

Mine Action in Syria

A photograph of a war-torn street in Syria. The scene is filled with rubble and destroyed buildings. In the foreground, a woman in a pink shirt and patterned pants is walking away from the camera, followed by a young boy in a dark shirt. Further down the path, two more children are visible. The street is narrow and flanked by damaged concrete structures. The sky is overcast and grey.

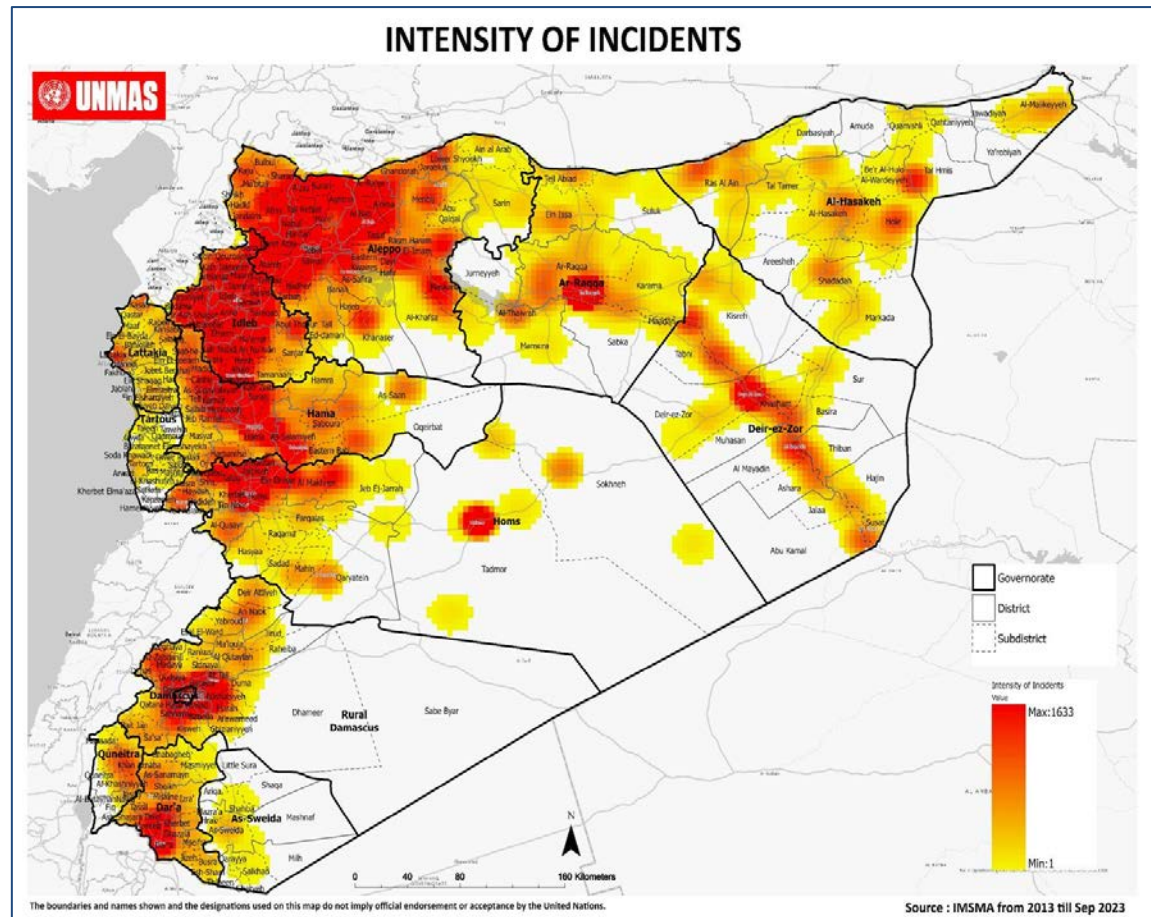
Joseph McCartan
Chief Mine Action Programme
UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS)
Damascus, Syria

Explosive Ordnance Contamination in Syria

Scale and scope of EO contamination remains undefined - open source data, however, indicate an average of 31 EO incidents per day.

Humanitarian Needs Overview:
2023:

- 11.5 million people (**1 in 2 people in Syria**) are estimated to be living at risk of death or injury from explosive ordnance.
- **Agriculture areas and access roads** are often found to be most contaminated.
- 1 out of 10 direct explosive ordnance victims is a **child**.
- 87% of recorded explosive ordnance victims are **male**.
- Dire socio-economic situation increasing likelihood of **risk-taking behavior patterns**.

