

LANDMINE MONITOR FACT SHEET

Prepared by Mines Action Canada



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Established in 1998, Landmine Monitor is an initiative of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, 1997 Nobel Peace Prize Co-Laureate

Non-State Armed Groups and the Mine Ban

June 2005

A greater understanding of the role of Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs), also referred to as Non-State Actors (NSAs), in the global landmine crisis is required to inform efforts to bring about a total and comprehensive ban on antipersonnel landmines.¹ NSAGs are known to possess, use, produce, and transfer antipersonnel mines. NSAGs suffer the impact of mines they, or others, lay on the territory of their operations, or in some cases among the population with which they are associated. A few NSAGs are known to provide victim assistance and undertake mine action. Although activity by NSAGs has been reported in previous Landmine Monitor annual reports, beginning with the 2005 Landmine Monitor report, a special thematic coordination has been launched, in order to obtain a more complete understanding of NSAGs in relation to issues of concern to the mine ban movement, and to inform further actions or advocacy in relation to NSAGs.

This fact sheet is an inventory of Landmine Monitor data on Non-State Armed Groups, and is based almost exclusively on the country reports contained in *Landmine Monitor Report 2004*, and on the most recent reporting period from May 2003 to September 2004.² Over the years, Landmine Monitor has reported on 119 different armed groups operating in 34 countries.³ This Fact

¹ Non State Armed Groups are any identifiable group which uses armed methods, and is not within the *formal* structure of a recognized state. This will include 1) counter-state armed political movements, guerilla movements and rebel armed forces; 2) militias or civil patrols often operating under the sanction of official entities, but not within the legal state structure, and 3) criminal groups, among others. (There are exceptions and complications to the above categories, and Landmine Monitor makes its own determination on a case by case basis, within this general framework).

² In a very few cases, the LM 2004 report needed clarification. If we could clarify it through other published material, we included it, otherwise we did not include the data in question. Determination of use took in confirmed or alleged use from 1 Jan 2003 to Sept 2004. The section on Ceasefires required consultation of other sources, since this has not been a research area for Landmine Monitor in the past.

³ **Mine Ban Treaty States Parties** include: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Chad, Colombia, DR Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Liberia, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan, Turkey, Uganda, Venezuela, and Yemen. **States Not Party** include: Bhutan, Burma/Myanmar, Georgia, India, Indonesia (signatory), Iraq, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, and Uzbekistan. Other areas which ICBL monitors and reports on include: Abkhazia, Chechnya, Kosovo, Palestine and Western Sahara.

Sheet focuses only on those NSAGs who have possessed or are affected by landmines.

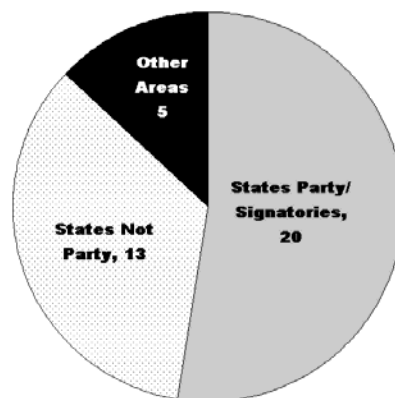
Because of the often imprecise nature of the information that can be collected on NSAGs, statistics presented here on use, production, stockpiling and trade may in some cases include not only antipersonnel mines, but also anti-vehicle mines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including command-detonated devices.

USE

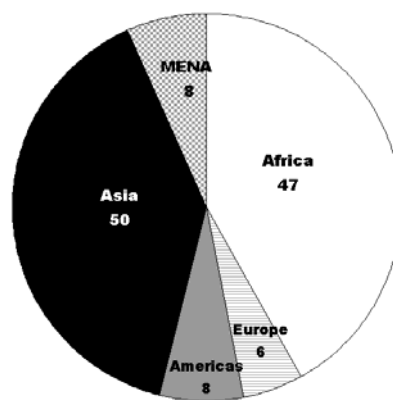
Sixty-five NSAGs in nineteen countries used or were alleged to use antipersonnel mines or similar weapons during the *Landmine Monitor Report 2004* reporting period.⁴ The countries included: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma/Myanmar, Burundi, Colombia, D.R. Congo, Georgia, India, Iraq, Nepal, Philippines, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Russia, Turkey, Yemen, and Uganda. This does **not** include some difficult to define entities which have been reported to have used mines on occasion: cattle thieves in Senegal or farmers protecting their cattle from thieves in Somalia, tribal feuds in Pakistan, criminal gangs in Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro, and coca farmers in Bolivia.

Of the 65, about half were active in only four countries: Burma/Myanmar (15), India (9), DR Congo (7) and Colombia (6). In most cases, the NSAGs used antipersonnel mines sporadically, in a singular incident, or on a relatively small scale. NSAGs in both Colombia and Burma are considered frequent and significant users of antipersonnel mines. Smaller quantities of mines were believed used, but over a wide geographical area in Nepal and Iraq. For other countries with a significant number of NSAGs (DR Congo, Somalia) available information does not allow for an assessment.

