Mine Action and Explosive Hazard Management: Humanitarian Impact, Technical Aspects, and Global Initiatives



Course Author

The United Nations Mine Action Service

Series Editor

Ramona Taheri

UNMAS

Peace Operations Training Institute®

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Note to Students »

This training is <u>NOT</u>:

- An instruction manual for working with landmines and explosive hazards.
- A theatre-specific training guide; rather, it is generic in nature and some content may not be applicable in all situations.
- A training in first aid and medical assistance for victims.
- Mine awareness training for the local population.

Mine Action and Explosive Hazard Management: Humanitarian Impact, Technical Aspects, and Global Initiatives



A peacekeeper conducts a search for landmines and explosive devices on a road near the UN base in Kidal, Mali. 23 October 2018. UN Photo by Harandane Dicko.

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Peace Operations Training Institute
9609 Gayton Road #201
Richmond, VA 23238 USA
www.peaceopstraining.org

First edition: 2003 by the United Nations Mine Action Service
Second edition: 2014 by the United Nations Mine Action Service and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
Third edition: 2025 by the United Nations Mine Action Service

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Table of Contents

Foreword viii

Method of Study ix

Lesson 1 The Global Landmine Problem and the United Nations Response 10

Section 1.1 Global Overview 11

Section 1.2 Mine Action and Effective Coordination: United Nations Policy 15

Section 1.3 Resolutions on Assistance in Mine Action 17

Section 1.4 The United Nations Mine Action Strategy (2024) 20

Lesson 2 Mines, Cluster Munitions, and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) in Peace Agreements and Ceasefires 24

Section 2.1 What are Ceasefire and Peace Agreements? 25

Section 2.2 What is Humanitarian Disarmament? 27

Section 2.3 Mine Action Guidelines for Ceasefire and Peace Agreements 27

Section 2.4 Case Studies 28

Lesson 3 Mines, Cluster Munitions, and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW): Conventions and Agreements 38

Section 3.1 Introduction to Humanitarian Disarmament Treaties 39

Section 3.2 The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) 40

Section 3.3 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II 43

Section 3.4 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V 46

Section 3.5 Convention on Cluster Munitions 48

Lesson 4 Landmine and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) Safety and Training 53

Section 4.1 Introduction to Landmine and ERW Safety Training 55

Section 4.2 Basic Safety Principles in Mined and ERW-affected Environments 57

Section 4.3 Identifying Landmines and ERW 64

Section 4.4 Recognizing Dangerous Areas 71

Section 4.5 Emergency Procedures in a Minefield or Explosive Area 77

Section 4.6 Assisting a Mine or ERW Victim 79

Section 4.7 Country-Specific Leaflets 80

Lesson 5 International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) 84

Section 5.1 Background 86

Section 5.2 Guide for the Application of International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) 92

Section 5.3 Clearance Requirements 99

Section 5.4 Guide to the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) 103

Lesson 6 Victim Assistance 111

Section 6.1 Introduction to Victim Assistance 112

Section 6.2 International Mine Action Standard 13.10 on Victim Assistance in Mine Action 114

Section 6.3 Draft Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan 2025–2029 121

Section 6.4 Lausanne Action Plan 124

Section 6.5 The United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2024 125

Lesson 7 Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) 129

Section 7.1 Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) 131

Section 7.2 The International Mine Action Standards (IMAS): Explosive Ordnance Risk Education 132

Lesson 8 Mine Action Information 152

Section 8.1 Mine Action Assessment and Survey 154

Section 8.2 The Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) 160

Section 8.3 E-MINE: UN Mine Action Gateway and Additional Resources 161

Lesson 9 Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) 165

Section 9.1 Introduction to Improvised Explosive Devices 166

Section 9.2 IED-related Terms and Definitions 174

Section 9.3 Suggested Actions if Encountering an IED 177

Appendices

Appendix: List of Abbreviations and Acronyms 182

Instructions for the End-of-Course Examination 185

Foreword

Dear Student,

Thank you for enrolling in the *Mine Action and Explosive Hazard Management: Humanitarian Impact, Technical Aspects, and Global Initiatives* course. This course was created in collaboration with the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). The Peace Operations Training Institute (POTI) would like to thank UNMAS and the United Nations Children's Fund for their significant contributions to the course.

