



الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان
SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

On the International Day for Mine Awareness:

**Documenting the deaths of at least 3,799
civilians from landmines and cluster munitions
in Syria, March 2011 – April 2026**

329 Civilians Have been Killed since the Fall of the Assad Regime,
including 65 children, and 47 Deaths Have been Documented
during Mine Clearance Operations

Saturday 04 April 2026

3,799





The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, independent group that is considered a primary source for the OHCHR on all death toll-related analyses in Syria.

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FIRST: INTRODUCTION

After more than fourteen years of armed conflict in Syria, accompanied by grave violations including killing, arbitrary arrest, and widespread destruction, the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime on December 8, 2014, marked the beginning of a new transitional phase. However, this phase revealed extremely serious challenges, foremost among them the continued threats posed by the remnants of war, particularly anti-personnel landmines and unexploded cluster munitions.

These remnants continue to pose a daily threat to the lives of civilians across Syria. Landmines, by their very nature as hidden and capable of exploding indiscriminately, disproportionately affect the most vulnerable groups, particularly children. Throughout the years of conflict, the Syrian Network for Human Rights has documented the widespread use of landmines and cluster munition remnants by Assad regime forces and Russian forces. However, a significant number of minefields remain undiscovered or undocumented, meaning that the figures in this report represent a minimum of the actual incidents.

With the return of increasing numbers of displaced people to their areas of origin following the fall of the regime, and the resumption of agricultural and livelihood activities, the dangers of landmines have become more pronounced. Landmine explosions have been recorded during plowing of agricultural land and while searching for truffles, in addition to accidents caused by children tampering with unidentified remnants of war, resulting in numerous deaths and injuries. Attempts to remove landmines, whether by engineering teams affiliated with the Syrian Ministry of Defense or through volunteer initiatives lacking adequate training and equipment, have also led to further casualties.

The continued presence of landmines and explosive remnants of war not only threatens the lives and physical safety of individuals but also hinders recovery and reconstruction efforts, leaving vast areas of land unsafe for use. This reality necessitates increased support for mine clearance actors, including specialized training in accordance with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), the provision of necessary technical equipment and funding, and the development of systematic mechanisms for documenting and addressing contaminated sites.

This report aims to review the casualties caused by landmines and cluster munition remnants in Syria from March 2011 to April 2026, identifying the temporal and geographical distribution of incidents before and after the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime. It also provides practical recommendations to the Syrian government and the international community to reduce casualties and enhance clearance and awareness efforts, particularly during the country's transitional phase. The incident patterns covered in the report include landmine explosions and explosions of unexploded cluster munition remnants.

Fadel Abdulghany, director of the Syrian Network for Human Rights, says:



We have documented the killing of at least 3,799 civilians, including 1,000 children, by landmines and cluster munitions since 2011. Of these, 329 civilians were killed after the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime. These figures represent the minimum of what has actually occurred, as vast areas of Syrian land remain contaminated with undiscovered and unmarked mines. The return of displaced persons to their areas and the resumption of agricultural activities are exposing increasing numbers of civilians to direct danger, while demining operations are being carried out in extremely dangerous conditions, resulting in the deaths of 47 people, most of whom were members of military engineering teams that require comprehensive training and appropriate equipment. Syria needs a comprehensive national demining program that operates according to international standards and sustained international technical and financial support. The Syrian government must also accede to the Ottawa Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions and establish a mechanism for compensating and rehabilitating victims.

SECOND: METHODOLOGY

This report is based on the methodology of the Syrian Network for Human Rights in monitoring and documenting victims of landmines and cluster munition remnants, a methodology based on more than fifteen years of experience, with modifications that take into account the field and political transformations that Syria witnessed after the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime in December 2014.

Time and Geographic Scope: The report covers the period from March 2011 to April 2026, encompassing all Syrian governorates. The network based the distribution of casualties across governorates on the location of the mine or cluster munition explosion, rather than the victim's place of residence, accurately reflecting the geographical spread of contamination and its direct impact on civilians in each area.

Data sources: The documentation process was based on multiple and diverse sources, including the network of field researchers affiliated with the Syrian Network for Human Rights, direct interviews with surviving victims and relatives of victims, eyewitness testimonies, information received from official authorities in the affected areas, reports from the Syrian Civil Defense teams, as well as open-source analysis of images and video recordings using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) techniques to identify and verify locations.

Verification Procedures: All data underwent a multi-stage verification process before being included in the network's database. This included verifying the victim's identity and the circumstances of the incident through at least two independent sources, confirming the nature of the explosion (whether caused by a landmine, cluster munition, or other type of explosive remnant of war) based on field testimonies and physical evidence where available, and cross-referencing the data with other independent sources to ensure accuracy and avoid duplication. The data is stored in specialized databases that allow for incident tracking and analysis.

