

# LANDMINE MONITOR

**Myanmar/Burma Country Report  
November 2019**



# LANDMINE & CLUSTER MUNITION **MONITOR**

2019 Landmine Monitor  
& Cluster Munition Monitor  
Myanmar/Burma Country Reports

## About this 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. **Cluster Munition Monitor** documents the implementation of the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions. Both Landmine Monitor and Cluster Munition Monitor assess the efforts of the international community to resolve the crisis caused by these weapons.

As of 1 November 2019, 164 countries, over 80% of the world's governments, have ratified, or acceded to, the Mine Ban Treaty. 120 countries have signed, ratified, or acceded to, the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Myanmar/Burma has not yet joined either convention.

Landmine & Cluster Munition 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 and cluster munitions. It is meant to compliment the reporting requirements of countries which have ratified the treaties. Our reports seek to make transparent the state of the landmine and cluster munition crisis, and government policies or practices, in non-signatory states.

Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor aims to promote and facilitate discussion within human society in order to reach the goal of a landmine and cluster munition free world.

Landmine & Cluster Munition 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 & Cluster Munition Monitor Myanmar/Burma researcher for 2019 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](mailto:burma@icblcmc.org). If you have corrections regarding the contents of this report please write: [monitor@icblcmc.org](mailto:monitor@icblcmc.org)

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Cover Photo: Landmine survivor in Kawt Pyin village, Kyaukkyi township, doing livelihood activity of peeling betel nuts Photo Credit Zaw Zaw Oo/Humanity & Inclusion



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## Mine Ban Policy

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has not acceded to the Mine Ban Treaty.<sup>1</sup>

Myanmar continued to express its support for the Mine Ban Treaty in the reporting period, but did not take any steps to accede to it. Myanmar's armed forces claim to use antipersonnel landmines on a limited basis. (*See Use section below.*)

In November 2018, at the Mine Ban Treaty Meeting of States Parties, Myanmar reiterated that the peace process is the "highest priority." It also stated that it "would like to encourage relevant international organizations and the states parties to further strengthen cooperation with the countries which are not yet ready to accede to the Convention by providing more necessary technical assistance which we believe will facilitate them to join the Convention expeditiously."<sup>2</sup>

Previously, in June 2018, a Myanmar Ministry of Defense official told the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) that key stakeholders, particularly the military, are reviewing the possibility of Myanmar's accession to the Mine Ban Treaty.<sup>3</sup> However, in late May 2018, Myanmar's Minister for International Cooperation, U Kyaw Tin, told the treaty's special envoy, Prince Mired Raad Zeid Al-Hussein of Jordan, that Myanmar would consider joining the treaty after the successful implementation of a nationwide ceasefire agreement by all parties.<sup>4</sup> At the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on 8 November 2018, Myanmar reiterated that relevant officials were reviewing the Mine Ban Treaty to gain a better understanding of it with a view to the country joining in future. Myanmar added that disarmament matters are part of the peace process negotiation and that capacity constraints also prevent Myanmar from joining the convention.<sup>5</sup>

Previously, 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.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The military junta ruling the country changed the name from Burma to Myanmar. Many ethnic groups in the country, and a number of states, 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 [MINU website](#).

<sup>2</sup> [Statement of Myanmar](#), Mine Ban Treaty Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 30 November 2018.

<sup>3</sup> ICBL/Landmine Monitor meeting with U Min Htike Hein, Assistant Secretary, Union Minister Office for Defence, Ministry of Defence, Naypyitaw, 29 June 2018.

<sup>4</sup> "[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, "[Mine Ban Convention Special Envoy to visit Myanmar](#)," Press Release, 24 May 2018.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> Landmine Monitor meetings 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. Press Release, "[Myanmar seriously considering landmine treaty as part of its state reforms](#)," Mine Ban Treaty Implementation Support Unit (ISU), 12 July 2012.

On 4 April 2019, the International Day for Mine Action, at an event in Naypyitaw, UNICEF encouraged the government to, “accelerate efforts towards the preparation and ratification of the Mine Ban Treaty,” while calling on all parties to conflict to cease laying new landmines. At the same event, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator encouraged the government to enable mine clearance activities to begin in states where conflicts have ceased without waiting for the full conclusion of the peace process.<sup>7</sup>

Myanmar again abstained from voting on UNGA Resolution 73/61 on 5 December 2018, which promotes universalization of the Mine Ban Treaty. Since 1997, Myanmar has abstained from voting on this annual UNGA resolution supporting the Mine Ban Treaty.<sup>8</sup>

Myanmar has participated as an observer in several Meetings of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty, most recently in November 2018, but it has never attended a Mine Ban Treaty Review Conference.<sup>9</sup> Myanmar participated in intersessional meetings of Mine Ban Treaty in Geneva in 2013, 2014, 2016, and 2019.

At the 17th Meeting of States Parties in December 2018, Myanmar’s delegation responded to allegations of landmine use by Myanmar forces.<sup>10</sup> Myanmar stated that it had begun joint-patrols with Bangladesh along their shared border in August 2018, and claimed that since the institution of these patrols, no landmine casualties had been reported.

In April 2019, Myanmar also attended a regional seminar on the landmine ban organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Lao Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vientiane.<sup>11</sup>

In March 2019, the Human Rights Council’s Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar called on the government of Myanmar and ethnic armed groups to immediately halt mine use, and for the government to join the Mine Ban Treaty.<sup>12</sup>

In December 2018, Mine-Free Myanmar<sup>13</sup> (an initiative launched by the ICBL in 2003 to promote the landmine ban in Myanmar, including by calling for a halt to use of antipersonnel mines) held a press conference in Yangon to launch *Landmine Monitor 2018*’s country report on Myanmar and distributed 1,200 Burmese-language translations of the report.<sup>14</sup> In December 2018 and June 2019, Landmine Monitor worked with the UN’s Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU) to produce and disseminate infographics outlining the impact of landmines in Myanmar and the impact of landmine casualties on the health system in Myanmar respectively.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> UNICEF, “[One out of four casualties of landmine incidents in Myanmar are children](#),” Press Release, 4 April 2019.

<sup>8</sup> In 1996, Myanmar voted in favour of a UNGA resolution calling on governments to pursue an international agreement banning antipersonnel landmines.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> [Statement of Myanmar](#), Mine Ban Treaty Seventeenth Meeting of State Parties, Geneva, 26 November 2018.

<sup>11</sup> “[Experts Discuss Landmine-related Risks At A Regional Seminar](#),” *Lao News Agency*, 2 May 2019. The seminar covered landmines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war.

<sup>12</sup> Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, “[Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar](#),” A/HRC/40/68, 5 March 2019. Recommendation: “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 mines and unexploded ordnance; mark and fence mine areas; and carry out systematic mine-risk and education activities.”

<sup>13</sup> The ICBL initiative was initially known as “Halt Mine Use in Burma/Myanmar.” See, [Mine-Free Myanmar website](#).

<sup>14</sup> “[2017 Myanmar/Burma Country Report released at Yangon Press Conference](#),” 11 January 2018. Audio recording of the press conference.

## Production, stockpiling, and transfer

Myanmar Defense Products Industries known as “Ka Pa Sa” is a state enterprise located at Nyaung Chay Dauk in western Pegu (Bago) division that produces fragmentation, bounding, and blast antipersonnel mines, including mines with low metal content.<sup>16</sup> In September 2016, government authorities in Myanmar confirmed that landmines were still being produced.<sup>17</sup>

Myanmar has also imported or otherwise received, obtained, and used antipersonnel mines manufactured in China, India, Italy, Russia (and the former Soviet Union), and the United States (US), as well as mines of unknown origin.<sup>18</sup>

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

Myanmar is not known to have exported antipersonnel mines.<sup>19</sup>

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

Various non-state armed groups (NSAGs) in Myanmar have produced improvised antipersonnel mines, including the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), and the Democratic Karen Benevolence Army (DKBA). It is believed most other non-state armed groups have the capacity to manufacture improvised mines.

NSAGs have manufactured blast and fragmentation mines from locally available materials, sometimes referred to as improvised explosive devices or “IEDs.” Victim-activated explosive devices are considered improvised antipersonnel mines prohibited by the Mine Ban Treaty.

Some NSAGs have also made Claymore-type directional fragmentation mines and antivehicle mines with antihandling devices.

Armed groups in Myanmar have also acquired mines by removing mines laid by the Tatmadaw (government), seizing Tatmadaw stocks, and, previously, by obtaining them from the clandestine arms market.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> “[Townships with Known Landmine Contamination \(2018\) and Casualties in Myanmar \(as of Dec 2017\)](#),” United Nations Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU), 30 May 2018. Infographic provides a 11-year overview of data from Landmine Monitor Reports (2007–2017). The infographic was also available in [Burmese language](#) for the first time. MIMU reported to the Landmine Monitor that the landmine infographic has been one of their most requested products.

<sup>16</sup> 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 plastic mine. It also produces the MM4, which is an antivehicle mine.

<sup>17</sup> Htoo Thant, “[Tatmadaw insists landmine use kept within reasonable minimum](#),” *Myanmar Times*, 13 September 2016.

<sup>18</sup> See, *Landmine Monitor Report 2004*, p. 938. The mines include: Chinese Types-58, -59, -69, -72A; Soviet POMZ-2, POMZ-2M, PMN-1, PMD-6; US M14, M16A1, M18; and Indian/British LTM-73, LTM-76.

<sup>19</sup> 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*, p. 469.

<sup>20</sup> *Landmine Monitor Report 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*, p. 1013.



## Use

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

### *New use by government forces*

At the treaty's Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties in November 2018, a Myanmar government representative claimed that allegations that it had used landmines on the border with Bangladesh were without merit, and that joint patrols with Bangladeshi border patrols encountered no mines.<sup>21</sup>

However, in July 2019, an official at the Union Minister Office for Defence stated to Landmine Monitor that "since the start of the civilian era, the Tatmadaw no longer use landmines" but qualified that by stating that in some instances landmines are still used. Specifically, he 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."<sup>22</sup> Previously, in September 2016, Deputy Minister of Defence Major General Myint Nwe informed the Myanmar parliament that the army continues to use landmines in the internal armed conflict.<sup>23</sup>

Since mid-2018, fighting between the Tatmadaw and the NSAG Arakan Army in Rakhine state has intensified. The Arakan Army has regularly published photographs online of antipersonnel mines produced by the Ka Pa Sa, the state-owned military industries, including MM2, MM5, and MM6 antipersonnel mines among other seized weaponry.<sup>24</sup> While these photographs do not specifically identify new landmine use, they do indicate that antipersonnel mines are part of the weaponry of frontline units.

