

May 1 - August 15, 2025.

### **Highlights**



Deminers from DanChurch Aid (DCA) on their way to a clearance site in Mansura district in Raqqa governorate. July. 2025. Photo: DCA.

- In the month of May, Syria reached a grim milestone with the number of casualties from explosive ordnance (EO) since December 8, 2024 surpassing 1000.
- Three deminers from White Helmets were killed in Homs as they were called to respond to an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) task.
- In June the Syrian Civil Defence/the White Helmets transformed into a newly established
   Ministry for Emergency and Disaster Management set to oversee mine action activities.
- Explosive ordnance (EO) contamination impeded access for firefighters as they were working to extinguish the **wildfires raging in and around Lattakia** in June/July.
- Escalation of hostilities in As-Sweida in July prompted large movement of people towards
   Dar'a, with risks from EO-related accidents increasing as people were seeking safety.

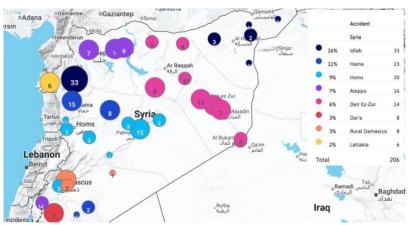


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#### **LATEST UPDATES**

The end of May brought a grim milestone in Syria - the number of casualties from EO-related incidents/accidents (since December 8, 2024) had surpassed 1000. During the reporting period for this situation update (May 1 – August 15, 2025) INSO recorded a total of 206 EO incidents/accidents, with 143 people killed and 361 injured.

This brings the total number of incidents/accidents recorded between December 8, 2024 and



Geographical distribution of EO-related accidents across Syria between May 1 till August 15, 2025. Source: INSO Conflict and Humanitarian Data Centre.

August 15, 2025, to 664, with a total of 1274 casualties (513 persons killed, and 761 injured), rendering the threat from explosive ordnance the most acute safety risk for civilians in Syria.

Men and children remain among the most affected by EO contamination. The majority of all casualties are men, indicating strongly at the fact that pursuit of livelihoods remains among the most dangerous activities for Syrians, with the majority of EO-related incidents/accidents taking place in agricultural land, in grazing areas or while people are collecting scrap metal. Of 206 incidents/accidents that took place between May and mid-August, **133 took place as people were trying to cultivate land or graze animals**. 96 people were killed and 128 were injured while endeavouring to provide basic livelihoods for their families.

Children in Syria are disproportionately affected by EO, often encountering items near their homes or schools while playing. Between May and mid-August, 52 children were killed and 90 were injured in 70 out of 206 EO-related incidents. Access to trauma care, prosthetics/orthotics, rehabilitation and psychosocial support remains limited, yet these services are critical in determining long term outcomes, especially for children. For children who lose limbs, ongoing care, including multiple annual replacements due to growth, is essential but financially devastating for families already struggling to make ends meet. These services are not available in all parts of Syria, are often delivered by NGOs and depend on annual funding cycles.

Matching the urgent needs with a scale-up of survey and clearance, urgent delivery of explosive ordnance risk education, and scaling up availability of trauma care and physical rehabilitation across Syria will remain key priorities for all partners, especially as a larger movement of Syrians is expected in the coming months.

#### Three demining colleagues killed

Syria Mine Action AoR is deeply saddened to report that the month of May also saw the loss of three of our own colleagues while they were answering a call to remove an EO item in Hama, Syria. This tragic loss of lives of three



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of our own is a stark reminder that humanitarian mine action remains the most dangerous job while at the service of those most vulnerable and while enabling humanitarian efforts. Containing, removing and disposing the widespread, extremely volatile explosive hazard contamination requires highly trained expertise, with trainings that are long, expansive and thorough given that the lives and limbs of civilians are at stake. Humanitarian deminers, even after such long training, use of protective gear and advanced equipment and despite adherence to International Mine Action Standards always operate under some level of risk to their own life. Despite all, they do it for the sake of a greater good: to save lives and to enable humanitarian, early recovery, reconstruction and development efforts. As we mourn the loss of our own and convey our deepest condolences to their families and their colleagues, we vow to remain steadfast in our mission to keep Syrians safe.

