualties.⁶²
- In June 2021, KNLA Battalion 102 removed landmines that they had laid along a road, to allow villagers to go to market. KNLA rebels left the mines at the side of the road.⁶³
- In May 2021, Myanmar government officials alleged that KIA mine use had caused two casualties in Momauk township, in Kachin state.⁶⁴
- In April 2021, the KNLA blocked a military road with mines near the Koo Seik Tatmadaw camp, in Ma Htaw village tract in Hpapun township, Kayin state.⁶⁵
- In January 2021, the KNLA informed residents in Thaton township, Mon state, that it had laid landmines in the area, which then resulted in a child casualty.⁶⁶
- In July 2020, the KNLA warned a farmer in Hpapun township, Kayin state, not to enter certain nearby areas where they had planted landmines.⁶⁷

In April 2021, the State Administrative Council held a press conference, which included a display of different improvised mines they claimed to have recovered in operations against people opposed to the military coup.⁶⁸

Previously, 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 of these groups—two Karen National Union (KNU) factions, the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS), the Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), the Pa-O National Liberation Organization (PNLO), the All

59. For example, the Taze People's Comrades in Taze Township, Sagaing Region, claim that military vehicles triggered landmines they had laid near Doukgyi village. See, "More Than 40 Junta Troops Killed Across Myanmar," *The Irrawaddy*, 16 August 2021. The Southern Pauk Guerrilla Force in Pauk Township, in Magway Region, killed several soldiers; and when reinforcements came to retrieve the bodies, more of its mines exploded, killing 17 more troops. See, "Armed resistance replaces anti-coup protests in Pauk township," *Frontier Myanmar*, 31 August 2021.

60. "Myanmar Resistance Landmines Kill Junta Troops After Attack on Power Line," *The Irrawaddy*, 18 August 2021.

61. "Karen Human Rights Group Submission to Landmine Monitor," August 2021. KHRG researchers were told that no warning by the KNLA was issued. Nearby, another mine caused minor injuries to two other people the same day.

62. "People's Defence Force in Sagaing says it killed 180 junta troops with help of Kachin Independence Army," *Myanmar Now*, 12 July 2021.

63. "Karen Human Rights Group Submission to Landmine Monitor," August 2021. KHRG researchers were told that on 19 June 2021, KNLA Battalion 102 removed mines for local villagers to be able to go to Hpapun town. They left some landmines beside the road, making some villagers afraid to return to their own villages.

64. "New clashes break out between KIA, regime forces in northern Shan State," *Myanmar Now*, 18 May 2021.

65. "Karen Human Rights Group Submission to Landmine Monitor," August 2021. On 4 April 2021, the KNLA attacked the Koo Seik Tatmadaw camp in Ma Htaw village tract, and KNLA soldiers blocked a military road with logs and landmines.

66. KHRG, "Doo Tha Htoo District Incident Report: Child seriously injured in a landmine explosion in Thaton Township," January 2021.

67. "Karen Human Rights Group Submission to Landmine Monitor," August 2021. A farmer was generally warned by the KNLA, but asked for specifics and was told that an area he usually pastured his cattle had been mined.

68. "Information Team of State Administration Council holds press conference 4/2021," *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 10 April 2021, p. 5. From the photographs it was not possible to determine the technical characteristics of the mines.

Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF), the Chin National Front (CNF), and the DKBA—had previously used mines.⁶⁹ In February 2018, the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and the Lahu Democratic Union (LDU) joined the NCA, bringing the number of NSAG signatories to 10.⁷⁰ In April 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 sign.⁷¹

In past years, some NSAGs and former NSAGs in Myanmar unilaterally renounced antipersonnel mine use by signing the Deed of Commitment administered by Geneva Call, a Switzerland-based non-governmental organization (NGO).⁷² 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.⁷³ In June 2017, the TNLA denied allegations of new mine use and affirmed that the TNLA had not used landmines since signing the Deed of Commitment.⁷⁴

Responses to new landmine use

Previously, various Myanmar government officials have either admitted or denied that government forces were using antipersonnel landmines.⁷⁵

In October 2020, Myanmar rejected reports that the Tatmadaw had laid mines on the border with Bangladesh.⁷⁶ Bangladesh stated that it remained concerned at the ongoing use of antipersonnel landmines by Myanmar forces on its border and said “unfortunately, outright denial to such a fact-based report remains the only response from Myanmar.”⁷⁷

In a July 2021 letter to the ICBL, the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management of the National Unity Government stated that the “military’s increased use of landmines after the coup on February is unacceptable and must be stop [sic]” and also called on all other parties in Myanmar to immediately halt landmine use.⁷⁸

NSAGs active in Myanmar often blame government forces, or each other, for using antipersonnel mines.

The use of landmines in Myanmar has been widely condemned.⁷⁹

In September 2020, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar documented casualties due to antipersonnel landmines, and cited landmines as “a significant obstacle for the return of displaced persons.” The Special Rapporteur also called on the government to immediately halt landmine use, and for

69. “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 KNLA; the armed wing of the RCSS is the 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.

70. “Two ethnic armed groups sign ceasefire agreement in Nay Pyi Taw,” Global New Light of Myanmar, 14 February 2018.

71. Lei Lei, “Landmines Strike 10 Civilians in a Single Town in Myanmar’s Shan State,” The Irrawaddy, 27 September 2019.

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

73. 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.

74. Amnesty International, “All the Civilians Suffer: Conflict, Displacement and abuse in Northern Myanmar,” 14 June 2017, p. 44.

75. For example, in 2018, Myanmar stated that “the Myanmar Armed Forces is no longer using the landmines while safeguarding the life and property of its people in internal conflicts.” Statement of Myanmar, Mine Ban Treaty Sixteenth Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 21 December 2017.

76. Statement of Myanmar, General Debate, First Committee, UNGA 75th Session, 19 October 2020.

77. Statement of Bangladesh, General Debate, First Committee, UNGA 75th Session, 14 October 2020.

78. Statement of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, National Unity Government of Myanmar, received by the Monitor via email on 22 July 2021.

79. Lawi Weng, “3 Civilians Reportedly Killed by Landmines in Shan State in June,” The Irrawaddy, 8 July 2018.

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Myanmar to join the Mine Ban Treaty.⁸⁰

The December 2020 Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in Myanmar expressed concern at the number of child casualties caused by landmines, and called on Myanmar to join the Mine Ban Treaty.⁸¹

In June 2021, the ICBL condemned new use of antipersonnel mines in Myanmar, and called on all armed actors in the country to halt use and for accession to the Mine Ban Treaty.⁸²

In January 2021, at Myanmar's Universal Periodic Review by the Human Rights Council, Germany and Panama expressed concern at ongoing landmine use and called for a halt to mine use.⁸³ The ICBL made a stakeholder submission to Myanmar's Universal Periodic Review, drawing upon Landmine Monitor reporting.⁸⁴

In June 2020, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict expressed alarm at "the sharp increase in the number of incidents of killing and maiming, including by anti-personnel mines" in Myanmar and urged the government to join the Mine Ban Treaty.⁸⁵

Bangladesh, a State Party to the Mine Ban Treaty, has regularly condemned use of antipersonnel landmines by Myanmar. Previously, at the UNGA 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."⁸⁶

IMPACT of antipersonnel landmines in Myanmar

Myanmar/Burma⁸⁷ is heavily mine-affected as a result of conflicts between the Tatmadaw (national armed 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 the borders with Bangladesh, China, India, and Thailand. New mines

80. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, UNGA 75th Session, Item 72 (c) of the provisional agenda, A/ 75/335, 1 September 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 landmines and unexploded ordnance from contaminated areas in accordance with international mine action standards, properly mark and fence contaminated areas prior to clearance activities, and carry out systematic mine-risk and education activities, and permit humanitarian mine-action organizations to engage in mine clearance activities."

81. Children and Armed Conflict in Myanmar: Report of the Secretary-General, S/2020/1243, submitted to the UN Security Council, 17 December 2020.

82. ICBL, "Landmines Continue to Kill and Injure Citizens in Myanmar, in Midst of Humanitarian and Political Crisis" 24 June 2021.

