

## KEY DATA

### NO APMBC ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE:

State not party to the APMBC

### AP MINE CONTAMINATION:

Unknown but heavy

### LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS

Release of AP mined area	Release in 2024 (km <sup>2</sup> )	Release in 2023 (km <sup>2</sup> )
Clearance	Unknown	Unknown
Technical Survey	0	0
Non-Technical Survey	0	0
 Destruction of AP mines during clearance, survey, and spot tasks	 2024	 2023
AP Mines destroyed	Unknown	Unknown

### MAIN AP MINE SURVEY AND CLEARANCE OPERATORS IN 2024:

- Unknown

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

All parties to Myanmar's civil war are reported to be using anti-personnel (AP) mines, some conventional and many of an improvised nature. The Tatmadaw (Myanmar Army) is reported to have emplaced a dense defensive mine belt around Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine state. After a threefold increase in 2023, the United Nations (UN) recorded a further rise in explosive ordnance casualties in 2024.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Myanmar's armed forces and non-State armed groups should halt all use of AP mines, including mines of an improvised nature.
- Myanmar should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Relevant authorities in Myanmar should permit humanitarian mine action organisations to undertake surveys to identify and mark mined areas using conventional marking systems, particularly in areas expected to receive internally displaced persons (IDPs).
- Mine action NGOs and their implementing partners should develop standards for implementing community-based assessments and non-technical survey (NTS).

# AP MINE SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

## MANAGEMENT

- Department of Rehabilitation (DoR)

## NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Tatmadaw (Army)
- Unspecified ethnic armed entities/non-State armed groups
- Unspecified NGOs

## INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
- DanChurchAid (DCA)
- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Humanity & Inclusion (HI)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

## OTHER ACTORS

- UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)

## UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Myanmar is heavily mine-affected as a result of conflicts between the Tatmadaw (Myanmar army) and numerous non-State armed groups (NSAGs) affiliated with ethnic minorities. The conflicts started after the nation's independence in 1948. AP mines, including those of an improvised nature, as well as other improvised explosive devices (IEDs) continue to be laid by both government forces and NSAGs.<sup>1</sup> Mine use has reportedly accelerated since the military's February 2021 coup and the escalating conflict it has ignited across the country.<sup>2</sup>

The UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar reported in September 2019 that parties to the conflict, including the Tatmadaw, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the Restoration Council of Shan state (RCSS, formerly referred to as the Shan State Army South (SSA-S), and the Shan State Progressive Party (SSPP, formerly referred to as the Shan State Army North (SSA-N)), all continued to emplace landmines and IEDs.<sup>3</sup> Intensifying conflict since then has seen mines and improvised mines widely used by other ethnic armed organisations and Popular Defence Forces. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) recorded a total of 1,082 civilian casualties from explosive ordnance in 2024, up from 1,052 the previous year. Actual casualties are believed to be higher.<sup>4</sup>

There is no accurate estimate of the extent of mine contamination. Before the coup, available data showed that nine of Myanmar's fourteen states and regions were

contaminated with mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW).<sup>5</sup> The UN believes that Myanmar has the highest number of mine/ERW casualties in the world.<sup>6</sup> UNICEF reported mine incidents in Naypyidaw in June 2024.<sup>7</sup>

Mine contamination was previously concentrated in the states bordering Bangladesh, China, and Thailand. UNICEF monitoring of mine and ERW incidents found that most casualties in 2024 occurred in the eastern Shan state (24% of all casualties); the central Sagaing region (which before the coup was largely peaceful), and the western state of Rakhine. Other states and regions experiencing mine/ERW casualties in 2024 included Ayeyarwady, Bago, Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Magway, Mandalay, Mon, Naypyidaw, Tanintharyi, and Yangon.<sup>8</sup> Among recent developments, the Tatmadaw was reported in 2025 to have emplaced a massive defensive mine belt around Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine state, and an area of strategic Chinese Belt & Road Initiative investment that is heavily contested by the Arakan Army.<sup>9</sup>

A 7.7 magnitude earthquake on 28 March 2025 centred near Sagaing, close to Myanmar's second city of Mandalay, added further complexity to understanding and dealing with explosive ordnance contamination causing displacement of mines, destroying or moving signs and markers indicating the presence of explosive items and posing risks to first responders and recovery programmes of explosive items buried in rubble.<sup>10</sup>

1 Amnesty International, "Myanmar: Military's use of banned landmines in Kayah state amounts to war crimes", 20 July 2022; and "Myanmar: In reverse: Deteriorating Human Rights Situation, Report, January–February 2021, p. 8.