#### Wildfires sweep large swaths of agricultural areas in Lattakia

On June 30th, a series of large-scale wildfires – fuelled by extreme weather conditions-temperatures soaring above 45 degrees Celsius and wind speeds exceeding 60 kilometers per hour (km/h) – swept through the mountainous, densely forested, and agricultural areas in northern and north-eastern rural Lattakia governorate. Immense efforts were invested to gain control over the scorching flames, with presence of explosive ordnance significantly hindering access to affected areas. Despite the mobilization of over 150 firefighting teams, including support from different countries, the fires have scorched more than 15,000 hectares of forest and farmland, including olive groves and grazing areas. Throughout the over two-week battle to extinguish the fires, mine action partners were providing support to both firefighting teams, as well as to affected communities. The White Helmets mine action teams supported their firefighting colleagues from the Syrian Civil Defence through targeted clearance efforts to enable access to affected areas. The White Helmets teams also delivered emergency EORE sessions to firefighting teams in order to help teams recognise danger, enhance knowledge about risks and be able to adopt necessary safety measures when encountering EO. Similar sessions were delivered to the affected populations living in and moving about the affected areas. At the same time, colleagues from HALO Trust deployed a rapid response team to work alongside the Syrian Civil Defence and with firefighting units to open access paths through forests, clear dry brush near residential areas, and facilitate the safe movement of fire trucks.<sup>2</sup> The final tally of the two-week battle with fires led to an alarming deterioration of the humanitarian situation, a significant increase in humanitarian needs for thousands of affected populations and long-term loss of livelihoods.

#### Outbreak of violence in southern Syria

On 12<sup>th</sup> of July, armed hostilities and clashes escalated in As-Sweida Governorate, southern Syria, causing deaths and injuries among civilians and triggering large-scale internal displacement to rural As-Sweida, Dar'a and Rural Damascus. While active hostilities have so far subsided, Syria Mine Action AoR remains gravely concerned over more than 150,000 internally displaced persons who sought refuge in the neighbouring areas where conflict activities were high, however levels of EO contamination remain to be assessed. The United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Response (UN OCHA) activated inter-sectoral emergency response, with Syria Mine Action AoR partners contributing in different parts of Syria's South. Across As-Sweida, Dar'a and Rural Damascus, UNMAS facilitators have been delivering EORE sessions for internally displaced populations, while UNMAS's

<sup>2</sup> Halo Trust LinkedIn account

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> UN OCHA Humanitarian Response Plan, Lattakia wildfires, 15 July 2025.



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implementing partner identified and marked 12 EO items in Rural Damascus and 66 EO items in Dar'a. At the end of July, HALO Trust completed the training of EORE and NTS teams in Dar'a and commenced activities in the governorate. HALO's EORE teams were deployed to deliver safety messages to displaced populations in IDP centres in Ataman, Da'el, Kherbet Ghazala, Abtaa and Sheikh Miskine communities. HALO's three NTS teams remain split between Ataman and Dar'a City itself, assessing the situation on the ground to better plan for scale-up of NTS activities. In Rural Damascus, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) teams continued with clearance efforts in Nashabiya, while NTS teams uncovered and marked 11 hazardous areas in Maliha, Duma and Al Tall. NPA's EORE teams continue to provide safety messages to the affected populations. Danish Refugee Council (DRC) also implements



DRC team conducting an EORE session in Rural Damascus, July. 2025. Photo: DRC.

programming in Rural Damascus where EORE teams conducted 19 sessions through which they delivered safety messages for 468 persons from affected areas across the governorate. Syria Mine Action AoR coordinates emergency response with both national and subnational ISCGs, and contributes to the weekly Flash Updates on situation in As-Sweida issued by UN OCHA.

### SEVERITY OF EO CONTAMINATION ACROSS SYRIA AND PARTNERS' RESPONSE

Over the three months that this situation update covers, EO incidents/accidents took place in all but one governorate, with Deir ez-Zor again counting the most accidents and casualties, closely followed by Idlib, Aleppo, Homs and Hama. The table below demonstrates the number of accidents and casualties per governorate:

Governorate	Number of accidents	Total number of casualties	People killed	People injured
Deir ez-Zor	37	61	22	39
Idlib	33	65	22	43
Homs	27	48	19	29
Aleppo	25	39	17	22
Hama	23	36	10	26
Ar-Raqqa	16	31	11	20
Rural Damascus	10	26	11	15
Al Hassakeh	8	12	5	7
Dara'a	9	9	4	5

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As Sweida	6	21	10	11
Lattakia	5	10	1	9
Quneitra	3	3	2	1
Damascus	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tartous	0	0	0	0

#### Deir ez-Zor

Deir ez-Zor remains one of Syria's most heavily contaminated regions, accounting for nearly 25% of all EO-related incidents since December 2024. Years of conflict along the Euphrates left both urban and rural areas riddled with explosive hazards and severely underserved. As movement across the governorate increased, so did accidents: between May and mid-August, 37 incidents caused 61 casualties. Since December 8, 2024, a total of 290 people have been affected, 118 killed and 172 injured.

