

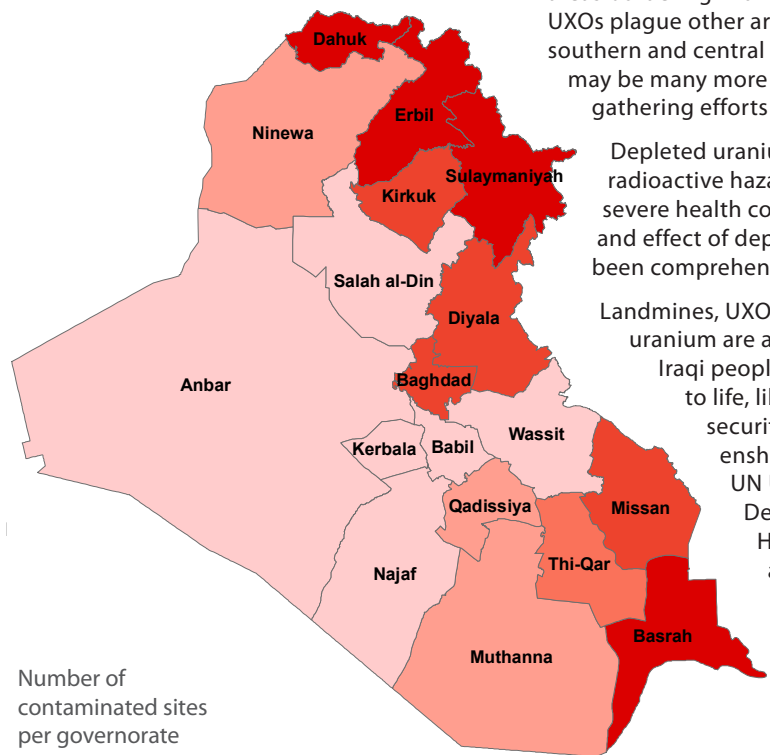
Landmines and Unexploded Ordnance Factsheet

April 2011

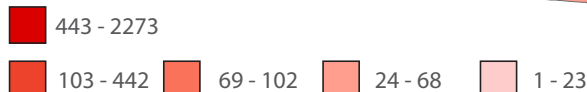
Contamination

Years of war and internal conflict have left a dangerous legacy of landmines and unexploded ordnances (UXOs). The widespread contamination is one of the largest in the world.

Landmine and UXO contamination



Number of contaminated sites per governorate



Source: Landmine Impact Survey: UNDP, iMMAP

Contaminated sites cover an estimated 1,730 square kilometres and affect around 1.6 million people in over 1,600 communities. Landmine contamination is particularly concentrated in Iraqi Kurdistan, major oil infrastructure and areas bordering with Iran, while UXOs plague other areas in the southern and central governorates.¹ There may be many more mined areas that data gathering efforts have not yet covered.²

Depleted uranium also presents a radioactive hazard which can cause severe health complications.³ The extent and effect of depleted uranium has not been comprehensively assessed.

Landmines, UXOs and depleted uranium are a major threat to the Iraqi people's "right to life, liberty and security of person" enshrined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,⁴ and inhibit Iraq's economic development.

Threat to civilians

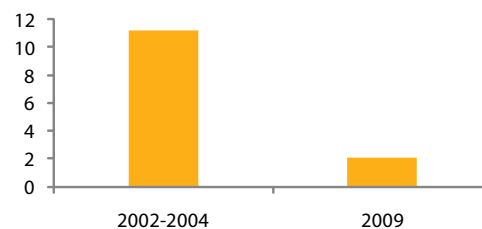
In 2009, landmines and UXOs killed or injured two Iraqis every week. 80% of victims were young men aged 15 to 29 years. Between 48,000 and

"Contaminated sites cover an estimated 1,730 square kilometres and affect around 1.6 million people in over 1,600 communities."

68,000 Iraqis have undergone amputations due to landmine and UXOs.⁵

Children are often not educated about the dangers associated with approaching or disturbing landmines and UXOs. 24% of victims in the Kurdistan Region

New victims of by landmines and UXOs per week



Source: UNDP/iMMAP Landmine Impact Survey

"Between 48,000 and 68,000 Iraqis have undergone amputations due to landmine and UXOs."

were under 14 years old.⁶ Many children lose their limbs, sight, or hearing resulting in lifelong disability. Child victims are often perceived as a burden to their families and are discriminated against by society, facing limited or no future prospects for education.

Deaths also take away sources of family emotional and financial support: 44% of victims in the Kurdistan Region during the past forty years were the family breadwinner.⁷ Children's lives are devastated when a parent or caregiver is injured or killed as they lose the care and attention they

"24% of victims in the Kurdistan Region were under 14 years old"

require, and are often forced out of school and into work.

Inhibiting development

Impacted communities in Iraq are generally small, rural and dependent on agriculture. 90% of the contaminated land is agricultural, inhibiting communities' ability to develop sustainable livelihoods. Access to many water sources has also been cut off. In the South, blockage of high-value irrigation cropland is of particular concern.⁸ In the North, contamination often blocks land used for collecting firewood and medicinal

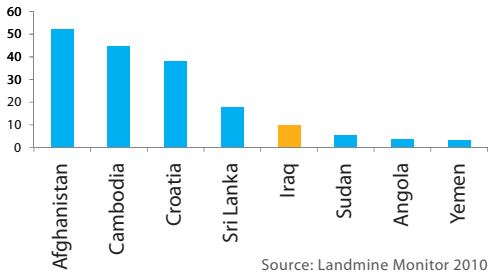
Iraq's international obligations

In 2008, Iraq became State Party to the Ottawa Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Under the Convention, Iraq has committed to never again use, produce, acquire, or export antipersonnel mines. It has also committed to destroy stockpiled mines in four years and to clear minefields by 2018.

