



UNITED NATIONS  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



# THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES OF MINE ACTION IN SOMALIA

*Cover: Clearance operation in Galdogob, 2021. Source: UNMAS*

The Sustainable Development Outcomes of Mine Action in Somalia,  
GICHD and UNDP, June 2023

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## CONTRIBUTORS

### GENEVA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR HUMANITARIAN DEMINING (GICHD)

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining works towards reducing risk to communities caused by explosive ordnance, with a focus on landmines, cluster munitions and ammunition stockpiles. The Centre helps develop and professionalise the sector for the benefit of its partners: national and local authorities, donors, the United Nations, other international and regional organisations, non-governmental organisations, commercial companies, and academia. It does so by combining four lines of service: field support focused on advice and training, multilateral work focused on norms and standards, research and development focused on cutting-edge solutions, and facilitating dialogue and cooperation.

### SOMALI EXPLOSIVE MANAGEMENT AGENCY (SEMA)

The Somali Explosive Management Authority (SEMA) is Somalia's national mine action authority. Established in 2013, it replaced the Somali National Mine Action Authority (SNMAA) and is currently responsible for all components of mine action in five Federal Member States as well as the Banadir Regional Administration, undertaking planning, coordination, and data management for all activities relating to explosive ordnance including land release, explosive ordnance risk education, and victim assistance.

SEMA oversees the implementation of all mine action legislation and ensures the national standards, regulations, guidelines, and procedures are followed. It is committed to working closely together with international partners, national institutions, and local organisations to reduce the threat posed by explosive ordnance to the Somali people.



## UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

The United Nations Development Programme is the leading United Nations organisation fighting to end poverty and inequality, and climate change. UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in nearly 170 countries and territories, the UNDP offers a global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

## UNITED NATIONS MINE ACTION SERVICE (UNMAS)

In Somalia, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) works to ensure that people are safer and more secure by supporting Somali national authorities and security services to reduce the threat posed by explosive ordnance (EO), including improvised explosive devices.

Since 2009, UNMAS has supported the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), now the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), by delivering tailored training in explosive-threat mitigation, carrying out pre- and post-deployment briefings, and facilitating the movement of convoys, especially along main supply routes. In addition, UNMAS deploys explosive detection dog teams to enhance the safety and security of strategic UN and government premises. To support stabilisation efforts, UNMAS carries out assessments to identify EO contamination along main supply routes supporting ATMIS operations and provides risk education to remote communities.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The GICHD and UNDP would like to extend their sincere thanks to the Somali Explosive Management Authority, its regional offices, and the regional mine action consortia: Jubaland Mine Action Network (JUMAN), Benadir Mine Action Consortium (BENAMAC), Central Somali Mine Action Consortium (CESMAC), South West Mine Action Consortium (SOWMAC), and Shabelle and Hiran Mine Action Consortium (SHAHMAC), whose support was indispensable in carrying out this research.

The research team would also like to express their appreciation to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) for their vital support in sharing input, providing data, and contributions throughout the research process, and without whom this research would not have been possible.

Our thanks also go to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Somalia, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), Mines Advisory Group (MAG), The HALO Trust, Ukroboronservice SC, Diversity Action Network Somaliland (DAN), and the Wadaagsan company who generously took part in the interview process, provided data, and shared their insights.

The GICHD and UNDP would like to thank the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) for its financial support to this project.

The authors of this study are Ángela Hoyos Iborra and Svenja Liu of the GICHD.

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AMISOM</b>	African Union Mission in Somalia	<b>EORE</b>	Explosive ordnance risk education
<b>APM</b>	Anti-personnel mine	<b>ERW</b>	Explosive remnants of war
<b>APMBC</b>	Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction	<b>FGS</b>	Federal Government of Somalia
<b>AVM</b>	Anti-vehicle mine	<b>FMS</b>	Federal Member States
<b>BAC</b>	Battle area clearance	<b>GICHD</b>	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
<b>BENAMAC</b>	Benadir Mine Action Consortium	<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced person
<b>CESMAC</b>	Central Somalia Mine Action Consortium	<b>IED</b>	Improvised explosive device
<b>CCM</b>	Convention on Cluster Munitions	<b>IMSMA</b>	Information Management System for Mine Action
<b>CRPD</b>	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	<b>JUMAN</b>	Jubaland Mine Action Network
<b>DAN</b>	Diversity Action Network Somaliland	<b>MAG</b>	Mines Advisory Group
<b>EO</b>	Explosive ordnance	<b>MoWHRD</b>	Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development
<b>EOD</b>	Explosive ordnance disposal	<b>NPA</b>	Norwegian People's Aid
		<b>NTS</b>	Non-technical survey

<b>PMAC</b>	Puntland Mine Action Centre
<b>PWD</b>	Person with disabilities
<b>RETD</b>	Risk education talking device
<b>SAEH</b>	Small arms and explosive hazards
<b>SALW</b>	Small arms and light weapons
<b>SEMA</b>	Somali Explosive Management Authority
<b>SHAHMAC</b>	Shabelle and Hiran Mine Action Consortium
<b>SOWMAC</b>	South West Mine Action Consortium
<b>UNMAS</b>	United Nations Mine Action Service
<b>UNOPS</b>	United Nations Office for Project Services
<b>UOS</b>	Ukroboronservice SC

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# KEY FINDINGS

This study comprehensively maps the sustainable development outcomes of mine action activities in Somalia.

The study analyses the impact of land release, victim assistance, explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), and existing efforts related to gender mainstreaming, and partnerships and cooperation, in the medium and long term.

The study presents evidence of the multidimensional and transformative role of mine action in Somalia by identifying its direct contribution to **15 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and to at least **47 of their targets**. Hence, the mine action sector has clearly contributed to the five dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: partnership, peace, people, planet, and prosperity.

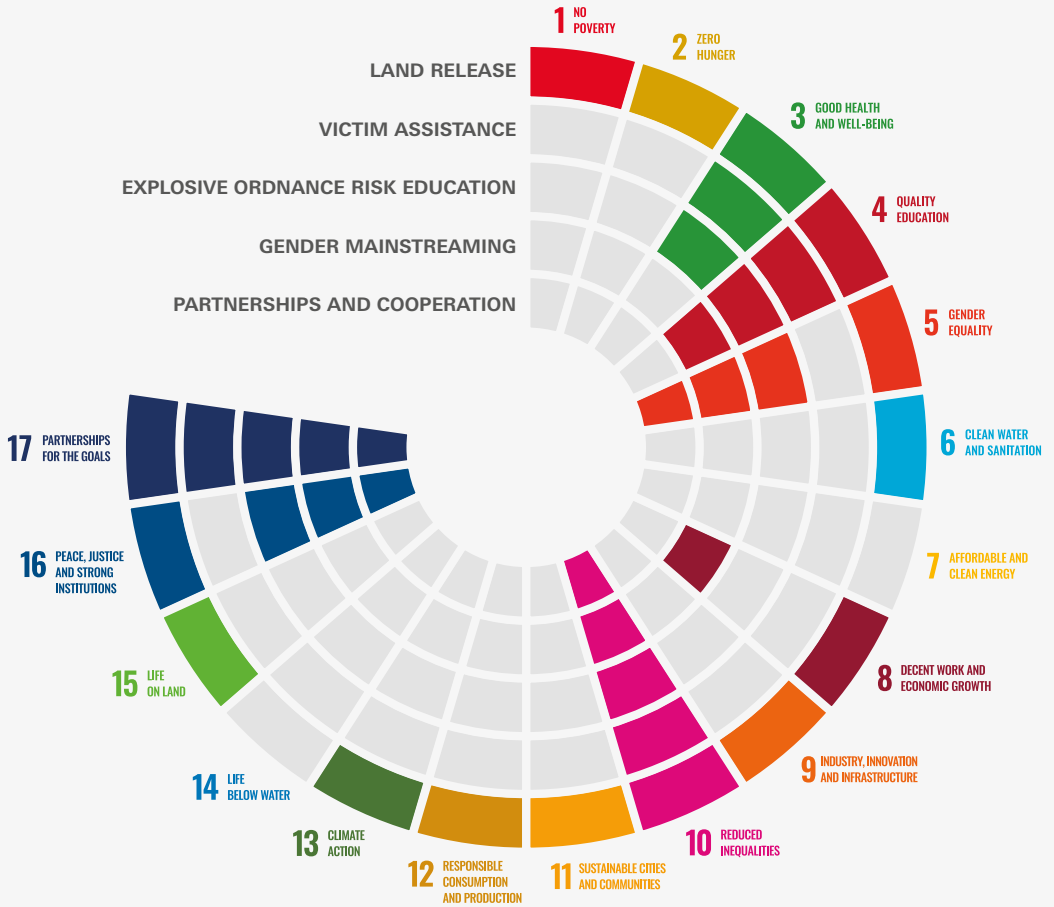
FIGURE 1 CONTRIBUTION OF MINE ACTION TO THE SDGs IN SOMALIA





FIGURE 2

## CONTRIBUTION OF MINE ACTION TO THE SDGs BY ACTIVITY IN SOMALIA



# LAND RELEASE



Whilst an understanding of baseline contamination is not yet available, land release efforts have focused on known hazard areas along the border between Somalia and Ethiopia. The study examines the impact of land release as well as efforts to map hazardous areas in these regions. Broader regional impacts of these activities are explored as well as clearance in other areas of the country impacted by conflict.

Besides the immediate contribution to SDG 16 and its target 16.1 on the reduction of all forms of violence, the study identifies the direct contribution of land release to 15 SDGs and 30 of their associated targets.

## FACILITATING SAFE MOBILITY

Land release has facilitated safe mobility for internally displaced persons, nomadic pastoralists, and local communities living in and around contaminated areas, thereby contributing to **SDG 10** Reduced Inequalities and its **target 10.7** on facilitating orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people. Land release also enhances the safety of both regular and irregular movement, supporting **SDG 16** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions through **target 16.1** on the reduction of all forms of violence.

By facilitating safe access, land release has contributed to **SDG 1** No Poverty through **target 1.4** on equal rights to economic resources and access to basic services. Through non-technical survey, mine action will also allow for contributions to **SDG 9** Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, specifically **target 9.1** as land release activities facilitate regional planning to support the future development of resilient infrastructure for economic development and well-being.

Partnerships have ensured safe operations and are indicative of mine action's contributions to **SDG 17** Partnerships for the Goals, particularly **target 17.17** on effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships.

## AGRICULTURE AND PRODUCTIVE USE OF LAND

Due to the strong link between land and livelihoods in Somalia, land release has contributed to **SDG 1** No Poverty, and its **target 1.1** and **target 1.4** that address extreme poverty and access to resources, including land. It has also contributed to **target 1.5** on building the resilience of the poor, reducing their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events.

By enabling the safe use of land for food production, mine action has contributed to **SDG 2** Zero Hunger, and its **target 2.1** on ensuring access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food, as well as **target 2.3** on agricultural

productivity and the incomes of small-scale food producers including family farmers and pastoralists. It has also promoted **SDG 8** Decent Work and Economic Growth, and its **target 8.3** on supporting productive activities and decent job creation and **target 8.5** on productive employment.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

By linking land release with environmental conservation activities, mine action has contributed to **SDG 13** Climate Action and its **target 13.1** on strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters as well as **target 13.3** on improving education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, and impact reduction.

Through the rehabilitation of water infrastructure, mine action has contributed to **SDG 6** Clean Water and Sanitation and its **target 6.4** on reducing the number of people suffering from water scarcity. This, in turn, links with **SDG 12** Responsible Consumption and Production and its **target 12.2** on sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources.

By facilitating the rehabilitation of degraded land, this project has also supported **SDG 15** Life on Land and its **target 15.3** on combating desertification and restoring degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought, and floods.

Effective partnerships between mine action and environmental sustainability projects have facilitated effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships, contributing to **SDG 17** Partnerships for the Goals and its **target 17.17**. By passing on valuable skills and knowledge on sustainable activities, it has also contributed to **SDG 4** Quality Education and its **target 4.4** on increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship.

## SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Through the clearance of roads and access routes, land release has contributed to **SDG 1** No Poverty and its **target 1.4** on access to basic services, and natural resources including land. Land release has also facilitated safe access to education, with contributions to **SDG 4** Quality Education and its **target 4.1** on ensuring all girls and boys complete primary and secondary education.

Land release has enabled safe access to natural resources and increased the potential for trade and economic development, supporting **SDG 8** Decent Work and Economic Growth, specifically **target 8.1** on sustaining economic growth, **target 8.2** on economic productivity, **target 8.3** on supporting productive activities and decent job creation, and **target 8.5** on productive employment and decent work. By giving small-scale traders and farmers access to local marketplaces, land release has also facilitated **SDG 9** Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure and its **target 9.3**, increasing the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, and their integration into value chains and markets.

By enabling major infrastructure projects, mine action contributes to **target 9.1** on developing reliable, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure to support economic development and well-being. It also facilitates planning and construction of sustainable and resilient infrastructure through enhanced financial, technological, and technical support, thereby enabling **target 9.a**. Similarly, ongoing improvements to roads supports **SDG 11** Sustainable Cities and Communities and its **target 11.2** by providing access to safe and sustainable transport systems and improving road safety. It also has implications for **SDG 3** and its **target 3.6** on reducing deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents.

Public infrastructure projects enabled by land release also contribute to **target 11.7** on safe, inclusive and accessible public spaces as well as **SDG 3** Good Health and Well-being and its **target 3.4** on reducing premature mortality from non-communicable disease through prevention and treatment, and **target 3.8** on access to essential healthcare services.

Beneficial impacts on women's autonomy and greater economic empowerment allow for contributions to **SDG 10** Reduced Inequalities and its **target 10.2** on the empowerment and promotion of social, economic, and political inclusion of all.

## **WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)**

By facilitating access to safe drinking water, land release has supported **SDG 6** Clean Water and Sanitation, in particular **target 6.1** on access to safe and affordable drinking water. Positive implications for women and girls have also facilitated **SDG 5** Gender Equality and its **target 5.2** on the elimination of violence against all women and girls.

Land release has enabled the construction of a major water source, contributing to **SDG 6** Clean Water and Sanitation and its **target 6.1** on access to safe and affordable drinking water. It has also contributed to **SDG 9** Industry, innovation and Infrastructure and its **target 9.1** on developing reliable, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure.

## VICTIM ASSISTANCE



The study identifies the direct contribution of victim assistance to 4 SDGs and 9 of their associated targets.

Ongoing work to build victim assistance is progressing towards contributions to **SDG 10** Reduced Inequalities and its **target 10.2** on the empowerment and promotion of social, economic and political inclusion of all as well as **target 10.3** on ensuring equal opportunity and reducing inequality.

Mainstreaming of disability policies will facilitate **SDG 3** Good Health and Well-being and its **target 3.8** on health coverage and access to quality health services as well as **SDG 17** Partnerships for the Goals and **target 17.14** on enhancing policy development for sustainable development.

There has been cross-sectoral cooperation on this issue, facilitating **target 17.9** on international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries, **target 17.16** on multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and **target 17.17** on effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships.

Whilst not yet mainstreamed, efforts to improve health support to explosive ordnance victims by NGOs have contributed to **SDG 3** and its **target 3.4** on reducing premature mortality through prevention and treatment as well as **target 3.8** on access to quality essential healthcare services.

The active inclusion of persons with disabilities and disability considerations in mine action efforts such as EORE contributes to **SDG 4** Quality Education and its **target 4.5** on ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities.



# EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE RISK EDUCATION (EORE)



The study identifies the direct contribution of EORE to 6 SDGs and 11 of their associated targets.

EORE encourages and promotes safe behaviour among communities at risk, contributing to **SDG 16** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and its **target 16.1** on the reduction of all forms of violence. By ensuring incidents are reported and authorities notified, EORE in Somalia has also contributed to **target 16.3** on the promotion of the rule of law.

By ensuring that EORE sessions are catered to individual needs, accounting for characteristics such as gender, age, and linguistic needs, mine action has also contributed to **SDG 10** Reduced Inequalities and its **target 10.3** on ensuring equal opportunity and reducing inequalities of outcome as well as **SDG 4** Quality Education and its **target 4.a** on providing safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all.

Similarly, it has contributed to **SDG 5** Gender Equality and its **target 5.1** on ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls. Mine action has also enabled leadership opportunities for women's groups in the community, contributing to **target 5.5** on women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership.

EORE in Somalia has been strengthened through effective partnerships which support **SDG 17** Partnerships for the Goals including **target 17.16** on multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement

of the Sustainable Development Goals, **target 17.17** on effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, and **target 17.9** on international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building.

The use of EORE training to help spread Covid-awareness messaging has supported national efforts for risk reduction and management of national and global health risks, contributing to **SDG 3** Good Health and Well-being and its **target 3.d**.

Effective use of innovative risk education devices, especially amongst nomadic populations, has allowed for contributions to **SDG 10** Reduced Inequalities and its **target 10.7** on safe migration and mobility. Its utility for remote communities in spreading Covid-awareness messages has also allowed for contributions to **SDG 3** and its **target 3.d**.

# GENDER AND DIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING



The study identifies the direct contribution of gender and diversity mainstreaming to 6 SDGs and 15 of their associated targets.

By ensuring female representation and leadership through the employment of Somali women, mine action has contributed to **SDG 5** Gender Equality and its **target 5.1** on ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, and **target 5.5** on ensuring women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership. It has also facilitated **SDG 8** Decent Work and Economic Growth and its **target 8.5** on full and productive employment and decent work.

Specialised training for female staff to build capacity and improve employment prospects has also contributed to **SDG 4** Quality Education and its **target 4.3** on equal access to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education, as well as **target 4.4** on increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment.

Efforts to ensure community liaison and explosive ordnance risk education is tailored to the needs of women and girls and has contributed to **target 4.5** on eliminating gender disparities and ensuring equal access to education, as well as **target 4.a** on building safe and inclusive learning environments. This goal is also enshrined in mine action strategic planning which facilitates **SDG 5** and its **target 5.c** on adopting sound policies for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. This work, in combination with broader efforts to enshrine women’s rights in all aspects

of social, economic, and political life, contributes to **SDG 16** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and its **target 16.b** on promoting and enforcing non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

Ongoing work by international operators to support local efforts on gender mainstreaming has also contributed to **SDG 17** Partnerships for the Goals and its **target 17.9** on enhanced international support for capacity-building as well as **target 17.17** on encouraging and promoting effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships.

By strengthening and giving a platform to female leadership in beneficiary communities, mine action has contributed to **SDG 10** Reduced Inequalities and its **target 10.2** on empowering and promoting the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, and **target 10.3** on ensuring equal opportunities and reducing outcome inequalities.

Women's increased access to profitable activities and increased security as a result of land release, has also contributed to **SDG 8** Decent Work and Economic Growth and its **target 8.5** on full and productive employment and decent work as well as **SDG 16** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and its **target 16.1** on the reduction of violence and related death rates.

By ensuring mine action operations support local opportunities for peace, mine action has contributed to **SDG 16** and its **target 16.1** on reducing all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere. It has also supported positive peace efforts by contributing to **SDG 8** Decent Work and Economic Growth and its **target 8.6** by reducing the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training.

## PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATION



The study identifies the direct contribution of partnerships and cooperation to 4 SDGs and 9 of their associated targets.

There have been clear contributions from mine action to **SDG 17** Partnerships for the Goals and its **target 17.9** on enhanced international support for capacity-building, and **target 17.17** on encouraging and promoting effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships. Support from organisations on improving the Somali Explosive Management Authority's data collection and management has also contributed to **target 17.18** on capacity-building support to improve access to and the quality of data.

Partnerships in mine action have allowed for effective capacity-building at different levels in Somalia, with contributions to **SDG 16** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and its **target 16.6** on the development of effective, accountable, and transparent institutions, and **target 16.a** on strengthened national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.

Cooperation with local women's groups has also impacted **SDG 5** Gender Equality and its **target 5.5** on women's full and effective participation at all levels of decision-making, and **target 5.1** on ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls. These partnerships contributed to **SDG 10** Reduced Inequalities and its **target 10.2** on the social, economic, political inclusion of all, and **target 10.3** on equal opportunity and the reduction of inequalities of outcome.

# **PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY**

This study aims to map and analyse the sustainable development outcomes of mine action in Somalia, using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an analytical framework.

The tangible benefits of mine action can be clearly quantified and demonstrated through the number of square metres of land released and the number of explosive ordnance (EO) removed. However, measuring the longer-term contributions of mine action to broader sustainable development is more challenging. At the same time, it can demonstrate more concretely the reality of how mine action has impacted the lives of individuals and communities affected by EO contamination.

This study aims to identify the different ways in which mine action has led to a positive impact in Somalia by examining the outcomes of mine action interventions (land release, victim assistance, explosive ordnance risk education (EORE)), and approaches (gender and diversity mainstreaming, partnerships and cooperation). It considers the broad array of humanitarian, social, economic, and environmental implications of mine action work, using the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a guide.

### **The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

Building upon the achievements and lessons learnt from the Millennium Development Goals, in 2015 the United Nations Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a new plan of action.<sup>1</sup> The 2030 Agenda is universal, transformative and rights based, under the premise that 'no one will be left behind'. It contains 17 integrated Sustainable Development Goals and 169 associated targets, which are based on the three core elements of sustainable development – economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection – and calls for peace and partnership.

There are five critical dimensions at the core of the 2030 Agenda, known as 'the 5 Ps': people, prosperity, planet, partnership, and peace.

The SDGs serve to measure the longer-term consequences of mine action interventions, since they allow for integrating and assessing most of the external dimensions that influence the results of mine action, including political, economic, social, and cultural factors, and the performance of other related humanitarian or development projects.

The findings of this study are not meant to serve as an evaluation of the mine action activities conducted in Somalia, but rather should be used as a reference to highlight the value of connecting sustainable development, peacebuilding and humanitarian activities as mutually reinforcing efforts across the full cycle of a mine action programme: from planning to monitoring and evaluation.

The Somalia case study provides an analysis of the results of mine action in the medium and long term, through an assessment of the contribution of land release, victim assistance, and EORE to sustainable development. This research also takes into consideration the importance of gender and diversity mainstreaming efforts and the establishment of partnerships – within and beyond the mine action sector – regarding the overarching principle of 'leaving no one behind'.



The study is one of a series of country-level studies, undertaken as part of the *Beyond the Square Meters Cleared* project. It builds on the following previous studies conducted by the GICHD, in close collaboration with key partners:

- *Leaving no one behind: Mine action and the Sustainable Development Goals* (2017).
- *The Socio-economic Impact of Anti-vehicle Mines in Angola* (2019).
- *The Sustainable Development Outcomes of Mine Action in Jordan* (2021).
- *The Sustainable Development Outcomes of Mine Action in Cambodia* (2021).
- *Contribuciones de la acción integral contra minas al desarrollo sostenible en Colombia* (2022).
- *The Sustainable Development Outcomes of Mine Action in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (2022).

The **Sustainable Development Outcomes of Mine Action in Jordan** constituted a first-of-its-kind study that comprehensively mapped the sustainable development outcomes of mine action activities and approaches in Jordan. The findings and lessons learnt from this pilot publication have served as the methodological source of inspiration for a series of new studies, including this one.

However, it is important to highlight that the methodology of this study has been specifically designed based on the particularities of the Somali context, considering relevant feedback obtained through a consultative process with key mine action stakeholders.

The initial research plan to include field visits was modified due to security and access concerns. The study therefore relied on desk research and 18 remote interviews (semi-structured) with representatives from the Somali Explosive Management Authority (SEMA), the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), Ukroboronservice SC (UOS), Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), The HALO Trust, Diversity Action Network Somaliland (DAN Somaliland), the Puntland Mine Action Centre (PMAC),<sup>2</sup> and

the regional mine action consortia including Benadir Mine Action Consortium (BENAMAC), Central Somali Mine Action Consortium (CESMAC), South West Mine Action Consortium (SOWMAC), Shabelle and Hiran Mine Action Consortium (SHAHMAC), and Jubaland Mine Action Network (JUMAN). Written information was also provided by the Wadaagsan company as well as many of the aforementioned partners.

The primary data collected through remote interviews was cross-referenced with secondary data and grey literature sources. This analysis has been complemented by satellite imagery to illustrate changes in development after the release of land, where possible. The study is mostly based on remote analysis and exchanges with key stakeholders, unlike previous studies where field observation, in-person interviews and focus groups were conducted. The limited access to direct testimonies does present a shortcoming and the study acknowledges that the research would have benefitted from direct interaction with key stakeholders and from field visits.

As a thorough understanding of baseline contamination in the country is not yet available, much of the study focuses on locations where mine action has occurred, which are mostly concentrated in the border regions between Somalia and Ethiopia, although mine action has also occurred in other areas where EO contamination has been reported following conflict. Despite differing levels of administrative autonomy across Somalia's states, the study aims to provide a consolidated picture of mine action throughout the country with a view to demonstrating how mine action activities have supported sustainable development efforts. Hence, this study presents relevant results across the country, but it must be noted that data across some regions was not included due to political and administrative considerations.

The study aims to bolster the evidence of mine action's multidimensional impact in Somalia which could, in turn, support awareness raising and resource mobilisation which are key considerations for the sector. Ongoing efforts are needed to support national coordination, localisation, and the sustainable resourcing of mine action, particularly in the context of severe climate change impact which has altered migration routes and increased the need for land access. It is therefore imperative to ensure greater visibility and understanding of the vital impact of mine action in Somalia.

# INTRODUCTION

## CONTEXT

Decades of armed conflict in Somalia have left significant contamination from explosive ordnance (EO), including landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW), with an ongoing impact on the livelihoods and safety of local communities. A large part of this contamination originates from border conflicts in 1964, and the Ogaden War in 1977–78,<sup>3</sup> which left legacy minefields on each side of the border between Somalia and Ethiopia.<sup>4</sup> Landmines were used by both sides to defend military positions and restrict the movement of opposition forces.<sup>5</sup> Large areas of land were left strewn with landmines which went largely undocumented for many years. The war had a heavy toll on local villagers and by the early 1980s, over 1,500,000 refugees had fled the Ogaden region.<sup>6</sup>

However, ongoing conflicts in this area and across Somalia over the past decades have meant that the issue is not only limited to EO left over from old battlefields. Somalia's civil war, beginning with rebellions against the Siad Barre government after the end of the Ogaden War and followed by its eventual collapse in 1991, left a vacuum of power which resulted in subsequent violent clashes over the succeeding decades. Despite interventions by the United Nations and the inauguration of the Federal Government of Somalia in 2012, conflicts continue to impact local populations in different regions across the country, leaving behind ERW. New anti-personnel mines (APMs) and anti-vehicle mines have been found to have been laid as recently as 2012<sup>7</sup> and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) continue to be used by non-State actors in ongoing conflicts.<sup>8</sup> This has been increasingly noted in urban areas and along roadsides where higher numbers of civilians are vulnerable to attacks despite the focus on military targets.<sup>9</sup> IEDs have been the greatest cause of EO-related casualties for many years.<sup>10</sup>

## ARMED CONFLICT IN SOMALIA

<b>1964</b>	Border conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia
<b>1977-78</b>	Ogaden War
<b>1988-91</b>	Civil war against the Siad Barre regime
<b>1992-95</b>	United Nations intervention
<b>2004</b>	Transitional Federal Government (TFG) inaugurated
<b>2006-07</b>	Conflict between the Islamic Courts Union and Ethiopian and TFG forces
<b>2012</b>	Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) inaugurated
<b>2023</b>	Ongoing conflict between FGS forces (Somali Security Forces, Somali National Army, support from the African Transition Mission in Somalia) and al-Shabaab

The ongoing issue of EO derives from decades of conflict and political instability and adds to other significant and multifaceted developmental and humanitarian issues affecting the country, including severe food insecurity caused by climate change-induced natural hazards, large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs), and challenges related to poverty and gender inequality.

Climate change is a driver of conflict and displacement and is directly linked to food insecurity in the country. In 2022, 5.6 million people were considered food insecure and 2.8 million were unable to meet their daily food requirements in Somalia.<sup>11</sup> Recent environmental crises, particularly recurrent droughts, along with periodic conflicts, have led to an unprecedented rise in internal displacement, with Somalia already having one of the highest numbers of IDPs in the world.<sup>12</sup>

Socio-economic challenges have also exacerbated security issues, increasing tensions over the acquisition of commodities, driving people towards recruitment in non-State groups such as al-Shabaab, and adding to a cycle of instability with a detrimental impact on long-term development and sustainable peace.<sup>13</sup>

These varied challenges create a complex landscape for mine action in a country where the presence of EO has created additional barriers to sustainable development for several decades. In 2022, an estimated 7.7 million people,<sup>14</sup> roughly 46 per cent of the population,<sup>15</sup> were identified as being in need of humanitarian assistance in the country, including refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>16</sup> IDPs, especially women and girls, continue to be significantly impacted by the ongoing difficulties facing Somalia.<sup>17</sup> Competing priorities due to the ongoing conflict and lack of government funding to run State institutions have led to the Somali Explosive Management Authority (SEMA) relying entirely on international support and funding.

Somalia is comprised of six states with differing levels of administrative autonomy including Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Jubaland, Puntland, Somaliland, and South West State, as well as one regional administration, Banadir.<sup>18</sup> The state of Somaliland self-declared independence in 1991 although its independence remains unrecognised by the international community. Nevertheless, in practice Somaliland's operations and governance remain independent from the rest of Somalia. The Puntland State of Somalia, having self-declared as an autonomous state in 1998, remains politically aligned with the Federal Government of Somalia.<sup>19</sup> The implication of this political and administrative context is that the coordination of mine action activities in Somalia are separated between Somaliland and the rest of the Somali states.

# MINE ACTION IN SOMALIA

Mine action operators have been present in Somalia since 1991, working on a range of land release, capacity-building, and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) activities in Somaliland and Puntland.<sup>20</sup> Land release activities across other regions began in or after 2008. Over this time, mine action has continued despite the significant interrelated challenges of security, accessibility, and persistent unpredictability in resources and funding.

The current National Mine Action Authority in Somalia is SEMA, which took over from the Somali National Mine Action Authority in 2013.<sup>21</sup> However, whilst SEMA was established through a presidential decree under the Ministry of Internal Security, it is yet to be formally recognised by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), which has had implications for its resourcing. The SEMA headquarters in Mogadishu undertake coordination efforts in parallel with state offices and regional mine action consortia across five states, as well as the regional administration of Banadir, whilst the Mine Action Center is responsible for coordination of mine action under the Ministry of Defence in Somaliland. The regional mine action consortia are expected to hold quarterly coordination meetings organised by SEMA together with international operators including the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), Mines Advisory Group, Ukroboronservice SC, and The HALO Trust.

SEMA undertakes all aspects of planning, coordination, and data management of mine action in five Federal Member States of Somalia and in Banadir,<sup>22</sup> having taken over the ownership of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database from UNMAS in 2017. Ongoing mine action nationalisation efforts have been supported by NPA and UNMAS, which have provided funding and capacity-building support to SEMA in recent years, whilst ongoing processes are undertaken for its integration into the government budget and national legislation.

Somalia is a State Party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (APMBC), the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The importance of mine action for Somalia's national development is reflected in the Somalia Mine Action Strategic Plan which highlights the role of mine action in providing "both direct and indirect support" to Somalia's national development planning.<sup>23</sup> The strategic plan notes the role of mine action in supporting peace and security, facilitating the development of local and national institutions, enabling the restoration of infrastructure, and increasing resilience to adverse natural, political, and economic events.<sup>24</sup>

Mine action operations have continued in recent years, despite restrictions to the safe access of mine action operators to confirmed hazardous areas and suspected hazardous areas. Close coordination with local leaders and government authorities has allowed international operators to stay ahead of changing conditions and continue with secure operations. For certain areas in the southern and central states,<sup>25</sup> the situation can change rapidly, and accessibility may be limited to major towns with buffer zones.<sup>26</sup> Other areas in these states are wholly inaccessible due to the presence of armed groups, meaning that the presence of contamination cannot be confirmed.

## NATURE OF CONTAMINATION

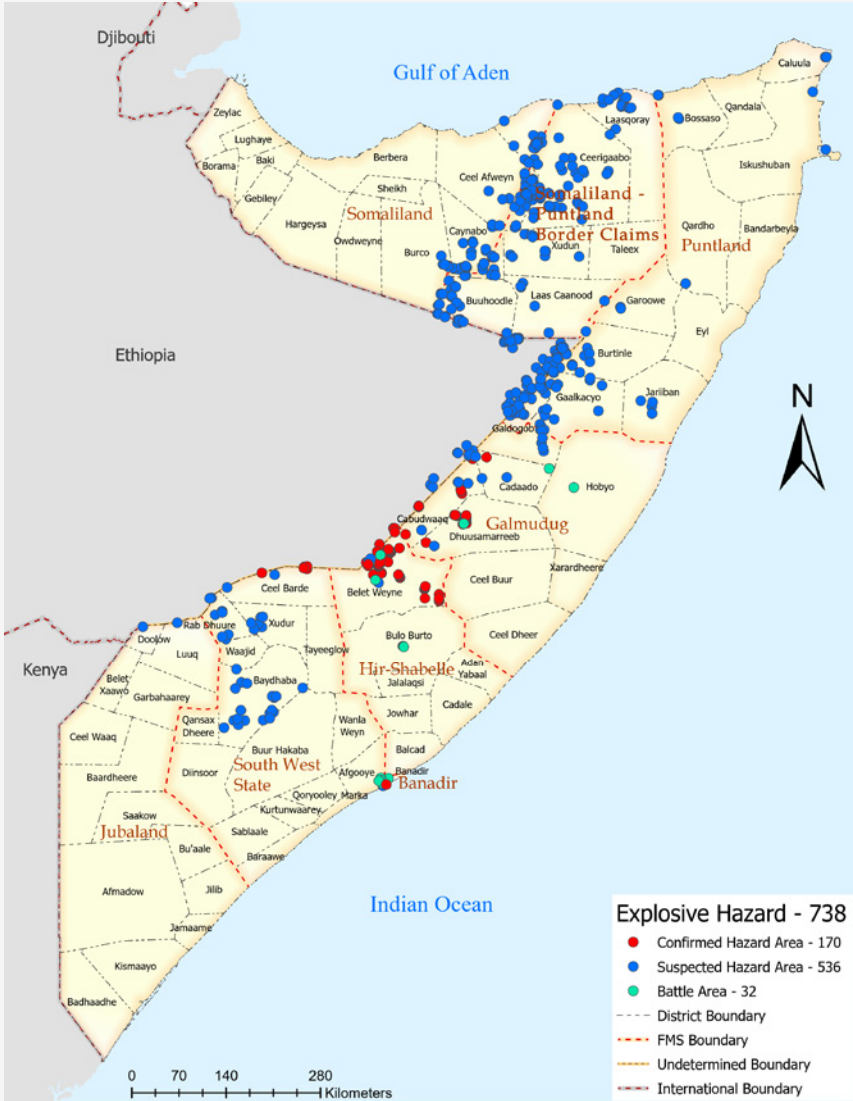
Due to the lack of a comprehensive baseline assessment of EO contamination in Somalia, an understanding of the full extent and nature of contamination is not currently available.<sup>27</sup> In 2022, there was an estimated 169 km<sup>2</sup> of contaminated land in five of the Federal Member States (FMSs) of Somalia, including 109 km<sup>2</sup> of suspected hazardous areas and 60 km<sup>2</sup> of confirmed hazardous areas.<sup>28</sup> <sup>29</sup> In Somaliland, 5.46 km<sup>2</sup> of land remains to be cleared, including 18 minefields totalling 3.9 km<sup>2</sup> and 65 road tasks totalling 1.4 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>30</sup> Work to better understand the existing contamination in Puntland is ongoing, with 7.1 km<sup>2</sup> of newly mapped contamination in southern Puntland at the end of 2022.<sup>31</sup>



Since the start of land release activities in 2008, 25.5 km<sup>2</sup> of land has been cleared<sup>32</sup> in five FMSs and 110.4 km<sup>2</sup> in total has been either cleared, cancelled or reduced.<sup>33</sup> As of October 2022, a reported 215 communities in these states continued to be affected by EO.<sup>34</sup> Land release in the northern state of Somaliland began earlier, with 27.4 km<sup>2</sup> cleared, 2.9 km<sup>2</sup> excavated, 29.1 km<sup>2</sup> surveyed, and 6.8 km<sup>2</sup> cancelled by The HALO Trust since 1999.<sup>35</sup> Contamination in the country, and particularly in the southern and central states, is complex due to the possibility of recontamination of previously cleared areas, and the existence of poorly managed or abandoned stockpiles, which can increase the risks associated with IEDs.<sup>36</sup> Although there are no officially held stockpiles of APMs, the FGS has noted that privately owned stockpiles exist and are also held by armed anti-government groups.<sup>37</sup>

In general, contamination is confirmed or suspected throughout the major regions of Somalia with the majority existing in the form of legacy minefields along the Somali-Ethiopian border, although there is a better understanding of overall contamination in the northern regions of Somalia where relative stability in recent years has allowed for survey data to be gathered, and there is a lower risk of recontamination. The states of Galmudug and Hirshabelle had the highest number of recorded EO accidents in 2022, specifically in rural areas along the border region, with EO involved in 35 per cent of all recorded accidents.<sup>38</sup> In particular, the highest concentration of EO incidence reports in 2021–2022 were recorded in the district of Dhabad in Galmudug.<sup>39</sup>

Barriers relating to resourcing and security have so far prevented comprehensive non-technical survey (NTS) or technical survey work in Galmudug, Hirshabelle, South West State, and Jubaland. However, there is clear recognition of the need for more work, as evidenced by the updated prioritisation response by the explosive hazards Area of Responsibility to mobilising funds for NTS activities. Such activities would help to better understand the needs for subsequent clearance and EORE efforts.<sup>40</sup>



Federal Republic of Somalia  
 Known Explosive Hazards  
 As of November 2022

Disclaimer - The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement by the United Nations.

