

Landmine Monitor

Myanmar/Burma Country Report

December 2017



Includes Cluster Munition Monitor report 2017

LANDMINE & CLUSTER MUNITION

MONITOR

About this report

Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor provides research for the *International Campaign to Ban Landmines* and the *Cluster Munition Coalition*. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) formed in 1992 to rid the world of the scourge of the anti-personnel landmine. The ICBL is a network of over 1,300 non-governmental organizations in 70 countries, and received the Nobel Peace Award in 1997. The Cluster Munition Coalition is an international civil society campaign working to eradicate cluster munitions, prevent further casualties from these weapons and put an end for all time to the suffering they cause.

Landmine Monitor documents the implementation of the 1997 Ottawa Convention, or the Mine Ban Treaty. **Cluster Munition Monitor** documents the implementation of the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions. Both Landmine Monitor and Cluster Munition Monitor assess the efforts of the international community to resolve the crisis caused by these weapons.

As of 1 December 2017, 162 countries, over 80% of the world's governments, have ratified, or acceded to, the Mine Ban Treaty. 119 countries have signed, ratified, or acceded to, the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Myanmar/Burma has not yet joined either convention.

Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor is not a technical treaty verifications system or a formal inspection regime. It is an effort by ordinary people to hold governments accountable to non-use of antipersonnel landmines and cluster munitions. It is meant to compliment the reporting requirements of countries which have ratified the treaties. Our reports seek to make transparent the state of the landmine and cluster munition crisis, and government policies or practices, in non-signatory states.

Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor aims to promote and facilitate discussion within human society in order to reach the goal of a landmine and cluster munition free world.

Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor works in good faith to provide factual information about the issue it is monitoring in order to benefit the world as a whole. It is critical, but constructive in its documentation and analysis.

Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor Myanmar/Burma researcher for 2017 was Yeshua Moser-Puangsuwan. The Monitor is grateful to all the organizations and individuals who provide information for this report each year, and acknowledge their contribution within the report. We encourage contributions which provide accurate documentation on these issues. Please contact us at: burma@icblcmc.org. If you have corrections regarding the contents of this report please write: monitor@icblcmc.org

Cover Photo: Two PMN type antipersonnel landmines unearthed by refugees on the Bangladesh-Myanmar border. Photo taken from cellphone video by refugee, and includes images of victims of the mines, and dangerous mine removal by untrained local people trying to prohibit more casualties. Footage provided to the Monitor by Frontier Magazine. Used with permission.

Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor Myanmar/Burma
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1997 Nobel Peace Co-Laureate

Policy

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has not acceded to the Mine Ban Treaty.¹

Myanmar has periodically expressed support for the Mine Ban Treaty, but has not taken steps to accede to it.

New use of antipersonnel landmines by Myanmar government forces in August–September 2017 along the border with Bangladesh, causing mine casualties among fleeing Rohingya civilians, has been widely condemned. The use of this prohibited weapon raises the question of Myanmar’s sincerity in expressing its intent to join the Mine Ban Treaty. (*See Use section below*)

When Landmine Monitor visited Myanmar’s new capital Naypyitaw in June 2017, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence officials informed its representative that the government is actively considering accession to the Mine Ban Treaty and said that both ministries have undertaken detailed actions towards accession. The officials could not provide an estimated timeline for when Myanmar would accede to the Mine Ban Treaty.²

Myanmar did not make any public statements regarding the Mine Ban Treaty in 2016 or the first half of 2017.

Previously, in July 2012, Minister of Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin stated that Myanmar was considering accession to the Mine Ban Treaty.³

In June 2016, a senior leader of the National League for Democracy, the party in the civil government, told the Monitor that the party’s policy supports a ban on landmines and that that promise will be kept.⁴ At meetings of the Union Peace Conference (UPC) in July 2017, several speakers called for an end to the use of landmines and for landmine clearance.⁵

A March 2017 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar proposed that Myanmar join the Mine Ban Treaty by October 2017.⁶

Myanmar abstained from voting on UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 71/34 on 5 December 2016, which called for universalization of the Mine Ban Treaty. Since 1997, Myanmar has abstained on every annual UNGA resolution supporting the Mine Ban Treaty.⁷

Myanmar has participated as an observer in several Mine Ban Treaty Meetings of States Parties, most recently in 2013.⁸ It has never attended a Mine Ban Treaty Review Conference.⁹

¹ Formerly called the Union of Myanmar. The military junta ruling the country changed the name from Burma to Myanmar. Many ethnic groups in the country, and a number of states, still refer to the country as Burma. Internal state and division names are given in their common form, or with the ruling Union Solidarity Development Party (USDP) designation in parentheses, for example, Karenni (Kayah) state. Since 2009, the Monitor has used township names according to the UN Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU). For more information see the [MINU website](#).

² Landmine Monitor meetings with Kyaw Moe Tun, Director of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Naypyitaw, 26 June 2017; and with Lt. Col. Myo Win Aung, Judge Advocate General’s office, Ministry of Defence, Naypyitaw, 26 June 2017.

³ U Wunna Maung Lwin made this statement to the President of the Mine Ban Treaty’s Eleventh Meeting of States Parties, Prak Sokhonn of Cambodia, during the Association of South-East Asian States (ASEAN) Foreign Ministers Meeting in Phnom Penh in July 2012. Press Release, “[Myanmar seriously considering landmine treaty as part of its state reforms](#),” Mine Ban Treaty Implementation Support Unit (ISU), 12 July 2012.

⁴ Monitor interview with National League for Democracy Party Patron Thura U Tin Oo, NLD HQ, Yangon, 6 June 2016.

⁵ See, for example, “[Discussion on the peace: union peace conference—21st century panglong continues](#),” *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 2 September 2016, p. 2; “[The Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong](#),” *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 4 September 2016, p. 4; and Saw Nyunt Thaug, “[Panglong fails to address need for landmine clearance agreements](#),” *Karen News*, 30 May 2017.

⁶ Human Rights Council, “[Situation of human rights in Myanmar](#),” A/HRC/34/67, 14 March 2017, p. 23, Annex, para. xii.

⁷ In 1996, Myanmar voted in favour of a UNGA resolution calling on governments to pursue an international agreement banning antipersonnel landmines.

⁸ Myanmar also attended Mine Ban Treaty Meetings of States Parties in 2012, 2011, 2006, and 2003.

⁹ Myanmar did not participate in the Mine Ban Treaty’s Third Review Conference in Maputo, Mozambique, in 2014, the Second Review Conference in Cartagena, Colombia, in 2009, or the First Review Conference in Nairobi,

Myanmar has also attended the Mine Ban Treaty's intersessional meetings in Geneva in 2013, 2014, and most recently in May 2016, where its representative spoke at an ICBL side event on landmines in Myanmar.

Activities commemorating the International Day of Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action on 4 April 2017 were held in Naypyitaw, Yangon, and Hpaan in Kayin state.¹⁰ That month the Myanmar Police Force and Border Guard Bangladesh concluded an agreement to remove landmines, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs) from along the border of the two countries.¹¹

Since 2003, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) has undertaken a national initiative focused on ending landmine use in Myanmar and encouraging the country to accede to the Mine Ban Treaty.¹² In December 2016, Mine-Free Myanmar held a press conference in Yangon to launch the *Landmine Monitor 2016* country report on Myanmar and distributed 1,200 Burmese-language translations of the report through UN agencies and NGOs.¹³ In June 2017, Landmine Monitor and the UN produced an infographic on the impact of landmine use in Myanmar.¹⁴

Production, stockpiling, and transfer

Myanmar Defense Products Industries (Ka Pa Sa), a state enterprise at Ngyaung Chay Dauk in western Pegu (Bago) division, has produced fragmentation and blast antipersonnel mines, including ones with low metal content.¹⁵ In September 2016, government authorities in Myanmar confirmed that landmines are still produced in the country, but provided no information on the types or quantities of mines produced.¹⁶

As the Monitor has previously reported, in addition to domestic production, Myanmar has obtained and used antipersonnel mines manufactured in China, India, Italy, Russia and the former Soviet Union, and the United States (US), as well as some mines whose origin has not been identified.¹⁷

There is no publicly available information on the types or quantities of antipersonnel mines in government possession, however Myanmar is believed to stockpile a significant number of landmines.

Myanmar is not known to have exported or antipersonnel mines.¹⁸

Production, transfer, and stockpiling by non-state armed groups

Various non-state armed groups (NSAGs) in Myanmar have produced antipersonnel mines, including the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), Democratic Karen Benevolence Army (DKBA), Karenni Army, and United Wa State Army.

Kenya, in 2004.

¹⁰ See, Nay Rai and Zeyar Tun, "[US\\$6 million given for clearing land mines in four states and regions](#)," *Myanmar Eleven*, 5 April 2017; "[Mine squads wait to clear landmine at ceasefire regions](#)," *Myanmar Eleven*, 6 April 2017; and "[Kayin State officials hope to accelerate landmine clearance](#)," *Karen Information Center*, 6 April 2017.

¹¹ "[BD, Myanmar agrees to remove land mines from border](#)," *The Financial Express* (Dhaka), 6 April 2017.

¹² Initially known as "Halt Mine Use in Burma/Myanmar," the initiative is now called "[Mine-Free Myanmar](#)."

¹³ "[Press Conference in Yangon disseminates 2016 country report of Landmine Monitor](#)," 27 December 2016. Audio recording of the press conference and questions available with the link.

¹⁴ "[Townships with Known Landmine Contamination \(2016\) and Casualties in Myanmar \(as of Dec 2015\)](#)," United Nations Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU), 15 June 2017. Infographic provides a 10-year overview of data from the Landmine Monitor (2007–2016). MIMU reported to the Landmine Monitor that the landmine infographic has been one of their most requested products.

¹⁵ Myanmar produces the MM1, which is modeled on the Chinese Type-59 stake-mounted fragmentation mine; the MM2, which is similar to the Chinese Type-58 blast mine; a Claymore-type directional fragmentation mine; and a copy of the US M14 plastic mine.

¹⁶ Htoo Thant, "[Tatmadaw insists landmine use kept within reasonable minimum](#)," *Myanmar Times*, 13 September 2016.

¹⁷ See, *Landmine Monitor Report 2004*, p. 938. The mines include: Chinese Types-58, -59, -69, -72A; Soviet POMZ-2, POMZ-2M, PMN-1, PMD-6; US M14, M16A1, M18; and Indian/British LTM-73, LTM-76.

¹⁸ In 1999, Myanmar's representative to the UN stated that the country was supportive of banning exports of antipersonnel mines, however, no formal moratorium or export ban has been proclaimed. See, *Landmine Monitor Report 2000*, p. 469.

NSAGs have manufactured blast and fragmentation mines from locally available materials. These are sometimes referred to as IEDs. Victim-activated IEDs are considered to be improvised antipersonnel mines and prohibited by the Mine Ban Treaty. In 2006, a foreign technician reportedly trained KNLA units to manufacture and deploy bounding antipersonnel mines.¹⁹ Some NSAGs have also made Claymore-type directional fragmentation mines and antivehicle mines with antihandling devices.

Armed groups in Myanmar have also acquired mines by removing mines laid by others, seizing government (Tatmadaw) stocks, and by obtaining them from the clandestine arms market.²⁰

Government forces continue to report the seizure of antipersonnel landmines and other weapons from NSAGs in Myanmar. In December 2016, government forces seized various types of improvised landmines in Mongko township of Shan state, but it was unclear to which group they belonged.²¹ In February 2016, government forces seized eight POMZ antipersonnel landmines from armed groups in the Kokang region.²²

Use

Since the publication of its first annual report in 1999, Landmine Monitor has consistently documented the use of antipersonnel mines by government forces and NSAGs. This mine use has continued during this reporting period, which covers calendar year 2016 and the first three-quarters of 2017.