Data Protection and Confidentiality: The Syrian Network for Human Rights is committed to strict procedures to protect the identity of witnesses, victims and their families, including the encryption of personal data and not disclosing information that may lead to the identification of sources, in accordance with the data protection principles adopted in human rights documentation.

Determining responsibility: In many cases, identifying the party responsible for planting mines is increasingly difficult due to the multiple actors who have controlled territory during the years of conflict and the lack of official minefield maps. Regarding cluster munition remnants, the network's database confirms the involvement of Bashar al-Assad's regime forces and Russian forces in most cluster munition attacks that left behind these remnants, thus holding them responsible for accidents caused by their detonation.

Methodological limitations: The data presented in this report represents a minimum of documented incidents, for several reasons:

- **First**, large areas of Syria still contain undiscovered minefields, meaning that many incidents go unreported.
- **Second**, access to the field varies across governorates, and some areas may be less covered than others.
- **Third**, the report does not include the social, economic, and psychological impacts of mine incidents, dimensions that warrant separate consideration.
- **Fourth**, in some cases, it may be difficult to definitively distinguish between a landmine explosion and the explosion of other unexploded ordnance. In such cases, the incident is classified according to the most likely probabilities supported by the available evidence.

THIRD: TOLL OF VICTIMS OF LANDMINES AND CLUSTER MUNITIONS SINCE MARCH 2011

A- Casualty Toll

The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented the deaths of at least 3,799 civilians from landmines and cluster munitions between March 2011 and April 2026, including:

- ☉ 1,000 children.
- ☉ 377 women.
- ☉ 329 civilians, including 65 children and 29 women, since the fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime on December 8, 2024.

The casualty figures are distributed as follows:

a) Landmines:

The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented the deaths of at least 3,398 civilians from landmine explosions between March 2011 and April 2026, including:

- ☉ 862 children.
- ☉ 343 women.
- ☉ 317 civilians, including 56 children and 26 women, since the fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime in December 2024.

b) Cluster Munitions:

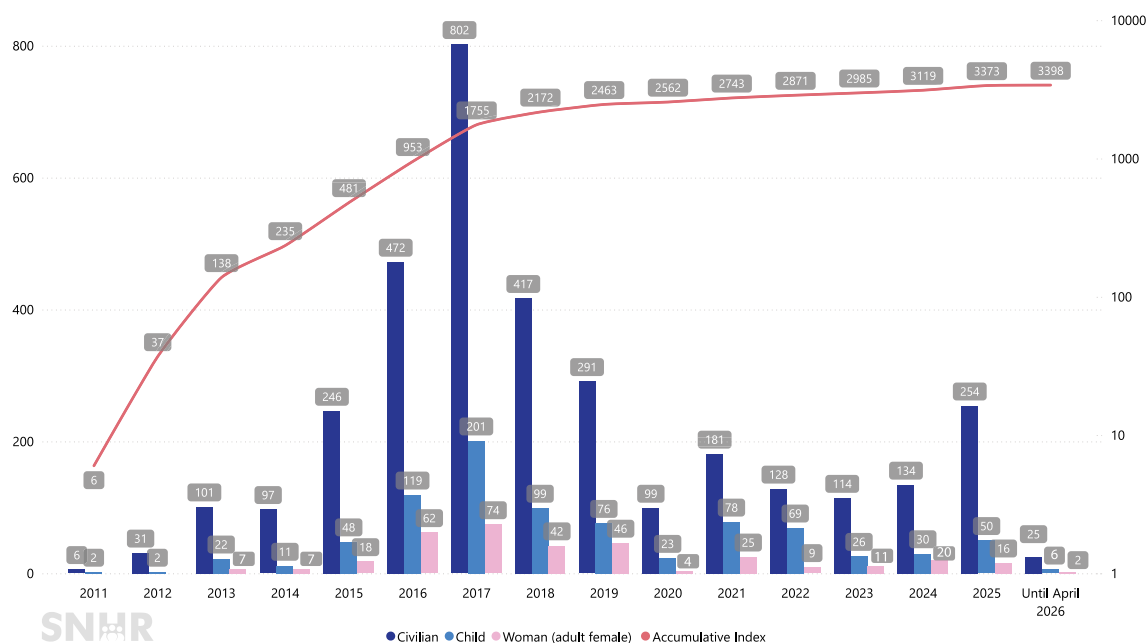
The Syrian Network for Human Rights documented the deaths of at least 401 civilians from cluster munition remnants between March 2011 and April 2016, including:

- ☉ 138 children.
- ☉ 34 women.
- ☉ 12 civilians (9 children and 3 women) since the fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime in December 2014.

