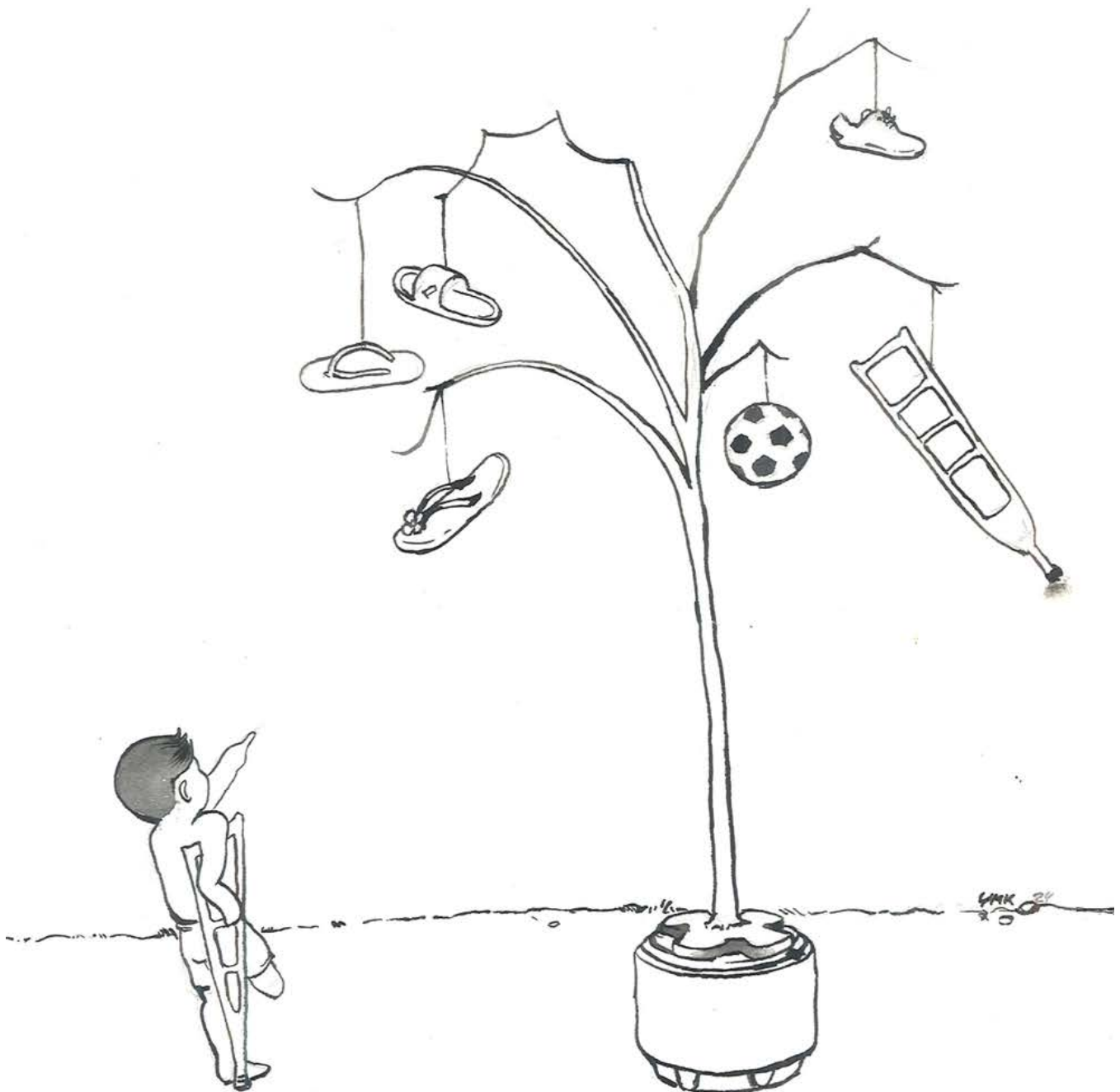


Landmine Monitor

Myanmar/Burma

December 2024



Includes Cluster Munition Monitor 2024

LANDMINE & CLUSTER MUNITION MONITOR

Peace agreements may be signed, and hostilities may cease, but landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) are an enduring legacy of conflict.

Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor is the civil society initiative providing research for the ICBL-CMC. It has reported on the global landmine and cluster munition problems and solutions since 1999 and 2010 respectively.

It has become the monitoring regime for the Mine Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions and is a shining example of the concept of civil society-based verification that is now employed in many similar contexts.

A broad-based network of individuals, campaigns, and organizations from around the world contribute to the Monitor's global research work. The 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 is not a technical treaty verification system or a formal inspection regime. It complements the reporting requirements of countries which have ratified the treaty. Our reports seek to make transparent the state of the landmine crisis, and government policies or practices, in non-signatory states.

The Monitor also aims to promote and facilitate discussion within human society in order to reach the goal of ending the suffering caused by antipersonnel landmines and cluster munitions, and establishing a landmine and cluster munition free world.

Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor Myanmar/Burma researcher for 2024 was Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan. This report contains information included up to October 2024, except for Casualties and Support which report on data from the last calendar year. 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. If you have corrections regarding the contents of this report please write: monitor@icblcmc.org

This country report is printed and disseminated by MineFreeMyanmar.info and PDF copies are available at the website.

Cover: Artwork from the 2024 nationwide all media art contest on the impact of landmines in Myanmar run by Mhyote Mine Kin Kwar Pyi Myanmar Credit: Mine Free Myanmar

Landmine Monitor

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Landmine Monitor Myanmar/Burma Country Report December 2024

Myanmar continues to produce and use antipersonnel landmines, despite its previous expressions of interest in joining the Mine Ban Treaty and its vote in favor of an annual United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution promoting the treaty in 2023. Non-state armed groups (NSAGs) in Myanmar also produce and use antipersonnel mines, including improvised blast and fragmentation mines that are victim-activated.

New mine use in Myanmar increased significantly in 2023–2024.

Policy

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has not acceded to the Mine Ban Treaty.¹

Following a military coup on 1 February 2021, the Myanmar Armed Forces created a provisional government.² Parliamentarians that were elected in November 2020 formed an oppositional National Unity Government (NUG) from exile in April 2021.³ Neither contender for government in Myanmar took any steps during 2023 or the first half of 2024 to accede to the treaty.

Before the coup, Myanmar officials had expressed interest in the Mine Ban Treaty and support for its humanitarian provisions.⁴ Myanmar often stated that it was studying the treaty with a view to joining in the future.⁵ In November 2020, Myanmar stated that it was “attentively” following the work of the treaty, which it said plays “an important role in ending the human suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel land mines.”⁶

Myanmar did not participate in the 1996–1997 Ottawa Process that created the Mine Ban Treaty.

Myanmar has participated as an observer at several meetings of the treaty.⁷ Since the Fourth Review Conference in 2019, it has attended all of the treaty’s annual meetings, most recently the Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties in Geneva in November 2023. Representatives from Myanmar’s Geneva mission also attended the treaty’s intersessional meetings in Geneva in June 2024.

In December 2023, for the second time, Myanmar voted in favor of the key annual UNGA resolution promoting universalization of the Mine Ban Treaty. Between 1997 and 2021, Myanmar abstained from voting

1. The military junta that previously ruled the country changed its name from Burma to Myanmar. Many ethnic groups in Myanmar, and a number of other countries, still refer to the country as Burma. Internal state and region names are given in their various forms as per local usage, for example, Karenni (Kayah) state. Since 2009, the Monitor has used township names according to those used by the United Nations (UN) Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU). For more information, see the MIMU website.
2. The Provisional Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar was formed on 1 August 2021 by the State Administration Council (SAC), with the Commander-in-Chief of the Myanmar Armed Forces, Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, as its chair.
3. The NUG is composed of members of the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, parliamentarians who were elected in November 2020 but prevented from taking office on 1 February 2021 by the military coup. The NUG also has representatives from some of Myanmar’s many ethnic minority groups. The NUG sanctioned the formation of anti-military militias within the country in May 2021, which are known as People’s Defence Forces (PDFs). Many anti-military militias are self-organized and their connections to the NUG may be tenuous.
4. In November 2019, Myanmar’s former Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Win Myat Aye, stated, “Myanmar recognizes the importance of the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention in putting an end to the suffering and human casualties caused by anti-personnel mines, in saving lives and in returning hope and human dignity. We also believe that universalization of the convention is vital in reducing humanitarian harms. Building lasting peace is the most fundamental and important task in the process of stopping future use of anti-personnel mines.” Statement of Myanmar, Mine Ban Treaty Fourth Review Conference, Oslo, 26 November 2019.
5. Myanmar Explanation of Vote on Resolution L.45, UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 6 November 2019. UNGA, Official Records, A/C.1/74/PV25, p. 1. This is virtually the same as its statement the previous year. Myanmar Explanation of Vote on Resolution L.53, UNGA First Committee, New York, 8 November 2018. See also, Myanmar Explanation of Vote on Resolution L.40, UNGA First Committee, New York, 31 October 2017. UNGA, Official Records, A/C.1/72/PV26, pp. 18–19 and 29.
6. Statement of Myanmar, Mine Ban Treaty Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties, held virtually, 16 November 2020.
7. Myanmar previously attended Meetings of States Parties in 2003, 2006, and 2011–2013. It did not participate in the Review Conferences held in 2004, 2009, or 2014. Myanmar participated in intersessional meetings in Geneva in 2013–2014, 2016, 2019, and 2021.

on the annual UNGA resolution promoting the treaty.⁸ Myanmar has not offered any explanation for its change of vote.

