

Mine Action Area of Responsibility
Strategy 2025 – 2026
Myanmar



Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Context	3
3. Incidents and Impact	3
3.1. Contamination and Proliferation of Explosive Hazards	4
4. People in Need and Targeting	5
5. Role and History of the MA AoR	5
6. Strategic Priorities	6
Objectives and key activities	6
6.1. Objective 1: Increase awareness and education on the risks of landmines and ERW among at-risk populations.	6
6.2. Objective 2: Enhance coordination, effectiveness, and coverage of mine action activities across Myanmar.	7
6.3. Objective 3: Ensure that landmine and ERW victims/survivors and their families have access to necessary health care, rehabilitation, reintegration, and socio-economic support.	8
6.4. Objective 4: Reduce and ultimately stop the indiscriminate use of landmines and victim-activated IEDs and limit their impact on the civilian population.	9
7. Guiding Principles	9
8. Conclusion	11
9. Enabling Factors	11

1. Introduction

Myanmar continues to face severe challenges due to landmines and explosive ordnance (EO), with the problem worsening since the 2021 military takeover. This strategy aims to address these issues through comprehensive actions that do not yet include demining operations, which are currently prohibited.

The primary focus is on expanding and improving Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) to reach more at-risk populations, enhancing the coordination and effectiveness of mine action activities, advocating for policy changes to allow demining, and limiting the use of landmines. Additionally, it seeks to provide extensive support to survivors, including medical care, rehabilitation, and socio-economic integration.

By implementing these measures, the strategy aspires to create a safer Myanmar, free from the threats posed by landmines and EO, ensuring that all communities can live in safety and that the needs of survivors are adequately met. This involves not only immediate risk mitigation through education but also long-term advocacy and support initiatives to build a more secure and resilient nation.

2. Context

Myanmar has faced significant issues with landmines and EO since conflicts began in 1948, following its independence. These hazards, including anti-personnel mines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), are reported in all 15 States and Regions, contributing to a persistent threat to safety.

Since the military takeover on February 1, 2021, violence has escalated, leading to intensified conflicts between the Myanmar Armed Forces, Ethnic Armed Organizations, and the People's Defense Forces. This has resulted in a significant rise in EO casualties, reaching record levels, with all conflict parties reportedly employing mines and victim-activated IEDs. De-mining is not allowed and communities lack essential information on safe behaviour, and many individuals, aware of the risks, are forced to disregard them for survival and livelihood needs.

Survivors of landmines and other EO incidents often face lifelong impairments, psychological trauma, social marginalization, livelihood difficulties, and barriers to education. The lack of access to emergency healthcare and rehabilitation services further exacerbates their plight, particularly due to the inadequacies of the healthcare system following the military takeover.

Additionally, armed clashes across Myanmar continue to displace significant numbers of civilians from their homes. As of 2 December 2024, UNHCR estimates that 3.2 million people have been internally displaced within Myanmar since the military takeover on February 1, 2021, with an additional 277,500 individuals displaced prior to this date. IDPs and returnees are especially at risk as they venture into new, unknown, and potentially contaminated environments.

Myanmar is not a signatory to key conventions such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), or the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). However, the country has shown engagement with APMBC-related events as an observer, including the Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the APMBC in Oslo in 2019. Myanmar is a State Party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), ratified in 2011, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified in 1991.

3. Incidents and Impact

The proliferation of landmines and explosive ordnance in Myanmar has reached a critical level, with incidents reported across all states and regions by Q3 of 2024¹. In the first nine months of the year, 889

¹ Myanmar Landmine/ ERW Incident Information 2024 (Q2), UNICEF Myanmar.

casualties were recorded nationwide, representing 85% of the total casualties reported in 2023, which stood at 1,052. Shan State recorded the highest number of casualties in 2024, accounting for 25% of the total, followed by Sagaing Region with 17% and Rakhine State with 12%. Children under 18 constituted 28% of the casualties, underscoring the disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations. In 2023, Myanmar also recorded the highest number of landmine and explosive ordnance casualties globally, ahead of Syria (933 casualties) and Afghanistan (651 casualties) and Ukraine (580), highlighting the widespread and devastating impact of landmine contamination². Myanmar's position as the highest contributor to global landmine casualties underscores the urgent need for increased mine action effort to address this escalating crisis. The growing presence of landmines in residential areas further exacerbates risks to civilians, highlighting the critical and immediate need for targeted interventions to mitigate the devastating impact on vulnerable populations.

