

APRIL 2023 -  
SEPTEMBER 2023

# NORTHEAST SYRIA Humanitarian Mine Action Response Bi-annual Update



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## ACRONYMS

AANES	Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria
CL	Community Liaison
EH	Explosive Hazard Incident (3iS system based on available open sources)
EO	Explosive Ordnance
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
EORE	Explosive Ordnance Risk Education
HMA	Humanitarian Mine Action
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
MAA	Mine Action Authority
MAC	Mine Action Center
MTT	Multi Task Team (conducting survey, search and clearance activities)
NES	Northeast Syria
NESMAO	Northeast Syria Mine Action Office
NTS	Non-Technical Survey
FSL	Food Security Livelihood

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Brief

Since the last bi-annual update, Northeast Syria (NES) was marked by brutal and sporadic escalation of fighting, further driving the region in a stalemate. This multi-sided conflict continues to generate a deadly legacy of Explosive Ordnances (EO), including Mines, Explosive Remnants of War (ERWs) and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). Over the last 6 months, **726** new hazardous areas and **350** new single EO items have been discovered. This is adding up to the already staggering level of existing contamination reports, still waiting for clearance operations (see chapter 2. Explosive Ordnance contamination extent in Northeast Syria for more details). The number of victims caused by EO during the year 2023 is extremely alarming. From January 2023 to September 2023, iMMAP France – 3iS reported **422** victims through its EHI\* system. This is the deadliest recorded figures since 2019.



During the single month of April 2023, **72** persons have been reported killed or injured by Explosive Ordnance in NES

(see chapter 3. Explosive Ordnance impact in Northeast Syria for more details).

Additionally, the presence of EO contamination continues to impede development perspectives, by notably blocking livelihood resources. 5 Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) organizations are currently operating in NES, covering the pillars of **Mine Action**. Reduced level of fundings impact their capacities to comprehensively respond to the increased above-mentioned needs.

\*EHI – Explosive Hazard Incidents – Based on on daily reviews of news agency and adhoc open sources collected information.

With a survey consortium of Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) partners continues to collect further evidence and data to show a baseline contamination and to properly map the extent of EO contamination in NES. Up to now data shows that all districts and governorates controlled by the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) have been affected.



**Mine Action** – activities which aim to reduce the social, economic, and environmental impact of mines, and ERW - including unexploded sub-munitions.

**Note:** The objective of mine action is to reduce the risk from landmines and ERW to a level where people can live safely; in which economic, social and health development can occur free from the constraints imposed by landmine and ERW contamination, and in which the victims' different needs can be addressed.

Mine action comprises five complementary groups of activities:

- EORE.
- humanitarian demining, i.e., mine and ERW survey, mapping, marking and clearance.
- victim assistance, including rehabilitation and reintegration.
- stockpile destruction,
- advocacy against the use of Anti Personal Mines.

Source: IMAS 01.10 Guide for the application and development of International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).

## Objective

This biannual report aims to inform about Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) interventions and aid decision-making of humanitarian and stabilization stakeholders engaged in NES. It highlights the known extent of EO in the region; its devastating and long-term impact; the activities' progress achieved by HMA actors; the challenges faced, and sectoral recommendations.



The 5 pillars of Humanitarian Mine Action are:

**EORE** – Explosive Ordnance Risk Education 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 behavioral change. Core activities include public information dissemination, education, and training.

**Clearance** – in the context of mine action, the term refers to tasks or actions to ensure the removal and/or the destruction of all explosive ordnance from a specified area to a specified depth or other agreed parameters as stipulated by the NMAA/Tasking Authority.

**VA** – Victim Assistance refers to all aid, relief, comfort, and support provided to victims (including survivors) with the purpose of reducing the immediate and long-term medical and psychological implications of their trauma.

**Stockpile Destruction** – the physical destructive procedure towards a continual reduction of the stockpile of explosive ordnance.

**Advocacy** – in the context of mine action, the term refers to... public support, recommendation, or positive publicity with the aim of removing, or at least reducing, the risk from, and the impact of, mines and ERWs.

Source: IMAS 01.10 Guide for the application and development of International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).

## Source

Given the challenges and sensitivities of operating in Northeast Syria, location and personal details of humanitarian organizations contributing to this report have been anonymized when requested.

This report relies on below sources:

- Data collected by iMMAP France -3iS from Humanitarian Mine Action organizations operating in NES.
- Explosive Hazard Incidents (EHI). Open-source data base managed by iMMAP France – 3iS to collect information about EO related accidents and victims. Multi Sectoral Needs Assessments (MSNA).
- Interviews and insight from Humanitarian Mine Action organizations and affected communities.
- Findings based on limited datasets are included after confirmation that international humanitarian organizations acknowledged the same trend.

## Mine Action stakeholders engaged in Northeast Syria

### Humanitarian Mine Action Coordination

#### iMMAP France – 3iS

3iS is hosting the Mine Action Sub-Working Group (MASWG) within the NES NGO forum mechanism. This coordination platform supports relevant actors to implement impactful, timely coordinated, and accountable Humanitarian Mine Action activities.

Thanks to an Information Management system that collects and centralizes data from HMA implementing organization, 3iS develops evidence-based products (such as this biannual update).



#### iMMAP France becomes 3iSolution

3iS is a not-for-profit organization created in Sept 2008 and registered in France as Association by law of 1901 under the name of iMMAP France. It still operates legally under that name.

3iS focuses on using the latest innovation and the technology offered by the private and academic sectors to enhance the power of information, giving the most direct and concrete impact at the beneficiaries' level.

Website: [3iSolution](https://3isolution.org)

### International NGOs implementing HMA activities

As of September 2023, (4) international NGOs are implementing Humanitarian Mine Action activities in NES:



#### Mine Action authority

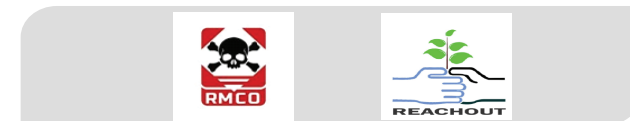
#### NESMAC (North and East Syria Mine Action Center)



**The NES Mine Action Office (NESMAO) becomes the NES Mine Action Centre (NESMAC)** The NESMAC (formerly NESMAO) is the authority body, responsible to regulate and coordinate Mine Action programs in the AANES region. Supported by iMMAP Inc through a dedicated capacity building project, the NESMAC is strengthening its role to compliant with International Mine Action Standards. As such, it transitioned from “office” to “center”, allowing the establishment of sub-sequent regional offices. – this is highlighted by the reinforcement of a Raqqa regional focal point, being closer to the most identified

needs and HMA operators. In addition to this progress, the NESMAC has been reviewing a Memorandum of Understanding previously signed with HMA implementing organizations. Steps are also being taken to enhance the Mine Action information process – with several data sharing agreements in place between the NESMAC, the HMA Coordination hosted by 3iS and HMA organizations. Lastly a more formal and standardized Task Order system should be established in the coming months, including a priority setting criteria to better guide clearance programs where it would have the most benefits and impacts. The NESMAC is led with a gender equality approach thanks to 2 co directors.

### Local NGOs implementing HMA activities



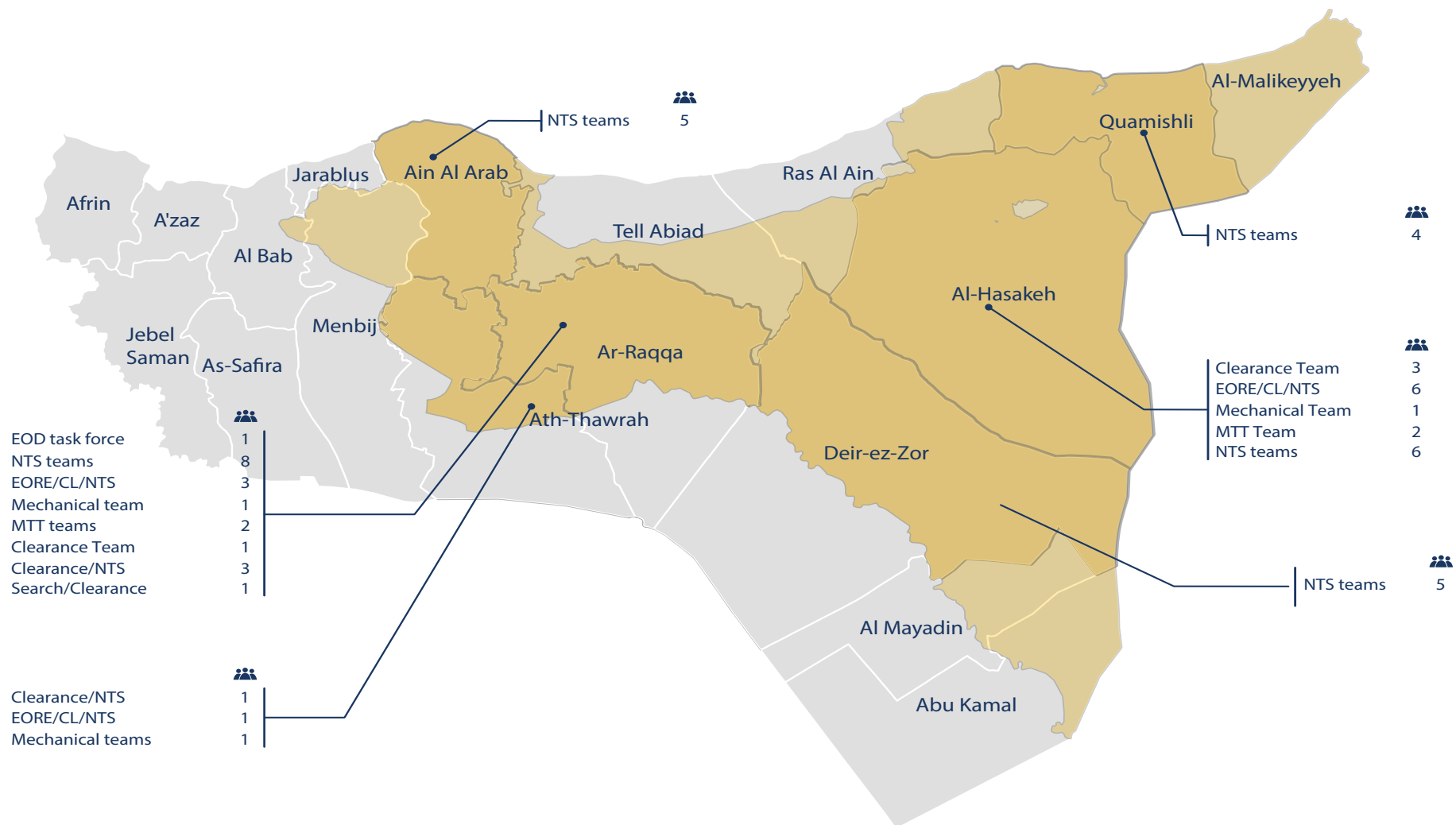
**Rojava Mine Control Organization (RMCO)** is conducting activities independently and in partnership with one international NGO.