There are a multitude of reasons for a high number of casualties in Deir ez-Zor, including dismantlement of former frontlines combined with distribution of arable land across the governorate, limited accessibility by humanitarian partners on both sides of the Euphrates River and limited availability of services in general. At present, only Humanity & Inclusion (HI) has a full-time operational presence in Deir ez-Zor, delivering EORE, NTS, clearance interventions, and referring EO survivors for further services to other governorates in Deir ez-Zor city and the Seven villages. HI



HI demining team addressing EO contamination around one of the schools in a village close to Deir ez-Zor, June 2025. Photo: HI.

also responds to specific requests from partners and working groups to remove EO items from critical infrastructure. For example, during the month of July, Deir ez-Zor EORE working group requested EO clearance in three schools in the city, while UNICEF asked for support to their water and sanitation teams who were to rehabilitate the main water station that supplies water to most of the city and surrounding villages.



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Access to lifesaving and critical trauma care and post-injury physical rehabilitation, especially after an accident happens, remains scarce both due to damage to health facilities, as well as due to funding cuts impacting partners who provided such critical services in the past. At present, the only trauma care centre is located in Deir ez-Zor National Hospital in Deir ez-Zor city and is operated by Medicins sans Frontieres Netherlands (MSF). Availability of trauma services is also one of the prerequisites for mine action partners to expand survey and clearance operations, given that the demining teams operating in the field must have access to trauma care that is not available among the medical teams that always accompany them. At present, many patients have to travel far longer than "the golden hour" determining their survival to reach MSF's trauma care unit. HALO Trust supported MSF by assessing altogether four potential facilities where MSF plans to establish additional trauma and general health care services in Deir ez-Zor governorate, with teams releasing two facilities for use, and dedicating clearance teams to address EO contamination in the remaining two. Additionally, HALO sent one NTS and one mechanical clearance team to Abu Kamal to conduct assessments and emergency clearance in critical locations. Initial assessments showed extensive contamination with IEDs that will need urgent addressing in the future.

Across Syria, and in Deir ez-Zor in particular, the AoR is gravely concerned about the increase of clearance activities by unequipped, unskilled, and "volunteer" entities that conduct "surface" clearance that is not in line with the International Mine Action Standards. While such clearance entails removal of EO items visible to the naked eye, it neglects the fact that EO can be located in the ground or in rubble of damaged or destroyed buildings and will continue to pose a deadly risk until removed by specialised teams. Apart from being extremely dangerous, surface clearance can give a false sense of safety for civilians who venture back to their property without knowing that the risk from death and injury remains high. MA AoR and Deir ez-Zor EORE Working Group (EORE WG) are working to develop dedicated messaging to increase awareness about the dangers from unskilled EO clearance.

#### Idlib

Since the former front lines were abandoned, Idlib governorate has seen a sharp increase in the number of casualties, largely attributed to increased movement of people southwards. Additionally, after almost 14 years of war, many Syrians were finally able to reach their long abandoned agricultural land, albeit unaware about the looming EO contamination, especially around the former front lines. Since the last situation update in May, INSO reported 33 EO incidents/accidents with a total of 65 casualties (22 people killed and 43 injured), with the majority of incidents/accidents taking place in agricultural land or grazing areas. The White Helmets and HALO Trust are currently the two main clearance partners in Idlib. The White Helmets have been focusing their interventions on delivering EORE to affected populations, especially to returnees around the former front lines, as well as NTS to identify hazardous areas and EOD spot tasks where needed. HALO in turn has been focusing on mechanical clearance of minefields over the past few months, all while continuing with their regular clearance activities in agricultural land and addressing EO contamination found on critical infrastructure. In Saraqeb, for example, HALO mechanical teams cleared a contaminated area that prevented the construction of a critical sewage canal. These clearance efforts allowed contractors to safely commence their work, with the infrastructure project completed in weeks thereafter and directly benefitting thousands of residents. A hazardous site was transformed into a functioning public service space. "My home lies next to the sewer trench that was contaminated by hazardous

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items. After HALO's mechanical clearance, I can return home safely and cultivate my land without fear," said Ali Mohamad Dandal, resident of Sarageb.