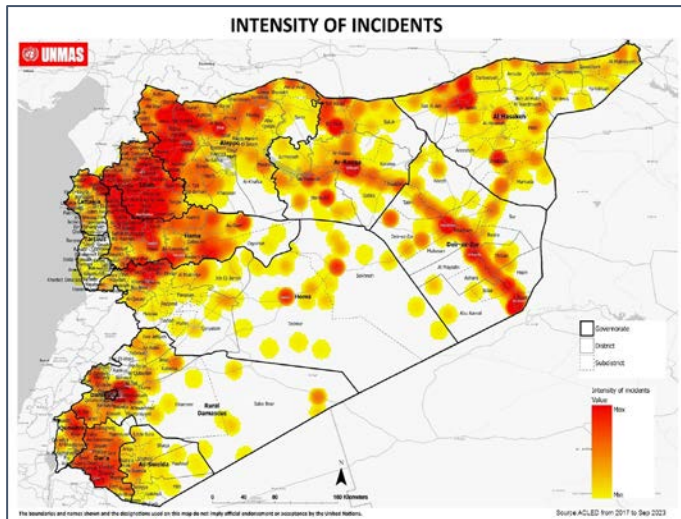


*source: IMSMA from 2013 till Sep 2023

Trends Analysis

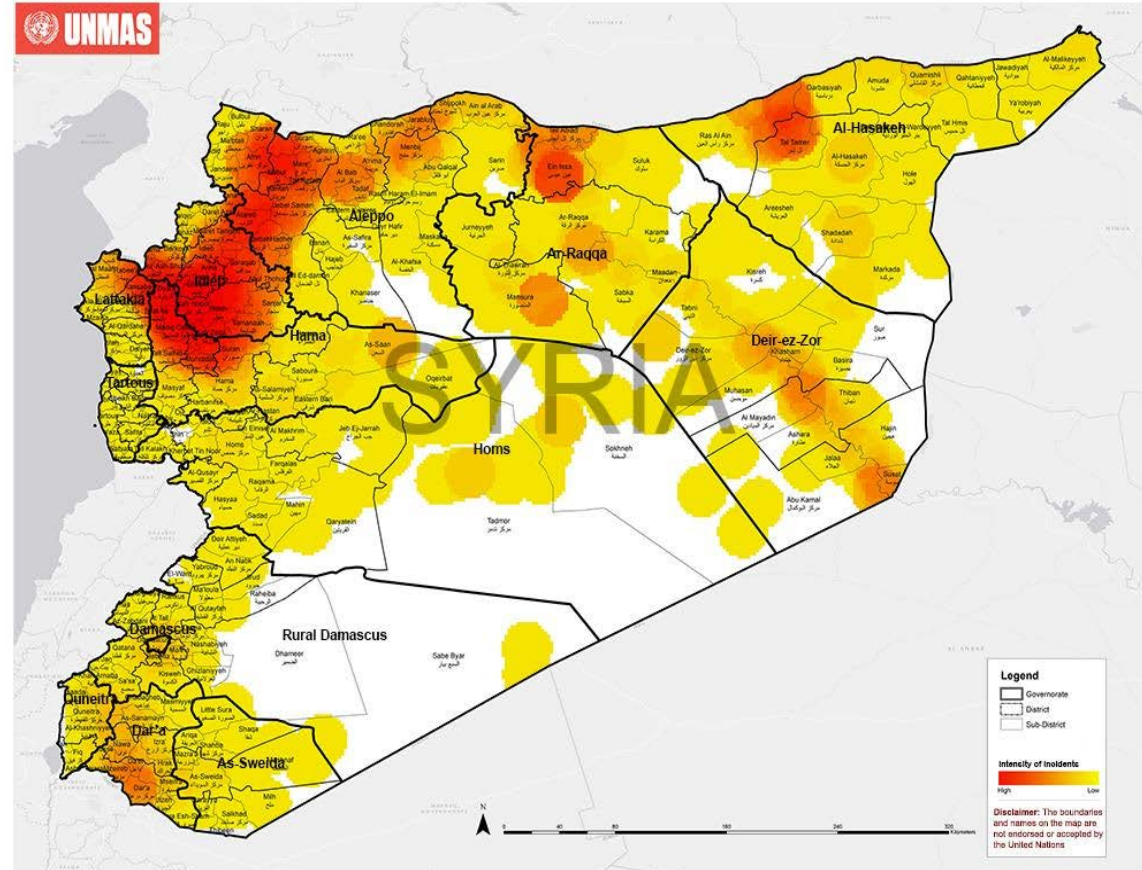
Based on open source data (ACLED)

- from 1 Jan 2019 to 30 Sep 2023, a total of **36,121** EO incidents were recorded.
- This is an average of **21 EO** incidents per day.



