

## Clearing landmines from Ukraine may take decades;

Work to find, map, and remove them has already begun.

**For Immediate Release – 13 May 2022 – Geneva.** The on-going armed conflict in Ukraine has sparked widespread humanitarian crises, with reports of [thousands of civilian casualties](#), the use of landmines and other explosive ordnance, and the [fastest-growing refugee situation since World War II](#). Anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines, as well as other unexploded or abandoned ammunition left behind in Ukraine, [threaten the lives of millions of people](#). They will take years to remove, hindering reconstruction efforts and making it unsafe for people to return to their previous daily lives.

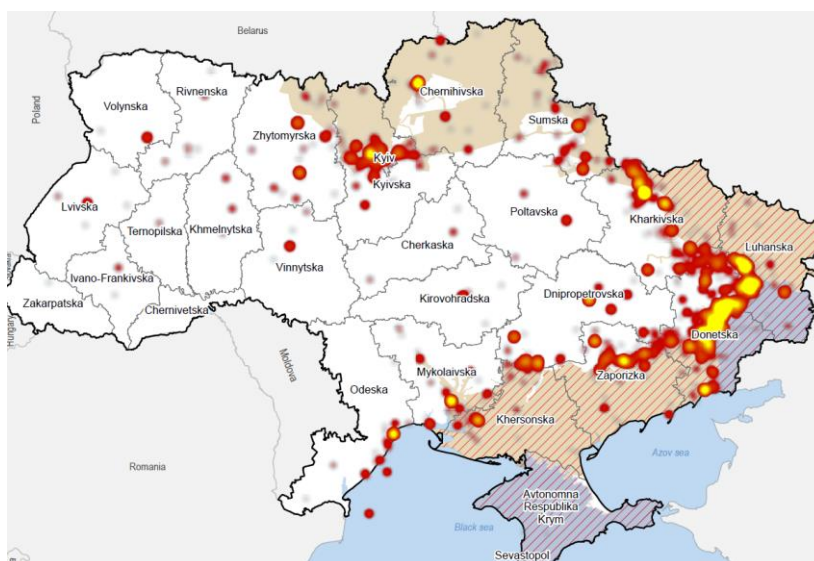
While full-scale humanitarian demining efforts are impossible during the conflict, coordination to support Ukrainian authorities to locate, identify and, when possible, remove explosive ordnance is already underway.

## Urgently mapping landmine risks for coordinated action

Ukrainian national authorities report that they have already located, recorded, and removed nearly 80,000 mines and explosive devices. This massive undertaking is closely supported by the Mine Action Information Management (IM) cell, coordinated by the GICHD, where national authorities are joined by UN agencies, and international and local mine action organisations. Responding to the surge of reports of explosive ordnance, the IM cell is acting as a mine action information hub, gathering data from a variety of national and international sources, including social media.

A cornerstone of this has been Ukraine's Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA), used in country since 2012. The GICHD-developed IMSMA has transitioned to an emergency coordination platform, allowing the IM cell to aggregate, interpret, and share the flood of data across partners and sources, in order to map areas where threats exist and define possible actions. During this emergency phase, coordinated access to up-to-date data helps national authorities target resources and take action strategically.

In the longer term, data-driven mapping of areas where landmines and other explosive ordnance are reported builds the foundation for effective and efficient humanitarian demining operations. Identifying the areas and extent of contamination helps speed the recovery process so that people can return to their homes and use their land safely.



Estimated mine action related incidents density. Image courtesy of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine and the SSTS Mine Action Centre, 2022.

## Helping civilians in mine-contaminated areas reduce risks

While mine action efforts are underway, Ukrainian civilians have an urgent need to understand how to recognise explosive ordnance in their communities, what to do if EO is found, and how to reduce their risks.

“10 to 30% of the explosive weapons used, dropped, fired or launched do not explode as intended and many other explosive ordnance are abandoned in various locations,” estimates the Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) Advisory Group, an international group of experts from the GICHD, UN agencies, international organisations and NGOs, in the recently published [Questions and Answers on EORE for Ukraine](#). This means that a large portion of mines and other EO used during the conflict will remain a threat to civilians after the fighting is over, especially for children.

Actors working on the ground in Ukraine play a crucial role in promoting awareness on risks faced by local communities. Through the UNICEF-led EORE working group in Ukraine, the GICHD is contributing to the information on risk education and good practices available there. This support is important to help to align with up-to-date good practices and identify evolving EO threats in real time.

## Identifying explosive ordnance items

In addition to the sheer quantity of explosive ordnance in Ukraine, the variety of the types of EO adds an additional challenge for mine action operators on the ground. Correctly identifying explosive ordnance is the first step in dealing with it as safely as possible.

Drafted over three weeks to provide urgent guidance to operators conducting mine action activities in Ukraine, the first edition of [GICHD's Explosive Ordnance Guide for Ukraine](#) identifies over 100 separate items of explosive ordnance, such as anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines, explosive submunitions, and grenades, found in Ukraine since the conflict began. The GICHD will continue to update the guide as more explosive ordnance is identified, aiming to assist mine action operators to manage the risks they face in their work.



## Planning for long-term response toward recovery

As Ukraine approaches three months since the escalation of the armed conflict in February, increased technical and financial support is needed to sustain current efforts and prepare for longer-term response.

“Humanitarian demining in Ukraine needs to focus on national capacity and nationally-led programmes,” explained GICHD Director, Ambassador Stefano Toscano. Current efforts in country build on solid national foundations that have existed in Ukraine for decades, dating back to the end of the second World War. These capacities need to be strengthened further to respond to the scale of explosive ordnance contamination now present, in support of wider recovery efforts.

The GICHD will continue to work alongside national authorities and international organisations over the long-term to address the impact of explosive ordnance in Ukraine. Today the focus is placed on targeted support to save lives and prevent losses and injuries. Tomorrow our joint efforts will be a prerequisite for reconstruction and sustainable development.

###

*The GICHD is grateful for the generous support of our donors and would like to recognise the contributions of the U.S. Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement, as well as the Governments of Switzerland and the Netherlands, which make our work in Ukraine possible.*

### **Media Inquiries:**

Laura Collier, Communications Manager  
T: +41 (0)22 730 93 72 | E: [l.collier@gichd.org](mailto:l.collier@gichd.org)

### **About the GICHD**

**The GICHD works towards reducing risk to communities caused by explosive ordnance,** with a focus on landmines, cluster munitions and ammunition stockpiles.

As an internationally recognised Centre of expertise and knowledge, the GICHD helps national authorities, international and regional organisations, NGOs and commercial operators in around 40 affected states and territories to develop and professionalise mine action and ammunition management.

Through its work, the GICHD strives for conventions to be implemented, completion targets to be reached, for communities to be protected from explosive harm, for housing, land, and infrastructure to be returned to communities, in support of sustainable livelihoods, and for gender equality and inclusion to be achieved and women and girls to be empowered. This work saves lives, facilitates the safe return of displaced populations, and promotes peaceful and sustainable development. Learn more at [www.gichd.org](http://www.gichd.org).