**Reach Out** offers safe and secure agricultural lands, providing livelihood opportunities for the local population, and fostering long-term resilience in the region. It is conducting activities in partnership with one international.

**REACH OUT** : a new local Mine Action organization in NES. ITF has devised an inclusive approach to address crucial gaps in clearing and releasing agricultural lands for livelihood opportunities in NES while simultaneously building local capacities to independently manage explosive ordnance contamination in the long term. To achieve these objectives, ITF will partner with a newly established local Syrian NGO called Reach out, which emerged from the initiative of Syrian staff previously employed by ITF during Phase I and Phase II projects in NES.



Map 1. Humanitarian Mine Action teams capacity mapping in September 2023





## 2. EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION EXTENT IN NORTHEAST SYRIA

Explosive Ordnance contamination is reported by all HMA NGOs and centralized by 3iS thanks to an agreed workflow. While there are still gaps of information due to access constraints, the launch in June 2023 of the FPI funded Non-Technical Survey (NTS) consortium, already largely improved the contamination picture at a regional level – with data from over **600 communities**.

### Bi annual reporting period – April 2022 to September 2023

Over this 6-month period, **63** new contaminated areas have been reported, corresponding to **7,363,652 m2**. In addition to **43** new Explosive Ordnance (EO) single item found, and still awaiting destruction or removal.

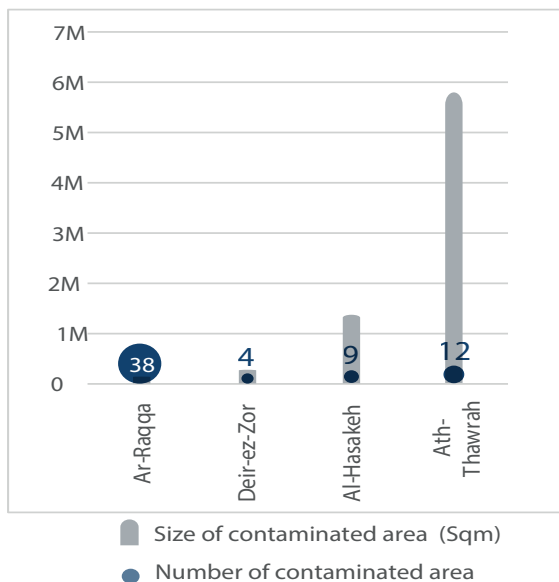
Al Hasakeh and Ar Raqqa governorates continue to have greater access and as such activities are concentrated in these areas.

This continues to impact the level of new hazardous areas and EO items reported over this period. This can cause some bias in the data presented as the ongoing conflict in areas with restricted access, and limited data, may appear less contaminated – while the opposite should be expected due

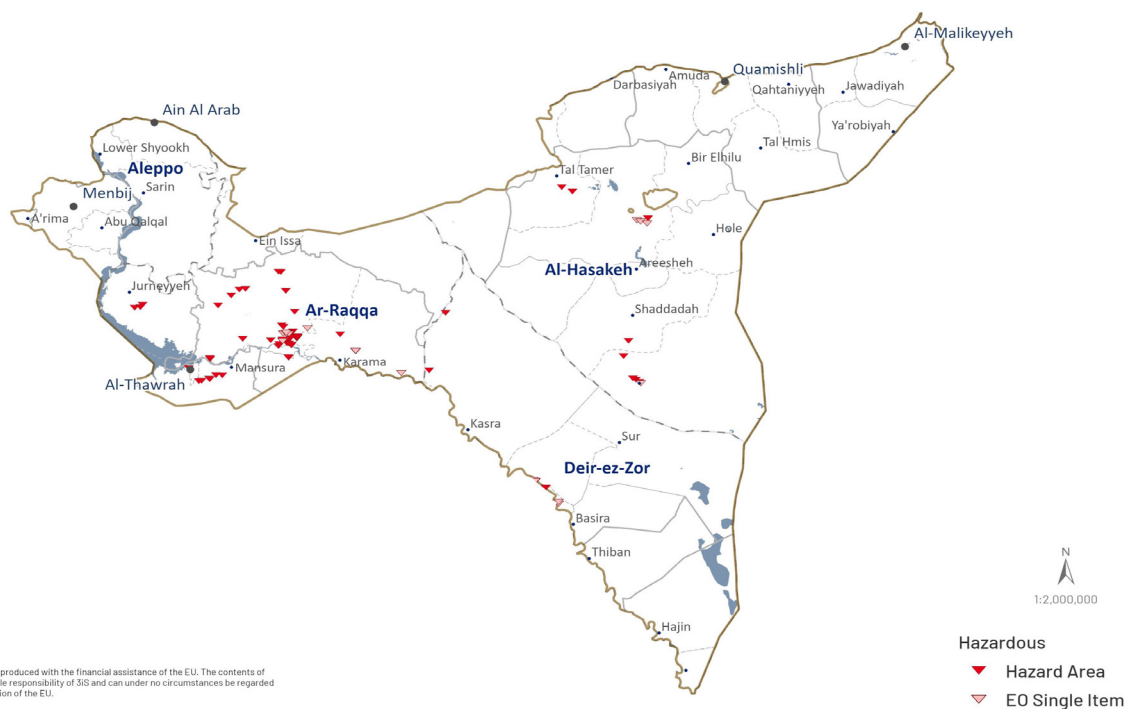
to the continuing of multiple conflicts. Up to Sep 2023, no HMA teams were fully focused on Tell Abiad and Ain Al Arab (Kobane) districts, mostly due to security and resource capacity constraints.

Map 2. New hazardous areas and EO single items reported from April to September 2023

New contamination reported between April 2023 and September 2023



Source: NES IMSMA data base consolidated by 3iS



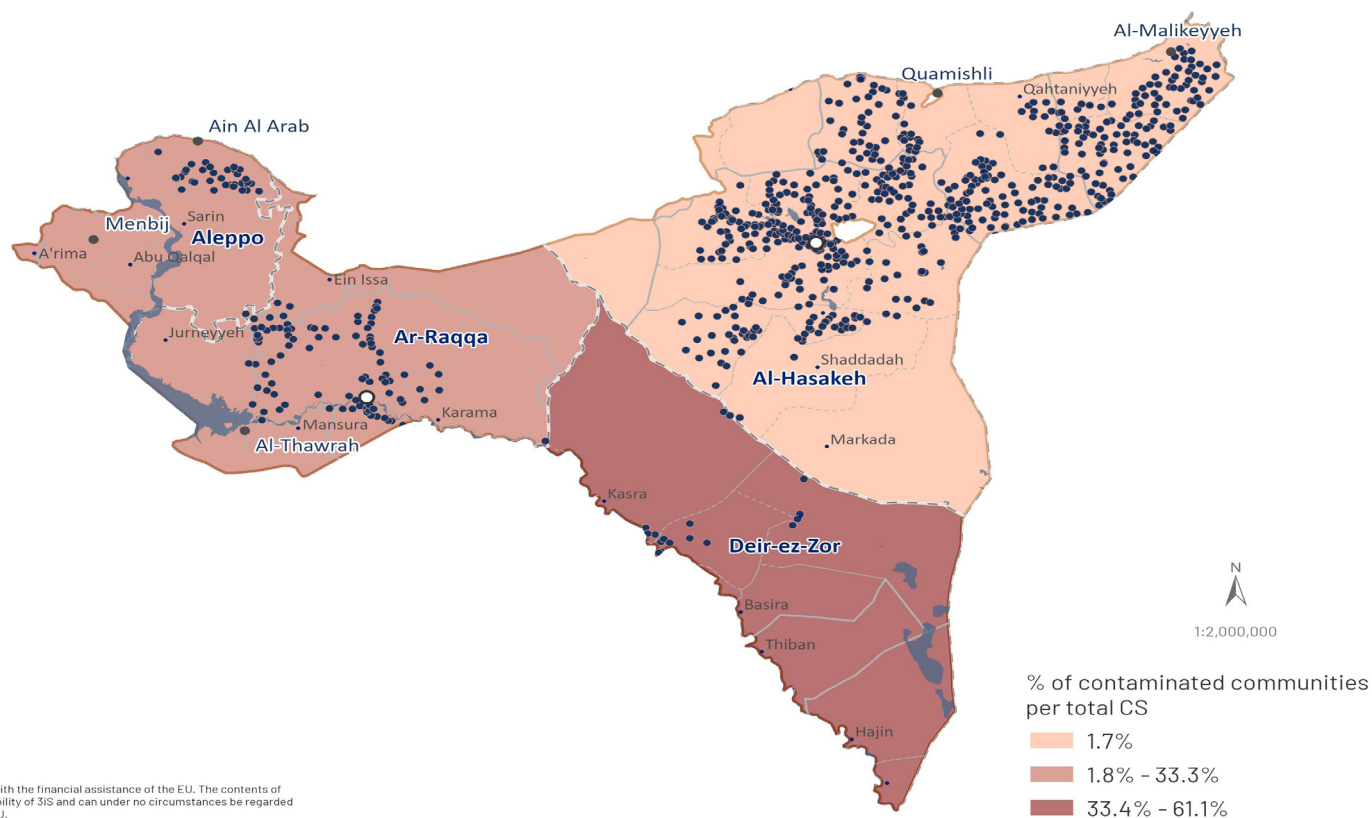
This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the EU. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of 3iS and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the EU.  
Basemap: 3iS NES database



