

PROTECTION CAPACITIES UNDER PRESSURE

Mine Action Analytical Note | August 2026

Human Cost of Funding Cuts

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

Between February and April 2026, the Global Protection Cluster investigated the impact of funding cuts on protection partners' capacities. The findings presented in the report *Protection Capacities Under Pressure* synthesized 747 survey responses across 22 country operations. This analytical note focuses on the impact on **Mine Action** or activities aimed at mitigating the threat posed by mines and other explosive ordnance to communities in hazardous areas. It draws on the GPC capacity mapping and additional reports from UNMAS and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munition Coalition. The most significant finding is not the scale of the funding cuts themselves, but the extent to which they have dismantled mine action capacity in communities that depend on it most. Of the 747 GPC survey responses, **144 (19%)** reported direct impacts on mine action programming and activities, totaling **1,009 impact counts** and **average capacity losses of 29%**.

144

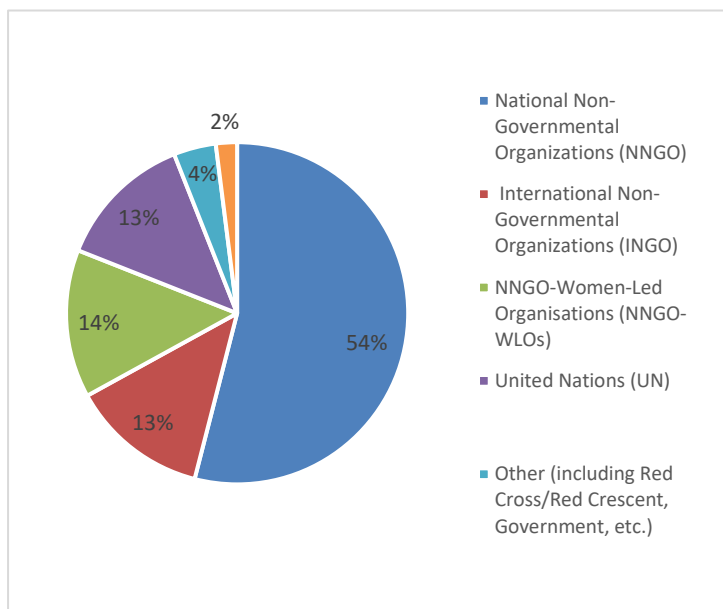
Mine Action respondents (19% of the total survey)

1,009

impact counts reported

29%

average capacity loss across all areas



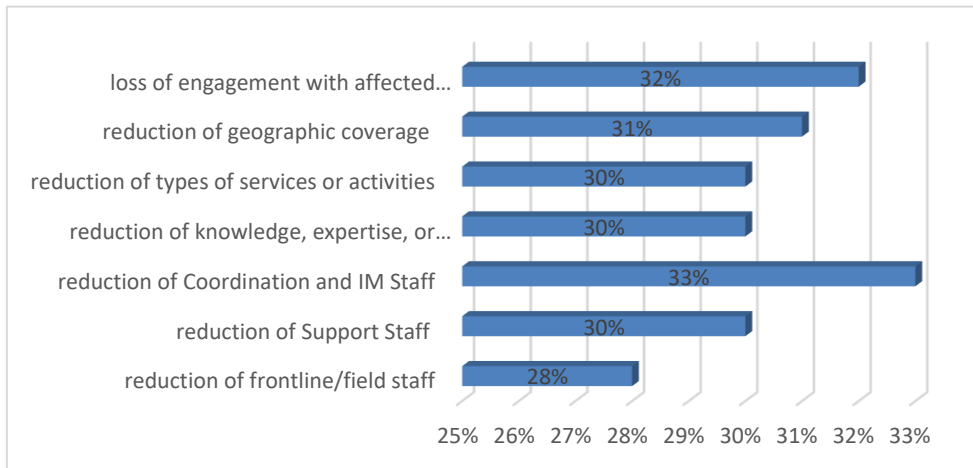
The data comes from a wide range of humanitarian actors, mostly national NGOs (NNGOs) which constitute most the respondents and demonstrating that the local response systems were particularly burdened by the cuts.

Total Mine Action-Impacted Key Actor Representation:

- National Non-Governmental Organizations (NNGO): 77 (54%)
- International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO): 18 (13%)
 - NNGO-Women-Led Organisations (NNGO-WLOs): 23 (14%)
- United Nations (UN): 18 (13%)
- Other (including Red Cross/Red Crescent, Government, etc.): 5 (4%)
- Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (NNGO-PwD): 3 (2%)

1. A PROTECTION CHAIN UNDER STRAIN

Mine action has faced massive reductions across the capacity chain: *workforce capacity, service package narrowing, geographic reach, community interface, and system-enabling capacities*:



Cross-sector retention data further indicate that the establishment of areas rendered safe from explosive ordnance are among the least retained activities system-wide. This suggests a significant contraction in survey, clearance, explosive ordnance disposal spot tasks, and safe-access activities. The downsizing

and withdrawal of peacekeeping missions have further accelerated this trend, reducing workforce capacity and operational reach in Mali, South Sudan, and Somalia.