B- Distribution of victims by year

a) Landmines:

SNHR documented the killing of at least 3,398 civilians, including 862 children and 343 women, by landmine explosions from March 2011 to April 2026. The victims are distributed by year as follows:



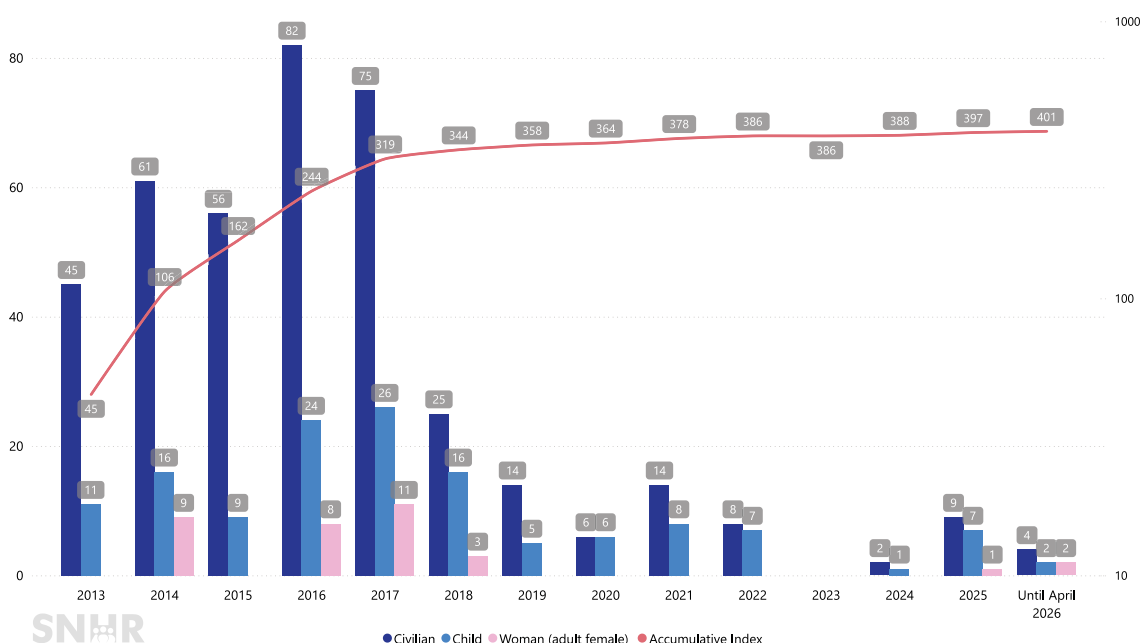
The annual data shown above for mine incidents in Syria shows a sharp rise in the number of victims. Incidents started at low rates in the early years following the outbreak of the Syrian revolution, then gradually increased to reach their peak in 2017, as this year constituted about 24% of the total recorded during the period (802 out of 3398), reflecting the intensive use of mines and the widening scope of their spread.

After 2017, the number of victims decreased relatively and gradually. However, casualties from landmines continued until April 2026, and the death toll rose significantly after the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime in December 2024, indicating that the threat of landmines remains and continues to endanger civilians.

These figures indicate that landmines pose a long-term threat to the civilian population, particularly children and women. The continued casualties after the fall of the previous regime underscore the urgent need to intensify demining efforts, strengthen awareness programs, and develop effective protection mechanisms for civilians in contaminated areas to reduce casualties and ensure civilian safety.

b) Cluster Munitions:

SNHR documented the killing of at least 401 civilians, including 138 children and 34 women, from March 2011 to April 2026, as a result of cluster munition remnants. The breakdown by year is as follows:



Hundreds of unexploded cluster munitions in Syria have become like landmines, and these remnants remain widespread across various governorates, as confirmed by previous statistics. We continue to record civilian deaths resulting from their detonation. The Syrian Network for Human Rights database confirms the involvement of the Bashar al-Assad regime and Russian forces in most of these attacks, thus attributing responsibility for deaths caused by cluster munition remnants to these forces.

