

The Impact of Mines/ERW on Children

Child casualties in 2020

Child casualties are recorded where the age of the victim is less than 18 years at the time of the mine or explosive remnants of war (ERW) explosion, or when the casualty was reported by the source (such as media) as being a child.

In 2020, there were at least 1,872 child casualties.

- Children made up half of civilian casualties where the age group was known.
- They accounted for 30% of all casualties—including civilians, humanitarian deminers, and military personnel—for whom the age group was known.
- Children were killed (645) or injured (1,218) by mines/ERW in 34 states and one other area in 2020. The survival outcome for nine children was not reported.

As in previous years, Afghanistan recorded the most child casualties of mines/ERW in 2020 (706). Children are extremely affected by mines/ERW in Afghanistan, the country where the highest number of child casualties of conflict was recorded since the United Nations (UN) began systematically documenting civilian casualties in 2009.

Syria had the next highest number of child casualties reported in 2020 (537). Syria has remained the country with the second highest annual number of child casualties after Afghanistan since 2015. Due to limited information and disaggregation, a lack of comprehensive data collection, and decreased access to many areas, it is certain that the actual number of child annual casualties occurring in Syria during that period is significantly higher.

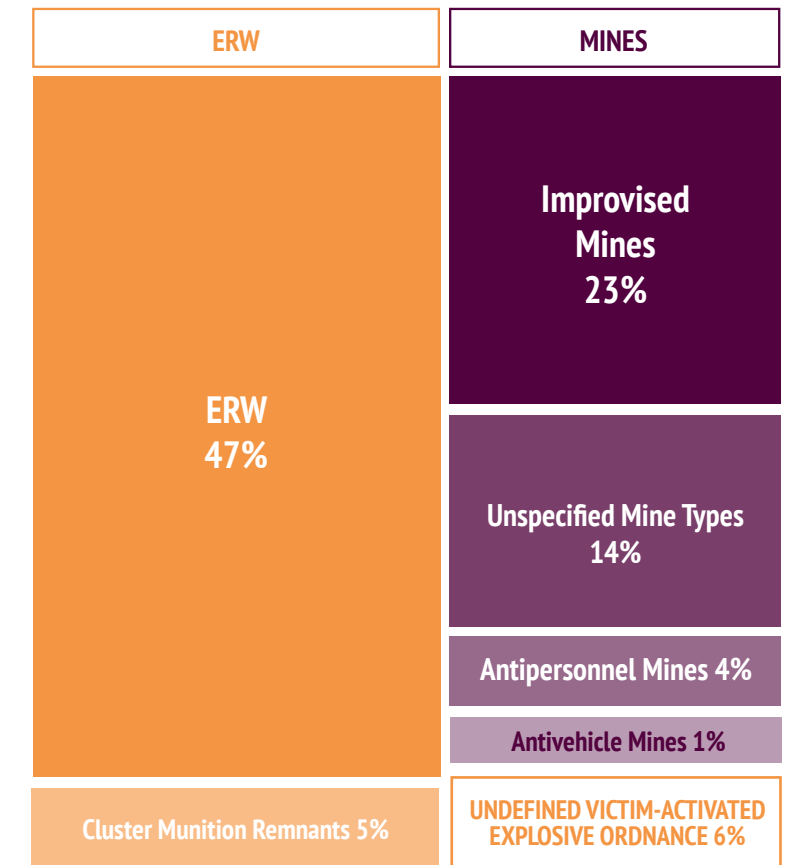
As in previous years, in 2020 the vast majority of child casualties—where the sex was known—were boys (81%).

Countries with the most child casualties in 2020

Countries	Child Casualties	Percentage of total global child casualties in 2020 (where age group was reported)
Afghanistan	706	37%
Syria	537	29%
Yemen	130	7%
Myanmar	76	4%
South Sudan	56	3%
Burkina Faso	49	3%
Iraq	42	2%
Pakistan	30	2%

Note: States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty are indicated in **bold**.