New landmine casualties in areas of conflict between the Tatmadaw and the Arakan Army not previously known to have landmine contamination also indicate new use, by either the Arakan Army, the Tatmadaw, or both. In January 2018, Indian authorities blamed landmine casualties occurring on its border with Myanmar, in Mizoram state, on either the Tatmadaw or the Arakan Army, both of whom were operating in the area.<sup>25</sup>

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

- In September 2018, Tatmadaw forces allegedly emplaced antipersonnel mines near the villages of Zi Kahtawng and Hka La around Nam San Yang district of Waingmaw township and banned people from going to and from the villages.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup> [Statement of Myanmar](#), Mine Ban Treaty Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 30 November 2018. "...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."

<sup>22</sup> Landmine Monitor meeting with U Min Htike Hein, Assistant Secretary, Union Minister Office for Defence, Ministry of Defence, in Naypyitaw, 5 July 2019.

<sup>23</sup> "[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 landmines were planted and soldiers were not present.

<sup>24</sup> See, Mine Free Myanmar, "[Allegedly Seized Mines Displayed by Arakan Army](#)," 18 April 2019.

<sup>25</sup> "[Man hurt in Mizoram IED blast](#)," *The Telegraph*, 18 January 2018.

<sup>26</sup> "FBR: Clash Summary: Chaos Reigned in Northern Shan State in September," *Free Burma Rangers*, 15 October 2018.

- In August 2018, in Muse district, northern Shan state, the Tatmadaw allegedly warned the population of Kawng Sahti that they had laid mines around Dung Aw and Uraw Hkyet.<sup>27</sup>
- In July 2018, in Waingmaw township of Kachin state, the KIA alleged that the Tatmadaw was emplacing antipersonnel mines along the Nam Sang river and antivehicle mines on the Zi Kahtawng road.<sup>28</sup>

Frequently it is difficult to ascribe specific responsibility for an incident to a particular combatant group. In August 2019, in northern Shan state, the Tatmadaw engaged in armed conflict with three members of the Northern Alliance—the Ta’ang National Liberation Army, Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, and the Arakan Army—near Maw Harn village in Kutkai township. Subsequently a Maw Harn villager was injured by a landmine. The villagers said there had been no landmines in the area prior to the conflict, but do not know whether government forces, NSAGs, or both were responsible.<sup>29</sup> In September 2019, near Nama Dar village in Paletwa township of Chin state, two villagers were injured by a landmine following armed conflict between the Tatmadaw and the Arakan Army at that spot. The villagers were unsure which entity laid the mine.<sup>30</sup>

In June 2018, the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar reported, following their investigations into mine use allegations in September 2017, that 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.”<sup>31</sup>

In June 2018, the 20<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the KIA shared photographs with Landmine Monitor that it said showed mines its forces cleared from the villages of Gauri Bum, Man Htu Bum, and Uloi Bai in Danai township. The photographs show around 80 antipersonnel mines, all M14 and MM2 types, with marking indicating Myanmar manufacture. The KIA alleged that Tatmadaw forces laid these mines in April and May, when the government forces left villages after occupying them. The KIA stated that two of their soldiers were injured while clearing the mines.<sup>32</sup>

Landmine Monitor subsequently showed the photographs to an official at the Myanmar Ministry of Defence in June 2018 and requested comment. The official noted that one mine shown in a photograph was an antivehicle mine and said that government forces do not use antivehicle mines against the insurgents as the NSAG do not use vehicles. He said that the antipersonnel mines could be copies of Myanmar-made mines that a NSAG planted, as he said the Myanmar army does not leave landmines behind after an operation.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>27</sup> “FBR: Clash Summary: Battles Continue in Northern Shan State Throughout August,” Free Burma Rangers, 12 September 2018.

<sup>28</sup> “FBR: Burma Army Tortures and Kills Six Female Medics, Continues Campaign Against Civilians,” Free Burma Rangers, 26 July 2018.

<sup>29</sup> “[Kutkai Villager ‘Seriously Injured’ by Landmine](#),” *Burma News International*, 20 September 2019.

<sup>30</sup> Thein Zaw, “[Two villagers injured by a landmine explosion in Paletwa](#),” *Narinjara News*, 9 September 2019.

<sup>31</sup> 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.

<sup>32</sup> Thein Zaw, “[Two villagers injured by a landmine explosion in Paletwa](#),” *Narinjara News*, 9 September 2019.

<sup>33</sup> 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.

*Previous use by government forces*

In September 2017, Landmine Monitor reported that several organizations independently published evidence that showed Myanmar government forces were using antipersonnel landmines along the country's border with Bangladesh. The mine use began in late August, when Myanmar government forces began a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya population, causing more than 700,000 people to flee to neighboring Bangladesh. Landmine Monitor reported the newly mined areas were located between Maungdaw township in Myanmar and Bandarban district in Bangladesh, two major land crossing routes between the countries.<sup>34</sup>

An October 2017 report by the UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights found that “mines were deliberately planted by the Myanmar security forces after 23 August 2017 along the border in an attempt to prevent the Rohingya refugees from returning to Myanmar. Information received by the Team referred to the use of landmines and to incidents of people stepping on mines whilst fleeing, or attempting to return to Myanmar to check on other missing family members from 25 August onwards. They were either killed instantly, or suffered serious injuries. The Cox's Bazar District Hospital and other medical facilities confirmed the treatment of mine injuries.”<sup>35</sup>

A report issued by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar—established by the Human Rights Council in March 2017—found the Mission had “reasonable grounds to conclude that landmines were planted by the Tatmadaw, both in the border regions as well as within 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 anti-personnel mines were placed in border areas as part of a deliberate and planned strategy of dissuading Rohingya refugees from attempting to return to Myanmar.”<sup>36</sup>

On 21 November 2017, a wild elephant died in Bangladesh's Bandarban district and Bangladeshi authorities attributed the cause of death to a landmine emplaced along the border.<sup>37</sup> Myanmar military forces used landmines along the Bangladesh border earlier in 2017. In July 2017, three farmers were killed and one injured by a mine allegedly laid by the Myanmar military at Pyanug Paik village in Maungdaw township.<sup>38</sup> In May, Amnesty International reported on Myanmar military forces use of antipersonnel landmines in areas

<sup>34</sup> According to Landmine Monitor, local researchers interviewing and assisting displaced Rohingya civilians as they crossed into Bangladesh on 28 August 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 these researchers, the mines were emplaced within Taung Pyo Let Yar village tract of Maungdaw township, adjacent to border pillar No. 31 in Bangladesh, an area that demarcates the beginning of the land border between Bangladesh and Myanmar. Email and phone interviews with researchers working with an NGO who wished to remain anonymous, 17 September 2017.

<sup>35</sup> According to the report, “The Team was informed that until 23 August 2017, the Myanmar and Bangladesh border guards conducted joint patrols along the international border between Bangladesh and Myanmar and that it was therefore highly unlikely that mines were planted before 23 August due to the likelihood of real danger for army personnel of both sides that they would step onto such an explosive device.” OHCHR, “Mission report of OHCHR rapid response mission to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, 13–24 September 2017,” 11 October 2017. pp. 9–10.

<sup>36</sup> 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.

<sup>37</sup> Anwar Hussain, “[Myanmar army's landmines put elephants at risk](#),” *Dhaka Tribune*, 26 November 2017.

<sup>38</sup> “[Rohingya farmers victims of fatal injury in land mine explosion in Northern Maungdaw](#),” *Arakan TV*, 15 July 2017. Photographic evidence included with reports, however independent verification was not possible. See also, Thar Shwe Oo, “[Landmine kills three in Maungdaw](#),” *Eleven Myanmar*, 16 July 2017; and Moe Myint, “[Landmine Explosion Kills Teenager, Two Men in Rakhine](#),” *The Irrawaddy*, 16 July 2017.



of Kachin and northern Shan states.<sup>39</sup> In April 2017, the Border Guard Forces under the command of the Myanmar Army warned locals from using the road from Meh Th'Waw to Myaing Gyi Ngu because the edges of the road had been mined.<sup>40</sup> In April 2016, four Rohingya from Maungdaw township were injured and one killed by a landmine after they were hired by the Myanmar Army to work on the border fence near border pillar 61. The injured were treated Buthidang Hospital.<sup>41</sup>

Past use of antipersonnel mines along this border has been documented in previous Landmine Monitor reports.<sup>42</sup>

### *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 military units in mine-affected areas, which effectively makes them human mine sweepers. This is a grave violation of international humanitarian and human rights law.<sup>43</sup> Forced labor that compels people to take part in work directly related to military operation is a violation of customary international humanitarian law, including in non-international armed conflicts.

The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) reported that Aung Lun, aged 45, from Paletwa township in southern Chin state was killed by a landmine while being forced to guide for Tatmadaw patrol from LIB 544 at the front line with the Arakan Army near the Bangladesh border on 25 February 2019.<sup>44</sup> Two other villagers who were also being forced to guide the Tatmadaw patrol were uninjured, however two soldiers in the patrol were also injured in the blast. CHRO reports that the Tatmadaw offered \$1,000 compensation to the family of the victim, but says that the practice of the Tatmadaw taking villagers as guides is increasing in the context of the Paletwa conflict.<sup>45</sup>

In December 2018, in Rakhine state, a Tatmadaw military column seized 11 villagers from Say Taung village in Buthidaung township and forced them to lead the soldiers along the route from his village to Yae Gaung Chaung in Rathedaung township. On a previous day, reportedly many Tatmadaw soldiers became victim of mines laid by the Arakan Army in the area. It is unclear if those mines were command-detonated or victim-activated.<sup>46</sup>

A September 2018 report by the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar received multiple, detailed accounts of forced laborers being made to walk at the

<sup>39</sup> Amnesty International, "[All the Civilians Suffer: Conflict, Displacement and abuse in Northern Myanmar](#)," 14 June 2017, p. 32.

<sup>40</sup> Unpublished information provided to the Landmine Monitor by the Karen Human Rights Group, 6 September 2017.

<sup>41</sup> "[Border Landmine Kills and Injures Rohingyas](#)," *Kaladan Press*, 19 April 2016.