Vector data Source: UNMAS, UNSOS GIS, HALO TRUST, NPA

Map of explosive hazards in Somalia, 2022. Source: UNMAS

ERW are widespread across all regions of Somalia, although reports of cluster munition remnants have been sporadic. Estimates suggest that cluster munition contamination covers less than 5 km<sup>2</sup> of land, although more thorough surveys are required to verify this.<sup>41</sup>

The presence of IEDs is also a major issue in Somalia, particularly in South West State, due to the ongoing war between the non-State armed group al-Shabaab and the FGS.<sup>42</sup> IEDs are a major cause of death in Somalia, with many planted in and around civilian infrastructure such as roads and water access points.<sup>43 44</sup> Poverty and unemployment also compound the issue, as civilians have been reported to gather EO they encounter, to harvest and sell explosive material for various purposes including for the construction of IEDs. Moreover, the existence of privately owned and abandoned stockpiles of weapons and ammunition continues to present a dual risk to safety and security, either through diversion or through unplanned explosions at munitions sites.

## KEY MILESTONES IN MINE ACTION IN SOMALIA

- **1991** The first mine operation in Somaliland was contracted by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and Médecins sans Frontières, undertaken by the commercial organisation Rimfire
  - **2007–8** The Transitional Federal Government of Somalia establishes the first National Mine Action Authority
  - **2011** The Somali National Mine Action Authority (SNMAA) is established
  - **2012** Somalia becomes a State Party to the APMBC
  - **2013** The SNMAA is replaced by the Somali Explosive Management Authority (SEMA)
  - **2015** SEMA is handed responsibility from UNMAS for mine action coordination in Somalia
- Badbaado Plan for Multi-Year Explosive Hazard Management is published
- Somalia ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). It entered into force the following year.
- The Cabinet approves the Mine Action legislation and budget
- **2017** Ownership of the national IMSMA database is transferred from UNMAS to SEMA

- **2019** Somalia ratifies the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

Somalia National Victim Assistance and Disability Action Plan is launched<sup>45</sup>

Somalia National Development Plan-9 (2020–2024) is launched

- **2020** Somalia National Mine Action Strategic Plan is approved

The Disabilities Road Map 2020–2023 is published

- **2021** Somalia applies for its first extension to the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in mined areas, to 2027, in accordance with Article 5 of the APMBC

# **THE CONTRIBUTION OF MINE ACTION TO THE SDGs IN SOMALIA**

This section looks specifically at the multidimensional contribution of mine action to sustainable development. Analysis includes key elements of mine action efforts including land release, victim assistance, explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), gender and diversity mainstreaming, and partnerships and cooperation.

Before delving into the specific impacts of mine action activities and given the connection between explosive ordnance (EO) and the ongoing conflict in Somalia, this section begins with an exploration of the broader impact of mine action on conflict reduction. Whilst EO contamination is a result of conflict, elimination of EO can also be a factor in reducing future conflict by preventing the diversion of explosive hazards which can perpetuate and exacerbate armed violence. These linkages are relevant in the Somali context, requiring their consideration as significant impacts of mine action in the country.

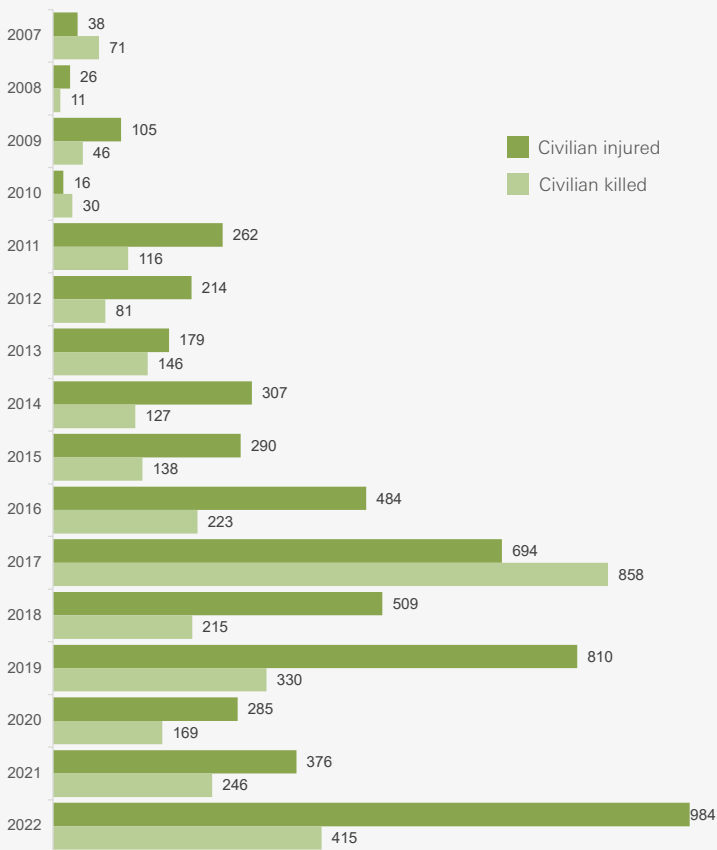
## MINE ACTION AND CONFLICT REDUCTION

Mine action has made an important contribution towards sustaining peace in Somalia, through strategies that are targeted at the local context of conflict.

Despite the widespread issue of EO contamination in Somalia, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are responsible for a significantly higher number of casualties in comparison with other explosive ordnance. IEDs have been the main weapon of choice by non-State armed groups. This includes al-Shabaab in an ongoing conflict with the African Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) and Somali Security Forces. Attacks by al-Shabaab have been both targeted and indiscriminate, including the use of IEDs, suicide bombings, and shelling, which have had a significant impact on civilian lives. Since 2007, approximately 4,000 IED incidents have been reported, resulting in 14,805 victims.<sup>46</sup> Despite the frequency of targeted attacks, civilians are disproportionately impacted, making up 42 per cent of all IED-related casualties in 2021.<sup>47</sup>

The regularity of the IED threat has not abated in recent years, with more than 1,800 IED incidents recorded in the period 2019–2021, causing over 3,800 casualties.<sup>48</sup> As shown in Figure 3, there has been a significant increase in civilian casualties of IEDs over the past decade.

**FIGURE 3** IED CIVILIAN CASUALTIES BY YEAR IN THE FEDERAL MEMBER STATES OF SOMALIA, 2007–2022



Data does not include Somaliland  
Source: UNMAS, own elaboration



The United Nations Mine Action Service has supported efforts to counter the threat of IEDs in Somalia through training, mentoring and equipment support to ATMIS, the Somali National Army, and the Somali Police Force.<sup>49</sup> However, international mine action operators have mostly focused their efforts on clearing legacy minefields as well as battle area clearance in sites where conflict has ceased.

There are important links between clearance and the proliferation of IEDs in certain regions of Somalia. Estimates suggest that 91 per cent of IEDs in Somalia are composed of explosives harvested from explosive remnants of war (ERW) and other EO left at abandoned ammunition storage facilities.<sup>50</sup> The presence of EO therefore has had a continuing impact on insecurity and significantly hinders longer-term peace. The private collection of ERW by civilians who have harvested hazardous materials is also an ongoing concern. EO is kept for a range of reasons including for sale, use, or when it is not recognised as EO, for other reasons such as to be used as landmarks, decoration, or as household or recreational items like soccer goal posts.<sup>51</sup>

A long history of EO contamination means that some individuals have learnt how to locate and harvest EO, including landmines, which are then sold and eventually used to fabricate IEDs by non-State actors.<sup>52</sup> Longstanding sustainable development issues, including poverty and a lack of employment opportunities, incentivise these activities. Such practices not only contribute to conflict but present considerable risks to the individuals themselves. This is an issue particularly in remote communities which are less likely to have received EORE, and more likely to be impacted by poverty and instability.<sup>53</sup>

Through EORE and land release, mine action operators reduce the threat of conflict by preventing high-risk behaviour, including the harvesting and sale of EO, as well as reducing the amount of explosive ordnance that can be found. This work has contributed to **SDG 16** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and its **target 16.1** on reducing all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.

In addition to land release, good physical security and stockpile management practices are also an important means of risk prevention and reduction, given the presence of abandoned ammunition storage facilities

in the country left over from prior conflicts.<sup>54 55</sup> These facilities present a threat to communities due to poor storage conditions, lack of governmental oversight, and the risk of diversion into the hands of non-State actors. The use of these stockpiles to fuel ongoing violent conflicts makes them both an immediate threat and a barrier to longer-term peace and sustainable development.

International operators have supported efforts to reduce these risks through training on explosive ordnance disposal and weapons and ammunition management systems for national authorities, as well as support for building armouries and safe storehouses for ammunition and explosives.<sup>56 57 58</sup> These efforts have contributed to **SDG 16** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and its **target 16.4** on reducing illicit arms flows, as well as **target 16.a** on strengthening national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.



*Clearance operation in Galdogob, 2021. Source: UNMAS*

# 1. LAND RELEASE

FIGURE 5

## CONTRIBUTION OF LAND RELEASE TO THE SDG TARGETS IN SOMALIA



- 1.1** End of extreme poverty
- 1.4** Equal rights to economic resources and access to basic services
- 1.5** Improved resilience, reduced vulnerability



- 2.1** Access to food
- 2.3** Doubling of the agricultural productivity



- 3.4** Reduction of premature mortality through prevention and treatment
- 3.6** Reduction of deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents
- 3.8** Access to essential health-care services



- 4.1** Ensuring completion of primary and secondary education
- 4.4** Increased number of skilled youth and adults



- 5.2** Elimination of violence against women and girls



- 6.1** Access to safe and affordable drinking water
- 6.4** Increased water-use efficiency



- 8.1** Sustained economic growth
- 8.2** Increased economic productivity through diversification
- 8.3** Support for productive activities and decent job creation
- 8.5** Full and productive employment and decent work



- 9.1** Equitable access to infrastructure
- 9.3** Increased access to financial services
- 9.a** Infrastructure development through financial, technological and technical support



- 
- 10.2** Social, economic, political inclusion of all
  - 10.7** Safe migration and mobility



- 
- 15.3** Restoration of degraded land and soil



- 
- 11.2** Access to safe and sustainable transport systems
  - 11.7** Universal access to public spaces



- 
- 16.1** Reduction of all forms of violence



- 
- 12.2** Sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources



- 
- 17.17** Effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships



- 
- 13.1** Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters
  - 13.3** Improve education and capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction

*The wording of the SDG targets listed above has been simplified; the full list of targets and their official names can be found on the United Nations website: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>*

**Land release** refers to the process of applying ‘all reasonable effort’ to identify, define, and remove all presence and suspicion of explosive ordnance through non-technical survey, technical survey and/or clearance.<sup>59 60 61</sup>

The restoration of access to and use of safe land is vital in Somalia, where land degradation and natural disasters, exacerbated by climate change, have been a major issue for decades, leading to food insecurity, poverty, loss of livelihoods, and high internal displacement. Land release can allow people to return to homes in previously unsafe areas, making land accessible for infrastructure, agriculture, and other economic activities. It can also help to prevent the escalation of ongoing violence and conflict, as clearance reduces the harvesting of explosive ordnance (EO) for the production of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

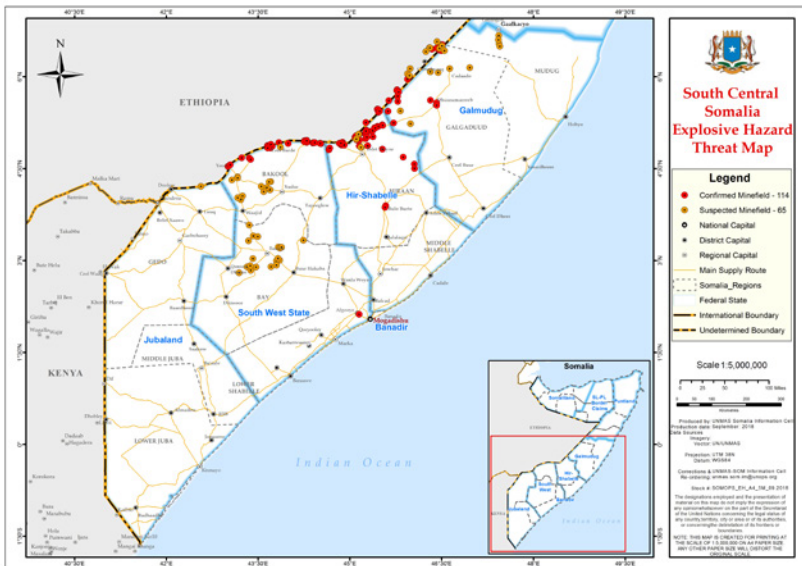
In Somalia, land release is a crucial enabler of safe mobility for a significant percentage of pastoral and nomadic communities, as well as internally displaced persons (IDPs). By preventing EO-related deaths and injuries, land release contributes directly to **SDG 16** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and its **target 16.1** on reducing all forms of violence and related death rates.

Although EO contamination is only one of many challenges facing Somalia’s long-term sustainable development, it continues to be a significant barrier to community safety and an important prerequisite for social, political, and economic objectives. The socio-economic impact of land release continues to be of significance for remote communities who experience higher levels of poverty and are more likely to be unaware of safe behaviours around EO, which makes them particularly vulnerable to the negative consequences of contamination.<sup>62</sup>

Due to the legacy minefields along the Somali-Ethiopian border, much land release has occurred in the regions of Hiran, Bakool, Galgaduud, Galdogob, Maroodi Jeex, and Togdheer.<sup>63</sup> However, large stretches of battle area clearance (BAC) have also occurred in the Banadir, Galgaduud, and Galdogob regions.<sup>64</sup> Recent conflicts are also relevant. For instance,

mine action operators have surveyed and cleared land in Bosaso, Puntland, following violent conflict which left explosive remnants of war (ERW) in urban areas in December 2021.<sup>65</sup> Since 2008, land release has enabled the release of 143 different infrastructure sites in Somalia, mostly consisting of roads and access routes.<sup>66 67</sup>

As of December 2022, the ongoing land release work by UNMAS contractor Ukroboronservice SC (UOS) included areas with a combined estimated population size of 62,950 people.<sup>68</sup> Land release carried out by The HALO Trust in the Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Puntland, and South West States helped 36 beneficiary communities across the four states.<sup>69 70</sup> In Somaliland, land release by The HALO Trust from 1999 to 2022 uncovered 3,360 anti-personnel mines, 1,019 anti-vehicle mines (AVMs), 60,125 stray ammunition pieces, 100,327 small arms ammunition rounds, and 27,116 items of unexploded ordnance.<sup>71</sup>



Explosive hazard threat map for Federal Member States, 2018. Source: SEMA<sup>72</sup>

Land release activities can remove restrictions to community access to basic services and economic opportunities, and enable the stability and security needed for recovery and development. This section illustrates the different ways in which land release has contributed to sustainable development outcomes by facilitating safe mobility, enabling access to natural resources such as pastureland and water, restoring safety to trade routes, and allowing for infrastructure development.

**FIGURE 4** EO REMOVED IN SOMALILAND, 1999-2022 / EO REMOVED IN SOMALIA, 2008-2022

	SOMALILAND	SOMALIA
ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES	3,360	211
ANTI-VEHICLE MINES	1,019	203
EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR		84,584
IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES		1,141
STRAY AMMUNITION	60,125	
SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION	100,327	33,154
UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE	27,116	

Source: The HALO Trust/UNMAS, own elaboration



## FACILITATING SAFE MOBILITY

Land release plays a large role in enabling the safe movement of people in Somalia. Roughly 60 per cent of the population is made up of nomadic herders who must remain mobile to ensure their livelihoods, making them more vulnerable to EO due to their need to move across large swathes of land.<sup>73 74</sup> This has been further exacerbated by a severe and devastating drought over the past few years, triggering pastoral migrations and forcing such communities to move further from their homes and into unfamiliar territory in search of food, water, and suitable land for their livestock.<sup>75</sup>

In addition to pastoral communities, contaminated areas are particularly dangerous for people displaced by climate change or conflict.<sup>76</sup> Families may be forced to travel for many miles to reach displacement camps or larger cities. In 2022, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported an estimated 2.97 million IDPs in Somalia, one of the highest numbers in the world.<sup>77</sup> Most live in the 2,000 displacement camps situated within the country, many of which are makeshift settlements where the threat of eviction is constant.<sup>78</sup> Internal displacement is one of the biggest ongoing issues facing Somalis – it is expected that conflict will have led to approximately 277,000 people becoming internally displaced over the course of 2022,<sup>79</sup> whilst intensifying drought conditions will have displaced one million people during the same year.<sup>80 81</sup>

Climate change has also disrupted traditional livelihoods in Somalia, leading to rapid urbanisation and forced evictions – both a “cause and a multiplier” of the internal displacement crisis.<sup>82</sup> Struggles over scarce resources generate and exacerbate local conflicts which themselves are a major cause of displaced populations. This adds to instability at the national level, further compounded by ongoing military operations against al-Shabaab in 2021, which forced 540,000 people to flee their homes.<sup>83</sup>



*Destroyed anti-tank vehicle found in the community in Galdogob district, 2022. Source: NPA*

Violent tensions in neighbouring countries also affect migration, with refugees and asylum seekers making up a portion of those displaced in the country. The ongoing conflict in neighbouring Yemen and Ethiopia could have ramifications for both displacement and regional stability. The UNHCR recorded over 30,000 refugees and asylum seekers in Somalia in 2022, mostly from Ethiopia, Yemen, and Syria.<sup>84</sup> According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Somalia's main migration patterns include forced migration (conflicts and natural disasters), irregular migration (poverty and limited livelihood options), mixed migration (asylum seekers, economic migrants, smuggled migrants, trafficking victims, etc.), traditional and cross-border migration (nomadic cross-border movement), and labour migration (movement across regions and states for employment purposes).<sup>85</sup>

These migration trends are significant because ongoing movement within and between state borders can increase the likelihood of EO accidents, especially for individuals or groups travelling through unfamiliar territory. In one incident in 2022, two people were killed and four injured while fleeing conflict in a vehicle that hit a roadside mine in Galmudug.<sup>86</sup>

Through land release, mine action has facilitated safe mobility for IDPs, nomadic pastoralists, and local communities living in and around contaminated areas, thereby contributing to **SDG 10** Reduced Inequalities on reducing inequalities and particularly to its **target 10.7** on facilitating orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people. Land release also enhances the safety of both regular and irregular movement, supporting **SDG 16** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and its **target 16.1** on the reduction of all forms of violence.

For villages in and around the border regions, mine contamination impacts access to government services, as well as travel that may be required for economic opportunities. By facilitating safe access, land release efforts have impacted **SDG 1** No Poverty and its **target 1.4** on equal rights to economic resources and access to basic services.