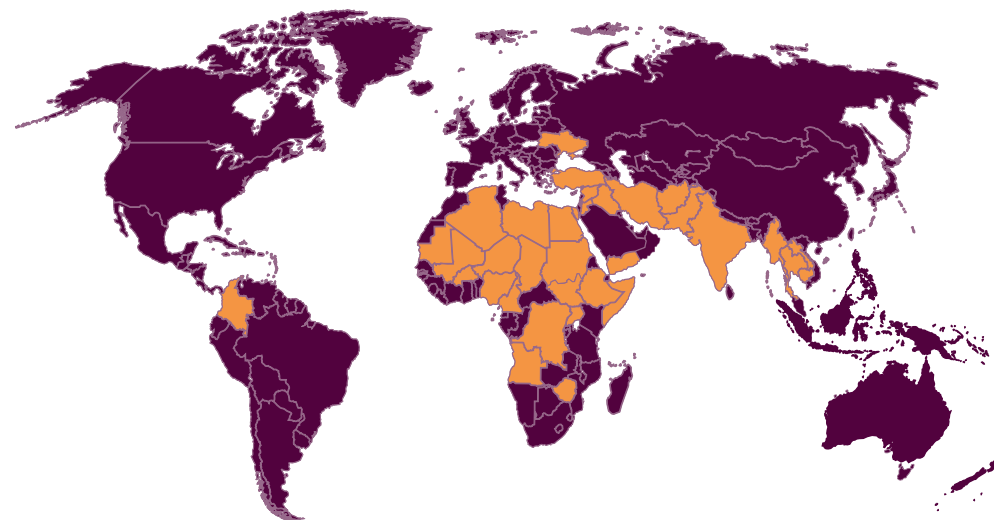
Devices causing child casualties in 2020



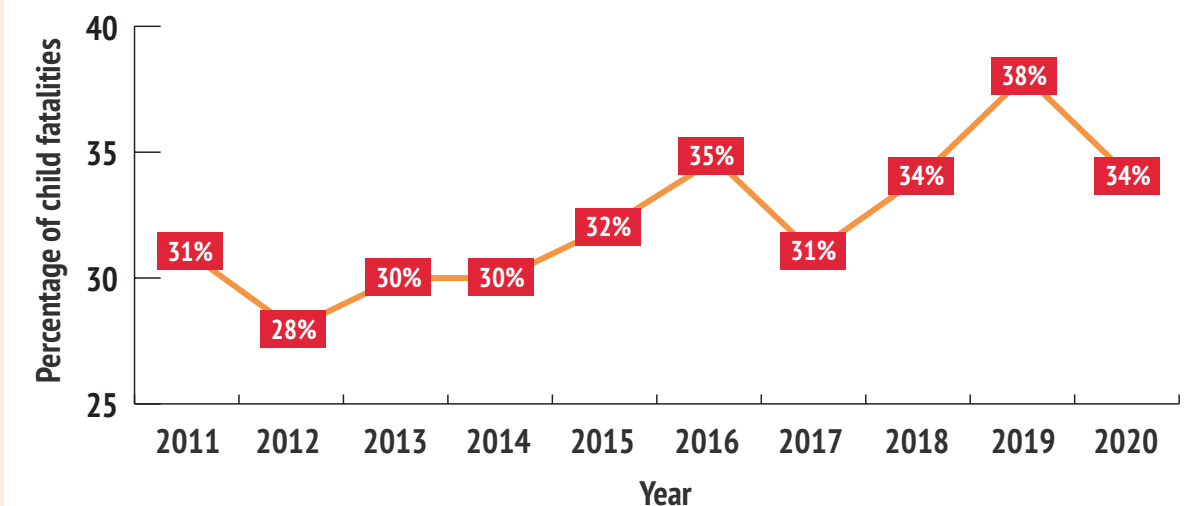
Child casualties recorded in 2020

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lao PDR, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia, Somaliland, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

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Percentage of child casualties killed 2010–2020



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Preventing child casualties

Risk education is one of the key methods to raise awareness among children of the risks of mines and ERW and to teach safe behavior. All of the states in which risk education was reported in 2020 also reached children.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), an estimated 4 million children are exposed to the danger of mines/ERW. Children are a key risk group because they are growing up in contaminated areas and often lack knowledge of the risks. In many states, children, particularly boys, are responsible for looking after animals and undertaking chores further from home, which may take them into mined areas. In some states children are more at risk from ERW, including cluster munition remnants, because they pick up items out of curiosity.

Although fewer reported mine and ERW incidents involve girls, women and girls are often an important group to target in risk education as they can help promote safer behavior among men and children. Women and girls are often harder to reach with risk education in places where their social and economic roles have been constrained. Women and girls have been encouraged by risk education organizations to engage with their families and communities.

