



## **Preliminary Report: Victim Assistance Needs Assessment Survey – 2024/2025**



**National Mine Action Centre, Sri Lanka  
Ministry of Urban Development, Construction and Housing**

## Contents

<b>List of Acronyms</b> .....	2
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	4
<b>2. Objective</b> .....	4
<b>3. Methodology</b> .....	4
<b>4. Main Findings of the Survey</b> .....	6
<b>5. Way Forward: Recommendations for Targeted Support</b> .....	9

## List of Acronyms

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APMBC	- Anti Personal Mine Ban Convention
DASH	- Delvon Assistance for Social Harmony
EO	- Explosive Ordnance
EORE	- Explosive Ordnance Risk Education
GICHD	- Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining
IMSMA	- Information Management System for Mine Action
INGO	- International Non-Government Organization
MAG	- Mine Advisory Group
NGO	- Non-Government Organization
NMAC	- National Mine Action Center
RMAO	- Regional Mine Action Office
UNCRPD	- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
SHARP	- Skavita Humanitarian Assistance & Relief Project
VA	- Victim Assistance

**Message from the National Director  
National Mine Action Centre (NMAC), Sri Lanka**



**M.M. Nayeemudeen**

*Secretary (Acting), Ministry of Urban Development, Construction and Housing  
National Director, National Mine Action Centre (NMAC)*

On behalf of the National Mine Action Centre (NMAC), Sri Lanka, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all government counterparts, international and national demining organizations, and community stakeholders for their invaluable contributions to the Victim Assistance (VA) Needs Assessment survey process. I also wish to sincerely thank the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) for their continued strategic guidance and technical support throughout this important initiative.

As Sri Lanka moves forward as a member of the Victim Assistance Committee of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) for 2025–2026, alongside Burkina Faso, the Netherlands, and Austria and in alignment with the Angkor Action Plan (2025–2029), we remain firmly committed to ensuring that the rights, dignity, and needs of landmine and explosive ordnance (EO) survivors are placed at the centre of our mine action programme.

The VA Committee, chaired by the National Director of NMAC and comprising representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Department of Social Services, the Regional Mine Action Office, and key national and international mine action organizations, has initiated a survey to verify the status of 20% of the 207 victims recorded in IMSMA since 2010. This exercise is designed to generate critical insights into the current needs of survivors—ranging from medical care, mobility support, and assistive devices, to livelihood opportunities, housing, and social protection. The Ministry has also reaffirmed its commitment to prioritize landmine and EO victims under the permanent housing schemes implemented as part of the resettlement programme for conflict-affected communities in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

This preliminary assessment marks an important step toward more targeted and sustained assistance while reinforcing coordination among all stakeholders. I wish to express my deep appreciation to HALO Trust, MAG, DASH, SHARP, the Sri Lanka Campaign to Ban Landmines (SLCBL), Independent Researchers, as well as the dedicated staff from NMAC, the Regional Mine Action Offices, and our government and development partners for their active engagement. Special thanks are extended to the GICHD Information Management Advisors, MAG Livelihoods Consultant and Implementation Support Officer of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit for their continued technical guidance and support, which were instrumental in bringing this initiative to fruition.

Together, through partnership and commitment, we will continue to ensure that mine action in Sri Lanka not only clears land with reasonable effort but also restores lives and builds sustainable, resilient communities.

**M.M. Nayeemudeen**

## 1. Introduction

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Since the end of the conflict in Sri Lanka, over 1,765 victims of landmines and explosive ordnance (EO) have been recorded in the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA). With the establishment of the National Mine Action Centre (NMAC) in 2010, the collection and disaggregation of victim data have improved, enabling annual reporting and district-level planning.

As a State Party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) and a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the Government of Sri Lanka is committed to ensuring the rights and needs of landmine and EO victims are addressed effectively.

