

Improvised Mines: The Impact 2019–2023

This fact sheet examines the impact of improvised mines, highlighting casualty and contamination issues during the period covered by the Oslo Action Plan. It provides an overview of the increasing harm caused by improvised antipersonnel mines, the countries impacted, and the challenges of assessing and reporting affected areas.

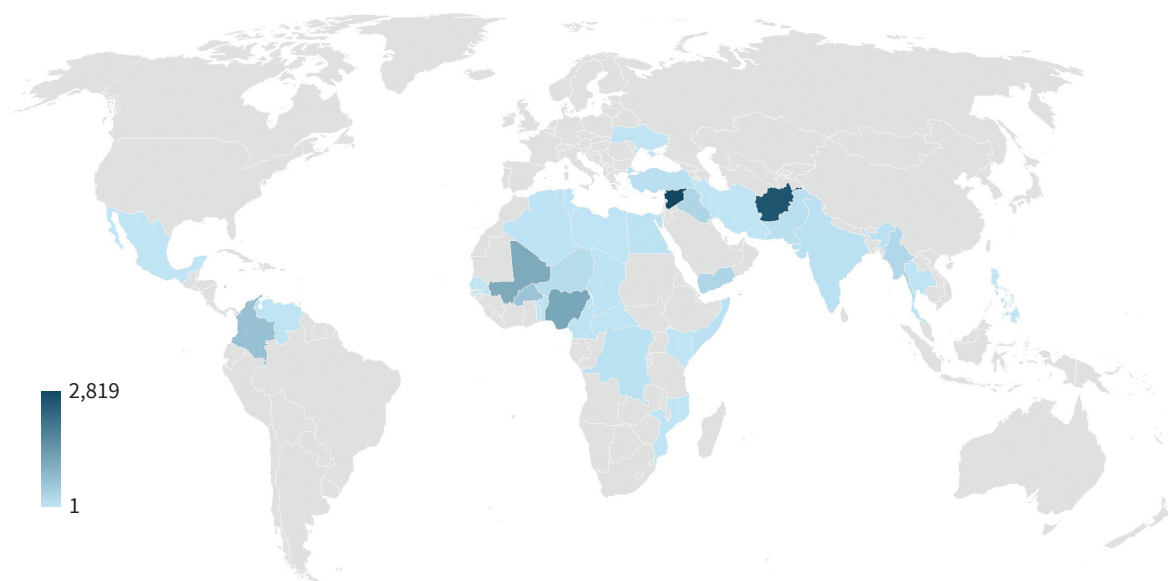
Improvised Mines: Casualties

Improvised mines are “homemade”—or assembled—explosive weapons that are designed to cause death or injury, and may be detonated by the presence, proximity, or contact of a person or a vehicle. As such, improvised mines can be considered victim-activated improvised explosive devices (IEDs). If their detonation can be initiated by a person, they fit the definition of antipersonnel landmines and are therefore prohibited under the Mine Ban Treaty.

Available information indicates that, worldwide, the fusing of most improvised mines causing casualties does allow them to be activated by a person, thus effectively making them antipersonnel mines prohibited under the Mine Ban Treaty.

The Monitor has recorded at least 10,553 improvised mine casualties in the period 2019–2023, and 35,733 casualties since 1999.

Improvised mine casualties recorded globally: 2019–2023



Improvised mines and other landmine types causing casualties

For each consecutive year since 2016, improvised mines caused the highest number of annual casualties. That remained the case in 2023. Of the 3,546 recorded casualties due to landmines of any type in 2023, the majority were caused by improvised mines (2,071). Antipersonnel mines—not including improvised mines—resulted in 833 casualties, antivehicle mines resulted in 291 casualties, and another 351 casualties were due to unspecified mine types.¹

In 2023, casualties from improvised mines were identified in 23 states.