83. Germany queried Myanmar, "What concrete steps does the Government of Myanmar plan to end the use of antipersonnel landmines and IEDs and support the expansion of mine clearance programs and what measures can be implemented in the meantime to warn civilians about areas with landmines, for example through signs and public announcements in both Burmese and in the language of ethnic minorities?" Panama queried Myanmar, "We note with concern the reports about the use of antipersonnel landmines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by the Myanmar Army and ethnic armed groups, which injured or killed civilians with an acute impact on women, children and internally displaced persons. Has Myanmar considered to halt the use of these weapons and to carry out systematic mine-risk and education activities due to their indiscriminate effects?" See, Universal Periodic Review, Myanmar, 25 January 2021.

84. Summary of stakeholders' information. See, Universal Periodic Review, Myanmar, 25 January 2021.

85. Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, UNGA 74th Session, Agenda Item 66(a), A/74/845-S/2020/525, 20 June 2020.

86. Statement of 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," 18 October 2017.

87. 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.

continue to be laid by both the Tatmadaw and NSAGs. The full extent of contamination in Myanmar is unknown, but it 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. In January 2020, the mine action sector gained permission to deploy technical teams to commence marking and fencing operations in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS),⁸⁸ but due to the COVID-19 pandemic little progress was made.

In 2020, Myanmar saw a decrease in the number of organizations undertaking humanitarian mine action projects. In August 2019, 16 organizations reported 21 mine action projects taking place across 85 townships. By February 2020, this had decreased to 13 organizations reporting 13 mine action projects across 77 townships.⁸⁹ In May 2021, a total of only seven organizations reported mine action projects taking place in Myanmar.⁹⁰

In 2020, risk education was 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). State level coordination was also organized in conflict areas including Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, and northern Shan State. Risk education focused on conflict-affected communities in ethnic territories, and particularly targeted IDPs and refugees.

For a decade, from 1999–2009, assistance to mine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) survivors and persons with disabilities in Myanmar was marginal, due to the neglect of healthcare services by governing authorities. Myanmar's authorities did not have a national victim assistance program or strategy. Awareness of the need for victim assistance increased significantly from around 2012, initially as a result of activities by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) established a permanent presence in Myanmar in 1986, and since the early 1990s has provided financial and technical support to physical rehabilitation programs.⁹¹

Between 2014 and 2020, the number of victim assistance service providers in Myanmar increased significantly. More than a dozen organizations—including government departments, the United Nations (UN), international and local NGOs, and community-based organizations—were involved in efforts. Victim assistance centers were built, while provision of prosthetics services improved, including via enhanced mobile services. Local availability of community-based rehabilitation and vocational training also increased. Victim assistance coordination improved after the introduction of the National Victim Assistance Technical Group (NVATG) as a sub-working group under the MRWG. Yet essential services remain scarce, particularly for people living in remote rural areas.

88. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bekim Shala, Country Programme Manager, Mines Advisory Group (MAG) Myanmar, 25 May 2020; and by Michael Horita, Field Coordinator, Humanity & Inclusion (HI) Myanmar, 16 March 2021.

89. Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU), "The MIMU 3W: Who is doing What, Where," undated.

90. One border-based organization, the Myanmar Red Cross, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and four international NGOs. See, MIMU, "Countrywide Overview - MIMU 3W," May 2021.

91. ICRC, "Where We Work: The ICRC in Myanmar," 30 June 2014.

Mine action management and coordination overview

National mine management actors	The Tatmadaw are responsible for mine clearance activities
UN Agencies	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Mine action legislation	None
Mine action strategic and operational plans	None
Mine action standards	National Mine Action Standard for clearance was being developed as of October 2019

Coordination and management

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.⁹² With the change of government after the November 2015 election, the Mine Action Center was dissolved. The new NLD-led government made peace negotiations a priority, and several participants in the peace process emphasized the threat of mines and the need for clearance.⁹³

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.⁹⁴

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 under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MoSWRR). Participants at the meeting also discussed the Ministry of Defense establishing state and regional level mine clearing groups.⁹⁵

It is unclear what progress, if any, has been made following the military coup in February 2021. Coordination mechanisms with the Department of Rehabilitation were reported to be suspended.

Strategic planning

As of August 2020, the pre-coup government had not announced a clear strategy on mine action.

In January 2018, the secretary of the Union Joint Monitoring Committee (JMU-C), Colonel Wunna Aung, had stated that mine clearance could not begin prior to the building of mutual trust between the government and NSAGs.⁹⁶ In May 2017, Colonel Aung stated that the Tatmadaw would take the lead on landmine clearance, but that international technological and material support would be accepted.⁹⁷

92. Roger Fasth and Pascal Simon, "Mine Action in Myanmar," *The Journal of ERW and Mine Action*, Vol. 19, Issue 2, July 2015.

93. 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 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."

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

95. Khin Myat Myat Wai, "Myanmar begins talk on landmine clearing program," *Myanmar Times*, 3 February 2020.

96. "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."

97. Ye Khaung Nyunt, "Second day of 10th Union Joint Monitoring Committee meeting in Yangon," *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 5 May 2017.

In August 2017, the Commander-in-Chief of the Tatmadaw, General Min Aung Hlaing, held talks with New Zealand's ambassador regarding assistance between the two states' militaries and mine clearance operations.⁹⁸ The Embassy of New Zealand in Myanmar 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 was reported to be successful in providing a focus for developing procedures.⁹⁹

Legislation and standards

In October 2019, Myanmar stated that it was in the process of finalizing its National Mine Action Standard for the conduct of systematic mine clearance. Myanmar was working with countries in the region via the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus Expert Working Group on Humanitarian Mine Action, under the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC).¹⁰⁰

Previously, in 2013, a technical working group comprised of government representatives from the former Myanmar Peace Center, and humanitarian actors, completed work on a draft national mine action strategy and national mine action standards, which were never approved by the government.

International demining organizations in Myanmar have followed IMAS, in addition to their own standard operating procedures.

Information management

Mine action actors in Myanmar retain their own survey results in the absence of a neutral national entity to store data on hazardous areas, which remains sensitive in view of continuing conflict.

Risk education management and coordination overview

Government focal points	Department of Rehabilitation, within the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MoSWRR)
UN focal point	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
Coordination mechanisms	Mine Risk Working Group (MRWG): comprised of ministries, international and national organizations, and four state-level coordination agencies; it leads on risk education and victim assistance
Risk education strategy	MRWG Strategic Workplan 2020–2021
Risk education standards	In development in 2019, but progress halted in 2021

Coordination

The Department of Rehabilitation, under MoSWRR, leads the MRWG as co-chair with UNICEF.¹⁰¹ Formed in April 2012, the MRWG was comprised of 10 ministries, 41 international and national organizations, and four decentralized working groups in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, and northern Shan states. In 2019, MoSWRR endorsed a decision to open a new state-level MRWG in Rakhine State, but at the end of 2020 this was still pending.¹⁰²

98. "Senior General meets New Zealand Ambassador," Global New Light of Myanmar, 27 August 2017.

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

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

101. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Kyaw Kyaw Oo, Operations Coordinator, NPA Myanmar, 18 March 2021.

102. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Sithu Win, Deputy Director, Department of Rehabilitation, 11 March 2021; and by Fabrice Vandeputte, Regional Programme Director, HI, 14 May 2020.

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The MRWG normally meets three times each year but met only once during 2020, in December, amid restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁰³ However, a virtual meeting was held with the four state-level MRWGs, while a national online meeting was held in October 2020.¹⁰⁴ The MRWG also conducted training workshops on risk education in Myanmar's states and regions in collaboration with UN agencies, and with international and national NGOs.¹⁰⁵

In 2021, humanitarian mine action operators in Myanmar continued to coordinate risk education activities online, via monthly and quarterly virtual meetings.

Strategies

A MRWG Strategic Workplan for risk education in 2020–2021 was in place, which also included objectives for victim assistance.¹⁰⁶

Information management

There is no comprehensive mine/ERW victim surveillance system in Myanmar. The MRWG provides mine/ERW incident data every quarter, with data collected through UNICEF, MoSWRR networks, the databases of mine action operators, the General Administration Department, and the police.¹⁰⁷ However, data is far from complete and many mine/ERW incidents in Myanmar remain unreported, due to the lack of a national accident surveillance system and limited healthcare facilities in remote areas.¹⁰⁸ The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as the lead for mine action, also keeps a database which all mine action organizations in Myanmar contribute to.¹⁰⁹

A workshop in Naypyidaw in 2019 initiated a discussion on the collection of victim data, advocacy efforts, and developing a national standardized system.¹¹⁰ In 2021, the Department of Rehabilitation reported that there had been improvements to the system in 2020, but no details were provided.¹¹¹

National standards and guidelines

In 2019, operators in the mine action sector in Myanmar were invited to help the government draft national risk education standards.¹¹² As of August 2021, these had not been finalized.

103. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Sithu Win, Deputy Director, Department of Rehabilitation, 11 March 2021.

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid.

106. Ibid.

107. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bishu Mahat, Weapon Contamination Coordinator, ICRC Myanmar, 15 May 2020.

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

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

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

111. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Sithu Win, Deputy Director, Department of Rehabilitation, 11 March 2021.

112. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bekim Shala, Country Programme Manager, MAG Myanmar, 25 May 2020; and by Kyaw Kyaw Oo, Operations Coordinator, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) Myanmar, 18 March 2021.

Victim assistance management and coordination overview¹¹³

Government focal points	Department of Rehabilitation, within the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MoSWRR)
UN focal point	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
Coordination mechanisms	Mine Risk Working Group (MRWG): comprised of ministries, international and national organizations, and four state-level coordination agencies; it leads on risk education and victim assistance
Risk education strategy	MRWG Strategic Workplan 2020–2021
Risk education standards	In development in 2019, but progress halted in 2021

Coordination

Humanity & Inclusion (HI) facilitated Victim Assistance Sub-Technical Group (VATG) meetings, which in 2020 were held three times at the national level: in person in March, and virtually in May and November. At the state level, meetings were held in northern Shan (7 July), Kayin (12 August), and Kachin (10 September).¹¹⁴

Organizations representing persons with disabilities, including the Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association (MPHA) and the Myanmar Federation of Persons with Disabilities (MFPD), took part in VATG meetings in 2020.

Laws and policies

In June 2015, Myanmar enacted the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law.¹¹⁵ In July 2018, MoSWRR published the rules and regulations that applied under the 2015 law.¹¹⁶

In July 2019, Myanmar passed a Child Rights Law, to align national policies and regulatory frameworks with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Myanmar ratified in 1991.¹¹⁷ The law includes sections on victim assistance and protection against landmine incidents.

In 2014, Myanmar launched a National Social Protection Strategic Plan, through MoSWRR, to provide an allowance to all persons certified with a disability.¹¹⁸ 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

113. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Sith Win, Deputy Director, Department of Rehabilitation, 11 March 2021; by Michelle Yesudas, Humanitarian Policy and Advocacy Adviser, and Nyo Nyo Thaw and Aye Thoun, Project Managers, HI, 18 May 2021; and by Fabrice Vandeputte, Regional Programme Director, HI, 14 May 2020. See also, "Myanmar drafts national strategy for disabled," Xinhua, 4 April 2019; GICHD, "Myanmar: Victim Assistance & Mine Risk Education," presentation by Dr. San San Aye, Deputy Director General of the Department of Social Welfare, at Meeting of National Mine Action Programme Directors, in Geneva, 17 February 2015; and 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.

114. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Sith Win, Deputy Director, Department of Rehabilitation, 11 March 2021; and by Michelle Yesudas, Humanitarian Policy and Advocacy Adviser, and Nyo Nyo Thaw and Aye Thoun, Project Managers, HI, 18 May 2021.

115. Myanmar Law Library, "Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law No. 30/2015 - Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities," June 2015.

116. Pyae Thet Phyto, "After delay, Disability Rights rules and regulations published," Myanmar Times, 13 July 2018.

117. UNICEF Myanmar press release, "The enactment of the new Child Rights Law by the Government of Myanmar a Landmark step," 24 July 2019.

118. 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 Myanmar, "Myanmar National Social Protection Strategic Plan," December 2014, p. 53.

townships across four states, as a pilot program with a view to eventual nationwide coverage.¹¹⁹ At a national level meeting in Naypyidaw in February 2020 to discuss the formation of a national mine action authority, it was reported that MoSWRR would provide MMK200,000 (US\$110) and prosthetic limbs, if needed, for each victim of landmine explosions.¹²⁰ Between September 2019 and August 2020, the fund was budgeted for 600 victims.¹²¹ In 2020, the Department of Rehabilitation reported that since the 2017–2018 financial year, 648 mine victims had received payments, amounting to a total of MMK129,600,000 (US\$70,000).¹²²

However, while the victim assistance fund was easy for people to access in government-controlled areas, it was less clear how accessible it was to people living in areas controlled by NSAGs.

A disability certification and registration process was being rolled out by MoSWRR in 2020, and was piloted in two states under the Department of Rehabilitation. Persons with disabilities were to be registered through a nationwide system to receive a disability card, which includes classification based on the severity of their disability. This will likely enable better identification of persons with disabilities, greater advocacy for their rights, and future provision of social protection funds.¹²³

Strategies

Under Myanmar's pre-coup government, a national strategic plan on the rights of persons with disabilities was being developed by a working committee, with the support of eight subcommittees which included representatives from organizations of persons with disabilities and other NGOs.

In April 2019, MoSWRR held a planning meeting and drafted a national strategy in relation to Myanmar's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

In 2019, the ICRC, together with the World Health Organization (WHO), worked with the Ministry of Health to develop a draft strategic plan on strengthening the national rehabilitation sector.¹²⁴ The work of a steering committee set up to implement this plan and develop a national referral system was delayed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹²⁵ The steering committee convened virtual meetings towards the end of 2020 to discuss expanding local access to assistive technology and producing online training materials for the referral system personnel, who were set to come from the Ministry of Health, local NGOs, and the Red Cross Society.¹²⁶

National standards and guidelines

In 2020, the Victim Assistance IMAS was introduced in a national level VATG meeting by HI and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), and the standard was translated into Burmese.¹²⁷ HI also introduced the VA Standard at national level at the MRWG.¹²⁸

119. Monthly assistance payments of MMK16,000 to MMK30,000 (approximately \$8 to \$16), depending on circumstances. A disabled child will get MMK16,000 per month and a disabled adult up to 64 years old will get MMK30,000. 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, Htoo Thant, "Pilot project to register disabled people for welfare," Myanmar Times, 1 February 2019; and Htoo Thant, "Government to start disability payments," Myanmar Times, 16 November 2017.

120. Exchange rate from 2 October 2021: MMK1,852.99=US\$1. Oanda.com.

121. Khin Myat Myat Wai, "Myanmar begins talk on landmine-clearing program," Myanmar Times, 3 February 2020.

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

123. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Sithu Win, Deputy Director, Department of Rehabilitation, 11 March 2021. Exchange rate from 2 October 2021: MMK1,852.99=US\$1. Oanda.com.

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

125. ICRC, "Annual Report 2019," 29 June 2020, p. 350.

126. ICRC, "Annual Report 2020," 1 July 2021, p. 363.

127. ICRC, "Annual Report 2020," 1 July 2021, p. 363.

128. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Michelle Yesudas, Humanitarian Policy and Advocacy Adviser, and Nyo Nyo Thaw and Aye Thoun, Project Managers, HI, 18 May 2021.

129. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Michelle Yesudas, Humanitarian Policy and Advocacy Adviser, and Nyo Nyo Thaw and Aye Thoun, Project Managers, HI, 18 May 2021.

Contamination

Myanmar is contaminated with landmines—including improvised mines—and ERW, as a legacy of decades of internal armed conflict between the Tatmadaw and NSAGs in ethnic minority areas. Myanmar is not known to be contaminated with cluster munition remnants.

Landmine contamination

Some 97 of Myanmar's 325 townships—across 12 states and regions—are believed to suffer from some degree of landmine contamination, primarily in the form of antipersonnel mines.¹²⁹

No formal estimate exists of the extent of mine contamination in Myanmar, though credible reports of mine contamination, casualties, and confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) or suspected hazardous areas (SHAs), have been reported in the states of Chin, Kayah, Kayin, Kachin, Mon, Rakhine, and Shan; and in the administrative regions of Bago, Magway, Sagaing, and Tanintharyi.¹³⁰

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 victims.¹³¹

Some contamination is from mines produced by state-owned factories. Ka Pa Sa (Defense Products Industries) produced at least five types of antipersonnel landmines, including domestic versions of PMN, POMZ, and M-14 type mines. NSAGs in Myanmar are also known to construct improvised mines (see Myanmar Mine Ban Policy profile).

