

The Impact of Mines/ERW on Children

Reporting for the period 2019–2023

Child casualties¹

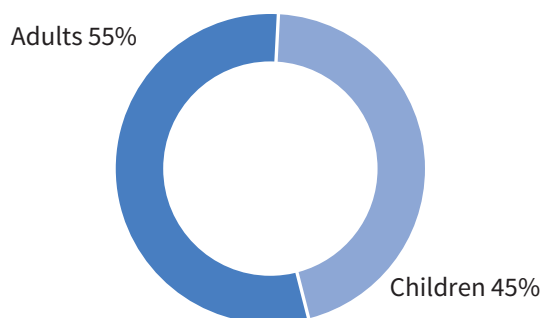
Children are extremely vulnerable to the harm caused by antipersonnel landmines and improvised mines, as well as by explosive remnants of war (ERW), including cluster munition remnants. Children have made up almost half (43%) of all civilian casualties (people killed and injured) recorded by the Monitor since 1999.²

Landmine Monitor 2024 found that there were at least 1,498 child casualties from mines and ERW in 2023, which accounted for 37% of all civilian casualties for whom the age group was known (4,007), while civilians represented 84% of recorded casualties in 2023 where the civilian status was known. Of the 1,498 child casualties in 2023, 470 were killed and 994 were injured by mines/ERW across 30 states and other areas.

Child casualties 2019–2023

In the five-year period following the Mine Ban Treaty Fourth Review Conference in Oslo in 2019, child casualties from landmines and ERW have continued to occur in disturbing numbers. This fact sheet presents an overview of child casualties during this period, highlighting trends, and the types of mines and ERW causing harm. It also looks at child casualties across mine-affected States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty, particularly those with extended Article 5 clearance deadlines.

Mine/ERW casualties by age group in 2019–2023³



During the period 2019–2023, children accounted for 45% (7,918 of 17,512) of all civilian casualties for whom the age was known.

While Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor data on child casualties represents the most complete global total for 2019–2023, the actual number of casualties—including among children—is certain to be significantly higher than that recorded for this period. This was due in some cases to data being collected rapidly—in situations of emergencies, conflict, and displacement. Data was often unavailable; or available information on the casualties lacked details, such as age, civilian or military status, and gender.

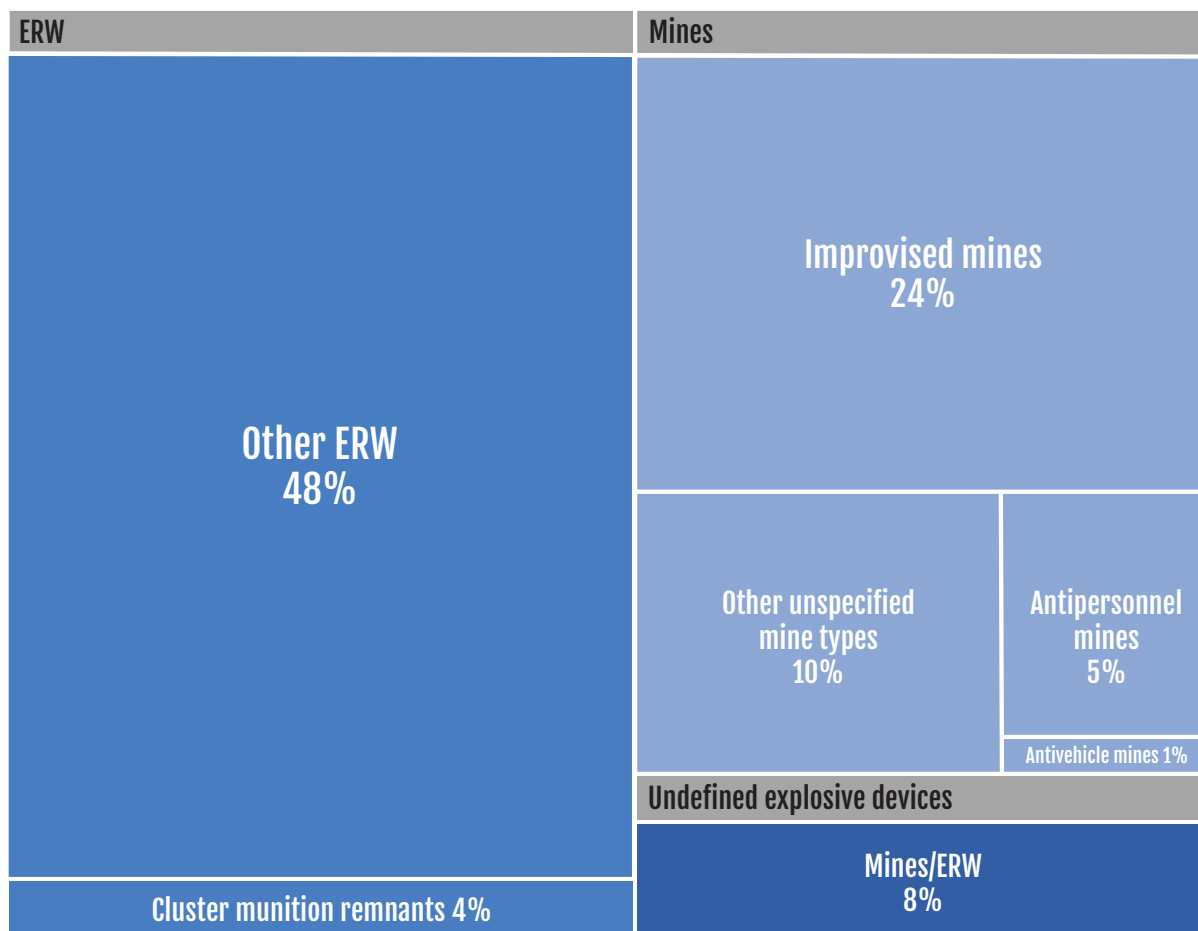
States with the largest numbers of child casualties from mines/ERW in 2019–2023

