



Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan

**Eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)**

**Geneva**

**11 to 14 September 2023**

## Afghanistan's statement on the Article - 4:

Excellences, Distinguished Heads of Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen!

The Government of Afghanistan signed Convention on Cluster Munitions in December 2008 and ratified it on 8 September 2011. The convention entered it into force on 1 March 2012. Following that, all known CM stockpiles were destroyed during 2012-2014.

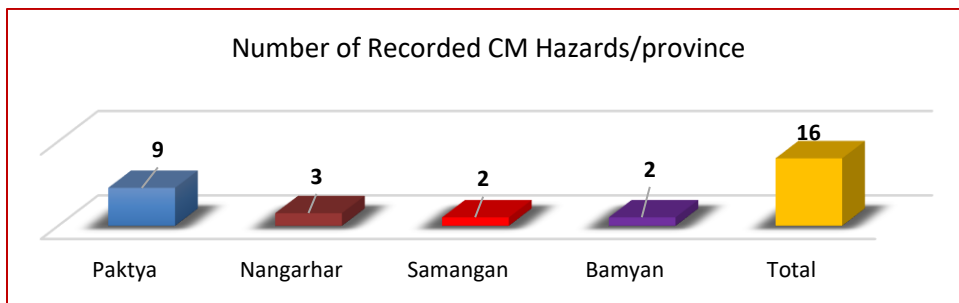
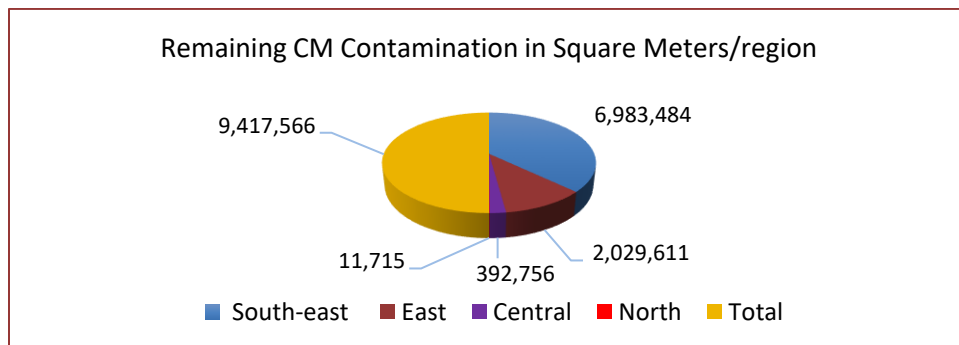
According to the IMSMA database, since 1989 around 42,300 explosive ordnance (EO) casualties have been recorded in Afghanistan, out of which 258 are due to cluster munitions (CM); including 27% death and 73% injuries. More than 65% of all CM casualties are children.

CCM Article 3: As stated before, Afghanistan has achieved the CCM Article 3 obligations, and destroyed all CM stockpiles during 2012-2014.

CCM Article 4: Afghanistan has a comprehensive survey information on the extent and impact of explosives hazards including cluster munitions. Since the convention entered into force, the programme managed to release 31 CM hazards covering more than 16 sq km area, including 0.25 sq km area cancelled. A total of 5,784 sub-munitions have been found/destroyed since 01 March 2012; including during the clearance operations of the CM sites, and as part of the EOD tasks.

Based on IMSMA, 1,029,908 sqm CM contaminated area has been cleared between 05-March to 31-May-2023, where 11 sub munitions and over 2,000 ERW have been found and destroyed.

The remaining CM contamination:



As illustrated in above charts, as of August 2023, over 9.4 sq km area still needs to be released from CM contamination, located in 4 provinces of Afghanistan. This new information is based on a recent survey/resurvey conducted in 2022 and 2023.

Release/clearance of CM contamination is included in the national mine action implementation plan, and hopefully all currently known and recorded CM contaminated areas will be released within the current Article 4 extended deadline. It is worth mentioning that, all EO affected areas including CM sites are now accessible for mine action operations without any security restrictions. The generous support of mine action donors is immensely needed in this regard to make use of this precious opportunity at maximum and alleviate the threat of EO, especially the threat of cluster munitions.

Before the political changes in Afghanistan, most of the CM contaminated areas were inaccessible due to the security restrictions, therefore, a clear picture of the CM contamination was unknown. However, there were unconfirmed reports of the CM strike sites in Paktya and Nangarhar provinces. Luckily, the reported areas have been assessed and surveyed in 2022/2023, the result of which shows a total 16 CM hazards covering around 9.4 sq km area. Nevertheless, due to major changes in security situation and accessibility of previously inaccessible areas in Afghanistan, the possibility of additional CM strikes sites is predictable. Provided that a nationwide survey is planned to be undertaken by the mine action programme of Afghanistan to understand the real scope of EO problem in Afghanistan.

In addition to funding land release of other EO contamination, PM/WRA generously pledged funding for the clearance of remaining CM contamination, Demining Agency for Afghanistan (DAFA) one of the national mine action NGOs that was involved in implementation of the CM clearance projects during the recent three years, will start CM clearance operations hopefully in November 2023.

Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) refers to the activities which seek to reduce the risk of EO accidents causing deaths and injuries; by raising awareness and promoting safe behavior among the 'at-risk' groups of people within the EO affected communities and raising the awareness of general population, in the country, through public information dissemination, education and training and community liaison. EORE should ensure that men, women and children in the affected communities are aware of the risks from EO including CM and are encouraged to behave in a way, which reduces the risk to people, property and the environment.

EORE activities are carried out in EO including CM affected communities to the at-risk groups of people across Afghanistan by accredited implementing partners. EORE activities are conducted using Social Behavior Change Communication by aligning the material to the needs of audience and with the use of appropriate means and channels that are; deployment of couple teams in the targeted communities, use child and adult friendly material, installation of billboards and promoting awareness on the risk of EO through mass media. Aside of implementing EORE in the field, EORE teams will make sure audience have an understanding from different types of EO namely; anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines, improvised devices, cluster munition and other EO. They will also be briefed about the marking and ground signs in the field, and the teams will assist in marking the EO contaminated areas where possible.

Victim Assistance in MAPA is referred to a set of activities and strategies aimed to provide age and gender-sensitive assistance to EO- victims, including emergency and ongoing medical care, rehabilitation and psychological support, as well as, provide assistance for their social and economic inclusion. VA is implementing in eight components, which form all activities and services provided by different Government and non-government organizations in Afghanistan.

In response to Article-5, the VA is considered as one of the main objectives of MAPA strategic and action plans. Technical support is provided to relevant stakeholders in developing a centralized and responsive national information management system (NIMS), ensuring continuous collection, analysis and sharing of all EO casualty data.

At the end I would like to reiterate once again that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) commits itself to fulfilling its obligations in relation to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and other international conventions to which Afghanistan is already a state party. Providing full pledged support to humanitarian activities is the top priority of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

Thank you