2 "As Myanmar's army faces setbacks, it is stepping up attacks on civilians, a UN expert warns", *Associated Press*, 20 March 2024; UNICEF, "Three-fold increase in civilian casualties caused by landmines and unexploded ordnance in Myanmar's expanding conflict", 4 April 2024; Karen Human Rights Group, "Danger beneath our feet: Briefing Paper", 22 December 2023; see also Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Myanmar Emergency Update: Key displacement figures", 6 March 2023; and R. Ayisi, "Children pay a heavy price as more landmines are laid", UNICEF, 4 April 2023.

3 "Report of the Detailed Findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar", UN doc. A/HRC/42/CRP.5, 16 September 2019, pp. 155–58.

4 UNICEF, Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1, 2025.

5 Landmine Monitor, Myanmar/Burma, Mine Ban Policy, Last updated 12 November 2019, at: <https://bit.ly/2Trv0m>.

6 Statement of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Tom Andrews, to the UN Human Rights Council, 19 March 2025; see also UNICEF, "Six things to watch in Myanmar in 2025," 5 February 2025, at: <https://bit.ly/4189pv1>.

7 UNICEF, Myanmar Landmine/ERW Incident Information 2024 (Q2).

8 UNICEF, Myanmar Landmine and Explosive Ordnance Incident Information (2024).

9 Interview with international humanitarian organisation, 15 May 2025.

10 Email from Aleksandra Minkiewicz, Country Director, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), 16 July 2025.

## PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Myanmar does not have a structured mine action programme. Tentative steps over several years towards setting up a national mine action authority (NMAA) ended with the military coup in 2021. The State Administration Council established by the Tatmadaw to lead the government has not set up a mechanism for managing or coordinating mine action and focused on military campaigns marked by intensifying air strikes and sharply increased explosive ordnance contamination.<sup>11</sup>

The operating context for humanitarian demining organisations—as for humanitarian and civil society organisations in general—has become increasingly challenging. Myanmar informed the Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC in November 2020 that it had set up a Mine Action Working Group in May 2020 as “the first step towards formulating a National Strategy and Plan of Action for mine clearance”.<sup>12</sup> A Department of Rehabilitation created in 2018 gradually took over responsibility for overseeing

mine action and took steps towards setting up a NMAA but momentum was lost with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and government elections in November 2020.<sup>13</sup> No concrete results emerged by the time the Tatmadaw took over the government in February 2021. Since then, operators have followed a policy of non-engagement with the Department of Rehabilitation.<sup>14</sup>

A national Mine Risk Working Group (MRWG) first set up in 2012 has not formally convened since February 2021. A Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR) which was set up in 2022 under the Global Protection Cluster comprising UN agencies, international organisations, and NGOs meets monthly, providing a platform for coordinating and sharing information between demining organisations on security, access, and programme content. It is supported by five subnational AoRs – for the north-west, the north-east, the south-west, the south-east, and Rakhine state.<sup>15</sup>

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Myanmar does not have a centralised mine action information management database. Data collection and information management were included as one of six main priorities of the 2018–19 MRWG strategic plan.<sup>16</sup> It was hoped that a national database would be set up once a National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) was established,<sup>17</sup> but that process stalled after the February 2021 coup.

The MA AoR set up by the UN ranked improving information management—and specifically creating a comprehensive mine victim information system—as a top objective. UNICEF

continues to collect victim data from open sources which it releases quarterly, but the number of victims is believed to significantly exceed that recorded in available data.<sup>18</sup>

In 2021, DanChurchAid (DCA) had a project with a component related to information management which sought to build capacity of partners to gather, input, manage, and analyse data, and included plans to introduce and train them in the use of Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core. The project was delayed as a result of the coup.<sup>19</sup>

## PLANNING AND TASKING

In the absence of an NMAA, Myanmar has not formulated national or state-level plans for mine action. Humanitarian demining organisations are not permitted to conduct survey or clearance, restricting operations to supporting community-level assessments designed to identify the location of explosive ordnance and delivery of risk education.<sup>20</sup>

The MA AoR strategic plan for 2025–26 set out general objectives, including expanding risk education, enhancing the coverage and effectiveness of mine action, and ensuring access for victims to health care and support. It calls for increasing the number of local mine action organisations and providing them with training. It also called for systematic surveys to map explosive contamination and an information

11 “Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar, Report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights”, UN doc. A/HRC/57/56, 4 September 2024, pp. 4–5; Myanmar Protection Cluster Strategy 2024–2025, Global Protection Cluster, undated, pp. 2–3; and N. Gilten, “Myanmar: at least 43 killed and 50 injured by junta air strike in Rakhine”, Action on Armed Violence, 10 January 2025.