## **NPA'S SYSTEMATIC NON-TECHNICAL SURVEY PROJECT IN PUNTLAND**

A systematic survey allows for a clearer understanding of where contamination occurs as well as confirmation of safe areas in places where EO does not exist. In December 2021, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) began a systematic state-wide non-technical survey (NTS) project in Puntland, aiming to map and document contamination across the region, allowing for safer mobility through the verification and correction of previous mapping of the region.<sup>87</sup>

As with other areas of Somalia, Puntland has been heavily impacted by both conflict and environmental hazards which have restricted access to land. Large numbers of IDPs in the region mean that safe and accessible land is important both for forced migration and the seasonal migration of nomadic communities.<sup>88</sup> Concerns about EO contamination have also blocked access to land for infrastructure, development, water, and grazing. However, receding conflict in recent years has allowed for freer movement which has increased the likelihood of community contact with EO, as evidenced by increased calls for explosive ordnance disposal and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) by communities in the region.<sup>89</sup>

As of December 2022, NPA had completed the survey of southern Puntland, including all districts with known contamination by legacy minefields.<sup>90</sup> This included visits of 613 villages in the districts of Burtinle, Galdogob, Galkacyo, Garowe, Eyl, and Jariban, of which 52 were found to have been impacted by EO. As of this time, these ongoing survey activities had identified 188 hazards within a total area of 7,149,618 m<sup>2</sup>. The project is expected to conclude in February 2023.<sup>91</sup>

By improving knowledge on the extent and nature of EO contamination, this project has contributed to **SDG 10** on reducing inequalities and particularly to its **target 10.7** on facilitating orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people.



*Hazard marking as a result of NTS activities in Puntland, 2022. Source: NPA*

NPA's project has also been significant in demonstrating close collaboration with all levels of state and national authorities, with planning based on security advice provided by Puntland's Ministry of Security. These partnerships have ensured safe operations and are indicative of mine action's contributions to **SDG 17** Partnerships for the Goals, particularly **target 17.17** on effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships.



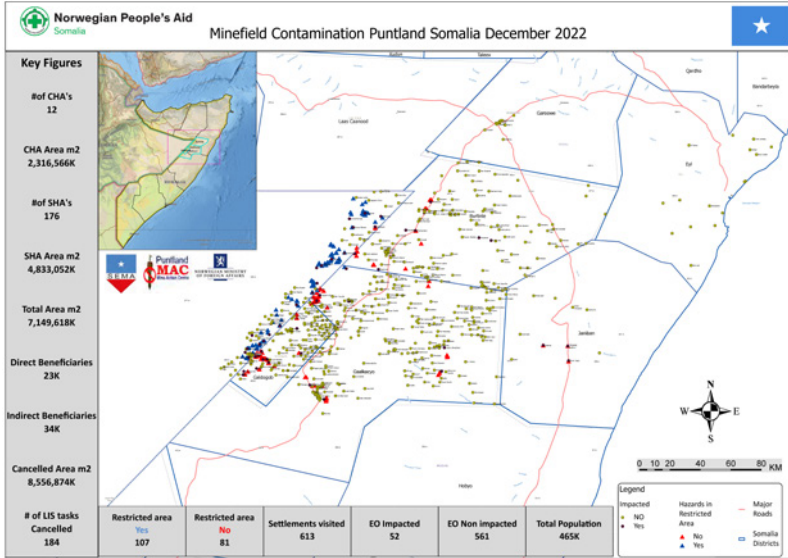
*Anti-personnel mines and anti-vehicle mines collected by the community in Burtinle district, 2022. Source: NPA*

At the same time, requests from local authorities have helped guide the prioritisation of sites and supported local development. For instance, NTS work in the Burtinle district was requested specifically by the mayor to support government planning for future infrastructure development, as well as supporting safe movement of IDPs in the area.<sup>92</sup> In total, 75 hazards were identified in this district, and hazardous areas totalling 3,515,963 m<sup>2</sup> were identified.<sup>93</sup> The prioritisation of this site will allow for contributions to **SDG 9** Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, specifically **target 9.1** as the NTS survey allows for regional planning to support the development of resilient infrastructure to support economic development and well-being.

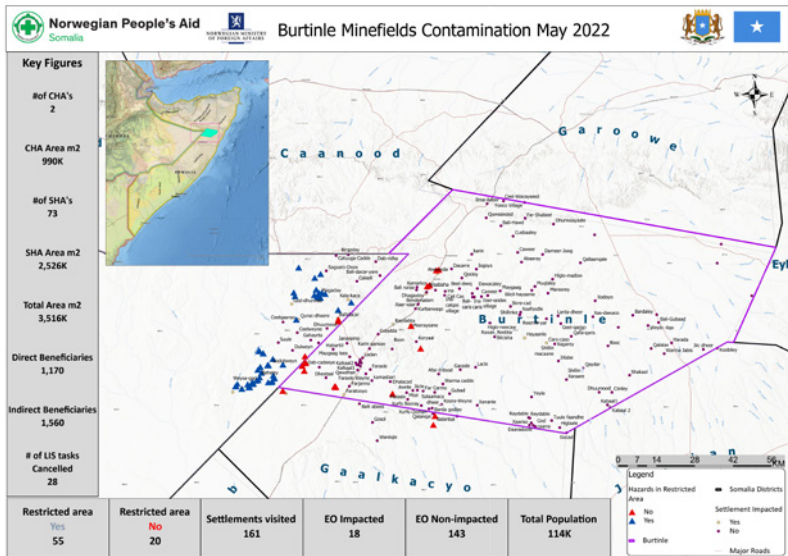


*NTS community interview in Galdogob district, 2022. Source: NPA*

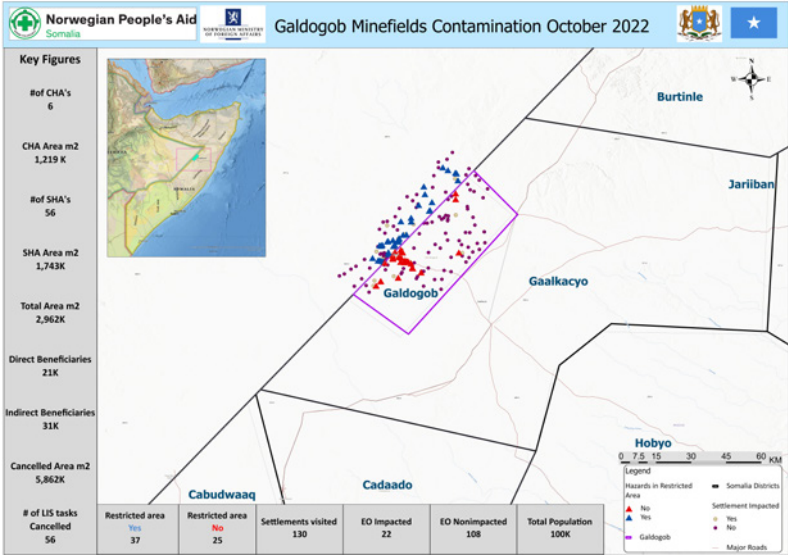




Minefield contamination in Puntland, December 2022. Source: NPA



Minefield contamination in Burtinle, May 2022. Source: PMAC/NPA



Minefield contamination in Galdogob, October 2022. Source: PMAC/NPA

## AGRICULTURE AND PRODUCTIVE USE OF LAND

Released land in Somalia has opened up access to safe farming and grazing land for the country's majority population of rural communities and nomadic pastoralists.<sup>94</sup> The border regions, in particular, contain important grazing land for communities, whilst agriculture is the main source of income in Somalia, with approximately 70.3 per cent of land being utilised for agricultural purposes.<sup>95</sup> Recent World Bank data suggests that agriculture makes up approximately 75 per cent of annual GDP, and 93 per cent of total exports.<sup>96</sup> Livestock makes up approximately 75 per cent of Somalia's total exports in terms of value.<sup>97</sup>

Agriculture is also the greatest source of employment for both women and men at 83.9 per cent and 79.2 per cent of the labour force, respectively.<sup>98</sup> The bulk of this is made up of livestock rather than farming, since arable land is limited, and livestock continues to be the country's main export.<sup>99</sup> Land release is therefore crucial to protecting the lives of nomadic pastoralists as well as their livestock, made up primarily of camels as well as cattle, goats, and sheep, during their seasonal migration. Where there is fear of EO, pastoralists are prevented from venturing towards arable grounds due to concerns for their safety as well as that of their animals.<sup>100</sup> For those who move across new or unknown territory, regular contact with different EO is likely, meaning that community liaison and EORE are highly important.



*Remnants of the camel killed in an EO accident in Afbarwaqo.  
Source: UOS/UNMAS*

As the livelihoods of the majority of Somalia's communities are based on agriculture and livestock, local populations are particularly vulnerable to the loss of land and therefore employment, which is a growing problem for Somali youth.<sup>101</sup> Many Somalis depend on livestock, not only as a source of income but also for food and nutrition.<sup>102</sup> In many cases, EO contamination is discovered through accidents involving animals.





*Livestock are vital for many community livelihoods, Burao, 2022. Source: MAG/Sean Sutton*

The loss of livestock can be devastating for families who rely on them. In one such case in Afbarwaqo village, UNMAS was alerted to the presence of EO when a camel was killed while grazing.<sup>103</sup> The district had previously been the site of conflict between rival clans in the area, leaving behind EO contamination. This accident had an enormous impact on the family for whom the camel was a crucial source of food and income. UNMAS sent a multitasking team from UOS to the area to clear the remaining EO and ensure the safety of community members living in the district. This security allowed the family to consider leasing another camel without fear of future EO accidents. Nearby EORE sessions were also delivered to livestock herders, who were given information leaflets as well as solar-powered audio messaging devices.

Livestock density, coupled with increased severity of drought and flash flooding, has limited the areas suitable for grazing, reducing vegetation cover and causing topsoil erosion. In the context of a growing population, the health and resilience of livestock are negatively impacted by a lack of infrastructure and water shortages, which in turn affects farmers' livelihoods.

The threat of EO contamination adds to the existing issue of land use caused by land degradation, a hazard which undermines the arability of land and reduces the resilience of the natural environment to ongoing climate change. Significantly for its land-dependant population, Somalia is the most drought-affected country in the Horn of Africa.<sup>104</sup> In 2022, ongoing deforestation and drought increased fears of famine, particularly in the regions of Baidoa and Burhakaba.<sup>105</sup>

With the amount of arable land decreasing, EO contamination further limits the accessible/safe land available for use by communities. In certain areas, shrinking viable pasturelands have pushed pastoralists closer to the border regions with Ethiopia, where the high risk of contamination is counterbalanced by green grazing grounds for livestock.<sup>106</sup>

For this reason, and because of the known issue of legacy minefields, mine action operators have focused their efforts on these areas since mid-2015, with UNMAS starting deployment of survey and clearance teams in the districts of Dollo, Yeed, El Barde, Beletweyne, Mataban, Dhabad, and Galdogob.<sup>107</sup> These operations have helped improve the safety of herding activities in these areas and allowed for the intensification of small-scale farming.



*Agricultural activity in the district of Dollo in 2022, following land release operations. Source: UNMAS*

In Hirshabelle, the land release work undertaken by The HALO Trust since 2019 has had a major impact on agricultural production and the quality of life for locals. The Shabelle River, which flows from Ethiopia through the regions of Hiran and Middle Shabelle and down to the southern states of Somalia, is a crucial water source which sustains agricultural production in the region. It is one of only two perennial rivers in Somalia.<sup>108</sup> The floodplains of the Shabelle River are fertile areas for farming, allowing crops to be grown for both domestic and international markets.<sup>109</sup>

However, zones around this river in Hiran have been affected by EO contamination. In one case, a local farmer sustained injuries after triggering a mine whilst driving a tractor. HALO teams were able to provide medical assistance and conduct an investigation into the incident which led to the identification of the area as a priority for survey and clearance activities.<sup>110</sup> Once the land was released, the farmer was again able to use the land safely for agriculture. This land release has also had wider benefits, as more people have moved into the newly secured region to undertake agricultural production, including the farmer's children who were able to build their own homes and cultivate the land for themselves.

Considering that most livelihoods in Somali communities are based on agriculture and livestock, land release has contributed to **SDG 1** on ending poverty in all its forms, and its **targets 1.1** and **1.4** that address extreme poverty and access to resources, including land.

By enabling the safe use of land for food production and increasing agricultural productivity, mine action has contributed to **SDG 2** Zero Hunger, and its **target 2.1** on ensuring access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food, as well as **target 2.3** on agricultural productivity and the incomes of small-scale food producers including family farmers and pastoralists.

By facilitating the productive use of land for economic purposes, mine action has promoted **SDG 8** Decent work and Economic Growth, and its **target 8.3** on supporting productive activities and decent job creation and **target 8.5** on productive employment.

# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

As the most drought-affected country in the Horn of Africa, Somalia's agriculture-dependant population has not only suffered from the contamination of arable land but also a shrinking quantity of fertile land.<sup>111</sup> Climate change, deforestation, overgrazing, poor agricultural practices, and drought have led to desertification and land degradation that has had enormous repercussions for local communities, including severe water shortages and reduced availability of food and pasture.<sup>112 113</sup> Research suggests that land degradation has included the loss of vegetation and topsoil, and the decline of soil moisture.<sup>114</sup> Such degradation has had a direct impact on agricultural productivity, lowering the crop and forage yields and creating conditions for more invasive species, decreased supply and quality of water, air pollution, and even impacting the longevity of roads and bridges.<sup>115</sup>

The increasing pressure on limited resources has exacerbated other environmental issues, as local communities turn to unsustainable practices such as cutting trees for firewood and charcoal, aggravating the issues of deforestation, and reducing the resilience of land to recover from environmental shocks such as drought.<sup>116</sup>

In Somaliland, mine action has not only increased the availability of land for use but also cleared land for rehabilitation activities to take place. Between 2021 and 2022, The HALO Trust undertook an innovative environmental rehabilitation programme in partnership with the local organisation Candlelight for Environment, Education and Health to rehabilitate and regreen land that had previously been cleared of contamination.<sup>117</sup> In addition to existing adverse environmental conditions, cleared land can be scarred by the demining process which can lead to vegetation and topsoil loss. By the end of 2022, the programme had involved six different communities close to the border regions in Bisiqa, Duruqsi, Gudubi, Jeenyo Laaye, Sayla Bari, and Nasiye.<sup>118</sup>



*Newly constructed soil bunds, Nasiye, 2022. Source: The HALO Trust Somaliland*

Communities previously impacted by EO contamination were provided with support and materials to construct soil bunds and plant tree saplings with the aim of improving water catchment and retention, increasing soil nutrition, and facilitating the greening and rehabilitation of land.<sup>119</sup> Community members were given environmental awareness training to understand the relationship between livestock, people, and the environment, as well as knowledge about the links between recurrent drought and deforestation.<sup>120</sup> These sessions focused on the important role of communities in preserving and rehabilitating land with the aim of fostering local ownership of the project. Across the different regions, 266 hectares of soil bunds are expected to be constructed, with 10,180 assorted tree seedlings provided and at least 1,670 families participating.<sup>121</sup>

In Sayla Bari and Nasiye, activities also included the rehabilitation of berkads, or water reservoirs, which allow for the capture and storage of rainwater.<sup>122</sup> The berkads are a vitally important infrastructure for rural communities which are heavily impacted by persistent drought conditions. Activities in Sayla Bari also include beekeeping, and training and supplies for honey production, to support eco-friendly economic diversification. A tree nursery is also being built, with 2,000 trees planned. Through this initiative, local staff are trained to build and maintain both beehives and the tree nursery, in an effort to promote local ownership and the sustainability of these activities.

The impact has already been demonstrated, as a local farmer in Sayla Bari has begun growing crops on previously barren land. In time, such results could allow for strengthened local food production as well as longer-term sensitisation towards critical sustainability issues.



*Seedlings in preparation for planting in previously contaminated areas, Sayla Bari, 2022. Source: The HALO Trust*

This innovative programme ensures that previously contaminated land can be restored to support local efforts to mitigate the impact of climate change and environmental shocks. By linking mine action with environmental conservation activities, this initiative contributes to **SDG 13** Climate Action and its **target 13.1** on strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters as well as **target 13.3** on improving education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, and impact reduction.

Similarly, it has also contributed to **SDG 1** No Poverty and its **target 1.5** on building the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reducing their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social, and environmental shocks and disasters.



Through the rehabilitation of water infrastructure, this programme has contributed to **SDG 6** Clean Water and Sanitation and its **target 6.4** on ensuring sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity. This, in turn, links with **SDG 12** Responsible Consumption and Production and its **target 12.2** on sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources.

By facilitating the rehabilitation of degraded land, this project has also supported **SDG 15** Life on Land and its **target 15.3** on combating desertification and restoring degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought, and floods.

This effective partnership between The HALO Trust and Candlelight has also facilitated effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, contributing to **SDG 17** Partnerships for the Goals and its **target 17.17**. By passing on valuable skills and knowledge on sustainable activities, it has also contributed to **SDG 4** Quality Education and its **target 4.4** on increasing the number of youth and adults with relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship.

# SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Land release in Somalia has supported ongoing work to open trade access routes and provide safe areas for the construction of public facilities. Since the start of land release activities, 143 hazardous blockages have been cleared.<sup>123 124</sup> The majority of these involved roads, allowing for access and the use of infrastructure that had been previously restricted.<sup>125</sup>

Infrastructure constraints present a key challenge in Somalia as the destruction and damage of infrastructure caused by ongoing protracted conflict prevents the provision of basic services.<sup>126</sup> In general, roads and bridges remain in poor condition, with 87 per cent of roads being unpaved and more than 90 per cent of roads considered to be deteriorated, creating accessibility issues for many Somalis, particularly farmers.<sup>127 128</sup> Border towns would particularly gain from improvements to transport corridors by opening up access to markets and trade opportunities.<sup>129</sup>

Land release in Somalia has served to facilitate the construction of roads and access routes which allow for ease of transport and mobility. Survey and clearance teams contracted by UNMAS along the Ethiopian border in recent years have allowed for safe access along approximately 60 km of roads in this area. These access routes were essential to link population centres such as Shiek-Nor in Mataban, Cayeyo in El Barde, Bali-Ade in Abduaq, Biriq in Beletweyne, Shaad-Ood in Abduaq, Dhabad in Abduaq and Galdogob.<sup>130</sup>



*Road clearance in Dhabad and Galdogob, 2020 and 2021. Source: UNMAS*



In addition to connecting population centres, the clearing of access routes has supported sustainable development in a range of other areas. For instance, land release of a minefield in Dhisagda (in northern Hiran) allowed for road access to schools, local amenities and services, and water access points in 2020. These cleared pathways also facilitated the distribution of humanitarian aid to areas that were previously difficult to reach.<sup>131</sup> Similarly, the clearance of Biriq Road the year before had allowed Dhisagda village to be linked up with the village of Mohamud Ga'ai, as well as linking the population hubs of Beletweyne, the capital of Hiran, and Fefer in Ethiopia.<sup>132</sup> Greater accessibility in this region has enabled regional trade as well as ease of movement and access to natural resources including water for livestock.

In the Woqooyi Galbeed region, contamination blocked residents of the town of Ceel Bardaale from accessing markets in the regional hub of Gabiley.<sup>133</sup> The need to bypass this hazardous zone meant that families, farmers, and traders from Ceel Bardaale would need to travel twice the distance in order to reach Gabiley, resulting in higher fuel costs and longer travel times. The clearance of this area by The HALO Trust allowed for safer and faster access which facilitated trade and transport in the area.