Of the 65, a total of 45 were confirmed to have used antipersonnel mines or victim-activated IEDs, and another 20 were alleged to have used them. Seven NSAGs were confirmed to use antivehicle mines, with a few more reports of possible or alleged use. From available reports, it is not possible to make a clear determination on use of



Global Distribution of Non-State Armed Groups by Treaty Status of Country and by Region.

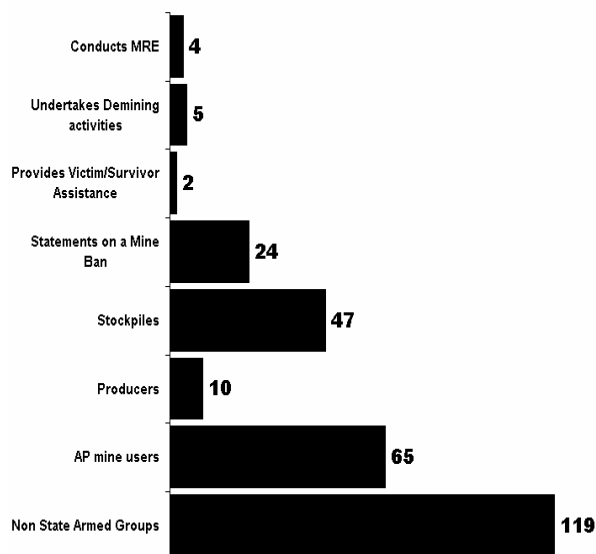


⁴ The actual number of NSAGs using mines in this period certainly exceeds 65. In other cases, researchers could not specifically identify the armed group where some use occurred, but gave vague information, such as 'foreign rebel group laid mines in border area...'. In the case of Somalia, 20 different groups were identified, but not all by name, and several were alleged to have laid mines, but not specifically named.

command-detonated mines.⁵ The true number using antivehicle mines is likely to be much higher than recorded, as is the likelihood of use of command-detonated devices, as these are not the focus of Landmine Monitor research.

PRODUCTION

Ten NSAGs were revealed to produce antipersonnel mines or command-detonated mines. These were Chechen rebels in Russia, former Taliban in Afghanistan, NSAGs in Burma/Myanmar, India, Colombia Iraq and Palestine, the Communist Party insurgencies in Nepal and Philippines, and the LTTE in Sri Lanka. Burmese insurgent groups produce both tripwire and pressure-operated mines, mines with anti-handling mechanisms, and directional mines. Colombian NSAGs also produce both antipersonnel and antivehicle mines. Chechen rebels recycle unexploded ordnance fired at them by Russian forces into antipersonnel devices, adding shrapnel to increase the lethality. A variety of insurgents report reusing mortars shot at them, replacing dud fuses with other detonators. The LTTE have sophisticated weapons manufacturing capacity, and were capable of manufacturing mines in very large numbers. The status of any production under the current ceasefire is unknown. The number of groups capable of making mines and IEDs is likely to be higher than what is currently recorded.



TRADE

Landmine Monitor has noted that since the mid-1990s, global trade in antipersonnel mines has been limited to a very low-level of illegal and unacknowledged trade. Some examples of clandestine trade (or allegations of trade) involving NSAGs noted in *Landmine Monitor Report 2004* include: an alleged supply to the UPC and Hema militias in the DRC by the Rwandan military and NSAG transfer of landmines from Afghanistan to Pakistan. A group involved in the undated seizure of illegal arms, including landmines bound for rebels in Colombia, was sentenced in Panama in 2003.

Stockpiles

Stockpiles in the possession of armed groups were determined in three ways: admitted by NSAGs; deduced from seizure or demining activities by others; or deduced from use. By this method 47 NSAGs were determined

⁵ Antivehicle mines were cited as having been used by NSAGs in Uganda, Palestine, Kosovo, Georgia, India, Iraq and the Philippines, and by criminal groups in Angola and tribal groups in Pakistan.

likely to maintain stocks, most believed to be very limited. Fifteen were admitted, eight identified by seizures, and 24 by use.⁶ Although it could be assumed that all 65 NSAGs who are using must have stockpiles, these 47 are the ones which are reported. Use by other NSAGs may primarily involve devices improvised in the field, or seized from enemy forces. In the case of India, the report states that 'many' NSAG maintain stocks of factory-made mines, without identifying the particular parties. NSAG stocks are frequently dispersed rather than in a central repository, and may be held in many small caches throughout an area of operation.

Political statements or commitments to a Mine Ban and Ceasefire/Peace Agreements

Twentyfour NSAGs were reported in the *Landmine Monitor Report 2004* as making statements regarding policy in relation to the landmine ban. These groups may have made a commitment within an existing bilateral agreement with a state, a unilateral statement, or signed the Geneva Call Deed of Commitment.⁷ The UC-ELN in Colombia proposed a humanitarian agreement with the government to limit use of mines and IEDs, the Philippine-based National Democratic Front has stated that it only employs command-detonated mines and has committed itself to the observance of the Geneva protocols.