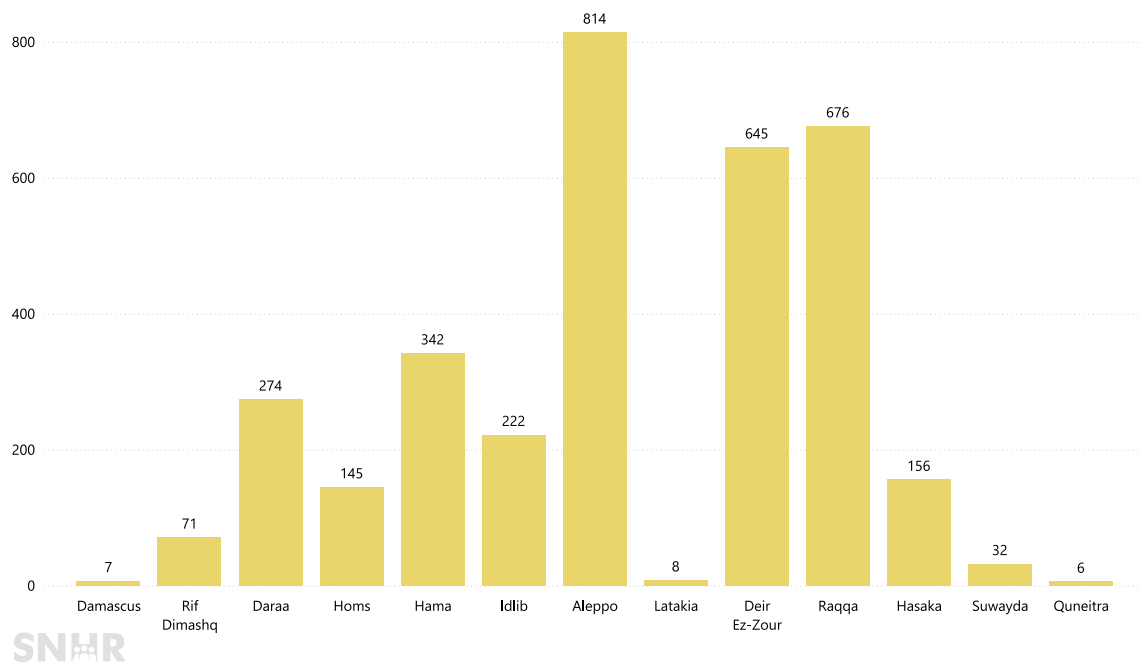
Data on unexploded cluster munitions shows that the number of victims peaked between 2013 and 2017, accounting for between 12% and 19% of the total casualties. This reflects the extensive use of these munitions and their direct impact on civilians. After 2017, the numbers declined significantly, but casualties continued even after the fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime in December 2014. This underscores the danger of these weapons and the ongoing threat posed by unexploded ordnance to civilians, despite the cessation of direct military operations. This data illustrates the long-term nature of cluster munitions, as they continue to harm civilians, especially children, which calls for intensifying efforts to remove these remnants and strengthening awareness and protection programs for the civilian population in contaminated areas, to ensure the reduction of human losses and the safety of civilians in the post-Bashar al-Assad era.

C- Distribution of Victims across Governorates:

a) Landmines:



SNHR documented the killing of at least 3,398 civilians, including 862 children and 343 women, by landmine explosions between March 2011 and April 2026. The toll was distributed across the governorates as follows:

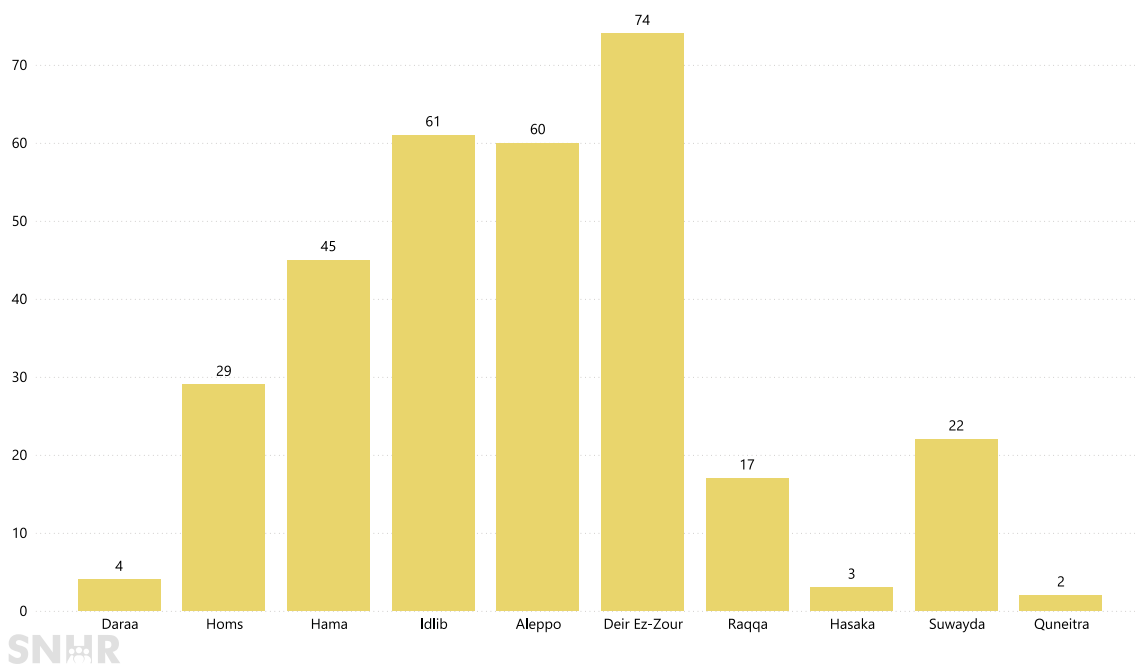


Data analysis shows that approximately 63% of landmine victims (2,135 out of 3,398) were killed in the governorates of Aleppo (24%), Raqqa (20%), and Deir ez-Zor (19%). These were followed by the governorates of Daraa, Hama, and Idlib, which together accounted for approximately 24% of the total victims (838 out of 3,398).

According to the Syrian Network for Human Rights database, the variation in the percentages mentioned above is due to several factors, most notably the changing size of the areas controlled by the warring parties and the multiple factions that controlled a single governorate, particularly in governorates like Aleppo, Raqqa, and Idlib. This resulted in a higher number of victims in these governorates compared to others.



SNHR documented the killing of at least 317 civilians, including 65 children and 26 women, by landmine explosions between the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime on December 8, 2024, and April 2026. The toll was distributed across the governorates as follows:

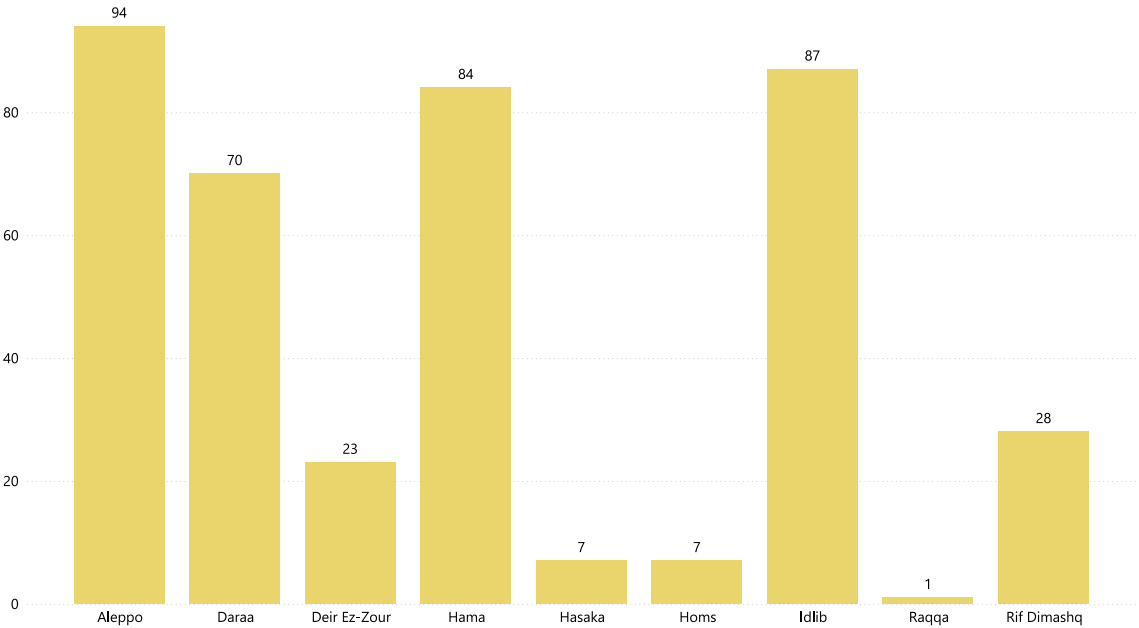


Data analysis shows that landmines continued to harm civilians even after the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime, with 317 victims recorded across various Syrian governorates. The data indicates that the highest number of victims was recorded in Deir ez-Zor (23.34%), Aleppo (18.93%), and Idlib (19.24%). These were followed by Hama (14.20%), Homs (9.15%), and As-Suwayda (6.94%), while Raqqa (5.36%), Daraa (1.26%), Al-Hasakah (0.95%), and Quneitra (0.63%) recorded fewer victims. This geographical distribution reflects the continued danger of landmines to civilians, particularly in areas heavily mined due to changes in control during the conflict. The continued casualties after the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime point to the long-term nature of these mines and their ongoing threat to the civilian population, especially children.