Further south, in the Bakool region, more than half of surveyed residents of El Barde indicated that land release by HALO had allowed for better access to land for grazing and agricultural activities, hospitals, and marketplaces across the border in Ethiopia.<sup>134</sup> Many were no longer afraid to send their children to school or to use the land for economic purposes, with 90 per cent of those surveyed noting that their income had increased following land release. An important resource in the area, frankincense trees, could be harvested again following land release, allowing the community to diversify from their reliance on livestock.<sup>135</sup>



*An EOD Police team member hands out EORE flyers to a family in Baligubadle, 2022. Source: MAG/Sean Sutton*

Women have also been important beneficiaries and partners in land release activities. As the expected primary caregivers, Somali women often have fewer opportunities to partake in profitable activities. However, through pre- and post-clearance surveys, HALO found that women can gain greater autonomy following land release due to increased access to markets and other income-generating activities.<sup>136</sup> Women also reported a greater sense of security and benefits from improved access to natural resources, particularly water sources such as wells or boreholes.<sup>137</sup>

Through the clearance of roads and access routes, land release has contributed to **SDG 1** No Poverty and its **target 1.4** on access to basic services and natural resources, including land. Land release has also enabled safe access to grazing lands, natural resources, and markets with impacts on pastoral work and livelihoods, supporting **SDG 8** Decent Work and Economic Growth, specifically **target 8.5** on productive employment and decent work. By giving small-scale traders and farmers access to local marketplaces, land release has also facilitated **SDG 9** Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure and its **target 9.3**, increasing the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, and their integration into value chains and markets.

Land release has also facilitated safe access to education and healthcare, with contributions to **SDG 4** Quality Education and its **target 4.1** on ensuring all girls and boys complete primary and secondary education, as well as **SDG 3** Good Health and Well-being and its **target 3.8** on access to essential healthcare services.

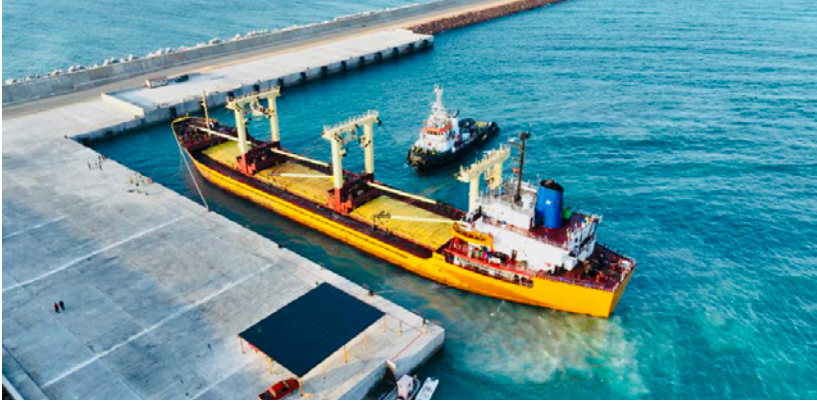
A beneficial impact on women's autonomy and greater economic empowerment allows for contributions to **SDG 10** Reduced Inequalities and its **target 10.2** on the empowerment and promotion of social, economic, and political inclusion of all.

Finally, land release has facilitated safe transport, impacting **SDG 11** Sustainable Cities and Communities and its **target 11.2** on providing access to safe, accessible transport systems and improving road safety. It also has implications for **SDG 3** Good Health and Well-being and its **target 3.6** on reducing deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents.

## THE GARACAD SEAPORT PROJECT

In addition to facilitating the construction and maintenance of smaller roads along the border, land release has had a major impact on the construction of major roads linking the greater regions across Somalia as well as neighbouring countries.

In one specific case, land release activities by The HALO Trust and NPA in the region of Galdogob have facilitated work for the Garacad Seaport Project, a significant infrastructure project consisting of the construction of a new port as well as the upgrading, repair, or construction of 303 km of roads linking the cities of Garacad, Galkayo, and Galdogob.<sup>138</sup> This major project is a private joint venture set up by the Wadaagsan company, which aims to create a trade route linking central Somalia and Ethiopia with foreign economies, particularly the Gulf States, with which Somalia has strong trade relations. Construction on the project has already begun, starting with the seaport located two kilometres south of the city of Garacad.<sup>139</sup>



*Garacad Seaport construction site, 2022. Source: Wadaagsan company*

In 2021, two minefields in Galdogob totalling an area of 458,816 m<sup>2</sup>, and battle areas totalling 2,508,282 m<sup>2</sup> were cleared. This work has already had a significant impact on local communities, with the installation of fibre optic cables in some areas, as well as an increase in livestock trade.<sup>140</sup> Successful implementation of the Garacad Seaport Project relies on land release in and around the crossing point at Galdogob-Turdibi, where the roads linking Ethiopia and Somalia intersect. EO accidents are an ongoing concern for the construction project, with EO-related incidents continuing to be reported in the Galdogob area.<sup>141</sup> In addition to safe roads, land release in this area would allow for the construction of trade facilities including a customs area, dry port, and trade-free zone.

Preliminary analyses suggest that the number of relevant consumers within the seaport's catchment area is approximately 890,000 people, considered comparable to that of the major ports in Berbera and Mogadishu.<sup>142</sup> The project is also expected to reduce the transport time for exports, particularly that of livestock, as Garacad is much closer to livestock producers in Somalia and Ethiopia than the port of Bosaso, from which livestock is currently being exported.<sup>143</sup> Current movement along the transit corridor linking the Garacad Seaport to the Somalia-Ethiopia border town of Galdogob-Turdibi is low but a large increase is expected following this construction project which will not only facilitate mobility but also allow for greater trade opportunities.

The Garacad Seaport Project links with ongoing internal road infrastructure programmes in Puntland<sup>144</sup> as well as planned regional infrastructure projects that have been explored through the Horn of Africa Initiative, a platform which brings together Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Sudan to develop coordinated approaches to shared regional challenges.<sup>145</sup> These projects aim to create economic corridors which strengthen regional cooperation and economic ties.<sup>146</sup> In September 2022, the World Bank approved a \$58 million grant to develop regional transport infrastructure in Somalia with the objective of enhancing connectivity within the Horn of Africa, facilitating trade through seaport access and improving road safety.<sup>147</sup>



Map of road construction plans for the Garacad Seaport Project. Source: Wadaagsan Company

Although this construction project is yet to be finalised, its completion could have a substantial impact on long-term sustainable development. As described, the project would enable **SDG 9** Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure and its **target 9.1** on developing reliable, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure to support economic development and well-being. It would also facilitate **SDG 11** Sustainable Cities and Communities and its **target 11.2** by providing access to safe and sustainable transport systems and improving road safety.

The potential for trade and economic development facilitates **SDG 8** Decent Work and Economic Growth through **target 8.1** on sustaining economic growth, **target 8.2** on economic productivity, **target 8.3** on supporting productive activities and decent job creation, and **target 8.5** on full and productive employment and decent work.

By enhancing access between regional hubs, this project could also contribute to **SDG 9** and its **target 9.3** on increasing the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, and their integration into value chains and markets.

## LINKING TRADE THROUGH THE BERBERA CORRIDOR

In Somaliland, land release activities in and around the border with Ethiopia have enabled successful utilisation of the Berbera Corridor, an important route linking Ethiopia to the northern port of Berbera through Hargeisa.<sup>148</sup> Berbera Port is one of two major ports in Somalia, a substantial enabler of trade and economic growth in the region. The land release activities in Somaliland have been substantial, with expectations that the region will be able to be declared mine-free within several years.<sup>149</sup> The work to clear the border areas supports both ongoing and planned construction to update and rehabilitate the 250 km road network between Togochale,<sup>150</sup> at the border crossing, and Kalabaydh, through to Hargeisa and Berbera Port.<sup>151 152 153</sup>

The plan to upgrade Berbera Port and the Berbera Corridor began in 2017, with an agreement between Dubai Ports World (a Dubai state-owned enterprise), which invested \$422 million in the project, and authorities in Ethiopia and Somaliland.<sup>154</sup> This agreement led to the opening of a new 400-metre-long terminal at Berbera Port in June 2021, allowing for a substantial increase in container capacity. Both the United Kingdom's Department for International Development and the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development have contributed to the upgrade of the Berbera Corridor to facilitate trade through Ethiopia, as well as to improve the safety and ease of movement between rural and urban areas within the Somaliland region.<sup>155</sup> <sup>156</sup>

Berbera Port provides an alternative trade route for Ethiopia, which relies on the Port of Djibouti to export 95 per cent of its trade.<sup>157</sup> This infrastructure development will therefore have implications both for local Somalis and for the wider region, bringing opportunities for increased interconnectivity and economic development.

In this way, and in addition to improving the safety of communities, land release activities in the border area are a vital first step to ensure that this important trade route successfully brings greater regional economic development.



*Map of the Berbera Corridor. Source: The HALO Trust*



Dedicated land release in Somaliland's border region has allowed for connectivity and mobility which will have a significant impact on economic development in the area. In addition to supporting the safety and security of local communities, mine action has enabled **SDG 8** Decent Work and Economic Growth through its **target 8.2** on economic productivity, **target 8.3** on supporting productive activities and decent job creation, and **target 8.5** on full and productive employment and decent work.

The ongoing work to upgrade routes along the Berbera Corridor has been enabled by land release, with contributions to **SDG 9** Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure and its **target 9.1** on developing reliable, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure to support economic development and well-being. It also facilitates sustainable and resilient infrastructure through enhanced financial, technological, and technical support, thereby contributing to **target 9.a**. Similarly, improvements to roads would support **SDG 11** Sustainable Cities and Communities and its **target 11.2** by providing access to safe and sustainable transport systems and improving road safety.

## CLEARANCE AND REHABILITATION OF MOGADISHU STADIUM

The Mogadishu Stadium is a significant structure in Somalia's capital city. It was constructed during the Siad Barre regime, with a capacity of 60,000 people. Although it held national and international sporting competitions in the past, over the years conflict and war led to its neglect and use for reasons other than sport and recreation. It was commandeered by al-Shabaab from 2006 to 2011, during the years they controlled Mogadishu. During this time, the stadium was used as a training ground for soldiers and as a jail.<sup>158</sup> After the Somali National Army and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troops took back Mogadishu, the stadium was used by AMISOM, until 2018, when it was handed over to the Federal Government of Somalia.





*Photo of AMISOM forces in Mogadishu Stadium in 2011. Source: UNMAS/AMISOM*

In 2018, UNMAS sent a multitasking team (MTT) to begin survey and clearance due to suspected explosive remnants of war (ERW) being left in and around the stadium.<sup>159</sup> Community liaison teams were also deployed to deliver EORE to labourers, stadium workers, and volunteers who were to work on the renovation of the stadium.<sup>160</sup> In total, the MTT found and removed 1,551 ERW from the site.<sup>161</sup> UNMAS also deployed clearance teams to other public facilities<sup>162</sup> which had previously been used by security forces, conducting BAC.

Mogadishu Stadium officially reopened on 30 June 2020, which was celebrated with a football match attended by then President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo as well as other government officials.<sup>163</sup>

By enabling the restoration of Mogadishu Stadium, mine action contributed to **SDG 9** Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure and its **target 9.1** on developing resilient infrastructure to support economic development and human well-being. It also contributed to **SDG 11** Sustainable Cities and Communities and its **target 11.7** on safe, inclusive and accessible public spaces.



*Mogadishu Stadium before and after BAC. Source: UNMAS*



*Mogadishu Stadium, 2017 and 2022. Source: Google Earth*

## CONSTRUCTION OF THE MOGADISHU NATIONAL BLOOD BANK

The Mogadishu national blood bank is planned to be the country's first national blood bank and has been identified as a priority by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and international agencies for some time. In October 2017, an IED attack caused the deaths of over 500 people in the nation's capital, with adequate treatment badly impacted by a shortage of blood for transfusions.<sup>164</sup> This was largely due to a lack of sufficient infrastructure for the proper storage of donated blood.

As a result, the FGS began planning the creation of a national blood bank as part of Banadir Hospital. UNMAS deployed a clearance team in 2020 to release 1,597 m<sup>2</sup> of land which found 33 explosive remnants of war.<sup>165</sup> This clearance work allowed the construction of the blood bank to proceed without concerns regarding EO. In August 2022, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) announced that funding had been secured and work was underway for the planning, design, and construction of the blood bank.<sup>166</sup>



*UOS clearance team undertaking land release activities on the premises of Banadir Hospital, 2020. Source: UNMAS*

Once the project is completed, it will have a significant impact on the ability of health services to provide emergency care for patients in need of urgent blood transfusions. Mine action will therefore be a direct contributor to **SDG 9** Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure and its **target 9.1** on developing resilient infrastructure to support human well-being. The development of a blood bank will also support **SDG 3** Good Health and Well-being and its **target 3.4** on reducing premature mortality from non-communicable disease through prevention and treatment, and **target 3.8** on access to essential healthcare services.

## WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

Land release has had a positive impact on water access in Somalia by creating safer routes to and from water sources and reducing the amount of time taken to collect water. Access to water is a major issue, as successive droughts have led to historic lows in rivers and water sources, especially in the south. In 2022, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) reported that up to 80 per cent of water sources were drying up in the country, with an estimated 4.2 million people facing acute water shortages.<sup>167</sup> Safe access to water sources is therefore extremely important, particularly to communities living in rural or remote areas. In 2022, approximately one million Somalis were displaced by severe drought, with many facing starvation as a result.<sup>168</sup> Somalia’s environmental issues have a strong correlation therefore to the issues of hunger, poverty, displacement, and water access.

In general, access to water and sanitation heavily corresponds to geographic regions, with large differences between access for urban households versus rural or nomadic households.<sup>169</sup> For instance, Mogadishu residents have high levels of access to both water and sanitation whereas IDP populations are often forced to travel long distances for water, due to insufficient services in displacement camps.<sup>170</sup> In South West State, communities rely on water trucking as wells have dried up and water prices have remained high in many areas.<sup>171</sup> Such price hikes are largely due to limited regulation of private water suppliers and families are often forced to travel long distances to source water from unsafe open wells, with 25 per cent of people in Somalia needing to walk for more than 15 minutes to collect water from the nearest source.<sup>172 173</sup>

A lack of sufficient water infrastructure is a major cause of this issue. UNICEF reports over 159 communal boreholes in need of urgent repair in the country.<sup>174</sup> The situation in displacement camps is even more dire, with unreliable pipelines and dangerous conditions for water collection due to overcrowding. In some communities, people rely on hand-built wells which may not be sufficient to meet needs during periods of drought.<sup>175</sup>



*An empty water well in Baligubadle village, March 2022. Source: MAG/Sean Sutton*

The job of collecting water often falls to women and girls who may be at risk of physical or sexual assault at unregulated water points and who miss out on education or work opportunities to undertake this task.<sup>176</sup> Children are particularly at risk as they encounter EO when carrying out tasks requiring travel, such as collecting water.<sup>177</sup> Due to their importance, water sources are also among the facilities targeted by al-Shabaab for the planting of IEDs which increases the risk associated with these points.<sup>178 179</sup>

By clearing EO-contaminated land, international operators have increased the security associated with water collection, with women in particular reporting feelings of improved safety and access to water.<sup>180</sup> In El Barde, part of the Bakool region in South West State, 100 per cent of the communities surveyed following land release indicated improved access to water. Following clearance, family members travelled only 3 km in search of water, as opposed to the 10 km they were forced to travel before land release took place.<sup>181</sup>

In many cases, EO contamination forces communities to take alternative routes to access natural resources, with local authorities forced to block roads that are deemed unsafe until suspected hazardous areas can be safely returned to communities. In 2019, for instance, the triggering of an AVM near Dhisqda village in Hiran led to the closure of Biriq Road by local authorities.<sup>182</sup> The blockage of this important access route meant that local communities



were cut off from food supplies, farming and livestock grazing was limited, and water collection and irrigation was affected. Local pastoralists noted that it took an additional two hours for them to access a water source for their livestock due to this blockage, with relatives choosing to move away to other villages due to the impact of the blocked road on their livelihoods.

International operators have also made attempts to support communities impacted by the ongoing drought. For Mines Advisory Group (MAG), which has targeted outreach to drought-affected IDP communities, this has been achieved by providing water trucks to beneficiaries.<sup>183</sup>



*Communities rely heavily on livestock, Burao, 2022. Source: MAG/Sean Sutton*

By facilitating access to safe drinking water, land release has supported **SDG 6** Clean Water and Sanitation, in particular **target 6.1** on access to safe and affordable drinking water. Land release has also improved the level of safety associated with water collection. Due to the specific impact on women and girls, who often take on these duties and are particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence, mine action has also facilitated **SDG 5** Gender Equality and its **target 5.2** on the elimination of violence against all women and girls.

## CONSTRUCTION OF THE XUMBAWEYNE DAM

The construction of the Xumbaweyne Dam in 2017 in the Woqooyi Galbeed region of Somaliland is an important example demonstrating how mine action can facilitate access to natural resources as well as infrastructure development.

The Xumbaweyne Dam was an important infrastructure project undertaken as a part of the Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation's 'For Your Sake, Somalia' campaign<sup>184</sup> which focused on alleviating the impacts of drought in Somalia.<sup>185</sup> At 150 metres long and 11 metres tall, it is the largest concrete dam in the region and aims to provide Hargeisa and its surrounding area with irrigation as well as a water storage zone to support local communities during the dry season. The dam has a storage capacity of 350,000 cubic metres and can secure up to 650,000 gallons of water per day during the dry season.<sup>186</sup>

The construction of this dam was made possible by land release activities undertaken by The HALO Trust. Although the construction site itself was not contaminated, there was evidence of EO in the areas around it. In 2015, HALO undertook land release activities on access routes in the radius of Hargeisa which facilitated safe movement for local communities to access markets and health services.<sup>187</sup> Before construction began, the engineering firm CONSER contacted HALO to ascertain the safety of access routes to the Xumbaweyne river site. As HALO had already released these areas, it was able to provide CONSER with clarity on which roads could be safely used. One of HALO's cleared road tasks became the primary access routes used for the construction of the dam.

In enabling the construction of a major water source, mine action has facilitated **SDG 6** Clean Water and Sanitation and its **target 6.1** on access to safe and affordable drinking water. It has also contributed to **SDG 9** Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure and its **target 9.1** on developing reliable, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure.