INTENSITY OF INCIDENTS IN SYRIA

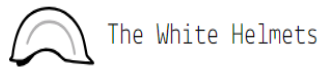
A Collective information from Open Source about explosive incident for the conflict in Syria



Mine Action Sector Response: Coordination

NW - MASC (led by the Halo Trust) in GZT

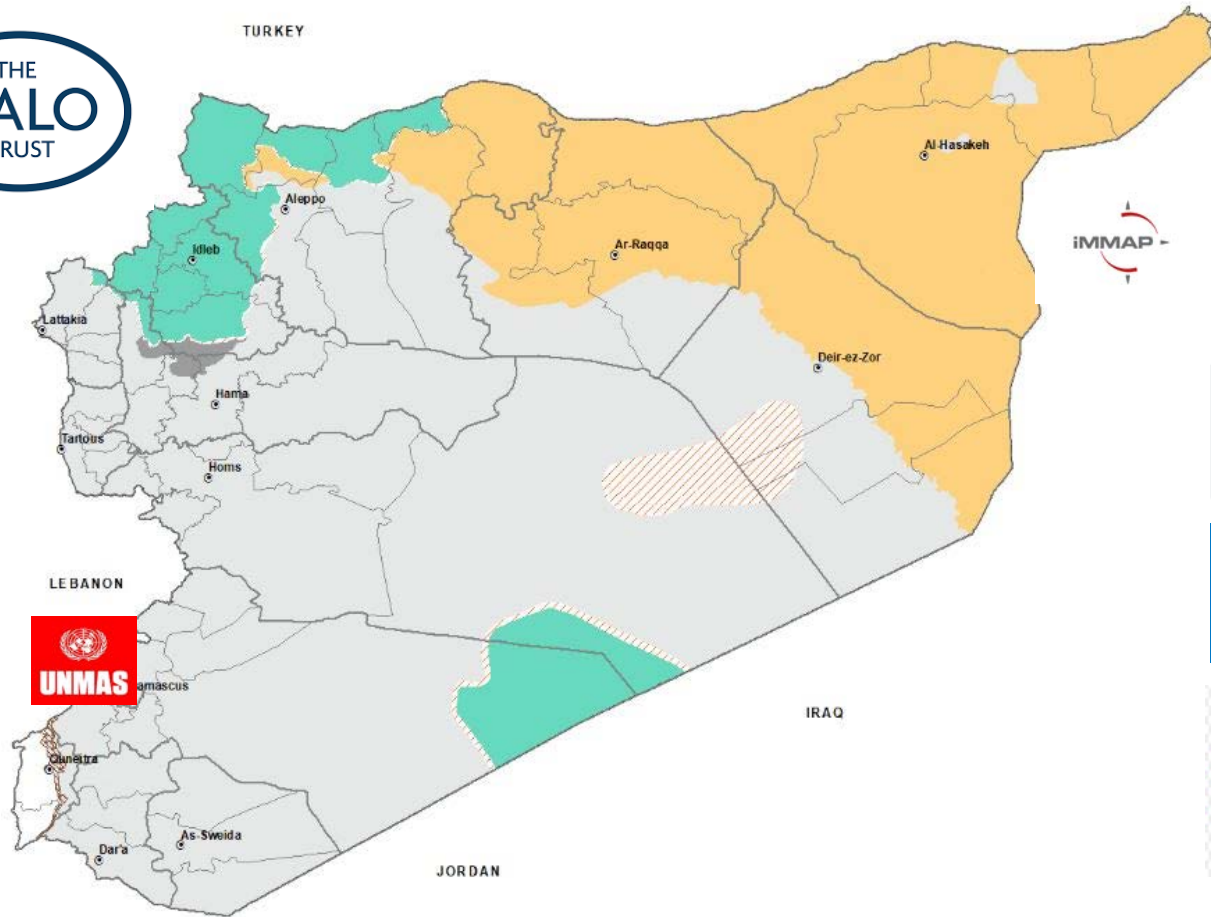
NE - iMMAP MA focal point



GoS - MASS (UNMAS-led) in Damascus



Norwegian People's Aid - Syria
المساعدات الشعبية النرويجية - سوريا



UNMAS

Mine Action in Government-Controlled Areas

Overview:

