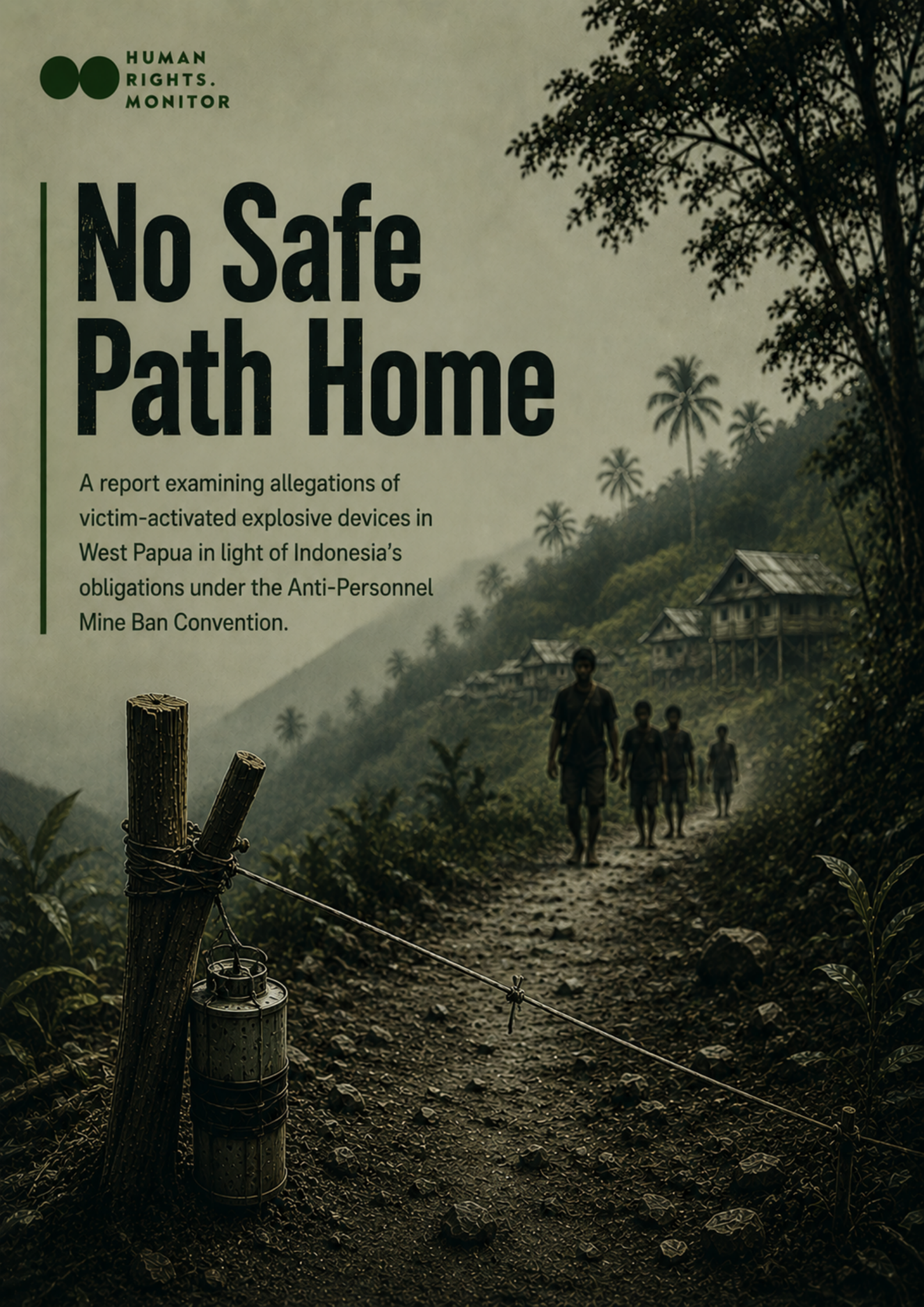




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No Safe Path Home

A report examining allegations of victim-activated explosive devices in West Papua in light of Indonesia's obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.