b) Cluster Munitions:



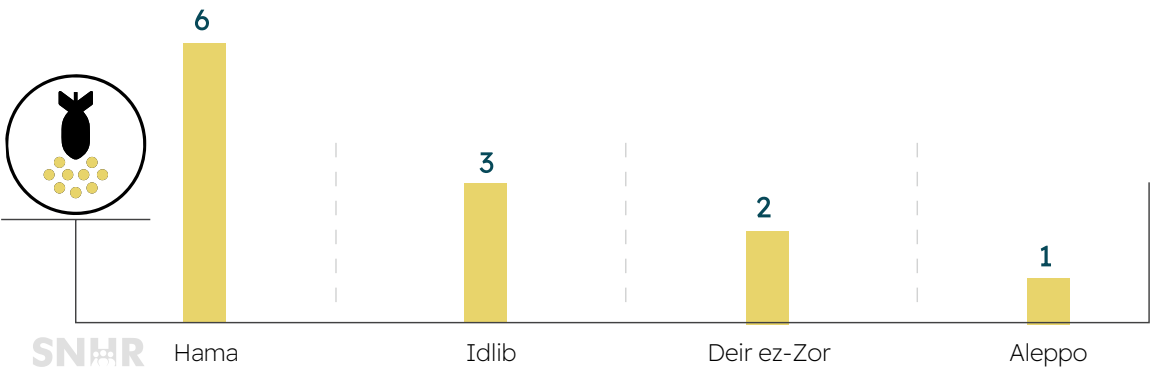
SNHR documented the killing of at least 401 civilians, including 138 children and 34 women, from March 2011 to April 2026, as a result of cluster munition remnants. The toll was distributed across the governorates as follows:



Data analysis shows that approximately 84% of victims of unexploded cluster munitions (335 out of 401) were killed in the governorates of Aleppo, Idlib, Hama, and Daraa, followed by the governorates of Rif Dimashq and Deir ez-Zor, which accounted for about 13% of the total number of victims (51 out of 401). The variation in these percentages is attributed to several factors, most notably the intensity of cluster munition attacks by Bashar al-Assad’s regime forces and Russian forces in some areas, which resulted in a higher number of victims in Aleppo, Idlib, Hama, and Daraa compared to other governorates.




SNHR documented the deaths of at least 12 civilians—9 children and 3 women—from the fall of Bashar al-Assad’s regime on December 8, 2014, until April 2016, as a result of the explosion of cluster munition remnants. The total was distributed among the governorates as follows:



D- Landmine and Cluster Munition Injuries

Landmines and unexploded cluster munitions cause serious harm to civilians, as their explosions result in severe injuries. These injuries often include amputations, severe physical injuries, and potentially permanent disfigurement, as well as partial or total loss of hearing or sight, leading in many cases to permanent disabilities.

 While it is difficult to determine the total number of victims, the network estimates that at least **10,600 civilians** have sustained injuries of varying severity, many of whom require prosthetic limbs, as well as long-term rehabilitation services and ongoing psychological support, given the limited resources and services available.

FOURTH: MINE CLEARANCE OPERATIONS AND THE RISKS INVOLVED

Following the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime on December 8, 2014, numerous initiatives emerged to remove landmines and unexploded ordnance. These initiatives were undertaken by various entities, including Syrian Ministry of Defense military engineering teams, Syrian Civil Defense teams, and volunteer efforts by civilians in their respective areas. These combined efforts resulted in the dismantling and removal of thousands of landmines and unexploded ordnance from various regions.

However, these operations were carried out under extremely difficult conditions, most notably the absence of official minefield maps or technical data specifying the types of mines planted, their locations, and danger zones. The former parties to the conflict failed to disclose this information, which contravenes the obligations stipulated in Protocol II amending the Convention on Conventional Weapons (1996) regarding the registration and disclosure of mine locations upon the cessation of hostilities. Furthermore, most field teams lacked the specialized training and technical equipment necessary to conduct clearance operations in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), which define the safety and efficiency requirements for surveying, clearing, and destroying munitions. A comprehensive national mine action management program is still lacking, and international technical and financial support for this purpose remains inadequate.

SNHR has documented the deaths of 47 people during demining operations since the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime. Of these, 40 were members of the Syrian Ministry of Defense's engineering teams, while the remainder were killed during individual or volunteer demining attempts. The Network also recorded dozens of injuries of varying severity during these operations, although the exact number of casualties could not be fully verified according to the Network's established documentation standards.