To further reduce the risk from death and injury in Idlib, direct EORE sessions are delivered by both MA-specific partners, as well as by partners trained by MA actors to do so. Access to specialised care and protection services for EO survivors remains a challenge in the governorate, with HI continuing to be one of the key actors providing comprehensive VA-specific services.

### Aleppo<sup>3</sup>

In Aleppo, INSO incident/accident reports indicate that the main risk comes from anti-personnel mines left by the different parties to the conflict. Since December, an increased movement of the population has been noted, particularly across the Aleppo governorate towards Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor and Hassakeh and vice versa. Since the May 1st, INSO recorded 25 incidents/accidents in Aleppo, with 17 people killed and 22 injured, bringing the total number of casualties in the governorate since December till mid-August to 209 – 77 people killed and 132 injured. EORE partners continue to deliver safety messages, while MA partners implement two pillars of mine action across the governorate, including EORE, and NTS and clearance, with HALO specifically focusing on Jebel Saman.

### Partners' response/achievements across Syria

In addition to Deir ez-Zor, Idlib and Aleppo, partners have been implementing an array of MA activities in Raqqa, Hassakeh, Hama, Homs, Rural Damascus and Dar'a.

- In Raqqa governorate, DanChurch Aid (DCA) continues with clearance operations in Mansura and Ein Issa districts, with a local partner conducting EORE and NTS activities. 19 EORE sessions were conducted in Deir ez-Zor and from mid-June in Raqqa. DCA commenced clearance in Medaggen and Ein Issa from mid-June and removed the explosive hazards through clearance and spot tasks.
- Since May 2025, Humanity & Inclusion (HI) has delivered 2,224 Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) sessions across Deir ez-Zor, Idlib, Raqqa, and Tabqa. HI teams have also produced 26 Non-Technical Survey (NTS) reports, safely disposed of 1597 EOs be it live or inert. HI continues to operate in 14 rehabilitation centers: one in Raqqa, one in Tabqa, one in Kisreh (Deir ez-Zor), and 11 in Idlib. These centers are delivering prosthetics/orthotics for EO survivors, rehabilitation services, psychosocial support and inclusion activities.
- Across Raqqa and Hasakeh governorates, Mines Advisory Group (MAG) released 1,590,922 sqm of contaminated land, directly benefiting 525 individuals. MAG's Community Liaison team delivered at least 1,385 EORE sessions to 12,574 individuals, including men, women, children, people with disabilities, residents, returnees and IDPs. A total of 17 communities have been surveyed, and NTS activities identified

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> While the table above indicates to a higher number of incidents/accidents in Homs during this reporting period, Aleppo has been consistently more affected by EO contamination due to still existing front lines and increased movement of people between Aleppo governorate and Raqqa/Deir ez-Zor.



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52 new hazardous areas covering 4,467,941 sqm of land. In addition, 42 EOD spot tasks were identified, and clearance teams removed and destroyed 629 EO items, mostly submunitions, UXO, and AT conventional mines. MAG also began clearance on a newly discovered barrier minefield previously unknown to returnees. The area has been marked to warn of the hazard while clearance operations are ongoing. Furthermore, MAG trained 20 schoolteachers on how to deliver



EORE sessions to their students and fellow teachers, selected and trained 2 new volunteers as community focal points, and refreshed the training of 16 previously trained volunteers. In the photo above, a MAG community liaison team member conducting EORE pre-tests in the village of Shanan in Raqqa, July 2025. Photo: MAG.

- In Hassakeh, **ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF)** has been operating at reduced capacity, with one EORE team and one NTS team implementing programming. Planning is in progress to scale up response as of October 2025, with with clearance and expanded EORE, including in Deir ez-Zor.
- Since May, The HALO Trust (HALO) EORE teams conducted 816 sessions across Idlib (Al Ma'ra, Jisr-Ash-Shugur, Saraqeb, Ariha, Harim), Dar'a (Dar'a, Izra') and Aleppo (Jebel Saman). In the same areas, HALO NTS teams completed 12 survey tasks, covering 2,524,919 m², while clearance teams safely destroyed 3,458 in this reporting period, primarily UXOs and small arms ammunition.
- Since April, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) has been focusing on implementing activities in Homs and Rural Damascus governorates, most notably in Al Qusayr in Homs, and Duma, Nashabiyeh, Al Tall, Maliha and Babella subdistricts in Rural Damascus. In total, 31 EORE sessions were conducted, while NTS teams produced 206 NTS reports identifying 1078 EO items, including 342 AXOs, 9 cluster munitions, 49