- MA Sub-Sector established in 2019 under the Protection Sector.
- Integrated within the UN humanitarian response, Humanitarian Needs Overview, Humanitarian Response Plan and UN-GOS 2022-24 Strategic Framework.
- The UNMAS mission is to act as an **enabler** of UN humanitarian and early recovery operations.
- Survey & clearance operations are conducted by Safety Solutions and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA).
- **EORE** is the most widespread of MA activities, and well mainstreamed across the humanitarian response.
- Ongoing **victim assistance** and disability inclusion via Syrian NGOs, Khotwa & ADRA.
- UNMAS is the de facto MAC, providing advisory, technical and operational support to MA actors, including through **accreditation** and quality assurance.

Challenges and Needs:

- Continued conflict, and additional layers of EO.
- No comprehensive EO contamination data- need for country-wide baseline survey.
- Limited number of operational MA actors.
- Unpredictable funding - need for long-term investment to build sustainable capacity.



Norwegian People's Aid - Syria
المساعدات الشعبية النرويجية - سوريا



UNICEF Interventions



- UNICEF Syria is engaged in two MA pillars - EORE: which is led by the Child Protection (CP) Sub-Sector, and Victim Assistance: through cash assistance.
- UNICEF planned to reach 1,460,000 children with EORE activities in 2023. Only 332,696 children have been reached, as of August, due to lack of funding .

Challenges and Needs:

- For the last two years, UNICEF Syria has been trying to get the authority's approval to establish an EORE Working Group, co-chaired by the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs and Population (SCFAP), under the Mine Action sub-sector to coordinate activities and harmonize messaging.
- Decreased funding in 2023 for EORE activities.

UNDP Interventions



- UNDP Syria provide assistance through 5 prosthetics workshops.
- Interventions started in 2015 and UNDP has supported 1301 beneficiaries.

Challenges and Needs:

- Economic support, medical care, prosthetic/orthotic services and assistive products/devices are key needs reported by communities. Prohibitive cost, nonexistence or remoteness of services are still major barriers to assisting survivors of explosive ordnance incidents.
- Specialized services remain limited and insufficient, particularly in Deir Ezzor, Raqqa, Aleppo and Homs.
- VA requires a multi-year approach especially for children and remains under-funded.

Mine Action in the North West



Overview:

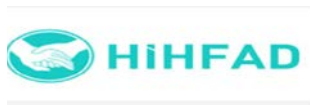
- UNICEF reports that 65% of locations have reported deaths or injuries to EO contamination, impacting 73% of agricultural land in the region.
- UNICEF have delivered EORE to 250K people and trained 112 facilitators.
- Clearance of hazardous areas has started for the first time in August 2023 by the HALO Trust.

Challenges and Needs:

- Continued conflict, and additional layers of EO.
- VA rehabilitation and prosthetic centres require consistent funding to provide physiotherapy, psychosocial support, prosthetic support, and medical transportation, yet current resources are scarce and insufficient to meet the needs.
- Challenges remain in gaining permission for survey and clearance from the de-facto authorities.
- No comprehensive EO contamination data and EO incident tracking system - need for baseline.
- survey and for addressing implementation plans.
- Funding.



The White Helmets



Mine Action in the North-East



Overview:

- Records from January 2017 to March 2023 show that MA actors removed/destroyed **117,832** EO items and cleared or cancelled (through Non-Technical Survey) a total of **33,680,164 m²**.
- During the first quarter of 2023, **2,838,309 m²** were additionally reported as hazardous.
- NES wide impact survey in all accessible communities, involving 30+ survey teams in a survey consortium of HMA partners.

Challenges and needs:

- Continued conflict, and additional layers of EO.
- Access challenges restricting activities and assessments.
- Current level of funding does not meet needs.



Questions



**UNMAS implementing partner Khotwa providing EORE materials to children
in Rural Damascus. ©UNMAS, January 2022**