

P R E S S E M I T T E I L U N G

Yemen: Explosive remnants of war the biggest killer of children since truce began

Sana'a, 1 July, 2022 – Landmines and unexploded ordnance have been the biggest killers of children in Yemen since a truce was announced in April, according to Save the Children. The uptick in deaths from these weapons is understood to be the result of families moving to previously inaccessible areas following the decrease in hostilities.

New analysis from the child rights agency shows that landmines and unexploded munition were responsible for over 75% of all war-related casualties among children, killing and injuring more than 42 children between April and the end of June.

Since the truce began after seven years of conflict, the number of casualties related to armed conflict has fallen significantly, with 103 civilians killed in conflict during the three-month period. In the three months prior to the truce, 352 civilians were killed.

However, incidents related to landmines and unexploded ordnance have continued at a similar level, with an estimated average of one incident a day, resulting in the death of 49 civilians including at least eight children. In the three months prior to the truce, 56 civilians were killed by landmines and unexploded ordnance.

Explosive remnants of war remain a legacy threat from the fighting, posing a lasting hazard to civilians across the country even after hostilities cease. Children, in particular, have a heightened vulnerability to unexploded ordnance and landmines due to low-risk awareness and high inquisitiveness. Moreover, the sense of relative safety has resulted in a heightened mobility among civilians, and especially displaced people, who may feel confident to return to areas where hostilities have de-escalated.

Save the Children's Country Director for Yemen, Rama Hansraj, said:

“Even though fighting has been less frequent in the past months, explosive remnants of war are still claiming the lives of civilians on a daily basis. Landmines and unexploded munition pose a major threat to everyone in Yemen – especially children.

“Children are curious by nature – they want to explore their world and learn about it. And when they see something shiny or interesting, they can't help themselves from touching it. That's why so many children have been killed or injured in unexploded ordnance incidents; they pick up the unfamiliar object thinking it's a toy, only to find out that it's an unexploded cluster bomb.

“It gets even worse as we enter the rainy season, the land becomes saturated, and landmines buried in the shallows can drift into areas previously perceived to be safe. In the past couple of weeks, we've seen

many reports of adults and children killed or maimed while doing daily chores, such as fetching water, working in their farms or tending to their livestock.

“There is no safe place for children in Yemen, not even when the fighting has relatively subdued. Children in Yemen have endured mind-boggling violence and immense suffering for too long, and unless the warring parties and donor community prioritize the protection of children, the grim legacy of war will haunt them for years to come.”

Save the Children is calling on warring parties to speed up and fully engage in all efforts to clear existing mines and unexploded ordnance and to take immediate, practical measures to reduce the increasing impact of these explosives. Save the Children is also calling on the donor community to support the scale-up and provision of technical equipment necessary for the marking and clearance of unexploded ordnance and mines so that children and their communities are aware of the risk and better able to mitigate it in a safe manner.

Save the Children has been working in Yemen since 1963, implementing programmes in education, child protection, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, and emergency response across most of the country. Save the Children continues to work on providing assistance to victims of mines and unexploded ordnance, covering the costs of medical treatment and providing psychosocial support when needed.

Notes to editors:

- The data analysis was conducted by Save the Children, Yemen Country Office, and it covers the period **between March 31st, 2022, until June 27th, 2022.**
- The numbers of casualties (fatalities and injuries) are extracted from the **Civilian Impact Monitoring Project** under Yemen’s Protection Cluster (<https://civilianimpactmonitoring.org/>).
- **Total Civilian Casualties** (including airstrikes, shelling, small arms fire, landmines, UXOs, sniper, IEDs, light weapons, drones, naval shelling, and hand grenades, and excluding casualties resulted from personal disputes): **341 (Fatalities: 103 / Injuries: 238).**
- **Total Children Casualties** (including airstrikes, shelling, small arms fire, landmines, UXOs, sniper, IEDs, light weapons, drones, naval shelling, and hand grenades, and excluding casualties resulted from personal disputes): **56 (Fatalities: 15 / Injuries: 41).**
- **Total Civilian ERW Casualties** (including landmines and UXOs): **139 (Fatalities: 49 / Injuries: 90).**
- **Total Children ERW Casualties** (including landmines and UXOs): **42 (Fatalities: 8 / Injuries: 34).**

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Kontakt:

Save the Children Deutschland e.V.

Pressestelle – Silke Zorn

Tel.: +49 30 27 59 59 79 232

Mail: silke.zorn@savethechildren.de

Für mehr aktuelle Informationen folgen Sie uns online:

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Über Save the Children

Im Nachkriegsjahr 1919 gründete die britische Sozialreformerin und Kinderrechtlerin Eglantyne Jebb Save the Children, um Kinder in Deutschland und Österreich vor dem Hungertod zu retten. Heute ist die inzwischen größte unabhängige Kinderrechtsorganisation der Welt in rund 120 Ländern tätig. Save the Children setzt sich ein für Kinder in Kriegen, Konflikten und Katastrophen. Für eine Welt, die die Rechte der Kinder achtet, in der alle Kinder gesund und sicher leben sowie frei und selbstbestimmt aufwachsen und lernen können – seit über 100 Jahren.