## Update on the NES-Wide Non-Technical Survey project led by 3iS in partnership with ITF, HI and DCA.

Launched in June 2023, **609 communities** across Northeast Syria have been surveyed up to September 2023. The coverage of Deir Ez Zor governorate remains limited due to re-escalation of violent combats. Consequently, the survey stopped in DEZ as of the 23rd of August with tentative to resume in the coming months. Although there has been limited community surveys conducted in Deir Ez Zor, compared to other more accessible areas, the ratio of contamination reported so far has been extremely high. The ratio of communities surveyed and reported as contaminated is followed by Raqqa governorate and Kobane (Ain Al Arab) district.

Map 3. Community Survey



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Basemap:  
Source: 3iS NES database

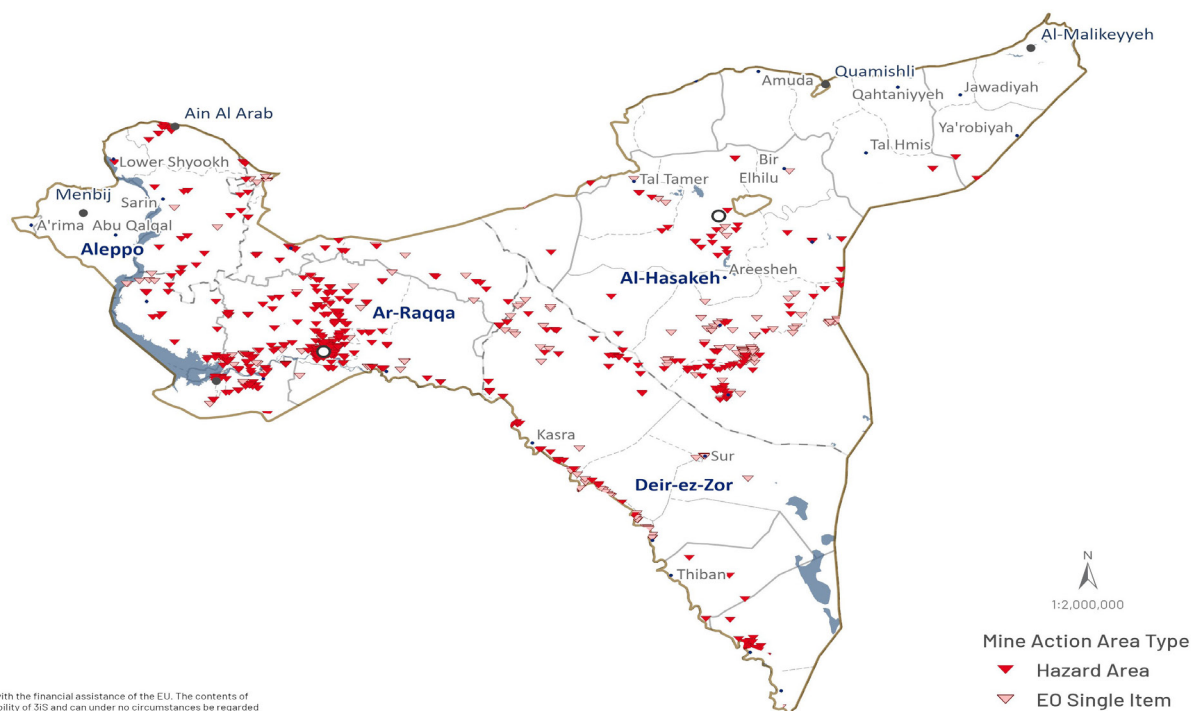
## Consolidated overall period – From January 2017 to September 2023

Overall records show that **726** areas remain openly contaminated as Suspected Hazardous Areas (SHA) or Confirmed Hazardous Areas (CHA) requiring follow up activity and corresponding to **31,622,421 m<sup>2</sup>**.

In addition to the above, **350** single Explosive Ordnance items are still awaiting to be safely removed or destroyed.

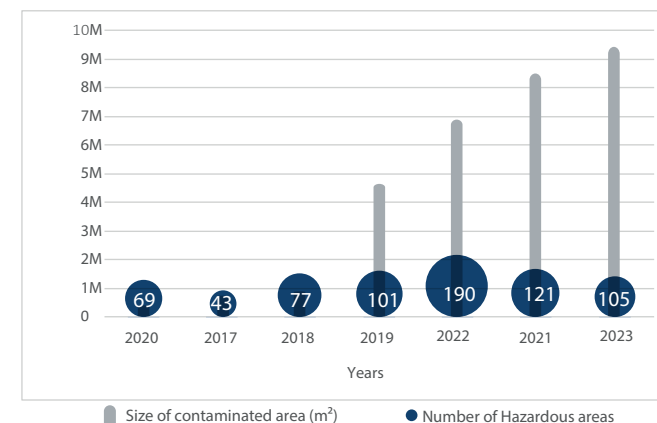
Source: IMSMA data base consolidated by 3iS from January 2017 to Sep 2023

Map 4. Overall open hazard areas and EO single items awaiting clearance



This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the EU. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of 3iS and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the EU.  
Basemap:  
Source: 3iS NES database

Yearly contamination reported and still awaiting for clearance



Source: NES IMSMA data base consolidated by 3iS

The square meter of contamination reported is increasing each year! – this, along with ongoing conflict, means the level of contamination will continue to rise and the gap between clearance efforts and contamination still requiring actions, will continue to grow!





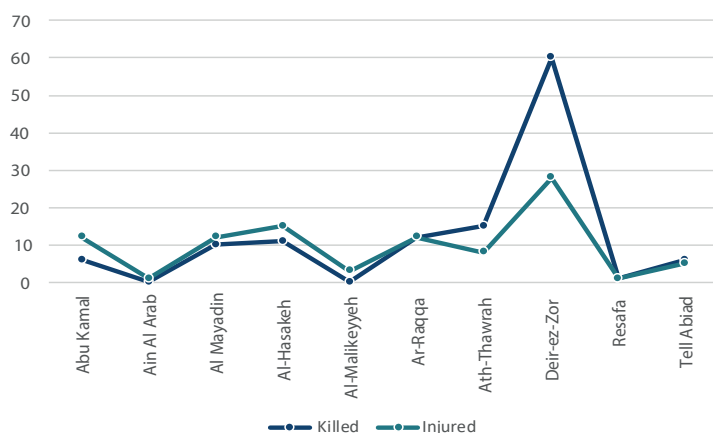
### 3. EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION IMPACT IN NORTHEAST SYRIA

#### Accidents and Victims

Bi annual reporting period – April 2022 to September 2023

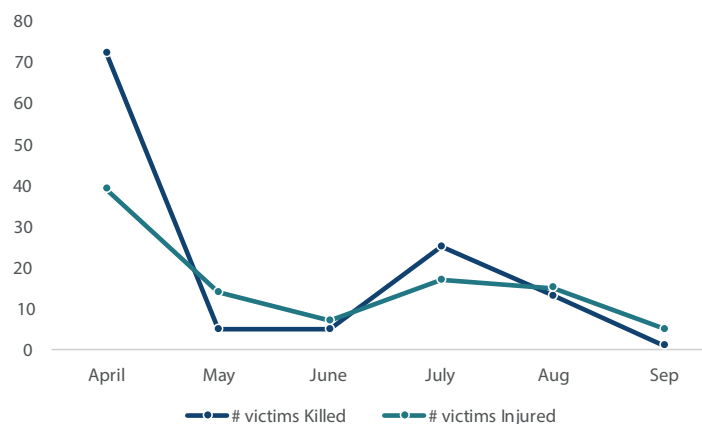
Over a 6-month period, from April 2023 to September 2023, HMA organizations officially documented through the conduct of community liaison and survey activities, **77** EO related incidents corresponding to **88** victims in NES. As accidents and victims are under documented and reported, the MASWG collects in parallel, information from open sources through its Explosive Hazards Incident (EHI) system. As such, it is estimated that **218 persons were injured or killed over the last 6 months by Explosive Ordnance in Northeast Syria**.