ERW Contamination

Myanmar is also affected by ERW, including mortars, grenades, artillery, and air-dropped bombs. Periodic reports in Myanmar suggest the presence of ordnance dating from World War II. ERW contamination has also been reported in relation to armed conflict during late 2018 and early 2019 in Kachin state,¹³³ and due to conflict in 2020 in Rakhine state.

129. The Department of Rehabilitation reported that nine states and regions out of 15 were contaminated. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Sith Win, Deputy Director, Department of Rehabilitation, 11 March 2021.

130. Across Kayah and Kayin states, all 14 townships are contaminated. In Myanmar's five other affected states, contaminated townships are as follows: Chin state (Hakka, Mindat, and Paletwa); Kachin state (Bhamo, Chipwi, Hpakan, Injangyang, Mansi, Mogaung, Mohnyin, Momauk, Myitkyina, Shwegu, Sumprabum, Tanai, Tsawlaw, and Waingmaw); Mon state (Bilin, Kyaikto, Mawlamyine, Thanbyuzayat, Thaton, and Ye); Rakhine state (Ann, Buthidaung, Kyaukphyu, Kyauktaw, Maungdaw, Minbya, Mrauk-U, Myebon, Ponnagyun, Rathedaung, and Tounghup); and Shan state (Hopong, Hsenwi, Hsihseng, Hsipaw, Kengtung, Konkyan, Kutkai, Kyaukme, Kyethi, Langkho, Lashio, Laukkaing, Lawksaw, Loilen, Manton, Mawmai, Monghpyak, Mongkhet, Mongmit, Mongpan, Mongshu, Mongton, Mongyai, Muse, Namhsan, Namtu, Nanhkan, Nawngkhio, Pangsang, Pekon, Tachileik, Tangyan, and Ywangan). In the five affected regions, contaminated townships are as follows: Bago region (Kyaukkyi, Shwekyin, Tantabin, and Taungoo); Magway region (Minhla and Pauk); Mandalay region (Thabeikkyin); Sagaing region (Indaw, Kalewa, and Lay Shi); Tanintharyi region (Bokpyin, Dawei, Myiek, Tanintharyi, Thayetchaung, and Yebyu).

131. 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.

132. 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.

133. 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.

Casualties overview

Casualties	
All known mine/ERW casualties (as of the end of 2020)	5,261 (900 killed, 4,243 injured, 118 unknown)
Casualties in 2020	
Annual total	280 (decrease from 358 in 2019)
Survival outcome	195 killed, 85 injured
Device type causing casualties	175 antipersonnel mines; 4 improvised mines (victim-activated IEDs); 16 antivehicle mines; 43 ERW; 42 unspecified mines/ERW
Civilian status	259 civilians, 16 military, 5 unknown
Age	200 adults, 76 children, 4 unknown
Gender	170 men, 47 women, 63 unknown

Note: ERW=explosive remnants of war; IED=improvised explosive device.

Casualties in 2020

In 2020, there were at least 280 mine/ERW casualties in Myanmar, based on information provided by NGOs, UN agencies, and other organizations, as well as by state and independent media reports. Although this marked a decrease from the annual casualty total for 2019, the number of fatalities increased significantly to 195 in 2020 from 89 in 2019 the previous year. The majority of casualties (175) were caused by antipersonnel mines.

Most casualties in 2020 (147) were recorded in Rakhine state, followed by Shan state (72). Kachin state had 21 recorded casualties, while Kayin state had 15 recorded casualties. The total number of casualties in Rakhine state represented an increase from 2019, when the state had 119 casualties. In Shan and Kachin states, casualties decreased in 2020, from 149 and 51 respectively in 2019.

Despite the presence of a number of mine action actors, and though coverage of victim assistance increased, no national systematic casualty data collection occurred. Due to the lack of an official data collection mechanism, the absence of a 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 Myanmar.

Media reporting indicates a trend of increasing annual casualties in recent years. In August 2019, the Department of Rehabilitation, within MoSWRR, stated that the number of landmine casualties in Myanmar was increasing each year.¹³⁴ On 4 April 2019, the MRWG reported that although many incidents still go unreported, annual casualties increased from 176 in 2017, to 276 in 2018.¹³⁵ The Department of Rehabilitation reported 200 casualties from 112 incidents from January–September 2020, with women and children accounting for 48% of the casualties.¹³⁶ Differences in the casualty figures provided by the MRWG and the Monitor are attributable to the fact that the MRWG seeks to have a 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 is comprehensive, but provide the best-known estimates from public sources in light of the lack of official data.

134. Myat Thura, “Official warns of rising landmine casualties,” Myanmar Times, 14 August 2019.

135. UNICEF press release, “One out of four casualties of landmine incidents in Myanmar are children,” 4 April 2019.

136. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Sith Win, Deputy Director, Department of Rehabilitation, 11 March 2021.

A 2018 study found that many IDPs with disabilities living 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.”¹³⁷

The number of Tatmadaw and NSAG casualties due to mines/ERW remains unknown, but is likely substantial. A Ministry of Defense official told the Monitor that landmines were the chief cause of death and injury for Tatmadaw troops, yet added that if he revealed the figure “it would give a psychological weapon to our enemies.”¹³⁸ Past Monitor reporting indicates that there have been a significant number of military casualties, but military records remain unavailable to the public.¹³⁹

The total number of casualties in Myanmar, for all time, is unknown. The Monitor recorded a total of 5,261 mine/ERW casualties (900 killed, 4,243 injured, 118 unknown survival outcome) between 2000 and the end of 2020.

Mine action

Operators and service providers

Clearance operators

National	Tatmadaw Field Engineering Corps
International	DanChurchAid (DCA) Danish Refugee Council (DRC) Mines Advisory Group (MAG) The HALO Trust Humanity & Inclusion (HI) Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA)

International demining organizations started arriving in Myanmar in 2012, but were not authorized to conduct non-technical survey operations until around 2015. In 2020, six international demining operators had offices in Yangon and some in regional locations: DanChurchAid (DCA), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), the HALO Trust, Humanity & Inclusion (HI), Mines Advisory Group (MAG), and Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA).

In November 2019, Bangladesh offered mine action assistance to Myanmar, at the Fourth Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty.¹⁴⁰

Survey

In July 2020, the Monitor and the Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU) produced a country map showing townships with SHAs, and an infographic on the impact of landmine use in Myanmar.¹⁴¹

137. International Alert, “Conflict Impacts on Gender and Masculinities Expectations on People with Disabilities in Kachin State: A Rapid Assessment,” December 2018, pp. 14–15.

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

139. 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.

140. Statement of Bangladesh, Mine Ban Treaty Fourth Review Conference, Oslo, 27 November 2019.

141. MIMU, “Townships with Suspected Landmine Contamination (1999–2000) and Casualties in Myanmar (2019),” 2020. The infographic provides an 11-year overview of data from the Monitor (2007–2017), and is also available in Burmese. MIMU reported to the Monitor that the infographic was one of their most requested products.

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From 2016, several international mine action operators were authorized to conduct non-technical survey in specific locations in Myanmar. Non-technical survey by DCA, DRC, the HALO Trust, and MAG took place in 2018 and 2019, although operators were unable to carry out survey across an entire state, leaving them unable to determine a baseline level of contamination.

In January 2020, mine action operators gained permission to deploy technical teams to commence marking and fencing operations, in accordance with IMAS.¹⁴² The Department of Rehabilitation asked the mine action sector to prioritize technical survey, marking, and fencing of areas identified for returns and resettlement of IDPs in Kachin state.¹⁴³ However, in 2020, restrictions on travel and gatherings amid COVID-19 led to delays, and prevented non-technical survey from taking place.¹⁴⁴

In 2020, DRC planned to commence non-technical survey in Kachin state and northern Shan state, but was unable to conduct training for staff. Training is now planned for late 2021, with operations to commence in early 2022. Community mapping exercises were conducted in 31 villages in 2020 and early 2021, to identify non-technical survey tasks in potentially contaminated villages.¹⁴⁵

The HALO Trust undertook non-technical survey in early 2020, but suspended activities in March 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions. Before the suspension, the HALO Trust identified five CHAs in northern Shan state (totaling 419,009m²) and four SHAs in Kayin state (totaling 6,058m²). One CHA in northern Shan state and six CHAs in Kayin state were marked. The HALO Trust resumed operations in March 2021 with four teams across Kayin and Shan states, though as of August 2021 operations were suspended again due to further COVID-19 restrictions.¹⁴⁶

In 2020, MAG conducted non-technical survey in the Tanintharyi region, in three areas (Nyaung Pin Kwin village, Pyigyimandaing village tract, and Rar Hpu village), and in Loikaw township in Kayah state. The surveys were conducted in January–March and September 2020, identifying four SHAs totaling 9,321m². No marking was conducted in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions. As of the end of August 2021, MAG had been unable to conduct further non-technical survey.¹⁴⁷

HI did not conduct non-technical survey in 2019 or in early 2020, but planned to start survey from September 2020.¹⁴⁸ NPA was unable to undertake non-technical survey in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁴⁹ DCA did not conduct non-technical survey in 2020, and focused on risk education and victim assistance.¹⁵⁰

Some farmers in the Bago region have marked mine contaminated areas discovered while farming, in an attempt to warn people from entering those areas.¹⁵¹

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

143. 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.

144. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Liam Harvey, Head of Programme, DRC Myanmar, 26 August 2021; and by Stephen Hall, Programme Manager, HALO Trust Myanmar, 31 August 2021.

145. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Liam Harvey, Head of Programme, DRC Myanmar, 26 August 2021.

146. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Stephen Hall, Programme Manager, HALO Trust Myanmar, 31 August 2021.

147. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Sofia Raineri, Programme Officer, MAG Myanmar, 3 September 2021.

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

149. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Kyaw Kyaw Oo, Operations Coordinator, NPA, 18 March 2021.

150. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Matthew Walsh, Head of Humanitarian Response and Mine Action, DCA- Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) Myanmar joint office, 13 September 2021.

151. “Karen Human Rights Group Submission to Landmine Monitor,” August 2021. In August 2020, in Htatabin township in Bago region, farmers informed Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) researchers that they sometimes discovered landmines when clearing land for new plantations, after which they placed a warning or danger sign indicating that there should be no entry due to landmine contamination.

Clearance

Humanitarian mine action operators have not been permitted to conduct clearance by either the government or authorities in ethnic minority areas, and this remained the case in 2020. The Tatmadaw have conducted some mine clearance, but the operations are to unknown standards. The amount of land cleared, and the number of antipersonnel mines destroyed, has not been reported.

In January 2019, the Tatmadaw announced localized mine clearance in advance of the resettlement of families in Nam San Yang village, in Kachin State's Wiangmaw township.¹⁵² In November 2019, an assessment by a Kachin-based NGO found that households with registration certificates had their household compounds cleared with a bulldozer.¹⁵³ In March 2020, villagers in Nam San Yang complained that mines remained a threat in the area.¹⁵⁴ In July 2020, the Tatmadaw returned, and removed mines from 100 acres of farmland.¹⁵⁵ In August 2020, Tatmadaw spokesperson Brigadier-General Zaw Min Tun told a journalist 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 mine clearance.¹⁵⁶ In December 2020, it was reported that clearance in Ta Pyae Yan and Kyauk Sa Khan villages, in Waingmaw township, was undertaken ahead of the return of 2,000 villagers.¹⁵⁷

In March and August 2020, limited clearance was also reported in Lajaryan and Dotphoneyan, in Kachin state, in coordination with the Kachin Humanitarian Concern Committee (KHCC).

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 Defense Services, said the military had asked camp residents to leave to prevent them from being injured by mines, and that troops had deactivated a mine 20 meters from the camp. Camp officials stated that the military then torched temporary shelters at the camp, causing about 400 of the 500 people living there to flee in fear.¹⁵⁸ It is not known if further mine clearance occurred at the site.

Armed conflict between the Tatmadaw and an NSAG, the Arakan Army, in Rakhine state has led to thousands of IDPs since 2018. Since November 2020, an informal ceasefire has been observed. Mine clearance work was reported in February 2021 in the townships of Rakhine state where IDPs were expected to return home. Mine clearance has taken place along the Ann-Sittwe highway and in some villages in Rathedaung township. As of 19 February 2021, there were 13,445 IDPs seeking to return to their homes from IDP camps in Ann, Buthidaung, and Sittwe townships.¹⁵⁹

On 31 March 2021, the Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Dr Thet Thet Khine, at a Committee on Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development meeting in Naypyidaw, said emphasis was being placed on clearing landmines to resettle IDPs to their native villages in Rakhine state.¹⁶⁰ However, clearance was not systematic and not all townships were included in the plans.¹⁶¹ In

152. "Seventeen Kachin IDP Families Return Home," Kachin News Group/Burma News International, 4 February 2019.

153. 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," United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Kachinland Research Centre, 12 December 2019.

154. "Returned IDPs Demand Landmines Be Removed From Nam San Yang," Kachin News Group/Burma News International, 25 March 2020.

155. Ibid.; and "More Than One Year After IDPs Return to Nam San Yang, Burma Army Removes Landmines From Their Farmland," Kachin News Group, 3 August 2020.

156. Ye Mon, "An unhappy return for IDPs in Kachin State," Frontier Myanmar, 22 August 2019.

157. Myat Thura, "Myanmar Military clears mines to help villagers return home," Myanmar Times, 16 December 2020.

158. Khin Myat Myat Wai, "Myebon camp in Rakhine closed for landmine clearance, Tatmadaw says," The Myanmar Times, 29 January 2020.

159. "Since mid-January, over 13,000 IDPs in Arakan State register to return home," Development Media Group, 19 February 2021; and "Landmine clearance said to make way for IDPs in some Arakan townships," Development Media Group, 25 February 2021.

160. "Quick win projects intended to narrow development gap between Rakhine State and other states," Global New Light of Myanmar, 31 March 2021, p. 12.

161. "Mine clearance ineffective in Arakan state," Burma News International, 25 May 2021.

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March 2021, it was reported that the military and the Arakan Army were negotiating to clear mines from mountains and forests where conflict had previously occurred.¹⁶²

A national humanitarian group, the Free Burma Rangers (FBR), run a course on mine identification and emergency clearance procedures, in annual training programs for relief teams.¹⁶³ Landmines encountered on their missions are either removed by FBR personnel, who then turn them over to NSAGs from ethnic minority communities, or are removed directly by the local NSAGs.

Deminer safety

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.¹⁶⁴

Mine action was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and by the changing political situation and civil unrest in Myanmar following the February 2021 coup. Mine action activities were impacted by restricted communications, a shutdown of essential services such as banks, travel restrictions, and local lockdowns. Increased safety and security measures were put in place by operators.

Risk education

Operators and service providers

Risk education operators¹⁶⁵

Type of organization	Name of organization	Type of activity
Governmental	Department of Rehabilitation	Coordination and chair of the MRWG
	Department of Education	Risk education in Kayin state
National	Committee of Internally Displaced Karen People and the Karen Teachers	Provides risk education alongside other forms of humanitarian assistance and advocacy
	Working Group	
	Karen Development Network	Community-based risk education
	Karenni Social Welfare and Development Center	Established a Karenni Mine Risk Education Group in 2006 to provide risk education and collect victim data

162. "Military, AA negotiate to clear landmines from Arakan's forests," Development Media Group, 10 March 2021.

163. FBR, "New Rangers Graduate Relief Team Training and Go Now to Help People Under Attack," 1 January 2021.

164. KHRG, "Karen Human Rights Group Submission to Landmine Monitor," August 2020.

165. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Sithu Win, Deputy Director, Department of Rehabilitation, 11 March 2021; MIMU, "The MIMU 3W: Who is doing What, Where," 23 August 2020; Land Portal, "Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People," undated; Durable Peace Programme, "Ta-ang Student Youth Union (TSYU)," undated and UNOCHA, "Mine Risk Education in Myanmar: When Knowledge is Power," 6 March 2019; Durable Peace Programme, "Nyein (Shalom Foundation)," undated; Durable Peace Programme, "Wunpawng Ningthoi (WPN)," undated; DCA, "DCA and NCA in Myanmar," undated; DDG, "Where We Work: Myanmar," no longer available online; JOIN, "International Assistance in Myanmar," undated; response to Monitor questionnaire by Fabrice Vandeputte, Regional Programme Director, HI, 14 May 2020; by Bishu Mahat, Weapon Contamination Coordinator, ICRC Myanmar, 31 August 2021; by Geoff Moyan, Programme Manager, HALO Trust Myanmar, 4 March 2021; by Michael Horita, Field Coordinator, HI Myanmar, 16 March 2021; and by Matthew Walsh, Head of Humanitarian Response and Mine Action, DCA-NCA, Myanmar, 13 September 2021.