<sup>42</sup> A massive outflow of Rohingya people, nearly a quarter of a million, from Northern Rakhine State (NRS) occurred in 1991 and 1992. Following widespread condemnation of Burma at that time by the Muslim world, Myanmar's armed forces emplaced a significant minefield along the entire length of its border with Bangladesh. Bangladesh officials and humanitarian workers stated at the time that Burma's boundary minefield was laid for the purpose of deterring further flight out of the country by the Rohingya, and also to harass cross border movement by several Rohingya and Rakhine armed groups active at that time. See, *Landmine Monitor 2000*, "[Burma Country Report](#)." In the early 1990s, several armed groups existed in that border area, including the Rohingya Solidarity Organization, the Arakan Rohingya National Organization, the Arakan Army, and the Arakan Liberation Army. Further mine laying occurred in later years. See, Landmine Monitor, "Country Profile: Myanmar/Burma: Ban Policy profiles," for [2013](#), [2014](#), and [2015](#).

<sup>43</sup> Over the past two decades, Landmine Monitor has reported disturbing evidence that Myanmar military have forced civilians to clear antipersonnel mines without training or protective equipment or forced civilians to guide or carry equipment for the military 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.

<sup>44</sup> "[Civilian Injured by Landmine on Burma-India Border](#)," *Burma News International*, 19 March 2019.

<sup>45</sup> Email to Landmine Monitor from Sang Hnin Lian, Chin Human Rights Organization, 17 April 2019.

front of the Tatmadaw columns when travelling through the forest in areas of active conflict. Several victims of forced labor said they witnessed other civilians being injured or killed by landmines and told the mission that they were put at the front to act as “human mine sweepers.”<sup>47</sup>

In August 2018, Tatmadaw Light Infantry Battalion 501 seized four villagers for forced labor as guides from Pang Law village, in Kyaukme township, which has extensive landmine contamination.<sup>48</sup>

In May 2018, the Kachin Women’s Association Thailand reported that villagers from Lai Nawng Khu Kachin state’s Hpakant township fled their homes on 11 April 2018 after a rumor of armed confrontations between Tatmadaw and KIA forces. After spending two nights in the forest, Tatmadaw forces from Light Infantry Battalion 424 found and questioned them. Then the Tatmadaw troops ordered the villagers to walk in front of them in single file. A villager at the front of the column named Po Shan was subsequently wounded by a landmine and villagers saw him carried away, but is not known if he survived.<sup>49</sup>

In May 2018, Sai Htun Nyan, a Shan state Member of Parliament claimed that villagers from Taw Sang in his township of Kyaukme were forced to walk ahead of a Myanmar Army infantry column on 3 May 2018, resulting in landmine casualties. He reportedly stated that people from his constituency had provided him with accounts detailing how they were forced to walk in front of military units through minefields. He said the Myanmar Army employs this practice the most, but NSAGs have also done so.<sup>50</sup> In November 2017, according to testimony collected by the Karen Human Rights Group, a resident of T’Kwee Klah village in Karen state’s Hlaingbwe township served as a porter for the Border Guard Forces (BGF) for almost two months and was made to walk in front of BGF soldiers through mined areas.<sup>51</sup>

In July 2019, an official at the Union Minister Office for Defence stated to the Landmine Monitor that claims of forced labour by the Tatmadaw in mined areas are fabricated. He noted that the Tatmadaw has firm policies against forced labour in place. He stated that insurgents will hide their weapons and attempt to blend in with the local population, and if caught will say they are being taken for forced labour. He dismissed allegations that military units take local people as guides, stating that each military unit has GPS and knows the terrain better than locals.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Moe Myint, “[Military Using Villagers as Human Shields in N. Rakhine Battles](#),” *the Irrawaddy*, 28 December 2018.

<sup>47</sup> 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.

<sup>48</sup> “[Burma Army conscripts porters, detains elderly and children during “clearance operations” near Upper Yeywa dam site in N. Shan State; arrests, tortures villagers in S. Shan State](#),” Burma Campaign UK, 7 September 2018.

<sup>49</sup> Kachin Women’s Association Thailand, “[Burma Army commits war crimes against Kachin IDPs: blocking access to refuge, using as human shields and minesweepers, indiscriminate shelling, looting](#),” 14 May 2018; and subsequent clarification emails from San Htoi, Kachin Women’s Association Thailand, 2 July 2018.

<sup>50</sup> Lawi Weng, “[Shan State Parliament Refuses to Let Lawmaker Raise ‘Human Shield’ Allegations](#),” *the Irrawaddy*, 1 June 2018.

<sup>51</sup> Karen Human Rights Group, “[Interview #17-131-A4-I1](#),” published 8 June 2018. There is no official governmental document that defines a Border Guard Force (BGF), however they have a military structure parallel to the Myanmar Army. The BGF commander is from an ethnic armed group, as are many of the rank and file. BGF are supposedly under the command of the Myanmar army, however they sometimes appear to carry out independent activities.

<sup>52</sup> Landmine Monitor meeting with U Min Htike Hein, Ministry of Defence, in Naypyitaw, 5 July 2019.

*Use by non-state armed groups*

Many NSAGs have used antipersonnel mines in Myanmar since 1999. In late 2018 and early 2019, there were reports of new use by the KIA, Arakan Army, DKBA, KNDO, and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA).<sup>53</sup> Frequently it is difficult to ascribe specific responsibility for an incident to a particular combatant group. For example, in August 2019, in northern Shan state, the Tatmadaw engaged in armed conflict with three members of the Northern Alliance—the Ta’ang National Liberation Army, Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, and the Arakan Army—near Maw Harn village in Kutkai township. Subsequently a resident of Maw Harn village was injured by a landmine. The villagers said there had been no landmines in the area prior to the conflict, but do not know which group was responsible.<sup>54</sup>

In February and March 2019, in Manli village in Namtu township of Shan state, several villagers were killed and injured by mines when returning to their agricultural fields after fighting between the Shan State Army-South and an alliance of the Ta’ang National Liberation Army and the Shan State Army-North.<sup>55</sup> In April 2019, the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services accused the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and Shan State Progressive Party (SSPP) of laying the mines which caused the injuries.<sup>56</sup> In September 2019, near Nama Dar village in Paletwa township of Chin state, two villagers were injured by a landmine following fighting between the Tatmadaw and the Arakan Army. The villagers were unsure which group laid the mine.<sup>57</sup> In February 2019, near Nam Maw Lon village, in Hsipaw township, in northern Shan state, a villager died and two were injured after stepping on a mine in an area which had seen recent fighting between the Restoration Council Shan State/Shan State Army-South (RCSS/SSA) and the Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North (SSPP/SSA). Both groups blamed the other side for the incident.<sup>58</sup>

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

- ♦ In July 2019, in Hpapun township of Kayin state, the KNDO laid mines in the Bu Ah Der village tract reportedly to defend against attack by the Tatmadaw.<sup>59</sup>
- ♦ In May 2019, in Hlaingbwe township of Kayin state, a DKBA officer from Meh Pru village tract ordered his soldiers to plant more landmines in seven nearby mountainous villages to protect their area.<sup>60</sup>
- ♦ In December 2018, the Pa-O National Liberation Organization of southern Shan state stated that the RCSS/SSA had frequently laid landmines in their area.<sup>61</sup>
- ♦ In August–September 2018, in Hpapun township of Kayin state, KNLA Battalion #102, Company #4 informed villagers that they would lay mines near former Tatmadaw

<sup>53</sup> There are also allegations of use by the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), the Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army-North (SSPP/SSA) and the Restoration Council Shan State/Shan State Army-South (RCSS/SSA) in their operations against Myanmar armed forces during the reporting period.

<sup>54</sup> “[Kutkai Villager ‘Seriously Injured’ by Landmine](#),” *Burma News International*, 20 September 2019.

<sup>55</sup> Myat Moe Thu, “[Three killed, four injured by landmine in Shan State](#),” *Myanmar Times*, 1 April 2019.

<sup>56</sup> Min Naing Soe, “[Army announces TNLA and SSPP planned mine attack in Manli Village](#),” *Eleven Myanmar*, 1 April 2019.

<sup>57</sup> Thein Zaw, “[Two villagers injured by a landmine explosion in Paletwa](#),” *Narinjara News*, 9 September 2019.

<sup>58</sup> “[One Killed, Two Injured in Hsipaw Landmine Blast](#),” *Burma News International*, 20 February 2019.

<sup>59</sup> “KHRG Submission to Landmine Monitor,” September 2019, unpublished.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Nyein Nyein, “[Shan Armed Group Kills At Least Four Ethnic Pa-O in Shooting](#),” *the Irrawaddy*, 12 December 2018.

military camps, and that they should not go to those areas. Subsequently two Tatmadaw soldiers reportedly were injured by these mines.<sup>62</sup>

- ♦ In November 2018, two civilians were injured in a mine incident that the KIA blamed on use by the TNLA.<sup>63</sup>

- ♦ In October 2018, New Mon State Party claimed that the KNU had laid landmines in a disputed area in Yebyu township in Thanintharyi region.<sup>64</sup> The KNU denied the allegation.<sup>65</sup>

- ♦ In August 2018, near Kammamaung in Hlaingbwe township of Kayin state a KNLA soldier was injured by a mine he had laid.<sup>66</sup>

In 2011, the government of Myanmar announced its intent to conclude peace agreements with NSAGs operating in the country. On 15 October 2015, eight ethnic armed groups signed a nationwide ceasefire accord with the government, committing to “end planting of mines” and “cooperate on the process of clearing all landmines.” All the groups—two factions of the Karen National Union, the Restoration Council for Shan State, the Arakan Liberation Party, the Pao National Liberation Organization, the All Burma Students Democratic Front, the Chin National Front, and the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army—had previously used landmines.<sup>67</sup> In February 2018, the New Mon State Party and the Lahu Democratic Union joined the nationwide ceasefire accord, bringing the number of ethnic armed groups in the agreement to 10.<sup>68</sup> 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 join the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.<sup>69</sup>

In the past, some armed groups and former armed groups unilaterally renounced antipersonnel mine use by signing the Deed of Commitment administered by the Swiss NGO Geneva Call.<sup>70</sup> The Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF) signed the Deed of Commitment in 2007 and its armed wing, the TNLA, has previously promised to refrain

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<sup>62</sup> “KHRG Submission to Landmine Monitor,” September 2019, unpublished.

<sup>63</sup> “FBR: Clash Summary: Steady Fighting in November in Northern Burma,” Free Burma Rangers, 15 December 2018.

<sup>64</sup> “[Landmine blasts injure two in NMSP-KNU disputed-area in Yebyu Tsp within this month](#),” *Burma News International*, 29 October 2018.

<sup>65</sup> “[Three More Landmines Explode in Tanintharyi](#),” *Burma News International*, 9 January 2019.