The impact on victim assistance has also been acute. Meeting the needs of women, girls, boys and men who have suffered physical, mental and/or sensory trauma, whilst also addressing affected families and communities, requires an integrated multi-sector approach. Services for survivors have been curtailed in many countries. In Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria, capacity shortages have eroded information management systems to the extent that Protection Clusters are no longer systematically collecting data on victims.

The GPC survey corroborates the findings of *the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munitions* on [“the Impact of 2025 US funding cuts on Humanitarian Mine Action”](#). The cuts reduced clearance capacity resulting in massive loss of trained personnel, weakened national programmes and increase risk to civilians. Afghanistan lost 67 operational teams and Colombia reported interruptions to demining activities in conflict-affected areas. Risk education activities have been reduced. Survivors receive less assistance and rehabilitation support. “The termination of US funding has resulted in reduced resources for landmine clearance, particularly in Afghanistan, Colombia, Iraq, Tajikistan, Yemen, and Zimbabwe (...). Where clearance operations have stopped or slowed, local communities continue to face limited access to land, adversely affecting their livelihoods and hindering economic progress.”

2. THE HUMAN COSTS OF CUTS

Victim assistance is an essential component of mine action in Nigeria. Most victims of explosive ordnance accidents come from vulnerable backgrounds with limited access to public services and social protection. In many areas, there has been a gap in terms of structured victim assistance programmes. However, when support from UNMAS and the local non-governmental organization CENSCOPE began in 2024, beneficiaries reported a restoration of hope for both victims and their families. Survivors gained access to emergency medical treatment and necessary referrals were efficiently managed, families were relieved from unsustainable expenses. On average, CENSCOPE estimated that the cost of care per beneficiary ranged from \$150 to \$250 depending on individual needs. Regrettably, this critical support was short-lived. With funding cuts in 2026, victim assistance services have been drastically reduced. Yet



accidents continue to occur. Survivors continue to be identified, and referrals are made. However, without adequate funding, only minimal support can be provided. Many cases are redirected elsewhere, often to facilities that are distant or have limited capacity or intake criteria, resulting in avoidable complications or even fatalities.

Previously available funding allowed timely treatments thus safeguarding survivors against unsustainable financial repercussions. Recent reductions have severely undermined not only direct victim assistance initiatives, but also overall service availability as many relevant organizations have scaled down operations in high-risk regions, including psychosocial and economic support indispensable for recovery post-injury. Sometimes, even small transportation expenses can constitute an insurmountable barrier in accessing services. Many victims are now left to rely on traditional remedies, without hospital care, or live with untreated injuries because they cannot afford quality services.

Story of a severe injury of a 15-year-old boy (Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria)

On 13 March 2026, a 15-year-old boy sustained severe injuries when an unexploded ammunition detonated as he and friends tried to dismantle it. He lost two fingers and required emergency surgery. His family could not afford the necessary treatment. In the absence of a victim assistance programme to cover costs, hospital care was discontinued prematurely, traditional medicine proved inadequate, and the wound became infected. Without urgent intervention, he risks losing his entire hand.

This example is not an isolated hardship. They are part of a systemic shift causing organizations to scale down psychosocial and economic support integral to recovery. Survivors are increasingly left to rely on traditional remedies, discontinue hospital care, or live with untreated injuries because they cannot afford proper services.

3. CONCLUSIONS



The capacity mapping report highlights that mine action faces challenges similar to those affecting the broader protection sector. The current funding crisis is not a temporary disruption but a structural contraction of response capacity. Across operations, organizations are reducing staff, scaling back services, withdrawing from affected areas, and losing the system-level capacities required to sustain effective programming. These losses are unlikely to be reversed quickly and may take years to rebuild. Northeast Nigeria illustrates this trend, where funding cuts have undermined victim assistance services at a critical moment, interrupting progress in restoring access to care for survivors.

4. DATA SOURCES & REFERENCES



1. Global Protection Cluster (GPC): *Protection Capacities Under Pressure: Evidence from Consultations with Protection Partners across 22 Operations*, July 2026.
2. UNMAS Nigeria - *Victim Assistance and the Cost of Inaction*
3. International Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munition Coalition: [*the Impact of 2025 US funding cuts on Humanitarian Mine Action*](#)