In this course, you will learn about the global problem of landmines. The course begins by discussing the United Nations Mine Action Strategy, which outlines the vision of the United Nations of a "world free from the threat of mines, explosive remnants of war (ERW), including cluster munitions, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), where individuals and communities live in a safe environment conducive to sustainable peace and development, where no one is left behind, where the human rights and needs of victims are fully respected and where parties to conflict respect international humanitarian and human rights law." The course continues by discussing ways this vision can be achieved, including: guidelines for ceasefires and peace agreements; humanitarian disarmament treaties, such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions and Certain Conventional Weapons; landmine and ERW safety; the use of International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG); victim assistance; explosive ordnance risk education; and an introduction to IED awareness.

Landmines and ERW are indiscriminate killers. When they are left behind following a conflict, they remain a threat to humanitarian workers, civilians, and everyone working to build peace in a nation emerging from conflict. Long after conflicts end, these devices represent lingering cruelty and are obstacles to recovery. In this course, you will learn what measures organizations and the international community are taking to address the issue of landmines and explosive remnants of war, as well as the work that remains to be done. It is our honour here at POTI to work with you in support of this important mission.

— Ramona Taheri

Executive Director

Peace Operations Training Institute

Method of Study

This self-paced course aims to give students flexibility in their approach to learning. The following steps are meant to provide motivation and guidance about some possible strategies and minimum expectations for completing this course successfully:

- Before you begin studying, first browse through the entire course. Notice the lesson and section titles to get an overall idea of what will be involved as you proceed.
- The material is meant to be relevant and practical. Instead of memorizing individual details, strive to understand concepts and overall perspectives in regard to the United Nations system.
- Set personal guidelines and benchmarks regarding how you want to schedule your time.
- Study the lesson content and the learning objectives. At the beginning of each lesson, orient yourself to the main points. If possible, read the material twice to ensure maximum understanding and retention, and let time elapse between readings.
- At the end of each lesson, take the End-of-Lesson Quiz. Clarify any missed questions by rereading the appropriate sections, and focus on retaining the correct information.
- After you complete all of the lessons, prepare for the End-of-Course Examination by taking time to review the main points of each lesson. Then, when ready, log into your online student classroom and take the End-of-Course Examination in one sitting.

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- Your exam will be scored electronically. If you achieve a passing grade of 75 per cent or higher on the exam, you will be awarded a Certificate of Completion. If you score below 75 per cent, you will be given one opportunity to take a second version of the End-of-Course Examination.
- A note about language: This course uses English spelling according to the standards of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (United Kingdom) and the *United Nations Editorial Manual*.

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- Access to all of your courses;
- A secure testing environment in which to complete your training;
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LESSON 1

The Global Landmine Problem and the United Nations Response



UN Photo by Isaac Billy.

Landmines were originally developed for military use, but they have had a profound and long-lasting impact on ordinary people and their communities.

In This Lesson »

Section 1.1 Global Overview

Section 1.2 Mine Action and Effective Coordination: The United Nations Policy

Section 1.3 Resolutions on Assistance in Mine Action

Section 1.4 The United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2024

Lesson Objectives »

- Discuss the general history of landmines: why they were originally developed, how they have been used throughout history, and how their impact has changed with advances in technology.
- Identify global locations with landmine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) problems and programmes.
- Understand why attention to global landmine and ERW problems is vital.
- Be familiar with the Mine Action and Effective Coordination: United Nations Policy (A/53/496, Annex II).
- Understand the meaning of the term "mine action" and identify the five main components of UN mine action.
- Be familiar with the current *UN Mine Action Strategy*.
- Understand the vision and mission of UN mine action.



Weapons retrieved from rebels by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in coordination with the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) are destroyed in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo. 26 October 2012. UN Photo by Sylvain Liechti.

Section 1.1 Global Overview[1]

> "Mine action is an investment in humanity. It is a prerequisite for humanitarian relief efforts and the foundation of lasting peace and sustainable development… let us build on past progress and rid the world of the scourge of landmines once and for all."
>
> – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, 4 April 2022

1) Portions of this section are drawn from *Landmines: The World Takes Action*, produced by UNMAS and available from UNMAS upon request. For more information visit <www.unmas.org>.

