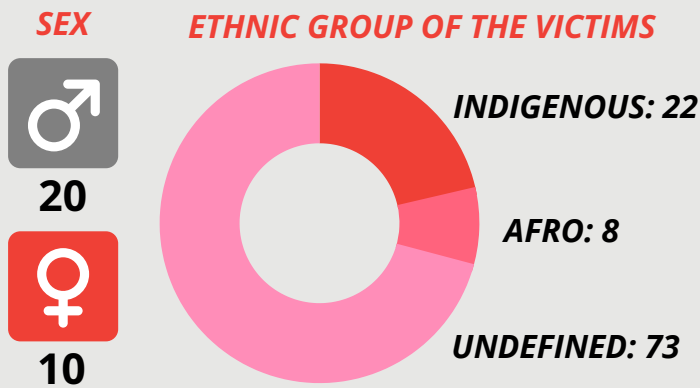




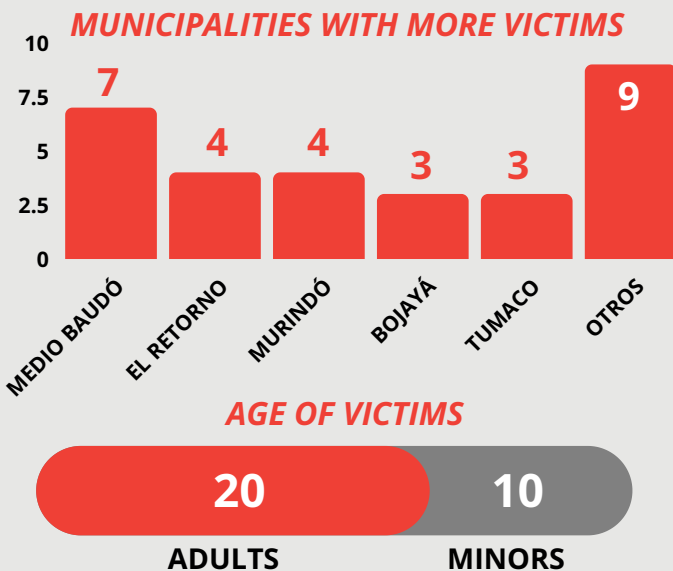
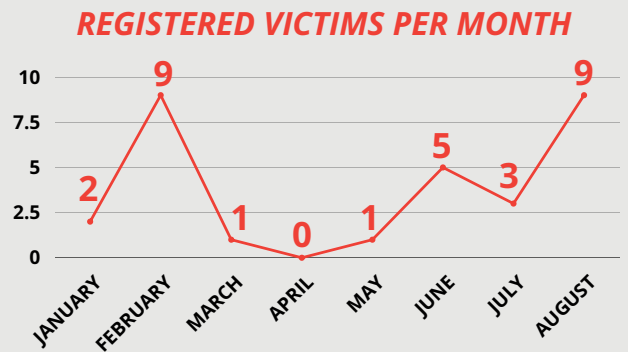
The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Colombia newsletter informs about the main technical assistance activities carried out through the projects implemented in the country to strengthen the mine action sector, in conjunction with the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP, in Spanish) - Descontamina Colombia.

The impact of anti-personnel mines on ethnic groups in Colombia*

Antipersonnel Mines (APM) and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) are disproportionately affecting ethnic groups in Colombia. According to statistics from OACP, **between January and August 2021 there have been 30 new victims (29%) belonging to indigenous and afro-descendant communities**, out of a total of 103 victims registered in the first eight months of the year. Although this number is slightly lower compared to the same period in 2020, when 33 indigenous and afro-descendant victims were registered, it reflects a worrying trend of higher accidents among ethnic groups, taking into account that in 2019 only 2 victims were registered (1 indigenous and 1 ROM or Gypsy) throughout the year.