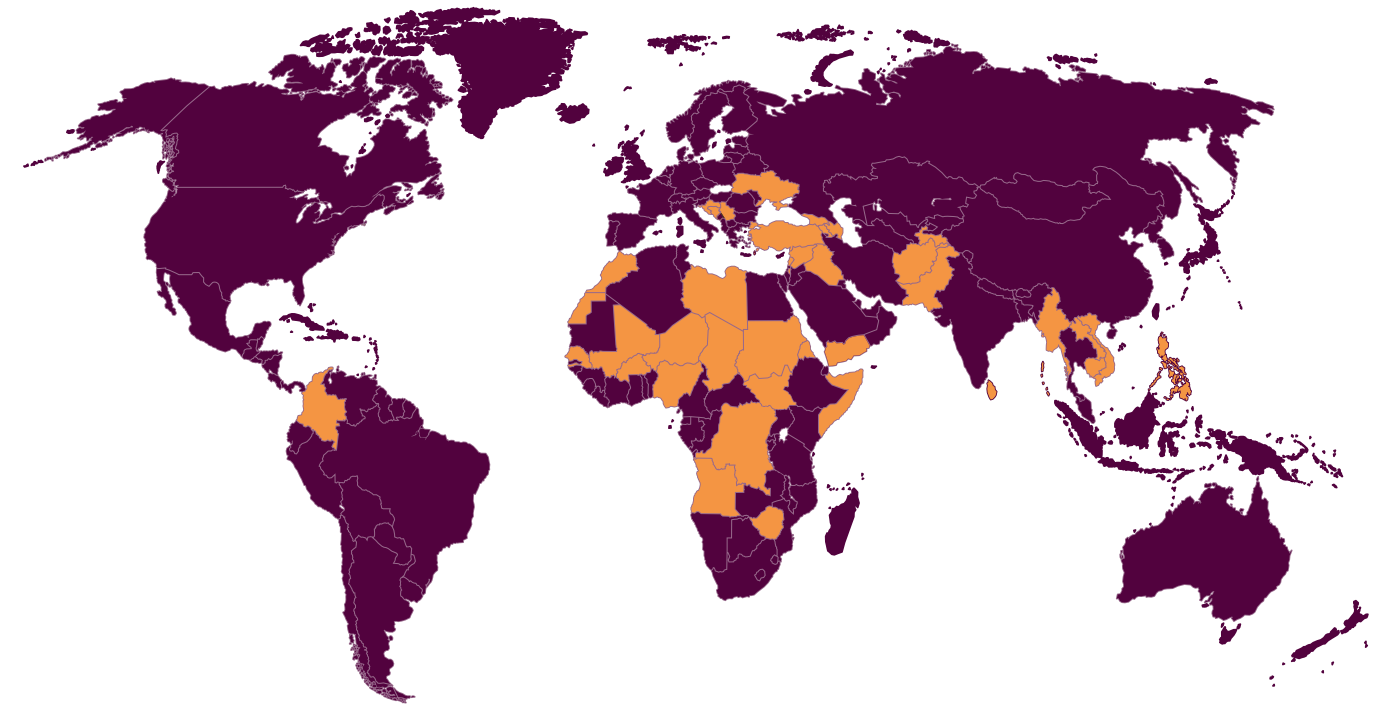
Risk education messages are conveyed to children through interactive means such as puppet shows, games, role plays, videos, and apps. Risk education is often provided to children in schools, by risk education teams or by teachers as part of the school curriculum.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the delivery of risk education to children in school settings in many countries. Risk education operators turned to innovative technology and online teaching methods to reach children.

- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, online risk education reached primary school children through an instant messaging app "Viber."
- In Colombia, the "Safe Steps" project provided risk education through community sessions, television slots, and interactive 3D virtual reality stories.
- In Ukraine, an online education course "Super Team against Mines" reached children in both government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas.

Despite the challenges in 2020, children made up more than two thirds (68%) of all risk education beneficiaries (based on answers by operators in 24 countries and areas to an explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) survey by the Monitor): 47% of all those child beneficiaries were girls and the remaining 53% were boys.

States and other areas where children received risk education in 2020



Abkhazia, Afghanistan, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, Colombia, Croatia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Georgia, Iraq, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Myanmar, Nagorno-Karabakh, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Senegal, Serbia, Somalia, Somaliland, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, Vietnam, Western Sahara, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

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Risk education in schools in Mine Ban Treaty States Parties

Risk education in school curriculum

Afghanistan, Cambodia, Colombia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan
(Also provided risk education in schools outside of the curriculum)

Risk education in school curriculum in development

Iraq, Nigeria, South Sudan, Zimbabwe

Risk education outside of the formal school curriculum

Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Chad, Colombia, Croatia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Ukraine, Yemen, Zimbabwe

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Age-sensitive victim assistance for children

Age-sensitive victim assistance remained among the significant under-reported aspects of victim assistance, particularly with regard to child survivors or children who are the family members of survivors and/or persons killed by mines and ERW.