*Xumbaweyne Dam, 2015. Source: Google Earth.*



*Xumbaweyne Dam, 2020. Source: Google Earth.*



*DAN Somaliland Protection Team. Source: DAN Somaliland*

## 2. VICTIM ASSISTANCE

FIGURE 6

## CONTRIBUTION OF VICTIM ASSISTANCE TO THE SDG TARGETS IN SOMALIA



- 3.4** Reduction of premature mortality through prevention and treatment
- 3.8** Access to essential health-care services



- 17.9** Enhanced international support for capacity-building
- 17.14** Enhanced policy coherence for sustainable development
- 17.16** Enhanced global partnership for sustainable development
- 17.17** Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships



- 4.5** Equal access to all levels of education



- 10.2** Social, economic, political inclusion of all
- 10.3** Equal opportunities, reduction of inequalities

*The wording of the SDG targets listed above has been simplified; the full list of targets and their official names can be found on the United Nations website: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>*

**Victim assistance (VA)** refers to a set of activities addressing the needs and rights of explosive ordnance (EO) victims, and comprises emergency and ongoing medical care, rehabilitation, psychological and psychosocial support, socio-economic inclusion, as well as data collection and laws and policies.<sup>188</sup>

**Victims** include persons either individually or collectively who have suffered physical, emotional and psychological injury, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights through acts or omissions related to the use of EO. Victims include directly impacted individuals (direct victims) as well as their families, and communities affected by EO (indirect victims).<sup>189</sup>

**Survivors** refer to men, women or children who have been injured and possibly impaired as a result of an accident with EO.<sup>190</sup>

**Persons with disabilities** include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.<sup>191</sup>

Since 2005, over 1,100 explosive ordnance (EO)-related incidents have been recorded in Somalia, with more than 1,450 recorded EO victims.<sup>192</sup> Of these, over 400 were killed with at least 1,000 survivors living with injuries and disabilities caused by these accidents. Over 80 per cent of these casualties were civilians and most accidents involved explosive remnants of war (ERW) rather than landmines, with only 140 victims having been injured or killed by a landmine.<sup>193</sup> The trend in reported EO-related incidents has remained steady over the past decade, with slight decreases being seen in the past three years, suggesting that mine action is beginning to have an impact on reducing the number of EO victims.<sup>194</sup> Of note is the far greater number of improvised explosive device (IED) victims, with 14,805 recorded since 2007 in more than 4,000 IED incidents.

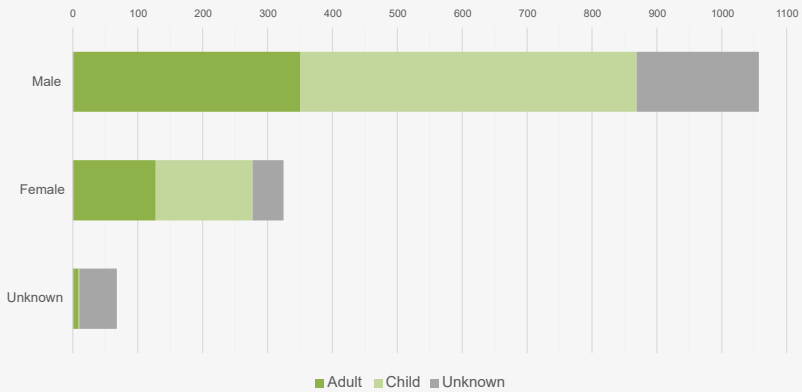
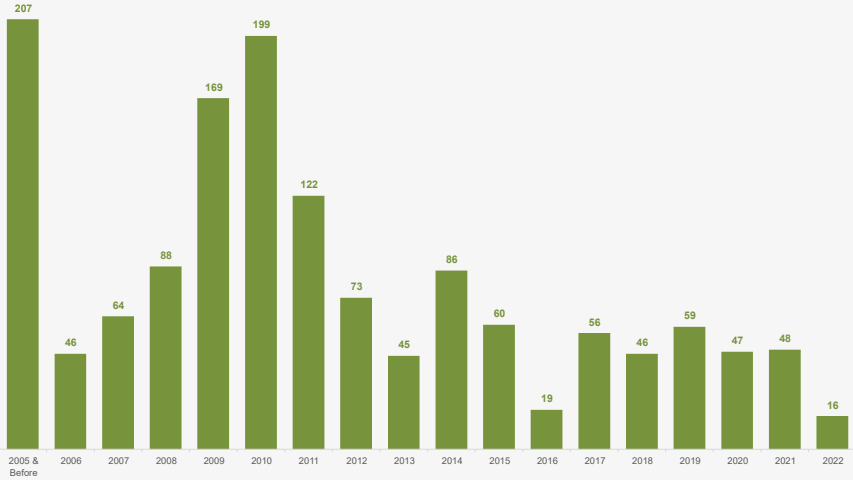
The majority of survivors and casualties in recent years have been school-age children who have inadvertently come across EO whilst playing, attending classes, or performing duties such as herding livestock or collecting water.<sup>195</sup> Boys, in particular, have constituted the highest number of ERW victims since 2005.<sup>196</sup> In 2021, the Somali Explosive Management Authority (SEMA) reported that 84 per cent of the casualties since 2020 had been children.<sup>197</sup> According to the 2022 Somalia Humanitarian Needs Overview, this increased to 91 per cent in 2022, with more than 50 per cent of recorded cases occurring when children encountered EO and played with them.<sup>198</sup>

In general, men and boys have a higher risk of encountering EO as their traditional gender roles mean they are likely to be undertaking activities which require crossing large areas of land, such as herding livestock or travelling for work.<sup>199</sup> Available victim data suggests that there were three times more male than female victims between 2005 and 2022, although adult male victims have decreased significantly in the last decade.<sup>200</sup>

It is clear that mine action has had a significant impact on the rate of disability in the country. In Somaliland, decades of land release and relative stability have meant that disability and health services have reported a significant decrease in the number of victims of EO and conflict that require their services.<sup>201</sup>

FIGURE 7

LANDMINE AND ERW VICTIMS IN SOMALIA, 2005–2022<sup>202</sup>



Data does not include Somaliland  
Source: UNMAS, own elaboration

Victim assistance and disability support in Somalia is in its early stages. There is a significant number of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the country: an estimated 10–15 per cent of the population.<sup>203</sup> It is estimated that rehabilitation services including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and assistive devices respond to only 20 per cent of people in need.<sup>204</sup> Mine action operators have reported instances where victims of EO accidents did not receive timely care despite the severity of their injuries.<sup>205</sup> However, recent attempts have been made to improve the situation for EO survivors as well as the wider population of PWDs. Somalia established the National Disability Agency (NDA) in 2018 and developed the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and Disability Rights in the Federal Republic of Somalia Road Map 2020–2023 in 2020.<sup>206</sup>

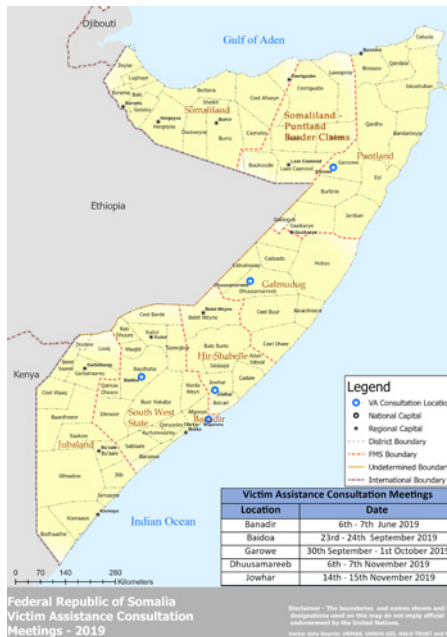
In 2021, with the support of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), Somalia published the National Plan of Action for Landmine Victim Assistance and Disabilities 2020–2025, a joint undertaking between SEMA, the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development, and the Ministry of Internal Security.<sup>207</sup> The Plan of Action was drafted following a consultation workshop involving PWD representatives and community groups.<sup>208</sup> It was initially launched at the Fourth Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty in 2019, the same year that Somalia became a State Party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).<sup>209</sup>

The Plan of Action is evidence of growing intergovernmental efforts to improve support to EO victims and to PWDs in general. It includes objectives on the improvement of data collection and management; the establishment of physical rehabilitation services and healthcare facilities in affected regions; the initiation of social, educational, and economic support to victims; the establishment of psychological and psychosocial support services; and the creation of legislative and legal frameworks for victims. There is also the intention to integrate this national plan into wider-ranging national disability frameworks which will support the mainstreaming of mine action into broader agendas and ensure the rights of EO victims are upheld in the long term.<sup>210</sup>





Launch of the Somali National Plan of Action for Landmine and Victim Assistance and Disabilities, 2019. Source: Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit



Map of regional victim assistance consultations for the National Plan of Action for Landmine Victim Assistance and Disabilities 2020–2025, 2019. Source: SEMA



SEMA has also embarked on producing key documents related to the coordination and development of an overall strategy on victim assistance, including national standards, policy documents, and resource mobilisation concept papers. This ongoing work is supported by the EU delegation in Somalia.<sup>211</sup>

Implementation is yet to begin, and work is continuing to understand the current context through an ongoing national PWD needs assessment, being carried out by the NDA with the Federal Member States.<sup>212</sup> However, these recent activities to begin cross-cutting strategic development and organisation are a promising start towards long-term disability support and victim assistance in the country. Somalia's National Development Plan 2020–2024 notes the need to include disaggregated data on PWDs, emphasising that their level of vulnerability is currently indicated by anecdotal information.<sup>213</sup> Yet, the inclusion of EO victims in the Plan as a vulnerable group is a clear indication that the fulfillment of their needs is integral to ensuring sustainable development outcomes in Somalia.

The 2012 National Policy on Disability in Somaliland recognises the presence of EO as a cause of disability but also notes that there are insufficient disability prevention policies.<sup>214</sup> The Policy Implementation Action Plan 2018–2021 for the National Policy on Disability also notes the need for greater inclusion for people with disabilities as well as data disaggregation that includes disability.<sup>215 216</sup>



*Young beneficiaries of DAN Somaliland's victim assistance project. Source: DAN Somaliland*

Somalia adheres to various international instruments and frameworks related to victim assistance, disability, and diversity mainstreaming:

- **The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**, which requires Member States to ensure that all PWDs enjoy full equality under the law and have the same rights and access to social, medical and rehabilitation services as the rest of the population.
- **The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**, which contains provisions on the protection of the rights of PWDs in relation to fair treatment, appropriate care, and full participation in society.
- **The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V, and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)**, which all contain provisions on victim assistance.

This work to improve the support for PWDs, including EO victims, contributes towards the achievement of **SDG 10** Reduced Inequalities and its **target 10.2** on the empowerment and promotion of social, economic and political inclusion of all, as well as **target 10.3** on ensuring equal opportunity and reducing inequality.

Ongoing work to mainstream disability policies will contribute to **SDG 3** Good Health and Well-being and its **target 3.8** on health coverage and access to quality health services as well as **SDG 17** on partnerships and its **target 17.14** on enhancing policy development for sustainable development.

Nevertheless, further national regulatory and policy frameworks are needed to ensure that PWDs have support beyond individual initiatives. Systemic interventions allowing for broader social, economic, and health-related support to PWDs can generate contributions to several SDGs and ensure a longer-term impact on peace and development.

To fill the gap in the current provision of health services, international operators have set up systems of support in Somalia in recent decades. For instance, the Somali Red Crescent Society has run physical rehabilitation centres to provide rehabilitation and treatment services for people living with disabilities in Galkayo, Hargeisa, and Mogadishu since the late 1990s.<sup>217 218</sup> Local organisations and networks have also mobilised to improve the lives of PWDs in Somalia. The Somali Disability Empowerment Network (SODEN), for instance, has programmes to improve the quality of life for PWDs including advocacy-building programmes, relief, capacity-building, and legal aid.<sup>219</sup>

Diversity Action Network Somaliland (DAN) has provided rehabilitation and health services for over two decades, as part of their broader humanitarian and development work with vulnerable communities. Through their health facilities in Hargeisa, Burao, Erigavo, and Borama, this NGO has provided support to PWDs, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, children, and the elderly.<sup>220</sup> In addition to local communities, DAN has serviced patients from across other Somali states, as well as refugees from Ethiopia, Djibouti, Yemen, and Syria. Over the period 2020–2022, DAN reached 2,732 new patients with rehabilitation needs, and provided 1,986 orthopaedic appliances.<sup>221</sup>

Between 2020 and 2022, DAN also ran a victim assistance project in partnership with The HALO Trust focused on outreach to five IDP settlements in Hargeisa and Burao, to reach marginalised beneficiaries with difficulties accessing services.<sup>222</sup> The project focused on supporting the rehabilitation of victims of war and conflict, including EO victims, and providing assistance through rehabilitation services, psychosocial support, and referrals.<sup>223</sup> It reached 350 people, providing health assessments, basic on-site treatment, and referrals to rehabilitation centres for more complicated cases. In addition, DAN organised a training workshop for 60 caregivers to assist them with longer-term support to their family members, and to disseminate information on disability rights, inclusion, and services. Through the partnership with The HALO Trust, DAN received assistance by way of vital equipment upgrades and supplies, staff skills training, and other material and supply provisions.

This cross-sectoral cooperation makes a clear contribution to **SDG 17** Partnerships for the Goals and its **target 17.16** on multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, **target 17.17** on effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, and **target 17.9** on international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries.

While not yet mainstreamed, these efforts to improve health support to EO victims have contributed to **SDG 3** Good Health and Well-being and its **target 3.4** on reducing premature mortality through prevention and treatment as well as **target 3.8** on access to quality essential healthcare services.



*Manual demining team undertakes a casualty evacuation drill in Dolow, May 2013. Source: H. de Jager/UNMAS*

International operators have also made efforts to support victims despite the difficulties related to access to healthcare. For instance, UNMAS has taken care to ensure that PWDs are included in explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) by raising awareness about the unique vulnerabilities of PWDs to EO, as well as the way they may be exploited in a conflict environment.<sup>224</sup> In addition to improving the inclusivity of EORE sessions, involving PWDs can support them to overcome stigma and aspects of post-traumatic stress, and help them reintegrate into the community. It can also support disability inclusion and assistance efforts in general, through the collection of data on PWDs to further the understanding of needs for this vulnerable group.

The active inclusion of PWDs and disability considerations in mine action efforts contributes to **SDG 4** Quality Education and its **target 4.5** on ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities.



*MAG programme officer provides EORE at the 'State House park' IDP camp in Hargeisa, March 2022. Source: MAG/Sean Sutton.*

### 3. EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE RISK EDUCATION

FIGURE 8

CONTRIBUTION OF EORE TO THE SDG TARGETS IN SOMALIA



**3.d** Strengthened capacity for risk reduction



**10.3** Equal opportunities, reduction of inequalities  
**10.7** Safe migration and mobility



**4.a** Building safe and inclusive learning environments



**16.1** Reduction of all forms of violence  
**16.3** Promote the rule of law



**5.1** End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls  
**5.5** Women's full and effective participation at all levels of decision making



**17.9** Enhanced international support for capacity-building  
**17.16** Enhanced global partnership for sustainable development  
**17.17** Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships

*The wording of the SDG targets listed above has been simplified; the full list of targets and their official names can be found on the United Nations website: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>*



**Explosive ordnance risk education (EORE)** “refers to activities which seek to reduce the risk of injury from EO by raising awareness of women, girls, boys and men in accordance with their different vulnerabilities, roles and needs, and promoting behavioural change. Core activities include public information dissemination, education and training”.<sup>225</sup>

International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) 12.10 Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE),<sup>226</sup> Second Edition, Amendment 3 (2020), represents the most substantial update of this standard since 2009. One of the key changes is the shift in terminology from mine risk education (MRE) to EORE which has been widely adopted by the sector.

In this context, the updated IMAS 12.10 on EORE establishes principles and provides guidance for the effective assessment, planning, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation of EORE interventions.

EORE is an integral part of Somalia’s mine action, supporting communities to adopt safer behaviours and avoid explosive ordnance (EO) accidents where land release has yet to be completed. For communities living in contaminated areas, EORE can greatly enhance safety and reduce accidents, with benefits to longer-term social and economic development.

The majority of EORE in Somalia is undertaken through community liaison and face-to-face sessions, with trainers adopting a variety of methods to help beneficiaries learn and adopt safe behaviours. International operators, such as Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA), have integrated their EORE with non-technical survey (NTS) programmes which has allowed for more targeted information to be provided to beneficiaries.<sup>227</sup> Training is also held in schools and madrasas,<sup>228</sup> as well as internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, where sessions are targeted at specific beneficiary groups catering for different languages, age, gender, and local needs. In addition to face-to-face messaging, public information dissemination is used to spread awareness of safe behaviours, including billboards, leaflets, audio, and radio channels.





Billboards raising awareness of EO. Source: UNMAS and PMAC

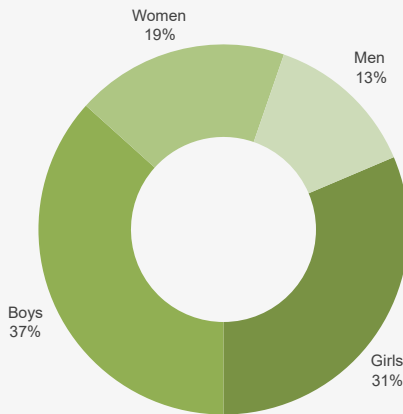
Almost all international operators present in Somalia undertake some form of EORE as part of mine action operations including The HALO Trust, NPA, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Ukroboronservice SC, as well as the local mine action consortia. All operators have reported hiring gender-balanced community liaison and EORE teams, following best practice to ensure that contact and support for beneficiaries is undertaken in safe and inclusive conditions. In total, there have been 1,808,154 beneficiaries of EORE in Somalia, with 102,261 EORE sessions conducted and over 1,300 communities visited.<sup>229</sup> <sup>230</sup> Of these, 11,855 were reported to be persons with disabilities although in many cases data disaggregated by disability has not been captured. Data disaggregated by sex and age show a total of 567,559 girls, 662,927 boys, 336,887 women, and 240,781 men, reflecting the prioritisation of children in the approach to behavioural change.

Due to the prevalence of explosive remnants of war (ERW) in regions across Somalia, teaching communities how to identify and stay safe around hazards can be vital. In many cases, people have been injured while handling EO, without being aware of the danger. Anecdotal information suggested that EO has been used as goal posts, markers, toys, fencing, and even as makeshift household items.<sup>231</sup> Many accidents involve children playing with EO, indicating a particular vulnerability for this group. EORE

sessions not only teach communities how to identify explosive ordnance but how to stay safe around it. Where possible, communities are given a means of reaching explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams to deal with the hazards and keep the surrounding community safe. Before EO can be safely disposed of, community members are taught how to safely mark dangerous areas to prevent others from coming into contact with the EO.

FIGURE 9

PERCENTAGE OF EORE BENEFICIARIES DISAGGREGATED BY GENDER AND AGE IN SOMALIA



BOYS	GIRLS	WOMEN	MEN
662,927	567,559	336,887	240,781

Data does not include Somaliland  
Source: UNMAS, own elaboration



*Children read an EORE flyer in Baligubadle, 2022. Source: MAG/Sean Sutton*

There has been a strong cooperative approach to EORE in Somalia, which is undertaken through partnerships between local mine action consortia, international operators, and the Somali Explosive Management Authority State Offices.<sup>232</sup> These partnerships benefit from the local knowledge provided by grassroots organisations, as well as international expertise and training which have developed local capacity for the implementation of EORE projects. Local mine action consortia have received training to provide EORE to beneficiaries in their regional areas.<sup>233</sup> In addition to providing EORE directly to beneficiaries, operators including MAG and NPA have adopted a training-of-trainers (ToT) approach, training government agencies and other partners such as teachers and police officers to deliver EORE. This has proved to be a highly sustainable and effective method of ensuring communities continue to receive information under complex circumstances.