Human Rights Monitor (HRM)

Friedrich-Ebert-Str. 55

42103 Wuppertal

Germany

web: <https://humanrightsmonitor.org>

Twitter: @hurimonitor

Promoting Human Rights through Documentation and Advocacy



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A report examining allegations of victim-activated explosive devices in West Papua in light of Indonesia's obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Published by Human Rights Monitor in May 2026

<https://humanrightsmonitor.org>

HRM gratefully acknowledges the contributions of local human rights defenders and witnesses who made this report possible.

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Abstract

This report addresses allegations concerning the presence of anti-personnel mines and other victim-activated explosive devices in parts of West Papua. The material reviewed relates to incidents reported between 2023 and 2025 in Intan Jaya Regency and Puncak Regency. Five incidents are described, based on available accounts, visual material, and contextual information. The reported incidents are examined in light of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and Indonesia's practice under the treaty. Indonesia joined the Convention in 2007 and later stated that its stockpiles of explosive devices had been destroyed and that no mined areas existed. Reports of explosive devices being encountered and detonating long after earlier declarations were made raise questions about how such information becomes known and how it is managed in practice. This report does not seek to assign responsibility to specific individuals or institutions. It records the incidents as they have been reported and considers what they indicate about the treaty's application, particularly where reporting has been incomplete, follow-up measures remain unclear, and civilians continue to face risks during ongoing security operations.

1. Introduction

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is a key treaty in international humanitarian law. It was adopted in 1997 in response to the long-term harm caused by anti-personnel mines, particularly to civilians after conflicts have ended. The Convention prohibits the use, production, stockpiling, and transfer of these weapons. Its implementation has led to the destruction of millions of mines and has reduced civilian casualties in many affected countries.

Indonesia ratified the Mine Ban Treaty on 16 February 2007. The Convention entered into force for the country on 1 August 2007. By joining the treaty, Indonesia accepted a total ban on the use, development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, and transfer of anti-personnel mines. It also committed to destroying all existing stockpiles. In its official reports, Indonesia stated that 12,312 anti-personnel mines were destroyed and that no mined areas existed under its jurisdiction or control.

Information emerging from West Papua points to a different picture. Five documented incidents between 2023 and 2025 indicate that anti-personnel mines or other victim-activated explosive devices may have been used or emplaced during military operations by Indonesian security forces in the Papuan provinces. These allegations are based on documentation collected by local human rights defenders. In one case, Indonesian police officials even acknowledged that security forces may have been responsible.

The five cases are briefly summarised below. Each case is analysed in detail in Section 4.

1. Intan Jaya Regency, November 2023: [An 11-year-old girl was seriously injured when an explosive device detonated about 40 metres from her school in Sugapa District](#). Local reports said the device exploded when the child examined an object found near the school grounds.
2. Intan Jaya Regency, May 2025: Following a military operation in which civilians were killed, [families and recovery teams allegedly found explosive devices around burial sites](#). Witnesses described devices placed in a way that could injure people trying to retrieve and bury the dead.
3. Puncak Regency, May 2025: People in [Gome and Gome Utara reportedly witnessed TNI personnel placing booby traps during military operations](#). Some of the devices were reportedly set along roads used by civilians leaving the area.
4. Intan Jaya Regency, August 2025: HRM received video material showing a body evacuation in which an explosive device was reportedly placed under the body to detonate during recovery.
5. Yahukimo Regency, December 2025: A [40-year-old Papuan man was injured when he triggered a victim-activated explosive device](#) placed on a walking path connecting the gardens and homes of residents in the Jalan Gunung area of Dekai District.

These allegations raise questions about compliance with the Mine Ban Treaty. This report explains what the treaty requires and how the documented incidents relate to those rules. It also describes the accountability mechanisms

available under the treaty and under international law more broadly. If the allegations are confirmed, the incidents would be violations of the treaty. They would also suggest conduct that goes beyond accidental or isolated events.

2. Indonesia's obligations under the Mine Ban Treaty

A prohibition that applies in all circumstances and at all times

When Indonesia joined the Mine Ban Treaty in 2007, it accepted rules that are clear and strict. The treaty allows no exceptions. It does not permit reservations and there are no provisions that allow the use of anti-personnel mines because of military needs or security situations. Article 1(1) of the treaty sets out this ban and requires all State Parties to never use anti-personnel mines under any circumstances. The prohibition is not limited to the use alone and also applies to making, acquiring, stockpiling, retaining, or transferring these weapons. The treaty further forbids assisting or encouraging anyone else to conduct these acts.