Overview

Landmines were originally developed for military use, but they have had a profound and long-lasting impact on ordinary people and their communities. Long after conflicts end, mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) continue to kill and maim, often making it impossible for refugees and internally displaced people to return to their homes and prolonging suffering for everyone in the affected areas.

During several recent conflicts, landmines have been deliberately used to target civilian populations. As a result, mines may be found in places of little or no military value, such as schools or agricultural fields. For individuals and communities alike, many of whom are already living in poverty and insecurity, the impact of landmines is not simply physical, it is also psychological, social, and economic. Long after conflicts have ended, the legacy of landmines remains, but the problem is being addressed, and the threat is lessening. Globally coordinated programmes designed to tackle the threat of landmine and ERW contamination, and the impact of these explosive weapons, are continuing to grow and develop in the twenty-first century.

History of landmines

Landmines have had a long history, dating back to hazards buried in the ground during the Greek and Roman empires, before explosives were invented. A 14th century Chinese military treatise, the *Huolongjing* (Fire Dragon Manual), describes mines that used gunpowder and were set off by enemy movement. However, it was during the Second World War that anti-personnel and anti-tank landmines started to be very widely used, with tens of millions being laid in the course of the conflict. They were then used for defensive and tactical purposes to achieve military objectives. Troops typically mapped the location of the minefields for future clearance, even though many of the mines laid were not immediately cleared. In many countries, a residual threat from the Second World War still exists.



Soldiers of the Brazilian battalion of UNEF being instructed by Lt. L.G. Lessa on dealing with a landmine. 01 April 1959. UN Photo.

Advances in technology in the 1960s made it possible to scatter mines mechanically rather than planting them by hand. This meant that hundreds of landmines could be deployed at the same time using aircraft, rockets, or artillery. While a troop of 30 men could lay approximately 50 mines per hour, one remote delivery system could scatter over 200 mines in the same time. During the Viet Nam War, vast areas of land in Viet Nam, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Cambodia were completely saturated with mines using these delivery systems.

As conflicts became more brutal, the effect of landmines was no longer strictly limited to military targets. In the 1980s, mines proliferated as the weapon of choice in many internal conflicts. The low cost of anti-personnel mines made them particularly appealing to guerrilla and military forces in developing countries. The production of smaller and more sophisticated landmines and the development of homemade devices caused their prolific use. Plastic mines, which cannot be identified with metal detectors, also became common. Civilians became targets because

anti-personnel landmines were used intentionally to harass and terrorize them, forcing them to leave their homes and blocking access to important infrastructure such as water and electricity. These factors, but most of all the indiscriminate use of landmines, led to a global crisis.

In 1992, six humanitarian organizations joined together to create the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). From their work in mine-affected countries, they had seen first-hand the horrendous toll landmines take on innocent people in countries where conflict has already caused so much pain. The work of ICBL, which grew to a membership of more than 1,400 non-governmental organizations, in partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations (UN), and governments worldwide, aims to bring the history of landmines to a close.

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the ICBL and its coordinator Jody Williams in 1997 drew worldwide attention to the problem of landmines. The *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction*, known as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Ottawa Treaty, or the Mine Ban Treaty, entered into force in 1999. As of May 2025, 165 of the world's countries were party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which bans the use, development, production, stockpiling, and transfer of anti-personnel landmines (see Lesson 2).[2] All European Union members and all States in Sub-Saharan Africa are now States Parties. This may have given the impression that the landmine challenge has been met and that the media and governments can start turning their attention to other problems. This is unfortunately not the case. Sadly, there are still 33 states that have not yet formally agreed to be bound by the Convention and landmines still affect over 50 of the world's countries. Millions of landmines are still lying in the ground and claim thousands of innocent victims every year. In several countries, landmines continue to be used as indiscriminate weapons of war.