New use by government forces

Reports indicate that Myanmar government forces, known as Tatmadaw, used antipersonnel landmines in Myanmar during 2016 and 2017.

In September 2017, various organizations independently published evidence drawn from sources that include firsthand eyewitness accounts and photographic evidence that showed how in previous weeks Myanmar government forces had used antipersonnel landmines along the country's border with Bangladesh. The mine use began in late August, when Myanmar government forces began a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya population, causing the flight of more than 420,000 people to neighboring Bangladesh. It is unclear if this mine use has continued as parts of the border area remain inaccessible.²³

According to Landmine Monitor, local researchers interviewing and assisting displaced Rohingya civilians as they crossed into Bangladesh on 28 August saw an army truck arrive on the Myanmar side of the border from which they witnessed Myanmar government soldiers unloading three crates.²⁴ They said the soldiers removed antipersonnel landmines from the crates and placed them in the ground, later returning at night to place more mines.

¹⁹ According to a US cable released by Wikileaks in August 2011, in December 2006 during an interview with US Embassy officials a Karen politician indicated that “in 2005 a foreign expert trained the KNLA on how to manufacture ‘Bouncing Betty’ anti-personnel mines, packed with ball bearings. The KNLA claims all of its brigades now know how to produce this ‘new’ landmine. KNLA officers claim they use them only in forward areas to slow the Burmese Army’s advance into traditional KNU territory. The source said the new mines are much more lethal than earlier KNLA mines that tended to maim rather than kill.” “[06RANGOON1767, BURMA REGIME AND KAREN MISTRUST CONTINUES](#),” US Department of State cable dated 4 December 2006, released by Wikileaks on 30 August 2011.

²⁰ *Landmine Monitor Report 2009* identified the presence of US-made M26 bounding antipersonnel mines in Myanmar but could not identify the source or the user. In 2010, a confidential source indicated that the KNLA had received many M26 mines from the Royal Thai Army in the past, before Thailand joined the Mine Ban Treaty. See, *Landmine Monitor Report 2009*, p. 1013.

²¹ “[Landmines, ammunition seized](#),” *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 26 December 2016.

²² “Drugs, weapons and ammunition seized from Kokang renegade groups,” *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 27 February 2016.

²³ HRW, “[Live updates: Rohingya Crisis](#),” ongoing blog (undated).

²⁴ Email and phone interviews with researchers working with an NGO who wished to remain anonymous, 17 September 2017.

According to the researchers, the mines were emplaced within Taung Pyo Let Yar village tract of Maungdaw township, adjacent to border pillar No. 31 in Bangladesh, an area that demarcates the beginning of the land border between Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Researchers told Landmine Monitor that the landmine use continued over the following days, progressing northeast along the border within the townships of Mee Taik, Nga Yant Chaung, Hlaing Thi, Bauk Shu Hpweit, and In Tu Lar. This stretch lies between the two main land crossing routes between Myanmar (Maungdaw township) and Bangladesh (Bandarban district).

On 5 September, *Reuters* reported that two Bangladeshi sources witnessed three to four groups working near the border's barbed wire fence "putting something into the ground," which *Reuters* subsequently determined to be landmines.²⁵ Also on 5 September, two children from Myanmar who had fled to Bangladesh were injured after reportedly attempting to destroy landmines they discovered on the border.²⁶

In September 2017, the Bangladeshi government protested this new use of landmines on the border by Myanmar government security forces.²⁷ Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina accused Myanmar of laying landmines along the border to prevent Rohingya from fleeing violence.²⁸ The Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, Shahidul Haque, stated in an interview that the Bangladeshi government had "reliable information" that Myanmar military forces had "laid land mines across a section of the Bangladesh-Myanmar border."²⁹

Amnesty International reported on 9 September that it had spoken to several eyewitnesses who said they saw Myanmar military forces, including military personnel and the Border Guard Police, using antipersonnel mines near Myanmar's border with Bangladesh.³⁰

Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported on 23 September that Myanmar military personnel had planted antipersonnel mines in northern Rakhine state prior to their attacks on predominantly Rohingya villages.³¹ Rohingya refugees from Buthidaung and Rathedaung township in Rakhine state told HRW that they saw the Myanmar military laying antipersonnel mines on roads as the military entered and attacked villagers. Two other Rohingya refugees told HRW that men in apparent Myanmar military uniforms were seen in the northern part of Taung Pyo Let Yar performing some activity on the ground. One said that on 4 September he observed several soldiers from a patrol stop at least twice, kneel down on the ground, dig into the ground with a knife, and place a dark item into the earth.

Amnesty International and HRW reviewed photos of the mines used along the Bangladesh border that clearly show PMN-1 type antipersonnel mines lying in the ground. Neither organization could determine if these mines were originally manufactured in the Soviet Union or copies of that mine made by Myanmar (named MM-2) or by China (named Type 58).

There is evidence that Myanmar military forces used landmines along the Bangladesh border earlier in 2017. In July 2017, three farmers were killed and one injured by a mine allegedly laid by the Myanmar military at Pyanug Paik village in Maungdaw township.³² In May, Amnesty

²⁵ Krishna N Das, "[Exclusive: Bangladesh protests over Myanmar's suspected landmine use near border](#)," *Reuters*, 5 September 2017; and Ananya Roy, "[Bangladesh accuses Myanmar government of laying landmines near border](#)," *International Business Times*, 6 September 2017.

²⁶ S. Bashu Das, "[2 Rohingya children injured in landmine blast near Naikhongchhari border](#)," *Dhaka Tribune*, 5 September 2017.

²⁷ Krishna N Das, "[Exclusive: Bangladesh protests over Myanmar's suspected landmine use near border](#)," *Reuters*, 5 September 2017.

²⁸ Statement of Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh to the opening of the 72nd session of the UNGA, New York, 21 September 2017.

²⁹ Annie Gowen, "[Rohingya refugees crossing into Bangladesh face another threat: Land mines](#)," *Washington Post*, 13 September 2017.

³⁰ Amnesty International, "[Myanmar Army landmines along border with Bangladesh pose deadly threat to fleeing Rohingya](#)," 9 September 2017.

³¹ HRW, "[Landmines Deadly for Fleeing Rohingya: Military Lays Internationally Banned Weapon](#)," 23 September 2017.

³² "[Rohingya farmers victims of fatal injury in land mine explosion in Northern Maungdaw](#)," *Arakan TV*, 15 July 2017. Photographic evidence included with reports, however independent verification was not possible. See also, Thar Shwe Oo, "[Landmine kills three in Maungdaw](#)," *Eleven Myanmar*, 16 July 2017; and Moe Myint, "[Landmine](#)

International reported on Myanmar military forces use of antipersonnel landmines in areas of Kachin and northern Shan states.³³ In April 2017, the Border Guard Forces under the command of the Myanmar Army warned locals from using the road from Meh Th’Waw to Myaing Gyi Ngu because the edges of the road had been mined.³⁴ In April 2016, four Rohingya from Maungdaw township were injured and one killed by a landmine after they were hired by the Myanmar Army to work on the border fence near border pillar 61. The injured were treated Buthidang Hospital.³⁵

Past use of antipersonnel mines along this border has been documented in previous Landmine Monitor reports.³⁶

There were other reports of landmine use by Myanmar military forces in 2016–2017:

- In April 2017, mines laid outside a Myanmar Army camp in Mansi township of Kachin state killed a girl and wounded two other girls.³⁷
- In February 2017, the Myanmar Army Light Infantry Brigade 11 reportedly laid mines near She Shang village in Muse township in Shan state, resulting in a civilian casualty, while landmines laid outside a Myanmar Army base in Monggu in Muse township also caused child casualties.³⁸
- In January 2017, the Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) claimed to have recovered two landmines, among other weapons, from the Myanmar Army after fighting with Myanmar Army Light Infantry Brigade 567 and 203 troops between Pan-ku and Pan-lon villages of Kutkai township.³⁹
- In September 2016, mines were laid in Hlaingbwe township during fighting between the military and an ethnic armed group, but it is unclear which side had laid mines.⁴⁰
- In May 2016, local villagers in Namsan Yang in Kachin state allege that the Myanmar Army laid landmines in the area, resulting in one casualty.⁴¹
- In May 2016, Myanmar refugees from Laogai and Konkyan townships, displaced to China by armed conflict between the army and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, reported that they had been blocked from returning to Myanmar by mines laid along the border by the Myanmar Army.⁴²

[Explosion Kills Teenager, Two Men in Rakhine](#),” *The Irrawaddy*, 16 July 2017.

³³ Amnesty International, “[All the Civilians Suffer: Conflict, Displacement and abuse in Northern Myanmar](#),” 14 June 2017, p. 32.

³⁴ Unpublished information provided to the Landmine Monitor by the Karen Human Rights Group, 6 September 2017.

³⁵ “[Border Landmine Kills and Injures Rohingyas](#),” *Kaladan Press*, 19 April 2016.

³⁶ A massive outflow of Rohingya people, nearly a quarter of a million, from Northern Rakhine State (NRS) occurred in 1991 and 1992. Following widespread condemnation of Burma at that time by the Muslim world, Myanmar’s armed forces emplaced a significant minefield along the entire length of its border with Bangladesh. Bangladesh officials and humanitarian workers stated at the time that Burma’s boundary minefield was laid for the purpose of deterring further flight out of the country by the Rohingya, and also to harass cross border movement by several Rohingya and Rakhine armed groups active at that time. See, *Landmine Monitor 2000*, [Burma Country Report](#). In the early 90s, several armed groups existed in that border area, including the Rohingya Solidarity Organization, the Arakan Rohingya National Organization, the Arakan Army, and the Arakan Liberation Army. Further mine laying occurred in later years. See, *Landmine Monitor Myanmar/Burma Ban Policy profiles 2013, 2014, and 2015*.

³⁷ “[Child killed, two girls injured in Kachin landmine blast](#),” *Kachin News Group*, 26 April 2017.

³⁸ “[Kachin and Northern Shan Update: Civilians Caught in the Middle](#),” *Free Burma Ranger*, 3 April 2017.

³⁹ “[TNLA sitrep](#),” Burma Death Watch blog, 25 January 2017. Conflict news aggregator emailed to the Monitor 30 April 2017. Blog has since been ceased and can now be found on [facebook](#).

⁴⁰ “[Landmine kills Kayin village head](#),” *Eleven Myanmar*, 17 September 2016.

⁴¹ Kachinland News Updates, 6 May 2016.

⁴² Shan Human Rights Foundation, “[Burma Army expansion, abuses along Kokang-China border creating scores of ‘ghost villages’](#),” News Updates, 12 May 2016. It is uncertain when the alleged mines were laid, but apparently sometime following their flight in February 2015.