In this context, NMAC conducted a sample survey to assess the current status and unmet needs of victims recorded in IMSMA since 2010. The findings will serve to inform policy decisions, improve coordination among stakeholders, and advocate for sustained support to victim assistance (VA) efforts.

## 2. Objective

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This VA Needs Assessment Survey aimed to achieve the following primary objectives:

- **Verify data accuracy** and assess the current status of 20% (42 individuals) of landmine and EO victims recorded in IMSMA since 2010.
- **Identify current needs, challenges, and service gaps** affecting landmine and EO victims.
- **Support evidence-based decision-making** for government agencies, INGOs and NGOs in designing and implementing effective VA programmes.
- **Demonstrate to donors and stakeholders** the ongoing importance of victim assistance in post-conflict recovery and rights-based development.

## 3. Methodology

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The Victim Assistance Needs Assessment Survey was conducted in 2024 by the NMAC in consultation with the Information Management Technical Coordinator and IM Specialist from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). The survey received voluntary technical and operational support from the four in-country mine action operators: MAG, HALO Trust, DASH, and SHARP. Additional support was provided by the Regional Mine Action Office (RMAO) and members of the VA Committee.

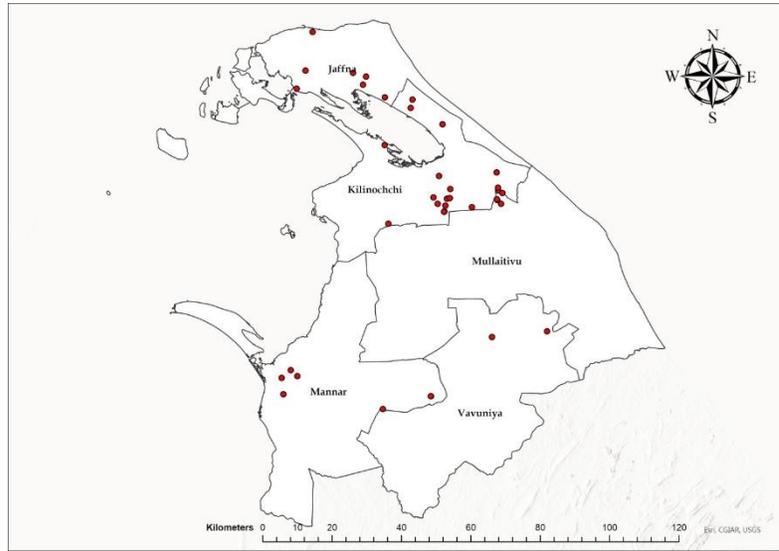
The VA Committee, in collaboration with the technical support mission of the APMBC Implementation Support Unit, conducted a thorough assessment to justify the need for the survey. Following this assessment, and based on the Committee's recommendation, the Secretary

of the Ministry approved the implementation of the survey, ensuring that all relevant Government Agents in the Northern Province were duly informed.

### **Sampling Approach**

**A total of 41 victims (20%) were selected from 207 victims recorded in IMSMA from 2010 to 2024 and residing in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka—mostly concentrated in the Jaffna and Kilinochchi districts, as shown on the distribution map—including 32 males and 9 females.**

The sampling process was strategically coordinated to align with the completion survey activities conducted by community liaison teams from each mine action operator. By conducting the VA survey in parallel with these existing field visits, the approach maximized operational efficiency and ensured comprehensive geographic coverage without requiring additional deployments.



Of the 41 surveys conducted, nearly half—20 surveys (49%)—were carried out by the Halo Trust, followed by MAG with 9 surveys (22%), DASH with 8 surveys (20%), and SHARP with 4 surveys (9%).

### **Data Collection**

A structured questionnaire, developed using Survey123, was used to collect individual data. Disability status was assessed with the Washington Group Short Set of questions.

### **Verification Workshop**

Before field deployment, an induction and coordination workshop was held in Kilinochchi, attended by representatives from the Ministry of Health, Department of Social Services, Divisional Secretariats, Grama Niladhari officers, and mine action operators.