The civil society initiative Mine-Free Myanmar released a Burmese translation of Landmine Monitor 2023 at a press conference in Chiang Mai, Thailand in December 2023.⁹ It also displayed artwork by artists from mine affected parts of Myanmar at Chiang Mai University in March 2024.¹⁰ In November 2023, the UN's Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU) produced an updated map of Myanmar's mine-affected areas and infographics detailing the impact of mines.¹¹

At the treaty's Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) condemned new use of antipersonnel mines in Myanmar and called on all governments to strongly condemn this use.¹²

Production, transfer, and stockpiling

State-owned enterprise Myanmar Defense Products Industries, known as Ka Pa Sa, which operates under the Myanmar military, produces at least five types of antipersonnel landmine: MM1, MM2, MM3, MM5, and MM6.¹³ These antipersonnel mines continue to be produced for use by Myanmar's Armed Forces.¹⁴ During 2024, NSAGs in Myanmar continued to publish photographs showing antipersonnel mines produced by the state that they had captured, seized, or recovered from frontline Myanmar Armed Forces units. In January 2024, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) displayed MM1 and MM6 mines captured in Mongmit township of Shan state.¹⁵ Also in January 2024, the Arakan Army (AA) displayed MM2 and MM6 mines captured in Paletwa township in Chin state.¹⁶ In March 2024, the AA captured additional MM2 mines in Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships in Rakhine state.¹⁷ In February 2024, the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) displayed hundreds of MM1 and MM2 mines seized from military vehicles in Dawei township, Tanintharyi region.¹⁸ In March 2024, the Kawthoolei Army (KTLA) displayed MM1 mines captured in Bokpyin township, Tanintharyi region.¹⁹

8. "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction," UNGA Resolution, 77/63, 7 December 2022. In 1996, Myanmar vot-ed in favor of a UNGA resolution calling on governments to pursue an international agreement banning antiper-sonnel landmines.

9. The Mine-Free Myanmar initiative was initially known as "Halt Mine Use in Burma/Myanmar." See, Mine-Free Myanmar website.

10. The exhibition featured artwork on the theme of "The impact of antipersonnel landmines on my community" from across Myanmar, including from Chin, Karen, Mon, Rakhine and Shan states and the Tanintharyi and Yan-gon regions. The art work included submissions in Burmese, Karen and English. The competition was supported by a grant from the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. See, Mine Free Myanmar, "Art Competition: Im-pact of mines on my community," 15 December 2023

11. MIMU, "Townships with Suspected Landmine/ERW Contamination (1999–2024) and Landmine/ERW Casualties in Myanmar (2023)," November 2023. MIMU reports that the infographic is one of their most requested products.

12. Statement of the ICBL, Mine Ban Treaty Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 24 November 2023.

13. The MM1 is modeled on the Chinese Type-59 stake-mounted fragmentation mine; the MM2 is similar to the Chi-nese Type-58 blast mine; the MM3 is a bounding fragmentation mine; the MM5 is a Claymore-type directional fragmentation mine; and the MM6 is a copy of the United States (US) M14 low metal content antipersonnel mine. Myanmar also produces the MM4 antivehicle mine.

14. In December 2019, an NSAG in Shan state published photographs showing MM2 antipersonnel mines with mark-ings that indicate they were manufactured by Myanmar Defense Products Industries in 2018. The allegation and photographs were published on a Facebook page associated with the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS). See Facebook post by Tai Freedom, 3 December 2019. See also, Tai Freedom website.

15. Facebook post by Maung Media, 5 January 2024.

16. Facebook post by Dawei Watch, 14 January 2024; and Facebook post by Narinjara News, 18 January 2024.

17. Arakan Army, "Arakan Army Battle News," 8 March 2024.

18. "Revolutionary troops retrieve weapons from military council vehicles in eastern Dawei forest," The Tanintharyi Times, 23 February 2024.

19. Facebook post by Dawei Watch, 26 March 2024.

Previously, in August 2023, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and a local People's Defence Force (PDF) recovered MM2 and MM6 mines from a Myanmar Armed Forces outpost in Mabein township, Shan state.²⁰ In November 2023, a Karenni group displayed MM6 mines captured in Muse township, Kayah state.²¹

In December 2023 alone, there were at least five reports of antipersonnel mines recovered from the junta. A Chin armed group displayed MM1, MM2 and MM6 mines captured in Gangaw township of Magway region.²² The TNLA seized crates of new MM6 mines in Namtu township, Shan state.²³ The KNLA and two associated anti-military militias displayed MM1, MM2 and MM6 mines captured in Thandaunggyi township of Kayin state.²⁴ The Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) displayed MM2 mines captured in the Kokang regions in northern Shan state.²⁵ The TNLA displayed MM2 and MM6 mines captured in Kyaukme and Namhkan townships of Shan state.²⁶

Myanmar is not known to have exported antipersonnel landmines.²⁷ Myanmar previously imported or otherwise acquired and used antipersonnel mines manufactured in China, India, Italy, Russia or the former Soviet Union, and the United States (US).²⁸

There is no publicly available information on the types or quantities of antipersonnel mines stockpiled by the Myanmar Armed Forces.

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

NSAGs in Myanmar have produced improvised blast and fragmentation antipersonnel mines that are victim-activated. Such improvised explosive devices are prohibited by the Mine Ban Treaty, regardless of whether they were manufactured in a factory or improvised from locally available materials. Some NSAGs in Myanmar have also produced Claymore-type directional fragmentation mines, antivehicle mines, and antipersonnel mines equipped with antihandling devices.²⁹

Some NSAGs also possess antipersonnel mines that they seized from the Myanmar Armed Forces and from other groups.³⁰ They have also removed landmines from mined areas for re-use and acquired them

20. Facebook post by People's Spring, 26 August 2023. The National Unity Government (NUG) sanctioned the formation of anti-military militias in May 2021, known as People's Defence Forces (PDFs). Many such groups are self-organized and their connections to the NUG may be limited.

21. Facebook post by Mekong News, 30 November 2023.

22. Facebook post by Shwe Phee Myay News Agency, 28 December 2023.

23. In one photo soldiers are seen taking new MM6 antipersonnel mines out of two crates marked "Mine AP Pressure." See "Weapons including 2 Howitzer confiscated in battle of Namtu city," Shwe Phee Myay News Agency, 28 December 2023.

24. "Karen and Karenni joint forces capture military base by Thanlwin river," Shwe Phee Myay News Agency, 19 December 2023.

25. Facebook post by Khit Thit Media, 3 December 2023.

26. Facebook post by Khit Thit Media, 5 December 2023.

27. In 1999, Myanmar's representative to the UN stated that the country supported banning exports of antipersonnel mines. Yet no formal moratorium or export ban has been proclaimed. See, ICBL, *Landmine Monitor Report 2000: Toward a Mine-Free World* (New York: Human Rights Watch, August 2000), p. 469.

28. ICBL, *Landmine Monitor Report 2004: Toward a Mine-Free World* (New York: Human Rights Watch, October 2004), p. 938. The mines include Chinese Types-58, -59, -69, and -72A; Soviet POMZ-2, POMZ-2M, PMN-1, and PMD-6; US M14, M16A1, and M18; and Indian/British LTM-73 and LTM-76.

29. The Monitor received photographs from an anonymous source that purport to show an improvised antipersonnel mine factory in Demoso township, Kayah state set up by the Karenni Nationalities Defense Force (KNDF) in February 2023.

30. In 2023 and early 2024, multiple NSAGs seized or captured antipersonnel mines from the Myanmar Armed Forces in Chin, Kayin, Kayah, Rakhine and Shan states, and in the Magway, Sagaing and Tanintharyi regions. Between January 2022 and September 2023, in a non-exhaustive survey of media reports and photographs, Landmine Monitor found more than 45 instances of mines being captured from the Myanmar Armed Forces, amounting to hundreds of antipersonnel mines of types MM1, MM2, MM5, and MM6. See, *Mine-Free Myanmar*, "Myanmar Armed Forces consistently using antipersonnel landmines over the past 18 months," 9 June 2023.

from the clandestine arms market.³¹

Use

Myanmar continues to use antipersonnel landmines, despite voting in favor of an annual UNGA resolution promoting the treaty since 2022.³² The use of mines appeared to significantly increase in 2023–2024 as the Monitor has documented use of antipersonnel landmines by the Myanmar Armed Forces, as well as by PDFs and various NSAGs operating in Myanmar.

Use by the Myanmar Armed Forces

Myanmar's Armed Forces have repeatedly used antipersonnel mines since seizing power in a coup in February 2021. This use represents a significant increase on use in previous years, including use around infrastructure such as mobile phone towers, extractive enterprises, and energy pipelines.

Photographs reviewed by the Monitor indicate that antipersonnel mines manufactured by Myanmar were captured from the Myanmar Armed Forces by NSAGs every month between January 2022 and September 2024, in virtually every part of the country, indicating extensive landmine use.³³ In August 2023, the Myanmar Armed Forces were reported to have increased the destructive power of antipersonnel landmines by placing a mortar projectile underneath them.³⁴

Attributing the new use of antipersonnel mines is made difficult by the complex conflict situation and the partisan nature of some media sources.³⁵ While many areas were already heavily contaminated by landmines, given the increase in use since the military coup, most of the casualties reported during 2023 and 2024 appear to be from antipersonnel mines recently emplaced.

The Myanmar Armed Forces have previously admitted to the Monitor that they use antipersonnel mines in areas where they are under attack.³⁶

Examples illustrating the new use of antipersonnel mines are summarized below.³⁷

In September 2024, villagers in Gwa township of Rakhine state said that soldiers from the Myanmar Army's 563rd Light Infantry Battalion were laying landmines from the mountain behind Taing Kyoe village in southern Gwa to Kyway Chai Kwat This village.³⁸ In May 2024, residents of Sittwe, the capital of Ra-

31. Landmine Monitor 2009 identified the presence of US-made M26 bounding antipersonnel mines in Myanmar but could not identify the source or the user. See, Landmine Monitor Report 2009: Toward a Mine-Free World (Ottawa: Mines Action Canada, October 2009), p. 1,031.

32. See, UN Voting Data on annual resolution titled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction."

33. Mine Free Myanmar, "More antipersonnel landmines seized by armed groups during first 3 months of 2024," 1 June 2024. For example, on 13 September 2023, Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) seized a large quantity of MM1, MM2, and MM6 antipersonnel landmines after capturing a Myanmar Army outpost in Kawkaik town-ship of Kayin State. Facebook post by Shwe Phee Myay News Agency, 15 September 2023.

