Mine Action in Syria

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

Data source: Open Source ACLED Jan2019-Sep2023 / Produced by: UNMAS GRIP
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

iMMAP

MAG - MAG saves lives builds futures

HiHFAD

Hi

Hi

Takaful Al Sham

The White Helmets

Handicap International

UNICEF

UNDP

ITF

DCA

Iraq

Jordan

Syria

Lebanon

Turkey

Damascus

Ar-Raqqa

Al-Haseke

Al-Malikiyeh

Cyprus

JORDAN

LEBANON

TURKEY

NE - iMMAP MA focal point

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

GoS - MASS (UNMAS-led) in Damascus

Norwegian People's Aid - Syria

iMMAP
Mine Action in Government-Controlled Areas

Overview:

• MA Sub-Sector established in 2019 under the Protection Sector.
• 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.
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.
- Funding.
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