In 2009, Iraq signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which bans the use, production, and transfer of cluster munitions, sets strict deadlines for clearance of contaminated land and destruction of stockpiles of the weapon, and includes groundbreaking provisions for assistance to victims and affected communities. The Convention is only six ratifications away from the threshold of 30 required for it to become binding international law.

plants.⁹ Contamination also delays oil sector reconstruction and production. Under the terms of contracts signed with the Government of Iraq, oil companies are obliged to investigate and clear any areas relevant to oil production that are suspected of being contaminated.

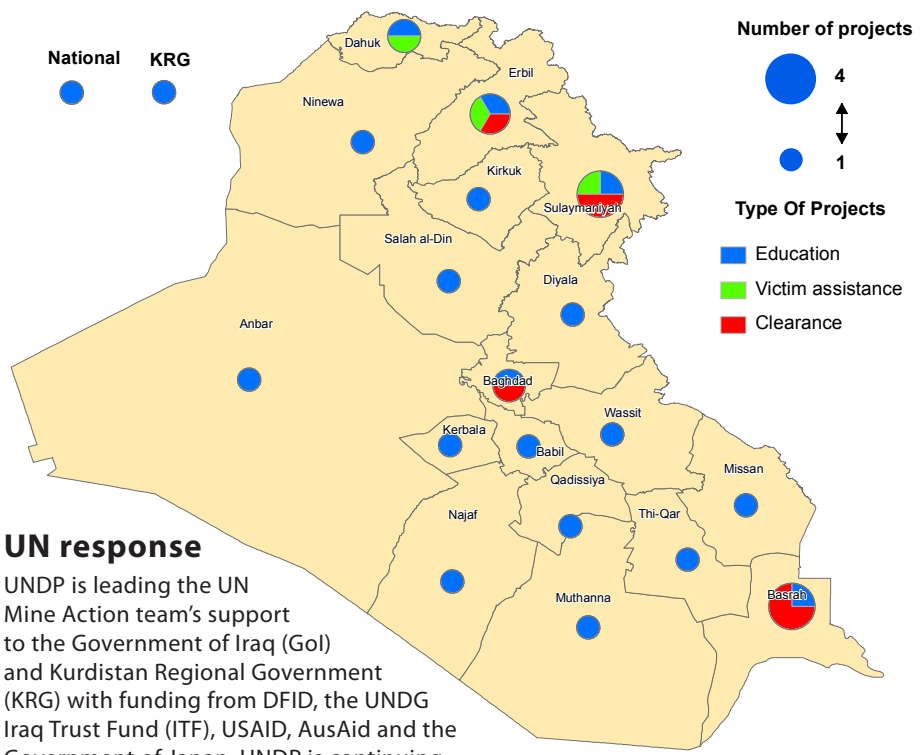
2009: Area cleared of landmines by country (km2)



In 2009, out of the 66 states confirmed or suspected of landmine contamination, Iraq was ranked fifth for the amount of land cleared (9.9 square kilometres).



UN Mine Action Projects by Governorate



UN response

UNDP is leading the UN Mine Action team's support to the Government of Iraq (GoI) and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) with funding from DFID, the UNDG Iraq Trust Fund (ITF), USAID, AusAid and the Government of Japan. UNDP is continuing to build the capacity of the GoI in clearance and stockpile destruction. UNOPS Mine Action Unit has been providing equipment to government counterparts to complement the activities of UNDP with funding from the UNDG ITF.

As part of the Mine Action team, UNICEF will continue to provide technical and financial support to Mine Risk Education (MRE) through institutional capacity development, MRE in schools and communities, MRE

materials review, and direct MRE for high-risk populations with funding from AusAid and DFID. Some 310,000 people have received MRE; 2,800 teachers were trained; 200 community volunteers were trained for community liaison and monitoring; and 60,000 materials were distributed.

WHO is assisting victims of landmines and UXOs by working in partnership with local NGOs to train healthcare professionals and community leaders and by providing support

to ortho-prosthetic, rehabilitation and reintegration centres in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Dahuk. WHO projects will continue to strengthen emergency medical responses to mine victims and provide psychological, physical and social rehabilitation of people with disabilities funded by the EU and Government of Japan.

WHO is developing the capacity of the Ministry of Health to collect data on and analyse birth defects in six governorates with funds from the UNDG ITF.



Endnotes

- 1 UNDP/iMMAP, Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) 2004-2006
- 2 UNDP/iMMAP, Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) 2004-2006
- 3 Souad N. Al-Azzawi, Depleted Uranium Radioactive Contamination in Iraq: An Overview (2006)
- 4 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml, accessed 29 April 2011); UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (<http://www.unicef.org/crc/>, accessed 29 April 2011)
- 5 UNDP/iMMAP LIS 2004-2006
- 6 UNICEF 2009 needs assessment in Kurdistan Region
- 7 UNICEF 2009 needs assessment in Kurdistan Region
- 8 UNDP/iMMAP LIS 2004-2006
- 9 UNDP/iMMAP LIS 2004-2006