34. As the Myanmar Armed Forces withdrew from Thauung Salone village, Shan state, an MM6 mine—placed on top of the fuze and body of a mortar projectile—was reportedly emplaced by departing troops on a path behind the village medical clinic. It was later found by returnees. Free Burma Rangers, "Doctors as Targets: Many Killed In Burma Army's Attacks On Medical Facilities," 21 June 2023; and email from David Eubanks, Free Burma Rangers, 5 September 2023.

35. Media and data sources tied to the military tend to publish incidents ascribed to anti-military groups. Media and data sources tied to ethnic armed groups or the National Unity Government (NUG) publish incidents ascribed to the Myanmar Armed Forces. Very few publish the same incidents.

36. "In border areas, if the number of Tatmadaw [Myanmar Armed Forces] 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 micro-wave 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." Monitor meet-ing with U Min Htike Hein, Assistant Secretary, Union Minister Office for Defense, Ministry of Defense, Naypyitaw, 5 July 2019.

37. See also, ICBL-CMC, "Country Profile: Myanmar: Mine Ban Policy," 2023.

38. The villagers said landmines laid by the junta forces are usually located in the ridges behind the villages. The villagers have been asked to avoid foraging, cutting wood and gathering bamboo from the forests and mountains for the time being. Thinzar Nwe, "Junta forces continue to lay landmines in Gwa," Narinjara News, 17 September 2024.

khine state, reported that more mines had been laid around the city by the Myanmar Army as the Arakan Army (AA) seized control of more areas.³⁹

Mine casualties are often recorded on the outskirts of Myanmar Army camps, which is another indicator of new use. In September 2023, a girl was seriously injured by a mine laid near a Myanmar Army camp in Tedim town in Chin state, whereupon the 269th Infantry Battalion admitted to laying mines around its base and on a nearby ridge.⁴⁰ On 30 June 2024, the Myanmar Army warned the villagers not to approach areas where they had laid mines around Kyeintali town in Gwa township in Rakhine state. Villagers attributed the death of one person to these mines.⁴¹

In May 2024, residents of Kyar MOUNG village of Taungup township in Rakhine state claimed that the Myanmar Armed Forces had laid landmines along a nearby road located above an oil pipeline. A person foraging for food near a Myanmar Army base outside the village was also wounded when she stepped on a landmine.⁴²

In March 2024, residents of two villages alleged that the 34th Infantry Battalion and the 542nd Light Infantry Battalion, based in Kyaukphyu township of Rakhine state, had planted landmines in fields and along roads used by civilians near Sai Chone Dwain village and Aung Zedi village resulting in several casualties.⁴³

In February 2024, two children were seriously injured by a landmine near the base of Mee Thet Kone hill in Mindat city in southern Chin state. Locals allege the mine was laid by the military. The hill is where Myanmar Army 274th Infantry Battalion is based.⁴⁴

In January 2024, two soldiers were killed and another injured as they reportedly stepped on their own mines at the 538th Light Infantry Battalion camp in Rathedaung township of Rakhine state.⁴⁵ On the previous day, a resident of Rathedaung township's Ball Lone Kwin village was seriously injured by a mine on the banks of the Mayu River, across from the camp of the 537th Light Infantry Battalion of the Myanmar Armed Forces.⁴⁶

On 7 December 2023, a displaced person returning to Kyainseikgyi township, Kayin state stepped on a landmine planted on the road near villagers' houses. Villagers said they saw soldiers from the Myanmar Armed Forces 558th Infantry Battalion placing bamboo to block the road leading to their camp, and believe that this battalion laid the mine as it is the only unit patrolling the area.⁴⁷

The Myanmar Armed Forces have reportedly threatened that farmers must pay for antipersonnel mines detonated by their livestock. On 1 January 2024, near Let We Det village, close to Buthidaung town, Myanmar Army soldiers reportedly demanded 1.5 million kyats (US\$707) from an owner of a cow maimed by an antipersonnel mine. The owner could not pay so the soldiers butchered the cow.⁴⁸ On 16 May 2023, livestock owned by farmers in Pyint Taw village in Rathedaung township, Rakhine state, were killed by landmines planted by the Myanmar Army near their camp in Ma Nyin Taung village. Subsequently, Myan-

39. "Locals in junta-held Sittwe fear landmines planted by military," Development Media Group, 18 May 2024; and "Rohingya Man Injured in Landmine Explosion in Sittwe," Rohingya Khobor, 30 July 2024.

40. "A child's leg was amputated due to being stepped on by a landmine near the SAC camp in Tedim town," My-anmar Press photo Agency, 4 October 2023.

41. "Kyeintali resident killed in landmine blast," Development Media Group, 24 July 2024.

42. Thinzar Nwe and Aung Kywe Nyein, "Landmine threats loom in Rakhine State, 3 persons lose legs within 2 days," Narinjara News, 9 May 2024.

43. "Two Landmine Explosions in Kyaukphyu: One Man Loses Leg, Another Injured," Narinjara News, 13 March 2024.

44. "Two children injured by landmine blast in Myanmar," Radio Free Asia, 5 February 2024.

45. "2 junta soldiers killed by their own landmine in Rathedaung," Narinjara News, 5 January 2024.

46. "Two individuals lose legs in Rathedaung landmine incidents within a week," Narinjara News, 4 January 2024.

47. Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG), "KHRG Submission to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), August 2023–August 2024," 22 September 2024.

48. In the incident, two Rohingya farmers had stepped on an antipersonnel mine, one receiving serious injuries, but the other farmer and the cow mildly injured. Online database of the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). See, ACLED website. Exchange rate for 1 January 2024: MMK1,000=US\$0.4715. Oanda.

mar Army officials from the camp summoned villagers and warned that they would have to pay compensation if cattle stepped on mines and caused them to explode.⁴⁹

Atrocity/forced labor mine clearance

The Monitor has found evidence that the Myanmar Armed Forces continues the practice of using civilians as ‘guides’ to walk in front of its units in mine-affected areas, effectively to detonate landmines. This is a grave violation of international humanitarian and human rights law.⁵⁰

In July 2024, the Myanmar Army allegedly forced local villagers to walk in front of them as they cleared command-detonated mines placed by the local PDF on the Monywa–Mandalay road. The same report states that in June, the Myanmar Armed Forces also made villagers walk ahead of them while removing mines between Myay Hne village in Monywa township and Khin Mon village in Chaung-U township, Sagaing region.⁵¹

On 6 June 2024, a group of locals from in Ahr Lar Kat Pa village, Myinmu township in Sagaing region, were seized by the Myanmar Armed Forces, who forced them to clear landmines planted by local PDF troops near the Shwe Gu Gyi monastery. One villager died and two were severely injured by mines in the process.⁵²

On 2 June 2024, a Rohingya youth, who was forcibly conscripted by the military, escaped from the Thone Maing Border Guard Police in Maungdaw town, Rakhine state, and then was severely injured by a mine.⁵³

In December 2023, residents of Chaung-U town, along with internally displaced persons (IDPs) taking refuge in the local monastery, were forcibly taken by the Myanmar Army to clear mines laid on a road by a PDF group.⁵⁴ Also in December, two young men were seized by Myanmar Armed Forces from their farm near Pay Taw village in Seikphyu township, Magway region and seriously injured after they stepped on mines.⁵⁵

In September 2023, the Myanmar Armed Forces seized eight people as human shields in Dabak village, in Waingmaw township of Kachin state, one of whom subsequently was injured after stepping on a landmine.⁵⁶

In May 2023, the Myanmar Armed Forces allegedly seized about 30 people working in fields near Maung Taung village, Hpakant township, Kachin State to serve as human shields. Two of them and a soldier were wounded after an improvised mine exploded on the road.⁵⁷

In January 2023, an IDP residing in the Kye Nan camp in Momauk township of Kachin state was injured after being forced to guide for the Myanmar Armed Forces on the Bhamo and Loiye road.⁵⁸

49. “Army warns that owners must pay if planted landmines are exploded by cattle,” *Narinjara News*, 7 June 2023.

50. For more than two decades, the Monitor has reported disturbing evidence that the Myanmar military has forced civilians to clear antipersonnel mines without training or protective equipment, or forced them 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. See, Human Rights Council, Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Tenth Session, “Summary prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15(c) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1,” 18 October 2010.

51. “Myanmar junta troops use human shields to clear landmines on Monywa–Mandalay Road,” *Mizzima*, 7 July 2024.

52. Online database of ACLED.

53. Online database of ACLED.

54. “Junta troops arrested civilians in Chaung U and forced them to clear landmines,” *Myanmar Pressphoto Agency* 20 December 2023.

55. Online database of ACLED.

56. Information provided to the Monitor by a source requesting anonymity.

57. Information provided to the Monitor by a source requesting anonymity.

58. Information provided to the Monitor by a source requesting anonymity.

Use on the Bangladesh border

In early 2024, there was an increase in people injured by landmines in Myanmar along the border with Bangladesh. Villagers attribute this to new mines laid by Myanmar Army border patrols. As conflict shifted to southern Buthidaung in Rakhine state, the Myanmar Army began laying new mines near the town.⁵⁹ In May 2024, the Arakan Army (AA) took control of the Myanmar border with Bangladesh and created routes through border minefields, and were requiring people pay in order to be guided across.⁶⁰ In mid-2024, cattle smugglers continued to be victimized by landmines at this border.⁶¹ In August 2024, Rohingya villagers who were collecting forest products were injured by mines laid near an AA camp.⁶² In July 2024, one person was killed and two others injured, all residents of Bangladesh, while foraging for crabs in the Naf River after having crossed the borderline dividing Bangladesh and Myanmar that cuts through the river. It is not clear who laid the mines.⁶³

Use by non-state armed groups

Ethnic armed groups have engaged in conflict with the central authorities in Myanmar for decades and Landmine Monitor has documented mine use by such groups for more than 25 years. Several militias sanctioned by the Myanmar Armed Forces, including Pyusawhti, the People's Militia Forces (PMF), and the Border Guard Forces (BGF), act under the military's direction and sometimes independently. Since the military coup in February 2021, more local anti-military resistance groups have been established, some of which identify as People's Defence Forces (PDF). PDF groups often declare allegiance to the National Unity Government (NUG).⁶⁴ Local media often report the use of "landmines" by such groups. Many of these devices are command-detonated roadside bombs, but some are victim-activated landmines. Given the number and variety of NSAGs operating in Myanmar, it is often difficult to assign responsibility for use to a specific NSAG. Yet many have used mines since the Monitor started reporting in 1999.⁶⁵ The Monitor has reviewed the following incidents attributed to NSAGs in the second half of 2023 and through August 2024.