<sup>66</sup> “[Skirmishes Between Burma Army and KNLA Increase in Northern Karen State](#),” *Karen News*, 18 September 2018.

<sup>67</sup> “[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 RCSS is the political organization of the Shan State Army South, the ALP has its Arakan Liberation Army, the PNLO has its Pao National Liberation Army, and the CNF has the Chin National Army. The other two groups have the same name for their armed organizations.

<sup>68</sup> “[Two ethnic armed groups sign ceasefire agreement in Nay Pyi Taw](#),” *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 14 February 2018.

<sup>69</sup> Lei Lei, “[Landmines Strike 10 Civilians in a Single Town in Myanmar’s Shan State](#),” *the Irrawaddy*, 27 September 2019.

<sup>70</sup> In the past, a few armed groups and former-armed groups, unilaterally renounced the use of antipersonnel mines by signing the Deed of Commitment administered by the Swiss NGO, Geneva Call. The Chin National Front/Chin National Army renounced use in July 2006. The Arakan Rohingya National Organization and the National United Party of Arakan, both now militarily defunct, renounced use in October 2003. The Lahu Democratic Front (LDF), Palaung State Liberation Army, and PPLO/Pa’O Peoples Liberation Army (PPLA) renounced use in April 2007. In a June 2010 report, Geneva Call noted that LDF and the PPLA had disbanded.

from mine use.<sup>71</sup> In June 2017, the TNLA denied allegations of new mine use and affirmed that the TNLA has not used landmines since signing the Deed of Commitment.<sup>72</sup>

### Responses to new landmine use

In the reporting period, various Myanmar government officials either admitted or denied that government forces are using antipersonnel landmines. At the Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties in November 2018 a Myanmar government representative claimed that allegations that it had used landmines on the border with Bangladesh were without merit, and that joint patrols with Bangladeshi border patrols encountered no mines.<sup>73</sup> In July 2019, an official at the Union Minister Office for Defence stated to the Landmine Monitor that “since the start of the civilian era, the Tatmadaw no longer use landmines” but qualified that by stating that in some instances landmines may still be used. Specifically, he 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.”<sup>74</sup> The previous year, Myanmar had stated that “the “Myanmar Armed Forces is no longer using the landmines while safeguarding the life and property of its people in internal conflicts.”<sup>75</sup> However, in June 2018, an official at the Union Minister Office for Defence told Landmine Monitor that the Myanmar armed forces are still using antipersonnel landmines, but said the use is strictly for “self-defense” purposes and always “well-mapped.”<sup>76</sup>

Myanmar’s NSAGs tend to blame government forces or each other for using antipersonnel mines.<sup>77</sup> However, the KIA defended its production and use of improvised landmines in the past year. Information Chief Colonel Naw Bu said in a January 2018 media interview that the KIA use antipersonnel mines “on paths approaching our frontline camps and around our headquarters.” He justified the use, stating, “We only plant mines in the conflict area and do not plant mines in places where civilians move.”<sup>78</sup>

The use of landmines in Myanmar has been widely condemned.

In June 2019, the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict called attention to the “killing and maiming of children, notably caused by landmines, by all parties” in Myanmar.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>71</sup> 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.

<sup>72</sup> Amnesty International, “[All the Civilians Suffer: Conflict, Displacement and abuse in Northern Myanmar](#),” 14 June 2017, p. 44.

<sup>73</sup> [Statement of Myanmar](#), Mine Ban Treaty Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 30 November 2018. “...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.”

<sup>74</sup> Landmine Monitor meeting with U Min Htike Hein, Ministry of Defence, in Naypyitaw, 5 July 2019.

<sup>75</sup> [Statement of Myanmar](#), Mine Ban Treaty Sixteenth Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 21 December 2017.

<sup>76</sup> Landmine Monitor meeting with U Min Htike Hein, Ministry of Defence, in Naypyitaw, 29 June 2018.

<sup>77</sup> Lawi Weng, “[3 Civilians Reportedly Killed by Landmines in Shan State in June](#),” *the Irrawaddy*, 8 July 2018.

<sup>78</sup> Nang Lwin Hnin Pwint, “[Mined areas increase to 11 Townships-original in Burmese language](#),” *the Irrawaddy*, 13 January 2018.

<sup>79</sup> UN, “[Children and armed conflict Report of the Secretary-General](#),” A/73/907–S/2019/509, 20 June 2019.



On 1 March 2019, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet condemned the use of antipersonnel landmines in Myanmar by both the government armed forces and by non-state armed groups.<sup>80</sup>

At the Human Rights Council on 11 September 2017, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein stated that he was “appalled by reports that the Myanmar authorities have now begun to lay landmines along the border with Bangladesh.” In March 2017, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar called on all parties to “immediately cease using landmines.” In August 2018, the UN Human Rights Council reported on how the presence of landmines has impeded the safe return of displaced persons in Kachin and Shan states.<sup>81</sup>

Bangladesh, a State Party to the Mine Ban Treaty, has condemned the use of antipersonnel landmines by Myanmar.<sup>82</sup> At the UN 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.”<sup>83</sup> There is no evidence to indicate that Bangladesh has laid antipersonnel mines on its side of the border. During a 2 October 2017 high-level meeting between Bangladesh and Myanmar authorities, Bangladesh’s Home Minister, Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, reportedly asked Myanmar’s military to stop laying landmines along the border with Bangladesh. She told media that, “I raised the issue of planting land mines along the zero line. I clearly told the honorable minister that, according to international law, Myanmar cannot plant land mines along the border. This is illegal.”<sup>84</sup>

The ICBL has strongly condemned the new use of landmines in Myanmar, stating, “There can be no justification for using such indiscriminate weapons, which are harming and killing civilians fleeing their homes.”

Calls to end mine use and clear landmines have become more common from within Myanmar in recent years. In September 2019, Jivita, a local NGO providing assistance to mine and other war injured in Kyakme township of Shan state, requested the Tatmadaw and all ethnic armed organizations stop using landmines.<sup>85</sup> In April 2018, Shan state MP, Daw Nan Khin Htar Yee, said she was saddened that Myanmar has not signed the Mine Ban Treaty and pledged to encourage the government to sign.<sup>86</sup> At the Second Union Peace Conference in May 2017, the head of the Union-level Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee urged the public to call on local officials to clear landmines and unexploded ordnance.<sup>87</sup> In January 2017, the Lower House Member of Parliament for Manton township issued a statement condemning the use of landmines in armed conflict between the

<sup>80</sup> OHCHR, “Mine Ban Convention – [20 years of protection. Celebrating 20 years since the Mine Ban Treaty entered into force](#),” Keynote Speaker: UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, 1 March 2019, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

<sup>81</sup> Human Rights Council, “[Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar](#),” 28 August 2018.

<sup>82</sup> Bangladesh, “[Statement under Thematic Discussion on "Conventional Weapons" in the First Committee of the 72<sup>nd</sup> session of the UN General Assembly on Wednesday, 18 October 2017](#),” New York, 18 October 2017.

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<sup>84</sup> “[Stop Landmines, Airspace Violations, Bangladesh Minister told Myanmar Delegation](#),” *Radio Free Asia*, 5 October 2017.

<sup>85</sup> Lei Lei, “[Landmines Strike 10 Civilians in a Single Town in Myanmar’s Shan State](#),” *the Irrawaddy*, 25 September 2019.

<sup>86</sup> Pyae Thet Phy, “[Government to go slow on EU landmine aid offer](#),” *Myanmar Times*, 6 April 2018.

<sup>87</sup> Saw Nyunt Thaung, “[Panglong fails to address need for landmine clearance agreements](#),” *Karen News*, 30 May 2017.

Myanmar Army and NSAGs in Shan state and called on all parties to stop using landmines.<sup>88</sup>

## **Impact**

The Union of the Republic of Myanmar is heavily mine-affected as a result of conflicts between the Tatmadaw (government forces) and numerous non-state armed groups (NSAGs) affiliated with ethnic minorities. Armed conflict has occurred since the country's independence in 1948. Mined areas are located in areas of Myanmar adjacent to its borders with Bangladesh, China, India, and Thailand. New mines continue to be laid by the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed groups. The extent of contamination in Myanmar is unknown, but includes improvised mines and mines produced in state-owned factories. Contamination impedes the return of refugees and internally displaced people. A trend of increasing landmine casualty numbers in recent years is reported by national stakeholders.

A Mine Action Center was created under the previous administration but was dissolved with the change of government in 2016. As of September 2019, the government has not announced a clear strategy on mine action or established a coordination structure. The Tatmadaw has undertaken some mine clearance, but operations are not systematic or recorded. Humanitarian Mine Action operators began arriving in Myanmar in 2012, but as yet are not permitted to clear mines.

In October 2019, Myanmar announced it was finalizing National Mine Action Standards for systematic mine clearance. Myanmar is also working with other countries in the region through the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM)-Plus Expert's Working Group on Humanitarian Mine Action under the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center.

For a decade, from 1999 through 2009, assistance to mine/explosive remnants of war (ERW) survivors and persons with disabilities in Myanmar was marginal due to many years of neglect of healthcare services by the ruling authority. Myanmar authorities did have a national victim assistance program or strategy. Awareness of the need for victim assistance in Myanmar increased significantly since around 2012, initially as a result of activities by NGOs. In 2013, under an agreement with the government of Myanmar the ICRC started to support government-run rehabilitation centers, which had been operating without external support since 2007.

Since 2014, the number of victim assistance service providers has increased significantly, now with over a dozen organizations, including government departments, the UN, international and local NGOs, and community-based organizations involved in efforts. Specific victim assistance centers were developed and prosthetic services built and improved, including through enhanced mobile services. Localized availability of community-based rehabilitation and vocational training also increased. Coordination improved with the introduction of the National Victim Assistance Technical Group as a sub-working group under the Mine Risk Working Group (MRWG). However, overall, essential services remain scarce, particularly for many people in remote rural areas.

Myanmar is a State Party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

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<sup>88</sup> Nyein Zaw Lin, "[MP denounces collateral damage and landmine danger](#)," *Myanmar Times*, 25 January 2017.

