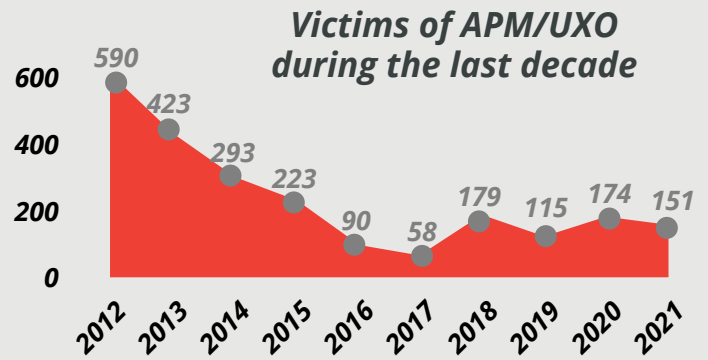




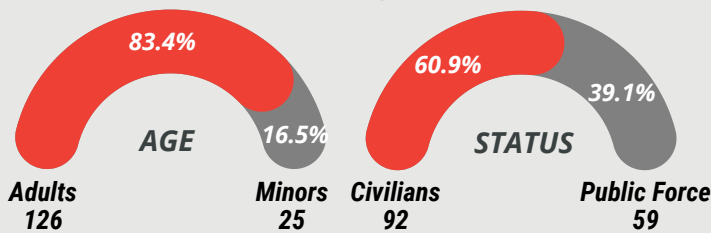
The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Colombia newsletter informs about the main technical assistance activities carried out through the projects implemented in the country to strengthen the mine action sector, in conjunction with the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP, in Spanish)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

## The impact of anti-personnel mines in Colombia in 2021

Colombia ended 2021 with **at least 151 Anti-personnel Mine (APM) and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) casualties recorded**, according to official statistics from OACP - Descontamina Colombia. Although the total number registered in 2021 is slightly lower compared to the number of victims registered by OACP in 2020 (174), the figure remains significantly higher than the number of victims registered in 2017 (58), arguably the most peaceful year in Colombia's recent history, just after the signing of the Peace Agreement.



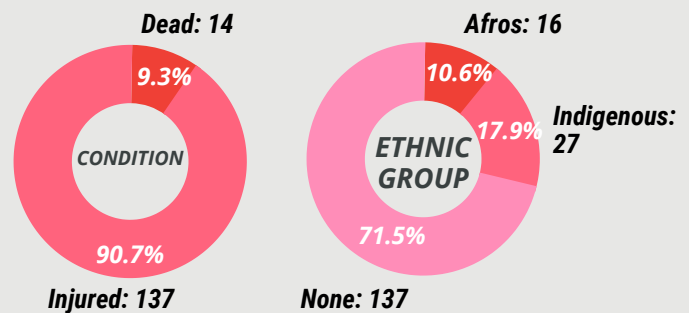
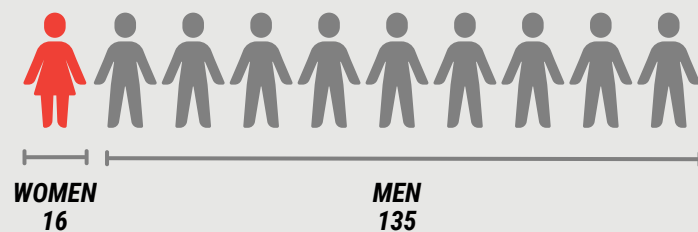
### Characterization of victims in 2021



We again note with concern that the **civilian population was the most affected (60.1%)** by anti-personnel mines in 2021, of which 27,2% were minors, showing the indiscriminate nature of these weapons proscribed by International Humanitarian Law.

### Indirect impact on women

Although women represent a smaller proportion of the victims (10.6%), we should not forget that each male victim causes a change in the organization of households, **burdening women with the responsibility of providing care for the victim, generating income and ensuring the safety of children**, usually after having moved to an urban center where the family can access state services.



Another worrisome indicator is the proportion of victims belonging to ethnic groups: **almost three (28.5%) of every 10 victims registered in 2021 were Indigenous or Afro-descendant persons**. This figure is particularly relevant, as it shows that ethnic minorities, especially protected by the Colombian constitution, are disproportionately affected by explosive ordnance compared to the rest of the Colombian population.