59. On 1 January 2024, two Rohingya farmers stepped on an antipersonnel mine in Let We Det village tract on the west side of Buthidaung town in Buthidaung township. One of them lost his right leg and the other received a minor injury. See, online database of ACLED. On 10 January 2024, a resident of Hpon Nyo Leik village of south Buthidaung, stepped on a mine at the foot of the Kyauk Yant hill. It was allegedly laid by the 22nd Brigade of the Myanmar Army, which has a camp on the top of the hill. See, online database of ACLED.
60. As of May 2024, the AA guide anyone wishing to traverse the border if they pay tax to the AA soldiers controlling the border post. A Rohingya woman, who traveled from north Buthidaung for medical treatment, told the Monitor, "My brother and I paid 20,000MMK (10,000MMK each) [US\$9.42 (\$4.71)] to the AA office near the border. They gave us a pass for one month. The AA soldiers also took us to the border point. They showed us safe passage. We reached Lambochari of Naikong chari [in Bangladesh] easily." Exchange rate for 31 May 2024: MMK1,000=US\$0.4708. Oanda.
61. On 4 May 2024, one cattle smuggler was seriously injured and two others lightly injured by a mine while crossing the border. They left the cattle behind. On the following day they sent two other persons to bring the cattle, who also stepped on a mine. All five were treated in Cox's Bazar hospital. Information provided by informants to the Monitor.
62. Residents of Kyar Nyo Pyin in Buthidaung township believe landmines laid by the AA were responsible for injury and deaths in their village. They informed the Monitor that on 22 August 2024, seven Rohingya went to a hill to collect bamboo shoots and other vegetables. The hill had been occupied by the AA for the past 4–5 years. When they did not return by noon, their family went to find them. On the hill, two were found, one boy and one man. Both were badly injured by an antipersonnel mine and they had lost their eyes. As they were blind, they couldn't return. No one knows what became of the other five.
63. "Rohingya man killed, 2 Injured in landmine explosion during crab harvest in Naf River," *The Business Standard*, 8 July 2024.
64. As of May 2023, the NUG claimed that there were over 300 PDF groups organized in 250 townships across Myanmar. The exact figure is difficult to verify. See, "The PDF has established 300 battalions and columns in 2 years," *People's Spring*, 5 May 2023.
65. On 15 October 2015, eight ethnic armed groups signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) with the government, committing to "end planting of mines" and "cooperate on the process of clearing all landmines." Since the February 2021 military coup, this commitment no longer appears to be operational.

On 29 August 2024, one villager was injured and another died from landmines that locals said were laid by the PDF in Yay Pya village tract, Kyaukkyi township, Bago region.⁶⁶

On 8 July 2024, a man was seriously injured after stepping on a landmine allegedly planted by the Arakan Army (AA) in Valangte village, Matupi township in Chin state.⁶⁷

On 14 June 2024, a man was seriously injured by a mine that other locals claim was planted by the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) near Loi Kan village in Lawksawk township of Shan state.⁶⁸

In May 2024, there were several landmine casualties in Tamu township of Sagaing region on Myanmar's border with India between border pillars 91–94 that locals said were due to mines laid by various armed groups.⁶⁹

On 8 March 2024, one farmer was killed and another injured by a landmine planted by the Chin National Army (CNF/CNA) near Lalengpi town in Matupi township, Chin state.⁷⁰

On 24 and 25 October 2023, two locals were injured by landmines in Thayetchaung township in Tanintharyi region in an area that was the scene of fighting between the Kaw Thoo Lei Army (KTLA) and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA).⁷¹ Earlier, on 15 October 2023, a man was shot at by the KTLA and then seriously injured by a landmine in Hseh Phyu Taing village tract of Thayetchaung township in Tanintharyi region.⁷²

On 4 August 2023, a villager from Th'Myit Aye Kone village tract, Kyaukkyi township, Bago region stepped on a landmine laid by the KNLA, which had issued a warning not to enter the area.⁷³

On 20 June 2023, a female farm worker was injured by a landmine planted by a local PDF near Nat Pay village in Kanbalu township in Sagaing region, and the two people who came to help her were injured by another mine explosion.⁷⁴

On 7 July 2023, a man was killed by a landmine allegedly planted by a PDF group near Mya Taung village in Tigyang township, Sagaing region.⁷⁵ Also on 7 July 2023, two men collecting bamboo were injured by an improvised mine allegedly planted by a PDF near Se Gyi village in Kanbalu township, Sagaing region.⁷⁶

On 23 July 2023, a man was killed after stepping on a landmine that locals claimed was planted by the RCSS west of Nam Par Tet village in Mawkmai township, Shan state.⁷⁷

A significant number of incidents involving explosive devices planted on berms of roadways, and then triggered by motor scooters, were attributed to resistance groups. The devices were likely antipersonnel mines, as these incidents almost always involved injury rather than death.⁷⁸

66. KHRG, "KHRG Submission to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), August 2023–August 2024," 22 September 2024.

67. Online database of ACLED.

68. Online database of ACLED.

69. "Landmines kill, maim many on Indo-Myanmar border," *The Sangai Express*, 2 August 2024.

70. Online database of ACLED.

71. KHRG, "KHRG Submission to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), August 2023–August 2024," 22 September 2024.

72. KHRG, "KHRG Submission to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), August 2023–August 2024," 22 September 2024.

73. KHRG, "KHRG Submission to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), August 2023–August 2024," 22 September 2024.

74. Online database of ACLED.

75. Online database of ACLED.

76. Online database of ACLED.

77. Online database of ACLED.

78. The Monitor recorded 68 incidents in Bago, Magway, Mandalay, and Sagaing regions, as well as in Chin, Mon, Kachin, and Shan states.

The Monitor continued to record incidents in 2023 and early 2024 involving the use of victim-activated booby-traps or explosive devices in urban areas. Most mine victims were engaged in trash collection or searching rubbish for something to sell.⁷⁹

Unattributed new mine use

It is often difficult to assign responsibility for specific incidents in Myanmar to either the Myanmar Armed Forces, PDFs, or to a particular NSAG. Villagers have reported mine casualties in areas that were previously considered safe, but where armed conflict had recently occurred. Mines attributed to unknown armed groups were responsible for deaths and injuries in Chin, Kayah, Kayin, Rakhine, and Shan states, and in the Sagaing region during the first half of 2024.⁸⁰

Due to increased armed conflict throughout the country, people are also becoming casualties of explosive remnants of war, mostly children due to handling ordnance left over from armed conflict.⁸¹

In past years, some NSAGs in Myanmar unilaterally renounced antipersonnel mine use by signing a Deed of Commitment administered by Geneva Call, a Switzerland-based non-governmental organization (NGO).⁸² The Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF) signed it in 2007 and its armed wing, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), has previously promised to refrain from mine use.⁸³ In June 2017, the TNLA denied allegations of new use and affirmed that it had not used landmines since signing the Deed of Commitment.⁸⁴ In July 2022, the Arakan Army stated that it used solely command-detonated landmines, but gave no indication as to the status of antipersonnel mines that it had captured from the Myanmar Armed Forces.⁸⁵

79. The Monitor recorded at least 30 injuries or deaths among trash collectors or scavengers in towns in the Magway, Mandalay, Sagaing, Tanintharyi, and Yangon regions and in Rakhine state between January 2023 and March 2024.

80. See, for example, in May 2024, four children were killed and one injured by a landmine in Khawea village in Paletwa township, Chin state that villagers said could have been laid by the Arakan Army, who currently have control of the area, or by the Myanmar Armed Forces, who were previously present. "Landmine Blast in Paletwa Kills Four Children Instantly, Injures One," Burma News International, 11 May 2024. In February 2024, residents of Ahnin and Htinshu villages, of Thanbyuzayat township of the Tanintharyi region said one resident was seriously injured after armed conflict between the Myanmar Armed Forces and the People's Joint Defense Force, but were unsure which group left the mine behind. "Woman Seriously Injured by Landmine explosion in Thanbyuzayat Township," Burma News International, 9 February 2024. The Monitor has recorded at least 50 deaths and injuries between 1 January and 30 June 2024 for which no group claimed responsibility, or that were attributed to an unknown armed group.

81. For example, on 14 July 2024, a child was killed and another injured after they handled an unexploded mortar projectile that they found next to a road in Kaw Loo Der village tract, Hpapun Township, Kayin State. KHRG, "KHRG Submission to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), August 2023 - August 2024," 22 September 2024.

82. In the past, a few NSAGs and former NSAGs in Myanmar unilaterally renounced use of antipersonnel mines by signing the Deed of Commitment. The Chin National Front/Chin National Army (CNF/CNA) renounced use in 2006. The Arakan Rohingya National Organization (ARNO) and the National United Party of Arakan (NUPA), both now militarily defunct, renounced use in 2003. The Lahu Democratic Front (LDF), the Palaung State Liberation Army (PSLA), and the Pa-O People's Liberation Organization/Pa-O People's Liberation Army (PPLO/PPLA) renounced use in 2007. In June 2010, Geneva Call noted that the LDF and the PPLA had disbanded.

83. 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.

84. Amnesty International, "All the Civilians Suffer: Conflict, Displacement and abuse in Northern Myanmar," 14 June 2017, p. 44.