3.1. Contamination and Proliferation of Explosive Hazards

Prior to 2021, landmine contamination in Myanmar was mainly concentrated in Kachin, northern Shan, parts of the Southeast, Rakhine, and partially in Chin. However, over the past two years, the proliferation of landmines, unexploded ordnance (UXOs), and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) has escalated to alarming levels, posing a significant threat to civilian populations. Currently, incidents of landmines are being reported in all states and regions of Myanmar, with the exception of Nay Pyi Taw, suggesting that contamination is now widespread across the country.

- **Encroachment into Residential Areas:** A particularly concerning development since 2022 is the encroachment of landmines into residential areas, dramatically increasing the risk to civilians. Landmines have been found around schools, temples, agricultural fields, and frequently used community paths, putting everyday activities and lives in constant jeopardy.
- **Surge in the Use of IEDs:** The use of IEDs has surged significantly, posing a new and escalating threat compared to the pre-2021 situation. While IEDs have always been present in Myanmar, their recent increased use has led to more frequent and severe injuries and fatalities. The sophistication and prevalence of these devices are growing, further endangering the civilian population.
- **Increase in UXOs:** Heavy fighting has resulted in a substantial increase in unexploded ordnance (UXO) in populated areas, presenting an imminent danger to civilians. While Myanmar has historically been more known for its landmine issues, the growing presence of UXOs is becoming a significant concern. This shift exacerbates the threat landscape, making it more complex and dangerous.

With over 3.2 million people displaced since February 2021, the imminent return of these individuals to their homes could worsen the crisis. Landmine and IED contamination pose significant barriers to their safe return, limiting access to essential services and jeopardizing livelihoods.

Longer term widespread contamination restricts access to agricultural lands, disrupts trade routes, stifles tourism, and impedes economic recovery. Contaminated land becomes unusable, affecting food security and livelihoods. The cost, time, and complexity involved in demining these communities will continue to rise, presenting long-term challenges. Communities live in constant fear and uncertainty, which affects mental health and community cohesion. The social fabric of communities is strained as people struggle to cope with the pervasive threat of landmines and EO. Landmines and UXOs also have a detrimental impact on the environment. Explosions and contamination damage natural habitats, hinder conservation efforts, and reduce biodiversity. The presence of mines can prevent access to water sources, forests, and other natural resources, further compounding the challenges faced by affected communities.

² Landmine Monitor 2023

4. People in Need and Targeting

As part of Protection Cluster the MA AoR has integrated various quantitative and qualitative data sources to capture all relevant variables of need, in broad consultation with sub-national clusters and partners. Data on internal displacement was used to estimate the number of displaced people in need of mine action assistance. Analysis of incidents data together with information from Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) provided insights into the frequency and intensity of violent incidents, correlating the need for protection services with the number of those most severely impacted by the crisis and identifying high-risk areas requiring intervention. This data was analysed along with reports from the Protection Incident Monitoring System (PIMS). The 2024 Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) highlighted specific protection vulnerabilities among displaced and marginalized groups, while an assessment of territorial control dynamics informed about access to services and associated risks. Additionally, weather severity analysis was integrated to account for the impact of climate-related risks on communities, ensuring that indicators reflected the capacity to respond to environmental challenges. Relevant gender and protection analyses were integral to informing the overall assessment. All assessments included gender-disaggregated data to capture specific vulnerabilities faced by women, girls, boys, and men. This informed targeted interventions to address unique protection risks.

Through this process, 7.3 million people were identified as being in need of mine action assistance in Myanmar. The MA AoR has set an ambitious target to reach 1 million people, a figure determined by current funding projections and delivery capacity. Achieving this goal requires a concerted effort, bringing together all stakeholders to collaborate and contribute toward this critical endeavour.

5. Role and History of the MA AoR

The MA AoR is essential for coordinating efforts across risk education, victim assistance, and advocacy for clearance and stockpile destruction. Established to enhance coherence, reach, and effectiveness, the MA AoR scales up responses during emergencies and operates under the Protection Cluster.

Efforts to address EO contamination in Myanmar gained international attention in 2008, leading to the formation of the national Mine Risk Working Group (MRWG) in 2012. However, the MRWG has not formally convened since the military takeover in 2021 and the challenges brought by COVID-19.

