



Landmines and Unexploded Ordnances Factsheet in Iraq

April 2013

Contamination

Years of war and internal conflict have left a dangerous legacy of landmines and unexploded ordnances (UXOs) in Iraq. Its widespread contamination remains one of the largest in the world.

Contaminated sites cover an estimated 1,730 square kilometres and affect around 1.6 million people in over 1,600 communities. Chiefly, landmines dominate the contamination profile in the north while in the south, in addition to mines, scattered UXO and cluster bombs are more pervasive.

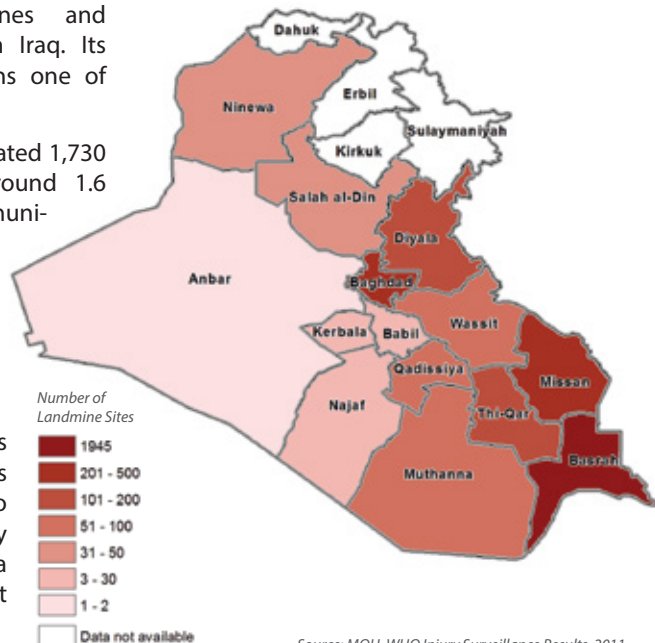
Landmine contamination affects major oil and infrastructure projects and many lie in close proximity to the border with Iran. There still may be more mined areas that data gathering efforts have not yet covered.

Landmines and Explosive Remnants of War are a major threat to the Iraqi people's "right to life, liberty and security of person" enshrined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and inhibit Iraq's economic development.

Threat to civilians

The total number of mine related incidents reported in 2010 through the sentinel injury Surveillance System is 25 with 64% case fatality, while in 2011 30 incidents with 33% case fatality rate were reported. About 60% of the reported cases of landmine incidents

Iraq - Number of Landmines and UXOs by Governorates



Source: MOH, WHO Injury Surveillance Results, 2011

were among the group of 25 – 44 years of age while 46.7% of reported cases of UXOs incidents were among the age group of 5 – 14 years. All reported cases were male. Children are often more vulnerable to the dangers associated with approaching or disturbing landmines and UXOs. 24% of victims in the Kurdistan Region were under 14 years old. Many children lose their limbs, sight, or hearing resulting in lifelong disability. Child victims are then often perceived as a burden to their families and are discriminated against by society, with limited or no future prospects for education or employment.

The death of a breadwinner also affects the emotional and financial support for children, as their lives are devastated when a parent or caregiver is injured or killed. They lose the care and attention they require, and are often forced out of school and into work. 44% of victims in the Kurdistan Region during the past 40 years were family breadwinners.

Linking landmines to Vulnerability

A survey conducted by the UN Inter Agency Information and Analysis Unit found that:

- Per capita income is lower in mine contaminated areas
- Education achievement is lower in mine contaminated areas.
- Households in districts with mines are more food insecure
- Resident of districts with mines rate services such as Education and electricity access poorer than those without mines.

Mines: Inhibiting factor for development

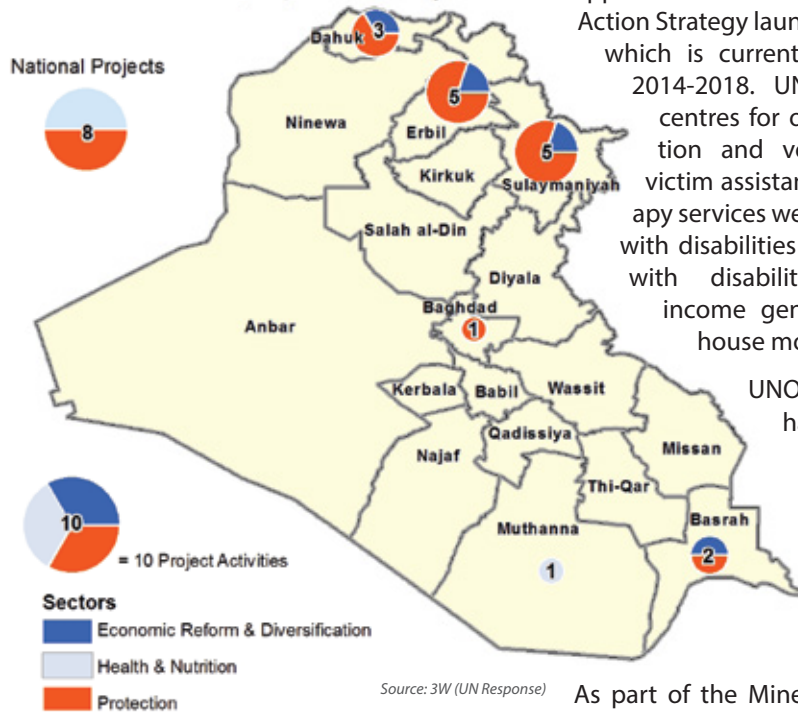
Impacted communities in Iraq are generally small, rural and dependent on agriculture. 90% of the contaminated land is agricultural, inhibiting a community's ability to develop sustainable livelihoods. Access to most water sources has also been cut off. In the South, blockage of high-value irrigation cropland is of particular concern. In the North, contamination often blocks land used for collecting firewood and medicinal plants.