85. "Military-planted landmines causing civilian casualties in Arakan State: AA spokesman," Development Media Group, 11 July 2022.

Myanmar is heavily contaminated with landmines as a result of conflicts between the Myanmar Armed Forces and various non-state armed groups (NSAGs). According to United Nations (UN) reporting in 2024, the country is “littered with landmines.”⁸⁶ Landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) have also impeded opportunities for displaced persons to return to their places of origin.⁸⁷

Myanmar has no national mine action authority, and international demining operators are not authorized to conduct clearance.⁸⁸ Any potential implementation of coordinated mine action activities has also been severely impacted by the military’s seizure of power from the elected National League for Democracy (NLD)-led government in a coup on 1 February 2021, as well as subsequent events linked to the establishment of the ruling junta (a military government calling itself the State Administration Council).

The Monitor has reported high numbers of mine/ERW casualties for Myanmar every year since Monitor recording began in 1999. The Monitor and UN sources recorded more than one thousand people killed or injured in 2023.

In 2023, Myanmar was the country with the largest number of new annual casualties recorded globally for the first time. The surge in mine/ERW incidents in Myanmar has been driven by the intensifying conflict.

The Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR) in Myanmar, led by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), supports the coordination of risk education and victim assistance efforts.⁸⁹ Risk education efforts in 2023 prioritized camps for internally displaced persons (IDP), villages with reports of widespread contamination, and active conflict zones.⁹⁰

Victims’ access to rehabilitation services is being provided through a referral system linking mine action organizations and broader aid networks.⁹¹ According to Monitor data landmine victims were treated primarily at civil service hospitals. In 2023, mine survivors were treated in at least 63 hospitals and clinics within Myanmar. Some also sought treatment in Bangladesh, India and Thailand.⁹² In 2024, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights stated that the State Administration Council blocked mine/ERW victims’ access to medical care and prosthetics.⁹³

86. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) “Myanmar Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024: Addendum,” June 2024, p. 3.

87. UNOCHA, “Myanmar Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024: Addendum,” June 2024, p. 6.

88. United Nations (UN) Mine Action Strategy 2019–2023, Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism, “Thematic Study on Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming in UN Mine Action – the Cases of Colombia and Myanmar,” undated, p. 8.

89. United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), “Myanmar Country Office: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4,” 31 May 2022, p. 4.

90. UNOCHA, “Humanitarian Response Plan, Myanmar: End-Year Report 2022,” 11 April 2023.

91. UNICEF, “Myanmar Country Office Humanitarian Situation Report No. 6,” 18 August 2024, pp. 7–8.

92. See also UN MIMU, Facilities Supporting Treatment of Civilian Mine Victims, 30 September 2024.

93. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) press release, “Myanmar amputees under siege by junta landmines, harassment and blockades of prosthetics, say UN experts,” 22 November 2024.

ASSESSING THE IMPACT

Casualties

Myanmar has no official mechanism to collect data on mine/ERW casualties.⁹⁴ The Monitor has collected data annually from multiple sources since 1999. Reports gathered from available sources are unlikely to reflect the full extent of incidents and casualties.

In 2023, the Monitor recorded at least 1,003 mine/ERW casualties. The Monitor has recorded a total of 7,177 casualties (1,287 killed, 5,764 injured, and 126 with an unknown survival outcome) since 1999 to the end of 2023. The total number of mine/ERW casualties in Myanmar, for all time, is unknown.

UNICEF reporting on mine and ERW incidents in Myanmar, which is included in Monitor data, also indicated that casualty numbers increased markedly in the country in 2023.⁹⁵

Cluster munition casualties

The Myanmar Armed Forces used domestically produced cluster munitions during attacks in 2021–2023. On 25 April 2023, the Myanmar Air Force dropped a cluster bomb near Mae Ka Neh village in Myawaddy township, Kayin (Karen) state, that wounded four civilians. Another attack involving cluster bomb use resulted in casualties in April 2023, in Mindat township, Chin state. Remnants of this type of cluster bomb were previously found in the same township after an aerial attack by the Myanmar Armed Forces in July 2022 wounded 13 civilians.⁹⁶ Neither the full extent of contamination by cluster munition remnants, nor an accurate number of casualties due to cluster munitions is yet known for Myanmar.

Contamination

Landmine contamination

Since the first annual Landmine Monitor report was published in 1999, the Monitor has documented extensive use of antipersonnel landmines by the Myanmar Armed Forces and by various NSAGs operating in Myanmar.

New mine use since the military coup in February 2021 has increased the extent of contamination. Mines continue to be laid by the Myanmar Armed Forces and NSAGs, including newly formed anti-coup resistance groups. Suspected mine/ERW contamination was reported in over half (190 of 330) of all townships in 2023, a significant and rapid increase from the 100 townships reported to be contaminated in 2020. In 2023 only, casualties were reported in at least 134 townships. In 2022, for the first time, mine/ERW casualties occurred in every state and region of the country, except Naypyitaw.⁹⁷

Reports indicate that the Myanmar Armed Forces have frequently emplaced landmines in villages, near homes, and around public buildings such as churches.⁹⁸ Reports also indicate that antipersonnel mines have been laid by the Myanmar Armed Forces near mobile phone towers, copper mines, and oil and gas

94. Monitor casualty dataset for Myanmar.

95. UNICEF, “Three-fold increase in civilian casualties caused by landmines and unexploded ordnance in Myanmar’s escalating conflict,” 4 April 2024.

96. Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, “Briefing Paper: Cluster Munition Production and Use in Myanmar/Burma,” August 2023.

97. Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU), “Townships with Suspected Landmine/ERW Contamination (1999–2023) and Landmine/ERW Casualties in Myanmar (2024),” 9 October 2024.

98. Amnesty International, “Myanmar: Military’s use of banned landmines in Kayah State amounts to war crimes,” 20 July 2022.

99. Marwaan Macan-Markar, “Myanmar land mine danger grows as military rings Chinese assets,” Nikkei Asia, 3 July 2023.

pipelines.⁹⁹

Expansion of mine/ERW contamination into residential areas has resulted in heightened risks for civilians. The increased use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and the presence of unexploded ordnance in populated areas has also presented new threats.¹⁰⁰

Cluster munition remnant contamination

According to Monitor information, the Myanmar Armed Forces used a domestically produced cluster munition in attacks in several parts of the country in since at least 2021. The presence or extent of any cluster munition remnant contamination in Myanmar is not known.¹⁰¹

Other types of contamination

The extent of ERW contamination is not known. ERW from past conflicts, including ordnance dating back to World War II, are reported to have caused casualties in Myanmar.¹⁰²

ADDRESSING THE IMPACT

Clearance

Myanmar has no known national mine action body in place to oversee land release. Most mine action coordination mechanisms in Myanmar have been suspended since the February 2021 military coup. No humanitarian mine clearance is known to be taking place in Myanmar. Localized mine removal has been conducted by the Myanmar Armed Forces, while NSAGs have also conducted sporadic mine removal.¹⁰³ The Monitor also received photographs of mine warning signs reportedly posted by the Arakan Army in Mrauk-U township in 2024.

Legislation and standards

Myanmar does not have specific mine action legislation or national standards in place. Previously, in October 2019, National standards for clearance were reported to be in development,¹⁰⁴ but no update has been provided since.

Strategies and policies

As of the end of 2023, Myanmar had no clear national humanitarian mine action strategy in place, while no international operators were authorized to conduct mine clearance in the country. Despite movement restrictions and access constraints affecting much of Myanmar, Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR) coordination activities continued in 2023, with partners delivering risk education to affected communities. MA AoR collaborated with REACH on developing indicators to strengthen mine action planning through the 2023 Multi-Sector Needs Assessment.¹⁰⁵ International operators working in Myanmar have

100. UNICEF, “Myanmar Country Office Humanitarian Situation Report No. 6,” 18 August 2024, p. 3.

101. Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, “Briefing Paper: Cluster Munition Production and Use in Myanmar/Burma,” August 2023.

102. Phadu Tun Aung, “One woman dead and nine others injured after bomb explodes in Minbya,” Myanmar Now, 12 January 2021; and “Unexploded WWII bombs discovered at central Myanmar sports ground,” Coconuts Yan-gon, 30 September 2015.

103. See, for example, “AA clears junta planted landmines in Kyaukphyu” Narinjara 12 March 2024. The ABSDF reportedly removed landmines from a captured police station in Gangaw Township, Magway Region. “Junta forces booby trap Gangaw Township police station with mines” Mizzima, 8 November 2023. The Chin National Front stated it had removed landmines at the Idia-Myanmar border in Rikhawdar, Falam Township of Chin State, Myanmar Peace Monitor. Interview, 23 November 2023.

104. Statement of Myanmar, United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, 74th Session, New York, 25 October 2019.

105. UNICEF, “Myanmar Country Office: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 3,” 30 April 2023, p. 4.

followed International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) in addition to their own standard operating procedures for risk education and victim assistance.¹⁰⁶

Information management

Myanmar does not have a national mine action database. Information management in relation to risk education and victim assistance data collected by operators requires improvement.¹⁰⁷

Clearance operators

Since the 2021 coup, international humanitarian mine action operators have not been permitted—neither by the government nor by local authorities in ethnic minority areas—to conduct technical survey or clearance. Sporadic mine removal by the Myanmar Armed Forces and NSAGs has been reported.¹⁰⁸

Land release: antipersonnel landmines, cluster munition remnants and other ordnance

In 2024, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that mine clearance efforts in Myanmar remain minimal and uncoordinated. Local demining was reported by some interviewed villagers, including attempts at clearing contaminated land with rented vehicles equipped with backhoe attachments. According to HRW, military units have increasingly forced villagers, including children, to serve as “human minesweepers,” by compelling them to walk ahead of troops in order to trigger explosive devices.¹⁰⁹ It was also reported that anti-junta Karenni Nationalities Defence Force (KNDF) units have been assigned to clear land after State Administration Council forces are forced out of an area. KNDF soldiers have been clearing undergrowth manually, to detect mines without the use of metal detectors. The priority for demining has been to make agricultural areas available.¹¹⁰ Some NSAGs have been removing junta military-laid mines from farms and fields and collecting them to stock for re-use.¹¹¹

In Kachin state, the Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR) was working closely in early 2023 with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Danish Refugee Council, The HALO Trust, and Mines Advisory Group (MAG) to assess landmine contamination in areas where IDPs were returning.¹¹² However, no humanitarian mine clearance was undertaken in Myanmar in 2023.