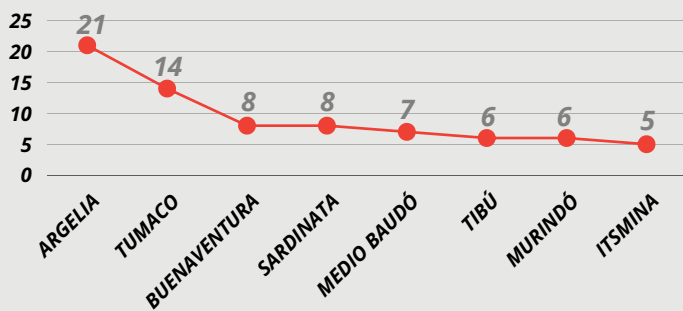


**UNMAS maintains its call for armed actors in Colombia to abandon the use of explosive ordnance, including anti-personnel mines, which have an indiscriminate effect, violating the principle of distinction, and cause unnecessary and excessive damage to the civilian population.**

\*Source: OACP / Descontamina Colombia. Figures may vary slightly in the coming weeks, due to case reviews carried out by the Government of Colombia.

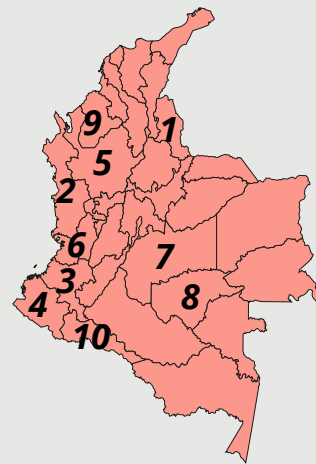
The humanitarian impact of APM and UXO accidents was concentrated in 43 municipalities located in ten departments during 2021. Norte de Santander, Chocó, Cauca, Nariño and Antioquia, **the five most affected departments, accounted for 83% (126) of the total number of registered victims**, which shows a focalization of violence in two regions: the Pacific coast and border area with Venezuela.

### The eight most affected municipalities



The municipalities of Argelia in Cauca; Tumaco in Nariño; Medio Baudó, Murindó and Istmina in Chocó; Sardinata and Tibú in Norte de Santander and Buenaventura in Valle del Cauca, **accounted for half (75) of the total number of victims** last year.

### Departments affected by number of victims



1. **Norte de Santander:** 29
2. **Chocó:** 28
3. **Cauca:** 27
4. **Nariño:** 21
5. **Antioquia:** 21
6. **Valle del Cauca:** 8
7. **Meta:** 6
8. **Guaviare:** 4
9. **Córdoba:** 4
10. **Putumayo:** 3

**Total: 151**

### The situation in Arauca

Arauca, a department historically affected by antipersonnel mines continues without registering victims of these devices since 2019, but in recent months we have registered the **increase in the use of explosive ordnance (including a car bomb in Saravena)** and numerous threats by non-state groups indicating the new installation of APM.

\*Source: OACP / Descontamina Colombia. Figures may vary slightly in the coming weeks, due to case reviews carried out by the Government of Colombia.



### Anti-personnel mine contamination spreads to Venezuela

The use of anti-personnel mines was evidenced on the other side of the border, after two Venezuelan civilians were killed in an antipersonnel mine accident in the State of Apure, bordering Colombia, on January 31. **This fact indicates a new mine contamination in Venezuelan territory**, after Venezuela was declared free of antipersonnel mines in 2013, in compliance with the commitments acquired by this country before the Ottawa Convention.

## HUMANICEMOS DH milestones in 2021

During 2021 HUMANICEMOS DH contributed to peacebuilding in Colombia with several milestones achieved from mine action. These achievements were made possible, in part, thanks to financial support from the **European Trust Fund for Peace** and technical assistance from UNMAS, both of which have supported the development and strengthening of HUMANICEMOS DH's organizational and operational capacities. [More details here.](#)

- 1 **March 2021:** One week after the start of Manual Clearance operations, a team identified on March 3 its first anti-personnel mine in La Montañita, Caquetá.
- 2 **March 2021:** Explosive Ordnance Risk Education work started in Solita, Caquetá, second municipality assigned by OACP.
- 3 **June 2021:** UNMAS finalized the process of technical assistance and training to HUMANICEMOS DH. As of July 1, they operate autonomously.
- 4 **July 2021:** 12 ex-combatants in the process of reintegration passed the first demining course given by HUMANICEMOS DH personnel, without UNMAS support.
- 5 **August 2021:** OACP assigns a third municipality to HUMANICEMOS DH to expand mine action work: Cartagena del Chairá, Caquetá.
- 6 **October 2021:** OACP formalizes the delivery of the first mine-free area completed by HUMANICEMOS DH: El Cedrito Indigenous Reservation in La Montañita.