### **Data Management**

Field data collected through Survey123 were recorded into the IMSMA Core portal allocated to Sri Lanka by GICHD. Data verification and approval were conducted within the system following a defined workflow.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Respondents were assured that their participation was confidential and voluntary, with the right to withdraw or decline to answer any question at any point during the interview.

## **4. Main Findings of the Survey**

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### **▷ Victim Profile: Demographic and Socio-Economic Overview:**

<b>Gender Distribution</b> 32 (78%) male and 9 (22%) female.	<b>Age Distribution</b> Aged 15 to 60+, with largest groups in 36–40 and 46–50 (15% each), and 26–30 and 60+ (12% each)
<b>Victims' Age When Accident Occurred</b> Adults make up the majority of victims (73%), but 10 out of 32 male victims were boys, and 1 out of 9 female victims was a girl.	<b>Education</b> Most victims had low education levels: 46% had not completed secondary school, and only a few (15%) had higher education or vocational training.
<b>Occupation at Time of Accident</b> Most victims were daily labourers (34%), with men also working as farmers and small business owners, while women were mainly employees or engaged in housework.	<b>Main Breadwinner</b> 75% of male victims were the main breadwinners for their households, compared to only one-third of female victims.  Among the 27 victims identified as main breadwinners, 65 dependents rely on them, averaging about 2.4 dependents per victim.

↳ Most victims were in their most productive working years and served as the main breadwinners for their families. As a result, the accidents they experienced have serious long-term effects not only on their own lives but also on the wellbeing of their dependents and communities.

↳ While most victims were adults at the time of the accident, one in four cases involved a male under the age of 18—highlighting the need for child-focused EORE programmes, particularly those targeting boys.

↳ Low education levels among victims likely limited their access to safer employment and reduced their awareness of mine risks, increasing their vulnerability to accidents.

### ▷ Nature & Impact of Injuries Among Victims

<p><b>Type of Accident</b></p> <p>71% of victims were injured in EO accidents<sup>1</sup>, mostly during civilian activities (18 males and 4 females), while 29% were involved in demining-related accidents<sup>2</sup>, with females making up 42% of those cases.</p>	<p><b>Type of Injury</b></p> <p>27% of victims suffered amputations—4 affecting upper limbs and 6 lower limbs—while 17% sustained eye injuries, resulting in partial or complete vision loss in one eye. Other common injuries included wounds, shrapnel, and burns.</p>
<p><b>Disability Status</b></p> <p>39% of victims (13 males and 3 females) reported impairment following the accident, and 81% of them (10 males and 3 females) self-reported as having a disability based on the Washington Group of Questions<sup>3</sup>.</p>	

↳ Although females represented only 22% of all victims, they accounted for 5 out of 9 female victims (over 55%) in demining-related accidents, showing a disproportionate impact and underscoring the need for gender-sensitive safety measures in demining operations.

↳ High levels of impairment and disability among victims (39% impaired, 81% self-report disability) underline the long-term physical and social consequences, reinforcing the need for sustained medical, rehabilitative, and social-economic support services.

### ▷ Key Challenges Faced by Victims

<p><b>Medical Needs</b></p> <p>19% of victims (5 males and 3 females) reported needing ongoing medical care, with half of them also requiring physical rehabilitation.</p>	<p><b>Economic Challenges</b></p> <p>51% of victims (19 males and 2 females) reported difficulties participating in economic activities due to their injury or disability, with those affected by EO accidents facing significantly more barriers than demining accident victims.</p>
<p><b>Social Barriers</b></p>	<p><b>Housing Vulnerabilities</b></p> <p>One-third of victims (9 males, 6 females) reported owning homes without</p>

<sup>1</sup> Explosive Ordnance (EO) accidents refer to accidents that occur during aid, military or civilian activities such as farming, housework, and other daily routines.

<sup>2</sup> Demining accidents refer to accidents that occurred at official demining sites during clearance operations.

