

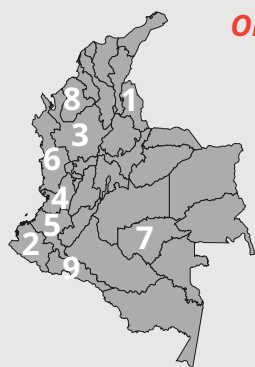


The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Colombia newsletter informs about the main technical assistance activities carried out through the projects implemented in the country to strengthen the mine action sector, in conjunction with the **Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP, in Spanish) - Descontamina Colombia**.

The impact of anti-personnel mines in Colombia

January - July 2021

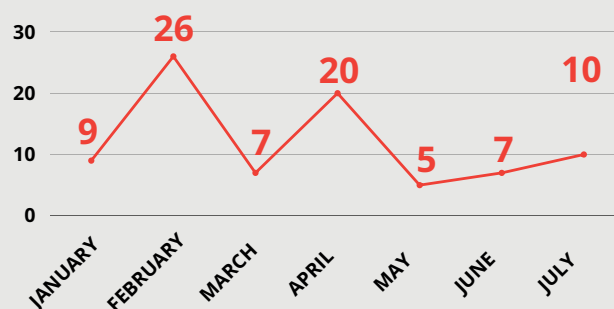
Colombia reported during the month of July **10 new victims of Antipersonnel Mines (APM) and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)**, six fewer victims registered compared to July 2020, according to statistics reported by the OACP. Once again, we observe with concern that the civilian population is the most affected (seven out of ten new victims are civilians) by these weapons. We urge those who use antipersonnel mines to abandon their use immediately. The number of APM and UXO victims registered during the first seven months of the year now stands at 84.



ORIGIN OF THE VICTIMS 2021

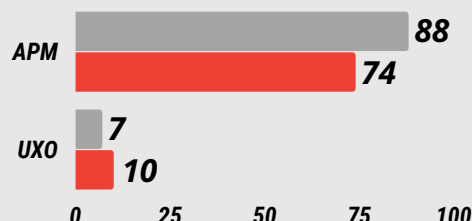
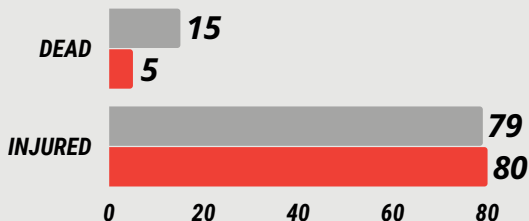
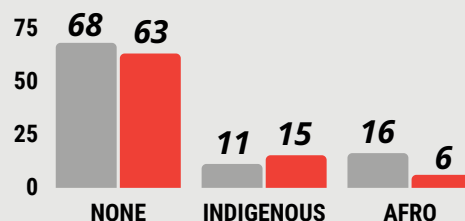
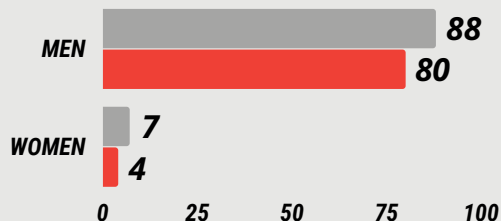
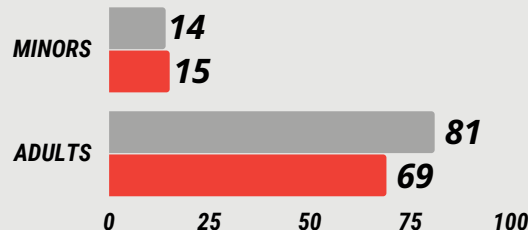
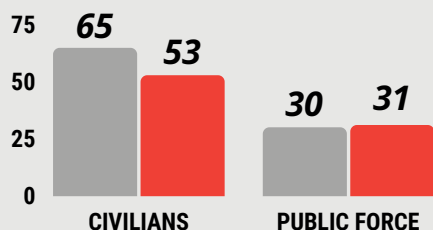
1. NORTE DE SANTANDER: 22
2. NARIÑO: 15
3. ANTIOQUIA: 15
4. VALLE DEL CAUCA: 8
5. CAUCA: 7
6. CHOCÓ: 6
7. GUAVIARE: 4
8. CÓRDOBA: 4
9. PUTUMAYO: 3

