PRINCIPLED MINE ACTION
FOR IDPS IN SYRIA

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Syria Crisis
2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview

13.1 million
Total people in need

5.6 million
People are experiencing acute needs
Since January 2015, an average of 1 explosive incident has occurred every 10 minutes in Syria.

Explosive weaponry has been used indiscriminately against the civilian population and is a major driver of displacement.

Each year of conflict adds another layer of potential explosive hazards, compounding the threat.

Source: Clash Database (Jan 2015 – Oct 2017)
IDP movements in 2017

IDP Movements

Legend

- Governorate Boundaries
- Subdistrict Boundaries
- Number of IDPs arrived by subdistrict
  - 1 - 1,000
  - 1,001 - 5,000
  - 5,001 - 10,000
  - 10,001 - 20,000
  - > 20,000
- No IDPs annual reported
- Orange indicates movement from origin to destination by governorate
- (The movement of IDPs less than one thousand is not reflected on the map)
- Numbers are rounded to thousands

2,875,345*
Total number of IDP arrivals

2,975
Communities received IDP
Contamination and IDP figures

IDP Movements (k. thousand)

Conflict Incidents*

- 3000 – 9000
- 1000 – 3000
- 500 – 1000
- 100 – 500
- <100

*Individual reports of airstrikes, heavy weapons fire, and IEDs or other explosive hazards.

Source: Clash Database (Jan 2015 – Oct 2017)
Explosive Hazards in Syria: Issues and Challenges

Explosive hazards pose a serious threat to IDPs during flight, displacement, or when trying to return home or settle elsewhere.

Conflict and explosive incidents as a major cause of displacement.

Explosive hazards:
- **Cause** debilitating injuries and death to civilians
- **Limit** safe access to services
- **Impede** the delivery of humanitarian aid
- **Endanger** the movement and lives of displaced persons, host communities, and humanitarian actors.

6.1 M people internally displaced by violence

8.2 M people now live in areas affected by hostilities and explosive incidents

Limited access for humanitarian mine action
Core Principles Guiding Returns in Syria

SSG Dec 2017 “Core principles on voluntary return as a durable solution for IDPs in Syria”

- Right to freedom of movement, choice of place of residence, and Do-No-Harm principles
- All returns must be voluntary, safe, informed, and dignified.
- Appropriate levels of services and adequate assistance are maintained in IDP sites until conditions are conducive for returns.

Multiple humanitarian components are needed to enable the safe, dignified return of civilians: Shelter; Food, Security, and Livelihoods, Health, Housing, Land and Property, and Protection.

The overall conditions for safe, dignified and sustainable IDP return are not yet in place in many areas of Syria due to:
- Ongoing conflict
- High levels of new displacement
- High levels of explosive hazard contamination in key infrastructure, agricultural land, and residential areas
- Infrastructure damage or destruction and lack of adequate accommodation

As such, humanitarian community in Syria does not promote return.
Where conflict has been a major driver for displacement, mine action is a foundational component for the wider humanitarian response:

• Mine Action ensures the physical safety for returns, facilitates meeting conditions for safe and dignified returns, and is an enabler of humanitarian and reconstruction efforts.

Conditions of Physical Safety for Return:

• **Technical explosive hazard survey** implemented to assess contamination and prioritize clearance,
• Main routes and roadways **free of explosive hazards,**
• **Marking of hazards and explosive hazard removal** in areas of potential returns and humanitarian intervention to mitigate threat,

And concurrently;
• **Age and gender tailored risk education** for all humanitarian agencies, potential returnees, and integrated into other sector activities in IDP sites and all communities hosting IDPs.
Response to IDPs – Role of Mine Action in Syria

**Coordination**
Focus on IDPs as a primary vulnerable group in the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan and Humanitarian Needs Overview.

**Risk education**
Key messaging tailored to target IDPs and people voluntarily returning to their areas of origin.

Risk Awareness training provided to humanitarian operators working with IDPs.

**Survey and Marking**
Gathering data on explosive hazards to inform IDPs and humanitarian operations; and marking them to further raise awareness of existing or potential threats.