<sup>3</sup> Using the threshold of having "a lot of difficulty" or "cannot do at all" in at least one domain of vision, hearing, mobility, cognition, self-care and communication.

<p>25% of victims (8 males and 2 females) reported difficulties participating in social, cultural, and educational activities.</p>	<p>proper legal documentation. 5% continue to live in temporary shelters with little or no access to electricity, sanitation, or clean water.</p> <p>Of those in these vulnerable housing situations, 40% are people with disabilities.</p>
<p><b>Mobility Limitations</b></p> <p>29% of victims (9 males and 3 females) lacked personal transport, while 71% owned some form—mainly bicycles (41%) or motorbikes (24%).</p> <p>1/3 of victims who reported having a disability do not have their own means of transportation.</p>	<p><b>Assistance Coverage</b></p> <p>Over 80% of victims receive some form of assistance, 28 benefitting from the Aswesuma<sup>4</sup> cash grant—often alongside other support.</p> <p>Nearly half (19 males and 2 females) received a disability allowance, while 17% reported receiving no assistance at all.</p>

↳ Livelihood support emerged as the most pressing challenge among the surveyed victims. Half of the victims reported difficulties participating in economic activities due to their impairments or disabilities. For most (13 out of 21), this led to a significant reduction in income affecting the entire household. Four individuals reported struggling to cover basic living costs such as housing and food. Qualitative feedback collected during the survey consistently emphasized livelihood support as a top priority.

↳ Land documentation remains another key challenge. Unclear or absent land titles create barriers to accessing credit, applying for government support, and making long-term investments in farming infrastructure and technology.

↳ Victims living with disabilities are disproportionately impacted, facing lasting health challenges and significant socio-economic barriers.

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<sup>4</sup> The government's new compensation program introduced in response to the ongoing economic crisis.

## **5. Way Forward: Recommendations for Targeted Support**

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The data shows that 85% of surveyed victims expressed clear needs for support, mainly focused on livelihood development and access to basic services. These findings present an opportunity for targeted interventions by government bodies and development partners.

### **1. Livelihood Support Is the Top Priority**

- 56% of male victims (18) and 78% of female victims (7) identified livelihood assistance as their main need, making it the most frequently cited aspiration. Among those who self-reported having a disability, 56% (7 males and 2 females) also expressed this need.
- Requests ranged from general livelihood support to sector-specific needs such as:
  - Fishing (5% – all males)
  - Tailoring and small-scale businesses (5% each – all females)
  - Masonry and self-employment (5% – all males)

### **2. Housing and Transportation Remain Key Needs**

- Accommodation assistance was requested by 7%, all males, likely reflecting ongoing housing insecurity or lack of legal housing documentation noted elsewhere in the survey.
- Similarly, 7% requested vehicle assistance, which aligns with transport challenges highlighted earlier in the findings.

### **3. Education and Health Support Still Matter**

- 7% of respondents (1 female, 2 males) requested educational support, including possible continuation of studies or support for their children.
- Medical assistance was less commonly mentioned (5%) but still critical, especially in the context of long-term injury or impairment.

#### 4. Gaps in Clarity and Outreach

- 15% of victims provided unspecified responses, suggesting either unclear awareness of available services or difficulty articulating specific needs. This highlights a need for:
  - Improved information dissemination about available government schemes
  - Case management approaches that can help victims define and pursue recovery goals

<b>Need Assistance For:</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Need Accommodation Support		3	3	7
Need Assistance for Education	1	2	3	7
Need Assistance for Fishing		2	2	5
Need Assistance for Livelihood	3	13	16	39
Need Assistance for Small Scale Business	2		2	5
Need Assistance for Tailoring	2		2	5
Need Medical Assistance		1	1	2
Needs Assistance for Masonry		2	2	5
Needs Assistance for Self-Employment		1	1	2
Needs Assistance for mobility		3	3	7
Unspecified	1	5	6	15
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100</b>