Contamination is also delaying the oil sector's reconstruction and production. However, under the terms of contracts signed with the Government of Iraq, oil companies are obliged to survey and clear any areas relevant to oil production that are suspected of being contaminated.



Marking mines in the Safwa area. Photo by: UNDP Iraq, Basra, Southern Iraq, 2011

Iraq - UN Mine Action 3W Active projects as of April 2012



in the sector, including those working in the oil sector. This seeks to achieve a unified approach in line with the National Mine Action Strategy launched in February 2010, which is currently being updated for 2014-2018. UNDP supported three centres for orthopaedic, rehabilitation and vocational training for victim assistance. 22,490 physiotherapy services were provided to persons with disabilities and over 500 persons with disabilities benefited from income generation activities and house modifications.

UNOPS Mine Action Unit has provided equipment to government counterparts to complement the activities of UNDP with funding from the UNDG Iraq Trust Fund.

As part of the Mine Action team, UNICEF continues to provide technical and financial support to Mine Risk Education (MRE) through institutional capacity development, MRE in schools and communities, MRE materials review, and direct MRE for

high-risk populations with funding from AusAid and DFID.

Between 2006 and 2011 UNICEF MRE activities extended to 4,850 teachers, 600 community volunteers, 150 health workers, 500 social workers, 300 local NGOs and government officials. Furthermore, 900 children (as peer educators) were trained on the risks and threats of mines, UXOs and Explosive Remnants of War. UNICEF, with its partner Handicap International and other counterparts, will ensure the continued development of MRE initiatives and the inclusion of MRE in school curricula to provide more coherent safe behaviour messages for children and youth.

WHO is assisting victims of landmines and UXOs by working with local NGOs, to train healthcare professionals and community leaders and by providing support to ortho-prosthetic, rehabilitation and reintegration centres in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Dohuk. WHO continues to strengthen emergency medical response to mine victims including psychological, physical and social rehabilitation of people with disabilities using funds provided by the EU, the Government of Japan and the Netherlands.



Zuhria, who lost one of her legs in a mine accident, with her family at home. Photo by: UNDP Iraq, Northern Iraq, 2009

Endnotes

- 1 UNDP/iMMAP, Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) 2004-2006
- 2 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml), accessed 29 April 2011); UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (<http://www.unicef.org/crc/>), accessed 29 April 2011)
- 3 UNICEF 2009 needs assessment in Kurdistan Region
- 4 UNICEF 2009 needs assessment in Kurdistan Region
- 5 UNDP/iMMAP LIS 2004-2006
- 6 UNDP/iMMAP LIS 2004-2006

International Obligations

In 2008, Iraq became a State Party to the Ottawa Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

Under the Convention, Iraq has committed to never again use, produce, acquire, or export antipersonnel mines. It has also committed to destroy stockpiled mines in four years and to clear minefields by 2018.

In 2012, Iraq's ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The Convention bans the use, production, and transfer of cluster munitions, sets strict deadlines for clearance of contaminated land and destruction of stockpiles of the weapon, and includes ground-breaking provisions for assistance to victims and affected communities.

In January 2012 Iraq ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), an international human rights instrument of the United Nations intended to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Parties to the Convention are required to promote, protect, and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities and ensure that they enjoy full equality under the law. As of March 2012, the Convention has 153 signatories and 111 parties.

UN response

UNDP is leading the UN Mine Action team's support to the Government of Iraq (GoI), including the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) with funding from AusAid, DFID, and US Department of State.

UNDP coordinates UN agencies' response and is continuing to build the capacity of the Government's institutional structure to develop an effective and efficient national Mine Action programme for Iraq. UNDP is expanding the mine action coordination network to include all international and local NGOs and private companies working