Child survivors have specific and additional needs in all aspects of assistance. For example, children whose injuries resulted in amputated limbs require more complicated rehabilitative assistance. They need to have prostheses made more often as they grow and may require corrective surgery for the changing shape of a residual limb.

National education plans and policies including programs to promoting inclusive education at all levels can contribute to the inclusion of child survivors and indirect child victims.

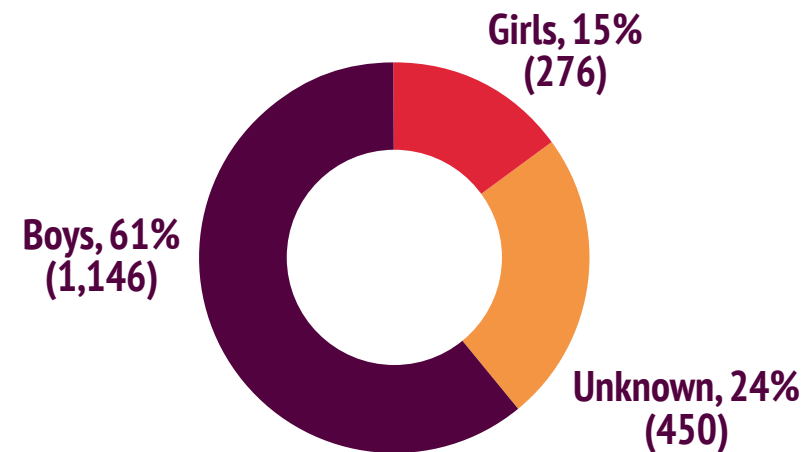
However, the extensive needs have far surpassed the progress made to date. Due to the high ratio and numbers of child casualties recorded annually, international actors sought to improve the situation for children in humanitarian settings.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) recognizes that children with disabilities should have full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children; and also recalls obligations undertaken by States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

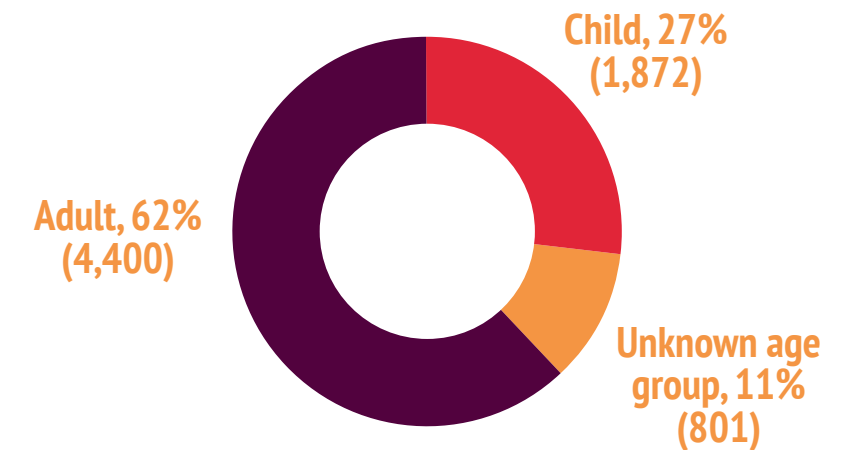
Reporting and guidelines on issues of children and landmines have been progressively developed:

- Each year since 2009, the Monitor has released specific annual updates on the impact of mines/ERW on children including data on child casualties and information on child-focused victim assistance to raise awareness of the threats, needs, challenges, and progress.
- In 2014, Colombia, as the Mine Ban Treaty Victim Assistance co-chair, produced a guide to victim assistance for children and adolescents, and UNICEF published guidance on victim assistance for children.
- In 2019 the UN's interagency Protection Standby Capacity Project (ProCap) launched a deployment in response to the impact of mines/ERW on children, from which guidance was produced in 2020 to strengthen the response to the needs of child survivors throughout the broader humanitarian program cycles.

Child casualties by gender in 2020



Child casualties among all casualties in 2020



Explosive items causing child casualties: 2010–2020