**Impact and Mine Action management and coordination**

<b>Mine action coordination</b>	
<b>National mine action management actors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) state that they are responsible for mine clearance within the country.</li> <li>The Mine Risk Working Group (MRWG), comprised of ministries, international and national organizations, and four state-level coordination agencies, takes the lead on risk education and victim assistance.</li> </ul>
<b>UN Agencies</b>	UNICEF UNHCR
<b>Mine action legislation</b>	None
<b>Mine action strategic and operational plans</b>	No current strategy on mine action
<b>Mine action standards</b>	<p>In process of finalizing the Myanmar National Mine Action Standard for clearance in October 2019.</p> <p>International operators currently follow International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).</p>

**Impact and Survivor assistance planning and coordination**

<b>Victim assistance coordination</b>	
<b>Government focal point</b>	Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement, Department of Social Welfare and Persons with Disabilities
<b>Coordination mechanisms</b>	<p>The Department of Rehabilitation in the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement and UNICEF continued to co-chair the MRWG, which is responsible for victim assistance and other mine action pillars.</p> <p>The National Victim Assistance Technical Group, coordinated by Humanity &amp; Inclusion (HI), gathers national and international victim assistance actors under the umbrella of the MRWG.</p>
<b>Victim assistance plan</b>	<p>None</p> <p>The development of the national strategic plan for the rights of persons with disabilities is being developed under the leadership of a working committee with the support of eight subcommittees, headed by the key social departments and with the participation of representatives from government, Organizations of People with Disabilities (DPOs), and other NGOs. In April 2019, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement held a planning meeting and drafted a national strategy in accordance with Myanmar's obligations under the CRPD.<sup>89</sup></p>

<sup>89</sup> [“Myanmar drafts national strategy for disabled,” Xinhua](#), 4 April 2019.

<b>Disability sector integration</b>	A representative of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement reported that Myanmar was taking an integrated approach towards victim assistance, based on the CRPD, in its national disability law and national social protection strategy. <sup>90</sup>
<b>Survivor inclusion and participation</b>	<p>No direct representation of mine/ERW victims, but survivors belong to broader DPOs that participate in various coordination roles.</p> <p>Although landmines and armed violence increase the numbers of people with disabilities, they tend not to be among those people consulted by policy- and decision-makers.<sup>91</sup></p>

### Impact and Contamination

Extent of contamination	
<b>Landmines</b>	<p>Unknown. (Includes improvised mines.)</p> <p>New mine contamination in 2018 &amp; 2019.</p>
<b>Other ERW contamination</b>	Extent unknown.

Some 84 townships (out of a total of 325) in 10 states and regions, are believed to suffer from some degree of mine contamination; primarily antipersonnel mines.<sup>92</sup> During the past year, contamination has increased in Rakhine state and in the north of the country. Shan state and Kachin state are considered to be heavily contaminated. Previously, Karen (Kayin) state and Pegu (Bago) division in the south of the country were among those with the heaviest mine contamination and the highest number of recorded victims.<sup>93</sup>

A UN Fact-Finding Mission reported in September 2018 that “despite the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in October 2015, which committed all parties to end the use of landmines and cooperate on mine-clearance operations, new landmines continue to be laid.”<sup>94</sup> It cited credible reports that the Tatmadaw and ethnic armed groups had laid landmines and reported, “Tatmadaw soldiers lay landmines in villages they have attacked

<sup>90</sup> [Presentation by Dr San San Aye](#), Deputy Director General of the Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement, Meeting of National Mine Action Programme Directors, Geneva, 17 February 2015.

<sup>91</sup> International Alert Myanmar, “[Conflict impacts on gender and masculinities expectations on people with disabilities in Kachin state: A rapid assessment](#),” Kachinland Research Centre (KRC), December 2018.

<sup>92</sup> Myanmar is divided into states and regions. States are the designated home areas of some of Myanmar’s larger ethnic groups. Other areas, which are not identified with a specific ethnic group, are administrative regions. The former military junta changed the name from Burma to Myanmar in 1989 and also changed the names of some states. Many ethnic groups within the country still prefer to use the name Burma. Internal state and division names are given in their common form or with the name adopted by the former military regime in parentheses.

<sup>93</sup> 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.

<sup>94</sup> UN, “Report of the Detailed Findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar,” A/HRC/39/CRP.2, 17 September 2017, p. 95.

or after civilians have fled, or on roads frequently used by civilians.”<sup>95</sup> New contamination occurred in 2018 and 2019 in central Rakhine state, in several townships previously unknown to suffer any contamination by landmines. Other accounts of new contamination due to continuing use by Myanmar military forces and NSAGs in Myanmar were reported throughout 2018 and the first half of 2019. (*See Myanmar’s Mine Ban profile for further details.*)

No formal estimate exists of the extent of landmine contamination in Myanmar but credible reports of mine contamination, casualties, or suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) have been reported in the following states and townships:

- Kayah state: all seven townships;
- Kayin state: all seven townships;
- Kachin state: Bhamo, Chipwi, Hpakant, Injangyang, Mansi, Mogaung, Mohnyin, Momauk, Myitkyina, Shwegu, Sumprabum, Tanai, Tsawlaw, and Waingmaw;
- Mon state: Bilin, Kyaikto, Mawlamyine, Thanbyuzayat, Thaton, and Ye;
- Bago region: Kyaukkyi, Shwekyin, Tantabin, and Taungoo;
- Rakhine state: Buthidaung, Kyauktaw, Maungdaw, Minbya, Mrauk-U, Myebon, Ponnagyun, and Rathedaung;
- Shan state: Hopong, Hsenwi, Hsihseng, Hsipaw, Konkyan, Kutkai, Kyethi, Kyaukme, Langkho, Lashio, Laukkaing, Lawksawk, Loilen, Manton, Mawkmai, Mongmit, Mongshu, Mongpan, Mongton, Monghpyak, Mongyai, Muse, Namhsan Tachileik, Namtu, Nanhkan, Nawngkhio, Pangsang, Tangyan, and Ywangan;
- Tanintharyi region: Bokpyin, Dawei, Myiek, Tanintharyi, Thayetchaung, and Yebyu;
- Chin state: Paletwa;
- Sagaing region: Indaw.

Some contamination is by mines produced in state-owned factories. KaPaSa (Defense Products Industries of Myanmar) produce at least five types of antipersonnel landmines, including domestic versions of PMN and POMZ and M-14 type mines. (*See section on Production in the Ban Policy profile for more details.*)

Landmine contamination in Myanmar is frequently cited as a barrier to the return of refugees and internally displaced people. In Kachin State, internally displaced people identified landmines as one of the three top obstacles to return to their areas of origin according to the May 2018 Durable Peace Programme Consortium report.<sup>96</sup> In early 2019, the government of Myanmar produced a draft national strategy outlining its intention to close all internally displaced people camps within the country; yet its strategy document makes no mention of the need to clear mines.<sup>97</sup> However, in January 2019, the military removed landmines from Nam San Yang a village in Kachin state to allow the return of people displaced by previous armed conflict.<sup>98</sup>

Myanmar is also affected by ERW, including mortars, grenades, artillery, and air-dropped bombs. Periodic reports appear of discovered ordnance dating to World War II.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>96</sup> *Durable Peace Programme Endline Report* (Kachin, Myanmar, May 2018). The Durable Peace Programme is a consortium of seven local and international organizations serving the war affected population of Kachin state.

<sup>97</sup> The Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Department of Disaster Management, “National Strategy on Closure of IDP Camps (Draft),” undated.

<sup>98</sup> Ye Mon, “[An unhappy return for IDPs in Kachin State](#),” *Frontier Myanmar*, 22 August 2019.



New ERW contamination has been reported related to armed conflict in late 2018 and early 2019 in Kachin state.<sup>100</sup>

## Casualties

Casualties		
All known casualties by end 2018	The total number of casualties in Myanmar is unknown. The Monitor has recorded 4,623 mine/ERW casualties (616 killed; 3,889 injured; 118 unknown) through the end of 2018.	
Casualties in 2018 <sup>101</sup>		
Annual total	430	Increase from 202 in 2017
Survival outcome	Killed 79; injured 351	
Device type causing casualties	141 antipersonnel mines/improvised antipersonnel mine (victim-activated improvised explosive devices, IEDs); 1 antivehicle mine; 72 ERW; 216 undifferentiated mines/ERW	
Age and gender	At least 331 male; including 47 boys	At least 85 female: including 6 girls

In 2018, there were at least 430 mine/ERW casualties in Myanmar based on information provided by NGOs, UN agencies, the ICRC and other organizations, as well as by state and independent media reports.

Various media reporting indicated a trend of increasing casualty numbers in recent years. In August 2019, the Department of Rehabilitation in the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement stated that the number of landmine casualties in Myanmar is increasing yearly: “According to the records of the [ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center, or ARMAC] member countries, social media, and concerned organizations in rural areas, the number of mine casualties has increased yearly. Also, we’ve seen that the rate of disability is increasing.”<sup>102</sup> On 4 April 2019, Myanmar media stated that although many incidents still go unreported, the MRWG recorded mine/ERW casualties increased from 176 in 2017 to 276 in 2018.<sup>103</sup> Differences in the total casualty count between annual figures are attributable to the fact that the MRWG seeks to have a general figure available in the best possible time to inform its activities. The Landmine Monitor compiles its data over a longer time frame and can be considered an amended/updated figure when released nearer the end of the following year. Neither tally can be considered comprehensive, but each provide the best-known information primarily drawn from public sources in light of the lack of any official data.

Although the presence of a number of mine action actors and coverage of victim assistance programs increased, no national systematic collection of casualty data occurred.

<sup>99</sup> See, for example, “[Unexploded WWII bombs discovered at central Myanmar sports ground](#),” *Coconuts Yangon*, 30 September 2015; and N. Thwin, “[World War II ordnance kills three](#),” *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 20 March 2012

<sup>100</sup> See, for example, 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.

<sup>101</sup> Unless noted otherwise, Monitor casualty data for 2018 is from a combined dataset of published and unpublished sources.

<sup>102</sup> Myat Thura, “[Official warns of rising landmine casualties](#),” *Myanmar Times*, 14 August 2019.

<sup>103</sup> UNICEF, “[One out of four casualties of landmine incidents in Myanmar are children](#),” 4 April 2019.

Due to the lack of an official data collection mechanism, the absence of any 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 the country.

A study in 2018 found that many internally displaced person with disabilities in NSAG-controlled areas appeared have impairments due to landmines and conflict-related violence. However, in government-controlled area, “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.”<sup>104</sup>

The number of military and other combatant casualties remains unknown, but is believed to be substantial. A Ministry of Defense official stated to the Monitor that landmines were the chief cause of death and injury for the Tatmadaw over any other cause, however he said that if he revealed the figure “it would give a psychological weapon to our enemies.”<sup>105</sup> Past reporting by the Monitor has indicated that there are a significant number of military casualties, but such military records remain unavailable to the public.<sup>106</sup>

The total number of casualties in Myanmar is unknown. The Monitor has recorded annual casualty figures of 4,623 (616 killed; 3,889 injured; 118 unknown) between 2000 and the end of 2018.