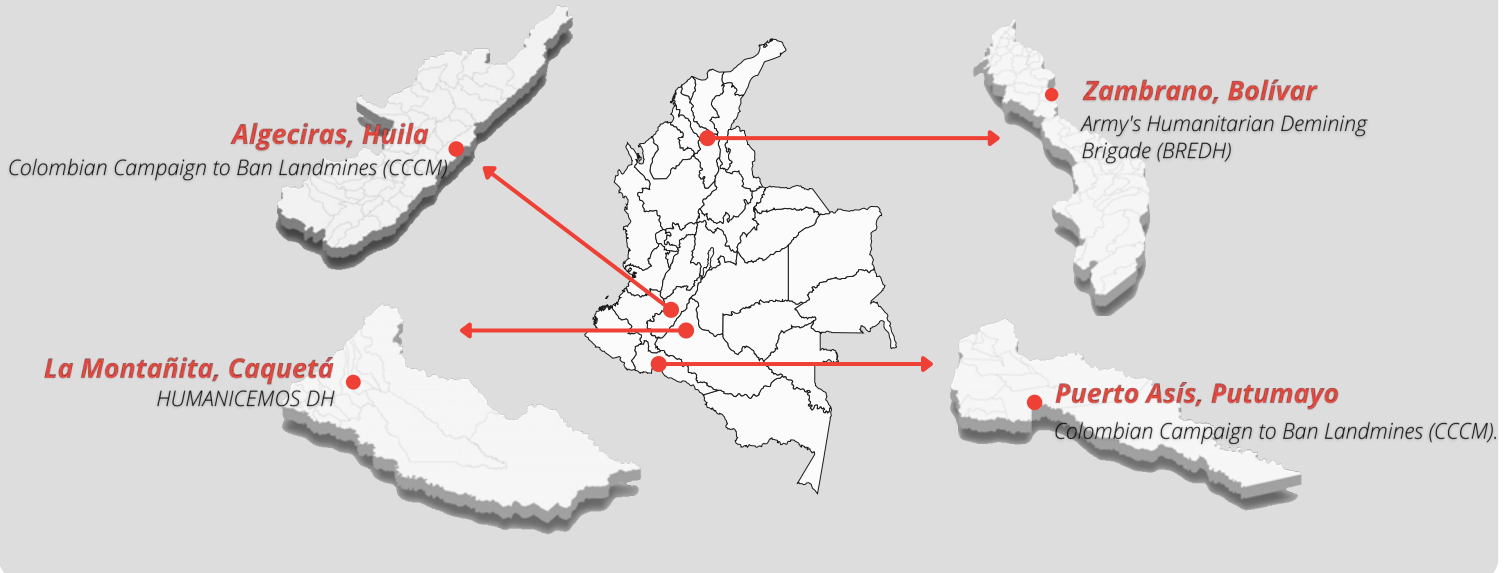
## UNMAS and OACP strengthen explosive ordnance disposal capacity of the humanitarian demining organizations in Colombia



This course is part of the activities agreed between UNMAS and OACP to strengthen the humanitarian demining sector in the country. Photos: UNMAS.

21 people from 10 mine action organizations in Colombia now have a better capacity to destroy the explosive ordnance they encounter during their operations, after they passed the first Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD level 2) practical course in Colombia that complies with the new Colombian Technical Standards (NTC) and the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). This practical training, conducted between January 17 and 28, was preceded by a five-week theoretical training conducted in 2021. The trainings were conducted by personnel from UNMAS, the Army's International Demining Center (CIDES), the EOD Center of the Swiss Confederation Armed Forces and the mine action component of the Organization of American States (OAS), **with financial support from the Republic of Korea.**

## Organizations begin to measure the socio-economic impact of humanitarian demining in Colombia with UNMAS methodology



Three organizations concluded in January the first tests of a methodology developed by UNMAS to measure the socioeconomic impact of humanitarian demining (HD) in four Colombian municipalities that have benefited from this type of operations. The methodology uses information gathered during HD operations, and **is reinforced with the use of Geographic Information Systems and the analysis of satellite images that allow evidencing the changes in the communities.**

The methodology was built during 2021 and testing began in October with the participation of the Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines (CCCM), HUMANICEMOS DH and the OACP for operations delivered by the Army's Humanitarian Demining Brigade (BREDH). This is the first standardized methodology in Colombia to measure the socioeconomic impact of humanitarian demining, which **seeks to demonstrate the importance of investing in this activity.** The results will be disclosed soon by each organization.