In general, it is important to understand that anti-personnel mines cannot distinguish between a fighter and a civilian, and once they are laid, they can remain dangerous for years or even decades. In many cases, people are injured or killed long after active fighting, often in places where the local population has already returned. That is why the treaty does not treat mine use as something that can be justified by military advantage, and why it allows no exceptions. The ban applies everywhere and at all times. It applies in peacetime and during armed conflict, in cities and in remote rural areas, during major operations and ordinary patrols. The treaty includes no emergency clauses or temporary waivers, meaning it applies in all circumstances and at all times.

Indonesia's stated compliance with the Mine Ban Treaty

Indonesia has repeatedly stated that it complies with the Mine Ban Treaty. After joining the treaty in 2007, the [Indonesian government reported that 12,312 anti-personnel mines had been destroyed](#). These figures were submitted through the treaty's reporting process. The treaty allows only a narrow exception under Article 3. States may keep a limited number of anti-personnel mines for training related to mine detection, clearance, and destruction. Indonesia previously reported that it retained 2,454 mines for these purposes. Whether this number has changed should be checked against the most recent Article 7 reports.

In its reporting, Indonesia has also stated that no mined areas exist under its jurisdiction or control. This declaration is significant. By making it, the government indicates that its territory is free from anti-personnel mine contamination and that civilians are not exposed to such risks. This position has practical consequences. States that acknowledge mined areas must, under Article 5 of the treaty, identify contaminated land, set clearance priorities, establish timelines, and report regularly on progress. Indonesia, having declared that no such areas exist, does not face these ongoing clearance duties. At the same time, any new allegations of contamination draw closer attention, as newly discovered mines would point to prohibited use or prohibited transfer.

Transparency and reporting obligations

Article 7 of the Mine Ban Treaty requires States Parties to report regularly on how the treaty is being implemented. Each country is expected to submit an annual report by 30 April. These reports cover stockpiles, any mined or cleared areas, mines kept for training purposes, national implementation measures, and other information linked to treaty obligations. The reports have a practical function. They allow other States Parties and monitoring bodies to see how the treaty is being applied, to identify where assistance may be needed, and to follow progress toward eliminating anti-personnel mines. They also help to draw attention to potential problems before they lead to further harm.

In Indonesia's case, records show that no Article 7 report was submitted in 2024. This is more than a procedural delay. Regular reporting is a core part of the treaty and is central to transparency between States Parties. When a report is missing, questions about compliance tend to take on greater significance. The reporting gap is particularly difficult to understand given the November 2023 incident in Intan Jaya, in which a schoolchild was injured by an explosive device. That incident should have been reflected in the 2024 Article 7 submission. At a minimum, the report should have noted the incident, described the device involved, indicated whether a police investigation was opened, and explained what steps were taken to reduce further risk. Because no such information was reported, key questions remain. It is unclear whether the incident was not treated as relevant under the treaty, whether information was not properly collected or shared, or whether the issue was left unreported because it raised concerns about compliance.

How the treaty is applied at national level

Article 9 of the Mine Ban Treaty requires States to take concrete steps at national level to prevent prohibited conduct. This includes adopting laws and administrative rules, as well as criminal penalties where appropriate. The underlying point is simple. Treaty commitments have little effect if domestic systems are not able to investigate violations and hold those responsible to account. Applying Article 9 in practice involves more than passing legislation. It depends on how institutions function on the ground. Military personnel need to be informed about treaty rules, operations require oversight to reduce the risk of violations, and suspected incidents must be examined without delay. Where violations are established, those involved should face consequences regardless of rank. Responsibility does not stop at the lowest level but extends up the chain of command when officers knew, or should have known, about violations and failed to act. In Indonesia, these issues come into focus because of all the cases reported from West Papua. If security force personnel engaged in placing prohibited devices, this would indicate weaknesses in how national rules are applied in practice. It would also expose deeper problems, including how the use of anti-personnel mines is handled under criminal law, how clearly military rules prohibit such conduct, and whether people, regardless of their background, feel safe reporting suspected violations. [In a public statement](#), a police spokesperson stated that security forces could have been involved in the November 2023 incident. The statement shows that this risk is recognised within the security system, but what followed remains unclear. There is no public information on whether an internal investigation was conducted or what steps were taken by the responsible authorities. It remains also unclear whether physical evidence was collected, units in the

area were questioned, or any legal actions followed. This lack of information makes it difficult to see how the rules under Article 9 are applied in practice.