These figures reveal that demining operations themselves have become an additional source of casualties, as the harm is not limited to civilians exposed to accidental explosions, but also extends to demining personnel who lack a safe working environment. This situation necessitates the establishment of a national coordination structure to manage demining operations, the provision of systematic training for teams working according to IMAS standards, and the equipping of these teams with the necessary detection and personal protective equipment, in addition to increased international technical and financial support to ensure that clearance operations are carried out safely and effectively.

FIFTH: LEGAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Legal Conclusions:

The data documented in this report confirms that landmines and unexploded cluster munitions continue to pose a direct and daily threat to the lives and physical safety of civilians in various Syrian governorates, more than fourteen years after the outbreak of the armed conflict. The continued casualties even after the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime in December 2014 indicate that vast areas of land remain contaminated with undetected and uncleared mines, particularly in areas that have experienced frequent changes in control between the conflict parties.

Victim data shows that children make up about 26% of all landmine fatalities, while women account for about 10%. This distribution underscores the indiscriminate nature of landmines, which do not distinguish between combatants and civilians once planted.

1. Legal Classification under International Humanitarian Law:

- International humanitarian law, both customary and treaty-based, prohibits indiscriminate attacks, meaning attacks that are not directed at a specific military objective or that employ methods or means of warfare whose effects cannot be limited. Anti-personnel landmines, by their very nature, do not distinguish between combatants and civilians once deployed and remain effective for many years after the cessation of hostilities. Therefore, their use in or near populated areas constitutes a violation of the principles of distinction and precautions in attack.
- The 1997 Ottawa Convention comprehensively prohibits the use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of antipersonnel mines. Although Syria is not a party to this convention, the prohibition or severe restrictions on the use of antipersonnel mines reflect a growing trend in customary international law. Furthermore, the Second Amended Protocol to the 1996 Convention on Conventional Weapons imposes detailed restrictions on mine use, including the registration of their locations, warnings about their presence, and their removal after the cessation of hostilities.
- As for cluster munitions, the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions prohibits their use entirely, and neither Syria nor Russia is a party to it. However, the use of these munitions in populated areas, regardless of party to the Convention, constitutes a violation of customary international humanitarian law, which prohibits indiscriminate attacks and attacks that are expected to cause excessive civilian harm in relation to the anticipated military advantage.

2. Individual Criminal Responsibility

- The indiscriminate use of landmines and cluster munitions in civilian areas may constitute a war crime under the Rome Statute if the perpetrator knew that the attack would cause demonstrably excessive civilian casualties in relation to the anticipated military advantage. This conduct may also fall under the category of using weapons of an indiscriminate nature, depending on the circumstances and evidence of each case. Establishing criminal responsibility in this context requires demonstrating the mental element, including the commander's or perpetrator's knowledge of the indiscriminate nature of the weapon and the circumstances surrounding its use.
- SNHR database confirms the involvement of Bashar al-Assad regime forces and Russian forces in carrying out most of the cluster munition attacks, which left behind unexploded ordnance that continues to kill civilians. These forces, along with other parties to the conflict, are also responsible for planting mines in wide areas without recording their locations, placing warning signs, or taking measures for their removal after operations have ended. This constitutes a breach of clear legal obligations under Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Conventional Weapons and customary international humanitarian law.

3. Victims' Right to Reparation

- International law guarantees victims the right to effective remedies and appropriate reparation for harm caused by grave violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law. The Basic Principles on the Right of Victims of Grave Violations to a Remedy and Reparation define five forms of reparation: restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition. Article 91 of Additional Protocol I also stipulates the responsibility of parties to the conflict to compensate for harm caused by violations of international humanitarian law. This framework necessitates the establishment of a national mechanism for compensating and rehabilitating victims of landmines and cluster munitions within the broader transitional justice system in Syria.

4. Difficulty in determining responsibility and combating impunity

- In many cases, it is impossible to determine who is responsible for planting mines due to multiple parties successively controlling the same area and the absence of any official records. This difficulty exacerbates the problem of impunity, necessitating independent investigations and systematic documentation of contamination sites, linking them to data on control routes and conflict patterns. This will contribute to building accountability files usable before national and international judicial mechanisms.

Recommendations:

First: To the Syrian Government

I. Join relevant international treaties

Initiate accession to the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and fulfill the resulting obligations, including destroying stockpiles within the specified timeframes, preparing national plans for clearing contaminated areas, and submitting annual transparency reports to States Parties. Consideration should also be given to joining Protocol V to the Convention on Conventional Weapons on Explosive Remnants of War, which imposes obligations related to clearing explosive remnants of war and providing technical information about them.