REGISTERED VICTIMS PER MONTH - 2021



During July, the most affected departments were Norte de Santander, Antioquia and Nariño. **The regions with the most registered victims continue to be the Colombian Pacific Coast and the border area with Venezuela**, two regions where there are dynamics of conflict and the presence of illegal armed groups. Until July 31, the Government of Colombia registered a total of 12,074 victims of APM and UXO since 1990, the year in which the official registry began.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VICTIMS 2020 - 2021*





UNMAS will accompany another test such as the one developed in Barrancabermeja this September. Photo: Nicolás Meléndez / UNMAS Colombia.



Ex-combatants share information about explosive ordnance laid by FARC-EP during the armed conflict

34 places in six municipalities of Antioquia, Bolívar and Santander, with alleged contamination with explosive ordnance used during the conflict between FARC-EP and the Colombian State, were identified by ex-combatants on 19 July in the city of Barrancabermeja, Santander.

In this meeting, the methodology designed by the Tripartite Mechanism composed by the Colombian Government, the National Reincorporation Council (CNR-FARC) and the UN for the Gathering of Information on the Location of Explosive Ordnance was implemented for the first time. Representatives of the OACP, CNR-FARC, officials of the UN Verification Mission and UNMAS participated in this first test of the methodology.

The data collected formally begins the provision of information by FARC ex-combatants to the Government of Colombia to support the clearance of territories affected by anti-personnel mines and other explosive ordnance, as established in the Peace Agreement signed in November 2016. UNMAS, as a member of the Tripartite Mechanism, expects to start the first phase (pilot) of the gathering information project during the second semester of 2021.



The staff of HUMANICEMOS DH and UNMAS together with Ambassador Patricia Llombart, who is finishing her diplomatic mission in Colombia. Photo: HUMANICEMOS DH.

HUMANICEMOS DH and UNMAS participate in the European Trust Fund for Peace projects fair in Caquetá

On August 17, ex-combatants members of HUMANICEMOS DH and the team of the external quality assurance of UNMAS (in charge of ensuring the quality of the humanitarian demining operations of former organization), participated in a fair of the projects financed by the European Trust Fund for Peace organized by the Presidential Council for Stabilization, in the municipality of San Vicente del Caguán, Caquetá. This fair was attended by the Presidential Advisor for Stabilization, Emilio Archila; the Ambassador of the European Union in Colombia, Patricia Llombart; and municipal and departmental authorities. **The guests learned about the work done by ex-combatants members of HUMANICEMOS DH to eliminate explosive ordnance in Caquetá** and their support in the reconciliation process with the communities.



Experts from the Brazilian Army have supported the Colombian Army since 2015, as part of a cooperation agreement between both institutions. Photo: Ops. team/UNMAS.

UNMAS supports the training for personnel of Quality Management of the Colombian Army Demining Brigade

On August 19 and 20, the **UNMAS Colombia operations and technical assistance team gave courses on land release; evidence-based approach; and gender and diversity in mine action**, aimed at four members of the Humanitarian Demining Brigade of the Colombian Army who are part of the national monitors course. These monitors will carry out Internal Quality Management tasks, in order to guarantee that humanitarian demining operations of the Brigade comply with the National Technical Norms and the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). These sessions are part of the extended course that is led by experts from the Technical Assistance Group of the Brazilian Army from 2015.