Mine casualties during forced labor for the military used to be a commonly reported occurrence, but less so in recent years.⁴³

Use by non-state armed groups

At least 17 NSAGs have used antipersonnel mines in Myanmar since 1999. Some of these groups are no longer in existence or no longer use mines. However, there were several reports that various NSAGs used antipersonnel landmines in Myanmar during the reporting period, mostly in the states of Kachin, Kayin, Rakhine, and Shan:

- In August 2017, Myanmar state media reported difficulties in delivering aid in North Rakhine state due to landmines laid on roads and bridges.⁴⁴
- In June 2017, a local administrator in Tarlaw in Myitkyina township in Kachin state said the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) had laid landmines near the town that caused civilian casualties and the loss of livestock.⁴⁵
- In January 2017, the Democratic Karen Benevolence Army (DKBA)-Kyaw Htet faction acknowledged that it had used mines in the Mae Tha Wor area of Hlaingbwe township in Kayin state, wounding two army soldiers.⁴⁶
- In December 2016, the TNLA accused the RCSS of laying landmines prior to armed conflict between the groups in Thi-baw township, Shan state.⁴⁷ The same month, the Thai Army found a bag of improvised landmines on the border adjacent to an area controlled by the DKBA, and suspected that the mines belonged to that group.⁴⁸
- In November 2016, government forces apprehended two KIA members that the government said confessed to laying landmines near Labunkadaung village in Hpakan township. When the army took the KIA soldiers to the mined area a mine exploded, killing both KIA soldiers.⁴⁹
- In September and October 2016, a faction of the DKBA, reportedly laid mines during fighting in Hlaingbwe township.⁵⁰ In October 2016, the state-owned *Myawady Daily* reported that the Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army (SSPP/SSA) used mines in Mawmae village in Monghsu township in Shan state, resulting in civilian casualties.
- In July 2016, civilian porters for the RCSS/SSA alleged that TNLA laid mines that killed and injured members of their group.⁵¹ Several news reports noted that mines were discovered

⁴³ On 12 October 2016, government troops led by Captain Than Htaik Kyaw from Division 77 seized villagers of Mowlon village in Manton township, for forced labor. Four of these villagers were wounded by landmines as they attempted to escape. See, PSLF/TNLA, "SitRep." October 2016. Conflict news aggregator emailed to the Monitor, 30 April 2017. The injured were between the ages of 26 and 40. The wounded were reportedly sent to Manton Hospital. According a villager, Captain Than Htaik Kyaw told all male villagers to come for porter service. He threatened to burn down the entire village if they did not. They set out in the morning and the battle took place at about 1530 hours.

⁴⁴ See, "[There are difficulties for providing daily food and healthcare to villagers due to landmines planted on roads and bridges: Dr Win Myat Aye](#)," *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 30 August 2017. Photographs of explosive devices, said to be "landmines," provided by the President's Office do not make clear the method of activation. See, "[Extremist terrorists attack on police outposts in N-Rakhine](#)," *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 26 August 2017, photo, p. 3.

⁴⁵ Tun Lin Aung, "[Landmines scare Myitkyina farmers](#)," *Eleven Myanmar*, 2 June 2017.

⁴⁶ Ye Mon and Ei Ei Thu, "[Kayin landmine scare sparks tourism fears](#)," *Myanmar Times*, 6 January 2017.

⁴⁷ "[TNLA sitrep](#)," Burma Death Watch blog, 25 January 2017. Conflict news aggregator emailed to the Monitor 30 April 2017. Blog has since been ceased and can now be found on [facebook](#).

⁴⁸ Unpublished information provided to the Landmine Monitor by the Karen Human Rights Group, 6 September 2017.

⁴⁹ "[Landmine explosion kills two Kia troops](#)," *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 29 November 2016.

⁵⁰ Unpublished information provided to the Landmine Monitor by the Karen Human Rights Group, 6 September 2017. This DKBA faction has been referred to as DKBA #907, Kloh Htoo Baw (Golden Drum), and Brigade #5. Each of these terms refers to different configurations of DKBA units commanded by the brigadier general commonly known as Na Kha Mway, whose real name is Saw Lah Pwe. See also, "[Landmine kills Kayin village head](#)," *Eleven Myanmar*, 17 September 2016.

⁵¹ Thu Thu Aung, "[One dead, seven hurt in Shan State landmine blast](#)," *Myanmar Times*, 7 July 2016.

after armed conflict in 2016 between the TNLA, RCSS/SSA, SSPP/SSA, and government forces, but did not detail who was responsible for the mine use.⁵²

- In April 2016, a villager in Mone town in Bago region alleged that the KNLA laid mines around a logging area.⁵³

- In January 2016, a resident of Mone town said he had received verbal warnings and seen signs erected by the KNLA warning against entering an area near a KNLA gold mining area.⁵⁴ That same month, the Myanmar Army suffered a casualty to a mine allegedly laid by the KIA.⁵⁵

- In February 2016, an internally displaced person in Ndup Yang camp attempted to return to Hpon Kyan village to farm, but died after stepping on a landmine. The KIA had reportedly given verbal warning and placed a warning sign not to enter the area.⁵⁶ That same month, residents of Namkham town in Shan state alleged that the SSA-South (or RCSS) had laid landmines in their village.⁵⁷

- In January 2016, residents of Kutkai township in Shan state accused the KIA and the TNLA of planting landmines in the town.⁵⁸

- A local activist living in a village tract on the border of Kachin state and Sagaing said that mine use by the KIA has caused civilian casualties and displaced more than 100 farmers.⁵⁹

In the past, a few armed groups, and former armed groups, unilaterally renounced the use of antipersonnel mines by signing the Deed of Commitment administered by the Swiss NGO Geneva Call.⁶⁰ The Palaung State Liberation Front (PSLF) signed the Deed of Commitment in 2007 and its armed wing, the TNLA, has previously promised to refrain from mine use.⁶¹ In a written response to Amnesty International in June 2017, the TNLA denied recent allegations of mine use by its combatants, stating that the TNLA has not used landmines since signing the Deed of Commitment.⁶²

In 2011, the government of Myanmar announced its intent to conclude peace agreements with NSAGs. Since then, the need to end landmine use and ensure clearance has been mentioned in multiple meetings held by the government with almost every ethnic armed group in the country.⁶³

On 15 October 2015, eight ethnic armed groups signed a National Ceasefire Agreement committing to “end planting of mines” and “cooperate on the process of clearing all landmines.”⁶⁴ All of these groups—two factions of the Karen National Union, the Restoration Council for Shan State, the Arakan Liberation Party, the Pao National Liberation Organization,

⁵² See for example, [“Villager and daughter injured by landmine in Hsipaw,”](#) *Burma News International*, 22 July 2016.

⁵³ Karen Human Rights Group, [“Nyaunglebin Situation Update: Mone Township, April to May 2016,”](#) August 2016.

⁵⁴ Unpublished information provided to the Landmine Monitor by the Karen Human Rights Group, 5 September 2016.

⁵⁵ Free Burma Rangers Report, [“Burma Army Launches Attacks Across Kachin State,”](#) 29 April 2016.

⁵⁶ Information from UNHCR/UNICEF unified casualty database, emailed to Landmine Monitor, 10 May 2017.

⁵⁷ Maung Zaw, [“RCSS faces landmine claims,”](#) *Myanmar Times*, 18 February 2016.

⁵⁸ [“Local residents call for removal of landmines in Kutkai,”](#) *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 3 March 2016; and Nyein Nyein, [“Ethnic Civilians Demand End to Army Abuses in Shan State,”](#) *Irrawaddy*, 2 March 2016.

⁵⁹ [“Kachin landmines kill 11 last year,”](#) *Eleven Myanmar*, 31 January 2016.

⁶⁰ In the past, a few armed groups, and former armed groups, unilaterally renounced the use of antipersonnel mines by signing the Deed of Commitment administered by the Swiss NGO Geneva Call. The Chin National Front/Chin National Army renounced use in July 2006. The Arakan Rohingya National Organization and the National United Party of Arakan, both now militarily defunct, renounced use in October 2003. The Lahu Democratic Front (LDF), Palaung State Liberation Army, and PPLO/Pa’O Peoples Liberation Army (PPLA) renounced use in April 2007. In a June 2010 report, Geneva Call noted that LDF and the PPLA had disbanded.

⁶¹ Since 2014, Geneva Call has been pursuing inquiries about allegations of mine use made against the TNLA. See, Geneva Call, [“Burma/Myanmar: Geneva Call urges an end to mine use in northern Shan State,”](#) 14 July 2016.

⁶² Amnesty International, [“All the Civilians Suffer: Conflict, Displacement and abuse in Northern Myanmar,”](#) 14 June 2017, p. 44.

⁶³ U Wunna Maung Lwin made these statements to the President of the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties, Prak Sokhonn, on the margins of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Phnom Penh, in July 2012. Press Release, [“Myanmar seriously considering landmine treaty as part of its state reforms,”](#) Mine Ban Treaty ISU, 12 July 2012.

the All Burma Students Democratic Front, the Chin National Front, and the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army—had previously used landmines.⁶⁵ Several major armed groups remain outside the agreement.

No armed group unilaterally renounced the use of antipersonnel mines during peace talks in 2016 and the first half of 2017.⁶⁶

Responses to new use of landmines in Myanmar

The government of Myanmar has not substantively responded to the multiple reports that its military forces used antipersonnel landmines on the Bangladesh border in August–September 2017, but various officials have blamed NSAGs for this new use. Rakhine State Security and Border Affairs Minister Col. Phone Tint denied Myanmar government mine use, stating “There’s no landmine planted by the military in the area. The terrorists planted the landmines. The military will never do that.” Zaw Htay, a spokesman for *de facto* leader Aung San Suu Kyi, suggested that Rohingya militants [were responsible](#) for the new mine use.⁶⁷ Myanmar officials accused the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) of using improvised landmines against infrastructure and security forces. A local Tatamadaw officer told an international delegation of journalists visiting Rakhine state on 6 September that Myanmar military forces have not laid landmines along the Bangladesh border.⁶⁸

Myanmar government forces have admitted to using antipersonnel landmines elsewhere in the country. In June 2017, a Ministry of Defense official told Landmine Monitor that the military does not use landmines near highly populated areas.⁶⁹ In September 2016, Myanmar’s Deputy Minister of Defense Major General Myint Nwe informed the Myanmar parliament that the army continues to use landmines in internal armed conflict.⁷⁰ He stated that Tatmadaw used landmines to protect state-owned factories, bridges, power towers, and its outposts in military operations.⁷¹

⁶⁴ [The Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement between the government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Ethnic Armed Organizations \(NCA\)](#). The NCA, signed by some armed groups on October 2015, states under Chapter 3: Ceasefire related matters, point 5 (a) it states that, “Both parties agree to end the following activities:… planting of landmines…” Section 5 (e) states, “In line with progress on the peace process, both parties agree to cooperate on the process of clearing all landmines planted by both sides’ armies. Joint efforts on landmine clearing projects shall be carried out in close consultation with different levels of the government.” For more analysis see, Mine Free Myanmar, [“The Mine Ban and the National ceasefire process,”](#) 11 August 2015.

⁶⁵ [“Peace Deal Signed,”](#) *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 16 October 2015, p. 1. Each of the political organizations that signed the ceasefire agreement has an armed wing. The armed wing of the KNU factions is the KNLA, the RCSS is the political organization of the Shan State Army South, the ALP has its Arakan Liberation Army, the PNLO has its Pao National Liberation Army, and the CNF has the Chin National Army. The other two groups have the same name for their armed organizations.

⁶⁶ In the past, a few armed groups, and former armed groups, unilaterally renounced the use of antipersonnel mines by signing the Deed of Commitment administered by Geneva Call. The Chin National Front/Chin National Army renounced use in July 2006. The Arakan Rohingya National Organization and the National United Party of Arakan, both now militarily defunct, renounced use in October 2003. The Lahu Democratic Front (LDF), Palaung State Liberation Army, and PPLO/Pa’O Peoples Liberation Army (PPLA) renounced use in April 2007. In a June 2010 report, Geneva Call noted that LDF and the PPLA had disbanded.

⁶⁷ Krishna N Das, [“Exclusive: Bangladesh protests over Myanmar’s suspected landmine use near border,”](#) *Reuters*, 5 September 2017.