Although not a specific area of Landmine Monitor research, NSAG willingness to forego mine use, in most cases, is closely tied to the active stage of armed conflict within a country. *Landmine Monitor Report 2004* reported the status of peace talks, ceasefire agreements, negotiations, or the lapse of same, for 29 NSAGs in 14 different countries. It is known that there is mention of landmines within some of these agreements. Additionally, in 2004, the Thailand Campaign to Ban Landmines encouraged the inclusion of a ban on mine use in the ceasefire discussions which took place in that year between the Karen National Union and the ruling authorities in Burma/Myanmar.

MINED AREAS, DEMINING, AND MINE RISK EDUCATION

Ten NSAGs were cited as having mines in areas under their control, including areas under LTTE in Sri Lanka, KDP/PUK in Iraq (Kurdistan), SPLA/M in Sudan, three NSAGs in Colombia and four in Burma/Myanmar. A further 49 NSAGs with areas of operation were also cited as being mine-polluted.⁸ Only NSAGs with territory under their control are involved in mine action.

⁶NSAGs operating in: Burundi, DR Congo, Sudan, Uganda, Afghanistan, Colombia, Burma/Myanmar are reported to have some level of mine stocks. In other countries the likelihood of a stockpile was deduced from seizure or use. This does not include criminal groups operating in a number of countries believed to have some mines in their possession.

⁷ The non-governmental organization, Geneva Call, has provided a Deed of Commitment (DoC) for signature by Non-state armed groups by which they pledge to restrictions similar to those on States who sign the Mine Ban Treaty. As of June 2005, 27 armed groups from seven countries had signed DoC's on deposit with Geneva Call. The bulk of these groups (17) are in Somalia, while the remainder are from Burundi, Sudan, India, Burma/Myanmar, the Philippines and Iraq. <http://www.genevacall.org/signatory-groups/signatory-groups.htm>

Some of the groups which have signed the DoC were not known to have used or possessed landmines, or the NSAG has not been mentioned in a Landmine Monitor report, which accounts for a difference between numbers listed here, and DoC signatories.

⁸ In Afghanistan, Burma/Myanmar, India, Nepal, the Philippines, Colombia, Georgia, Iraq, Burundi, Sudan, Uganda, DR Congo and Chechnya.

Five NSAG were documented as having undertaken demining operations, and in at least three cases in Sri Lanka, Sudan and Iraq (Kurdistan) this is done in cooperation with specialist non-governmental organizations. In two cases, at the request of local communities, NSAGs in both Colombia and Burma/Myanmar have done some limited removal of mines. All signatories of the Geneva Call DoC are required to begin removal of mines in territory under their control. DoC signatories in Sudan and Iraq continued their involvement in previously launched demining programs during the reporting period.

Those NSAGs involved in or permitting MRE programs are almost identical to those with demining programs. MRE activities took place under four NSAGs in Sri Lanka, Sudan, Iraq (Kurdistan) and Burma/Myanmar. These programs were run in cooperation or with the support of NGOs, and in one case (Sri Lanka) with support from UNICEF. An agreement was concluded in Colombia during the same time period for an MRE program within the area of operation of a NSAG.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE

Victim assistance is only considered in the cases where an NSAG is associated with a specific population, which may reside on land under the control of the NSAG. Some NSAGs have Health and Welfare Divisions which operate mobile or stationary medical clinics, hospitals and prosthetic facilities. While the NSAG may fund these facilities directly, more often, they are provided by an NGO partner specializing in providing humanitarian medical assistance. In the *Landmine Monitor Report 2004*, NSAGs in only two countries, Sri Lanka and Burma/Myanmar, were specifically mentioned as providing different types of victim assistance, both through their own organizations as well as cooperatively with NGOs.⁹

MINE ACTION FUNDING

Mine action funding has supported programs taking place in communities under the nominal regulation of NSAGs in Sri Lanka, Sudan, Iraq (Kurdistan) and Burma/Myanmar. All funding is provided through non-governmental organizations.¹⁰ There are also specific reports of NGOs through whom victim assistance funding is channeled in Sri Lanka and Burma/Myanmar. There is no data on the actual expenditures by NSAGs for mine action, but it is believed there is some. Precise expenditures have been difficult to obtain, given the politically sensitive nature of NSAGs. Also, in cases like NSAGs in Burma/Myanmar, expenditures may go to "rear bases" in another country.

⁹ In Sri Lanka, victim assistance was provided by LTTE-linked organizations, such as TRO and White Pigeon, and in Burma/Myanmar, one relief agency runs its own mobile medical teams which can provide emergency amputation in case of landmine incident, in cooperation with the SSA, KNPP, KNLA, while several donors support the ethnic militia-linked Back Pack Health Worker Teams, or activities of the KNU Health and Welfare Division. Some NSAGs have an agreement allowing them to pass on war casualties to the ICRC's War Victims program.

¹⁰ Funding has been channeled through: Norwegian People's Aid, Mines Advisory Group, Swiss Foundation for Mine Action, Danish Demining Group, Nonviolence International, DanChurchAid and Oxfam GB. Donors included the European Commission, UNICEF, UNOPS, Norway and Denmark.