New number of victims caused by Explosive Ordnance between April 2023 and September 2023, by district level.



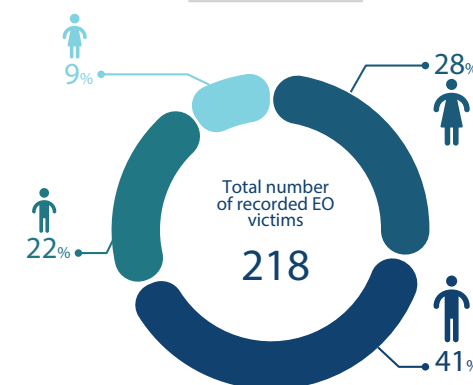
Source: 3iS Explosive Hazard Incident (EHI) - System based on open sources data collection

Victims of Explosive Ordnance in NES from April to Sep 2023



Source: 3iS Explosive Hazard Incident (EHI) - System based on open sources data collection

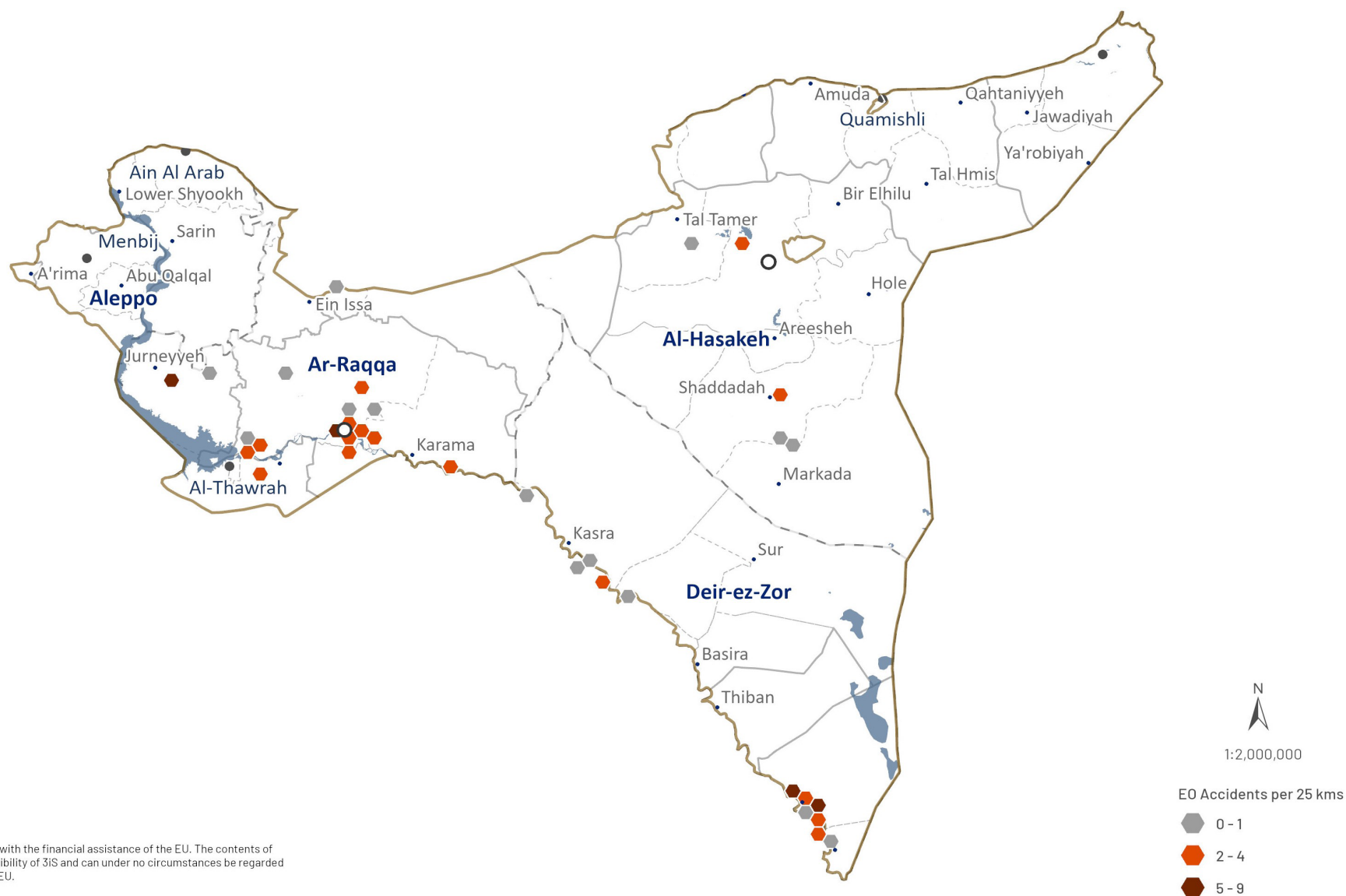
Profile of victims caused by Explosive Ordnance between April 2023 and September 2023.



Source: NES IMSMA data base consolidated by 3iS

IMSMA data shows that the most at risk group of having an accident is Adult Men – there is a number of potential reasons for this, including the type of work exerted, that requires entering contaminated areas (truffles pick up for instance). Activities especially Risk Education should be tailored to better address this group's needs.

Map 5. Recorded accidents caused by Explosive Ordnance between April 2023 and September 2023



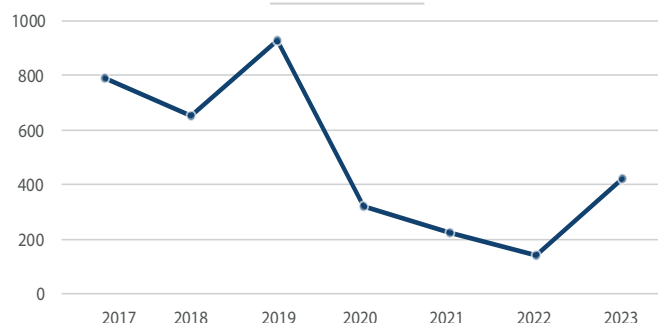
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 Basemap:  
 Source: 3iS NES database



## Consolidated overall period – From January 2017 to September 2023

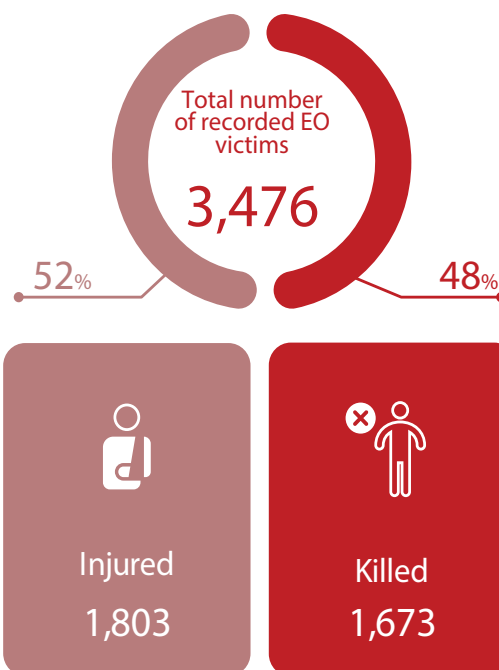
Between January 2017 and September 2023, HMA organizations officially documented via the conduct of community liaison and survey activities, **2134 EO related incidents corresponding to 2417 victims in NES**. In parallel, through its EHI system based on open sources, 3iS reported a total of **3476 victims caused by Explosive Ordnance since 2017 in Northeast Syria**. This further highlights that HMA partners do not have the current capacity to follow up all related suspected accidents and victims.

Yearly evolution of the number of victims caused by Explosive Ordnance (up to September 2023)



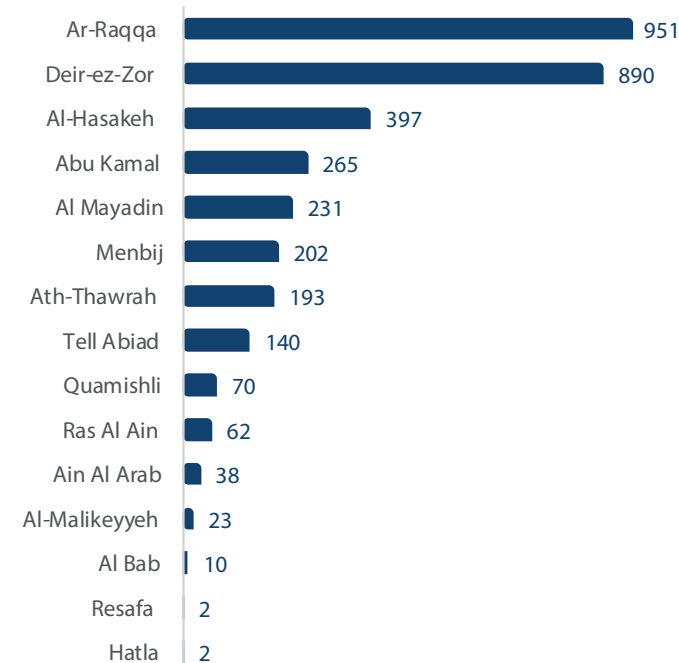
Source: 3iS Explosive Hazard Incident (EHI) - System based on open sources data