12 Statement of Myanmar, 18th Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC, Geneva 16–20 November 2020.

13 Email from Hilde Jørgensen, Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA), 27 May 2021.

14 Email from Matthew Walsh, Head of Humanitarian Response and Mine Action, DanChurchAid (DCA), 22 April 2021.

15 Interview with an international humanitarian organisation, 15 May 2025; MA AoR Strategy 2025–26, Global Protection Cluster, undated.

16 Email from Matthew Walsh, DCA, 22 April 2021.

17 Emails from Bekim Shala, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), 13 April 2020; Fabrice Vandepitte, Humanity & Inclusion (HI), 8 May 2020; Kyaw Lin Htut, NPA, 3 April 2020; and Liam Harvey, DRC, 22 May 2020; and Matthew Walsh, DCA, 22 April 2021.

18 Email from Kim Warren, MA AoR, 11 August 2022; and Zoom interview, 12 August 2022.

19 Email from Matthew Walsh, DCA, 22 April 2021.

20 Online interviews with operators, 15 May and 15 July 2025.

management department to be established with a centralised database accessible to all mine action stakeholders.<sup>21</sup> Among the challenges addressed by AoR participants is ensuring the consistency and quality of risk education messaging.<sup>22</sup>

Operators are not tasked by any central authority but liaise with local actors and communities in their operating areas to identify tasks.<sup>23</sup> Priorities are shaped by factors including the location of armed clashes and population displacements as well as results of community survey.<sup>24</sup>

## LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

### STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Historically, Myanmar has not developed national standards and therefore operators have followed the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and their own standard operating procedures (SOPs). Operators are not permitted to conduct technical survey, clearance, or explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), so the focus of the mine action sector is on developing standards for permitted activities.

Prior to the February 2021 military coup, tentative steps to develop national standards saw the drafting of a first national standard on marking, which was approved by the government in January 2020. An NTS Working Group also

worked on a standard for NTS in 2020, led by the Mine Action Advisor from the New Zealand Embassy,<sup>25</sup> but the group had not finalised and approved the standard by the February 2021 coup that suspended discussions on national standards.

The civilian-led government in office in 2018 agreed that physical marking (with warning signs) and fencing should be included as part of NTS.<sup>26</sup> Circumstances prevailing after the coup, including intensifying conflict, the Junta's crackdown on civil society and humanitarian programmes, and increased use of mines by parties to the conflict, halted the development of humanitarian mine action.

### OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Until 2023, five international demining organisations—DCA, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), The HALO Trust (HALO), Mines Advisory Group (MAG), and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)—had offices in Yangon and some provincial locations. Deteriorating conditions, ranging from widening conflict, administrative obstacles and denial of movement authorisations, most organisations now work remotely supporting local partners remotely.

In 2024, two demining organisations (HALO and MAG) were represented in Myanmar. Other organisations remotely supported partners in the country. HALO supported delivery of risk education in parts of the north, in western Rakhine state, and in the east, including from April in Mon State. MAG had 20 national staff and 36 volunteers supporting risk education and planned to expand, partly in response to the greater needs created by Myanmar's March 2025 earthquake.<sup>27</sup>

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Myanmar has no programme of systematic survey or clearance. Even before the February 2021 military coup, demining operators were not permitted by either the government or ethnic minority authorities to conduct technical survey, clearance, or EOD spot tasks. Since 2021, international operators have largely limited their activities to community-based assessments of contamination and risk education.<sup>28</sup>

21 MA AoR Strategy 2025–26, Global Protection Cluster, undated, pp. 6–9.

22 Online interviews with operators, 15 May 2025 and 15 July 2025.

23 Email from Julie Utting, HALO, 10 May 2022.

24 Email from Sofia Raineri, MAG, 8 August 2022.

25 Email from Liam Harvey, DRC, 21 April 2021.

26 Emails from Liam Harvey, DRC, 21 April 2021; and Matthew Walsh, DCA, 22 April 2021.

27 Aleksandra Minkiewicz, MAG, 16 July 2025.

28 Email from Camille Marie-Regnault, MAG, 15 May 2023.