

LANDMINE FREE 2025

MINE FREE DOES NOT MEAN VICTIM FREE
INCREASED EFFORTS BY ALL STATES PARTIES ARE NEEDED TO FULFILL THE VICTIM
ASSISTANCE OBLIGATIONS OF THE CONVENTION



Jemerson, 12, lost his left hand in 2014 due to a mine remained after the conflict that hit Colombia. The accident was in Corinto municipality (Cauca department) in Colombia. Thanks to HI support, Jemerson received rehab sessions and psychosocial support. Today, he follows drawing class at the cultural center of his municipality.
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For the first time in seven years, funding dedicated to victim assistance as part of the global mine action budget has increased. This has increased access to vital services for people injured, survivors, affected families and communities in humanitarian crisis, situations of protracted conflict, and in development contexts. The Landmine Free 2025 (LMF2025) campaign calls on the donor community to turn this positive change into a trend.

The context

The 2019 Landmine Monitor showed that direct international support for victim assistance has increased to levels last reported in 2011. Based on information available as of November 2019, earmarked funding for victim assistance reached 44,7 million in 2018, compared to 27,7

million in 2017¹. Half of this funding, however, went to just four countries: Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, and Syria; while a continuous decline was recorded for most of the other recipients (nine out of the 17 recipients of victim assistance funding received less support in 2018 as compared to 2017).

This has led to a worrisome scenario. Due to a reduction in the number of qualified staff, as well as in the availability of raw materials and assistive devices, gaps in the delivery of services have been witnessed in many countries including those where conflict is not raging. This is threatening the sustainability of essential programs and has led to a situation where several countries are 'left behind' despite the life-long needs of victims.

While it is recognized that other types of funding allocated through humanitarian development and human rights envelopes for mine/explosive remnants of war (ERW) affected countries contribute to victim assistance, evidence as to whether these broader efforts are reaching victims is lacking. This brings us to a related challenge, namely that of accountability towards victims: how to hold states accountable to the promise made to victims twenty years ago?

The future of victim assistance can and must be supported by both increased and continued earmarked funding as part of the global mine action budget and, at the same time, by effective integration into broader humanitarian, development and human rights efforts in countries affected by mines/ERW.

It is important to bear in mind that victim assistance is about saving the lives of people who had an accident with a mine/ERW (giving people a chance to survive) and about advancing the inclusion of survivors and indirect victims. As such, victim assistance cannot simply be subsumed in disability-inclusive efforts alone.

The obligations vis-à-vis victims will be realized when services are available, accessible and sustainable as a result of effective coordination between relevant ministries in affected countries.

Victim assistance efforts contribute to realizing a great number of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), targets and indicators. As a recent GICHD – UNDP study² shows, 'there is much potential for the work of mine action in fragile contexts to prepare the foundations on which sustainable peace and development can be built'. Victim assistance efforts alone can effectively contribute to achieving SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 16.

What is the LMF2025 campaign calling on States to do?

The Preamble of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention recognizes the desire of States Parties "to do their utmost in providing assistance for the care and rehabilitation, including the social and economic reintegration of mine victims..." In addition, Article 6 requires each State Party "in a position to do so..." to provide such assistance. In accordance with the above, the LMF2025 campaign calls on states and civil society:

¹ Landmine Monitor 2019, To be published

² 2017, Leaving no one behind: mine action and the sustainable development goals, Ursign Hofmann (GICHD) and Olaf Juergensen (UNDP).

- A. ***To increase sustainable support for victim assistance as part of the mine action budget or alternative sources, to meet the enduring needs of victims, namely by ensuring that technical and financial support is provided to:***
- i. Put in place coordination mechanisms, carry out cross-governmental efforts and create and use a centralized database to ensure that the needs and rights of mine victims are effectively addressed in an informed way, as per Actions #33, #34 and #35 of the Oslo Action Plan (OAP);
 - ii. Deliver first aid and other medical emergency services, and ongoing medical care, rehabilitation, psycho-social support, staff training and medical supplies with a specific focus on rural areas as per Actions #36 - 38 of the OAP and support the setup of national referral mechanisms as per Action #37 of the OAP;
 - iii. Develop and maintain socio-economic inclusion projects for victims through education, sports, leisure and cultural activities, vocational training, micro-credit, income generation and employment as per Action #39 of the OAP.
 - iv. Ensure that relevant national humanitarian response and preparedness plans provide for the safety and protection of mine survivors in situations of risk as per Action #40 of the OAP.
 - v. Ensure the full inclusion and effective participation of mine victims and their representative organizations in all matters that affect them, including in rural and remote areas as per Action #41 of the OAP.
- B. ***To integrate victim assistance into broader humanitarian, human rights and development efforts in mine/ERW affected countries.*** To ensure this integration is effective, government bodies responsible for mine action in donor states should promote the development of services relevant for victims through their country's other international cooperation and assistance programs.
- C. ***To support efforts to explore ways to strengthen States accountability towards landmines/ERW victims.***
- D. ***Ensure that all mine action operators, whether non-governmental or commercial, contribute to victim assistance through their different activities, ranging from data collection, to survey, clearance and risk education, are compliant with the International Mine Action Standard on Victim Assistance.***