States and areas with mine/ERW casualties in 2022

Sub-Saharan Africa	Americas	East and South Asia and the Pacific	Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia	Middle East/North Africa
Angola	**Colombia**	**Afghanistan**	Armenia	**Algeria**
Benin	**Mexico**	**Bangladesh**	Azerbaijan	Egypt
Burkina Faso	**Venezuela**	**Cambodia**	**Bosnia and Herzegovina**	Iran
Cameroon		India	**Croatia**	**Iraq**
Central African Republic		Lao People's Democratic Republic	**Tajikistan**	**Kuwait**
Chad		Myanmar	**Türkiye**	Lebanon
Democratic Republic of the Congo		Nepal	**Ukraine**	Libya
Mali		Pakistan		**Palestine**
Mauritania		**Philippines**		Syria
Niger		**Sri Lanka**		**Yemen**
Nigeria		**Thailand**		
Senegal				
Somalia				
Somaliland				
South Sudan				
Sudan				
Togo				
Uganda				
Western Sahara				
Zimbabwe				

Note: States Parties are indicated in **bold**; areas that are not currently United Nations Member States are indicated in *italics*.

2) Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, "Membership". Available from: <https://www.apminebanconvention.org/en/membership/>.

Impact of landmines and ERW

> "The landmine is eternally prepared to take victims. In common parlance, it is the perfect soldier, the 'eternal sentry.' The war ends, the landmine goes on killing."
>
> — Jody Williams, 1997 Nobel Peace Prize laureate for her work to ban landmines through the ICBL.

Years of war have left millions of landmines and ERW scattered in more than 50 countries worldwide. In war and in peace, civilians are their most common victims. Children, subsistence farmers, refugees, and people displaced by war are most often affected. The world's poor suffer the harshest consequences, facing danger every day to cultivate their fields, herd animals, and collect firewood or even water. To survive daily and access basic resources, they may be forced into dangerous mined areas. In many countries, women and children are responsible for carrying out these tasks. Many landmine victims are unable to reach medical treatment in time, since access to appropriate care is limited in remote and impoverished areas.

The impact of landmines and ERW extends beyond individual accidents and casualties. Landmines and ERW in vast areas of former battlefields have created acute social, economic, and environmental harm by denying access to productive areas for civilian use. They negatively impact development and obstruct post-conflict rebuilding, denying access to healthcare and education. Fertile agricultural land becomes useless. Mined irrigation systems and wells make it impossible to farm and maintain herds. Mined dams and electrical installations seriously reduce the ability of a nation to produce the power required for industry. Mined transportation systems interrupt the movement of people and the flow of goods and services throughout the country. Mined roads and the destruction of infrastructure make it difficult, and sometimes impossible, for humanitarian assistance to reach affected communities.

As of 1 November 2024, anti-personnel landmines have been found to affect 58 countries.[3] Unless landmines and ERW are cleared, the lives of individuals, communities, and nations cannot return to normal. In most mine-affected countries, the institutional, technical, and financial capacity to cope with the problem alone does not exist. Strong and centralized mechanisms are needed to promote cooperation and to gather and disseminate information available about the local landmine and ERW contamination to affected populations. The international community, including the United Nations and its non-governmental partners, help countries clear mines and ERW, develop mine awareness programmes for affected countries (see Lesson 7), help with victim assistance (see Lesson 6), destroy stockpiles, and advocate for a global ban on landmines (see Lesson 2).

The goal of all these activities is to reduce the impact of the landmine and ERW problem on people, on their families, on their communities, and on their nations. Mine action is about making people feel safe again. It is about the human right to live free from the threat and impact of landmines.

According to the International Mine Action Standards, mine action comprises five complementary groups of activities:

1. Explosive ordnance risk education (EORE);
2. Survey, marking and clearance of explosive ordnance (EO);
3. Victim assistance, including rehabilitation and reintegration;
4. Stockpile destruction; and
5. Advocacy.

These groups of activities, or pillars of mine action, will be discussed throughout the course.

3) International Campaign to Ban Landmines, *Landmine Monitor Report 2024*, 2024. Available from: <https://backend.icblcmc.org/assets/reports/Landmine-Monitors/LMM2024/Downloads/Landmine-Monitor-2024-Final-Web.pdf>.