Country	Child casualties	Percentage of child casualties	Total civilian casualties
Afghanistan	2,816	54%	5,180
Syria	1,662	54%	3,060
Yemen	687	57%	1,205
Myanmar	544	25%	2,208
Somalia	212	84%	253
Angola	211	67%	315
Iraq	191	46%	411
South Sudan	183	73%	252
Pakistan	137	44%	308
Nigeria	100	29%	349

Explosive devices causing child casualties in 2019–2023

Children in general are more likely to deliberately handle explosive items than adults, often unknowingly, out of curiosity, or by mistaking them for toys or other objects for play. Compared to adults, children are disproportionately affected by ERW and unexploded cluster submunitions. In 2019–2023, ERW continued to kill and injure more children than any other type of explosive device. Just under half of all child casualties (3,802, or 48%) were caused by ERW, and correspondingly, 63% of all ERW casualties were children, where the age group was recorded. Children accounted for almost half (47, or 47%) of all casualties from cluster munition remnants in 2023.

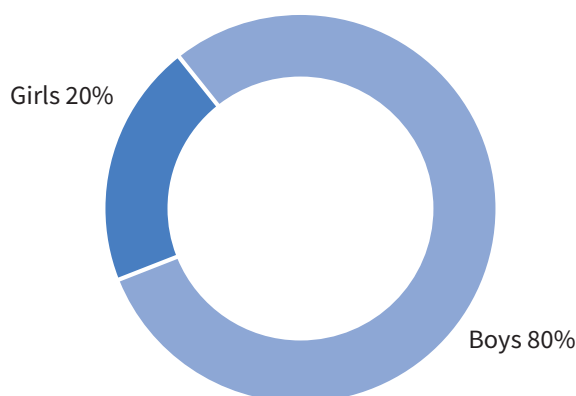
Child casualties by type of explosive device in 2019–2023



Gender and child casualties

Girls accounted for 20% of child casualties in 2019–2023, while boys continued to constitute the vast majority of child casualties at 80%, where reported.⁴

Mine/ERW casualties by sex recorded in 2019–2023



Update on children and risk education in 2023

As people continue to live and work in or near contaminated areas, risk education to address the threat posed by mines and ERW is a crucial intervention. Of the 33 States Parties with clearance obligations, 28 reported or are known to have provided risk education during 2023.⁵ Children are considered an at-risk group since their lack of knowledge of the risks and their curiosity can lead them to venture into and/or play in or near contaminated areas, and even touch or pick up unexploded ordnance. In many countries contaminated with mines and ERW, boys are at even higher risk of harm as they are more involved than girls in outdoor activities (such as herding livestock, gathering wood and food, or collecting scrap metal), during which they are likely to come into contact with mines and ERW.⁶

Children living in contaminated areas have been a key target group over the last few years. The number of child beneficiaries increased significantly from 47% of all beneficiaries in 2022 to 67% in 2023, with the percentage of boys receiving risk education increasing by 13% over the same period.

Victim assistance and child casualties

Child survivors have specific and additional needs in all aspects of assistance. For example, children whose injuries result 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 (stump).

Age-sensitive assistance remained among the significant under-reported aspects of victim assistance, particularly with regard to children who are the family members of survivors and persons killed by mines and ERW. Overall, reporting from programs and projects has yet to effectively address assistance and action intended to cover the specific needs of child and adolescent survivors according to their age group, background, and needs, rather than simply mentioning children as beneficiaries. Victim assistance providers do not provide detailed records of how child mine/ERW survivors or other children with disabilities have been assisted, or specifically which services have been rendered.

- 1 Child casualties include: casualties where the age of the victim is reported as less than 18 years at the time of the mine/ERW explosion, or when the casualty was reported by the source (such as a database or media report) as being a child.
- 2 Figures are for civilian casualties, where the age was known. Of the total casualties recorded since 1999, including military and deminers, 32% (34,453) were children where the age was known. The age was known for 107,247 casualties, with another 52,197 unknown.
- 3 These statistics refer to the percentages of civilian casualties where the age was known.
- 4 Statistics refer to data where the sex of casualties was recorded: 1,170 girls and 4,665 boys. The sex of 2,083 child casualties was not recorded for 2019–2023.
- 5 Argentina, Cyprus, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, and Oman did not report any risk education activities in 2023.
- 6 These are ongoing Monitor findings. For more background information, see, UNICEF, “The State of the World’s Children 2013: Children with disabilities,” pp. 54–69, www.unicef.org/reports/state-worlds-children-2013.