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United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Statement under agenda item 10 (e) - Victim Assistance

Geneva, 17 September 2025

Delivered by UNMAS

Mr. President,¹ Excellencies,

This statement is delivered on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA)².

Thousands of people live with the imminent risk of death and injury from cluster munitions. Tens of thousands more live with the devastating effects of physical and mental injuries caused by cluster munitions and explosive ordnance.

- Children like Jamal Imad Adama who was killed when unexploded cluster munitions detonated in farmland near the village of Maardes in Hama governorate on 18 July in Syria.²
- Or Mahmoud Muhammad Ali Al-Khalf, aged five years, who lost his hand on 14 August east of Deir ez-Zor when a submunition (cluster) bomb, exploded next to him.³

Since December 2024, 1,200 people are estimated to have been killed or injured in Syria alone by landmines and remnants of war, including many cluster munitions remnants. Survivors suffer from a chronic shortage of physical rehabilitation, psychosocial services, prosthetics and orthotics, and livelihood opportunities. It is estimated that 50-70 per cent of the health workforce

¹ Ambassador Carlos D. Sorreta, Permanent Representative of the Philippines.

² <https://news.snh.org/2025/07/22/a-child-jamal-adama-killed-and-another-injured-following-the-explosion-of-cluster-munitions-left-over-from-previous-bombing-in-the-village-of-maardes-in-the-hama-countryside-on-j/>

³ As reported by Humanity and Inclusion in Syria.



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has migrated out of the country depriving victims of the urgent support and adequate care that is much needed.⁴

This unfortunate pattern of increased need, under capacitated health and psycho-social sectors stretches from Syria to Sudan, Afghanistan to Gaza.

The UN supports girls, boys, women and men living with the injuries sustained from explosions. With funding from a few generous donors, the United Nations system provides victim assistance to survivors in many countries through various entities and agencies. In 2024, UNICEF supported over 5,500 child survivors of EO in 14 countries, while UNDP aided victims in Syria and Vietnam with prosthetics and social services. In the Western Sahara, UNMAS collaborated with the Sahrawi Association of Victims of Landmines to enable survivors to rejoin their communities.

In Colombia, UNMAS supported the development of referral pathways and adapted international standards on victim assistance to the national context. In Nigeria, the Mine Action Service linked 82 victims and survivors to essential services by mapping support systems and developing referral guidelines and training for local civil society organizations. The WHO supported rehabilitation in 21 countries, including Cambodia, Mozambique, and Sudan, and delivered assistive devices in Ukraine and the Occupied Palestinian Territory with support from the Global Partnership for Assistive Technology, hosted by UNOPS.

Despite these achievements, drastic cuts in humanitarian funding are disrupting access to emergency medical care and rehabilitation services in conflict zones. Many Victim Assistance

⁴ Syria MA AoR Situation Report No.4.



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programmes managed by local, national or international organizations are now suspended or find their capacity significantly inhibited, reducing the ability of humanitarian agencies to ensure even minimum standards of quality medical and mental health interventions. This is especially true for those which support the protection of children and their well-being. According to the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, funding cuts are already hindering organizations' abilities to meet Child Protection Minimum Standards in mental health and psychosocial support interventions, exposing children to potential long-term psychological trauma, untreated medical conditions, and cycles of poverty.⁵

Victim assistance is an ongoing and enduring obligation. Even in Lao PDR, a country out of conflict for decades, it is a struggle to provide victim assistance at scale, especially in rural areas. International partnerships remain crucial to sustaining support. Yet victim assistance remains significantly underfunded following the cessation of two victim assistance programmes with virtually zero funding to support a significant burden of explosive accident survivors.

It is clear from reading the Lausanne Action Plan progress report that greater financial commitments are required to translate policy frameworks into effective victim assistance as required by article 5. It is encouraging that two of the twelve States Parties with cluster munition victims (Lebanon and South Sudan) have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in the past year, meaning all twelve States now also parties to the CRPD.

Thank you.

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⁵ <https://alliancecpa.org/en/brief-global-impact-funding-cuts-children>