

## UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION

Myanmar is heavily affected by explosive ordnance as a result of decades-old conflicts between the Tatmadaw (army) and numerous non-state armed groups (NSAGs) affiliated with ethnic minorities. Since the military coup in February 2021 violence has sharply escalated in geographic scope and intensity accompanied by extensive government air strikes and including some use of cluster munitions. The extent of contamination from cluster munition remnants (CMR) is not known but is not thought to be substantial.

Among specific incidents, human rights and news organisations documented Myanmar Air Force use of cluster munitions in attacks on Mindat township in the western Chin State in July 2022<sup>1</sup> and a year later in July 2023.<sup>2</sup> Amnesty International also documented an attack on Namkham township in northern Shan state in December 2023 using bombs that it said were most likely cluster munitions. Photographs of the device's remnants matched those of cluster munitions used in previous Myanmar air force attacks.<sup>3</sup>

UNICEF expressed concern in 2019 about reports of killing of children in Rakhine State as a result of targeting and crossfire, including casualties from cluster munitions, but provided no details.<sup>4</sup> Myanmar Air Force attacks employing cluster munitions have been documented since 2022 in Chin, Karenni (Kayah), Karen (Kayin), and Shan states.<sup>5</sup> The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar said photographic and video evidence suggested continued use of cluster munitions in areas inhabited by civilians.<sup>6</sup>

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) said it had received extensive reports of use of cluster munitions in the central Sagaing region and Chin State but access constraints had prevented a clear determination of the device types employed. Analysis of available photographic evidence suggested Myanmar air force had used an improvised cluster munition dispenser made in Myanmar with steel from Thailand that released 12 submunitions.<sup>7</sup>

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

It is not known whether any CMR were destroyed during survey or clearance operations in Myanmar in 2023.

Due to the ongoing conflict and current situation in Myanmar, the information available on the other aspects of the national mine action programme is extremely limited.

<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International, "Deadly Cargo", 22 November 2022.

<sup>2</sup> "Air strikes by Military Council with bombs and cluster munitions", Burma News International (BNI), 11 July 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International, "Myanmar military should be investigated for war crimes in response to 'Operation 1027'", 21 December 2023.

<sup>4</sup> "UNICEF Myanmar calls for the urgent protection of children in Rakhine State as schools reopen soon", UNICEF website, 28 May 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor Briefing Paper, "Cluster Munition Production & Use in Myanmar/Burma", August 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Report to the UN Human Rights Council of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Thomas H. Andrews, 14 March 2024.

<sup>7</sup> Email from Camille Marie-Regnault, Country Director, Mines Advisory Group, 14 May 2024.