⁶⁸ *Channel News Asia* quoted Rakhine State Security and Border Affairs Minister Col. Phone Tint as denying allegations that government forces were laying landmines, and blamed ARSA: “There’s no landmine planted by the military in the area. The terrorists planted the landmines. The military will never do that.” May Wong, [“Walking amid burning homes and sounds of distant gunfire: Ground zero in Maungdaw, Rakhine,”](#) *Channel News Asia*, 6 September 2017.

⁶⁹ Landmine Monitor meeting with Min Htike Hein, Assistant Permanent Secretary to the Minister for Defence, Naypyitaw, 26 June 2017.

⁷⁰ Htoo Thant, [“Tatmadaw insists landmine use kept within reasonable minimum,”](#) *Myanmar Times*, 13 September 2016. Also, [“Pyithu Hluttaw hears answers to questions by relevant ministries,”](#) *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 13 September 2016. The Deputy Minister detailed that “Myanmar Tatmadaw has used landmines to protect state-owned factories, bridges and power towers from subversive activities and its outposts in military operations, said the deputy minister, adding that landmines were removed when the military left the outposts. Warning signs have been set up where landmines were planted, and where security is not available - Civilian victims of landmines in the military operational areas have been provided with health care by Tatmadaw medical teams.”

At the same session, a Member of Parliament from Shan state stated that “it can’t be denied that non-state armed groups are also using landmines...particularly since 2012.”⁷²

The new use of landmines in Myanmar in August–September 2017 has attracted widespread condemnation.

At the UN on 21 September, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, condemned the new mine use on the country’s border with Myanmar. She stated, “We are horrified to see that the Myanmar authorities are laying landmines along their stretch of the border to prevent the Rohingya from returning to Myanmar.”⁷³ Bangladesh is a State Party to the Mine Ban Treaty and there is no evidence to indicate that it has laid antipersonnel mines on its side of the border.

The ICBL has strongly condemned the new use of landmines in Myanmar in 2017, stating, “There can be no justification for using such indiscriminate weapons, which are harming and killing civilians fleeing their homes.”⁷⁴

At the Human Rights Council on 11 September 2017, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein stated that he was “appalled by reports that the Myanmar authorities have now begun to lay landmines along the border with Bangladesh.”⁷⁵ In March 2017, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar called on all parties to “immediately cease using landmines.”⁷⁶

On 22 September, the President of Mine Ban Treaty’s Sixteenth Meeting of States Parties, Ambassador Thomas Hajnoczi of Austria, expressed grave concern at the new use of landmines in Myanmar and said he had “asked the government of Myanmar to clarify the situation and consider an independent fact-finding mission with international participation into this matter.”⁷⁷

Calls to end mine use and clear landmines have become more common in Myanmar in recent years. In January 2017, the Lower House Member of Parliament for Manton township issued a statement condemning the use of landmines in armed conflict between the army and NSAGs in Shan state.⁷⁸ In February 2016, residents of the town of Kutkai in northern Shan state reportedly sent a letter to the Tatmadaw and NSAGs the KIA and TNLA demanding the clearance of landmines used in the township in January 2016.⁷⁹ In September 2016, more than 1,000 residents of the town of Sinbo in Myitkyina township in Kachin state reportedly took to the streets to protest deaths from landmines in the area.⁸⁰

⁷¹ “[Pyithu Hluttaw hears answers to questions by relevant ministries](#),” *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 13 September 2016.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ UN video, “[Bangladesh - Prime Minister Addresses General Debate, 72nd Session](#),” 21 September 2017.

⁷⁴ ICBL, “[Nobel Peace Prize-winning global campaign strongly condemns new use of landmines by Myanmar’s Military Forces](#),” Press Release, 22 September 2017.

⁷⁵ Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, “[Darker and more dangerous: High Commissioner updates the Human Rights Council on human rights issues in 40 countries](#),” Human Rights Council, Geneva, 11 September 2017.

⁷⁶ Human Rights Council, “[Situation of human rights in Myanmar](#),” A/HRC/34/67, 14 March 2017, p. 12, para. 63.

⁷⁷ Mine Ban Treaty, “[Landmine treaty President calls for fact-finding mission in Myanmar](#),” Press Release, 22 September 2017.

⁷⁸ Nyein Zaw Lin, “[MP denounces collateral damage and landmine danger](#),” *Myanmar Times*, 25 January 2017.

⁷⁹ “[Local residents call for removal of landmines in Kutkai](#),” *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 3 March 2016; and Nyein Nyein, “[Ethnic Civilians Demand End to Army Abuses in Shan State](#),” *Irrawaddy*, 2 March 2016.

⁸⁰ “[Sinbo residents protest landmines as death toll rises](#),” *Eleven Myanmar*, 27 September 2016.

Casualties Overview

All known casualties by end 2016	3,991 (488 killed; 3,385 injured; 118 unknown) since 1999
Casualties in 2016	298 (2015:159)
2016 casualties by outcome	69 killed; 229 injured (2015: 31 killed; 128 injured)
2016 casualties by device type	222 antipersonnel mines/improvised mine (victim-activated improvised explosive devices, IEDs); 3 antivehicle mine; 1 explosive remnants of war (ERW); 72 undifferentiated mines/ERW

In 2016, there were at least 298 mine/ERW casualties in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar based on information provided by NGOs, UN agencies, the ICRC, and other organizations, as well as, by state and independent media reports. The majority of casualties (156) were male, at least six casualties were female, two were girls, and two boys. The vast majority of casualties were civilian, just 15 casualties were recorded as having been involved in military activities in 2016.⁸¹

The 2016 casualty total for Myanmar marks a significant increase from the 159 mine/ERW casualties recorded for Myanmar in 2015. It is more similar, however, to the 251 mine/ERW casualties recorded for 2014. It is a significantly higher number than the 161 recorded by the Mine Risk Working Group for Myanmar for 2016.⁸²

The actual total number of casualties is expected to be much higher. Although the presence of a number of mine action actors and coverage of victim assistance programs increased, no national systematic collection of casualty data occurred. Due to the lack of an official data collection mechanism, the absence of any basic reporting format or means of sharing data, and the varying sources of annual data available to the Monitor, reporting is believed not to reflect the full extent of mine/ERW incidents and casualties in the country.⁸³

It was reported that the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement stated that landmines had injured or killed 298 people in Myanmar in 2015 and 2016, and that there was one landmine casualty “every three days.” The reported also cited the ministry as saying, “One in three landmine victims is a child, and one in every four is killed.”⁸⁴

In August 2016, the Ministry of Health and Sports released data on landmine fatalities for the first time. The ministry reported that 101 people had died as a result of antipersonnel landmine incidents in Myanmar during the 18-month period from January 2015 to June 2016. Of that total, 74 deaths due to landmines occurred in Kachin state, 14 in Shan state, 11 in Chin state, and one each in Kayah and Rakhine states. It appears that this number includes only civilian fatalities and not military and other combatants killed. The Ministry of Health and Sports did not provide data on the number of people injured.⁸⁵

As in all past years, the available data contained insufficient detail to distinguish trends or to ensure that the data for all casualties was correctly recorded by the source. The actual number of casualties is likely to be much higher.

The total number of casualties in Myanmar is unknown. The Monitor reported annual casualty figures of 3,991 (488 killed; 3,385 injured; 118 unknown) between 1999 and the end of

⁸¹ Unless noted otherwise, Monitor casualty data for 2016 is from a combined dataset of published and unpublished sources. For 110 casualties the age group and sex was not reported.

⁸² “Mine Action in Myanmar,” Mine Risk Working Group, PowerPoint presentation, 27 April 2017, provided to the Monitor by UNICEF, 17 May 2017. The presentation reports in 2016, there were 161 casualties of which 41 died and 120 injured, that one out of three were children, and that one out of four died. The Landmine Monitor includes UNICEF and UNHCR data and has been cross checked for duplicate reporting.

⁸³ See also, Roger Fasth and Pascal Simon (Danish Demining Group), “[Mine Action in Myanmar](#),” *The Journal of Mine and ERW Action*, Issue 19.2, July 2015.

⁸⁴ “[On Mine Awareness Day, Myanmar govt allocates \\$6m for landmine clearance](#),” *Coconuts Yangon*, 5 April 2017.

⁸⁵ “[Over 100 landmine fatalities since January 2015](#),” *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 19 August 2016.

2016. Past reporting by the Monitor has indicated that there are a significant number of military casualties, but such military records remain unavailable to the public.⁸⁶

Victim Assistance

At least 3,385 survivors have been identified by the Monitor since 1999 in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. However, this is believed to be only a small fraction of the actual figure, which was estimated by the NGO Mine Free Myanmar to exceed 40,000.⁸⁷

Victim assistance since 2015

A Technical Group on Victim Assistance, a sub-working group of the national Mine Risk Education Working Group facilitated by Handicap International (HI), was established in September 2014. The Technical Group on Victim Assistance, was tasked to define the victim assistance component of the 2015–2016 Mine Risk Strategic National Plan. Since its establishment, it also monitors implementation of victim assistance and shares information on victim assistance issues. It also creates linkages between the Mine Risk Education Working Group and disability-rights actors.⁸⁸

In 2015, there was a continued increase in rehabilitation and economic inclusion services available to survivors within Myanmar. However, it has been estimated that Myanmar requires approximately 300 prosthetic technicians to meet the needs of amputees, but has less than 30.⁸⁹

In 2015, a representative of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement reported that Myanmar was taking an integrated approach towards victim assistance, based on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), in its national disability law and national social protection strategy.⁹⁰

In early 2015, Danish Deming Group/Danish Refugee Council (DDG/DRC) conducted a “Landmine and Explosive Remnants of War Victims Survey” in Kachin and Kayah states that incorporated needs assessment and evaluation of opportunities for possible future activities. The DDG/DRC found through survey interviews with survivors and victim assistance organizations that the greatest needs included psychosocial support, livelihood assistance, and socio-economic reintegration. They also found that victim assistance needed to be integrated into the larger disability and rehabilitation sector, which also needed to be made sustainable.⁹¹

The first state-wide disability survey in Kayah state, conducted by World Education in 2015, determined that almost 9% of persons with physical disabilities had acquired impairments due to landmine injuries.⁹² HI reported that mine/explosive remnants of war (ERW) survivors in Kawkaik district in Karen state “may account for one third of persons with physical disabilities; in some villages this percentage is as high as 75%.”⁹³

⁸⁶ See the 2009 edition of the Monitor report for Myanmar available on the [Monitor website](#). Unprecedented levels of information on military casualties were received in 2008 from the State Peace and Development Council; 508 military casualties were identified. Information from this source has not been made available any other year.

⁸⁷ Email from Yeshua Moser-Puangsuan, Mine Free Myanmar, 26 September 2014.

⁸⁸ Ibid.; and from Yann Faivre, Country Director, HI - Myanmar, 27 October 2015; and “HI Victim Assistance Initiative in Myanmar,” presentation by Yann Faivre, HI, in Bangkok, 15 June 2015.

⁸⁹ Interview with Didier Reck, Physiotherapist, Physical Rehabilitation Programme Manager, ICRC, Yangon, 7 June 2016; and “[Estimate based on Guidelines for Training Personnel in Developing Countries for Prosthetics and Orthotics Services](#),” International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics/World Health Organization, 2005, pp. 17–18.

⁹⁰ [Presentation by Dr San San Aye](#), Deputy Director General of the Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement, Meeting of National Mine Action Programme Directors, Geneva, 17 February 2015.