Killed and Injured victims caused by Explosive Ordnance (up to September 2023)



Source: 3iS Explosive Hazard Incident (EHI) - System based on open sources data

Total number of victims caused by Explosive Ordnance by district level (up to September 2023)



Source: 3iS Explosive Hazard Incident (EHI) - System based on open sources data



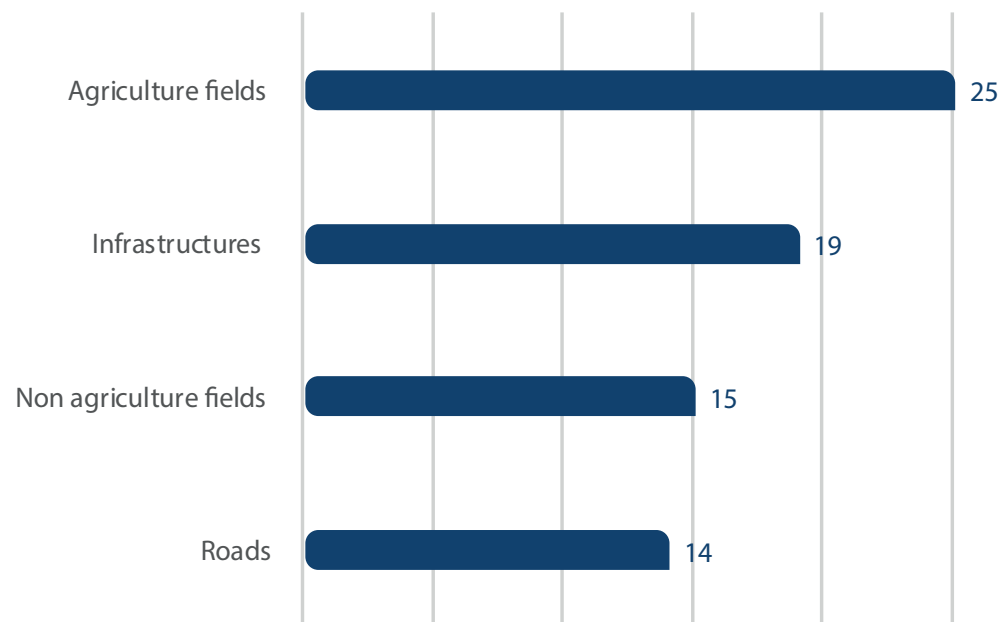
2023 has been marked by a pike of accidents and victims and has already surpassed 2020, 2021 and 2022! This is a worrying trend reminding all stakeholders about the deadly danger caused by EO and the critical growing needs in the region.

## Recorded blockages of land use due to EO contamination

Bi annual reporting period – April 2023 to September 2023

Over a 6-month period from April 2023 to Sep 2023, **79 new blockages** were reported by HMA organizations.

### New number of blockages caused by Explosive Ordnance between April 2023 and September 2023



Source: NES IMSMA data base consolidated by 3iS



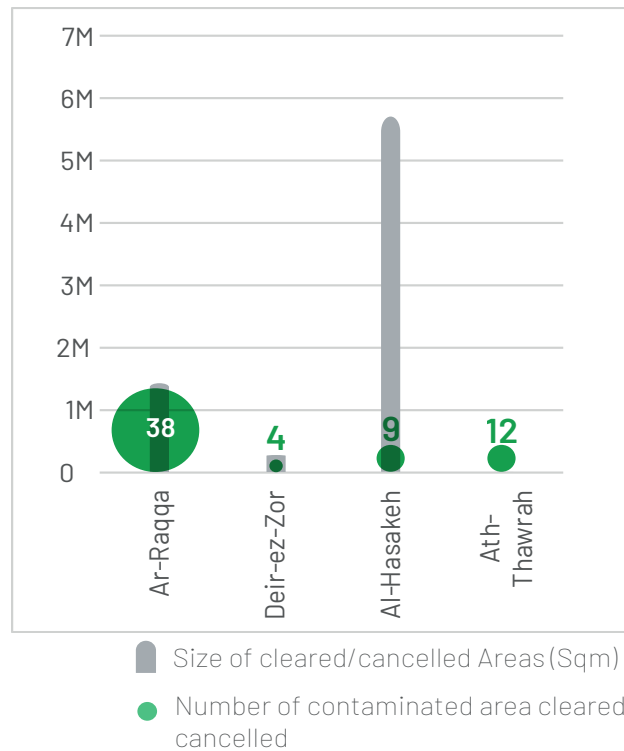
## 4. HUMANITARIAN MINE ACTION PROGRESS IN NORTHEAST SYRIA

### Clearance

Bi annual reporting period – April 2023 to September 2023

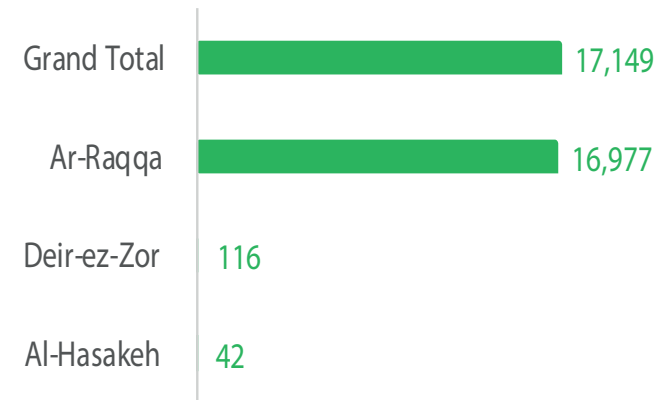
Data records from April 2023 to September 2023 show that Humanitarian Mine Action organizations removed/destroyed **17,149 items** and cleared an area size of **5,011, 714 m2**.

Cleared/cancelled areas (m2) by districts between April 2023 and September 2023.



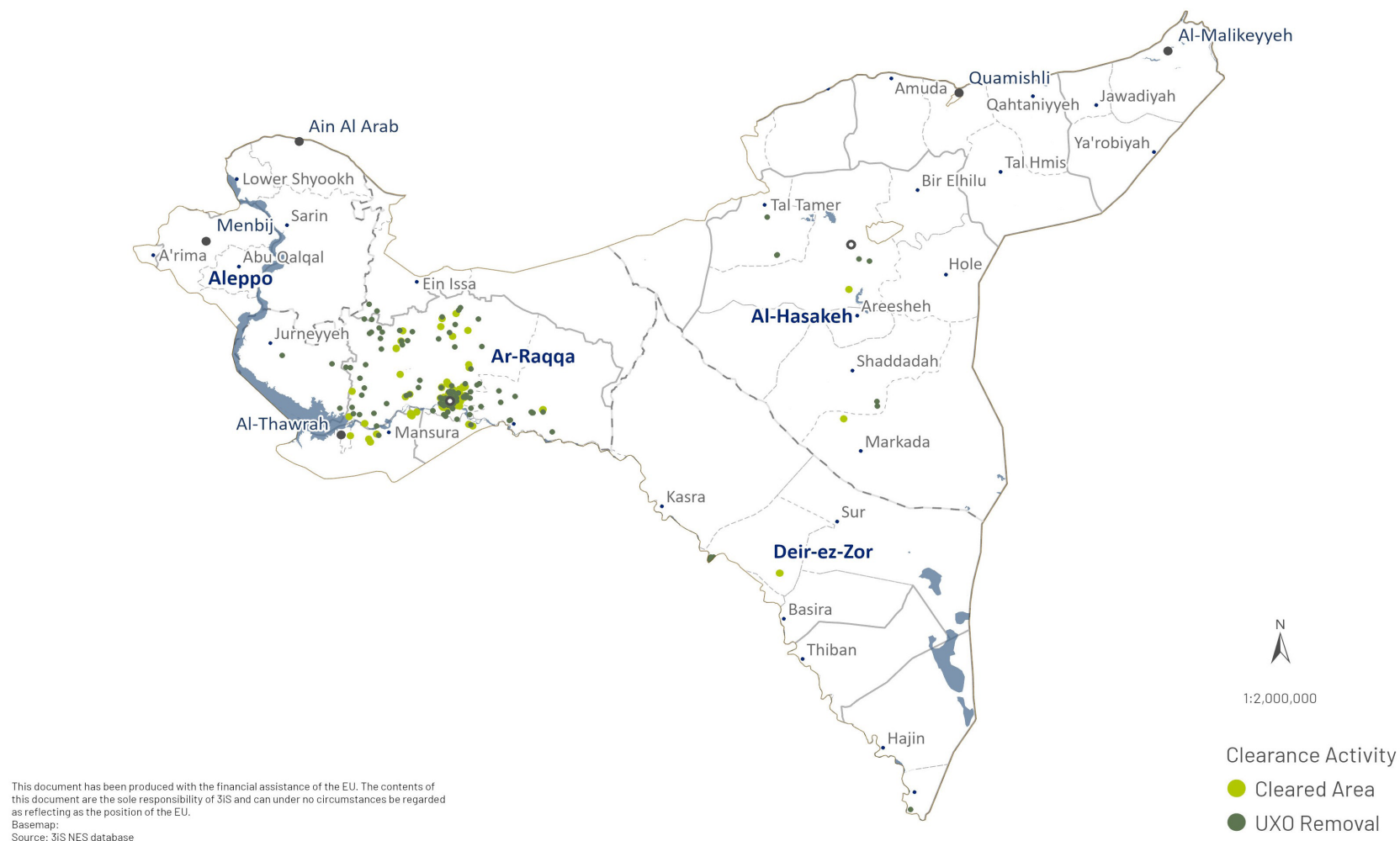
Source: NES IMSMA data base consolidated by 3iS