## Addressing the Impact

### Mine action

Mine Action	
<b>Landmine clearance</b>	The Tatmadaw is conducting some mine clearance but operations currently use unknown standards.
Progress	
<b>Landmines</b>	Myanmar is part of the ADMM-Plus Expert’s Working Group on Humanitarian Mine Action under the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center.  No mine clearance is permitted by NGOs. Limited non-technical survey has been permitted since 2016.

<sup>104</sup> International Alert, “Conflict impacts on gender and masculinities expectations on people with disabilities in Kachin state: A rapid assessment,” December 2018, pp. 14–15.

<sup>105</sup> Landmine Monitor meeting with Col. (rtd) Min Htike Hein, Deputy Permanent Secretary for the Minister of Defense, Ministry of Defense, Naypyitaw, 29 June 2018.

<sup>106</sup> See the 2009 edition of the Monitor report for Myanmar available on the [Monitor website](#). Unprecedented levels of information on military casualties were received in 2008 from the State Peace and Development Council; 508 military casualties were identified. Information from this source has not been made available any other year.

*Operators and service providers/implementers*

Operators and service providers	
Current operators	<p>Clearance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tatmadaw engineers</li> </ul> <p>Non-technical survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Danish Demining Group (DDG)</li> <li>• Mines Advisory Group (MAG)</li> <li>• The HALO Trust</li> </ul> <p><i>Risk education</i><sup>107</sup></p> <p>National:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee of Internally Displaced Karen People and the Karen Teachers Working Group</li> <li>• Karen Development Network</li> <li>• The Karenni Social Welfare and Development Center</li> <li>• Local Development Network</li> <li>• Ta'ang Students and Youth Union</li> <li>• Nyein (Shalom) Foundation</li> <li>• Wunpawng Ninghtoi</li> <li>• Myanmar Heart Development Organization</li> </ul> <p>Non-State Armed Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democratic Karen Benevolent Army</li> </ul> <p>International NGOs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DanChurchAid (DCA)-Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)</li> <li>• Danish Refugee Council (DRC)-Danish Demining Group (DDG)</li> <li>• HALO Trust</li> <li>• Humanity &amp; Inclusion (HI, formerly Handicap International)</li> <li>• Johanniter International Assistance (JOIN)</li> <li>• Mines Advisory Group (MAG)</li> </ul> <p>Red Cross:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Committee of the Red Cross</li> <li>• Myanmar Red Cross Society</li> </ul>

<sup>107</sup> MIMU, “[Myanmar, Who/What/Where, Mine Action](#),” 23 August 2019.

*Mine action program**Management*

Myanmar's previous administration created a Mine Action Center under the former Myanmar Peace Center in 2013, but it was never fully staffed and the government said concluding a National Ceasefire Agreement with non-state actors was a precondition for proceeding to survey and clearance.<sup>108</sup> Mine Action Standards for Myanmar were drafted, but never became operational. With the change of government in 2016, the Mine Action Center was dissolved. The new government made negotiations for a peace accord its priority, at which several participants emphasized the threat of mines and the need for mine clearance.<sup>109</sup> A May 2016 national youth conference also called on the army and ethnic armed groups to remove landmines.<sup>110</sup> Several civil society groups also called for mine clearance in recent years (*see Myanmar's Mine Ban Policy profile*).

The Department of Social Work (DSW) leads the MRWG, co-chaired with UNICEF, which is comprised of 10 ministries, 41 international and national organizations, and four state-level coordination agencies (in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, and Shan states).<sup>111</sup> The group meets quarterly in the capital, Naypyidaw, and focuses on risk education with a sub-working group on victim assistance.

*Strategic planning*

As of September 2019, the government has not announced a clear strategy on mine action or established any structure to coordinate it. Previously, in January 2018, Union Joint Monitoring Committee (JMU-C) Secretary, Colonel Wunna Aung, stated that mine clearance could not begin prior to the building of mutual trust between the government and ethnic armed groups.<sup>112</sup> In May 2017, Colonel Aung stated that the Tatmadaw would take the lead on landmine clearance and that international technological and material support would be accepted.<sup>113</sup> In August 2017, Myanmar's Commander-in-Chief of Defense Services, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, held talks with New Zealand's ambassador regarding assistance between the two countries militaries and mine clearance operations.<sup>114</sup>

*Legislation and standards*

In October 2019, Myanmar stated that it is in the process of finalizing its National Mine Action Standard for the conduct of systematic mine clearance. Myanmar is working with countries in the region through ADMM-Plus Expert's Working Group on Humanitarian Mine Action under the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Roger Fasth and Pascal Simon, "Mine Action in Myanmar," *Journal of Mine Action*, Issue 19.2, July 2015.

<sup>109</sup> See, for example: At the Union Peace Conference 21st Century Panglong, Daw Wint Wah Tun of the National League for Democracy said of her Shadaw township, Kayah state, "local people do not feel secure as landmine fields pose a threat to their way of life." "[Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong continues](#)," *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 2 September 2016.

<sup>110</sup> "Youth Empowerment: Myanmar's young people want an active role in the running of their country," *Mizzima Weekly*, 9 June 2016, p. 22.

<sup>111</sup> UNICEF, "Landmines and explosive remnants of war threaten children and communities across Myanmar," 4 April 2018.

<sup>112</sup> "[Standard operating procedures for commanders drafted at JMC-U](#)," *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 20 January 2018. "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," said Col. Aung.

<sup>113</sup> Ye Khaung Nyunt, "[Second day of 10th Union Joint Monitoring Committee meeting in Yangon](#)," *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 5 May 2017.

<sup>114</sup> MNA, "Senior General meets New Zealand Ambassador," *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 27 August 2017.

### *Operators*

International demining organizations started to arrive in Myanmar in 2012, but operations were not started until later.

In 2018 and early 2019, six international demining organizations had offices in Yangon and some provincial locations: DCA, DDG, HALO Trust, HI, MAG, and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). These international NGOs conducted risk education and community liaison activities, and community mapping of hazardous areas in some locations.

Since Myanmar does not have national mine action legislation or standards, demining organizations have followed IMAS and their own standard operating procedures. Currently all mine action actors retain their own survey results in the absence of a neutral national entity to store hazardous area data, which remains sensitive in view of the continuing conflict.

### *Survey*

The Tatmadaw has created its own warning signs and fenced some known mined areas, however it is not known how systematic such activities are.<sup>116</sup>

In December 2018, the Monitor and the UN Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU) produced a country map of townships with SHAs and an infographic on the impact of landmine use in Myanmar.<sup>117</sup>

Some international mine action actors were authorized to conduct non-technical survey in some locations beginning in 2016. Non-technical survey by MAG, DDG, DCA, and Halo Trust continued in 2018 and 2019. They have so far been unable to carry out surveys across an entire state (province), which would enable them to determine a baseline level of contamination. Signage or fencing of SHAs found during non-technical survey remains a sensitive topic and subject to approval by local authorities.

### *Clearance*

In July 2019, a representative of the Ministry of Defense stated to the Landmine Monitor that the Tatmadaw is clearing mines because it is their duty. "We do not do it for others, or for any international organization or group, therefore there is no need for us to report to anyone our mine clearance." The minister stated that military personnel are sent to the frontlines for five to six months, after which they are sent to military schools, where among other things, they learn to clear mines. He emphasized that all military personnel have the skill to clear landmines. "We clear mines around the villages, and the villagers thank us for saving them from the mines planted by the Ethnic Armed Organizations." In 2018, there was little conflict and the Tatmadaw could move freely due to the ceasefire and carry out more demining activities.<sup>118</sup> In October 2019, Myanmar stated the military together with ethnic armed organizations under the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement

<sup>115</sup> [Statement by Myanmar](#), UNGA First Committee, Thematic Discussion on Conventional Weapons, New York, 25 October 2019.

<sup>116</sup> Landmine 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 DKBA splinter group and the Tatmadaw in Hlaing-Bwe township during reported clearance. Photographer provided a photograph of the signs to the Monitor, Yangon, 3 August 2018. He said the truck in which he traveled with the Tatmadaw had many of the mine warning signs. Also, in November 2018, in Eastern Bago region, after a mine incident near a school in Tha Pyay Nyunt village, some Tatmadaw soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion 8/53 fenced the area where the explosion took place to make it inaccessible for the students. "KHRG Submission to Landmine Monitor," September 2019, unpublished.

<sup>117</sup> "Townships with Suspected Landmine Contamination (1999–2017) and Casualties in Myanmar (Jan–Dec2017)" UN MIMU, 26 November 2018. Infographic provides an 11-year overview of data from the Landmine Monitor (2007–2017). The infographic was also available in [Burmese language](#). MIMU reported to the Landmine Monitor that the landmine infographic has been one of their most requested products.



(NCA), had engaged in humanitarian demining in Kayin state, and that since 2011 more than 36,000 landmines and ERW were cleared.<sup>119</sup> State media report military clearance during the armed conflict periodically.<sup>120</sup>

Humanitarian mine action organizations have not been permitted to conduct clearance by either the government or ethnic authorities, and this remains the case as of October 2019.

### *Deminer safety*

Military training in landmine safety caused 11 casualties in May 2019. It was reported that an incident took place during training organized to teach police officers in Mandalay region about landmine safety, detection, and the different types of mines. A media report stated that as a part of the training, a police sergeant was supposed to step on a sample M14 plastic landmine while other trainees disarmed the landmine and save him. Brig-Gen Zaw Min Tun, secretary and spokesperson of the military's Tatmadaw True News Information Team, stated that the training was conducted by a technician from the military. He said, "We heard that the trainer mistakenly brought a real landmine with the training sample landmines and that a trainee stepped on it and it exploded. Normally, real landmines and samples are differentiated by color, however there can be mistakes. We are doing further investigations on this incident."<sup>121</sup>

### *Mine/ERW risk education*

As of August 2019, at least nine organizations implemented 13 risk education projects, in Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, and Shan states, and eastern Bago region, Mon state, and Tanintharyi region.