Recognizing the need for renewed coordination, the MA AoR was activated in early 2022 with efforts ongoing to include national organizations as co-leads. This forum facilitates collaboration, information sharing, and the development of effective referral mechanisms and responsive services for EO victims. The MA AoR operates at both national and sub-national levels, including coordination hubs in the Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Rakhine.

Through the Protection Cluster, the MA AoR works with the Inter-agency Cluster Coordination Group and aligns with the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP), emphasizing localization, inclusive programming, and improved outreach. This focus aims to build resilience and sustainability in mine action responses.

The MA AoR is committed to periodic reviews and the implementation of strategic plans, adhering to International Mine Action Standards. Multilateral and intergovernmental agencies, along with donors, are invited to support and actively participate in executing this strategy, aiming for a cohesive and effective mine action framework in Myanmar.

6. Strategic Priorities

Goal: To create a landmine impact-free Myanmar where all communities can live in safety and security, free from the threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war, and where the needs of survivors are adequately met.

Objectives and key activities

6.1. Objective 1: Increase awareness and education on the risks of landmines and ERW among at-risk populations.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Direct Delivery:

- Implement face-to-face Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) sessions in communities heavily affected by mines. These sessions will involve interactive workshops, presentations, and demonstrations on how to recognize, avoid, and report EO.
- Partner with local schools to either integrate EORE into the curriculum or deliver EORE in schools, ensuring children receive regular and age-appropriate education on EO risks.
- Conduct community outreach events, such as village meetings and public forums, to disseminate information on mine risks and safe behaviour practices.

Volunteer Network:

- Train and deploy local volunteers, including community leaders, teachers, and health workers, to deliver EORE. These volunteers will receive comprehensive training on EORE and communication skills.
- Establish a support system for volunteers, including regular training updates, resource materials, and a platform for sharing experiences and best practices.

Digital Outreach:

- Develop and distribute digital EORE materials, such as videos, apps, and social media campaigns, to reach broader audiences. These materials will be designed to be culturally sensitive and accessible to different literacy levels.

Integration with Humanitarian Activities:

- Mainstream EORE into other humanitarian programs, such as food distribution and health services, to maximize reach and impact. This will involve training humanitarian workers on EORE and incorporating mine risk messages into existing aid distribution channels.

Renew Material:

- Update and enhance educational materials regularly to keep illustrations and messaging current and relevant to evolving contexts. This includes revising content based on feedback from communities and incorporating new information on emerging threats.

Standardize Messaging:

- Ensure EORE messages remain clear, relevant, and consistent across all educational materials and platforms. Develop guidelines and templates for EORE communication to maintain uniformity in message delivery.

Indicators of Success: Number of people reached with EORE; increase in knowledge and awareness about mine risks among target populations.

6.2. Objective 2: Enhance coordination, effectiveness, and coverage of mine action activities across Myanmar.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Capacity Building:

- Provide training and resources to local mine action organizations to improve their operational capabilities.
- Develop a mentorship program where experienced mine action professionals guide and support local organizations in improving their operational capabilities.
- Supply essential equipment and resources to local organizations to enhance their ability to conduct mine action activities safely and effectively.

Quality Assurance:

- Implement quality assurance measures to ensure the safety and effectiveness of EORE operations using peer-to-peer quality assurance systems.
- Develop standard messaging for all EORE activities and ensure adherence through regular training and monitoring.

Local Organization Participation:

- Increase the number of local organizations participating in mine action activities to foster local ownership and sustainability. This involves providing grants, technical support, and capacity-building initiatives to strengthen local capabilities.

Contamination Surveys:

- Conduct systematic surveys to identify and map areas contaminated with landmines and EOs. This activity aims to gather comprehensive data to improve the understanding of the scope of the problem, facilitate proactive risk education and mitigation efforts, and prepare for future demining operations.

Data Management:

- Improve data collection, analysis, and sharing to inform decision-making and prioritize mine action activities. Establish an Information Management (IM) department to streamline these processes and develop a centralized database for mine action data, accessible to all relevant stakeholders, to facilitate coordination and information sharing.

5W Reporting:

- Enhance 5W (Who, What, Where, When, Whom) reporting to provide comprehensive and up-to-date information on mine action activities. This involves developing standardized reporting templates and ensuring regular data updates.

Funding and Staffing:

- Secure funding to reduce reliance on double-hatting and recruit specific staff dedicated to mine action coordination. This includes engaging with donors and exploring diverse funding sources.