# of single Explosive Ordnance destroyed/removed between April 2023 and September 2023.



Source: NES IMSMA data base consolidated by 3iS

Map 6. Clearance activities completed in NES over the last 6 months from April 2023 to Sep 2023

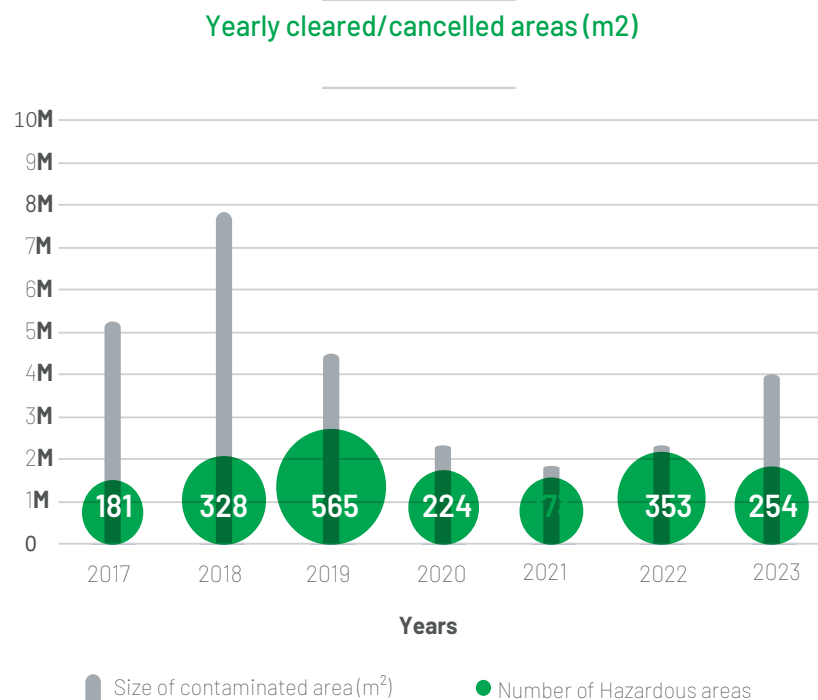


**Note:** Clearance efforts are concentrated in Ar Raqqa and Al Hasakeh governorates. This is mostly due to access constraints and operational capacity.

## Consolidated overall period – From January 2017 to September 2023

Overall records from January 2017 to September 2023 show that Mine Action organizations (Humanitarians and commercial) removed/destroyed **135,278** items and cleared a total of **39,106,295.09m<sup>2</sup>**.

On average between 2017 and 2023, 5,586,614 m<sup>2</sup> were cleared yearly and an average of 19,325 EO items were removed or destroyed.



Source: NES IMSMA data base consolidated by 3iS

## Future timeline clearance perspectives

If we estimate that the HMA capacity response remains the same as 2022 (**3,169,721 m<sup>2</sup>** cleared in 2022), more than 10 years would be required in theory to clear the current known hazardous areas (estimated to **31,622,421m<sup>2</sup>**). Nevertheless, this would only be accurate if no more contamination is reported after 2023. As mentioned above the level of contamination reported keep on growing year after year.

As such the gap between contamination requiring clearance and the capacity to address it, increases undeniably. Without addressing this with additional funding capacity the region will continue to suffer from EO contamination consequences in the years to come– causing not only risk to life but hindering socio-economic and development perspectives.

## Case Study: HI cleans up Sulphur suspected to be used to produce Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

In Syria, near Raqqa, HI's clearance team has cleaned up piles of Sulphur, a chemical used to produce explosive devices.

### A suspected chemical substance

"We received a call informing us that quantities of a suspected chemical substance, yellow in colour, had been found near the main road in a village near Raqqa in Syria.

When our team visited the area to gather information and locate the contaminated site, our contact explained that the site had been used by armed groups between 2014 and 2017. These armed groups used to bring in trucks from Iraq loaded with unknown materials. We assume that they were for the manufacture of explosives, notably improvised explosive devices.

At the end of the armed operations in the area, the site was mostly demolished. That's when locals noticed piles of a yellow-coloured substance within what remained of the walls of one of the buildings, and quantities of the same substance scattered around the site."

### A danger for farmlands

After the war, as the site bordered on a military zone, some farmers asked the military if they could have some of the suspicious substance, thinking it was suitable for use as a soil fertilizer. The military refused and wanted the site cleaned up.

The contaminated site was located on agricultural land on which there were wells and irrigation canals passing near a military area. One of the buildings on the site was built over an underground bunker equipped with ventilation holes and a tunnel wide enough for vehicles to come and go. The tunnel

extended quite a long way underground.

It was eventually determined that the yellow substance was sulphur, and that its presence in an open space through which people pass, including children from the village school, presented several dangers, including its direct and rapid flammability and the risk of leakage into the water sources, endangering crops and livestock. Sulphur is also harmful to the lungs.

Mine Action Team clearing contaminated agricultural land , Syria. | HI



### Neutralising the dangers

During the clean-up operation, team members wore masks to protect them from the chemical fumes and gas emissions. They worked for several days to remove the sulphur, spread over an area of 7000 square meters.

<https://www.humanity-inclusion.org.uk/en/news/hi-cleans-up-sulphur-used-to-produce-explosive-devices>

To neutralise the danger, the team put the substance into bags, loaded them onto trucks and transported them to place for safe storage, later to be disposed of according to the procedures for the disposal of chemicals. The dangers posed by this substance have been completely removed from a large area of agricultural land. The rural community that had been living in such close proximity to a dangerous chemical substance can now recover their land and use it for agriculture again. This task differed from clearing mines and other remnants of war, but it was as dangerous for our clearance teams as any other clearance operation. The temperatures were very high and the sulphur made it difficult for them to breathe. They had to work very slowly to avoid raising dust and fumes. Also, because of the hot weather, the sulphur dust mixed with their sweat, causing allergic reactions and itchy eyes. After eight days of working non-stop, the team completed the task of cleaning up the site. They felt happy and proud to have transformed this site from a place of pollution threatening the safety of the people and the environment into a safe place suitable for agriculture where green trees and flowers will grow again.

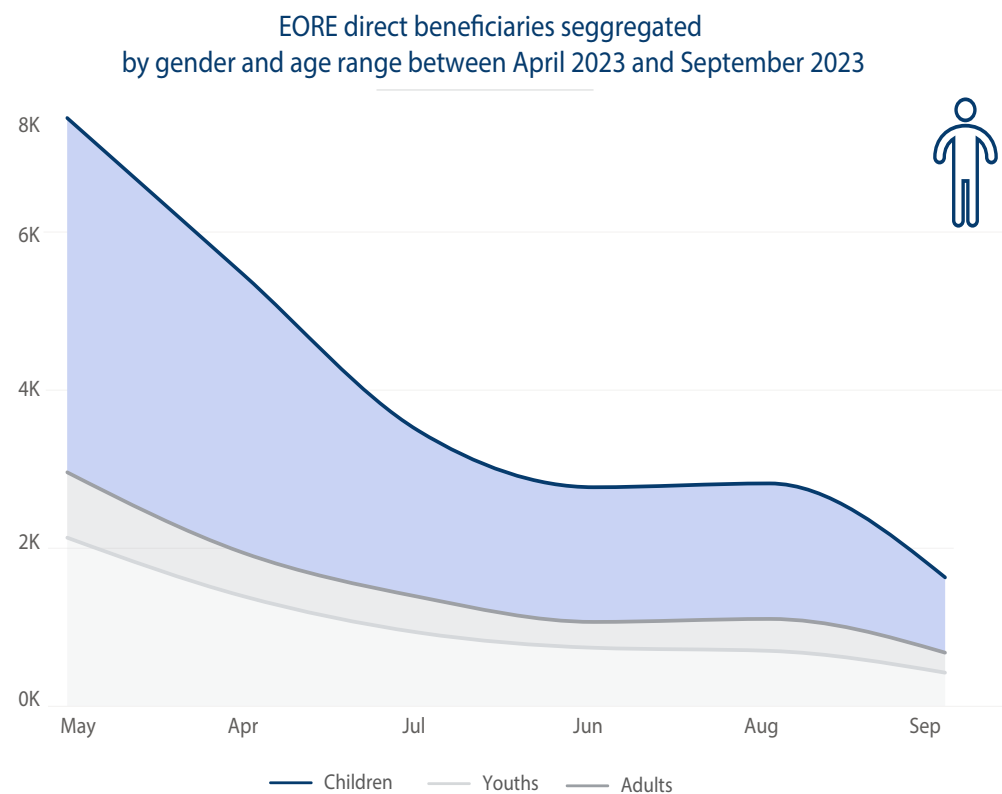
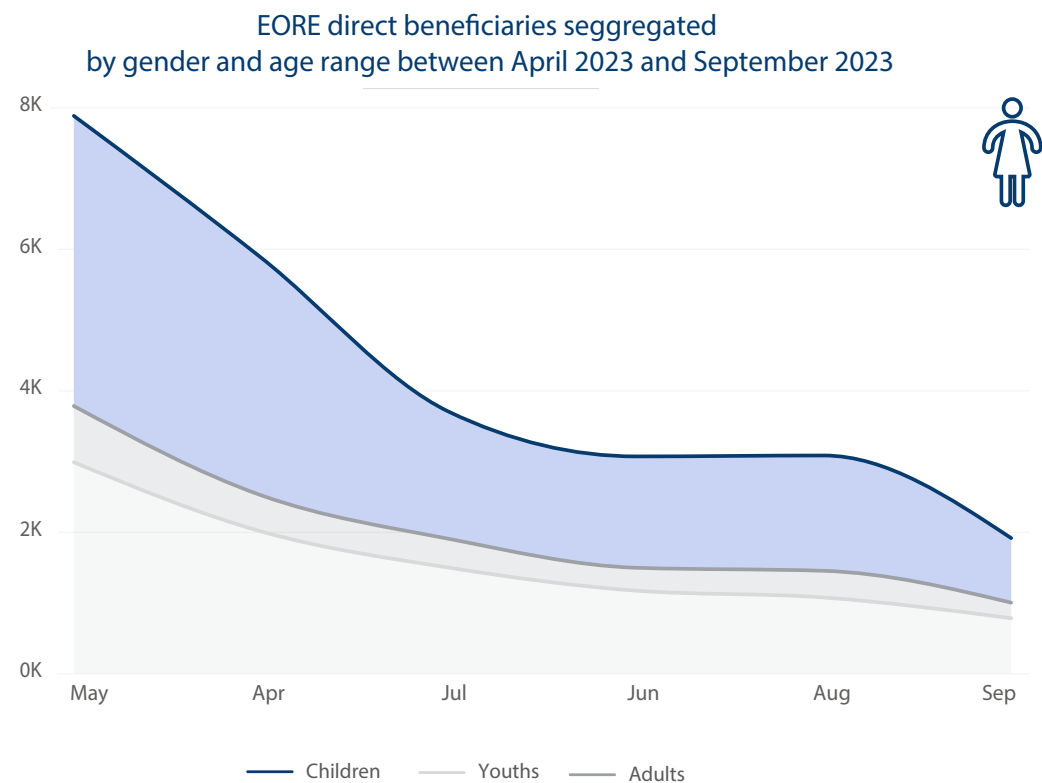
HI Clearance operations in Raqqa Governorate are funded by GFFO until December 2023 and operate in synergy with the other Humanitarian Mine Action Component.