No cluster munition remnant clearance was reported in Myanmar in 2023, and release of land contaminated by ERW was not reported in Myanmar in 2023.

Risk education

Risk education is coordinated by the MA AoR, which is led by UNICEF. In 2023, the MA AoR in Myanmar undertook initiatives to enhance collaboration with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG), the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), and the Myanmar Humanitarian Fund (MHF). In response to the sharp rise in mine/ERW casualties, the ICCG mainstreamed risk education activities across the entire cluster system. These efforts were reported to have contributed to an increase in the geographic coverage and the overall impact of risk education activities.¹¹³

106. International Campaign to Ban Landmines - Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC), “Country Profile: Myanmar: Impact,” updated 16 November 2021.

107. UNICEF, “Myanmar Country Office: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4,” 31 May 2022, p. 4.

108. ICBL-CMC, “Country Profile: Myanmar/Burma: Impact,” updated 16 November 2021; and “Landmines, and fear of renewed clashes, keep Lay Kay Kaw residents from returning,” Myanmar Now, 19 December 2022.

109. Human Rights Watch (HRW), “Myanmar: Surging Landmine Use Claims Lives, Livelihoods,” 20 November 2024.

110. “Myanmar’s landmine clearers working with pliers and bare hands,” Myanmar Now, 1 September 2023.

111. HRW, “Myanmar: Surging Landmine Use Claims Lives, Livelihoods,” 20 November 2024.

112. UNICEF, “Myanmar Country Office: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 3,” 30 April 2023, p. 4.

113. UNICEF, “Myanmar: Humanitarian Situation Report (End of Year 2023),” 14 February 2024, p. 4.

Risk education sessions prioritized active conflict areas, as well as IDP camps and villages with reports of widespread contamination.¹¹⁴ UNICEF developed emergency risk education tools for Myanmar in 2022, including a mobile application designed to teach users how to stay safe from mine/ERW contamination. UNICEF also used social media to disseminate safety messages.¹¹⁵

In May 2023, Cyclone Mocha, and the associated flooding, led to increased risk from shifting mines and ERW. UNICEF reported that around 60% of mine incidents that it recorded in May–June 2023 occurred in areas that were affected by the cyclone.¹¹⁶

Target groups for risk education

IDPs, returnees, and conflict-affected communities in Myanmar were significant target groups for risk education in 2023. Villagers are frequently injured when the need for food compels them to enter hazardous areas.¹¹⁷ Lack of knowledge of unsafe areas due to the absence of warning signs and recent contamination also created higher risk for local communities. Among the key at-risk groups were men engaged in hunting and foraging in remote areas. However, reaching men for risk education has been challenging as they are often absent during the working hours of providers. Reaching ethnic minority groups in border regions has also been difficult due to access restrictions, especially in NSAG-controlled areas.¹¹⁸

Children in conflict-affected areas and in IDP settlements are at high risk from mines/ERW. In some camps, a lack of schoolteachers limited risk education, with most safety messages provided outside of school.¹¹⁹ Children with disabilities have been especially hard to reach due to isolation and a lack of appropriate materials.¹²⁰

Delivery methods of risk education

Due to the lack of clearance activities, risk education has mostly been delivered as a standalone activity in Myanmar.¹²¹ Despite access constraints, MA AoR partners delivered critical safety information through various channels in 2023, including direct engagement, social media, community volunteers, and partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations.¹²²

Face-to-face sessions and the distribution of printed materials were previously the primary means of risk education delivery in Myanmar. However, since 2022, new delivery methods have been adopted, including the use of social media platforms to disseminate safety messages and the introduction of a risk education mobile application.¹²³ In 2023, risk education in Myanmar saw a shift toward more integrated, data-driven, and localized approaches, with a focus on advocacy, communication, and capacity-building.¹²⁴

Following Cyclone Mocha, UNICEF collaborated with MAG and the Danish Refugee Council to produce infographics and materials raising awareness of related landmine risks.¹²⁵

114. UNOCHA, “Humanitarian Response Plan, Myanmar: End-Year Report 2022,” 11 April 2023.

115. Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), “Explosive Ordnance Risk Education Advisory Group: Minutes of the EORE AG Meeting,” 8 March 2022.

116. UNICEF, “Myanmar Country Office: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4,” 30 June 2023, p. 3.

117. HRW, “Myanmar: Surging Landmine Use Claims Lives, Livelihoods,” 20 November 2024.

118. Mine Free Myanmar, “Landmine Monitor annual Myanmar/Burma Country Report 2023,” December 2023, p. 23.

119. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Fabrice Vandeputte, Regional Programme Director, Humanity & Inclusion (HI), 14 May 2020.

120. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Michael Horita, Field Coordinator, HI Myanmar, 16 March 2021.

121. Response to Monitor questionnaire by Geoff Moynan, Programme Manager, The HALO Trust Myanmar, 27 April 2020.

122. UNICEF, “Myanmar Country Office Humanitarian Situation Report No. 6,” 18 August 2024, pp. 7–8.

123. UNICEF, “Myanmar: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 12,” 13 February 2023.

124. UNICEF, “Myanmar: Humanitarian Situation Report (End of Year 2023),” 14 February 2024, p. 5.

125. UNICEF, “Myanmar: Humanitarian Situation Report (End of Year 2023),” 14 February 2024, p. 5.

Victim assistance

Since the military overthrew the civilian government in Myanmar in February 2021, access to healthcare and related human rights have continued to deteriorate.¹²⁶ Ongoing armed conflict in Myanmar has increased the burden on healthcare services, while some health facilities have been damaged or destroyed.¹²⁷ With mine/ERW casualties rising, capacity to meet the growing needs of survivors for medical care, rehabilitation services, socio-economic support, and psychological assistance remained inadequate in 2023, especially in rural areas.

*In the first half of 2024, the humanitarian situation in Myanmar deteriorated further due to intensified armed clashes in rural and urban areas. The conflict impeded access to essential health care, destroyed infrastructure, and hindered the relocation of affected populations to safer areas, while significantly increasing economic pressures.*¹²⁸

Insecurity Insight, an INGO which reports on attacks against healthcare workers and health facilities in armed conflicts world wide reported that at least 133 health facilities were damaged or destroyed in Myanmar in 2023, and at least 37 health workers were killed. They also reported that access for international aid agencies has repeatedly been restricted by the junta despite severe needs.¹²⁹

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) continued to advocate for the establishment of a national rehabilitation strategy. The ICRC reported that, in the first six months of 2024, people affected by explosive hazards made up more than a third all of persons with disabilities (853 of 2,405) who were supported through its physical rehabilitation program.¹³⁰

The political situation and conflicts have also stopped progress in the implementation of policies and activities for the rights of persons with disabilities.¹³¹

Landmine survivors continue to face significant financial challenges in accessing medical care due to high treatment costs.

In the southeast, existing support is insufficient to meet survivors' needs and long-term assistance programs to help victims and their families recover and rebuild are lacking. Many landmine survivors lack adequate support following incidents. Some have been receiving limited assistance from stakeholders, while villagers and relatives occasionally provide transportation and small amounts of financial aid.¹³²

Medical care and rehabilitation

Myanmar has few physicians trained in emergency medicine. Rural areas often lack emergency health workers and ambulance services, while healthcare centers in major cities lack adequate emergency response capacity. New legislation and arbitrary restrictions have impeded the work of voluntary aid groups,

126. Fabio Saini, "Myanmar's Military Regime Has Weaponized Public Health," *The Irrawaddy*, 6 November 2021; Global Health Partnerships, "Three years on from the military coup in Myanmar health workers are still being targeted," 1 February 2024; and Haar, Rohini J., Katerina Crawford, Larissa Fast, Than Htut Win, Leonard Ru-benstein, Karl Blanchet, Louis Lillywhite, Nicholus Tint-Zaw, and Myo-Myo Mon. "'I will take part in the revolution with our people': a qualitative study of healthcare workers' experiences of violence and resistance after the 2021 Myanmar coup d'état," *Conflict and Health*, 20 August 2024.

127. Insecurity Insight and Safeguarding Health in Conflict (SHCC), "Myanmar: Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2022," 12 July 2023.

128. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), "Myanmar: Operational Facts and Figures, January to June 2024," September 2024.

129. Insecurity Insight, "Critical Condition: Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2023". p.66.

130. ICRC, "Myanmar: Operational Facts and Figures, January to June 2024", September 2024.

131. Tual Sawm Khai, Minhaz Farid Ahmed, and Muhammad Asaduzzaman, "Examining the Vulnerability of Persons with Disabilities in Myanmar Pre and Post-COVID-19 and Military Coup," *Disability & Society*, 2 June 2024.

132. Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG), "Danger Beneath Our Feet - Landmine contamination in Southeast Burma and its impacts on villagers since the 2021 coup," 22 December 2023.