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IEDs, 98 mines, 541 UXOs and 39 other EO items. NPA clearance teams safely cleared 595 EO items, of which 20 were AXOs, 20 cluster munitions, 553 UXOs, and 2 unknown. 228 out of 1078 reported EO items were moved. Teams also conducted a total of 7 demolitions. Featured in the photo is the first demolition conducted by NPA on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

- Also in Rural Damascus, Danish Refugee Council (DRC) deployed EORE teams who conducted 19 direct
  sessions through which they delivered safety messages for 468 persons from affected areas across the
  governorate. DRC is currently training NTS teams who will be deployed to the field in September, with
  plans for additional scale-up in the coming months.
- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) delivered 621 direct EORE sessions across Idlib, Dar'a, Deir ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Lattakia, Quneitra, Damascus and Rural Damascus. A number of those sessions were a result of a pilot initiative to train 7 EO survivors as EORE facilitators. The initiative had a high impact on the communities who were delivered powerful messages on EO risks. UNMAS EORE facilitators continue to deliver safety messages to communities in Aleppo, Hama, Lattakia, Quneitra, Deir ez-Zor, Damascus



and Rural Damascus. Through its implementing partner Safety Solutions, **UNMAS** produced 39NTS reports identifying 54hazardous areas and found and marked 344 EO items. Featured in the photo are teams marking an EO item in Kafr Shams, Dar'a. In total109 EO items found in As-Sweida and Dar'a were safely removed by **UNMAS** implementing partner clearance teams.



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### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Urgent funding is needed to scale up survey and clearance efforts as the only way to reduce risks and ensure safety for the population. In 2024, mine action remained the most underfunded sector, with only 13% of the USD 51 million of the HRP-ask covered.
- Coordination and information management key for determining and managing EO contamination is currently underfunded, weighing heavily on partners' abilities to effectively address affected areas and measure impact.
- Support for victim assistance is urgently required to provide adequate care and accelerate their recovery.
   There is a chronic shortage of physical rehabilitation, psychosocial services, prosthetics and orthotics for upper limbs, and livelihood opportunities leaves EO survivors and persons with disabilities marginalised, inhibits their possibilities to care for themselves and their families, and prevents them from meaningfully participating in and contributing to the society.
- Explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) remains the first lifesaving and preventive tool to minimise the risk from death and injury. Yet, it is often undervalued by donors, forcing partners to reduce or even exclude EORE sessions from their funding proposals. With a large number of people expected to return in coming months, scaling up EORE is urgently needed.

#### **Upcoming events:**

- End of August anticipated conference gathering all MA actors and relevant government ministries organised by the Ministry for Emergency and Disaster Management on establishment of Syria's National Mine Action Authority and National Mine Action Centre.
- **September** Syria MA AoR and Geneva Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to organise a technical workshop with partners and the Ministry for Emergency and Disaster Management.
- **September** UNMAS to organise a donor meeting together with UN HABITAT and UNDP on urban clearance and reconstruction.
- Syria MA AoR regular partner meeting will take place on 28<sup>th</sup> of August.
- Regular meetings by the AoR working groups will also take place in the upcoming period: MA Advocacy WG, EORE WG, Survey and Clearance WG and MA IM WG.

This situation update has been produced in cooperation with the International NGO Safety Organisation – INSO.

The Syria Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR) is a part of the Syria Protection Cluster, led by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and co-led by Humanity & Inclusion (HI). The Syria MA AoR unifies all previously existing coordination structures (WoS MA AoR, NWS MAWG, NES MASWG, HCT MASS) and is hosting four technical working groups (WGs), namely: Explosive Ordnance Risk Education WG, Victim Assistance WG, Information Management WG and Survey and Clearance WG.

Syria MA AoR coordinates the work of 38 partners (2024 HRP) implementing four pillars of mine action in Syria: explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), clearance (survey, mapping, marking and disposal/destruction), victim assistance and advocacy.



The incidents and casualty figures presented herein have been sourced from the International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO). While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data, the authors of this report do not guarantee the completeness or timeliness of the information provided by INSO. The authors, as well as INSO, are not liable for any inaccuracies, errors, or omissions in the information presented herein.

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