Section 1.2 Mine Action and Effective Coordination: United Nations Policy

Overview

In October 1998, the Secretary-General of the United Nations submitted a mine action policy document to the General Assembly as part of his report *Assistance in mine clearance* (A/53/496). The mine action policy document, entitled *Mine action and effective coordination: United Nations policy*, introduces three complementary principles. First, it aims to foster the ability of the United Nations to support affected countries and populations in responding to the immediate and long-term problems posed by landmines. Second, it aims to foster the ability of the United Nations to support and build upon collective efforts of the international community at large. Third, it aims to strengthen the credibility of the United Nations in terms of transparency, accountability, and effectiveness.

The policy document introduces the global landmine crisis and recognizes that the United Nations has a central role in responding to this crisis. It discusses the nature of mine action and details the guiding principles for mine action, coordination, and development. It identifies the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) as the focal point within the UN for all mine-related activities. In addition, it lists the roles and responsibilities of other UN and like-minded partners in responding to the global landmine crisis. The intent in creating the policy document *Mine action and effective coordination: United Nations policy* was to sum up the key principles on which UN mine action is based and to clarify roles and responsibilities within the United Nations system. The policy in its entirety is available from: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n98/309/20/pdf/n9830920.pdf>.

UNMAS 2013 and Beyond »

This UNMAS video gives an idea of what mine action entails, where UNMAS is working, and what new challenges face the lead United Nations entity on explosive hazards.

Available at: <http://youtu.be/MsAUTeDo8Ic>.

United Nations mine action and the use of the militaries

> "In dealing with the landmine problem, the United Nations will respect the fundamental humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, and humanity so that priority is given to those who are most vulnerable. Training or support for mine action will not, in principle, be provided to the militaries of mine-contaminated countries."[4]

The following guidelines[5] concerning UN involvement with the militaries of mine-contaminated countries for mine action activities have been developed to complement the UN mine-action policy. They were approved by the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IAGC-MA) during a meeting chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on 25 January 1999.

4) United Nations, *Mine Action and Effective Coordination: United Nations Policy*, A/53/496, 14 October 1998, Annex II, para. 10.
5) Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, *The Role of the Military in Mine Action*, (Geneva: June 2003).



A delegation led by David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), with representatives from the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), the Government of Japan, and the National Mine Action Authority of South Sudan, visited a site in Eastern Equatoria, South Sudan, that is contaminated with cluster munitions. They saw first-hand how humanitarian mine action can prevent physical harm to civilians, improve access to basic services, and help people rebuild their lives in the wake of conflict. 19 November 2019. UN Photo by Nektarios Markogiannis.

The Role of the Military in Mine Action »

Excerpt from *The Role of the Military in Mine Action* by The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. Available from: <https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/uploads/gichd/Publications/Role_Military_MA.pdf>.

1. International assistance in mine action is often required in countries which are either still torn by internal conflicts to varying degrees (e.g. Afghanistan, Angola, Sudan), or have recently emerged from a conflict situation (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Nicaragua). Even when they respond to the authority of a legitimate government, the armed forces of those countries often operate along party lines and are major political instruments, if not political players themselves.

2. To ensure neutrality, the United Nations has therefore determined that training or support for mine action will not, in principle, be provided to the militaries of mine-contaminated countries. This principle is part of the United Nations policy on mine action (A/53/496, Annex II, para. 10, dated 14 October 1998) which the General Assembly welcomed at its fifty-third session (A/RES/53/26 dated 13 November 1998).

3. The United Nations recognises nonetheless that the militaries of mine-contaminated countries could contribute to humanitarian mine action. They often have the technical expertise and knowledge required for that purpose, as well as operational and logistical capacities. In a number of countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Jordan and Nicaragua they are already engaged in mine-clearance endeavours.

4. The United Nations recognises also that the primary responsibility for taking action against the presence of landmines lies with the concerned State. Thus, in principle, the government of the affected country should assume overall responsibility for the coordination and management of a national mine action programme, and determine which implementing mechanisms and arrangements should be established.

5. Even though the United Nations prefers providing assistance to mine action under civilian auspices and civilian implementation mechanisms, there are circumstances where it would be prepared to support government

mine action programmes which include collaborative arrangements with the militaries. Such circumstances and support should be considered on a case-by-case basis within the context of the Interagency Coordination Group on Mine Action and will adhere to the following guidelines:

5.1. The United Nations will not engage, directly or indirectly, in cooperative or collaborative arrangements with militaries when such arrangements hinder its neutrality and impartiality.