⁹¹ Roger Fasth and Pascal Simon, DDG, “[Mine Action in Myanmar](#),” *The Journal of Mine and ERW Action*, Issue 19.2, July 2015.

⁹² World Education, “Victim Assistance and Disability Project in Kayah State Disability Survey: Summary of Main Findings,” undated; and emails from Khim Mar Aung, Director, World Education, 12 June 2016; and from Mar Lar Soe, World Education, 12 June 2016. The survey covered 36% of the villages in the seven townships of Kayah state. Landmine-caused disability was 4% when measured against all causes of disability.

⁹³ HI, “[Land Mine Victim Assistance Centre in Kayin](#),” in *Thailand-Myanmar Cross Border Bulletin*, 8th Edition, October 2016, p. 8.

In 2014, the Ministry of Health and Sports and the ICRC agreed to build two new physical rehabilitation centers in Kyaing Tong in Shan state, and Myitkyina in Kachin state.⁹⁴

More actors were involved in delivering, planning, and organizing all aspects of victim assistance.

Assessing victim assistance needs

HI and the Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association (MPHA) Victim Assistance Center in the Kyaukkyi township of the Bago region surveyed mine survivors and other persons with disabilities. Survey results were to be used for interventions and evidence-based strategy. During needs assessments, referrals were made to appropriate and accessible services for mine survivors and other persons with disabilities. HI also developed directories of services in Mandalay, Ayeryawerdy, and East Bago (Kyaukkyi township).⁹⁵

World Education worked to improve data collection and information sharing about persons with disabilities in Kayah state.⁹⁶

In June 2017, a national consultation on disability statistics and Incheon Strategy indicators was organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. The consultation reviewed the national statistical system to assess progress, challenges, and gaps in disability policy and data collection.⁹⁷

The MPHA reported that a significant number of military personnel, armed group members, and civilians had acquired impairments and lived with disability due to conflict. Of approximately 12,000 amputees in Myanmar, two-thirds were believed to be landmine survivors.⁹⁸

Victim assistance coordination

The national Technical Group on Victim Assistance operates under the umbrella of the National Mine Risk Working Group (MRWG) and is chaired by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement. HI coordinated the national Technical Group on Victim Assistance, gathering national and international actors. The Technical Group on Victim Assistance continued to meet regularly in 2016.⁹⁹ Members of the group include international and national NGOs, the UN, the ICRC, and the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS), as well as international cooperation agencies. In 2017, HI created a Disability Inclusion Unit (DIU) for awareness-raising and mainstreaming of disability issues.¹⁰⁰

The Ministry of Health and Sports is responsible for the medical rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, and the Department of Social Welfare, within the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement is responsible for vocational training, education, and social protection strategies. During 2016, the government recognized the Myanmar Federation of Persons with Disabilities (MFPD; formerly called the Myanmar Council of Persons with Disabilities, MCPD) to serve as an umbrella group for disabled people's organizations (DPOs). The National Committee on Disability, the ministerial committee mandated with promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, did not meet in 2016.¹⁰¹

⁹⁴ ICRC, "[Annual Report 2014](#)," Geneva, 2015, p. 288.

⁹⁵ HI, "[Federal Information – Country Card: Myanmar](#)," 2016; response to Monitor questionnaire by Marie Mabrut, Operations Coordinator, HI - Myanmar, 13 October 2016; HI, "Victim Assistance in Disability Program in Kyaukkyi Township of Eastern Bago Region, Lessons Learnt Paper," April 2016; and interview with Yann Faivre, HI, Yangon, 9 June 2016.

⁹⁶ World Education, "[Victim Assistance and Disability Program in Kayah State](#)," undated.

⁹⁷ "[National stakeholder consultation on disability data collection in Myanmar 27-29 June 2017](#)," Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

⁹⁸ United States (US) Department of State, "[2016 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Burma](#)," Washington, DC, March 2017.

⁹⁹ Response to Monitor questionnaire by Marie Mabrut, HI - Myanmar, 13 October 2016.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.; email from Yann Faivre, HI, 27 October 2015; and "HI Victim Assistance Initiative in Myanmar," presentation by Yann Faivre, HI, in Bangkok, 15 June 2015.

¹⁰¹ US Department of State, "[2016 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Burma](#)," Washington, DC, March 2017; "Myanmar National Strategy for the Development of Persons with Disabilities 2016–2025," Unofficial

The MCPD (later the MFPD) was formed in December 2014. A council member stated that the group would “work to adopt a law to protect disabled people and to implement the CRPD.”¹⁰² World Learning provided technical support for local disability activists to organize the first Myanmar National Disability Conference, in order to elect representatives to a new 21-member MCPD. It continued to develop organizational and technical capacity in the MCPD with international disability law experts from the United States International Council on Disabilities and support from USAID.¹⁰³

Myanmar has a National Strategy for the Development of Persons with Disabilities (2016–2025).¹⁰⁴

A consultation Workshop on the National Strategic Disability Plan sponsored by the MCPD was held from 29 August to 2 September 2016. The Department of Social Welfare along with disability self-advocates participated in the development of implementation activities for 2017–2022 based on the objectives of the Myanmar National Strategy for Development of Persons with Disability (2016–2025), including a budget for the Myanmar fiscal year 2017–2018.¹⁰⁵

Several institutions were involved in the coordination of physical rehabilitation; the Ministry of Health and Sports, the Ministry of Defense, and the MRCS played roles in the provision of mobility aids, especially prosthetics and orthotics.¹⁰⁶

Although there is no direct representation of mine/ERW victims, survivors belong to broader DPOs that participate in various coordination roles.

Service accessibility and effectiveness

Victim assistance activities

Name of organization	Type of organization	Type of activity
Ministry of Health and Sports	Government	Prosthetic centers and two orthopedic hospitals
Ministry of Defense	Government	Prosthetics provided through three centers
Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement	Government	Socio-economic and rehabilitation services; vocational training school for adults with disabilities, including mine/ERW survivors
Shwe Min Tha Foundation	Local NGO	Covered incidental medical care costs, transportation to medical centers, and food distribution
The Back Pack Health Worker Teams (BPHWT)	Local NGO	Mobile emergency medical service in eastern Myanmar
Peace Myanmar Aid Foundation	Local NGO	Mobile prosthetic delivery
Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People	Community-based organization	Prosthetic production at the Kho Kay Prosthetic Clinic, Mutraw, Karen (Kayin) state
Karen Health and Welfare Department (KDHW)	Community-based organization	Provided medical first-aid assistance and amputative surgeries
Karenni Health Workers Organization	Community-based organization	Provided prosthetics in Loikaw, Kayah (Karenni) state
Karuna Mission Social Solidarity (KMSS Network)	National NGO (faith-based)	First aid and immediate assistance
Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association (MPHA)	National DPO	Disability rights advocacy, production of assistive devices; encouraging economic inclusion

translation; ICRC Physical Rehabilitation Programme (PRP), “Annual Report 2013,” Geneva, 2014, p. 52; and Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement, “[Rehabilitation of the Persons with Disabilities](#),” 2012.

¹⁰² “[Disabled Rights Council to be formed in Myanmar](#),” *Myanmar Matters*, 14 December 2014.

¹⁰³ World Learning, “[World Learning’s Commitment to Disability Inclusion, Highlighted programming and resources as of May 2016](#),” 2016.

¹⁰⁴ “Myanmar National Strategy for the Development of Persons with Disabilities 2016–2025,” Unofficial translation.

¹⁰⁵ “[Equal Rights: Advice Sought For Strategy For Dev’t Of PWDs](#),” *MiTV News*, 29 August 2016.

¹⁰⁶ ICRC PRP, “Annual Report 2014,” Geneva, 2015, p. 58.

		through employment
Association for Aid and Relief Japan (AAR Japan)	International NGO	Vocational training; community-based rehabilitation; referral system; survivor rights/advocacy
Exceed Worldwide	International NGO	Operates the prosthetic workshop at the National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH) in Yangon; financially supports Myanmar School of Prosthetics & Orthotics; opened new prosthetic workshop in Mandalay
Leprosy Mission –Myanmar	International NGO	Rehabilitation and prosthetics
DDG/DRC	International NGO	Direct assistance in the form of medical and rehabilitative care and referrals for mine/ERW survivors in Kachin state
HI	International NGO	Community-level data collection, mapping of services and barriers, assessment, referral, psychosocial support, socio-economic inclusion, repairs of mobility devices; coordination of assistance and advocacy on survivors/victims' needs; capacity-building of the MPHA, developing Victim Assistance Centers
World Education	International organization	Physical rehabilitation; economic inclusion; access to medical and vocational funds; coordination of assistance and advocacy on survivors/victims' needs
ICRC/Myanmar Red Cross Society	International/national organization	Support to four rehabilitation centers: one under the MRCS in Hpa-An and three centers under the Ministry of Health and Sports in Mandalay, Myitkyina and Kyaing Tong; prosthetic outreach for remote areas
UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	UN	Discretionary funds for financial assistance to cover medical costs of war victims/landmine survivors and rehabilitation, including transport; economic inclusion through livelihood program

Emergency and continuing medical care

Health in Myanmar has been affected by decades of ethnic conflict, centralized decision-making, and the exodus of qualified health professionals, including qualified physicians, nurses, and community health workers. The availability of medicines, medical equipment, and hospital/clinic beds are inadequate. Hospital facilities are dilapidated and require renovation. The reliability of electricity in health facilities is an ongoing challenge. Those people living in areas of armed conflict and other remote areas often cannot access to healthcare “within a few days’ walk.” Most health workers employed by ethnic and community-based health organizations attend initial training and periodic professional development seminars, with additional clinical supervision at the Mae Tao Clinic or other ethnic health clinics. Medics working in areas with landmines receive more intensive training in trauma management.¹⁰⁷

In response to increased government security interventions against armed elements in Rakhine, the ICRC expanded its support for the healthcare response by reimbursing the health

¹⁰⁷ BPHWT, “[Provision of Primary Healthcare among Internally Displaced Persons and Vulnerable Populations of Burma](#),” January 2016; and “[Burma’s Healthcare System in Critical Condition](#),” *Karen News*, 28 June 2013.

ministry for the cost of each transfer made by the outpatient referral service from northern Maungdaw to nearby hospitals.¹⁰⁸

There were parallel health systems in Myanmar, particularly in conflict-affected areas: centralized state services and local ethnic and community-based health providers.¹⁰⁹

Health Convergence Core Group (HCCG) worked to improve health systems. It is composed of four ethnic health organizations and four community-based health organizations: Burma Medical Association, Back Pack Health Worker Teams, Karen Department of Health and Welfare, Karenni Mobile Health Committee, Mae Tao Clinic, Mon National Health Committee, National Health and Education Committee, and the Shan Health Committee. In March 2016, HCCG held a seminar on Health Reform, Towards a Devolved Health System in Burma, to develop a set of health policy and health system recommendations for the new government of Myanmar and ethnic health organizations.¹¹⁰ No further activities were reported in 2016–2017.