** Victim Assistance**
IDPs are especially vulnerable to explosive hazards and have higher casualty rates. VA is integrated into RE and Survey efforts to ensure that IDPs are referred to Health facilities.

**Clearance**
Limited in scope by access restrictions but prioritized to ensure the safety of IDPs and host communities.
Coordination

Mine Action Area of Responsibility activated under the Syria Response and a core component of the Humanitarian Response Plan

27 partners in the Mine Action Sub-Cluster

• Ensure mine action participates in coordinated multi-sectoral responses to the most pressing needs.

• Integrate mine action within the wider humanitarian response.

• Technical advice and map products to all humanitarian, partners working within the WoS architecture on the explosive hazard threat.

• Advocate for increased access for Mine Action actors and increased language within the 2018 HRP.
RISK EDUCATION


Critical activity to mitigating the impact of explosive hazards

Tailored messaging for IDPs and people voluntarily returning to their areas of origin.

Integration of risk education in the activities and deliverables of other humanitarian sectors.

Returns to unsafe locations actively discouraged during risk education sessions.

2.1 M people reached with risk education across Syria
SURVEY AND MARKING

175 Communities surveyed

Survey and marking provides immediate benefit to communities because they can provide awareness on explosive hazard threats and hazardous areas can be cordoned off.

Data collection supports the prioritization of mine action activities to respond to areas and communities most in need.
Victim Assistance

Mine Action provides support for survivors of explosive incidents and their families through:

- Referral system to medical facilities
- Provision of prosthetics and orthotics
- Rehabilitation
- Psycho-social support
- Vocational training for people with disabilities
- Socio-economic support

Victim assistance is currently severely underfunded and under-implemented in Syria in relation to the need and must be expanded in coordination with the Health Cluster.

After returning to their village and accidently setting off an explosive hazard in their kitchen, the interviewee was severely injured and his mother lost her leg.

“I have not recovered since, and I am a father of four. I cannot cover my family’s expenses because I cannot work and my situation is getting worse day by day”

UNMAS funded community liaison teams in Idleb, 2017
Clearance of explosive hazards was not included in the narrative of the 2017 HRP, but OCHA are currently negotiating its inclusion as a humanitarian activity for 2018.

Clearance activities are occurring in some parts of Syria where access is possible – in North West, South and North East Syria.

Challenges for clearance:

• Lack of access for equipment and training
• Shrinking operational space in Non-Government areas
• Sheer scale of the contamination vs current capacity
• Complex explosive hazard picture – including IEDs
Lessons from Ar-Raqqa

In former ISIS-held areas, IEDs have extensively been placed to purposefully and indiscriminately target and kill civilians.

Early returns to unsafe areas where conditions for safe, dignified returns were not and have not yet been met.

Needs:

• Further risk education
• Comprehensive technical survey in urban environments
• Survey and clearance prioritized for residential areas and private homes
• Further integration of mine action within humanitarian activities and reconstruction efforts

50 blast related civilian injuries and deaths reported per week in Ar-Raqqa.
Syria Mine Action Appeal for 2018

20 Mine action projects submitted to the 2018 HRP

Funds Received: $12,035,558.50

Funds Requested: $38,285,722.50
Challenges to face in 2018

- Restricted access to affected areas for technical personnel and equipment
- Shrinking humanitarian space in non-government held areas
- Inclusion of expanded Mine Action Language within 2018 HRP
- Increased Humanitarian Mine Action Support from Damascus urgently needed
- Funding for mine action activities
Conclusions

• IDPs have specific vulnerabilities and are considered a key vulnerable group within the humanitarian response

• Mine Action is core to the safety of IDPs in Syria, both during displacement and as a tool to enable safe and dignified returns and other durable solutions to displacement.

• Political, access and security challenges are limiting the full scope of mine action activities in Syria

• Further funding to conduct implementable activities is needed

• Political will and support to expand the reach of humanitarian mine action actors in Syria is crucial

• The explosive hazard threat in Syria will take years to combat

• Investment now will save lives and help define the solution to our collective objective: to reduce the impact of explosive hazards on the people of Syria.