	Local Development Network	Community-based risk education
	Ta'ang Students and Youth Union	DCA partner and provides risk education in Shan state
	Kachin Development Group	HI risk education partner
	South Shan Youth Capacity Building Centre	Community implementers trained by the HALO Trust to provide risk education and first-aid in Shan state
	Never End Tomorrow	Community implementers trained by the HALO Trust to provide risk education and first-aid in Kachin state
International	DanChurchAid (DCA)-Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)	Risk education as part of a program to address natural disasters and the impacts of conflict. Works in the Bago region, and also in Chin, Kayah, Kayin, Mon, and Shan states
	Danish Refugee Council (DRC)	Operates mine risk education team and plans to provide risk education alongside non-technical survey in Kayah and Shan states
	The HALO Trust	Training for 750 community implementers in mine risk education and first-aid. Works in Kachin, Kayin and northern Shan states with partners Never End Tomorrow and the South Shan Youth Capacity Building Centre
	Humanity & Inclusion (HI)	Training of protection and education implementing partners in Kachin state and also works in eastern parts of the Bago region, and Kayin state
	International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	Emergency risk education, community-based risk education through Myanmar Red Cross Society volunteers, risk education in schools, training in risk education for community volunteers, and risk awareness sessions for other humanitarian organizations
	Johanniter International Assistance (JOIN)	Risk education through partners as part of broader humanitarian assistance focused on water, sanitation, hygiene, nutrition, health, and disaster preparedness
	Mines Advisory Group (MAG)	Risk education alongside community liaison activities in villages and IDP camps. MAG had three implementing partners in 2019–2020, and is contracted by the Durable Peace Programme to provide capacity-building support on risk education to 14 local organizations. MAG works in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, and Shan states, and also in the Tanintharyi region
	Relief International	Risk education in northern Shan state
	People in Need	Training in risk education delivery for teachers in IDP camps, in partnership with HI

Note: IDP=internally displaced person; NGO=non-governmental organization.

*Beneficiary numbers*Risk education beneficiaries in 2020¹⁶⁶

Operator	Men	Boys	Women	Girls
HALO Trust	7,137	4,265	9,383	5,088
HI	10	211	42	211
NPA	236	411	468	441
UNICEF	N/A	11,768	N/A	10,259

Note: N/A=not applicable.

The Department of Rehabilitation recorded a total of 109,180 risk education beneficiaries in 2020 (21,082 boys; 24,891 girls; 26,705 men; and 36,502 women), although the data was not collected according to Standard Beneficiary Definitions.¹⁶⁷ The total represents a decrease from the reported 280,000 people reached in Myanmar in 2019.¹⁶⁸ The beneficiary totals in the table above represent only some of the operators providing risk education in Myanmar.

More than 11,600 people received training in risk education through training of trainers programs in Myanmar in 2020. HI trained 52 people, the HALO Trust trained 10,646 people, while UNICEF trained 988 professionals (teachers, social workers, and NGO staff) to provide risk education.¹⁶⁹

ICRC reported reaching 160 direct beneficiaries with risk education in 2020, of which 112 were persons with disabilities.¹⁷⁰ HI reported reaching five persons with disabilities, while UNICEF reached 656 children with disabilities.¹⁷¹

As of August 2020, at least seven organizations reported implementing risk education across 82 townships, 293 village tracts/towns, 945 villages/wards, and in 23 IDP camps. Operators providing risk education were mostly concentrated in Kachin state, Shan state, Kayin state, Mon state, the Bago region, Kayah state, Rakhine state, and the Tanintharyi region.¹⁷²

Target groups

IDPs, returnees, and conflict-affected populations were a significant target group for risk education in Myanmar. While displaced in camps or host communities, they also returned to their villages of origin to check on livestock, property, and farmland. HI reported that IDPs sought income and livelihood activities outside of IDP camps in areas controlled by NSAGs in Kachin state.¹⁷³ People often relied on livelihood activities in forested and mountainous areas which remained contaminated.¹⁷⁴ In many cases, there was a lack of information on safe and unsafe areas due to an absence of warning signs and limited local knowledge of newly contaminated areas.¹⁷⁵

166. HALO Trust data from Geoff Moynan, Programme Manager, HALO Trust Myanmar, 4 March 2021; HI data from Michael Horita, Field Coordinator, HI Myanmar, 16 March 2021; NPA data from Kyaw Kyaw Oo, Operations Coordinator, NPA Myanmar, 18 March 2021; and UNICEF data from UNICEF presentation, “Mine action 2020: Summary of Results,” May 2021.

167. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Sithu Win, Deputy Director, Department of Rehabilitation, 19 March 2021.

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

169. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Michael Horita, Field Coordinator, HI Myanmar, 16 March 2021; by Geoff Moynan, Programme Manager, HALO Trust Myanmar, 4 March 2021; and UNICEF presentation, “Mine Action 2020: Summary of Results,” May 2021.

170. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bishnu Mahat, Weapon Contamination Coordinator, ICRC Myanmar, 31 August 2021.

171. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Michael Horita, Field Coordinator, HI Myanmar, 16 March 2021; and UNICEF presentation, “Mine Action 2020: Summary of Results,” May 2021.

172. MIMU, “Countrywide Overview – MIMU 3W,” May 2021; and UNICEF, “Mine Action in Myanmar Fact Sheet (as of 31st March 2020),” April 2020.

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

174. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bishnu Mahat, Weapon Contamination Coordinator, ICRC Myanmar, 31 August 2021.

175. Responses to Monitor questionnaire by Bishnu Mahat, Weapon Contamination Coordinator, ICRC Myanmar, 15 May 2020 and 31 August 2021.

Children were at risk from mines/ERW, particularly in return and resettlement areas and in conflict affected areas. In some IDP camps, there were not enough schoolteachers to support the provision of risk education, particularly in remote areas, and most risk education for children took place outside of school.¹⁷⁶ Children with disabilities were hard to reach, as they were often not visible in communities or had difficulty understanding materials.¹⁷⁷

Men were at risk from mines/ERW due to livelihood activities, such as hunting and foraging for food in remote areas far from their homes. These activities were often conducted out of economic necessity. Reaching men for risk education was reported to be challenging, as they were often out of their villages during scheduled working hours of risk education teams.¹⁷⁸ MAG provided risk education at night and at weekends in an effort to better reach men.¹⁷⁹

Reaching remote areas and some ethnic minority groups in Myanmar remained difficult due to access restrictions, particularly in NSAG-controlled areas. International NGOs worked with local partners to better reach remote communities. Risk education staff were required to be fluent in a number of local languages, while dialects and materials also had to reflect linguistic and cultural differences.¹⁸⁰ HI developed radio messages in the Kachin language to reach communities there.¹⁸¹

Delivery methods

Risk education is delivered as a standalone activity in Myanmar due to the lack of permission for operators to conduct clearance, although it is sometimes integrated with non-technical survey. In areas impacted by ongoing conflict, risk education is delivered through local partner organizations.

In 2016, a common Mine Risk Education Toolkit was field-tested, before being approved by the government in 2017. DCA and UNICEF also developed an app in 2017 as part of the toolkit, which was jointly developed by DCA, UNICEF, and the MRWG, with support from MoSWRR.¹⁸² The Mine Risk Education Toolkit was reviewed and revised by UNICEF in 2019–2020.¹⁸³

Face-to-face sessions remained the primary means of delivering risk education in Myanmar, along with the distribution of printed materials.¹⁸⁴ Risk education materials were being developed by HI to be inclusive of persons with disabilities, including children, through the use of plain and simple language, accessible fonts and colors, and the dissemination of messages via radio broadcasts.¹⁸⁵

In 2020, MAG was contracted by the Durable Peace Programme—funded by the European Union (EU)—to deliver training of trainers programs and capacity support in Kachin and northern Shan states, to help 14 NGOs integrate risk education into their humanitarian work. The partner agencies co-designed risk education activities based on their capacities, with MAG staff providing training, support with planning and materials, and quality assurance.¹⁸⁶

While schoolteachers received risk education training in some areas of Myanmar, risk education was not integrated into the national curriculum. However, ICRC reported in 2021 that a process was underway to integrate risk education into the school curriculum.¹⁸⁷

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

177. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Michael Horita, Field Coordinator, HI Myanmar, 16 March 2021.

178. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Kyaw Kyaw Oo, Operations Coordinator, NPA Myanmar, 18 March 2021.

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

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

181. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Michael Horita, Field Coordinator, HI Myanmar, 16 March 2021.

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

183. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Sithu Win, Deputy Director, Department of Rehabilitation, 11 March 2021.

184. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Geoff Moynan, Programme Manager, HALO Trust Myanmar, 27 April 2020; by Bekim Shala, Country Programme Manager, MAG, 25 May 2020; by Michael Hortia, Field Coordinator, HI Myanmar, 16 March 2021; and by Bishnu Mahat, Weapon Contamination Coordinator, ICRC Myanmar, 31 August 2021.

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

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

187. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bishnu Mahat, Weapon Contamination Coordinator, ICRC Myanmar, 31 August 2021.

HI began implementing a risk education project in IDP camps, in both government-controlled and NSAG-controlled areas of Kachin state in 2020. This included a training of trainers program for schoolteachers, in partnership with the Kachin Baptist Convention and People in Need.¹⁸⁸ ICRC and the Myanmar Red Cross Society provided risk education training to schoolteachers and other government staff.¹⁸⁹ HI trained community risk education volunteers and partner organizations in disability awareness and inclusive livelihoods.¹⁹⁰ ICRC trained risk education volunteers from communities in NSAG-controlled areas to provide risk education in IDP camps and conflict-affected villages.¹⁹¹ Villagers were encouraged by operators to report mines/ERW to local authorities.¹⁹²

Major Risk Education developments in 2020

In January 2020, the HALO Trust provided training to staff of the Rakhine Ethnic Congress in risk education and first-aid, enabling them to pass on their knowledge to conflict-affected communities in Rakhine state.¹⁹³

In 2020, amid restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, operators used television and social media sites, such as Facebook, to provide risk education messages.¹⁹⁴ NPA provided some remote and digital risk education, but planned to resume face-to-face sessions in 2021.¹⁹⁵ HI delivered risk education through three radio stations (Bhamo Diocese, Lashio Diocese, and Myitkyina Diocese) and three social media platforms (Facebook, WeChat, and Viber).¹⁹⁶ DRC developed online risk education sessions, available on platforms including Facebook, Messenger, Skype, and Viber.¹⁹⁷ ICRC provided risk education messages through radio stations, television, and a news agency.¹⁹⁸

In August 2020, the HALO Trust began to provide modified risk education sessions in households receiving delivery of hygiene materials.¹⁹⁹

HI was unable to fully deliver on one of its risk education projects in communities due to the access restrictions imposed amid the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁰⁰

Several emergency risk education sessions were held in northern Shan state in 2020, in response to displacement amid armed conflict.²⁰¹

Marking of mined areas

The Tatmadaw has produced warning signs and fenced some known mined areas in Myanmar, but it is not known to what extent this marking is systematic.²⁰²

188. Minutes of VATG meeting, 13 March 2020.

189. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bishnu Mahat, Weapon Contamination Coordinator, ICRC Myanmar, 31 August 2021.

190. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Michael Horita, Field Coordinator, HI Myanmar, 16 March 2021.

191. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bishnu Mahat, Weapon Contamination Coordinator, ICRC Myanmar, 31 August 2021.

192. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Liam Harvey, Head of Programme, DRC Myanmar, 26 August 2021.

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

194. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Sithu Win, Deputy Director, Department of Rehabilitation, 11 March 2021.

195. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Kyaw Kyaw Oo, Operations Coordinator, NPA Myanmar, 18 March 2021.

196. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Michael Hortia, Field Coordinator, HI Myanmar, 16 March 2021.

197. DDG, "Virtual Mine Risk Education in Myanmar," 10 June 2020.

198. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Bishnu Mahat, Weapon Contamination Coordinator, ICRC Myanmar, 31 August 2021.

199. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Geoff Moynan, Programme Manager, HALO Trust Myanmar, 4 March 2021.

200. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Michael Horita, Field Coordinator, HI Myanmar, 16 March 2021.

201. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Geoff Moynan, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 4 March 2021; and HALO Trust, "Latest: Keeping families safe in Myanmar," undated.

202. 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. The photographer provided an image of the signs to the Monitor on 3 August 2018, and said the truck in which he traveled with the Tatmadaw had many mine warning signs. 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. KHRG, "KHRG Submission to Landmine Monitor," September 2019.

Victim assistance

Victim assistance operators²⁰³

Type of organization	Name of organization	Type of activity
Governmental	Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MoSWRR)	Socio-economic support; rehabilitation services; vocational training school for adults with disabilities, including mine/ERW survivors
	Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS)	Prosthetic centers and two orthopedic hospitals
	Ministry of Defense (MoD)	Provision of prosthetic devices through three centers
National	Nu Daw Mya Yi Foundation	Prosthetics work camps in Yangon, in conjunction with Jaipur Foot of India
	Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People	Production of prosthetics 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 to survivors
	Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association	Advocacy on disability rights, production of assistive devices, and encouragement of economic inclusion via employment
International	Association for Aid and Relief Japan (AAR-Japan)	Vocational training, referrals, advocacy on survivors' rights
	Exceed Worldwide	Operates the prosthetics workshop at the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Yangon; and financially supports the Myanmar School of Prosthetics and Orthotics, and a prosthetics workshop in Mandalay
	Leprosy Mission–Myanmar	Rehabilitation and prosthetics
	Humanity & Inclusion (HI)	Community-level data collection on victims; mapping of services and barriers to access; assessment and referrals; psychosocial support; socio-economic inclusion; repair of mobility devices; advocacy on survivors' and victims' needs; and capacity-building of the Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association
	World Education	Physical rehabilitation; economic inclusion; access to medical and vocational funds; and advocacy on survivors' and victims' needs
	International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)/Myanmar Red Cross Society	Support to five rehabilitation centers: one under the Myanmar Red Cross Society in Hpa-An; three under the MoHS in Kyaing Tong (eastern Shan), Mandalay, and Myitkyina (Kachin); and a prosthetics and orthotics workshop in Buthidaung township, Rakhine state
	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	Financial assistance covering medical costs and rehabilitation, including transport, for war victims and mine survivors; and economic inclusion through livelihood programs

Note: ERW=explosive remnants of war.

203. AAR-Japan, "Where we work: Myanmar," undated; Exceed Worldwide, "The Myanmar School of Prosthetics and Orthotics: MSPO," undated; The Leprosy Mission International, "Myanmar," undated; HI, "Country Card: Myanmar," updated September 2020; World Education Myanmar Facebook page; and ICRC, "Annual Report 2020," 1 July 2021, p. 363.

Needs assessment

In May 2020, HI conducted a survey—mainly by telephone interview—of persons with disabilities and the impacts of COVID-19. Priorities identified by the survey included COVID-19 prevention awareness, distribution of food and non-food items (including hygiene materials), distribution of items to enable communication (such as phone cards), and access to safe rehabilitation services. The Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association is to lead on implementing these priorities.²⁰⁴

Medical care and rehabilitation

Traumatic injuries are the main cause of ill health and the third-highest cause of death in Myanmar. Myanmar has few physicians trained in emergency medicine and they are generally not located in rural areas, which lack ambulance services to care for mine/ERW survivors on the way to hospital. Health centers in Myanmar's three major cities lack adequate emergency response capacity—with Mandalay, Naypyidaw, and Yangon having only one emergency room each.²⁰⁵

Rehabilitation services are often not available to persons with disabilities in Myanmar, especially those living in rural areas. Existing physical rehabilitation centers cover only 10% of needs. Most centers are in larger cities, and travel expenses are prohibitive.²⁰⁶

The provision of and access to medical care and rehabilitation was further limited by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Mine victims found it difficult to get treatment in hospital due to the increase in COVID-19 patients. Often only outpatients were accepted, with appointments having to be made in advance.²⁰⁷

Following the coup in February 2021, Myanmar's healthcare system was reported to have largely collapsed as health workers and teachers joined the country's civil disobedience movement and/or were persecuted by the military regime. More than 250 attacks on healthcare workers or facilities in Myanmar were documented in the six months after the military coup.²⁰⁸ Movement restrictions and fear of violence prevented people from seeking help in emergency clinics and hospitals.