Physical rehabilitation, including prosthetics

As most rehabilitation centers are located in major cities and travel costs are high, persons with disabilities, especially those living in rural areas, often face tremendous difficulties in order to access services.¹¹¹

In 2016, the ICRC continued to support the Hpa-an Orthopaedic Rehabilitation Centre (HORC), run jointly by the Myanmar Red Cross Society and the ICRC, and to support three centers managed by the Ministry of Health, located in Mandalay and Yenanthar, enabling people living in remote areas to have access to services. It also opened the Myitkyina Physical Rehabilitation Center in Kachin state. The ICRC covered transportation and treatment costs for the most vulnerable patients. In 2015, 39% (301 of 764) of prostheses delivered in ICRC-supported workshops were for mine/ERW survivors; this was a decrease in real and percentage terms from previous years (44%, or 351 of 802 in 2015; 49%, or 502 of 1,027 in 2014).¹¹²

The Myitkyina Physical Rehabilitation Center in Kachin state opened in October 2016, it was created through a partnership between the ICRC and the Ministry and Health and Sports. The 60-bed center was expected to serve up to 1,500 patients a year with prostheses, orthoses, and physiotherapy, once it reaches full operational capacity.¹¹³ The Ministry of Health and Sports approved the construction of two new physical rehabilitation centers proposed by the ICRC, one for Myitkyina and another for Kyaing (Eastern Shan state) in 2016. The centers are needed to address the high demand for services in those conflict-affected regions.¹¹⁴

Exceed Worldwide opened a new prosthetic-orthotic center at the Mandalay Orthopaedic Specialist Hospital in January 2017. Jointly established by the Ministry of Health and Sports, with support from Japan, the center planned to offer prosthetic services to people in need in Mandalay and nearby regions and states.¹¹⁵

The MPHA produced prosthetics and assistive mobility devices at a small workshop in its office in Yangon. About a third of MPHA's members are landmine survivors.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁸ ICRC, "Annual Report 2016," Geneva 2017, pp. 328–329.

¹⁰⁹ Health Convergence Core Group, "[Community health: We care for our own](#)," *Myanmar Times*, 29 March 2016; Bill Davis and Kim Jolliffe, "[Achieving Health Equity in Contested Areas of Southeast Myanmar](#)," The Asia Foundation and Myanmar Development Research Institute – Centre for Economic and Social Development, Policy Dialogue Brief Series No. 12, June 2016; and HISGW, "[About Us: Health Convergence Core Group](#)," undated.

¹¹⁰ HCCG "[Statement of Burma Health System Reform Seminar](#)," *Burma Partnership*, 30 March 2016.

¹¹¹ ICRC PRP, "Annual Report 2013," Geneva, 2014, p. 52.

¹¹² The ICRC's mobile repair workshop provided repairs in four townships in Kayin state, three townships in Kayah state, 11 townships in Eastern Bago region, seven townships in Tanintharyi region, and five townships in Mon state. Village volunteer repairmen provided repairs in four townships in Tanintharyi and Eastern Bago regions. Email from Didier Reck, ICRC, 7 June 2016; ICRC, "Annual Report 2016," Geneva, 2017, p. 331; ICRC, "[Annual Report 2015](#)," Geneva, 2016, p. 346; and ICRC, "Annual Report 2014," Geneva, 2015, p. 293.

¹¹³ "[Standing strong: New facility to help Myanmar landmine victims, amputees](#)," *Channel News Asia*, December 2016; and ICRC, "[New centre brings physical rehabilitation services to northern Myanmar](#)," 29 November 2016.

¹¹⁴ ICRC PRP, "Annual Report 2014," Geneva, 2015, p. 58.

¹¹⁵ "[PO Center officially launched in Mandalay](#)," *Yadanabon News*, 18 January 2017.

¹¹⁶ "[Suddenly, there was an explosion](#)," *Frontier Myanmar*, 10 August 2016; and MPHA, "[MPHA Activities](#)," 2015.

HI provided victim assistance in Kayin state and East Bago, including rehabilitation, psychosocial, and livelihoods support. HI and the MPHA jointly created a Victim Assistance Disability Program in the Kyaukkyi township of Bago region. The program established a local Victim Assistance Center, supported by UNICEF, which provided the following activities:

- Information to mine survivors and other persons with disabilities on their rights as promoted by the CRPD and Myanmar’s law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Organization of social gatherings to promote the social participation of survivors and other persons with disabilities;
- Created a service directory to assist in this;
- Provided home-based peer-to-peer psychosocial support through nine trained volunteers;
- Community-based repair of assistive devices, orthosis, and prosthesis through four ICRC-trained volunteers.¹¹⁷

World Education supported a prosthetics workshop providing mine/ERW survivors in Kayin state. In 2015–2016, it ran a Victim Assistance and Disability Program including, capacity-building for local organizations assisting persons with disabilities and landmine survivors, advocacy among service providers for increased inclusion, economic inclusion, access to medical and vocational support funds networking, and coordination with disability actors, including the Department of Social Welfare community-based organizations, DPOs, and other service providers.¹¹⁸

Peace Myanmar Aid Foundation/Humanitarian Mine Action Initiative Myanmar runs a mobile prosthetics workshop in eastern Bago region.¹¹⁹

A free rehabilitation camp, established in February 2017, provided prostheses for 400 amputees, the majority being landmine survivors. Rehabilitative and technical assistance for the camp was provided by Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS, also known as the Jaipur Foot Foundation) with the help of the U Nu Daw Mya Yi Foundation (UNDMYF). The project was supported with a grant from India.¹²⁰

Psychosocial support

A psychosocial program combined with a community-based prosthetics service was launched by HI, MPHA, and the ICRC for survivors in 2015. This joint activity created the first Victim Assistance Center in Myanmar, in Kyaukkyi township, eastern Bago region.¹²¹ As of September 2017, psychosocial support was limited to peer-to-peer counselling through 30 community volunteers—persons with disabilities linked to MPHA Victim Assistance Centers and trained by a psychologist.¹²²

Economic and social inclusion

A lack of understanding about persons with disabilities as well as poor infrastructural accessibility make it difficult for persons with disabilities to attend school or find employment. World Education provided livelihood training and small business start-up kits to landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities in Kayin state.¹²³

¹¹⁷ HI, “[Federal Information – Country Card: Myanmar](#),” 2016; HI, “Victim Assistance in Disability Program in Kyaukkyi Township of Eastern Bago Region, Lessons Learnt Paper,” April 2016; interview with Yann Faivre, HI, Yangon, 9 June 2016; and response to Monitor questionnaire by Marie Mabrut, HI, 13 October 2016.

¹¹⁸ World Education, “[Victim Assistance and Disability Program in Kayah State](#),” undated.

¹¹⁹ James Nickerson, “[The tragedy of landmine warfare in Myanmar](#),” *Al Jazeera*, 30 October 2016; and email from Col. Thant Zin, Director, Peace Myanmar Aid Foundation, 25 September 2014.

¹²⁰ Htike Nanda Win, “[Most disabled lost limbs in land mines](#),” *Myanmar Times*, 17 February 2017.

¹²¹ HI, “[Federal Information – Country Card: Myanmar](#),” 2016; HI, “Victim Assistance in Disability Program in Kyaukkyi Township of Eastern Bago Region, Lessons Learnt Paper,” April 2016; interview with Yann Faivre, HI, Yangon, 9 June 2016; response to Monitor questionnaire by Marie Mabrut, HI, 13 October 2016; and email from Yann Faivre, HI, 29 October 2015.

¹²² HI, “[Consultancy- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support](#),” August 2017.

¹²³ World Education, “[Victim Assistance and Disability Program in Kayah State](#),” undated; and email from Khim Mar Aung, World Education, 12 June 2016.

AAR Japan Vocational Training Center for Persons with Disabilities provides training in tailoring, hairstyling, and computers free-of-charge in Yangon. The center supports graduates to achieve economic independence, gain employment, open their own shops, or become teachers at the center.¹²⁴

The Ministry of Education policy is reported to discriminate against persons with disabilities, on the basis that schools are allowed to refuse to accept an enrolment application for a child with a disability if they feel they cannot support them. The ministry is also reported to discriminate against persons with disabilities in employment advertisements for teaching positions by saying they need not apply. In response to criticism about the practice, a ministry representative was quoted as saying, “we need to appoint those with normal hands and feet to be teachers at basic schools.”¹²⁵

Laws and policies

The National Assembly passed the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in June 2015. The process of drafting by-laws for the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities also started in that month.¹²⁶ The laws prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, hearing, intellectual, and mental disabilities in employment, education, access to healthcare, the judicial system, or in the provision of other state services. It also directs the government to assure that persons with disabilities have easy access to public transportation. In 2016, the government was still in the process of drafting implementation guidelines for the disability law and did not effectively enforce these provisions.¹²⁷ In October 2015, the first meeting for the creation of by-laws took place, with the participation of the Myanmar Federation of Persons with Disabilities (MFPD), also known as the Myanmar Council of Persons with Disabilities (MCPD).¹²⁸ However, in September 2017 it was reported that implementing rules and regulations were yet to be released.¹²⁹

Myanmar adopted and launched a National Social Protection Strategic Plan in December 2014 through the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement to provide an allowance to all persons certified with a disability.¹³⁰

Military veterans with disabilities received benefits on a priority basis, usually a civil service job at equivalent pay. Official assistance to non-military persons with disabilities in principle included two-thirds of pay for up to one year for a temporary disability and a tax-free stipend for permanent disability; however, the government did not provide job protection for private sector workers that became disabled.¹³¹ Veterans’ disability pension rates, although inadequate, were about three-times the level what they were before funding for social programs was increased in 2015. In addition to a K90,000 pension; veterans who lost limbs receive compensation of about K100,000 (US\$80) per month, those who lost vision receive K12,000 per month.¹³²

Injured ranking soldiers, particularly officers, are often employed in military service in administrative positions or other support roles, depending on their level of education and the severity of their disability. There are believed to be dozens of army-built community settlements

¹²⁴ AAR Japan, “[Activities in Myanmar \(Burma\)](#),” undated.

¹²⁵ Thi Kha, “[Disabled pour scorn on discriminatory policy](#),” *Frontier Myanmar*, 28 March 2017.

¹²⁶ The Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2015, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (National Assembly) Law N.30, 4th Waning Day of Nayon 1377 ME, 5 June 2015.

¹²⁷ US Department of State, “[2016 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Burma](#),” Washington, DC, March 2017.

¹²⁸ Email from Yann Faivre, HI, 29 October 2015.

¹²⁹ Htike Nanda Win, “[Disabled people suffer from neglect, despite existing laws](#),” *Myanmar Times*, 13 September 2017.

¹³⁰ Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, “[Myanmar National Social Protection Strategic Plan](#),” December 2014, p. 53. The allowance will not be available until the rights of the persons with disabilities law is enacted and a certification process is established by the government.

¹³¹ Official assistance to nonmilitary persons with disabilities in principle included two-thirds of pay for up to one year for a temporary disability and a tax-free stipend for permanent disability. While the law provides job protection for workers who become disabled, authorities did not implement it.

¹³² Htet Khaung Linn, “[On society’s fringes, disabled Tatmadaw veterans languish in poverty](#),” *Myanmar Now*, 11 October 2016.

where disabled veterans and their families receive free housing. However, ordinary soldiers lacked job opportunities and ways of finding extra income. The free housing was often located in remote areas where there were no jobs, and that lacked basic amenities such as running water and electricity. Many veterans' children are migrant workers in Thailand and provide financial support for the families through remittances.¹³³

Myanmar acceded to the CRPD on 7 December 2011. The convention entered into force for the country on 6 January 2012. The MPHA received a second year of funding to build the capacity of DPOs to monitor and report on CRPD implementation in Myanmar as well as to prepare an alternative (shadow) report for submitting to the CRPD committee.¹³⁴

Victim assistance for Myanmar refugees in Thailand

Landmine survivors from Myanmar may cross the border to Thailand to receive medical care and rehabilitation at Mae Tao Clinic in Mae Sot, or through ICRC referrals to Thai hospitals in public district hospitals in the Thai-Myanmar border provinces and HI services in refugee camps.¹³⁵

Assistance for refugees in Bangladesh

In response to the Rohingya crisis, as of October 2017, HI provides immediate rehabilitation or psychological assistance. In partnership with a local center for disabilities and development, HI operated a fully equipped mobile rehabilitation center to remote areas of Bangladesh for physical therapy and fitting measurements for prosthetics.¹³⁶

Contaminated by: mines, primarily antipersonnel mines (heavy, but extent unknown), and explosive remnants of war (ERW).