Website: [HI](https://www.humanity-inclusion.org.uk/en/news/hi-cleans-up-sulphur-used-to-produce-explosive-devices)



## Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE)

Bi annual reporting period – October 2022 to September 2023



While this update has highlighted that men are the most at risk group, this is the group that has received the least number of EORE sessions !.

## Case Study: MAG's partnership with the NES- Education Council for an integrated EORE program.

### A community liaison officer delivering a Training of Trainers (ToT) session to school teachers



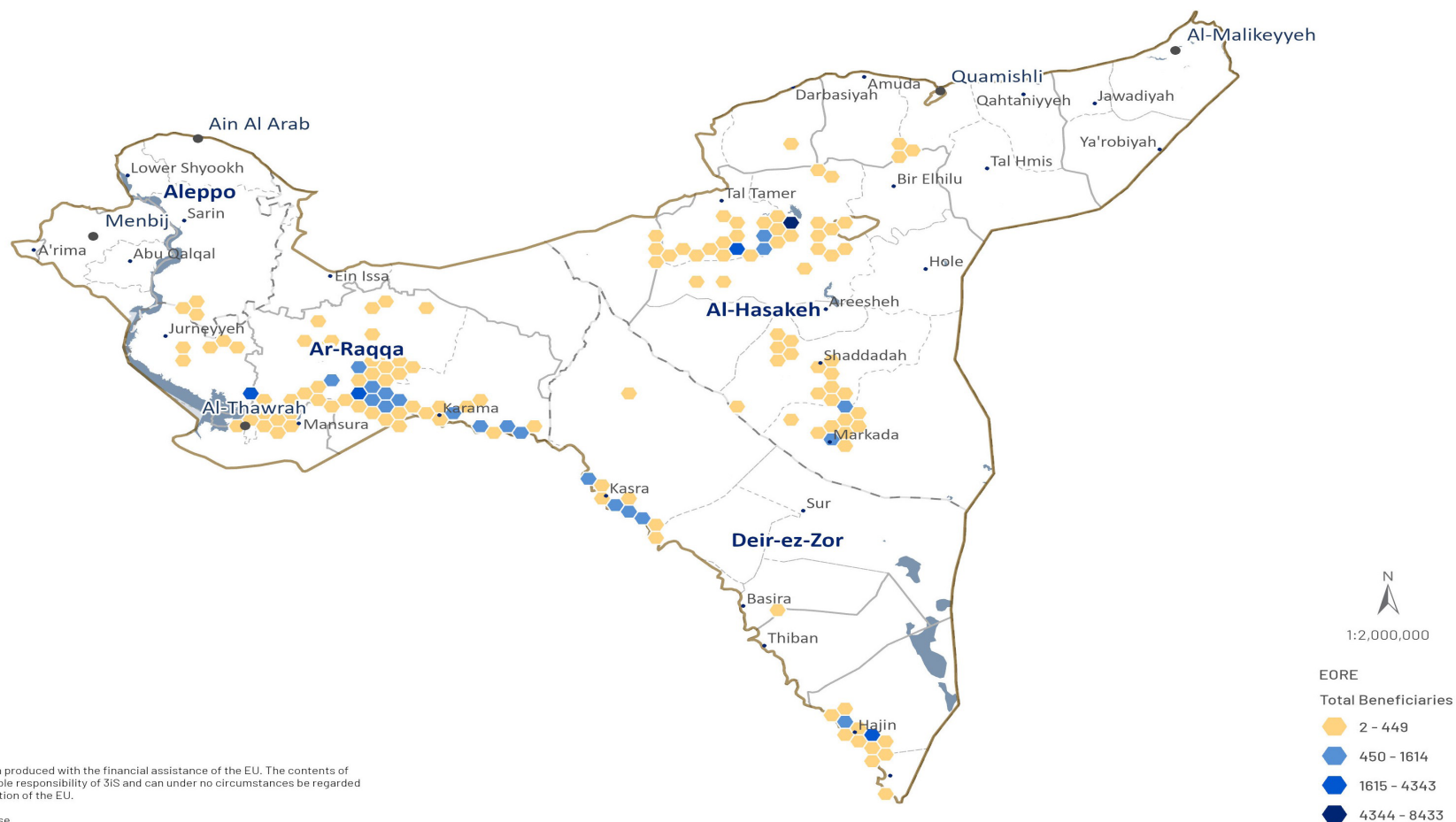
Starting in April 2022, MAG worked with the NES-Educational Council and integrated the Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) into the schools' curriculum.

MAG developed a guiding Booklet about EORE which has been adopted in schools as part of the curriculum.

In September 2023, MAG Community Liaison team delivered Training of Trainers (ToT) to twenty teachers, men and women, from several areas in NES. The curriculum targets three different ranges of children according to their age: 6-9, 10-13, and 14-17 years old.

Currently, MAG is coordinating with the Educational Council, Committee, and NESMAC to move forward and train thirty teachers before the end of December 2023.

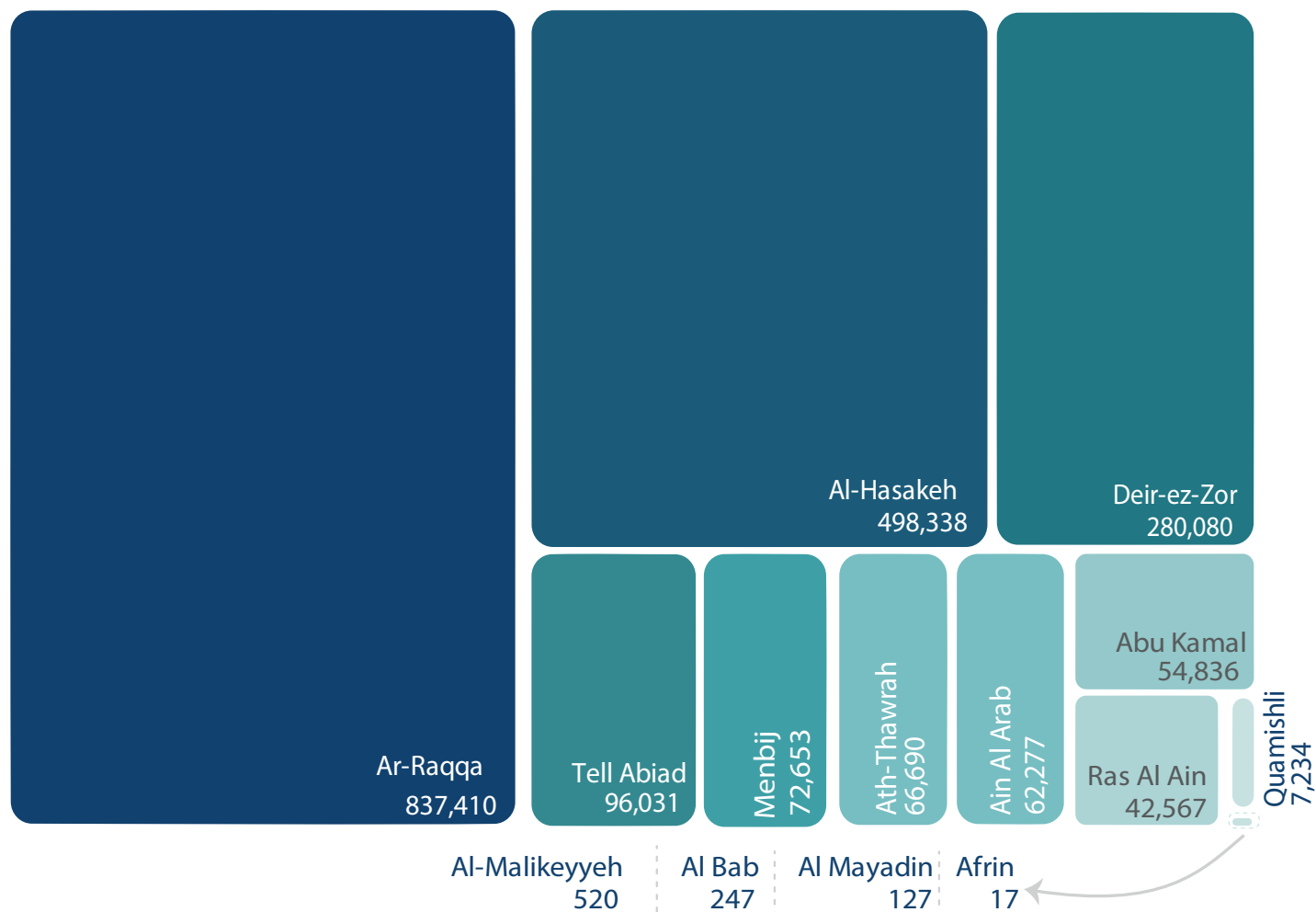
MAP 7. EO Risk Education direct beneficiaries from April 2023 to September 2023