### **Mine/ERW risk education actors<sup>122</sup>**

Location	National NGO	International NGO
<b>Chin state</b>	Karuna Myanmar Social Services	DCA
<b>Eastern Bago region</b>	Committee of Internally Displaced Karen People, Karen Teachers Working Group, Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association	DCA-CM, DCA-NCA, HI
<b>Kachin state</b>	Wunpawng Ninghtoi	DRC-DDG, MAG, HALO
<b>Kayah state</b>	Karenni Social Welfare and Development Center	DCA-CM, DCA-NCA, DRC-DDG, MAG
<b>Kayin state</b>	Committee of Internally Displaced Karen People, Karen Teachers Working Group, Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association	DCA-CM, DCA-NCA, HI, MAG, HALO
<b>Mon state</b>	Committee of Internally Displaced Karen People, Karen Teachers Working Group	DCA-CM
<b>Northern</b>	Ta'ang Students and Youth Union, Kachin Baptist	HALO, DRC-DDG, DCA-CM,

<sup>118</sup> Landmine Monitor meeting with U Min Htike Hein, Assistant Secretary, Union Minister Office for Defense, Ministry of Defence, Naypyitaw, 5 July 2019.

<sup>119</sup> [Statement by Myanmar](#), UNGA First Committee, Thematic Discussion on Conventional Weapons, New York, 25 October 2019.

<sup>120</sup> See, for example, "Tatmadaw column captures AA member dead after landmine attack," *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 11 May 2019, p. 11.

<sup>121</sup> "Mandalay Police Officer Seriously Injured in Landmine Training," *the Irrawaddy*, 21 May 2019.

<sup>122</sup> MIMU, "[Myanmar, Who/What/Where, Mine Action](#)," 23 August 2019.

<b>Shan state</b>	Convention, Wunpawng Ninghtoi, Myanmar Heart Development Organization, Center for Rural Education and Development	DCA-NCA, MAG
<b>Southern Shan state</b>		MAG, DCA-CM
<b>Tanintharyi region</b>	The Karen Teachers Working Group	MAG

In addition, UNICEF supported risk education in Shan, Mon, Kayin, and Kachin state and Eastern Bago region. The UNHCR supported risk education in Thanintharyi region, and Kayin, state. The Department of Education is listed as providing mine risk education in Kayin state.<sup>123</sup> The Myanmar Red Cross Society, together with the ICRC, is also conducting risk education.<sup>124</sup>

### Victim Assistance

Victim assistance providers and activities	
Name of organization	Type of activity
<b>Government</b>	
<b>Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement</b>	Socio-economic and rehabilitation services; vocational training school for adults with disabilities, including mine/ERW survivors
<b>Ministry of Health and Sports</b>	Prosthetic centers and two orthopedic hospitals
<b>Ministry of Defense</b>	Prosthetics provided through three centers
<b>National</b>	
<b>Peace Myanmar Aid Foundation</b>	Mobile prosthetic delivery
<b>Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People</b>	Prosthetic production at the Kho Kay Prosthetic Clinic, Mutraw, Karen (Kayin) state
<b>Karen Health and Welfare Department (KDHW)</b>	Medical first-aid assistance and amputative surgeries
<b>Karenni Health Workers Organization</b>	Prosthetics in Loikaw, Kayah (Karenni) state
<b>Karuna Mission Social Solidarity (KMSS Network)</b>	First aid and immediate assistance
<b>Myanmar Handicapped Physically Association (MPHA)</b>	Disability rights advocacy, production of assistive devices; encouraging economic inclusion through employment
<b>International</b>	
<b>Association for Aid and Relief Japan (AAR Japan)</b>	Vocational training; community-based rehabilitation; referral system; survivor rights/advocacy
<b>Exceed Worldwide</b>	Operates the prosthetic workshop at the National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH) in Yangon; financially supports Myanmar School of Prosthetics & Orthotics and a prosthetic workshop in Mandalay
<b>Leprosy Mission–Myanmar</b>	Rehabilitation and prosthetics

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> ICRC, “[Annual Report 2018](#),” p. 368.

<b>DDG/DRC</b>	Direct assistance in the form of medical and rehabilitative care and referrals for mine/ERW survivors in Kachin state
<b>HI</b>	Community-level data collection, mapping of services and barriers, assessment, referral, psychosocial support, socio-economic inclusion, repairs of mobility devices; coordination of assistance and advocacy on survivors/victims' needs; capacity-building of the MPHA, supporting Victim Assistance Centers
<b>World Education</b>	Physical rehabilitation; economic inclusion; access to medical and vocational funds; coordination of assistance and advocacy on survivors/victims' needs
<b>ICRC/Myanmar Red Cross Society</b>	Support to four rehabilitation centers: one under the MRCS in Hpa-An and three centers under the Ministry of Health and Sports in Mandalay, Myitkyina and Kyaing Tong; prosthetic outreach for remote areas
<b>UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)</b>	Discretionary funds for financial assistance to cover medical costs of war victims/landmine survivors and rehabilitation, including transport; economic inclusion through livelihood program

### *Laws and policies*

In July 2018, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Rescue and Resettlement released the publication of the long-awaited rules regulations for the Disability Rights Law that was enacted in June 2015.<sup>125</sup>

In 2017 and again in 2019, the Myanmar government announced to the media that it would be disbursing a monthly allowance to persons with disabilities in nine townships in four states as a pilot program with a view to eventual nationwide coverage.<sup>126</sup> In 2014, Myanmar launched a National Social Protection Strategic Plan through the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement to provide an allowance to all persons certified with a disability.<sup>127</sup>

Military veterans with disabilities received benefits on a priority basis, usually a civil service job at equivalent pay. Official assistance to non-military persons with disabilities in principle included two-thirds of pay for up to one year for a temporary disability and a tax-free stipend for permanent disability. The amount of the additional medical pension for veterans with permanent disabilities is determined by an injury severity scale of the Ministry of Defense. There are believed to be dozens of army-built community settlements where disabled veterans and their families receive free housing. However, ordinary soldiers with disabilities often located in remote areas lacked job opportunities and ways of finding extra income.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>125</sup> “[After delay, Disability Rights rules and regulations published](#),” *The Myanmar Times*, 13 July 2018.

<sup>126</sup> Monthly assistance payments of K16,000 to K30,000 depending on circumstances. A disabled child will get K16,000 per month and a disabled adult up to 64 years old will get K30,000. The project pilot areas are the East Dagon township of Yangon region, Patheingyi and Kangyi Taung townships of Ayeyarwaddy region, Monywa, Ayeyarwady and Chaung Oo townships of Sagaing region and Thantong and Paung townships of Mon state. See, “[Pilot project to register disabled people for welfare](#),” *The Myanmar Times*, 1 February 2019; and Htoo Thant, “[Government to start disability payments](#),” *Myanmar Times*, 16 November 2017.

<sup>127</sup> The allowance will not be available until the rights of the persons with disabilities law is enacted and a certification process is established by the government. Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, “[Myanmar National Social Protection Strategic Plan](#),” December 2014, p. 53.

### *Medical care and rehabilitation*

Traumatic injuries are the main cause of illness and the third-highest cause of death in Myanmar. There are few physicians trained in emergency medicine, and they are generally not located in rural areas, which also lack a nationwide ambulance service able to care for patients on the way to a medical facility. Medical facilities in the three major cities lack emergency response capacity: Yangon, Mandalay, and Naypyidaw (the capital) have only one emergency room in each city.<sup>129</sup>

Access to rehabilitation services is often not available to persons with disabilities in Myanmar, especially those living in rural areas. Existing physical rehabilitation centers cover only 10% of the country's needs. Most centers are in the larger cities and travel expenses are prohibitive.<sup>130</sup>

Since 2017, HI has been leading a partnership with Karen Department of Health and Welfare (KDHW) and provides support both in government- and non-government-controlled areas in Kachin state in response to a component of conflict sensitivity in the southeast.<sup>131</sup> The KDHW, which is the health department of the Karen National Union (KNU), reported that a medic's training course was provided to health workers, but more trained medics were needed to provide healthcare service in KNU-controlled areas.<sup>132</sup>

In Kachin, Rakhine and Shan states, the ICRC supported health centers and satellite posts, including facilities in areas controlled by armed groups.<sup>133</sup> Hospitals and other health facilities in Rakhine, including mobile health units, provided healthcare for internally displaced persons and other violence-affected people with ICRC support.<sup>134</sup> The ICRC continued supporting five physical rehabilitation centers and included physical rehabilitation in its Rakhine humanitarian response.<sup>135</sup>

### *Socio-economic and psychosocial inclusion*

Most mine/ERW survivors have had to abandon their traditional professions, making vocational training and other alternative livelihood solutions necessary.<sup>136</sup> DRC-DDG provided livelihood interventions to assist conflict-affected and mine/ERW-impacted communities as well as mine/ERW victims with skills-development training in business, and agriculture-oriented support.<sup>137</sup>

AAR Japan continued to provide vocational training for persons with disabilities at its center in Yangon.<sup>138</sup> In August 2018, the Myanmar Center for Responsible Business and AAR Japan, held a multi-stakeholder meeting with the support of Department of

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<sup>128</sup> Gerard McCarthy, "Veterans' Affairs in Myanmar's Reform Process," Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) Perspective Series, No. 78, 5 December 2018; and Htet Khaung Linn, "[On society's fringes, disabled Tatmadaw veterans languish in poverty](#)," *Myanmar Now*, 11 October 2016.

<sup>129</sup> Susan Becker, "[Progress towards health systems strengthening in Myanmar](#)," *Journal of Global Health Reports*, Vol. 2, 30 March 2018.

<sup>130</sup> ICRC Physical Rehabilitation Programme (PRP), "Annual Report 2018," Geneva, 2019, p. 45.

<sup>131</sup> HI, "Federal Information – Country Card: Myanmar," September 2018.

<sup>132</sup> "[Health workers are still needed in KNU areas, KDHW says](#)," *BNI*, 5 September 2018.

<sup>133</sup> ICRC, "Annual Report 2017," Geneva, 2018, p. 327.

<sup>134</sup> ICRC, "[Annual Report 2018](#)," Geneva, 2019, p. 366.

<sup>135</sup> ICRC PRP, "Annual Report 2018," Geneva, 2019, p. 45.

<sup>136</sup> DDG, "[DDG Study Aims to Counter Rise in Victims from Mines in Myanmar](#)," 16 January 2018.

<sup>137</sup> DRC/DDG, "[Factsheet Kayah State, 2018](#)," 2018.

<sup>138</sup> AAR Japan, "[Annual Report 2018: April 2018-March 2019](#)," undated but 2019, p. 17.