Mine Action

Summary

The extent of mine and ERW contamination in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is not known. New contamination was reported in 2017 on the border between northern Rakhine state and Bangladesh. In 2016, non-technical survey operations were approved for the first time. However, operators did not get authorization to conduct marking or clearance.

Recommendation for action

- Myanmar should activate a mine action center to provide an official focal point for mine action, take the lead in gathering data on contamination and victims, and coordinate with stakeholders in developing a response.

Contamination

Myanmar is heavily mine-affected as a result of conflicts started after independence in 1948 between the Tatmadaw (Myanmar's army) and numerous non-state armed groups (NSAGs) affiliated with ethnic minorities. Mined areas are located in areas of Myanmar adjacent to borders with Bangladesh, China, and Thailand, but are a particular threat in northern and eastern parts of the country.

At least 71 townships (out of a total of 325) in 10 states and regions are believed to suffer from some degree of mine contamination, primarily from antipersonnel mines.¹³⁷ In the past few

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Disability Rights Fund, "[Myanmar: Archives](#)," undated; and Disability Rights Fund, "[Our Grantees: Myanmar Physically Handicapped Association](#)," 2016.

¹³⁵ For more information, see ICBL-CMC Country Profiles on Thailand.

¹³⁶ HI, "[Rohingya crisis: Expanding our emergency response](#)," 20 October 2017.

¹³⁷ This reporting period saw the largest increase, compared to previous years, in the number of townships believed to have suspected hazardous areas. In 2009, the Monitor identified 23 townships from available data with suspected contamination in eight states and regions. Increased reports of contamination are a result of increased access to information and an increase in armed conflict in the northern areas. Myanmar is divided into states and regions. States are the "home area" of ethnic groups. Other areas, which are not identified with a specific ethnic group, are administrative regions. The former military junta changed the name from Burma to Myanmar in 1989 and also changed the names of some states. Many ethnic groups within the country still prefer to use the name Burma.

years, contamination has increased in the north. Shan state and Kachin state are considered heavily contaminated. Previously, Karen (Kayin) state and Pegu (Bago) division were among those with the heaviest mine contamination and the highest number of recorded victims. Townships on the Indian border of Chin state and in the Sagaing region also reportedly have suspected hazardous areas (SHAs).¹³⁸

Additional mine use occurred in 2017 when the Tatmadaw reportedly planted antipersonnel mines on the border between northern Rakhine state and Bangladesh and during a military campaign in August and September, causing casualties among fleeing Rohingya civilians.¹³⁹ Other accounts of use by Myanmar military forces and NSAGs in Myanmar were also reported in 2016 and 2017. (*See Myanmar's mine ban profile for further details.*)

No estimate exists of the extent of contamination but SHAs have been reported in the following states and townships:

- Kayah state: all seven townships;
- Kayin state: all seven townships;
- Kachin state: Bhamo, Chipwi, Hpakant, Mansi, Mogaung, Mohnyin, Momauk, Muse, Myitkyina, Shwegu, Sinbo, Sumprabum, Tanai, Tsawlaw, and Waingmaw;
- Mon state: Bilin, Kyaikto, Mawlamyine, Thanbyuzayat, Thaton, and Ye;
- Bago region: Kyaukkyi, Shwekyin, Tantabin, and Taungoo;
- Rakhine state: Maungdaw;
- Shan state: Hopong, Hsenwi, Hsihseng, Hsipaw, Konkyan, Kutkai, Kyaukme, Langkho, Lashio, Laukkaing, Loilen, Manton, Mawksai, Mongshu, Mongpan, Mongton, Monghpyak, Namhsan Tachileik, Namtu, Nanhkan, Yaksawk, and Ywangan;
- Tanintharyi region: Bokpyin, Dawei, Myiek, Tanintharyi, Thayetchaung, and Yebyu;
- Chin state: Paletwas; and
- Sagaing region: Indaw.

A situation analysis for humanitarian response in Myanmar released in September 2016 noted that, “Landmine contamination is a significant barrier to refugee return. It also continues to pose barriers to livelihoods, economic development, land ownership, and access to health and education services, all of which have gendered dimensions and implications.”¹⁴⁰

In June 2017, Landmine Monitor and the UN produced an infographic on the impact of landmine use in Myanmar.¹⁴¹

Explosive remnants of war

Myanmar is also affected by ERW, including mortars, grenades, artillery, and ordnance dating back to World War II, but the location or extent of contamination is not known.¹⁴² New ERW

Internal state and division names are given in their common form or with the name adopted by the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) in parentheses.

¹³⁸ Research by Landmine Monitor. Data sources included casualty information, sightings of mine warnings, and reports by NGOs and other organizations of use, as well as interviews with field staff and armed forces personnel. The survey included casualty data from January 2007 through December 2016 and data from other informants from January 2008 through October 2017.

¹³⁹ Amnesty International, “Myanmar Army landmines along border with Bangladesh pose deadly threat to fleeing Rohingya,” 9 September 2017; and Human Rights Watch, “Burma: Landmines Deadly for Fleeing Rohingya,” 23 September 2017.

¹⁴⁰ “[Situation Analysis of Southeastern Myanmar](#),” Myanmar Information Management Unit (MIMU), Peace Support Fund, September 2016. MIMU is a service to the UN Country Team and Humanitarian Country Team, under the management of the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator.

¹⁴¹ “[Townships with Known Landmine Contamination \(2016\) and Casualties in Myanmar \(as of Dec 2015\)](#),” MIMU, 15 June 2017. Infographic provides a 10-year overview of data from the Landmine Monitor (2007–2016).

¹⁴² See, for example, N. Thwin, “[World War II ordnance kills three](#),” *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 20 March 2012; “[WWII bomb kills 7 in Arakan](#),” *Irrawaddy*, 1 September 2011; and M. Thar Lay, “[Mandalay workers uncover WWII bomb](#),” *Myanmar Times*, Vol. 23, No. 455, 26 January–1 February 2009.

contamination has been reported related to armed conflict in late 2015 and early 2016 in Kachin state.¹⁴³

Program Management

The government had not, as of September 2017, formulated a clear direction for mine action or established a center to coordinate it.¹⁴⁴ In May 2017, the Union Joint Monitoring Committee (JMU-C) Secretary, Colonel Wunna Aung, stated that the Tatmadaw would take the lead on landmine clearance and that international technological and material support would be accepted. He noted that clearance would begin in Kayah state as a joint activity with the Karen National Union.¹⁴⁵ In August 2017, Myanmar's Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, held talks with New Zealand's Ambassador regarding assistance between the two countries militaries and mine clearance operations.¹⁴⁶

Myanmar's previous administration had agreed to set up a Myanmar Mine Action Center (MMAC) under the Myanmar Peace Center (MPC) in 2013, but it was never fully staffed and the government said concluding a National Ceasefire Agreement with non-state actors was a precondition for proceeding to survey and clearance.¹⁴⁷

The new administration dissolved the MPC at the end of March 2016 and replaced it with the National Reconciliation and Peace Center (NRPC), which reports to the state counsellor, who said negotiations over the National Ceasefire Agreement would be her administration's priority. At its first meeting, several participants emphasized the threat of mines and the need for mine clearance.¹⁴⁸ UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon also discussed the issue of mine clearance when he met with the head of the military, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, in August 2016.¹⁴⁹ A national youth conference held in the capital Naypyitaw in May 2016 called on the army and ethnic armed groups to remove landmines.¹⁵⁰ Several civil society groups also called for mine clearance during the year (*see Mine Ban Policy profile*).

The Department of Social Work leads the Myanmar's Mine Risks Working Group (MRWG), co-chaired with UNICEF, which comprises 10 ministries and 41 international and national organizations. The group meets quarterly and focuses on risk education and victim assistance. In the process, it has overseen the first steps to systematic survey of mine contamination.

International demining organizations, including DanChurchAid (DCA), Danish Demining Group (DDG), The HALO Trust, Handicap International, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), and the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD), have offices in Yangon and some provincial centers, and through community liaison or risk education have been able to build up knowledge of the location of hazardous areas in some states.

Land Release

¹⁴³ See, for example, unexploded aerial bomb allegedly from armed conflict in Kachin state in Waingmaw township in October 2016. Free Burma Rangers, "[UPDATE REPORT: Gidon Post Bombarded by Burma Airforce](#)," 7 October 2016.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Aksel Steen-Nilsen, Country Director, NPA and Greg Crowther, Regional Director, South and South East Asia, MAG, in Phnom Penh, 1 May 2017; and email from Melissa Andersson, Programme Manager, NPA, Yangon, 27 September 2017.

¹⁴⁵ Ye Khaung Nyunt, "[Second day of 10th Union Joint Monitoring Committee meeting in Yangon](#)," *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 5 May 2017.

¹⁴⁶ MNA, "Senior General meets New Zealand Ambassador," *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 27 August 2017.

¹⁴⁷ Roger Fasth and Pascal Simon, "Mine Action in Myanmar," *Journal of Mine Action*, Issue 19.2, July 2015.

¹⁴⁸ See, for example: At the Union Peace Conference 21st Century Panglong, Daw Wint Wah Tun of the National League for Democracy said of her Shardaw township, Kayah state, "local people do not feel secure as landmine fields pose a threat to their way of life." "[Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong continues](#)," *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 2 September 2016.

¹⁴⁹ "[C-in-C Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with UN Chief, diplomat](#)," *Global New Light of Myanmar*, 1 September 2016.

¹⁵⁰ "Youth Empowerment: Myanmar's young people want an active role in the running of their country," *Mizzima Weekly*, 9 June 2016, p. 22.

Operators have not received authorization to conduct marking or clearance from either the government or ethnic minority authorities but the Department of Social Work approved full non-technical survey in specified government-controlled areas for the first time in 2016.

MAG, after two years of risk education and community safety mapping in Kayah state, received authorization from the Department of Social Work for a pilot survey in government-controlled areas, which it conducted between July and October 2016 focusing on 16 villages of Loikaw township. Teams surveyed 30 of 47 hazardous areas covering 44,828m² identifying contamination by antipersonnel mines and ERW. In December, the Department authorized MAG to conduct non-technical survey in 74 villages across six townships. By the end of June 2017, MAG had surveyed 78 hazardous areas covering 77,782m². MAG found mines particularly in the vicinity of electricity pylons, even those outside conflict areas, underscoring the importance of investigating areas around other key infrastructure.¹⁵¹

In 2017, MAG had five community liaison teams working full-time on non-technical survey in all seven of Kayah state's townships. It had four survey teams in Shan state working out of Taunggyi and conducting full non-technical survey in three townships and community mapping in two others. It also had two teams undertaking initial community surveys in Kayin state as well as working with a local partner doing similar baseline surveys in non-government controlled areas, and three teams in the southern Tanintharyi region.¹⁵²

HALO Trust had conducted risk education under a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Department of Social Work authorizing it to work in all seven townships of Kayin state and some townships of Bago, Mon, Kachin, and Shan states. In 2016, it opened offices in Hpa-An in Kayin state, and in Lashio in northern Shan state. The MoU was amended in July 2017, expanding the approved operating area to include 18 townships of Shan state and authorizing it to conduct non-technical survey. HALO Trust was working in three townships of Kayin state (Hlaingbwe, Hpa-An, and Thandaungyi) and deployed three survey teams to map polygons. In Shan state, HALO was conducting risk education.¹⁵³

DDG, which has six teams conducting risk education in Kachin, northern Shan, and Kayah states, also received Department of Social Work authorization to undertake non-technical survey in Kayah state's Demoso township where it deployed two teams with three surveyors each starting in May 2017.¹⁵⁴

Mine/ERW risk education

As of September 2017, at least nine organizations implemented 13 risk education projects, primarily in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, and Shan states, and eastern Bago region, Mon state, and Tanintharyi region.