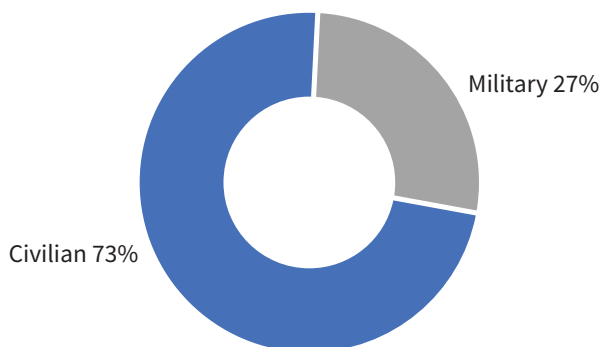
States with improvised mine casualties recorded in 2023*

Afghanistan, Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, Syria, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Türkiye, and Yemen.

* States Parties are indicated in **bold**.

The effects of improvised mines disproportionately impact civilians. Civilians represented the vast majority of casualties compared to military and other security forces.

Improvised mine casualties according to civilian status (where known): 2019–2023

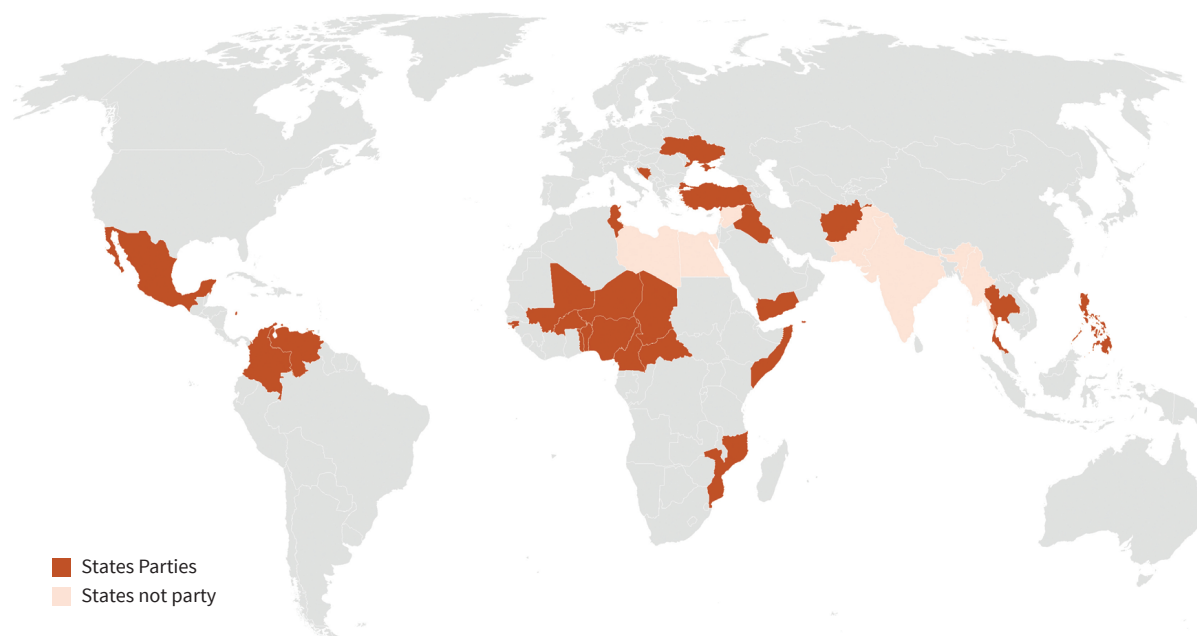


Fatal outcomes of improvised mines: 2019–2023

In the period 2019–2023, the survival rate for civilian casualties of improvised mines is much lower than for all other devices combined, at 55% compared to 68%, respectively.

Improvised Mines: Contamination

States suspected to be contaminated with antipersonnel mines of an improvised nature: 2019–2023



States recorded as affected by improvised mines in 2023*

Afghanistan, Benin, BiH, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, the DRC, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, India, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Somalia, Syria, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yemen.

* States Parties are indicated in **bold**.

Contamination from improvised mines and treaty obligations

As of October 2024, at least 32 countries are believed or known to currently have improvised mine contamination. The majority (25) are Mine Ban Treaty States Parties. Of those, 11 do not have recognized clearance obligations under Article 5 of the Mine Ban Treaty. These include Mozambique and Venezuela, which had both previously fulfilled their clearance obligations in 2015 and 2013, respectively.