3. Scope of the Mine Ban Treaty and prohibited devices

Definition of anti-personnel mines under the treaty

To understand whether the devices reported in West Papua fall under the Mine Ban Treaty, it is necessary to look at how the treaty defines anti-personnel mines. Article 2 describes such a mine as one that is designed to explode through the presence, proximity, or contact of a person, and that causes injury or death. The wording is simple, but it is meant to be read in practical terms. The treaty does not focus on how a device was manufactured, how advanced it is, or what it is officially called. It also does not depend on whether the device was originally produced as a mine. The decisive point is how the device operates in the field. If it is set up to explode because a person approaches it or touches it, it falls within the scope of the ban.

Victim activation is an essential element, and devices that detonate through human presence or contact are prohibited. Explosives triggered by remote control or other command mechanisms fall outside this specific definition, even though they may still be restricted under other rules of humanitarian law. This distinction is important because it prevents States from avoiding the treaty by changing labels or relying on improvised devices. As a result, the treaty applies to a wide range of explosive devices. Standard factory-made mines are covered, as well as simple pressure-plate devices assembled from shells, grenades, or other materials. The construction does not change the legal assessment. In each case, the danger comes from the same source, an explosive that is activated by a person and continues to threaten civilians long after it has been placed.

Booby-traps and victim-activated devices

Victim-activated booby-traps are relevant under the Mine Ban Treaty even though the treaty itself does not use that term. When such devices are set up to explode because a person approaches or touches them, they function in the same way as anti-personnel mines and are treated as such under the treaty.

Further guidance is provided by [Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons](#). That protocol defines booby-traps as devices designed or adapted to kill or injure. It explodes unexpectedly when a person disturbs what appears to be a harmless object.

Article 7 of the Protocol prohibits the use of booby-traps against civilians and requires parties to a conflict to take all feasible precautions to protect civilians from their effects. Article 6 further prohibits the use of booby-traps in connection with certain protected categories, including the sick, the wounded, the dead, and burial or cremation sites or graves.

Under the Mine Ban Treaty, the decisive point remains how a device is triggered. If a booby-trap explodes because of a person's presence, proximity, or contact, it falls within the treaty definition of anti-personnel mines. This is different from explosives set off by remote control. A device detonating remotely when a vehicle passed is

not covered by the Mine Ban Treaty, even though other rules of humanitarian law may still apply. An explosive that detonates when someone lifts an object or walks along a path is victim-activated and prohibited.

This distinction is directly relevant to the cases reported from West Papua. [Devices allegedly placed around graves and intended to explode when people approach to recover bodies](#) fit the description of victim-activated booby-traps. Such devices detonate without warning. Family members recovering the remains of loved ones would have no reason to expect explosive hazards during burial activities. Used in this way, these devices fall under the treaty ban, regardless of whether they were factory-made or improvised from other explosive materials.

Improvised devices and the scope of the treaty

In cases where mine use is alleged, it is sometimes argued that the devices involved were improvised and therefore not covered by the Mine Ban Treaty. That view does not match how the treaty is applied. The treaty does not make a distinction between factory-made mines and devices assembled from other materials. Its focus is on how a device functions. The treaty was drafted to include improvised devices when they are designed to detonate through human presence or contact. During the negotiations, this issue was discussed and deliberately addressed. Restricting the treaty to manufactured mines would have left a clear gap. States or armed groups could have assembled victim-activated devices locally and claimed they fell outside the ban. Such an outcome would have weakened the treaty's purpose. In the context of the cases reported from West Papua, this means that the origin of the devices is not decisive. Devices made from artillery shells, grenades, or similar components still fall under the treaty if they were set up to explode when someone approached or touched them. The key point is how the device behaved in practice. If it detonated when a child touched it, or if it would have exploded when family members approached a burial site, then it meets the treaty definition of anti-personnel mines and is prohibited.