Although indigenous and afro-descendant victims represent 29% of the total victims in 2021, it is important to note that these ethnic groups are minorities in Colombia, therefore the impact is greater per 100,000 inhabitants, when compared to the percentages of the general population. In Colombia, ethnic groups represent 11.2% of the total population, according to data from the national government.



The historical statistics of OACP reflect that since 1990, the year in which the official registry began, 515 victims of APM and UXO belonging to ethnic groups have been registered. From these historical data, the percentage of affectation in minors and mortality is of concern. **35.53% (183) of the victims belonging to ethnic groups were minors and of the total victims, 27.38% died as a result of the accident.** Being minority groups, they require special protection of their territories, their cultures and their lifestyles, which are threatened by the presence of explosive ordnance.

* Data accumulated between January and August 2021. Source: OACP



FARC ex-combatants share information about contaminated areas with explosive ordnance in the Tolima department

37 areas with possible contamination by explosive ordnance, located in the municipalities of San Antonio, Chaparral and Ibagué in the department of Tolima, were identified thanks to the information provided by ex-combatants in the process of reintegration, during one of the scheduled activities of the Pre-pilot of the project "Provision of information on contamination of explosive ordnance in Colombia". This second exercise was carried out on September 9, in the municipality of Chaparral and had the participation of 12 ex-combatants of the FARC-EP, representatives of the OACP, the National Reintegration Council (CNR-FARC), the Verification Mission of the UN and UNMAS.

Photo courtesy: Catalina Ramos / UN Verification Mission in Colombia.

The exercise was developed as interviews aimed at the description of the sites where the artifacts and their characteristics are located. The information collected was systematized by UNMAS for the construction of an online viewer that will facilitate the presentation and analysis of the data. The first exercise was carried out last July in Barrancabermeja, Santander.



HUMANICEMOS DH delivered its first mine-free area in an Indigenous Reservation of Caquetá, Colombia

In a ceremony held in Florencia, Caquetá, on October 7, the mine action centre (OACP - Descontamina Colombia) formalized the delivery of the first mine-free area completed by HUMANICEMOS DH, a mine action organization that emerged from the Peace Agreement. The ex-combatant personnel of this corporation cleared a dangerous area of 1,974 m² in Zone 4 of the municipality La Montañita, Caquetá, which is part of the Embera Chamí El Cedrito Indigenous Reservation. The demining work lasted three months and was carried out by 12 members of the organization. **This milestone for the peace in Colombia was possible thanks to the support of the European Trust Fund for Peace, of the European Union, and technical assistance from UNMAS.** HUMANICEMOS DH is currently completing humanitarian demining work in two other areas of La Montañita, and in the coming months it will expand its operations to two new municipalities: Solita and Cartagena del Chairá.

The Director of HUMANICEMOS DH, Ángela Orrego, together with the Counselor for Stabilization, Emilio Archila; the High Commissioner for Peace, Juan Camilo Restrepo; and the Governor of Caquetá, Arnulfo Gasca. Photo: UNMAS.



Our Results - Regional Coordination Project



On July 1, UNMAS Colombia restarted the activities of the Local Coordination Project, which seeks to strengthen the presence of the OACP in the territories most affected by explosive ordnance. **Through local coordinators, the articulation of all social and state actors is facilitated** with the aim of promoting the incorporation of the mine action into local policies, promoting the prevention of new accidents, provide support to the victims of APM and UXO to access into the Victims Referral Pathway (VRP) of the Colombian State, among other tasks.

The activities started in July are part of an extension of Phase 3 of the Project, with which 13 of the departments most affected by APM and UXO will be covered. This phase will run until February 2022 and is financed with UNMAS funds. These are some of the most relevant activities carried out by local coordinators between July and September:

CHOCÓ



August 30: EORE workshop and socialization of the VRP were given to the indigenous community of Borbollón Indigenous Reservation, Carmen de Atrato municipality.

August 31: Workshop on EORE and socialization of the VRP was held in the community of El Doce Aguilón, in coordination with the mayor's office of Carmen de Atrato.

