



Regional Conference on Addressing Improvised Anti-Personnel Mines Within the
Context of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and
Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

13-15 February 2024 – Accra, Ghana

Statement of the Federal Republic of Somalia on Addressing the Humanitarian Impact of
Improvised Anti-Personnel Mines.

Presented by Mohamed Harun, a mine survivor and current disability-child rights Adviser for
the Federal Government of Somalia – contact: mbiixi@gmail.com

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by thanking the Government of the Republic of Ghana,
as well as the Implementation Support Unit of APMBC, for organizing this important meeting.

It is a great privilege to represent the Federal Gov of Somalia, specifically the Explosive
Management Authority and the National disability Agency in this meeting and shed light on
matters related to Humanitarian impact of **Improvised Anti-Personnel Mines** in Somalia.

Dear respected friends/colleagues, Somalia continues to face great threats from landmines,
explosive remnants of war (ERW), and an increased use of improvised explosive devices.

Minefields along the border with Ethiopia, as well as unexploded ordnance abandoned in rural and urban areas, pose a constant danger to the Somali civilian population. The use of improvised explosive devices in main supply routes and urban settings further endangers the safety of the population, preventing them from accessing productive lands and carrying out their day-to-day livelihood activities safely.

Since July of last year, the Somali government and local defense forces, backed by international forces, have intensified operations to remove extremist forces from their bases in two large regions of the country - Galmudug and Hirshabele States. With significant progress made in this armed offensive, it is now expanding to Southwest and Jubaland States in Somalia. However, it is important to consider that the newly regained areas are contaminated with explosive remnants of war (ERW) and there has been an increased use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

As a result, the civilian population, including those who are returning after being displaced, are at risk of encountering explosive ordnance that has been left behind due to the ongoing armed conflict.

Since January 2022, a total of 89 civilians have been killed or injured by mines and ERW in 23 different locations throughout the country.

Shockingly, a majority of these victims were children, accounting for over 83% of the casualties. The devastating impact of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) cannot be understated, with civilians being disproportionately affected compared to other types of explosive ordnance.

In urban areas and along main supply routes alone, IEDs have resulted in the deaths and injuries of at least **4,864 people**. Surprisingly, even though civilians were not the intended targets, they comprised over 55% of the overall casualties. This alarming statistic highlights the urgent need for action.

Excellencies, ladies, and gentlemen

I am pleased to inform you that, despite all the challenges we have, survey and clearance activities in Somalia have been progressing well.

Hundreds of Somali nationals and international personnel have been deployed in the field to carry out mine and ERW clearance and survey in affected communities.

This work is being conducted in more than 40 districts across 16 regions of Somalia.

Additionally, we are expecting extra de-mining and survey teams to be deployed in some states, which will contribute to meeting our article-5 obligations.

Efforts in Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) have also continued. The mine action partners are implementing innovative approaches to expand coverage and reach the most vulnerable groups in the affected population. The Mine Action Program in Somalia is exploring the provision of EORE on IEDs to address the significant consequences of IED accidents on the civilian population.

On 4th January 2024, the mine action bill for SEMA has been endorsed by the council of ministers and submitted it to the office of the Parliament for approval.

This bill will allow SEMA to receive national funding to support the regulation and oversight of the humanitarian mine action sector in Somalia.

Distinguished delegates,

Insufficient funding is causing some international mine action operators to halt their operations and withdraw. Moreover, the escalating armed conflict in certain regions and the rise in the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are significant obstacles that further intensify the demand for urgent mine action response.

However, the gaps of Humanitarian IED Threat Management are:

- The available C-IED national capacity is limited to Somali Security Forces (SPF & SNA)
- The consolidated national mine action database is yet to include IED data
- SEMA is yet to develop IED related national standard
- limited evidence, mines of improvised in nature can affect implementation of article5

The presence of explosive ordnance and IED's continues to hinder progress in peace, security, development, and access to humanitarian assistance in Somalia, by presenting significant safety concerns and mistrust amongst citizens and national security service providers. The number of

IED and EO victims is increasing year by year and support to victims and their families is very limited.

Finally, I want to conclude my statement by expressing my thanks once again for the organizers of this regional meeting and i hope this conference to be very productive - free Africa from mines and IEDs.

Mohamed Harun

Thank you!