## Municipalities of the Colombian Pacific coast build their mine Victims Assistance with support from UN agencies

The municipalities of **López de Micay, Timbiquí and Guapi**, located in the Colombian Pacific coast, already have their Victims Assistance Referral Pathways (VA-RP) that will allow an effective response to eventual contingencies generated by explosive ordnance. These VA-RP were one of the results achieved in the framework of the inter-agency visit to this region between January 24 and 28 by several UN agencies, including the **UN Verification Mission in Colombia, UNHCR, WFP, OCHA and UNMAS**. In recent months, the humanitarian situation in this area of the department of Cauca has deteriorated, in part, due to the strengthening of armed groups that are competing for territorial control, generating new accidents with anti-personnel mines.

*This inter-agency visit was important due to the difficult access that limits the accompaniment to these territories.*  
Photo: UNMAS.



## Indigenous communities of Nariño receive Explosive Ordnance Risk Education

On January 29 and 30, two Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) awareness sessions were conducted by the local coordinator in Nariño, with the participation of authorities and members of eight Indigenous Reservations in the municipalities of Tumaco and Barbacoas that **are being affected by the installation of explosive ordnance in their ancestral territories by illegal armed groups**. The Indigenous Reservations benefited with these sessions were: Gran Sábalo, La Brava, Inda Sabaleta, Inda Guacaray, Alto Peña Lisa, Piguambi Palangala, Chinguirito Mira and Kejuambí Feliciano. This action was an effective response to early warnings issued by the Ombudsman's Office that seek to prevent new accidents with APM and UXO among the indigenous population of this department. The event was supported by the Pastoral Social.

*The EORE activities taught allow indigenous leaders to replicate what they have learned in their communities.*  
Photo: UNMAS.

## Our results, in numbers

### Explosive Ordnance Risk Education and Victims Assistance in departments most affected by violence

UNMAS made significant progress in protecting the communities most affected by violence and the resurgence of the armed conflict in Colombia. During 2021, **UNMAS provided grants to three local organizations** for the implementation of EORE activities in some of the municipalities most affected by explosive ordnance (EO).



#### Departments and municipalities covered

1. **Arauca:** Saravena y Tame.
2. **Antioquia:** Frontino y Dabeiba.
3. **Chocó:** Acandí y Carmen del Darién.
4. **Córdoba:** Puerto Libertador y Tierralta.
5. **Nariño:** Tumaco, Barbacoas, Magüí Payán y Roberto Payán.
6. **Norte de Santander:** San Calixto, Hacarí, Abrego, Teorama.
7. **Putumayo:** Puerto Asís y Puerto Caicedo.

#### Organizations implementing



corporación

paz y democracia



## Victims Assistance

The three grantee organizations also supported **170 mine victims in Antioquia, Arauca, Caquetá, Córdoba, Chocó, Meta, Nariño, Norte de Santander and Putumayo**, providing them with legal advice on how to enter the Colombian State's Victims Assistance (VA) Referral Pathway and facilitating information to access medical treatment.

Direct beneficiaries of EORE activities

**15.630**



german cooperation

DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT



5.109



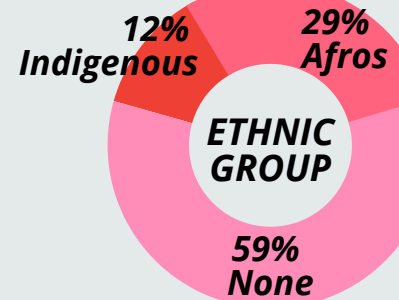
4.880



2.746



2.895



These grants were delivered by UNMAS thanks to funding from the Federal Government of Germany, helping to ensure an effective emergency response to the communities most affected by EO in Colombia, including internally displaced persons and ethnic communities.

## The UNMAS Colombia team



**Mónica Sandoval**  
Regional Coordinator  
Officer

Mónica holds a degree in Government and International Relations from the Universidad Externado de Colombia, and a master's degree in national security and defense from the Escuela Superior de Guerra. She is currently pursuing a specialization in government contracting at Universidad del Rosario. **She has more than eight years of work experience in Colombian public institutions** such as the National Planning Department and the National Federation of Departments as a technical advisor in the structuring, formulation and approval of social projects. With this work she facilitated the materialization of countless social projects that benefit dozens of communities in different regions of Colombia. As of February 2022, **she joins the UNMAS team in Colombia to coordinate the Regional Coordination Project, which supports the OACP-Descontamina Colombia** by facilitating coordination and deploying technical capacities in the territories most affected by the presence of explosive ordnance. Welcome!

## 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 **Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea**, whom we thank for their contributions in 2021 and 2022.