4. Documented incidents involving prohibited devices in West Papua.

Case 1: Child injured near school by explosive device in Intan Jaya Regency, November 2023

The first documented case occurred in Intan Jaya Regency in November 2023 and involved a serious injury to a child in a civilian setting. [On 9 November 2023, eleven-year-old Misalena Hagismajau was injured by an explosion](#) while walking near SD YPPK Titigi school in the Sugapa District. Case records indicate that several children had noticed an unfamiliar object concealed under dry grass at a distance of roughly 40 metres from the school. When Misalena approached and examined the object, it detonated and caused severe injuries (see photos below).



The location of the explosion is important, as it was within 40 metres of a school, in a space where children move, play, and gather each day. It is not a battlefield or an isolated security installation, but a civilian space where normal daily activities take place. The presence of an explosive device in such a location illustrates the danger posed by victim-activated devices in populated areas. Police opened an investigation after the incident. [A regional police spokesperson later stated publicly that the explosion was suspected to have been caused by a landmine](#) and that security forces may have been involved, referring to the area's status as a sensitive security zone. This statement is notable because it came from an official police source rather than from civil society organisations or external observers. It indicates that possible involvement by state actors was considered plausible by the authorities themselves.

From the perspective of the Mine Ban Treaty, the incident raises serious compliance concerns. Witnesses said the object exploded when it was touched. The blast happened immediately, the moment it was disturbed. Nothing in the accounts points to remote detonation, and there is no indication that the device was unexploded ammunition left behind after fighting. If security personnel placed the device, or if this happened with their knowledge, the use would fall under the ban in Article 1 of the Mine Ban Treaty. Even where responsibility has not been clearly established, the presence of such a device triggers obligations. Areas believed to contain explosive hazards must be identified and made safe to avoid further injuries. The incident also shows how exposed children are to this kind of risk. Children cannot be expected to recognise explosive devices or judge which objects are dangerous. International law takes this vulnerability into account and requires special protection for children. Under the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), Indonesia has a duty to protect children from harm and to ensure their safety. An explosive device placed close to a school runs counter to those obligations. The case should also have been reflected in treaty reporting.

Article 7 requires States Parties to report incidents involving anti-personnel mines or similar devices. The November 2023 explosion should therefore have been included in Indonesia's 2024 submission. This would

normally include information on the device, any investigative findings, and the steps taken afterwards, such as clearance work, local risk awareness, and medical support for the injured child. The absence of this information raises separate concerns about transparency.

Case 2: Explosive devices found near graves in Intan Jaya Regency, May 2025

The second reported incident took place in Intan Jaya Regency in May 2025, during military operations in the Sugapa and Hitadipa districts. On 13 and 14 May, units of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) carried out a security operation in the area. [Residents later spoke of armed encounters and civilian deaths during the raid.](#) After the operations, access to the affected villages was restricted. Families were unable to return to search for missing relatives or to retrieve the bodies of those who had been killed. Entry into the area was only allowed on 23 May 2025, nine days later. Local teams, made up of community members, were then able to begin searching for those who had not come back. During this effort, two bodies were located and prepared for burial. They were identified as Mrs Hetina Murib and Mrs Tapamina Tapani. While the recovery was taking place, members of the team noticed explosive devices near the burial site of Mrs Murib. Several witnesses said that explosive traps had been placed in a way that would cause them to detonate if anyone came close to the grave.

From a humanitarian law point of view, the placement of these devices is deeply troubling. The explosive traps were positioned to detonate when people came close to the burial site to recover the bodies of relatives. Retrieving the dead for burial is a basic humanitarian act. The devices did not distinguish between armed actors and civilians and instead placed family members in direct danger. In these circumstances, harm to civilians was not incidental but highly likely. Witness accounts indicate that the devices were set to explode through a person's presence, proximity, or contact. Under the Mine Ban Treaty, devices that function in this way fall within the ban on anti-personnel mines. Placing such devices counts as use under the treaty. Any involvement by state agents, including support or approval, would also fall within the scope of the prohibition.

Units of the Indonesian National Armed Forces were active in the area in the days before the devices were discovered. During that time, access was limited and the area remained under military control. While responsibility would need to be confirmed through a proper investigation, these circumstances give rise to serious concern about the possible involvement of state forces. The reported conduct also raises issues under other rules of humanitarian law. Amended [Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons](#) places specific limits on the use of booby-traps. It prohibits their use in connection with the dead or with burial sites. Explosive devices placed near graves, as reported in Intan Jaya, fall within this prohibition. If acts of this kind were not isolated, they could amount to a war crime under customary international humanitarian law.