Health personnel from eight departments receive workshops on anti-personnel mines victims assistance

134 health personnel from eight departments affected by the presence of explosive ordnance (Antioquia, Arauca, Cauca, Chocó, Nariño, Norte de Santander, Santander and Putumayo) attended two workshops in August to strengthen the medical care for victims of anti-personnel mines and guarantee adequate guidance so that victims can access the Victims Assistance (VA) Referral Pathway of the Government of Colombia. **The workshops exposed the need to train the personnel of the social security system; to provide specifically tailored care for victims and improve their access to psychosocial care.** These workshops were coordinated by UNMAS and provided by representatives of the OACP, the Ministry of Health and the Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR).

These workshops are part of the joint work plan between the MA AoR and Ministry of Health, which seeks to update the VA Referral Pathway. Reference photo / UNMAS.



The psychosocial consequences on children and adolescents victims of anti-personnel mines

Fear, panic, anger, recurring thoughts, aggressiveness, insomnia and post-traumatic stress are just some of the negative psychosocial effects faced by children and adolescents who have been direct or indirect victims of anti-personnel mines in Colombia. These were part of the messages shared by experts during the virtual event **"Mine action as a response for the protection of the rights of children and adolescents"**, held on August 19 and organized by the Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR), in alliance with the Child Protection AoR, the Catholic University of Colombia and the Colombian Association of Psychology Faculties (ASCOFAPSI, by its spanish acronym). [Watch the full stream here.](#)

Reference photo for EORE sessions.
Courtesy: UNICEF and H&I



1,255
(10.3%)

Children and adolescents victims of explosive ordnance in Colombia

IDENTIFIED PSYCHOSOCIAL CONSEQUENCES



Emotional

- Fear
- Sadness
- Panic
- Anger



Cognitive

- Recurring thoughts
- Feeling of re-experiencing
- Changes in the perception of the territory
- Memory loss



Behavioral

- Isolation
- Insomnia
- Aggressiveness



Others

- Post-traumatic stress
- Flash back
- Confusion

KEYS FOR SUCCESSFUL PSYCHOSOCIAL CARE*

Recognize the primary needs of the affected family (employment, housing, lack of food, etc.).



Promote family life projects.



Inter-institutional responsibility and articulate the support of all the actors in the sector (Government, NGO, Academy and the health sector).



Link the whole family in the rehabilitation process to avoid revictimization.



Participation of the nearby environment (community, school, etc.) to sensitize them.

**Source: Research from the Catholic University of Colombia / Presentation by Psychologist Ever José López.*

The UNMAS Colombia team



Wilmar Loaiza
Operations Assistant
UNMAS Colombia

Wilmar is a deminer specializing in Clearance and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD). Since 2013 he has worked in the mine action sector and has collaborated with organizations such as The HALO Trust and Perigeo as an Operations Officer, Clearance Team Leader and Training Officer. **In 2019, he joined the UNMAS Colombia team in charge of training former FARC-EP combatants who are part of HUMANICEMOS DH**, an organization that emerged after the 2016 Peace Agreement. Between 2019 and June 2021, Wilmar helped improve operational procedures of the organization and trained 39 ex-combatants as deminers and 19 as EOD Level 1 operators.

Thanks to his training, these personnel now have the ability to dispose of explosive ordnance that continues to threaten the population of Caquetá. Wilmar is currently part of the Operations team of UNMAS Colombia and is supporting the development of a Level 2 EOD course to strengthen the capacities of the personnel of accredited demining organizations in Colombia.

About UNMAS Colombia

Since 2010, UNMAS has supported the National Mine Action Center of Colombia, under the direction of the OACP, humanitarian demining, victim assistance and explosive ordnance risk education organizations, to increase the capacity of the mine action sector and strengthen its coordination and regulatory frameworks, considering best global practices. UNMAS works in Colombia with the support of the **European Union**, through the **European Trust Fund for Peace**; and the Governments of **Germany, Italy and Republic of Korea**, whom we thank for their contributions in 2021.

