



Check against delivery

United Nations Mine Action Service
Intersessional Meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
(19 – 21 June 2023)

Thematic Discussion on Improvised Anti-Personnel Mines

Remarks Delivered by Pehr Lodhammar on behalf of UNMAS

Tuesday 20 June

We welcome the thematic discussion on the threat posed by Anti-Personnel Mines of an improvised nature or victim-activated Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). In recent years, the dynamic IED threat has progressively expanded and evolved geographically, killing and injuring thousands of people, mostly civilians. IEDs are cheap and simple to produce, controlling the precursors is challenging as many have legitimate commercial or agricultural use. Designs for IEDs are freely available online.

The dramatic rise in the use of IEDs in West Africa includes the targeting of civilians and national security services across the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin and attacks against peacekeepers in Mali. IEDs are used to attack Somali security forces and citizens, and the African Union troops that serve in the African Transition Mission in Somalia. In the DRC, non-state armed groups use IEDs to target large numbers of civilians as well as security services. Over the last two years (April 2021 – March 2023) 2,130 civilian casualties in Somalia have been attributed to IED incidents with 682 civilian fatalities and 1,448 civilians injured.

The Security Council has mandated the United Nations to enhance the capacity of national authorities and peacekeeping troops to mitigate the IED threat in Somalia, Mali, the DRC and Central African Republic. At the request of the authorities in Burkina Faso and Iraq, the UN is also helping to build the capacity of national security services to deploy safely to protect civilians. Niger has been struggling with IED threat for several years and there have been IED incidents in Benin in late 2021.



Check against delivery

United Nations Mine Action Service
Intersessional Meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
(19 – 21 June 2023)

The UN has supported IED risk education programmes in many countries including Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Libya, Yemen, Syria and Myanmar.

Efforts to degrade the networks that employ IEDs must be pursued. Strengthened information sharing among affected Member States, across affected regions and among relevant organizations may help improve law enforcement and other preventive measures.

UNMAS Mali and the MINUSMA leadership advocate for comprehensive political solutions to the IED threat and for prevention through local dialogue. High-level political engagement in Kidal may in part help explain why fewer IEDs were recorded in the area since late 2021. Following the April 2021 attack on its camp in Aguelhok, MINUSMA launched a multifaceted action plan to improve community perceptions of the Mission in the Kidal region and this effort correlates with a significant decrease in the number of attacks against MINUSMA.

These actions are consistent with the 2021 Independent Strategic Review on the UN Response to the Explosive Threat (ISR) which recommends "*dialogue with all actors including non-state armed groups, including on their motivations for using explosive ordnance*" in Mali (ISR MINUSMA recommendation 2.3).

When security services deploy safely and protect the civilian population, space is opened for the extension of state authority based on popular trust in the security services. Of course, it is not enough to train and equip the security services; such initiatives must be undertaken within the context of national commitment to security sector reform and respect for the rule of law.



Check against delivery

United Nations Mine Action Service
Intersessional Meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
(19 – 21 June 2023)

Thank you.