In 2020, physical rehabilitation centers in Myanmar were supported by ICRC and HI, while one victim assistance center was supported by the Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association.²⁰⁹

ICRC supported nine physical rehabilitation projects, with five centers receiving ICRC support on a regular basis. A total of 298 mine/ERW survivors in Myanmar received physical rehabilitation services in 2020.²¹⁰ In February 2020, the government approved the opening of a prosthetics and orthotics workshop in Buthidaung township, Rakhine state, which also ran a mobile workshop to repair assistive devices and had a network of roving technicians to assist people in remote areas. Two rehabilitation centers were provided with raw materials for producing prosthetic feet, though access constraints prevented ICRC from providing similar assistance to a third center.²¹¹

The COVID-19 pandemic affected rehabilitation services, and all of the ICRC-supported facilities in Myanmar had to suspend their services for several months in 2020.²¹²

Since 2017, HI has partnered the Karen Department of Health and Welfare (KDHW)—a body within the Karen National Union (KNU)—to provide support in both government-controlled and NSAG-controlled

204. Responses to Monitor questionnaire by Michelle Yesudas, Humanitarian Policy and Advocacy Adviser, and Nyo Nyo Thaw and Sye Thoun, Project Managers, HI, 18 May 2021.

205. Susan Becker, "Progress towards health systems strengthening in Myanmar," *Journal of Global Health Reports*, Vol. 2, 30 March 2018.

206. ICRC, "Physical Rehabilitation Programme: 2018 Annual Report," 2019, p. 45.

207. Responses to Monitor questionnaire by Michelle Yesudas, Humanitarian Policy and Advocacy Adviser, and Nyo Nyo Thaw and Aye Thoun, Project Managers, HI, 18 May 2021.

208. Physicians for Human Rights, "At Least 252 Reported Attacks and Threats to Health Care in Myanmar During Six Months of Military's Crackdown," 10 August 2021.

209. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Sithu Win, Deputy Director, Department of Rehabilitation, 11 March 2021.

210. ICRC, "Annual Report 2020," 1 July 2021, p. 365.

211. *Ibid.*, p. 363.

212. *Ibid.*, p. 363.

areas of Kachin state.²¹³ In 2019, HI increased its support for medical care, using a social fund.²¹⁴ In 2020, HI continued to support the delivery of rehabilitation services in Kachin and Kayin states, and in the Bago region.²¹⁵

As of May 2020, the Prosthetics Department of the Mae Tao Clinic in Mae Sot—a Thai town on the border with Myanmar—which had previously provided prosthetics to people from Myanmar, ceased operations. A handover was planned to KDHW, and the clinic moved its equipment to a KDHW-run clinic in Klo Yaw Lay village, in Hpapun township, Kayin state. Mae Tao Clinic prosthetic technicians provided six months of training to six health workers from KDHW, the Pa-Oh Health Working Committee, and the Committee for Health and Development Network. Handover plans were postponed in 2020 due to travel restrictions and the closure of the Myanmar-Thailand border amid the COVID-19 pandemic, although the plan was to be reviewed in 2021.²¹⁶

The World Education Community-Focused Rehabilitation Services project aimed to improve access and opportunities for victims of conflict and people with disabilities in Kachin state. The project intends to pilot the Community-Based Inclusive Development Demonstration Model in Myanmar. The model was developed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Okard Project, and implemented by World Education Laos. In November 2020, World Education Myanmar supported its partner, the Kachin Baptist Convention, to conduct a needs assessment in participating communities.²¹⁷

Socio-economic and psychosocial inclusion

Most mine/ERW survivors in Myanmar have had to abandon their traditional professions, making vocational training and alternative livelihood support necessary.²¹⁸

The Association for Aid and Relief-Japan (AAR-Japan) continued to provide vocational training for persons with disabilities at its center in Yangon.²¹⁹

Since 2018, HI ran a project in partnership with the Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association to improve socio-economic conditions for mine/ERW victims, via livelihood services in the Bago region and Kayin state, funded by the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²²⁰ In 2020, HI supported two beneficiaries to attend skills training; while in 2021, three beneficiaries attended a vocational training center. Cash grants were provided to 78 people for income-generation activities in 2020. HI trained mine/ERW survivors in peer-to-peer counselling in the Bago region, and also in Kachin and Kayin states.²²¹

In 2020, ICRC funding enabled one rehabilitation center to hire and train a new staff member, and to provide training to two physiotherapists in mental health and psychosocial support.²²²

ICRC also organized an online workshop in 2020 for players, coaches, and other members of the wheelchair basketball program of the National Paralympic Committee.²²³

World Education Myanmar supported self-help groups in Kayah state for persons with disabilities and their family members, enabling activities such as income-generation, saving, and lending.²²⁴

International Cooperation and Assistance to Mine Action in Myanmar

213. HI, “Myanmar 2018,” September 2018.

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

215. HI, “Country Card: Myanmar,” updated September 2020.

216. Monitor interview with Naw Annie Po Moo, Director of Operations, Mae Tao Clinic, 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. See, Mae Tao Clinic, “Biennial Report 2019–2020,” 2021, p. 24.

217. See, World Education Myanmar Facebook page.

218. DDG, “DDG Study Aims to Counter Rise in Victims from Mines in Myanmar,” 16 January 2018.

219. AAR-Japan, “Annual Report 2018: April 2018–March 2019,” 2019, p. 17; AAR-Japan, “Where We Work: Myanmar,” undated.

220. HI, “Country Card: Myanmar,” updated September 2020.

221. Ibid.

222. ICRC, “Annual Report 2020,” 1 July 2021, p. 363.

223. Ibid.

224. See, World Education Myanmar Facebook page.

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In 2020, eight donors contributed US\$4.1 million to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for mine action; a 35% decrease compared to the annual level of funding received in 2019.²²⁵

2020 Monitor total does not include Denmark support to Danish Refugee Council (DRC) operations in Myanmar as it was part of a multisectoral humanitarian and resilience assistance programme, for which the specific amount going toward demining was not available, and as such could not be included in the Monitor support database.²²⁶

All international contributions went to non-technical survey, risk education, or victim assistance activities through non-governmental organizations.

International contributions: 2020²²⁷

Donor	Sector	Amount (national currency)	Amount (US\$)
US	Victim assistance	US\$1,000,000	1,000,000
United Kingdom	Risk education	£678,139	869,985
Switzerland	Survey and risk education	CHF590,000	628,395
European Union	Survey and risk education	€500,000	570,500
Sweden	Survey and risk education	SEK4,600,000	499,094
Norway	Risk education	NOK3,650,000	387,132
Luxembourg	Victim assistance	€73,525	83,892
Ireland	Survey	€70,000	79,870
Total		N/A	4,118,868

Since 2016, international mine action assistance to Myanmar has totaled more than \$26.5 million, representing an average of \$5.3 million per year.

Summary of international contributions: 2016–2020²²⁸

Year	International contributions (US\$)
2020	4,118,868
2019	6,275,838
2018	2,872,606
2017	6,725,763
2016	6,525,640
Total	26,518,715

225. Emails from Carole Ory, Senior Expert, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Arms Export Control, European External Action Service (EEAS), 29 June 2021; from Camilla Dannevig, Senior Adviser, Section for Humanitarian Affairs, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 23 September 2021; and from Erik Pettersson, Senior Programme Manager, Peace and Human Security Unit, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), 28 September 2021; ; Response to Monitor questionnaire by Steve Hoscheit, Security Policy Desk, Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, 21 May 2021; Ireland Mine Ban Treaty Article 7 Report for calendar year 2020, Form J, 30 April 2021; Sweden Convention on Cluster Munitions Article 7 Report, Form I, April 2021; Switzerland Convention on Cluster Munitions Article 7 report, Form I, April 2021; United Kingdom Convention on Cluster Munitions Article 7 Report, Form I, April 2021; and United States Department of State, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, To Walk the Earth in Safety, January–December 2020," April 2021, p. 27.

226. Denmark total support to DRC humanitarian operations in Myanmar in 2020 totaled DKK2,277,000 (\$348,005), and included a demining element. Average exchange rates for 2020: DKK6.543=US\$1. US Federal Reserve, "List of Exchange Rates (Annual)," 4 January 2021. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Kristine Dyregaard Nielsen, Head of Section, Denmark Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence, 15 October 2021.

227. Average exchange rates for 2020: €1=US\$1.141; NOK9.4283=US\$1; £1=US\$1.2829; SEK9.2167=US\$1; and CHF0.9389=US\$. US Federal Reserve, "List of Exchange Rates (Annual)," 4 January 2021.

228. See previous Monitor reports.