Action 21 of the 2019 Oslo Action Plan specifies that “States Parties affected by antipersonnel mines of an improvised nature will ensure that they apply all provisions and obligations under the Convention to such contamination as they do for all other types of anti-personnel mines, including during survey and clearance in fulfilment of Article 5 and disaggregate by types of mines when reporting in fulfilment of Article 7 obligations.”²

States Parties without current clearance deadlines that are suspected to have improvised antipersonnel mine contamination

Burkina Faso, Benin, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Mali, Mexico, Mozambique, the Philippines, Togo, Tunisia, and Venezuela

However, improvised mine contamination remains difficult to identify and record in any systematic way, thus making it difficult for States Parties to fulfill Action 21. Due to ongoing use, and changing methodologies of manufacture, defining the boundaries of areas suspected to be affected by improvised mines and establishing accurate contamination baselines is problematic. In many countries with volatile security situations, these mines are primarily handled on-site by local security forces, if found, and may go unreported on a wider scale. Moreover, counter-IED (C-IED) measures can themselves lead to changing circumstances and increase the use of improvised mines. This occurs when non-state armed groups (NSAGs) employ indiscriminate victim-activated improvised mines to evade C-IED methods that block the remote detonation of IEDs.

Challenges such as these were discussed at the Treaty’s Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties in November 2023 and at a regional conference on improvised antipersonnel mines in Accra in February 2024.³ The issue was also raised in a July 2024 United Nations Secretary-General report on IEDs.⁴

State Parties’ reporting on improvised mines remains limited. Few States Parties acknowledge the presence of improvised mines and insufficient detail exists on the antipersonnel features of fusing systems. Burkina Faso and Mali, for the first time in 2023, reported the presence of mines of an improvised nature in their Article 7 reports, but did not re-engage with their treaty clearance obligations by requesting new Article 5 deadlines.

In this regard, a good example has been set by Nigeria. In 2011, Nigeria announced that it had fulfilled its clearance obligation under Article 5 of the Mine Ban Treaty. However, subsequently in 2019 at the Fourth Review Conference, Nigeria reported facing the “tragic consequences” of improvised antipersonnel mines, identifying newly mined areas with these devices. As a result, Nigeria requested an extension of its clearance deadline in November 2020, which was granted with a new deadline of December 2021. Subsequently, Nigeria requested an additional extension with a deadline of December 2025.⁵

Additionally, a number of affected States Parties, including Afghanistan, Colombia, Iraq, and Yemen, are also leading the way by reporting improvised mine hazard area land release activities and the destruction of improvised mines.

- ¹ In many countries where conflict and violence are prevalent, media reporting and other available sources often do not clearly identify the type of explosive item causing casualties. The term “landmine” is often used both for improvised mines and other mine types indistinguishably. These casualties are recorded by the Monitor under “unspecified mine types.” However, even when a reliable source reports a “mine” or “landmine” incident, and the information to distinguish if it was an antipersonnel mine, antivehicle mine, or improvised mine is lacking, the location of incidents and contexts of harm often serve as indicators of casualties caused by improvised mines.
- ² Oslo Action Plan, Mine Ban Treaty Fourth Review Conference, Oslo, 29 November 2019, p. 36, bit.ly/OsloActionPlan2019.
- ³ “Anti-Personnel Mines of an improvised nature and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention,” Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 15 November 2023, pp. 1–2, bit.ly/MBTImprovisedMines15Nov2023; and Regional Conference on Addressing the Humanitarian Impact of Improvised Anti-Personnel Mines within the Framework of the Convention, 13–15 February 2024, bit.ly/MBTAccra13-15Feb2024;
- ⁴ United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), “Countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices: Report of the Secretary-General (A/79/211),” 22 July 2024, pp. 18–19, www.undocs.org/en/A/79/211.
- ⁵ Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, “Membership: Nigeria,” bit.ly/APMBCMembershipNigeria.