5.2. Unless provided in peace treaties, arrangements with militaries should be restricted to circumstances where the militaries are not party to any conflict, open or latent, local or regional, and they do not have the potential to become party to such conflicts.

5.3. The overall structure of a mine action programme, including its coordination, control and priority-setting mechanisms, should be agreed upon prior to engaging into arrangements with militaries.

5.4. The overall coordination, control and priority setting of mine action should be the responsibility of civilian authorities in country. In particular, priorities for mine action should be established in the context of the humanitarian, reconstruction and development requirements, and result from a concerted effort involving all parties concerned, including the United Nations when its assistance is requested.

5.5. When they are deemed appropriate, arrangements with militaries should be the object of formal memoranda of understanding (MOU) among all parties concerned clearly outlining roles, responsibilities and guiding principles.

5.6. All mine-clearance operations conducted with the support of the United Nations should respect the International Mine Action Standards.

5.7. When and where appropriate, collaboration with militaries can include tasking, quality control, information sharing and logistical support. However, the United Nations will not interfere with established military chains of command and will not provide funding for the salaries of military personnel.

In addition to this policy document, United Nations Mine Action and the Use of the Militaries, the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping has called for mine action activities to be implemented during the peacekeeping phase "in such a manner that their viable continuity is guaranteed to the maximum extent possible", and has specifically recommended that troop-contributing countries follow national and international standards for mine action, including IMAS.

Section 1.3 Resolutions on Assistance in Mine Action

Every two years, the United Nations General Assembly adopts a resolution on mine action and the Secretary-General writes a report on mine action. The latest resolution on Assistance in Mine Action [A/Res/78/70] was adopted by the General Assembly on 7 December 2023 during their 78th session.

The resolution builds on the foundations laid out by agreed language of the previous resolutions and, in particular, introduces new language that highlights the following areas, such as:

- Recognizes the UN Mine Action Strategy 2019-2023 and the UN efforts regarding its implementation, including its reinforced monitoring and evaluation mechanism, emphasizing the importance of using evaluation to inform the future direction of mine action within the United Nations;

- Appreciates the resilience shown by the mine action sector in the face of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, including the continuous use of innovative methods, such as virtual training platforms or merging health campaigns and risk education messages, which has allowed for safety and security training and risk education to continue;
- Raises concerns about the increasing threat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to civilian populations, humanitarian personnel, United Nations personnel, including peacekeepers, and national defence and security forces;
- Notes that for the purposes of the implementation of the present resolution, improvised explosive devices meeting the definition of mines, booby-traps, or other devices fall under the scope of mine action when their clearance is undertaken for humanitarian purposes;
- Recognizes the importance mine action plays in the *New Agenda for Peace*;
- Recognizes the contribution of mine action to the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*;
- Recognizes the importance of the full involvement and equal opportunities for participation of both women and men in mine action programmes and of gender- and age-appropriate and disability-inclusive perspective in mine action programmes;
- Uses explicit language related to victim assistance and on its integration into other sectors such as health care and disabilities, along with recognizing the needs and rights of persons with disabilities;
- Includes enhanced language in support of gender considerations, including with reference to the full and effective participation of men and, in particular, women;
- Notes with appreciation the efforts of the IAGC-MA in cooperating and coordinating with non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders and the strengthening of United Nations coordination at the global level;
- Highlights the role of the IAGC-MA and the Explosive Ordnance Risk Education Advisory Group which was formed to steer risk education efforts and to promote the use of robust behaviour change strategies to systematically protect affected populations;
- Encourages Member States to pledge multi-annual contributions to Mine Action;
- Raises once again the importance of a rapid response capability; and
- Highlights the need for the United Nations to continue to improve coordination, efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

Member States also "took note" of the Report of the Secretary-General. Member States have also requested the Secretary-General to report again at the 80th session of the General Assembly, in 2025. Overall, mine action continues to have a very solid basis for its work and focus and reflects the current collective focus in many areas.[6]

The *Report of the Secretary-General on Assistance in Mine Action* covers the period from August 2021 until July 2023. It was submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 76/74, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General submit a report on progress in the implementation of its resolutions on assistance in mine action, including on relevant UN policies and activities.[7]

6) For more details on views expressed by Member States during the open debate, please see <https://www.mineaction.org/sites/default/files/secretary-general_report_2023_a_78_259-en_5.pdf>.