META

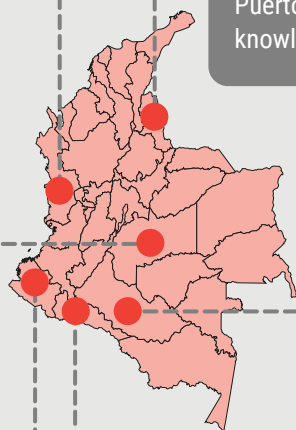


August 9: public officials and social leaders of the municipality of San Martín de los Llanos received training on how to activate the VRP after an accident with APM and UXO.

August 26: participation in the second session of the Mine Action Departmental Committee, in which the mine action departmental plan and the departmental VRP were approved.

September 10: a training session on the VRP was held for religious leaders and members of the municipal table for victims of the El Castillo municipality.

September 14 and 15: EORE workshops to 65 children and adolescents from Educational Institutions and the Villa Lucía Indigenous Reservation in the municipality of Mesetas.



NORTE DE SANTANDER



August 23: a session of the Mine Action Departmental Committee was held in the municipality of Tibú. The statistics of affectation by APM, the decree creating the Mine Action Committee and the VRP were shared.

August 25: in Cúcuta, a workshop was held to officials of the Mayor's Office and the health sector, about mine action policies and the VRP.

September 8: in the municipality of El Carmen, a strengthening workshop on the VRP was held for local officials, the health sector, social and indigenous leaders.

September 14: public officials from the municipality of Puerto Santander participated in a day to strengthen knowledge about mine action policies, the VRP and EORE.

CAQUETÁ



September 1: in the city of Florencia progress was made in updating the VRP for its inclusion in the Departmental Contingency Plan, in coordination with the locals governments.

September 10: training was provided about how to activate VRP in the municipality of El Doncello. The activity was coordinated with the Humanitarian Demining Brigade of the Colombian Army.

NARIÑO

August 20: Support for the consolidation of the Mine Action Committee of the municipality of Tumaco, the most affected by APM and UXO in 2021. The Mayor's Office requested technical assistance from UNMAS to build the work plan that will serve the most vulnerable communities.

August 20: A training workshop was held for the "Unión del Río Chagui Community Council", in the municipality of Tumaco, about how to report events with explosive ordnance. This territory is affected by disputes between illegal armed groups.

September 8: In coordination with the Government of Nariño and the EORE operators, the Departmental EORE strategy was built.

September 10: An articulation session was held with delegates from the Nariño health sector to identify the existing barriers in hospital assistance to APM victims and the implementation of the VRP.

PUTUMAYO



September 16: In the municipality of Mocoa, technical assistance was provided to the Government of the department. The work plan of the demining and EORE operators was presented.

**DESCONTAMINA
COLOMBIA**

The UNMAS Colombia team



Dahian Betancurt
HR and Admin Assistant

Dahian is a Social Worker at the National University of Colombia. **Since she joined the UNMAS team in 2018, she has developed human talent management functions, facilitating staff hiring and organizing wellness activities**, aimed at improving the work environment and strengthening teamwork. Dahian, being part of the Support Services team, also facilitates the administrative processes that guarantee the requirements of the different areas. In addition, she has the mission of ensuring compliance with the Health, Safety, Security, Environment (HSSE) policy in all areas of the programme. Her work allows UNMAS operations in Colombia to develop safely and effectively.

About UNMAS Colombia

Since 2010, UNMAS has supported the National Mine Action Center of Colombia, under the direction of the OACP, humanitarian demining, victim assistance and explosive ordnance risk education organizations, to increase the capacity of the mine action sector and strengthen its coordination and regulatory frameworks, considering best global practices. UNMAS works in Colombia with the support of the **European Union**, through the **European Trust Fund for Peace**; and the Governments of **Germany, Italy and Republic of Korea**, whom we thank for their contributions in 2021.