II. Establish a comprehensive national mine clearance program.

Establish a national mine management authority to coordinate all entities working in this field, including military engineering teams, civil defense, and specialized international organizations. This authority will be responsible for planning, implementation, and supervision in accordance with international standards for mine action. This includes increasing the number of trained teams, providing modern detection and clearance equipment, and establishing binding safety protocols for all personnel working in the field.

III. Field Survey and Identification of Hazardous Areas

Conduct a comprehensive field survey to identify areas contaminated with mines and cluster munition remnants, and place clear and permanent warning signs on them. Updated maps of contaminated areas should be published on official platforms and in local media, and public warnings should be issued in advance of any dismantling or detonation operations in populated areas.

IV. Protecting Victims and Ensuring Their Right to Reparation

Providing urgent medical care to landmine victims and establishing long-term physical and psychological rehabilitation programs, including the provision of prosthetics and psychological support services. A national mechanism for compensating victims of landmines and cluster munitions should also be established, in accordance with the basic principles on the right of victims to a remedy and reparation, and this mechanism should be integrated within a comprehensive transitional justice framework.

V. Awareness and Education

Adopting awareness programs aimed at the most vulnerable groups, especially children, farmers and returning displaced persons, and including the topic of mine and war remnants dangers in the official educational curricula.

Second: To the United Nations and the International Community

I. Strengthen Technical and Financial Support for Demining Operations

Allocate sufficient and sustainable financial resources within UN programs and international donors to support mine clearance projects in Syria. Provide logistical and technical support to field teams, particularly the Syrian Civil Defense and Ministry of Defense engineering teams, including specialized training according to IMAS standards and equipping them with detection and protection equipment, as well as supporting local community initiatives to raise awareness of the dangers of mines.

II. Activating Accountability Mechanisms

Support accountability efforts for the indiscriminate use of landmines and cluster munitions through available mechanisms, including the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria. The Syrian government should also be supported in establishing effective national judicial mechanisms to hold those responsible for these violations accountable.

Third: To the Syrian community and local communities

I. Adherence to safety practices

Avoid entering unsafe or unmarked areas, refrain from touching or moving any object of unknown origin, and immediately report any war remnants or suspicious munitions to the relevant authorities. Also, adhere to clear and safe routes when moving around, especially in rural and agricultural areas.

II. Participating in awareness and reporting efforts

Active participation in mine risk awareness campaigns organized by local and international organizations and government agencies, and establishing local networks to report suspected mine-contaminated sites, thus facilitating access to them by specialized removal teams.

APPENDIX: THE SPREAD OF LANDMINES AND THE ROLE OF THE SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN DOCUMENTING THEM

The Syrian Network for Human Rights is an [active member](#) of the International Cluster Munition Coalition and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL-CMC), and provides this coalition with regularly updated field data on the impact of landmines and cluster munition remnants on civilians in Syria.

SNHR's data indicates that a large number of minefields and areas contaminated with cluster munition remnants remain undiscovered, a consequence of years of multilateral mine use in situations where planting locations were not recorded and no measures were taken to identify them. The network's efforts in this area focus on three main areas:

First, documenting victims and those injured by landmine and cluster munition explosions in all Syrian governorates, using the multi-stage verification methodology adopted by the network and detailed in the Methodology section of this report.

Second, analyzing the temporal and geographical patterns of landmine incidents to identify the most contaminated areas and linking the data to military control patterns during the years of conflict. This will contribute to determining legal responsibilities and building accountability files usable before the relevant judicial mechanisms.

Third, coordinating with international partners to strengthen accountability mechanisms and support mine clearance and risk education programs within local communities, including providing relevant stakeholders with the data necessary to prioritize clearance operations.

Maps of Contaminated Areas

In December 2024, the Network issued [a statement](#) that included approximate maps of areas likely contaminated by mines in various Syrian governorates. These maps were prepared based on the Network's databases, which include records of victims and injuries and the geolocation of documented incidents. These maps represent the minimum extent of actual contamination, as they are limited to the locations that the Network was able to document. It is likely that large additional areas surrounding each documented location are also contaminated by mines, given the typical planting patterns of fields, parallel lines, or booby traps.

SNHR's databases also include approximate maps of areas likely contaminated with cluster munition remnants, prepared based on documentation of cluster munition attacks and records of victims of unexploded submunition explosions. The Network presented detailed maps of several governorates in its [report](#) of April 4, 2023, entitled: **“On the International Day for Mine Awareness: Documenting the Widespread Spread of Landmines in Syria, Threatening Millions of Lives.”**

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