7) The full report is available from: <https://www.mineaction.org/sites/default/files/secretary-general_report_2023_a_78_259-en_5.pdf>.

The report was prepared by UNMAS, as the UN system-wide leader, convener, and coordinator of mine action in coordination with members of the IACG-MA, who provided input for the initial draft and commented on earlier versions of the report. UNMAS also consulted internally within the Department of Peace Operations (DPO), with its field presences, and with relevant colleagues in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA).

The report strives to demonstrate the people-centred approach of mine action. While mine action has fallen off the radar of the international community, it is a sector that truly demonstrates, on a daily basis, the United Nations potential to "Deliver as One."

The report is structured as follows:

I. Introduction. Begins with an introduction of the purpose of the report while providing an update since the previous report. In addition, it highlights the continuing threat posed by mines and ERW as well as the growing threat of IEDs. The introduction also recognizes the changing operating environment due to urbanization, renewed conflicts, and extreme weather conditions as a result of climate change.

II. Update on international legal instruments related to mine action. The report then provides an update on the legal mechanisms and instruments related to mine action. The UN plays a key role in advocating for the universalization and implementation of legal instruments relating to mine action. The report provides an update on the progress. In this specific case, it highlights the lack of progress made in the accession of new Member States.

III. Reporting under the *Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2019–2023*.

   a. Strengthening protection against the risk and socioeconomic impacts of explosive ordnance. This section of the report provides an update on the impact of landmines citing some areas of significant progress such as Iraq and Laos, and other areas of rising risk such as Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Burkina Faso. This section highlights the progress in the survey and clearance of landmines, stating that a further 163km had been cleared and released in 2022 alone. It continues by informing that over 5.5 million people were reached with in-person EORE.

   b. Reintegration and access of victims and family members to health and education services. This section highlights the success of the increased pathways for victim assistance. It also brings to attention the appointment of the first United Nations Global Advocate for persons with disabilities in conflict and peacebuilding situations.

   c. Development of mine action capacities of national and local institutions. This section provides an update on three specific areas: strengthening national and local mine action capacity; strengthening weapons and ammunition management; and improving the safety and security of peacekeepers.

   d. Leveraging mine action to enhance humanitarian, peace and security, and development priorities. This section provides an update on how mine action is used across the UN to enable progress in other fields as a cross-cutting issue. This includes the role it has played in humanitarian coordination, integrating into peace and security priorities, and accelerating implementation of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*

   e. Addressing the specific needs of women, girls, men and boys from diverse groups, while facilitating their empowerment and inclusion. The report discusses that progress continued to be made in the development of gender strategies in countries and territories with active United Nations mine action operations.

IV. Observations and recommendations. In the final section of this report, the Secretary-General provides a series of recommendations and calls to action to progress the mine action endeavour.



An event under the theme "More than Mines" was held in Juba, South Sudan, to mark the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action (04 April). Held at the Nyakuron Cultural Centre, the event was organized by the National Mine Action Authority in partnership with the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS). Students gather at the Dr. John Garang Mausoleum grounds for a march to the Nyakuron Cultural Centre on the occasion. 02 April 2015. UN Photo by JC McIlwaine.

Section 1.4 The United Nations Mine Action Strategy (2024)

> "Even after the fighting ends, these deadly devices can contaminate communities for decades to come, posing a daily and deadly danger to women, men and children alike, and blocking vital humanitarian and development assistance."
>
> — United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres

Overview

The United Nations Mine Action Strategy (2024) is a framework for accountability within the UN system and its participating entities. It guides efforts to work together to prevent and address the dangers posed by explosive ordnance in times of war and after conflicts, while supporting affected communities. The Strategy is a result of collaboration among members of the IACG-MA. It introduces a "theory of change" for the role of the United Nations in mine action. Through an improved monitoring and evaluation mechanism, the United Nations will report on its mandated and obligated contributions, ensuring accountability at both headquarters and country levels. After extensive consultation and collaboration with over 300 stakeholders, the Strategy was endorsed by the Principals of the IACG-MA on 13 December 2023. It is practical, needs-based, people-centred, and resource-efficient with clear goals and indicators to evaluate progress and results. The Strategy also demonstrates a cohesive United Nations approach to mine action.