Rehabilitation, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement to obtain feedback on a draft handbook on employment of persons with disabilities.<sup>139</sup>

HI ran the United States-funded, Humanitarian Mine Action in Burma: Inclusive Socio-economic Development and Human Security for All project in three townships in Kayah state and East Bago regions in southeast Myanmar in partnership with the Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association (MPHA).<sup>140</sup>

The ICRC and/or the National Society provided material assistance for people affected by conflict and other violence in Kachin, Rakhine, and Shan states. The ICRC faced restrictions in providing cash income support to violence-affected households in northern Rakhine and adjusted by distributing household essentials and agricultural input.<sup>141</sup>

In 2018, World Education increased the capacity of the local disability self-help groups to work with local and state-level actors to increase the involvement of persons with disabilities in the peace process and their participation in decision-making and policy development. It coordinated two forums on disability and peace in Kayah and Bago. It also provided livelihoods support, medical assistance to mine/ERW survivors and other persons with disabilities with the support of the Grapes for Humanity Global Foundation.<sup>142</sup> World Education supported self-help groups across Bago region and Kayah state. It compiled, translated, printed, and distributed service provider directories in Kayah and Mon states.<sup>143</sup>

According to UNICEF reporting, 87% of children with disabilities did not visit a doctor and 20% said they were bullied at school.<sup>144</sup>

In 2018, six donors contributed US\$2.9 million to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for mine action; this represents less than half the levels of funding received in 2017 or 2016.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Myanmar Center for Responsible Business, "[Workshop to Consult Government Departments on the Draft Handbook on Employment of Persons with Disabilities](#)," 23 August 2018.

<sup>140</sup> HI, "[Federal Information – Country Card: Myanmar](#)," September 2018.

<sup>141</sup> ICRC, "Annual Report 2018," Geneva, 2019, p. 368.

<sup>142</sup> World Education, "[Engaging Persons with Disabilities in the Peace Process in Myanmar](#)," 2018; and World Education, "[Where We Work. Myanmar](#)," undated.

<sup>143</sup> Email from Khin Mar Aung, Director, World Education Myanmar, 25 October 2018.

<sup>144</sup> UNICEF, "[Children with disabilities: Ensuring inclusive policy and action to provide access to services](#)," undated.

<sup>145</sup> Response to Monitor questionnaire by Frank Meeussen, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Arms Export Control, European External Action Service, 30 September 2019; Germany, Mine Ban Treaty Article 7 Report, Form J, 4 April 2019; Ireland, Convention on Cluster Munitions Article 7 Report, Annex, 2 April 2019; and Mine Ban Treaty Article 7 Report, April 2019; Norway, Convention on Cluster Munitions Article 7 Report, Annex, 30 April 2019; Switzerland, Convention on Cluster Munitions Article 7 Report, Form I, 24 April 2019; and United Kingdom, Mine Ban Treaty Article 7 Report, Form J, 30 April 2019.



### Support for Mine Action

All international contributions went to non-technical survey, risk education, or victim assistance activities through the ICRC and other NGOs.

#### International contributions: 2018<sup>146</sup>

Donor	Sector	Amount (national currency)	Amount (US\$)
Switzerland	Risk education and victim assistance	CHF980,000	1,001,635
European Union	Risk education	€445,962	526,993
Germany	Victim assistance	€400,000	472,680
United Kingdom	Risk education	£314,044	419,657
Norway	Risk education	NOK3,000,000	368,922
Ireland	Clearance	€70,000	82,719
<b>Total</b>			<b>2,872,606</b>

Since 2014, international assistance to Myanmar has fluctuated greatly and has totaled more than \$25 million.

#### Summary of international contributions: 2014–2018<sup>147</sup>

Year	International contributions (US\$)
2018	2,872,606
2017	6,725,763
2016	6,525,640
2015	6,240,315
2014	3,386,230
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,750,554</b>

### Cluster Munition Monitor 2019

*Summary:* Non-signatory Myanmar acknowledges the humanitarian concerns associated with cluster munitions and has expressed interest in joining, but has not taken any steps towards accession. It last participated in a meeting of the convention in 2013. Myanmar abstained from voting on a key United Nations (UN) resolution on the convention in December 2018.

Myanmar previously stated that it has never used and does not produce or transfer cluster munitions. It allegedly used a weapon similar in design to a modern cluster munition in Kachin state in 2012–2013.

<sup>146</sup> Average exchange rate for 2018: €1=US\$1.1817; NOK8.1318=US\$1; £1=US\$1.3363; CHF0.9784=US\$1. US Federal Reserve, “[List of Exchange Rates \(Annual\)](#),” 2 January 2019.

<sup>147</sup> See previous Monitor reports. Total for support in 2017 has been rectified as a result of revised United States funding data.

## Cluster Munition Ban Policy

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has not acceded to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.<sup>148</sup>

Myanmar has indicated that it will consider acceding to the convention, but not until it has achieved a nation-wide peace agreement.<sup>149</sup> In 2017, Myanmar said it was reviewing its position on joining the convention, which it said aims to “prevent the indiscriminate use of...cluster munitions, which can lead to vulnerability and serious humanitarian impact...”<sup>150</sup>

Myanmar attended a regional meeting of the Oslo Process that created the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Lao PDR in October 2008 and participated in a regional conference on cluster munitions in Bali, Indonesia in November 2009.

Myanmar participated as an observer in the convention’s meetings, but not since 2013.<sup>151</sup> It has attended regional workshops on the convention, most recently in Manila, Philippines on 18–19 June 2019 and Vientiane, Lao PDR in April 2019.<sup>152</sup>

In December 2018, Myanmar abstained from voting on a key UNGA resolution that urges states outside the Convention on Cluster Munitions to “join as soon as possible.”<sup>153</sup> It has abstained from the vote on the annual UNGA resolution promoting the convention since it was first introduced in 2015.

Myanmar is not party to the Mine Ban Treaty. It is also not party to the Convention on Conventional Weapons.

## Use, production, transfer, and stockpiling

Myanmar told a regional meeting in 2009 that, “we do not use cluster munitions, develop, produce, otherwise acquire, retain or transfer to anyone, directly or indirectly, nor assist, encourage or induce anyone to engage in any activity prohibited under this Convention.”<sup>154</sup> It criticized cluster munitions as “weapons with indiscriminate area effect...which can cause humanitarian consequences.”<sup>155</sup>

Myanmar has denied using cluster munitions. In 2015, it said “cluster munitions were never used in...operations” by the Armed Forces.<sup>156</sup>

<sup>148</sup> The military regime changed the name from Burma to Myanmar in 1989, but many ethnic groups in the country and a number of states still prefer to use the name Burma.

<sup>149</sup> [Statement of Myanmar](#), UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 15 October 2015. In 2013, Myanmar expressed concern at the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions but did not elaborate its position on accession. [Statement of Myanmar](#), UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 30 October 2013; and [statement of Myanmar](#), UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 24 October 2012.

<sup>150</sup> Myanmar, Explanation of Vote on Resolution L.41, 72<sup>nd</sup> Session, UNGA First Committee, New York, 31 October 2017, UNGA, Official Records, [A/C.1/72/PV26](#), pp. 18–19/29.

<sup>151</sup> Myanmar participated as an observer in the convention’s annual Meetings of States Parties in 2010 and 2012 and then its intersessional meetings in 2013. Myanmar has not attended a meeting of the convention since 2013.

<sup>152</sup> Regional Seminar on Landmines, Cluster Munitions and Explosive Remnants of War, Vientiane, Lao DPR, 29–30 April 2019. See, “[Experts Discuss Landmine-related Risks At A Regional Seminar](#),” *Lao News Agency*, 2 May 2019; and “[Asia-Pacific Workshop on CCM Universalization](#),” Convention on Cluster Munitions Quarterly Newsletter, April 2019.

<sup>153</sup> “[Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions](#),” UNGA Resolution 73/54, 5 December 2018.

<sup>154</sup> Statement by Ye Minn Thein, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Conference on the Promotion and Universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Bali, 16 November 2009.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> [Statement of Myanmar](#), UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 15 October 2015.

Myanmar possesses 122mm Type-81 and Type-90B and M1985 240mm surface-to-surface rocket launchers, but it is not known if the ammunition for these weapons includes versions with submunition payloads.<sup>157</sup>

### *Previous allegation of use*

Myanmar acquired and reportedly used a weapon similar in design to a modern cluster munition in late 2012 and early 2013 during the conflict between government forces and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in Kachin state in the north of the country.<sup>158</sup> The KIA claimed that the Myanmar army units stationed at Gangdau Yang used cluster munitions against KIA forces in a 26 January 2013 attack at Hka Ya Bum, five miles west of the town of Laiza in southern Kachin state.<sup>159</sup>

Human Rights Watch (HRW) confirmed airstrikes and shelling on Laiza by Myanmar forces in December 2012 and January 2013.<sup>160</sup> It reviewed a set of photos that showed what appear to be the same remnants in a vehicle at a location that appear to be the site of the attack, indicating they were moved.<sup>161</sup> The “cluster adapter” and 20-pound fragmentation bombs shown in the photographs appear to meet the definition of a cluster munition under the Convention on Cluster Munitions.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> “[Myanmar Defense Weapons](#),” 20 March 2014. English translation from Hla Oo’s Blog, “[Burma Army’s MRLS or Multi Rocket Launcher Systems](#),” 23 March 2014.

<sup>158</sup> There is evidence that Myanmar government forces mounted six fragmentation bombs to the adaptor, which then separated from the rack when dropped from the air.

<sup>159</sup> “[Burma army uses cluster bombs to take key KIO position near Laiza](#),” *Kachin News Group*, 26 January 2013. On 19 April 2013, the deputy secretary of the Kachin National Council provided photographs to the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) showing an unknown type of air-dropped bomb that it said, “confirmed that the World War-Two era 20 pound fragmentation bombs were used during the airstrikes in the KIA’s strategic outposts between 14 December 2012 and 8 January 2013 by the Myanmar Air Force.” According to the Kachin National Council, “this type has never been used in Burma’s civil war before.” The photographs were contained in an email sent to the CMC by Hkun Htoi, Deputy Secretary, Kachin National Council, 19 April 2013.

<sup>160</sup> HRW also documented the attacks on Laiza on 14 January 2013, which killed three civilians. See HRW, “[Burma: Halt Indiscriminate Attacks in Kachin State](#),” 17 January 2013.

<sup>161</sup> Email from Bertil Lintner, 25 March 2013.

<sup>162</sup> The photographs show a metal tubular rack that appears to be similar in design to the US-produced M1 cluster adaptor. The small fragmentation bombs are of a more modern design and marking than World War II-era munitions. A military officer who requested anonymity confirmed that the weapon was manufactured in Myanmar; additionally, a former military ordnance officer confirmed that the markings on the weapons were those used by Myanmar’s armed forces.