While the ratio of contaminated communities shows that Deir Ez Zor has the highest level of contamination and the highest number of accidents, we can see that this area has received the least amount of EORE sessions – notably due to access issues. These facts, along with lack of clearance operations in this governorate means that the number of expected victims and accidents is likely to continue in Deir Ez Zor, unless addressed !

Consolidated overall period – From January 2017 to September 2023

## EORE consolidated direct beneficiaries by district up to September 2023





## 5. CHALLENGES IMPEDING THE HUMANITARIAN MINE ACTION RESPONSE

### Critical level of funding

Continued funding remains to be the most major concern. Indications show that there is very little secured funding across HMA partners after Q1 of 2024, all the while the enhanced data being collected indicates increasing needs – with the number of accidents and victims continuing to rise. Comprehensive contamination levels and impacts will be further fine-tuned, upon completion of survey consortium activities at the beginning of 2024.

### Security and access restrictions

Security and access restriction continue to impede HMA Operations. The ongoing NES contamination survey shows that over 252 communities remain inaccessible, restricting survey, EORE and clearance activities there - While these restricted communities are expected to have high levels of EO contamination as known battle areas !

An increase in tribal tensions, and other continuing conflicts throughout NES continue to restrict access to several areas.

### Lack of a coordinated prioritization system

The Mine Action response in NES is not yet driven by a coordinated prioritization strategy, planned between HMA organizations, the NESMAC, the MASWG (hosted by 3iS) and other relevant actors. HMA organizations rely on their own criterias to decide on areas of prioritization. While the MASWG is also supporting operators to avoid

duplications and gaps, the absence of a task order prioritization granted by the NESMAC is challenging for future planning – although this is being worked on !

### NES Mine Action Center capacity development

The newly structured NESMAC continues to build its capacity – having recently undergone an EORE ToT training, a QA/QC training, a land release training and continuous IM/GIS trainings.

At the same time, a new Task Order (TO) request system is being developed to formalize HMA Operations.

While this is a positive step forward, there are still no technical standards and guidelines, national standards, nor a documented land release process.

### Other issues affecting implementation.

- Explosive resources: Limitations on importing supplies to conduct controlled demolitions or Render Safe Procedures (RSPs) means that HMA operators are required to adopt ulterior methods of sourcing stores to conduct demolitions. A lack of commercial/military grade detonators, det cord and explosives, means operators are often forced to harvest supplies or use UXO as donor charges. This can mean inconsistent results when conducting demolitions and enhances the risk of failed demolitions. conduct of

an accreditation or external Quality Assurance/Control process. While HMA organization set up land release SOPs in NES based on IMAS, the finalization process is not yet validated through a third party Quality Control system.

- Recruitment and training: Restricted movement of personnel means recruitment and training oftentimes must be conducted within NES, limiting opportunities for international training, and limiting trainers and workshops being hosted in NES. It also limits the pool to choose from when organizations are recruiting - meaning extra time, money and effort is required to train staff to fulfill roles.



## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SECTOR'S PRIORITIES

### Recommendations

**Following on from the previous biannual update recommendation to expand HMA resources in Deir Ez Zor governorate, along with Ain Al Arab (Kobane), Ras Al Ain and Tell Abyad Districts.** Certain of these areas remain inaccessible due to security constraints, preventing the conduct of HMA activities. While needs are critical there, as highlighted throughout this update, the volatile security context constitutes a main barrier.

**In the district of Deir Ez Zor only, 88 new victims were reported (source: 3iSEHI system) during April - September 2023, the highest of any area.** This alarming figure asserts the critical need to rapidly expend (whenever the security context allows it), HMA EORE and land release activities in the region.

**To look at innovative finance methods and increase fundings for multi-year Mine Action program, ensuring continuation of activities.** HMA coordination and partners should look at innovative finance methods to try and address these challenges and needs. Longer term funding is required to ensure stability and development perspective. This is also a key condition to enable the establishment of a long term HMA strategy and solutions for NES.

**To establish an external Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) system.** As highlighted in the coordination satisfaction survey, HMA partners' feedback, and observations from the coordination, a clear need for an external accreditation and QA/QC process has been raised. This should be explored in more

detail and a robust multi-layered QMS (Quality Management System) should be established ensuring more consistent and quality data which is further harmonised - which would then allow more efficient costing and effective advocacy.

**Connecting the dots between innovation and standards.** As several issues squeeze HMA responses, it is essential that innovative new methods and technologies are used in mine action programs, to facilitate effective and remote responses. As new technologies and methodologies are explored the sector must not forget to ensure that innovation complies with, or improves, standards.

**Indicators should be designed to focus more on outcomes rather than outputs and designed with an integrated approach.**

While traditional Mine Action indicators focus on Outputs, overall Outcomes are often neglected due to lack of resources, synergies with other sectors and are often required to be measured beyond the project period. The sector should aim to focus more on integrated Outcomes for future development rather than #sqm released, focus should be on #sqm released and developed on.

## MASWG priorities for the next 6 months (From September 2023 to March 2024)

In line with Global MA AoR strategy, the NES MASWG will continue to:

Offer **reliable coordination for Humanitarian Mine Action** in NES response to accelerate and deliver more impactful interventions.

Build and **strengthen strategic partnerships**.

**Enhance and transfer capacity:** strengthen the meaningful participation, representation, and leadership of local and national actors in humanitarian coordination structures. Promote **equality, diversity, and inclusion** in HMA operations and workforce.

Contribute to **sustainable solutions** in collaboration with peace and development actors.

In addition, the below specific areas will be a priority for the next six months:

### Contribution to the Humanitarian Project Cycle.

Several activities are to be undertaken by the MASWG in contribution to the Humanitarian Project Cycle through the next few months – this is essential given other highlighted priorities such as mentioned funding and access challenges.

### Funding Advocacy

With continued funding being the biggest major concern amongst HMA partners, there is a requirement to continue advocating for multi-year funding to address the needs identified in NES. This will be assisted by working with HMA partners on a hybrid costing methodology which aims to better demonstrate how unit-based costing, alongside project-based costing will allow a more accurate calculations for the NES Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).

**Greater integration within the Protection Working Group and other relevant sectors** While partners at an organizational level often try to integrate activities, as

exemplified by DCA infrastructure rehabilitation or ITF “clear to grow” strategy, this should be replicated at a sectoral level. By integrating more with other sectors, focus can shift from an **OUTPUT** level to an **OUTCOME** level, leading not only immediate needs but future development perspectives!

**Develop the EORE Working Group (EOREWG).** Following the reactivation of the EORE WG, further developments should be made to target the most at need. Data shows that the most injured and killed due to EO remains are working age males. This is a difficult group to target due to their working activities during the days and often in small groups – meaning less direct beneficiaries are achieved during sessions. In order to achieve expected targets, sessions tend to be directed towards areas with a large audience concentrated in one area – rather than focus on the needs. **The EORE WG will develop strategies to work on such recommendations.**

### Completion of the coordinated NES-wide contamination survey

Thanks to the support of the European Commission (FPI- Foreign Policy Instruments), the large-scale NES contamination survey will be concluded in January 2024. A final report and assessment will be produced, with the contribution of mine action stakeholders in NES.

Data collected from these 30+ survey teams will be used toward addressing needs, issues, challenges raised throughout this update. The final contamination report will be used for more informed decision making and to contribute to sector strategy, prioritization and advocating for the required funding moving forward.

For complementary information (detailed maps, data analysis, etc.). Please send your request to the NES Mine Action Sub Working Group (MASWG) by clicking on the following link: [Mine Action Assistance Request Form](#).

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