

Joint Statement

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR MINE AWARENESS AND ASSISTANCE IN MINE ACTION – 4 APRIL 2026

Invest in Peace; Invest in Mine Action

Geneva, 31 March 2026

The world marks the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action on 4 April, reaffirming the essential role mine action plays in securing peace, enabling recovery, and driving sustainable development. This year's global theme, "Invest in Peace, Invest in Mine Action," highlights a fundamental truth: peace cannot be sustained where landmines, cluster munition remnants, and other explosive ordnance continue to endanger civilians and obstruct humanitarian and development efforts.

Across the globe, communities still live with the constant fear of explosive hazards. Peace is fragile when families cannot move safely, when essential services remain inaccessible, and when reconstruction is slowed by threats buried beneath the soil. Mine action offers a proven means of addressing these challenges by restoring safety, stability, and confidence.

The international community has built a robust framework that has reshaped expectations around civilian protection. The **Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention** set a clear and lasting standard by prohibiting weapons that cause indiscriminate and irreversible harm. The **Convention on Cluster Munitions** advanced this progress by banning munitions whose unexploded remnants continue to claim lives long after conflict ends. The **Political Declaration on Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas** renewed global attention to the devastating impact of explosive weapons in urban settings, while **the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons** has long reinforced humanitarian limits on the use of weapons posing excessive risk to civilians.

Together, these agreements form a powerful ecosystem that prevents new harm, addresses existing contamination, and strengthens global norms that prioritize civilian protection.

Humanitarian mine action saves lives on a daily basis: Clearance operations return land to safe use for homes, agriculture, schools, and markets. Risk education helps communities reduce exposure to danger while contamination persists. Victim assistance ensures that survivors receive the care, inclusion, and support they deserve. Surveys and assessments allow humanitarian and development partners to reach affected populations effectively. These efforts do more than remove explosive devices—they enable mobility, livelihoods, dignity, and long-term resilience.

Despite rising contamination in many conflict-affected regions, the impact of sustained mine

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action is clear. Entire areas once considered unusable have reopened. More than 30 States have declared themselves mine free. Critical infrastructure has been restored. Displaced families have been able to return to their homes. Fields have been planted again, businesses revived, and schools reopened. These are not isolated achievements; they are the cumulative result of decades of cooperation among states, international and national organizations, and affected communities.

But this progress is not guaranteed. Upholding the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and the EWIPA Declaration remains essential to preventing further harm and maintaining civilian protection as a universal norm. **Any retreat from these commitments' risks reversing hard-won achievements and placing communities back in danger.**

On this international day, **we the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), Fondation suisse de déminage (FSD), Handicap International Switzerland, and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), Swiss Mine Action Network (SMAN), the Mine-Ex Foundation, the World Without Mines Foundation, Global Clearance Solutions, APOPO, and the Digger Foundation** call on governments, donors, and partners to reinforce support for mine action and to champion the international agreements that guide it. Investment in mine action is an investment in safer movement, renewed livelihoods, and resilient communities. It is an investment in peace itself.

Mine action works. It has proven its value in every setting where it has been applied. With sustained commitment and principled adherence to the global norms that prohibit indiscriminate weapons, we can continue to reduce civilian harm, support recovery, and help build a future where no one's life is defined by the presence of explosive remnants of war.

QUOTES FROM ORGANISATIONS

“Mine Action saves lives and supports vulnerable communities every day. It enables the delivery of vital humanitarian aid, facilitates the safe return home of displaced populations, ensures peacekeepers can work safely, sets the conditions for long-term peace and security, and assists with sustainable economic and social development. Investment in Mine Action is an investment in peace, and an investment in the future.” **Kazumi Ogawa, UNMAS Director.**

“Mine action restores more than land: it restores freedom, opportunity and the foundations for sustainable recovery in conflict-affected communities.” **Shoko Noda, UNDP Crisis Bureau Director.**

“Explosive ordnance continues to harm civilians long after conflicts fade from the headlines,” said **Ambassador Tobias Privitelli, Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).** “Mine action is not only about removing weapons — it is

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about restoring safety, enabling recovery, and allowing communities to rebuild their futures with dignity.”

“Removing a landmine doesn’t just save a life. It allows a displaced family to sleep in their own beds again, a farmer to harvest his first wheat crop in years, schoolchildren to kick a ball on cleared playgrounds, a hospital to keep vaccines refrigerated through restored power lines, aid workers to reach people in need safely... That’s the true multiplier of mine action.” **Hansjörg Eberle, Director of the Fondation suisse de déminage (FSD).**

“Mine Action involves not only survey and clearance of contaminated land, but also advocacy to ensure there is no more use of mines or cluster munitions. We strongly encourage States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention and the Cluster Munition Coalition to promote the safety of civilians worldwide by publicly defending these conventions and their norms, condemning any new use, production, or transfer by any actor, under any circumstances.” **Tamar Gabelnick, Director of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL).**

“The two treaties against mines and cluster bombs, and the political declaration against bombing and shelling in cities, are proof that determined mobilisation can change history. And they remind us today that, despite the legitimate security concerns of States, these prohibited weapons are neither a rational military response nor an acceptable option under humanitarian law.” **Daniel Suda-Lang, Director of Handicap International Switzerland.**

“If mine action is about creating safe ground for societies to rebuild, Switzerland’s role is to create safe ground for cooperation — connecting actors, fostering innovation and ensuring that Swiss expertise translates into global impact.” **Catherine André, President of the Swiss Mine Action Network (SMAN).**

“At a time when international norms such as the Ottawa Convention are under growing pressure, sustained commitment to mine action is more important than ever. The International Day for Mine Awareness reminds us that the work is far from finished — especially in places that have faded from global attention, but where explosive hazards continue to shape daily life. This is where we work, alongside affected communities, to restore safety and create the conditions for lasting peace.” **Rolf Stocker, Co-President of the Foundation Board of World Without Mines Foundation.**

“Mine action is not only about removing threats - it is about how effectively we do it. Reaching people faster, working smarter in complex environments, and focusing efforts where they matter most can transform how quickly communities regain access to their land, their livelihoods, and their future.” **Christophe Cox, CEO of APOPO.**

“Mine action is the first step toward reconstruction. By combining advanced technology with operational expertise, we not only clear land, but enable infrastructure to be rebuilt, economies to recover, and communities to move forward safely and sustainably. This requires close

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collaboration between governments, industry, NGOs and international partners to deliver impact at the scale that is needed” **Philipp von Michaelis, CEO of Global Clearance Solutions.**

“After the war, it is civilians who suffer the consequences for decades. Landmines have impacts that go far beyond physical harm—they also hinder the economic and social development of affected regions. The costs of demining and providing assistance to victims are extremely high and vastly disproportionate to the initial purchase price of the mines.” **Reto Stump, President of the Mine-ex foundation.**

CAMPAIGN HASHTAGS

#MineActionDay2026 #IMAD #IMAD2026

ABOUT FSD

FSD is a Swiss humanitarian non-profit organisation that has been working since 1997 to create a safer and more sustainable future for communities affected by war and instability. Its main mission is to protect civilians from mines and explosive remnants of war.

FSD currently employs more than 700 people across four continents and has worked in around thirty countries since its creation.

More information: <https://fsd.ch/en/>

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