Research Initiatives:

- Encourage research culture, e.g., in-depth studies on why people are stepping on landmines, KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices) surveys, pre- and post-EORE studies. This research will provide valuable insights to inform and refine mine action strategies.

Indicators of Success: Improved coordination and collaboration among mine action stakeholders; increased number of local organizations involved in mine action; enhanced capacity of local mine action organizations; establishment of an effective IM department; comprehensive and accurate 5W reporting; sustainable funding and dedicated staffing for mine action activities; implementation of robust quality assurance systems, including peer-to-peer mechanisms.

6.3. Objective 3: Ensure that landmine and ERW victims/survivors and their families have access to necessary health care, rehabilitation, reintegration, and socio-economic support.

KEY ACTIVITIES**Healthcare Services:**

- Facilitate access to medical care, surgeries, and psychological support for victims. This involves working closely with health cluster and healthcare providers, advocating for the inclusion of landmine victims in national health programs.
- Establish mobile health clinics to reach remote and underserved areas, ensuring that all victims have access to essential healthcare services.

Rehabilitation Programs:

- Develop and support physical rehabilitation services, including prosthetics and physiotherapy. This includes establishing rehabilitation centres, training healthcare workers, and providing necessary equipment and materials.
- Implement community-based rehabilitation programs to support victims in their own communities, promoting social inclusion and reducing the need for long-term institutional care.

Socio-Economic Reintegration:

- Encourage implementation of programmes that support the economic empowerment and social inclusion of survivors and their families. This includes vocational training, microfinance initiatives, and employment opportunities tailored to the needs and abilities of landmine survivors.
- Partner with local businesses and industries to create job opportunities for survivors, promoting their integration into the workforce.

Referral Systems:

- Establish and strengthen referral systems to connect survivors with available services and support networks. This involves creating a directory of services, training case managers, and developing referral protocols.
- Coordinate with other humanitarian organizations to ensure a holistic approach to victim support, addressing medical, psychological, social, and economic needs.

Multi-Purpose Cash Provision:

- Provide financial support to meet the diverse needs of victims and their families. Work closely with Cash Working Groups (CWG) to develop guidelines and ensure that cash assistance is delivered in a timely and effective manner.
- Monitor the impact of cash assistance on beneficiaries' well-being and adjust the program based on feedback and changing needs.

Indicators of Success: Number of victims receiving medical and psychological care; improvement in the quality of life and socio-economic status of survivors; increased availability and utilization of rehabilitation services.

6.4. Objective 4: Reduce and ultimately stop the indiscriminate use of landmines and victim-activated IEDs and limit their impact on the civilian population.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Campaigns:

- Conduct national and international campaigns to highlight the impact of landmines and the importance of mine action. This includes organizing events, producing advocacy materials, and leveraging media channels to raise awareness.
- Collaborate with interlocutors, influencers, and community leaders to amplify campaign messages and reach a broader audience.

Policy Engagement:

- Engage with policymakers to advocate for access to demining and the elimination of landmines. This involves organizing meetings, providing evidence-based recommendations, and building alliances with other advocacy groups.
- Lobby for Myanmar to sign and ratify key international conventions, such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW).

Evidence Collection:

- Gather and present evidence to support advocacy efforts. This includes collecting data on the humanitarian impact of landmines, documenting survivor stories, and conducting research on the socio-economic consequences of landmine contamination.
- Develop comprehensive reports and policy briefs to inform and influence decision-makers at the national and international levels.

Indicators of Success: Increased public and political awareness of mine action issues; policy changes and implementation of international treaties related to mine action; active participation of communities and survivors in advocacy initiatives.

7. Guiding Principles

Localization: Commit to flexible funding, capacity-building, equitable partnerships, and local leadership. Ensure regular coordination among donors, intermediaries, UN agencies, INGOs, and local CSOs to address humanitarian needs effectively. Emphasize direct funding to CSOs, earmarked funds for emergencies, and multi-year funding for predictable crisis response.

Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP): Establish clear communication channels to provide affected populations with information about programs. Implement feedback and complaint mechanisms to allow community members to express concerns and suggestions. Regular participatory assessments will involve community members in planning, monitoring, and evaluating activities. Empower local communities by equipping them with the necessary knowledge and tools to actively participate in mine action efforts. Train staff and partners on community engagement and accountability principles to foster a culture of respect and dignity towards those we assist. Prioritize transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness to build trust, improve program effectiveness, and contribute to safer and more resilient communities.