¹⁵¹ Interview with Greg Crowther, MAG, in Phnom Penh, 1 May 2017; "Preliminary results of MAG's Non-Technical Survey in Kayah State," received by email from Greg Crowther, MAG, 2 May 2017; and Greg Crowther, Josephine Dresner, and Michael Aaron, "Mine Action in Burma, Building Trust and Incremental Gains," *Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction*, Issue 21.2, July 2017.

¹⁵² Email from Bekim Shala, Country Director, MAG, 27 September 2017.

¹⁵³ Email from Samuel Fricker, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 25 September 2017.

¹⁵⁴ Email from Pascal Simon, Programme Manager, DDG, 28 September 2017; and DRC/DDG, "Deployment and activities in Myanmar," July 2017.

Mine/ERW Risk Education actors¹⁵⁵

Location	National actor	International actor
Eastern Bago region	The Committee of Internally Displaced Karen People and the Karen Teachers Working Group	Dan Church Aid (DCA)
Kachin state		Danish Refugee Committee (DRC)
Kayah state	The Karenni Social Welfare and Development Center and the Local Development Network; The Department of Education, Planning and Training	DCA-Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and MAG
Mon state	Committee of Internally Displaced Karen People and Karen Teachers Working Group	DCA
Northern Shan state	Kachin Youth Organization and Shan State Youth Network Committee	HALO, DRC, and DCA-NCA
Southern Shan state		MAG
Tanintharyi region	The Karen Teachers Working Group; The Department of Agriculture and Department of Education, Planning and Training	DCA DCA-NCA

In addition, the National Society, trained by the ICRC, is also conducting risk education.¹⁵⁶

The Monitor acknowledges the contributions of the Mine Action Review (www.mineactionreview.org), which has conducted the mine action research in 2017, including on survey and clearance, and shared all its resulting landmine and cluster munition reports with the Monitor. The Monitor is responsible for the findings presented online and in its print publications.

¹⁵⁵ MIMU, "[Myanmar, Who/What/Where, Mine Action, All Agencies](#)," 27 September 2017.

¹⁵⁶ ICRC, "[Annual Report 2016](#)," p. 328.

Mine Action Support

In 2016, seven donors contributed US\$6.3 million to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for mine action, a 46% decrease from 2015.¹⁵⁷

Switzerland and Germany provided the largest contributions, with a combined total of \$4.5 million, representing more than 70% of all support.

All international contributions in 2016 went to non-technical survey, risk education, or victim assistance activities through the ICRC and other NGOs.

International contributions: 2016¹⁵⁸

Donor	Sector	Amount (national currency)	Amount (US\$)
Switzerland	Risk education and victim assistance	CHF3,199,880	3,249,269
Germany	Victim assistance	€1,124,002	1,244,495
United Kingdom	Risk education	£649,314	880,145
Norway	Non-technical survey and risk education	NOK3,100,000	369,329
European Union	Risk education	€316,284	350,190
Belgium	Risk education	€90,000	99,648
Ireland	Risk education	€70,000	77,504
Total			6,270,580

Since 2012, international assistance to Myanmar has varied significantly, ranging from a low of \$3.4 million in 2014 to a high of \$11.7 in 2015.

Summary of international contributions: 2012–2016¹⁵⁹

Year	International contributions (US\$)
2016	6,270,580
2015	11,677,355
2014	3,373,910
2013	7,892,326
2012	8,503,756
Total	37,717,927

¹⁵⁷ Belgium, Mine Ban Treaty Article 7 Report, Form J, 30 April 2017; Germany, Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II Annual Report, Form E, and Annex, 31 March 2017; Ireland, CCW Amended Protocol II Annual Report, Form E, and Annex 1, 30 March 2017; Switzerland, Convention on Cluster Munitions Article 7 Report, Form I, 28 April 2017; United Kingdom, Mine Ban Treaty Article 7 Report, Form J, 30 April 2017; response to Monitor questionnaire by Frank Meeussen, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Arms Export Control, European External Action Service, 30 September 2017; and email from Ingrid Schoyen, Senior Adviser, Section for Humanitarian Affairs, Norway Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 31 May 2017.

¹⁵⁸ Average exchange rate for 2016: €1=US\$1.1072; NOK8.3936=US\$1; £1=US\$1.3555; CHF0.9848=US\$1. US Federal Reserve, "[List of Exchange Rates \(Annual\)](#)," 4 January 2017.

¹⁵⁹ See previous Monitor reports. Total for 2013 has been rectified as a result of revised US funding data.

Myanmar/Burma Country Report: Cluster Munition Monitor 2017

Summary: Non-signatory Myanmar acknowledges the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions, but said in October 2015 that it cannot consider acceding to the convention until a nation-wide peace agreement is concluded. Myanmar abstained from voting on a key UN resolution on the convention in December 2016 and last participated in a meeting of the convention in 2013.

Myanmar states that it has never used and does not produce or transfer cluster munitions. It allegedly used a weapon similar in design to a modern cluster munition in Kachin state in 2012–2013.

Policy

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has not acceded to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.¹⁶⁰

Myanmar expressed concern at the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions in the past, but did not elaborate its position on accession until October 2015.¹⁶¹ Myanmar informed the UN General Assembly (UNGA) First Committee on Disarmament and International Security that ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions “would possibly be considered taking into consideration the political, economic and social circumstances in the aftermath of a nation-wide peace agreement.”¹⁶²

Myanmar made the comment in its explanation of why it abstained from the vote on a UNGA resolution that urges states outside the Convention on Cluster Munitions to “join as soon as possible.”¹⁶³ Myanmar again abstained from voting on another resolution on the convention in December 2016.¹⁶⁴

Myanmar attended one regional meeting of the Oslo Process that created the Convention on Cluster Munitions (Xieng Khouang, Lao PDR, in October 2008). It participated in a regional conference on cluster munitions in Bali, Indonesia, in November 2009.

Myanmar participated as an observer in the convention’s annual Meetings of States Parties in 2010 and 2012, as well as intersessional meetings in Geneva in 2013. It was invited to, but did not attend the convention’s Sixth Meeting of States Parties in Geneva in September 2016.

Myanmar is not party to the Mine Ban Treaty. It is also not party to the Convention on Conventional Weapons.

Use, production, transfer, and stockpiling

In November 2009, Myanmar informed a regional meeting that, “we do not use cluster munitions, develop, produce, otherwise acquire, retain or transfer to anyone, directly or indirectly, nor assist, encourage or induce anyone to engage in any activity prohibited under this Convention.”¹⁶⁵ It criticized cluster munitions as “weapons with indiscriminate area effect... which can cause humanitarian consequences.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁰ The military regime changed the name from Burma to Myanmar in 1989, but many ethnic groups in the country and a number of states still prefer to use the name Burma.

¹⁶¹ [Statement of Myanmar](#), UN General Assembly (UNGA) First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 30 October 2013; and [statement of Myanmar](#), UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 1 November 2012.

¹⁶² [Statement of Myanmar](#), UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 15 October 2015.

¹⁶³ “[Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions](#),” UNGA Resolution 70/54, 7 December 2015.

¹⁶⁴ “[Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions](#),” UNGA Resolution 71/45, 5 December 2016.

¹⁶⁵ Statement by Ye Minn Thein, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Conference on the Promotion and Universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Bali, 16 November 2009.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

In October 2015, Myanmar stated that it follows the basic principles of the law of armed conflict and stated, “Our Armed Forces exercises restraint in its military operations. Cluster Munitions were never used in these operations.”¹⁶⁷

Myanmar possesses 122mm Type-81 and Type-90B and 240mm surface-to-surface rocket launchers, but it is not known if the ammunition for these weapons includes versions with submunition payloads.¹⁶⁸

Previous allegation of use

Myanmar acquired a “cluster adapter” that it reportedly used in late 2012 and early 2013 during the conflict between government forces and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in Kachin state in the north of the country.¹⁶⁹ The weapon is similar in design to a modern cluster munition.

The KIA claimed that the Myanmar army units stationed at Gangdau Yang used cluster munitions against KIA forces in a 26 January 2013 attack at Hka Ya Bum, “a hill top of strategic significance” five miles west of the town of Laiza in southern Kachin state.¹⁷⁰ On 19 April 2013, the deputy secretary of the Kachin National Council provided photographs to the CMC showing an unknown type of air-dropped bomb that it said, “confirmed that the World War-Two era 20 pound fragmentation bombs were used during the airstrikes in the KIA’s strategic outposts between 14 December 2012 and 8 January 2013 by the Myanmar Air Force.” According to the Kachin National Council, “this type has never been used in Burma’s civil war before.”¹⁷¹

Human Rights Watch (HRW) received a separate set of photos that showed what appear to be the same remnants in a vehicle at a location that does appear to be the site of the attack, indicating they were removed.¹⁷² HRW confirmed airstrikes and shelling on Laiza by Myanmar forces in December 2012 and January 2013.¹⁷³ The government of Myanmar later admitted to shelling and bombing Laiza.¹⁷⁴

The “cluster adapter” and 20-pound fragmentation bombs shown in the photographs appear to meet the definition of a cluster munition in the Convention on Cluster Munitions.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁷ [Statement of Myanmar](#), UNGA First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, New York, 15 October 2015.

¹⁶⁸ “[Myanmar Defense Weapons](#),” 20 March 2014. English translation from Hla Oo’s Blog, “[Burma Army’s MRLS or Multi Rocket Launcher Systems](#),” 23 March 2014.

¹⁶⁹ There is evidence that Myanmar government forces mounted six fragmentation bombs to the adaptor, which then separated from the rack when dropped from the air.

¹⁷⁰ “[Burma army uses cluster bombs to take key KIO position near Laiza](#),” *Kachin News Group*, 26 January 2013.

¹⁷¹ The photographs were contained in an email sent to the CMC by Hkun Htoi, Deputy Secretary, Kachin National Council, 19 April 2013.

¹⁷² Email from Bertil Linter, 25 March 2013.

¹⁷³ HRW also documented the attacks on Laiza on 14 January 2013, which killed three civilians. See HRW, “[Burma: Halt Indiscriminate Attacks in Kachin State](#),” 17 January 2013.

¹⁷⁴ According to a January 2013 statement by HRW, “On January 14, government spokesman Ye Thut denied that government shells struck Laiza. The previous week, the Office of the President publicly denied that the army conducted any airstrikes against the KIA with helicopters and fighter jets, but then later backtracked when news reports showed video footage of the attacks.” HRW Press statement, “[Burma: Halt Indiscriminate Attacks in Kachin State](#),” 17 January 2013.

¹⁷⁵ The photographs show a metal tubular rack that appears to be similar in design to the US-produced M1 cluster adapter. The small fragmentation bombs are of a more modern design and marking than World War II-era munitions. A military officer who requested anonymity confirmed that the weapon was manufactured in Myanmar; additionally, a former military ordnance officer confirmed that the markings on the weapons were those used by Myanmar’s armed forces.