Collaboration has been integral to the success of EORE programmes across Somalia. Many risk education programmes involve community liaison officers, clan elders and IDP camp elders, as well as other local facilitators like youth or women’s groups to help mobilise community participation and support the dissemination of information to communities.<sup>234</sup> <sup>235</sup> By involving these focal points and active groups, local organisations like the Jubaland Mine Action Network (JUMAN) have ensured that information and awareness continue to be spread even after EORE training has been completed.

The active involvement of local focal points and clan leaders is crucial to community engagement in Somalia. For instance, a 2020 risk education project in the Daynile district of Banadir reached 2,020 people across six IDP camps, including the Adan Yabaal, Jubo, Camaara, Midnimodoon, Duco and Cashaqow IDP settlements.<sup>236</sup> Through 200 face-to-face sessions, risk awareness was improved through methods including brainstorming, Q&A, direct presentations, visibility banners, role play, songs, and games. Benadir Mine Action Consortium operators noted that beneficiaries were reached through strong collaboration with community elders who had a pivotal role in mobilising interest and participation in the risk education sessions, and the project was able to surpass its targeted number of beneficiaries.



*EORE session with the IDP community in Daynile district, 2020.  
Source: BENAMAC MRE Facilitator, Jamila D. Barre*

EORE programming has been sensitive to broader community needs. For instance, during the Covid-19 pandemic, operators included Covid-related health and safety messaging in their EORE trainings and implemented safety protocols to prevent the spread of illness. In 2022, operators were also involved in providing water trucks to beneficiaries, in line with government requests to NGOs to support the drought response.<sup>237</sup>

The use of EORE training to help spread Covid awareness messaging has supported national efforts for the risk reduction and management of national and global health risks, contributing to **SDG 3** Good Health and Well-being and its **target 3.d** on strengthening the capacity for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks.

Through training sessions and contact with remote communities, many community members have learnt to identify EO and alert authorities to their presence. By encouraging and promoting safe behaviour among communities at risk of encountering EO and ensuring incidents are reported, EORE in Somalia has contributed to **SDG 16** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and its **target 16.1** on the reduction of all forms of violence, as well as **target 16.3** on the promotion of the rule of law at the national and international levels.

By focusing on vulnerable IDP communities, EORE has facilitated **SDG 10** Reduced Inequalities and its **target 10.7** on the orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people.

EORE in Somalia has relied heavily on effective partnerships between international operators, local EORE providers, and community leaders and focal points, to ensure tailored training and support to beneficiaries. These partnerships support **SDG 17** Partnerships for the Goals, including **target 17.9** on international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building, **target 17.16** on multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and **target 17.17** on effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships.





## EORE FOR PRIORITY GROUPS

Children are particularly vulnerable to EO, making up more than 90 per cent of victims in Somalia in 2021.<sup>238</sup> In many instances young children have been involved in EO accidents due to natural curiosity, with many coming across EO by chance and being unaware of the danger. Boys are particularly vulnerable due to their traditional gender roles as livestock herders which means they travel more widely and are more likely to encounter EO.<sup>239</sup> For this reason, many operators focus their EORE sessions on schools and madrasas, utilising specific materials like posters, exercise books, t-shirts, and caps to help spread awareness.<sup>240</sup> Overall, boys and girls are the primary beneficiaries of EORE in Somalia. Operators have also undertaken initiatives to entrench EORE within school curricula and focus on the training-of-trainers for schoolteachers to ensure longer-term impact of their work.<sup>241</sup>

Certain groups are specifically targeted for receiving EORE including teachers, camp leaders or elders, humanitarian aid workers, street cleaners, returnees, police/military officers, and IDPs, as these individuals are either particularly vulnerable or may hold special positions allowing them to further disseminate information to others.<sup>242</sup>



*Schoolchildren reading information on EORE. Source: The HALO Trust/UNMAS*

In addition to schools, all operators providing EORE have undertaken specific training at IDP camps, in recognition of the increased vulnerability of IDPs due to unfamiliarity with the land they traverse. IDPs often travel under stressful conditions, having fled their homes due to violent conflict, poverty, drought, or other climatic shocks. This is compounded by insecure conditions, such as illegal roadblocks, newly planted improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and unsafe road conditions. In most cases, IDPs travel from rural locations towards cities where there is greater availability and mobilisation of services and aid.<sup>243</sup> EORE operators, such as JUMAN, work with local community groups to ensure IDPs are first provided with basic support, such as raw ingredients for cooking, before training is undertaken.<sup>244</sup>

Whilst IDPs can travel from many different regions, almost all are Somalis and understand the local language, making face-to-face EORE sessions an ideal mode for training. There are exceptions, such as Ethiopian refugees who cross the border into parts of Somaliland and Galmudug.<sup>245 246</sup> In these cases, trainers who speak Ethiopian languages, such as Amharic, are hired to deliver the sessions.

Specialised EORE training for IDPs is likely to continue to be relevant in the medium to long term, as many IDPs travel into urban areas like Mogadishu for security and aid.<sup>247</sup> Should circumstances change, these groups may begin to travel back to their homes, in some cases returning through hazardous zones. At the same time, families fleeing conflict may also come into contact with new EO contamination, often in the form of IEDs, which can be more difficult to identify.

Through tailored training to meet the needs of priority groups, EORE has contributed to **SDG 10** Reduced Inequalities and its **target 10.3** on equal opportunity and the reduction of inequalities of outcome. By targeting the most vulnerable groups, this work has also supported **SDG 16** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and its **target 16.1** on the reduction of all forms of violence.

Finally, a focus on supporting IDPs is linked with **SDG 10** Reduced Inequalities and its **target 10.7** on safe migration and mobility.





*EORE session for a health centre in Jowhar conducted by SHAHMAC and supported by NPA, 2019. Source: SHAHMAC*



*EORE session for farmers in Jowhar conducted by SHAHMAC and supported by NPA, 2019. Source: SHAHMAC*

## RISK EDUCATION TALKING DEVICES (RETDs)

Risk education talking devices, or RETDs, are an innovative device originally piloted by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Darfur.<sup>248</sup> These devices hold audio recordings in Somali of safety awareness messages through storytelling methods. 5,000 RETD units were brought into Somalia for use in 2021 and proved to be very important during the Covid-19 pandemic, for safely spreading covid awareness messages as well as information on EO, including IEDs, to remote and regional areas.<sup>249</sup> The devices are solar powered and allow up to 20–30 minutes of recorded messaging including transitional music, poetry, etc.

The devices proved to be particularly well-g geared to the Somali context, considering accessibility and security issues which can change day by day, as well as the presence of large nomadic populations who travel widely and who may be difficult to reach.<sup>250</sup> RETDs can be easily distributed and disseminated amongst these communities, with operators noting that they are affordable, sustainable, and easy to use. As they are solar powered, RETDs do not need to be charged in towns or stations, and the repetition of messages has been reportedly useful for children.<sup>251</sup>



*A risk education talking device. Source: UNMAS*

The HALO Trust utilised RETDs in the Abudwaq and Galdogob districts in 2021 and found they had a clear impact, with an increase in the number of callouts to EOD teams from community members who were able to recognise EO in their villages.<sup>252</sup> UNMAS impact assessments have also found that RETDs are the second most preferred medium for EORE, after face-to-face sessions and educational presentations. In addition, a decrease in accidents and positive behaviour change were also recorded. The success of these devices meant that an additional 5,000 were ordered in 2022.

Effective use of this innovative device, especially amongst nomadic populations, has allowed for contributions to **SDG 10** Reduced Inequalities and its **target 10.7** on safe migration and mobility. Its utility for remote communities has also meant contributions to **SDG 3** Good Health and Well-being and its **target 3.d**, by spreading Covid awareness messages, supporting national efforts for risk reduction, and the management of national and global health risks.

# SMALL ARMS AND EXPLOSIVE HAZARDS (SAEH) RISK EDUCATION

Community liaison and EORE have been extremely important for locating abandoned ammunition storage sites and ensuring that communities are aware of the dangers associated with this type of stockpiling. Since 2009, 33,154 items of small arms ammunition have been recovered/seized in Somalia.<sup>253 254</sup>

Work to reduce the risks associated with stockpiles of small arms and light weapons (SALW), ammunition, and ERW has involved targeted risk education programmes, as well as community liaison and media campaigns. MAG's small arms and explosive hazards (SAEH) risk education programme is one example of this work in Somaliland. SALW were found to be present in over 60 per cent of households in Somaliland in 2021, despite poor knowledge of gun safety and considerable risk.<sup>255</sup> This has led to poor storage practices and dangerous disposal methods, as well as high-risk behaviour such as the firing of weapons in the air during celebrations, or weapons being left in the vicinity of children. Surveys by MAG in Hargeisa found that SALW are as much of a risk to communities as EO.<sup>256</sup>

For this reason, MAG's risk education curriculum has combined EORE with education about the dangers of SALW. In addition to providing risk education directly to communities in urban and rural areas, MAG trains partners in local government and the police to present training sessions through its SAEH programme.<sup>257</sup> Its diverse community training network has involved six men and seven women in the regions of Togdheer, Sahil, and Maroodi Jeex, including representatives of women's groups and members of EOD police teams. The programme design involved close consultation with local leaders and ensured tailored messaging for the specific needs of communities in urban, rural, and coastal areas, including vulnerable IDP groups living in priority areas.



*Togdheer Police EOD team member conducts an SAEH session for IDP women. Source: MAG*

This education programme was supported by a media campaign for social and behavioural change in Hargeisa – also designed to support a civilian weapons registration programme piloted by MAG with governmental authorities. In particular, an original 11-episode radio drama *Dallaalimo*, focusing on promoting safer gun ownership, was produced and broadcast on Radio Hargeisa, proving to be highly popular and effective. The drama was designed through a participatory process involving the police, Radio Hargeisa, governmental authorities, traditional leaders, and youth and women’s organisations.<sup>258</sup>

The success of *Dallaalimo* led to additional episodes, a repeat of the programme in 2022, as well as live performances of the drama in community spaces which have reached up to 1,000 people, conveying messages through story and song.<sup>259</sup> The radio show itself reached almost 1.5 million people with its lifesaving messages and drove an almost 300 per cent increase in the number of gun registrations in the region.

The radio show, alongside social media messaging, led to clear changes in behaviour. For instance, callers to the show mentioned convincing others not to shoot their guns into the air at celebrations after learning about the accidents this can cause.<sup>260</sup> The show also invited trusted members of the community to discuss the dangers of SALW, including activists, doctors, clan elders, and security sector representatives.



*Clan chief Hassan Ahmed Qaalib as a guest on the Dallaalimo call-in show. Source: MAG*

By encouraging safe behaviour and spreading awareness on the dangers of EO and SALW, these programmes have contributed to **SDG 16** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and its **target 16.1** on reducing all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere. The development and design of tailored messaging has also contributed to **SDG 10** Reduced Inequalities and its **target 10.3** on equal opportunity and reduction in inequalities of outcome.





An EOD operator demonstrates manual demining for the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action in Mogadishu, 2013. Source: N.Quigley/UNMAS

## 4. GENDER AND DIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING

FIGURE 10

## CONTRIBUTION OF GENDER AND DIVERSITY TO THE SDG TARGETS IN SOMALIA



- 4.3** Equal access to technical, vocational and tertiary education
- 4.4** Increased number of skilled youth and adults
- 4.5** Equal access to all levels of education
- 4.a** Building safe and inclusive learning environments



- 5.1** End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls
- 5.5** Women's full and effective participation at all levels of decision making
- 5.c** Strengthened policies and legislation for gender equality



- 8.5** Full and productive employment and decent work
- 8.6** Substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training



- 10.2** Social, economic, political inclusion of all
- 10.3** Equal opportunities, reduction of inequalities



- 16.1** Reduction of all forms of violence
- 16.b** Non-discriminatory laws and policies



- 17.9** Enhanced international support for capacity-building
- 17.17** Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships

*The wording of the SDG targets listed above has been simplified; the full list of targets and their official names can be found on the United Nations website: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>*



As emphasised by UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, there is a need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes consider the special needs of women and girls.<sup>261</sup> Consequently, mine action works to improve the impact of interventions on affected women, girls, boys, and men from diverse groups.

This section focuses on the direct contributions of gender mainstreaming to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, it should be noted that, to ensure that the overarching principle of leaving no one behind is upheld, gender mainstreaming needs to be implemented and monitored as a cross-cutting approach in all mine action programmes, projects, and activities.

The Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development (MoWHRD) works to promote social and economic empowerment of women in Somalia, with the stated goal of ensuring “a society where human rights and fundamental freedoms are fully enjoyed”.<sup>262</sup> In 2016, the Federal Government of Somalia endorsed the MoWHRD’s National Gender Plan, which sets out priority intervention areas in economic empowerment, health, education, and gender and political participation.<sup>263</sup>

Article 11 of the Provisional Constitution affirms the notion of equality, stating that “All citizens, regardless of sex, religion, social or economic status, political opinion, clan, disability, occupation, birth, or dialect shall have equal rights and duties before the law.”<sup>264</sup> However, Somalia has not acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and has signed but not ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol).

Gender equality is an ongoing challenge in Somalia. The Somalia Women’s Charter, published in 2019 by the MoWHRD, lists a series of demands for the Federal Constitution to enshrine women’s rights, and affirms the importance of gender equality, human rights, and women’s empowerment.<sup>265</sup>

Traditional cultural norms in Somalia confer lower social status to women, and the country has a high prevalence of gender-based violence, early marriage, female genital mutilation, and some of the highest maternal and infant mortality rates in the world.<sup>266</sup> Women are less likely to have access to education, to participate in the labour market, and may not be expected to participate or engage in public fora in certain contexts.<sup>267</sup> In 2021, only 20.9 per cent of women aged 15 and older were employed (compared to 47 per cent of men).<sup>268 269</sup>

This context has an impact on mine action operations and the way in which participatory activities such as surveys and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) sessions are undertaken. EORE trainers have noted, for instance, the need to advocate for the inclusion of young women who can be sidelined or excluded from community events.<sup>270</sup> Creating safe spaces, in some cases through separate training for men and women, allows for tailored activities that promote active engagement and participation.



*Participants of Gender and Diversity in Mine Action Training, June 2021. Source: SEMA*

The importance of cross-cutting gender and diversity mainstreaming has been well-reflected in Somalia's National Mine Action Strategic Plan which notes the need to "deliver all activities in a gender responsive manner, addressing the different needs of women, girls, boys, and men – including information management, prioritisation, MRE, victim assistance, and community liaison".<sup>271</sup> As part of its Mine Ban Treaty obligations, the Somali Explosive Management Authority (SEMA) has also noted the inclusion of gender and diversity in its planning, including provisions for a meaningful gender balance in all non-technical survey (NTS) activities, clearance and risk education teams, ensuring all demographic groups are heard and treated fairly and equally, as well as the adoption of gender-sensitive recruitment procedures.<sup>272</sup>

In Somalia, international operators such as Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) have empowered local women and boosted female representation among staff by recruiting and training Somali women alongside men in mine action activities, including survey and EORE. Mixed gender community liaison teams working to educate and inform locals about explosive ordnance (EO) also ensures the delivery of gender-sensitive programming for beneficiary communities. Tackling the issue of gender equality from a mine action perspective involves not only including women in such activities but also providing women with leadership positions, empowering them through safe and inclusive EORE initiatives, and ensuring that women are involved in all levels of decision-making.

Many international mine action operators have begun taking steps to ensure greater gender representation and diversity mainstreaming in their work. For instance, MAG, The HALO Trust, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), and UNMAS, as well as local mine action consortia, have all reported deploying EORE teams with an even gender balance and collecting and recording data disaggregated by sex and age. Some have also set gender targets for employment as well as for the inclusion and participation of women in participatory activities like EORE and NTS.<sup>273</sup> UNMAS policies follow the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) Gender Parity Strategy which sets a target of 47–53 per cent female representation at all levels.<sup>274</sup>

Among international operators, The HALO Trust<sup>275</sup> has a 23 per cent female workforce (60% in operations; 40% in administrative roles), NPA has a 26.67 per cent female workforce (management roles composed of 20% female staff; operations roles composed of 13.3% female staff), and MAG has a 29.41 per cent female workforce (management roles composed of 67% female staff; operations roles composed of 40% female staff).<sup>276 277 278</sup> UNMAS has made large gains in gender parity, with a 44 per cent female workforce including 20 per cent women in leadership positions, 58 per cent women in explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) technical positions and 35 per cent women in non-EOD technical positions.<sup>279</sup>

All international operators reported implementing gender and diversity policies within their organisations. For HALO, this included policies relating to safeguarding, maternity, and childcare support, as well as providing annual gender training for all staff. Plans are also in place to create a women's empowerment working group to evaluate the conditions and experiences of female staff. In 2023, a new initiative will involve the provision of English language classes and a computer literacy course for selected female staff to build long-term skills both within and beyond the organisation.<sup>280</sup>

MAG has also taken major steps to improve gender mainstreaming in recent years, by having a dedicated Gender Lead, developing an internal gender policy and terms of reference, providing both internal and external gender training, as well as advocating for gender focal points in government organisations. MAG also provided support to a regional mine action consortium, Jubaland Mine Action Network (JUMAN), to train a Gender Focal Point and create a Gender Action Plan with the following objectives: alignment of organisational outputs, the collection of disaggregated data, and the creation of focal points for EORE teams and internally displaced person (IDP) communities. Support also included capacity development and gender training for JUMAN's five EORE teams, women's and youth groups, and local governmental administrative and security sector workers.<sup>281</sup>



*MAG's Gender Lead delivers vital EORE training to women in an IDP camp, Burao, 2022. Source: MAG/Sean Sutton*

By ensuring female representation and leadership through the employment of Somali women, mine action has contributed to **SDG 5** Gender Equality and its **target 5.1** on ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, and **target 5.5** on ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership. It has also facilitated **SDG 8** Decent Work and Economic Growth and its **target 8.5** on full and productive employment and decent work.

Specialised training for female staff to build capacity and improve employment prospects has also contributed to **SDG 4** Quality Education and its **target 4.3** on equal access to affordable and quality, technical, vocational and tertiary education, as well as **target 4.4** on increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment.

Efforts to ensure that community liaison and EORE is tailored to the needs of women and girls facilitates **SDG 4** Quality Education and its **target 4.5** on eliminating gender disparities and ensuring equal access to education, as well as **target 4.a** on building safe and inclusive learning environments. This goal is also enshrined in mine action strategic planning which facilitates **SDG 5** and its **target 5.c** on adopting and strengthening sound policies for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. This work, in combination with broader efforts to enshrine women's rights in all aspects of social, economic and political life, contributes to **SDG 16** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and its **target 16.b** on promoting and enforcing non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

Ongoing work by international operators to support local efforts in gender mainstreaming has also contributed to **SDG 17** Partnerships for the Goals and its **target 17.9** on enhanced international support for capacity-building.