Adherence to International Mine Action Standards (IMAS): Follow IMAS for safety, efficiency, and effectiveness. Integrate the Five Pillars of Mine Action:

- **Mine Risk Education (MRE):** Educate affected communities about the dangers of landmines and ERW.
- **Demining (Mine Clearance):** Systematic removal of landmines and ERW to make land safe for use.
- **Victim Assistance:** Provide medical care, rehabilitation, and socio-economic support to those injured by landmines and ERW.
- **Stockpile Destruction:** Safe and secure disposal of stockpiled anti-personnel mines to prevent future use.
- **Advocacy:** Promote policies and practices that aim to eliminate the threat of landmines and support the rights of affected individuals and communities.

Conflict Sensitivity: Tailor interventions to Myanmar's specific context, engage local communities, and ensure flexible programming. Monitor the impact of interventions on conflict dynamics and adjust strategies as needed. Key principles include:

- **Contextual Adaptation:** Continuous analysis and understanding of conflict dynamics.
- **Inclusive Participation:** Engage local communities, including ethnic and conflict-affected groups, in planning and implementation.
- **Flexible Programming:** Adapt funding and operations based on real-time conflict assessments.
- **Capacity Building:** Train local organizations on conflict-sensitive approaches.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish mechanisms to track the impact on conflict dynamics and adjust strategies.

Protection Mainstreaming: Prioritize safety, dignity, and meaningful access to services. Develop tools and provide training on protection principles. Focus on preventing gender-based violence, safeguarding children, promoting gender equality, and including marginalized groups. Key elements include:

- **Meaningful Access, Safety, and Dignity:** Ensure safe environments for all individuals to access aid.
- **Developing Tools and Providing Training:** Enhance protection mainstreaming through practical tools and comprehensive training.
- **Principles of Protection Mainstreaming:** Prioritize safety, avoid causing harm, ensure meaningful access, promote accountability, and encourage participation and empowerment.
- **Specific Protection Concerns:** Focus on gender-based violence prevention, child safeguarding, gender equality, and inclusion of marginalized groups.

8. Conclusion

By incorporating these principles and objectives, MA AoR strategy aims to address both immediate and long-term challenges posed by landmines and explosive ordnance in Myanmar. Through comprehensive risk education, effective clearance operations when possible, victim assistance, and sustainable capacity building, MA AoR strives to create safer and more resilient communities. MA AoR's adherence to international standards and commitment to localization, accountability, conflict sensitivity, and protection mainstreaming ensure that our interventions are impactful and sustainable, ultimately contributing to a impact-free Myanmar.

9. Enabling Factors

The successful implementation of the strategy to address landmine and EO threats in Myanmar relies on several key enabling factors. Political will and support are crucial, and it is possible with the right approach and engagement, facilitating both geographical access and also thematic such as allowing the demining to take place. Active engagement and cooperation from local authorities and community leaders is possible and would further bolster these efforts.

International support and sustained funding from donors and humanitarian organizations are vital to ensure the necessary resources are available for comprehensive mine action initiatives.

Building local capacity and fostering ownership are essential for the long-term sustainability of mine action activities, ensuring they have the skills and resources needed to continue these efforts independently.

Effective coordination and strong partnerships among stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and international organizations, are fundamental to leveraging diverse expertise and resources. Establishing robust coordination mechanisms can help synchronize efforts and avoid duplication, maximizing the impact of mine action activities.

Community engagement and participation are key to the success of risk education and awareness programs. Involving affected communities in planning, decision-making, and implementation ensures that interventions are culturally appropriate and context-specific, enhancing their effectiveness.

Technological advancements play a significant role in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of mine action response in Myanmar, including social media platforms and GIS tools can lead to more effective and innovative solutions.

A robust monitoring and evaluation framework is essential for tracking progress and measuring impact. Establishing clear indicators and benchmarks, along with regular monitoring and feedback mechanisms, allows for the adaptation of strategies based on evolving conditions and community needs.

Continuous advocacy and awareness campaigns at national and international levels are necessary to highlight the issue of landmines and mobilize support. Public awareness campaigns can educate broader audiences and garner the necessary attention and resources for sustained mine action efforts.

By focusing on these enabling factors, the strategy can create a conducive environment for addressing the threats posed by landmines and explosive ordnance in Myanmar, ensuring long-term safety and security for its communities.

END