The Strategy outlines the vision of the United Nations of "a world free from the threat of mines, explosive remnants of war (ERW), including cluster munitions, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), where individuals and communities live in a safe environment conducive to sustainable peace and development, where no one is left behind, where the human rights and the needs of victims are fully respected and where parties to conflict respect international humanitarian and human rights law." It includes a mission statement, which is as follows:

> "The United Nations supports States and affected communities to prevent, reduce and manage the threat and impact of explosive ordnance during and after armed conflict, empower affected women, girls, men and boys from diverse groups to live safely, and strengthen national capacities to protect individuals and communities from the threat of mines, ERW and IEDs until such time as the assistance of the UN is no longer requested."

The five agreed outcome areas of the Strategy are:

1. Protection of individuals and communities from the risks and socio-economic impacts of explosive ordnance strengthened;

2. Victims of explosive ordnance have equal access to comprehensive health assistance and education and participate fully in social and economic life;

3. National institutions effectively lead and manage mine action functions and responsibilities;

4. Momentum and profile of mine action efforts, including through mainstreaming in humanitarian assistance, human rights, peacebuilding, stabilization, and sustainable development, maintained and enhanced (cross-cutting); and

5. Mine action programmes address the specific rights, needs and vulnerabilities of women, girls, men and boys from diverse groups, while facilitating empowerment, inclusion and greater gender parity in employment (cross-cutting).

The following lessons will discuss how the Strategy guides the different components of mine action. Students are encouraged to read the entire Strategy, available from: <https://www.mineaction.org/sites/default/files/publications/un_mine_action_strategy_2024.pdf>.

Conclusion

This lesson explored the history of landmines, reviewing their original purpose and their historical use. It then considered their impact on civilians around the world and how it continues today and still requires action on an international scale. To gain an overview of this action, United Nations policy on mine action is introduced, as are guidelines on the role of the military and the most recent United Nations Mine Action Strategy.

End-of-Lesson Quiz »

1. Landmines frequently kill and maim people _____.

A. only during conflicts
B. long after conflicts end
C. even after complete demining
D. for two years post-conflict only

2. When are landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) dangerous?

A. During wartime
B. During peacetime
C. When children are present
D. All of these

3. When did anti-personnel and anti-tank landmines start to be very widely used?

A. During the Second World War
B. When the Chinese empire started using gunpowder
C. When hazards were buried in the ground during the Greek and Roman empires
D. During the First World War

4. Who or what is targeted by landmines?

A. Civilian targets only
B. Members of the military only
C. Infrastructure only
D. Military and civilian targets

5. Landmines _____.

A. almost always deactivate on their own
B. remove vast areas of land and resources from productive use
C. do not affect farming
D. are easy to see

6. Anti-personnel mines are used:

A. Always in a precise, targeted way
B. Indiscriminately
C. Only for military targets
D. So rarely that no trends are evident

7. UNMAS (United Nations Mine Action Service) is _____.

A. an organization providing food and shelter to victims of landmines
B. concerned primarily with the post-conflict economic activities of a country
C. the focal point within the UN system for all mine-related activities
D. focused on educating high-ranking government officials on the proper use of landmines

8. As of the 2024 reports, how many countries are affected by landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW)?

A. Fewer than 30
B. 30–40
C. 40–50
D. More than 50

9. Who has the primary responsibility for taking action against the presence of landmines?

A. The concerned State
B. The international community
C. Civilians living in affected regions
D. None of these

10. How often does the General Assembly adopt a resolution on mine action?

A. Every two years
B. Rarely
C. Every five years
D. The General Assembly cannot adopt resolutions on mine action.

Answer Key provided on the next page.

End-of-Lesson Quiz »

Answer Key »

1. B
2. D
3. A
4. D
5. B
6. B
7. C
8. D
9. A
10. A