## WOMEN AS PARTNERS AND BENEFICIARIES

Women are particularly important beneficiaries and distributors of information on EO in Somalia. EORE trainers from the Benadir Mine Action Consortium have noted that women are more likely than men to share and disseminate information, learnt through EORE, with immediate friends and family members. This can be important in cases where men are unavailable for training due to work responsibilities and is particularly significant considering that children are at the highest risk of being involved in EO accidents. Local NGOs have also noted that women's groups share information between themselves or at large meetings and gatherings. They also travel to help clean villages, burning the rubbish that is collected once finished. In cases where EO is found, this can be particularly dangerous, and so EORE training is beneficial for preventing accidents in such cases.<sup>282</sup>

Employing or otherwise involving women in mine action activities allows for broader access to different parts of Somali society and the inclusion of perspectives from different groups.<sup>283</sup> For this reason, organisations like JUMAN consider their work with women and youth groups as a core part of the community facilitation component of their work. In many cases, these community groups are already operating and involved with target beneficiaries such as IDPs and are able to help with organising the EORE training session groups to ensure that information is targeted.<sup>284</sup> JUMAN provides training-of-trainers to women's groups to ensure information continues to be disseminated through communities when international operators have moved on to different regions. These groups are also provided with materials which can be used to disseminate information.

Similarly, MAG has collaborated with the KAABA Federation, the largest women's federation in Somaliland, on risk reduction and education activities. The organisation was trained in small arms and light weapons risk education and has become a focal point for MAG in the regions of Awdal, Togdheer, and Maroodi Jeex. This partnership has not only empowered local women but has increased the reach of MAG training programmes amongst women and girls, allowing MAG to exceed their female beneficiary targets.<sup>285</sup>



In Somaliland, The HALO Trust hired 10 women from a minority clan in the Woqooyi Galbeed region which had been socially and economically marginalised.<sup>286</sup> Following consultations with clan elders and government authorities, the women were hired and trained as deminers, allowing them to gain experience and engage with other working women. With literacy and numeracy classes provided as part of the initiative, these women will gain long-term benefits for their livelihoods beyond the programme.

HALO noted that local Somali women who are trained as deminers can move across clan lines without fear of reprisals, as women are not seen as combatants in inter-clan conflicts.<sup>287</sup> This presented the organisation with a 'valuable opportunity' to retain female staff and promote them to senior leadership roles, facilitating knowledge retention and improving the efficiency of operations in new areas.



*An EORE session involving women, Burtinle district, 2022. Source: NPA*



By strengthening and giving a platform to female leadership in beneficiary communities, mine action has contributed to **SDG 10** Reduced inequalities and its **target 10.2** on empowering and promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all, and **target 10.3** on ensuring equal opportunities and reducing outcome inequalities. These effective partnerships have also paved the way for impacts on **SDG 5** and its **target 5.5** on ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership, as well as **SDG 17** Partnerships for the Goals and its **target 17.17** on encouraging and promoting effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships.

Women's increased access to profitable activities and increased security as a result of land release, has also contributed to **SDG 8** Decent Work and Economic Growth and its **target 8.5** on full and productive employment and decent work as well as **SDG 16** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and its **target 16.1** on the reduction of violence and related death rates.

## CONFLICT SENSITIVITY IN MINE ACTION EMPLOYMENT

Whilst language and religion are largely homogenous in Somalia, clan systems have particularly important implications for employment considerations and EORE programming. The clan system in Somalia governs many aspects of social and political life. Under the '4.5' clan structure, federal representation is split between the four main clans, with a 0.5 share given to smaller clans.<sup>288</sup> Access to certain territories is also restricted based on clan lines, an important consideration for mine action operators recruiting and deploying local staff for land release, community liaison, and EORE activities.<sup>289</sup> Inter-clan conflicts are an ongoing problem in certain regions, and local contextual knowledge on these issues is key for the safety of operational staff and local communities.

Operators have been careful to be inclusive and aware of the cultural context in areas of operation, hiring staff from local communities and ensuring proportional representation across clans in line with conflict sensitivity principles.<sup>290</sup> Through a strong community liaison focus and partnerships with clan elders, international operators ensure their presence is welcome before undertaking operations in new territories.<sup>291 292</sup> Awareness of clan divisions, as well as a reliance on the local knowledge of their deminers, has also allowed The HALO Trust to adapt their EORE training to specific clans, including smaller or minority clans. Separate sessions are then organised along clan or gender lines where necessary. In Somaliland, HALO takes care to employ survey staff from both rural and urban backgrounds to ensure that diverse perspectives from all sections of society are accounted for.<sup>293</sup>

In addition to ensuring staff safety and preventing harm, following conflict sensitivity principles means considering how operations can help improve peace and security for host communities. In Somalia, HALO has adopted a youth employment strategy to support conflict prevention in local regions.<sup>294</sup>

There are strong linkages between youth unemployment and violence/conflict in Somalia as unemployed youth are more vulnerable and more susceptible to turning to illegal activities. Youth unemployment has been a persistent issue in Somalia, mostly remaining above 30 per cent in the past decades.<sup>295</sup> In general, Somalia's population is young, with 38 per cent of the population between 15 and 35 years of age,<sup>296</sup> and 75 per cent of the population under 30 years.<sup>297</sup> Decades of instability mean that many young Somalis' lives have been shaped by insecurity in different forms. Ongoing developmental challenges compound these difficulties and, whilst a lot of youth find employment in the primary sector, many are heavily impacted by environmental and political instability.<sup>298</sup> In some cases, these challenges push Somali youth into criminal behaviour such as raiding livestock, or recruitment into violent non-State armed forces such as al-Shabaab.<sup>299</sup>

The employment of Somali youth in mine action can reduce the impact of economic vulnerability for them as well as reduce incentives to engage in illegal behaviour. Applying conflict sensitivity principles, HALO has engaged a strategy of employing local youth as deminers, in an effort to support youth education, training and employment.<sup>300</sup> In addition to providing employment opportunities, this strategy ensures that local staff have safe access to contaminated sites and villages, as they are part of local or regional clans.

By prioritising the employment of local Somali youth, HALO has been able to help build skills and training in local communities as well as preventing criminal behaviour. So far, HALO has already seen results through these activities, with 14 illegal checkpoints having been removed as a result.<sup>301</sup>

By ensuring that mine action operations support local opportunities for peace, mine action has contributed to **SDG 16** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and its **target 16.1** on reducing all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere. It has also supported positive peace efforts by contributing to **SDG 8** Decent Work and Economic Growth and its **target 8.6** by reducing the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training. Similarly, it has contributed to **SDG 4** Quality Education and its **target 4.4** on increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment.



*Delegates from Somalia at the 2022 Intersessional Meetings of the APMBC, Geneva. Source: AP Mine Ban Convention ISU*

## 5. PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATION

FIGURE 11

## CONTRIBUTION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATION TO THE SDG TARGETS IN SOMALIA



- 5.1** End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls
- 5.5** Women's full and effective participation at all levels of decision making



- 16.6** Development of accountable institutions
- 16.a** Strengthened national institutions, including through international cooperation



- 10.2** Social, economic, political inclusion of all
- 10.3** Equal opportunities, reduction of inequalities



- 17.9** Enhanced international support for capacity-building
- 17.17** Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships
- 17.18** Capacity-building support to improve access to and quality of data

*The wording of the SDG targets listed above has been simplified; the full list of targets and their official names can be found on the United Nations website: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>*

As recognised by UN Security Council resolution 2365, partnerships and cooperation are central to the success of mine action, particularly among national authorities, the United Nations, regional organisations, civil society, and the private sector.<sup>302</sup>

Partnerships are voluntary and collaborative relationships in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task, as mutually agreed.<sup>303</sup>

In Somalia, partnerships across global, regional, national, and local levels have been integral to the ongoing work to fulfill the country's Article 5 obligations under the Anti-Personal Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). The fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) relies on cooperation and shared goals among actors across different levels and sectors. Given the multidimensional, interlinked, and overarching nature of the SDGs, no country can achieve them alone, and strong cooperation is needed to realise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Somalia's national institutions have worked steadily with international organisations to reduce the risks associated with explosive ordnance (EO). Amidst the longstanding work of international operators, there has been a concerted effort to build capacity and regional partnerships between local, regional, and national NGOs. Capacity-building initiatives, particularly training, administrative and organisational support from the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), have helped to bolster the capabilities of national agencies.

Through the Arab Regional Cooperation Programme, managed by the GICHD, the Somali Explosive Management Authority (SEMA) has also participated in the regional Gender Focal Point online course, the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core workshop, the Information Management Qualification IMSMA Core Administrator training, Technical Survey training, and the Quality Management course. Direct support from the GICHD on the use of IMSMA and its latest generation (IMSMA Core) also aims to improve the data collection and management capabilities of SEMA. This support involves close collaboration with international operators to ensure alignment with other information management systems.

The regional mine action consortia have also received training from international operators, most significantly on explosive ordnance risk education (EORE). Specific partnerships have also allowed for support in other areas. For instance, Mines Advisory Group (MAG) has provided training on financial management, safeguarding and gender, security management, as well as equipment and materials to support the work of the Jubaland Mine Action Network (JUMAN). Its work to support social and behavioural change on weapons in Somaliland involved not only community consultations but also work with government and police representatives. MAG's programmes involved training-of-trainers for government staff on small arms and light weapons risk education, construction of safe ammunition storage facilities, strengthening links between explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams and internally displaced persons (IDP) communities, and the development of civilian weapon registration with the Ministry of Interior in Somaliland.

Many international operators have also undertaken partnerships with local police, supporting EOD efforts and training local providers on residual risk management.<sup>304 305 306</sup>

SEMA is working to improve coordination and partnerships with mine action operators and NGO consortia in the country. It organises quarterly coordination meetings involving international operators, UN agencies, and NGO consortia in order to share information and to provide a joint platform where organisations may raise issues.



*Quarterly coordination meeting held in Kismayo, March 2022. Source: SEMA*

Although there is still work to do, the focus on capacity-building in the Somali mine action context reflects a strong recognition of the importance of localisation in mine action efforts. In Somaliland, where the completion of land release is expected in several years' time, The HALO Trust is beginning to focus on capacity development for local authorities regarding residual risk management.<sup>307</sup>

Sustainable financing and the steady mobilisation of resources are key challenges to the localisation of mine action in the Somali context. Local actors, including SEMA and the regional mine action consortia, have relied heavily on strong partnerships with international operators, which has allowed for capacity development and basic funding. SEMA has yet to be formally integrated into the national government budget and legislation, which has prevented it from accessing State resources. As a result, the mine action sector is heavily reliant on the mobilisation of external funds, with limited resources gained in the domestic context.

At the international level, organisations coordinate activities through the explosive hazards section of the Somalia Protection Cluster which is coordinated by SEMA, UNMAS, and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).<sup>308</sup> The involvement of mine action operators in fora at the international level is evident through the inclusion of EO risk reduction activities in reporting through the Somalia Humanitarian Fund,



Humanitarian Needs Overview, and Humanitarian Response Plan. This high-level cooperation ensures that EO risks remain a consideration as part of broader humanitarian needs response planning.

Partnerships in mine action have allowed for effective capacity-building at different levels in Somalia, facilitating improvements towards **SDG 16** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and its **target 16.6** on the development of effective, accountable and transparent institutions, and **target 16.a** on strengthened national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.

Similarly, this has contributed towards **SDG 17** Partnerships for the Goals and its **target 17.9** on enhanced international support for capacity-building, and target **17.17** on encouraging and promoting effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships. Support from organisations including UNMAS and the GICHD on improving SEMA's data collection and management has also contributed to **target 17.18** on capacity-building support to improve access to and quality of data.



*Delegates from Somalia at the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties of the APMBC. Source: Convention Implementation Support Unit*



*Director General of SEMA, at the Fourth Review Conference of the Mine Ban Convention in Oslo. Source: Convention Implementation Support Unit*

Local partnerships have also been significant in Somalia. The regional mine action consortia in Banadir and Central Somalia, South West State, Hirshabelle, and Jubaland were initially formed from separate voluntary community groups, NGOs, and community leaders, who joined together to pool knowledge and resources. Assembling to create consortia increased the capacity of these groups and provided international operators with a source of local knowledge and a means of reaching communities in less accessible areas.<sup>309</sup> They have also strengthened local capacity. JUMAN, for instance, hired local staff in Jubaland, developing local capacity and ensuring that knowledge and experience were passed on to other groups.<sup>310</sup> They also help to represent local interests, having been involved in meetings of the Protection Cluster of the Somalia Humanitarian Fund.

Mine action operators have also reported the importance of ensuring local awareness and acceptance as a crucial part of their clearance activities.<sup>311</sup> Community liaison and linkages with local or regional governments as well as community leaders have been critical in Somalia for ensuring the safety and effectiveness of operations.



*Meeting between Puntland Mine Action Centre (PMAC) and Galdogob City Council, August 2022. Source: PMAC*

These partnerships have helped to empower local leaders and organisations to utilise their specific knowledge to contribute to protecting the lives of their communities and represent their interests in broader national and international settings. In this way, local mine action efforts have contributed to **SDG 10** Reduced Inequalities and its **target 10.2** on the social, economic, and political inclusion of all.

In Somalia, strong working partnerships with focal points in the community have been vital to mine action operators, as a means of safe and informed access to sites and communities. Focal points include community leaders such as clan elders, women’s representatives, and IDP camp elders. These representatives can be vital for understanding community needs, identifying vulnerable groups, and for generating trust and interest within communities for them to become involved in mine action activities.<sup>312</sup>



*Consultations with religious leaders during non-technical survey activities in Galkayo, September 2022. Source: NPA*



*Community engagement at Talole village in the district of Galdogob, August 2022. Source: PMAC*

Buy-in from clan elders is necessary as they are key actors when it comes to access, peace, and security in Somalia. This is the case, in particular, in remote regions where there is less government presence. In their risk education activities, MAG has engaged clan elders from the start of programmes, including them in meetings and training courses to ensure their support.<sup>313</sup> Clan elders have appeared on MAG's Radio Hargeisa call-in show to discuss the importance of weapon registration and encourage their constituents to register them.<sup>314</sup>

These joint efforts have bolstered the impact of mine action in communities and reflect strong contributions to **SDG 17** Partnerships for the Goals and its target **17.17** on encouraging and promoting effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships. Work with local women's groups has also impacted **SDG 5** Gender Equality and its **target 5.5** on women's full and effective participation at all levels of decision-making, and **target 5.1** on ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls.



## UNMAS SAFE GROUND CAMPAIGN

The UNMAS five-year Safe Ground campaign was launched by the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres in 2019, to raise international awareness and resources for victims and survivors of EO and armed conflict, through sports events.<sup>315 316</sup> The campaign recognises the ongoing need for victim assistance with an emphasis on promoting the SDGs and prioritisation of land release through human impact. The campaign aims to “turn minefields into playing fields” by working with State and local partners to clear contaminated sports sites and identify new areas that can be cleared and released to become sports facilities. The strategy recognises the importance of youth engagement as a vital part of mine action.

The first event of this initiative in Somalia was held in the town of Heral in Galmudug State, marking the completion of mine clearance in 2019.<sup>317</sup> UNMAS, in coordination with regional SEMA representatives, organised and provided equipment for a football game among local youth which was coupled with EORE messaging. The game was attended by community elders and the local authorities who presented awards to the players, supporting joint community efforts to celebrate achievements in mine action as well as working to prevent future accidents.



*Local youth playing soccer as part of the Safe Ground campaign. Source: UNMAS*

In 2021, UNMAS also ran a three-month-long project as part of the UNMAS Safe Ground campaign aimed at spreading awareness of the dangers of EO by celebrating the work that had been undertaken to clear hazards in and around Mogadishu National stadium.<sup>318</sup> Approximately 200 participants took part in a series of tournaments in Mogadishu, including football, basketball, and running races. The events focused on reaching Somali youth and persons with disabilities (PWDs), and incorporated EORE messaging to encourage safe behaviour, utilising leaflets, banners, and billboards.

These efforts contributed to **SDG 10** Reduced Inequalities and its **target 10.3** on equal opportunity and the reduction of inequalities of outcome by recognising the importance of youth and PWD participation in mine action.

# CONCLUSIONS



The Somalia case study demonstrates clear evidence of the multidimensional impacts of mine action on sustainable development at different levels, reducing risk to local communities and enabling access to basic services and humanitarian aid by removing barriers caused by the presence of explosive ordnance (EO).

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) framework enabled the identification of mine action's direct contribution to 15 SDGs and to at least 47 of their targets in Somalia, presenting evidence on the relevance of these efforts to advance broader agendas in contexts of ongoing protracted conflict.

Considering the current humanitarian, peace, and developmental challenges faced by Somalia, exacerbated by climate change, the study provides vital evidence on the positive impacts of mine action across multiple sectors. Further integrating mine action and development programmes can help to broaden these benefits in support of collective outcomes in the medium and long term.

Although work to release land from EO contamination is ongoing, this study demonstrates the potential for mine action to have an enabling role for humanitarian, development, and peace efforts. The impacts of land release can already be seen, not only in mine-affected communities, but also by facilitating large infrastructure projects, such as the Xumbaweyne Dam and the Garacad Seaport Construction Project, which can have longstanding impacts on communities across regions. Mine action has targeted support to vulnerable communities across Somalia, ensuring programmes reach internally displaced persons, nomadic pastoralists, and remote communities.

The study illustrates how land release can contribute to conflict reduction by decreasing the possibility of harvesting EO in contaminated sites and, as a result, preventing the proliferation of materials that could be used to assemble improvised explosive devices. In addition, it can support broader peace efforts by fostering economic stability and promoting gender equality with increased roles for women, among others. Mine action will continue to be relevant to peace efforts due to the need for clearance in areas liberated from conflict and the control of non-State actors.

Capitalising on these successes will require sustainable sources of financing to the sector. Formalisation of the Somali Explosive Management Authority and national resourcing is vital for effective efforts in the longer term, allowing for improved cooperation and collaboration of work, strengthening localisation, and promoting greater stability and capacity-building for local actors. Ongoing work to strengthen victim assistance and disability support is evidence of growing recognition of the importance of collaborative efforts at a national level. Implementation of this work will similarly require funding support, improved data collection, and capacity development.

At the same time, the study highlights the significant impact of partnerships on the path to stronger nationalisation of mine action undertakings. Coordinated efforts on explosive ordnance risk education, local cooperation to ensure safe and effective land release, and capacity-building programmes have enabled immediate humanitarian outcomes whilst contributing to longer-term development goals. The adoption of gender and diversity mainstreaming has also facilitated broader impacts and supported efforts towards gender equality.

Given its comprehensive scope, the SDGs can serve as a framework to strengthen cross-cutting policy coherence, evidence-based planning, reporting, and data collection to help integrate mine action activities into national SDG efforts while enhancing their relevance, visibility, and funding opportunities.

The continuous refinement of methodical analyses of existing and potential mine action outcomes will help to strengthen the evidence of the sector's role in fostering a triple nexus approach by contributing to broader humanitarian, development, and peace initiatives, in support of collective outcomes and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

# ENDNOTES

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**Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)**

Maison de la paix, Tower 3, Chemin Eugène-Rigot 2C

PO Box 1300, CH – 1211 Geneva 1, Switzerland

[info@gichd.org](mailto:info@gichd.org)

[gichd.org](http://gichd.org)

