

# GENDER AND THE MINE BAN TREATY

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines-Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC) and the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor (the Monitor) recognize that gender and diversity is an important factor in understanding and responding to the impact of mines, cluster munitions, and other explosive remnants of war (ERW).<sup>1</sup>

The Oslo Action Plan (OAP) highlights the importance of gender and ensuring that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, men, and boys are considered and inform all areas of Mine Ban Treaty implementation and national mine action programs. In response to the need to ensure an inclusive approach, starting in 2020, each committee of the Mine Ban Treaty adopted a gender focal point, as established by the OAP.<sup>2</sup>

The focus on gender in the OAP coincided with the 20-year anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000) which emphasizes a gender-based approach to mine action among its provisions, specifying:

*“the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls.”*

The UN’s Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes were first released in 2005, with a third revision published in 2019. Concurrent with a broader trend in international law and policy, intersectionality has also become an important aspect of analysis of gender and diversity considerations in mine action, taking into account intersecting factors such as age, ethnicity, social class, and disability.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For definitions of gender and explanations of the differences between use of the terms ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ relevant to the impact of mines, see, Gender and Diversity Working Group (GDWG), “Gender language,” [bit.ly/GenderLanguageGDWG](https://bit.ly/GenderLanguageGDWG); and World Health Organization (WHO), “Gender and health,” [bit.ly/GenderAndHealthWHO](https://bit.ly/GenderAndHealthWHO).

<sup>2</sup> See, GDWG webpage, [bit.ly/GenderAndDiversityWorkingGroupGDWG](https://bit.ly/GenderAndDiversityWorkingGroupGDWG).

<sup>3</sup> The GDWG “Gender language” paper notes that “Intersectionality is a concept that captures the various layers of advantages and disadvantages everyone experiences based on societal and structural systems. Women, girls, older persons, minorities, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups tend to experience reduced access to opportunities. When several of these factors overlap, they can cause increased discrimination, leading to exclusion. Intersectionality should be taken into consideration from identification and design to implementation, and in monitoring and evaluation, in order to address the needs and protect the rights of marginalised communities.”

## Measuring the Impact: Sex and Age Disaggregated Data (SADD)

Consistent with multi-year trends, in 2019, men and boys made up the majority of mine/ERW casualties,<sup>4</sup> accounting for 85% of all casualties for whom the sex was known (3,414 of 4,027). Women and girls made up 15% of all casualties for whom the sex was known (613).<sup>5</sup>

In the period 2010–2019 women and girls made up 13% of all casualties and men and boys 87%, for whom the sex was known.

In 2019 a higher percentage of women and girls were killed than men and boys: 43% for ‘female’ deaths compared to 36% for ‘male’ deaths for whom the sex was known. Data indicates that this change from relatively equivalent ratios of fatal outcomes in past years is observed in casualties of improvised mines.

Notably, due to more casualties occurring during conflict, detailed reporting and the extent of disaggregation by sex of casualties decreased significantly in recent years, at 33% unknown sex in 2015–2019 compared to 12% unknown during the previous five-year period, from 2010–2014.

## Gender in Mine Action Programs

By 2019–2020, States Parties Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, and Zimbabwe, included gender as a component of their national mine action strategies.

Many states have increasingly greater numbers of women working in the sector, including in mine clearance teams. Mixed or all-women clearance teams have been reported in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Colombia, Iraq, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Senegal, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe, as well as other areas Nagorno-Karabakh and Western Sahara.

## Gender in Responses to the Impact of Mines

Effective risk education needs to be tailored to the threat and sensitive to gender, age, disability, and other factors of diversity that may influence people’s exposure to mines and ERW. In many contexts, men are seen to be a primary risk group because of their roles and responsibilities.

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<sup>4</sup> Landmines of all types, including antipersonnel mines, antivehicle mines, and improvised mines, as well as cluster munition remnants and other explosive remnants of war (ERW).

<sup>5</sup> The Monitor casualty dataset is regularly updated as new data becomes available. *Landmine Monitor 2020* reported that in 2019, men and boys accounted for 3,190 of the 3,759 casualties for whom the sex was known (85%). Women and girls accounted for the other 569 casualties (15%).

Children are vulnerable to mine/ERW risk, often because of limited knowledge of the dangers, and natural curiosity. Boys, in particular, are noted for engaging in higher risk behaviors, as well as activities which may take them into hazardous areas including outdoor play, looking after animals, and undertaking household chores such as collecting firewood. Although fewer reported mine incidents involve women and girls, they are an important group to target in risk education as they can help promote safer behavior among men and among children and peers.

Reporting on sex and gender disaggregated victim data is often limited to statistical disaggregation of casualties and, less frequently, beneficiaries. Thus, data tends to fail to take into account the particular gender-related barriers faced by women and girls, men and boys. It is otherwise frequently reported that while men and boys represent the majority of reported mine casualties and face specific challenges, women and girls are likely to be disproportionately disadvantaged as a result of mine/ERW incidents.

Gender is a key consideration in victim assistance programming. However, the challenges are great. Despite efforts of programs for persons with disabilities to promote the inclusion of women with disabilities, overall they experience greater discrimination than men with disabilities, with more living in poverty and experiencing lower rates of employment.

In some countries, women face additional challenges accessing medical care due to the lack of gender-sensitive services, including a lack of women among trained rehabilitation professionals. Support has been given to the training of health professionals in order to raise awareness about addressing gender- and age-related needs of survivors, as reported over time in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, and Iraq. Several states, including Afghanistan and Tajikistan, have reported rehabilitation services with outreach programs that increase the number of women provided with transportation and accommodation at their facilities. Civil society and international organizations address these needs through targeted interventions.

The needs of widows have largely been overlooked among efforts to provide assistance for mine/ERW victims. Of the few victim assistance projects that include widows, the majority have been focused on livelihood support and income-generation.

The Monitor reported that implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) by States Parties should help ensure the rights of women and girls, as well as protect them from discrimination and exploitation. However, to date, states have not reported adequately about this connection between disarmament and human rights.