133. "'No remedy': A broken public health system fosters neglect and corruption," *Frontier Myanmar*, 8 August 2023; and "Junta tightens its grip on charities helping the dead and dying," *Frontier Myanmar*, 7 January 2023.

com-promising support for mine/ERW victims in Myanmar.¹³³ According to Monitor data, landmine victims were treated primarily at civil service public hospitals and clinics. In 2023 only, at least 63 hospitals and clinics within Myanmar have provided treatment to mine survivors. Also in 2023, some landmine victims received treatment in Bangladesh, India and Thailand.¹³⁴

In a press release endorsed by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UN experts stated that the State Administration Council blocked mine/ERW victims' access to medical care and prosthetics. The experts noted that "this is absolutely contrary to Article 11 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and UN Security Council Resolution No. 2475" on protecting persons with disabilities in war.¹³⁵ According to the UN, the supply of prosthetics is being prevented by the State Administration Council, and mine/ERW victims are being forced into hiding because they face harassment and arrest. The State Administration Council associates the resulting physical injuries, such as loss of limbs, with resistance activity.¹³⁶ For example the Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) reported an incident where a mine survivor had his right leg amputated and, while hospitalized, was accused by State Administration Council soldiers of being connected to the People's Defence Force, the armed wing of the in-exile National Unity Government.¹³⁷

Movement restrictions and the fear of violence have also prevented victims from obtaining medical assistance in clinics and hospitals. Rehabilitation services are often not available, particularly in rural areas. Physical rehabilitation centers cover only 10% of needs. Most centers are located in larger cities, with travel expenses prohibitive for mine/ERW victims living in rural areas.¹³⁸

In November 2024, the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC), in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement and the Ministry of Health, held a National Consultation Workshop in Naypyitaw, focusing on the physical rehabilitation and mental health needs of victims.¹³⁹

With funding from the USAID's Leahy War Victims Fund and support from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) provided small grants to local NGOs to ensure civilian conflict victims and persons with disabilities have access to health, rehabilitation, and assistive technology services.¹⁴⁰ The Learning, Acting, and Building for Rehabilitation in Health Systems (ReLAB-HS) clinical skills training program for rehabilitation professionals in Myanmar was designed to address the challenges of limited opportunities for continuing professional development, combined with the increased rehabilitation needs due to the consequences of political instability.¹⁴¹

The ICRC supported hospitals and health facilities, including those run by ethnic health organizations in Kachin, Rakhine, and Shan states.¹⁴² Due to Cyclone Mocha's impact and the escalation of hostilities,

134. Monitor data is based on analysis from multiple sources. See also UN MIMU, Facilities Supporting Treatment of Civilian Mine Victims, 30 September 2024.

135. The experts quoted were Tom Andrews, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, and Heba Hagrass, Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities. OHCHR press release, "Myanmar amputees under siege by junta landmines, harassment and blockades of prosthetics, say UN experts," 22 November 2024.

136. Vibhu Mishra, "Children and amputees bear brunt of Myanmar's deadly landmine epidemic," UN News, 22 November 2024.

137. KHRG, "Danger Beneath Our Feet - Landmine contamination in Southeast Burma and its impacts on villagers since the 2021 coup," 22 December 2023. Since the military coup in February 2021, more local anti-military resistance groups have been established, some of which identify as People's Defence Forces (PDF). Some PDF groups declare allegiance to the National Unity Government (NUG), while others are under the operational command of or are affiliated with ethnic armed organizations, or are acting more autonomously.

138. ICRC, "Physical Rehabilitation Programme: 2018 Annual Report," August 2019, p. 45.

139. ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC), "National Consultation Workshop on Physical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Needs Support for Explosive Ordnance (EO) Victims in Myanmar," 22 October 2024.

140. United States (US) Department of State Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM/WRA), "To Walk the Earth in Safety (2024)," 4 April 2024, p. 30. It was noted that the USAID funding was from a previous year.

141. "Clinical skills training supports Physiotherapists in Burma to deliver quality rehabilitation services," Physio-spot, 15 August 2023; and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) & Learning, Acting, and Building for Rehabilitation in Health Systems (ReLab H-S), "Integrating rehabilitation and assistive technologies into community programs: Lessons from Kayin State, Burma," 1 June 2024.

142. ICRC, "Annual Report 2023, Volume 2," 2024, pp. 284–285.

additional hospitals were supported to meet the growing needs of local populations. Five ICRC-supported facilities continued to provide services in 2023. A repair facility in northern Rakhine began to operate in 2023. The ICRC continued to build capacities at the centers it supported.¹⁴³

Humanity & Inclusion (HI) continued to provide rehabilitation services including physiotherapy, assistive devices, and mental health and psychosocial support.¹⁴⁴

In 2023, it was reported that persons with disabilities, including mine/ERW survivors, living in IDP camps in Rakhine state are on the rise, and continue to lack employment, food, and adequate healthcare services.¹⁴⁵

Socio-economic and psychosocial inclusion

The ICRC organized weekly events at rehabilitation centers and continued to provide online training for wheelchair - basketball players. It also facilitated livelihood activities, and vocational training, and access to higher education, among vulnerable groups.¹⁴⁶

Legal frameworks or policies on disability inclusion

Under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law (2015), persons with disabilities in Myanmar are entitled to formal equal rights and access to opportunities.¹⁴⁷ While this legislation prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities, in practice there is no meaningful enforcement and many persons with disabilities, including mine/ERW victims, still face discrimination.¹⁴⁸

Myanmar

In 2023, nine donors contributed US\$3.3 million to Myanmar for mine action activities. This represents a 36% decrease from the total contribution of \$5.1 million provided in 2022.¹⁴⁹

International contributions went toward clearance and survey, risk education, and victim assistance implemented by international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). UNOPS provided small grants to national NGOs for victim assistance activities.

143. ICRC Physical Rehabilitation Programme (PRP), “Annual Report 2023,” 2024, p. 32.

144. HI, “Country card: Myanmar 2023,” updated September 2023; HI, “Myanmar has fallen in a deep humanitarian crisis,” 31 January 2022.

145. “Disabled people at Arakan State’s IDP camps in need of assistance,” Development Media Group, 23 March 2023.

146. ICRC PRP, “Annual Report 2023,” 2024, p. 32.

147. “People with disabilities call for more legal protections, employment opportunities,” Development Media Group, 3 December 2022.

148. US Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, “2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Burma,” February 2023, p. 36.

149. Responses to Monitor questionnaire by Uffe Troensegaard, Head of Section, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 4 July 2024; by Patrik Faber, Chargé de Mission, Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 28 June, 2024; by Catarina Fabiansson, Senior Programme Manager, Unit for Peace and Human Security, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), 8th July 2024; by Akifumi Fukuoka, Deputy Director, Conventional Arms Division, Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 11 June 2024; by Fredrik Brogeland, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Norway to Geneva, 11 October 2024; United Kingdom (UK) Mine Ban Treaty Article 7 Report (for calendar year 2023), Form J. See, Mine Ban Treaty Article 7 Database; Switzerland Convention on Cluster Munitions Article 7 Report (for calendar year 2023), Form I. See, Convention on Cluster Munitions Article 7 Database; European Commission, EU Aid Explorer; and United States, US Department of State, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA), “To Walk the Earth in Safety: Fiscal Year 2023: 1 October 2022–30 September 2023,” 4 April 2024.

International contributions: 2023¹⁵⁰

Donor	Sector	Amount (national currency)	Amount (US\$)
Japan	Clearance, capacity-building, risk education	¥100,736,568	716,986
United Kingdom	Risk education	£532,205	662,063
United States	Victim assistance	\$500,000	500,000
Switzerland	Advocacy, risk education, victim assistance	CHF438,497	488,087
Denmark	Risk education	DKK2,410,950	349,920
Luxembourg	Risk education, victim assistance	€250,000	270,425
Norway	Survey, risk education	NOK2,154,999	203,958
European Union	Risk education	€81,272	87,912
Sweden	Clearance, survey	SEK194,346	18,319
Total	-	N/A	3,297,670

Note: EOD=explosive ordnance disposal; N/A=not applicable.

Five-year support for mine action

Since 2019, international mine action assistance to Myanmar has totaled \$24.9 million, representing an average of almost \$5 million per year.

Summary of international contributions: 2019-2023¹⁵¹

Year	International Contributions (US\$)
2023	3,297,670
2022	5,134,970
2021	6,100,000
2020	4,118,868
2019	6,275,838
Total	24,927,346

150. Average exchange rates for 2023: CHF0.8984=US\$1; DKK6.8900=US\$1; €1=US\$1.0817; NOK10.5659=US\$1; £1=US\$1.244; SEK10.6089=US\$1; ¥140.5001=US\$1; and United States (US) Federal Reserve, “List of Exchange Rates (Annual),” 1 February 2024. Currency conversions have been rounded to the nearest dollar (US\$). Calculation of total in US dollars was made prior to rounding.

151. See previous Support for Mine Action country profiles. ICBL-CMC, “Country Profiles: Myanmar,” undated; and ICBL-CMC, “Country Profiles: Myanmar (archives),” undated.

Summary: Non-signatory Myanmar has expressed interest in the Convention on Cluster Munitions but has not taken any steps to join it. Myanmar last participated in a meeting of the convention in 2022. Myanmar voted in favor of an important annual United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution promoting the convention in December 2023.

In the past, Myanmar stated that it has never used, produced, or transferred cluster munitions. However, evidence has emerged that indicates its armed forces have been using a domestically produced cluster munition since 2022. Myanmar denies the weapon is a cluster munition.

Policy

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has not acceded to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.¹⁵² After Myanmar's armed forces, took control of the country in a military coup on 1 February 2021, a provisional government was formed that is headed by the State Administration Council. Parliamentarians elected prior to the coup in November 2020 formed a National Unity Government in exile in April 2021.¹⁵³ Representatives of Myanmar have previously expressed interest in the convention, but have not taken any steps to accede to it. Previously, in November 2019, Myanmar reiterated that it could not join the convention until a nationwide peace agreement had been reached with non-state armed groups (NSAGs).¹⁵⁴ Myanmar has expressed concern at the "indiscriminate use" of cluster munitions, which it says can lead to "vulnerability and serious humanitarian impact."¹⁵⁵

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

Myanmar has participated as an observer at several meetings of the convention, most recently the Tenth Meeting of States Parties in Geneva in August–September 2022.¹⁵⁶ Myanmar has attended regional workshops on the convention.¹⁵⁷

In December 2023, Myanmar voted in favor of an important UNGA resolution urging states outside the Convention on Cluster Munitions to "ratify or accede to it as soon as possible."¹⁵⁸ In 2022, Myanmar voted in favor of the annual resolution promoting the convention for the first time, after previously abstaining from the vote in 2015-2021.

Production, transfer, and stockpiling

It is unclear if Myanmar has imported or otherwise acquired cluster munitions in the past. Myanmar possesses domestically-produced cluster munition stocks.¹⁵⁹

152. The military regime changed the name of the country from Burma to Myanmar in 1989, but many ethnic groups in Myanmar's border areas and several countries still prefer to use the name Burma.

153. The Provisional Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar was formed on 1 August 2021 by the State Administration Council (SAC), with the Commander-in-Chief of the Myanmar Armed Forces, Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, as its chair.

154. Myanmar Explanation of Vote on Resolution A/C.1/L.46, UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 6 November 2019.

155. Myanmar Explanation of Vote on Resolution L.41, UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 31 October 2017. UNGA, Official Records, A/C.1/72/PV26, pp. 18–19 and 29. Myanmar has made similar statements on previous occasions. See, statement of Myanmar, UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 15 October 2015; 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.

156. Myanmar participated as an observer at the convention's Meetings of States Parties in 2010 and 2012, as well as the Second Review Conference held in November 2020 and September 2021.

157. Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nations (UN) in Geneva press release, "Philippines hosts webinar to promote Convention on Cluster Munitions among ASEAN Member States," 29 July 2020.

158. "Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions," UNGA Resolution 78/32, 4 December 2023.

159. Myanmar possesses 122mm Type-81, Type-90B, and M1985 240mm surface-to-surface rocket launchers, but it is not known whether these include versions with submunition payloads. See, Myanmar Defense Weapons, "Some modern military weapons of Myanmar Army," 20 March 2014; and Hla Oo's Blog, "Burma Ar-my's MRLS or Multi Rocket Launcher Systems," 23 March 2014.

Myanmar was not known to have produced cluster munitions, but evidence emerged in 2023 indicating that it has manufactured a cluster munition since 2021 that has been used in several attacks in the country.¹⁶⁰ The cluster munition is an air-delivered munition comprised of a shell casing that contains 120mm mortar projectiles as submunitions. Each submunition has a plastic arming vane attached to an impact fuze that detonates on contact. The cluster bomb canister has space for 12 mortar projectile submunitions attached on an internal frame. It appears to meet the definition of a cluster munition under the Convention on Cluster Munitions. (See Use section below).

State-owned Myanmar Defence Products Industries (also known as KaPaSa) manufactured the cluster munition at its DI-21 facility in Seikphyu township in Magway region, while the submunitions were manufactured at its DI-3 facility in Sinda township in Magway region.

In March 2024, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Myanmar in Geneva issued a statement denying that this weapon is a cluster munition, stating: “With regard to the allegations of use of cluster munitions, the munitions used by Myanmar do not fall within the characteristics of cluster munitions defined by the Convention on Cluster Munitions.”¹⁶¹

Myanmar is not known to have produced or used cluster munitions before, though a rudimentary cluster munition was documented in the country a decade ago. The Kachin Independence Army (KIA), an NSAG operating in northeast Myanmar, alleged in January 2013 that the Tatmadaw had used an old weapon that was similar in design to a modern cluster munition near the town of Laiza, in Kachin state.¹⁶² The Monitor found that an “adapter” and 20-pound fragmentation bombs, shown in photographs reviewed by Human Rights Watch (HRW), may meet the definition of a cluster munition under the Convention on Cluster Munitions.¹⁶³

Previously, in 2009, Myanmar stated at a regional meeting on the convention 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.”¹⁶⁴

Use

In the past, Myanmar has denied using cluster munitions. In 2015, at the UNGA, Myanmar said that “cluster munitions were never used in...operations” by the Tatmadaw.¹⁶⁵

Evidence has emerged indicating that Myanmar’s armed forces have used an apparently domestically produced cluster munition in attacks in several parts of the country since in 2022, including during 2023 and as recently as April 2024. Cluster munition use has been identified in photographs of remnants, accounts,

160. Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, “Briefing Paper: Cluster Munition Production and Use in Myanmar/Burma,” 31 August 2023.

161. Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in Geneva, “Myanmar’s Observations on the report entitled ‘Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar,’” 15 March 2024.

162. “Burma army allegedly uses cluster bombs to take KIO position,” Burma News International (BNI), 28 January 2013. On 19 April 2013, the deputy secretary of the Kachin National Council (KNC) provided photographs to the 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 KNC, “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, KNC, 19 April 2013.

163. There is evidence that Myanmar government forces mounted six fragmentation bombs to the adapter, which then separated from the rack when dropped from the air. Photographs show a metal tubular rack that appears to be similar in design to the United States (US)-produced M1 cluster adapter. 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.

164. Statement of Ye Minn Thein, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Conference on the Promotion and Universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Bali, 16 November 2009.

165. Statement of Myanmar, UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 15 October 2015.

and other evidence of attacks by the Myanmar Air Force in Chin, Kayah, Kayin, Rakhine and Shan states, and the Sagaing region since 2022.

Cluster munitions were reportedly used in a Myanmar military airstrike on Auk Chaing village in Mindat township, Chin state on 3 April 2024.¹⁶⁶ The Myanmar military denied attacking the village.¹⁶⁷ Most recently, photographs of the aftermath of an 8 January 2024 airstrike in Thapyi Kan village in Mrauk-U township, Rakhine state, show cluster munition remnants.¹⁶⁸

Several cluster munition attacks were reported during 2023 and into 2024. Photographs of the aftermath of a 6 June 2023 airstrike in Kedong village tract in Kawkareik township, Kayin state, showed cluster munition remnants among the debris at a damaged school.¹⁶⁹ On 1 December 2023, cluster munitions were used in a Myanmar military attack on Namkham township in northern Shan state that allegedly killed one resident, injured five others, and damaged homes according to an investigation by Amnesty International.¹⁷⁰

Cluster bomb remnants were found after an attack by the Myanmar Air Force on a hospital in Saung Pwe village in Pehon township, Shan state on 25 April 2023, which injured five people, including two doctors.¹⁷¹ On the same day, the Myanmar Air Force dropped a cluster bomb near the village of Mae Ka Neh in Myawaddy township, Kayin state, wounding four civilians.¹⁷²

Another attack that resulted in casualties in April 2023 in Mindat township, Chin state, also involved cluster bomb use. Cluster bomb remnants were previously found in the same township after a July 2022 aerial attack that wounded 13 civilians, according to Amnesty International.¹⁷³

Between 17 February and 7 March 2023, witnesses to Myanmar Air Force attacks near the villages of Kon Tha, Nam Mae Kon, and Warisuplia, in Demoso township, Kayah state, reported hearing multiple explosions indicating the use of cluster bombs, and later found cluster bomb remnants. A humanitarian worker at the site told the Monitor that, “the aircraft were Yak 130. There were over 20 wounded and 7 killed by these strikes. Others were killed by conventional bombs and rockets.”¹⁷⁴

In December 2022, Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) published photographs of remnants from an apparent domestically-produced cluster bomb used in an attack in April 2022 in P’Loo village tract in Myawaddy township, Kayin state, adjacent to the border with Thailand.¹⁷⁵

166. “Mintang Township, Air bombardment of Okchai village by the army,” Khit Thit Media, 5 April 2024.

167. “Subversive media circulate misinformation about Aukchai village in Mindat,” Myanmar News Agency, 7 April 2024.

168. Facebook post by Narinjara News, 9 January 2024.

169. Facebook post by Karen National Union (KNU), 7 June 2023. Subsequent correspondence on Signal with a KNLA officer, 20 June 2023. The KNLA officer requested anonymity.

170. Amnesty International, “Myanmar: Military should be investigated for war crimes in response to ‘Operation 1207,’” 21 December 2023.

171. The casualties could have been caused by other weapons used in the same attack. Facebook post by Karenni Human Rights Group, 25 April 2023; and email exchange between Karenni Human Rights Group and the Monitor, 2023.

172. Photographic evidence provided to the Monitor by a KNLA officer via correspondence on Signal, 8–11 May 2023. The KNLA officer requested anonymity.

173. Amnesty International, “Deadly Cargo: Exposing the Supply Chain that Fuels War Crimes in Myanmar,” 3 November 2022, pp. 28–29. An impact ‘splatter’ pattern documented after an aerial attack in Karenni state was identified by the Monitor as typical of a mortar strike. This was attributed in the report to a submunition from an air-dropped cluster bomb.

174. Email correspondence with David Eubanks, Founder, Free Burma Rangers (FBR), 21–23 May 2023.

175. KHRG, “Bombs and Bullets Like Rain: Air strikes in the ‘peace town’ and places of refuge in Dooplaya District, December 2021 to May 2022,” 23 December 2022. See, photographs of cluster bomb tail, nose, and framing bent from impact, p. 10. KHRG did not identify the bomb type.

In May 2022, a local news organization published images of several cluster bomb remnants from attacks on 14, 15 and 20 May 2022 in Kale and Mingin townships of Sagaing region.¹⁷⁶

A March 2024 report by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Thomas H. Andrews, notes that “photograph and video evidence suggests the Myanmar military’s continued use of cluster munitions, including during Operation 1027. The military’s use of cluster munitions, which are inherently indiscriminate weapons, in areas inhabited by civilians likely constitutes a war crime.”¹⁷⁷

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Myanmar in Geneva issued a statement in response to the report that called it “another tool to discredit the Government.”¹⁷⁸ Myanmar did not deny undertaking the attacks, but it denied using cluster munitions, stating: “With regard to the allegations of use of cluster munitions, the munitions used by Myanmar do not fall within the characteristics of cluster munitions defined by the Convention on Cluster Munitions.”

176. “Military Council attacks with devastating, domestically produced bombs in Sagaing,” *The Irrawaddy* (in Burmese), 31 May 2022.

177. Human Rights Council, “Report on the situation of human rights in Myanmar by Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Thomas H. Andrews,” A/HRC/55/65, 20 March 2024.

178. Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in Geneva, “Myanmar’s Observations on the report entitled ‘Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar’,” 15 March 2024.