Case 3: Community reports of landmine use in Puncak Regency, May 2025

In late May 2025, residents in Puncak Regency reported several incidents connected to military operations by the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) in the districts of Gome and Gome Utara. The [operations took place between 22 and 28 May and involved both ground forces and air support.](#) During this period, local sources

reported civilian deaths, injuries, and the burning of residential buildings. On 22 May, a 29-year-old indigenous man, Mr Agus Murib, was shot while collecting firewood near Towenggi II Village. His wife managed to escape and alerted other villagers. Military forces reportedly remained in the area after the shooting, preventing the family from retrieving his body. His remains were later cremated close to the site. Additional incidents were reported in the days that followed. On 23 May, witnesses said security forces opened fire in Ninggabuma Village. A civilian woman, Mrs Ariu Mayau, was wounded, and a 16-year-old boy, Jefri Tabuni, was killed. Local accounts stated that he was not carrying a weapon. On 26 May, a combined air and ground operation took place in Welenggaru Village. A residential building caught fire after an airstrike, killing Mr Sole Mosip, a 52-year-old man who had been sheltering inside. When villagers later reached the area, they cremated his remains at the scene. Residents also described a separate danger linked to the same operations. On 27 May, eyewitnesses said they saw security personnel placing hand grenades and other explosive devices along public roads in Gome and Gome Utara. The devices were described as booby-trap type explosives and were reportedly installed without warning signs or barriers. These roads were used by residents, including people attempting to leave the area. HRM received photographs showing an undetonated explosive device said to have been taken from one of these locations. On 28 May, local police allowed limited access to the town of Kago so that residents could recover the body of Mr Sole Mosip and carry out the burial.

If the devices described by witnesses were designed to detonate when someone approached or touched them, they meet the treaty definition of anti-personnel mines. When such devices are placed on public roads, their use would be prohibited under Article 1 and Article 5 if they were laid by security forces. There is no public information showing that the roads or nearby areas were later checked for explosive hazards, that civilians were warned of possible risks, or that clearance measures were put in place. The concern also goes beyond the Mine Ban Treaty. Roads used by civilians remain protected under international humanitarian law, even during military operations. Leaving hidden explosive devices along these routes puts residents at risk and runs against those protections.

Case 4: Alleged placement of explosive device on a body in Intan Jaya Regency, August 2025

On August 11, 2025, TNI forces shot and killed two members of the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB) at different sites in Intan Jaya Regency. When a humanitarian team, including church representatives, civil society members, and local village government officials, recovered the body of one of the victims on 12 August 2025, they reported discovering an explosive device in a hole beneath the body. The video footage from the evacuation shows that the body was moved by tying a rope to it and then pulling it from a safe distance (see photos below).



If an explosive device was placed beneath a body and set to detonate through the presence, proximity, or contact of a person, this would amount to use prohibited under Article 1(1)(a) of the Mine Ban Treaty. The way the device was allegedly positioned indicates victim activation and therefore brings it within the treaty's scope. The same conduct would also be prohibited under [Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons](#), which bans booby-traps that are attached to, or associated with, dead persons. An explosive device placed in connection with a body exposes civilians involved in recovery and burial to immediate danger. International humanitarian law further requires that the dead be treated with respect and that their remains be recovered and buried. Placing an explosive device beneath a body would be incompatible with these obligations and may amount to a serious violation of customary international humanitarian law. Any determination of responsibility would depend on the outcome of an investigation, including whether state agents were involved or had prior knowledge of the device.

Case 5: Man injured on a footpath in Yahukimo Regency, December 2025

On [23 December 2025](#), [forty-year-old Agus Magayang](#) suffered blast injuries after allegedly stepping on an [explosive device](#) while walking on a civilian path in the Jalan Gunung area of Dekai District, Papua Pegunungan province. Mr Magayang is an indigenous civilian who has been displaced by armed conflict and security operations in the area. The incident followed an exchange of fire on 13 December 2025 between the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB) and Indonesian security forces (TNI-POLRI). After this clash, Indonesian forces reportedly intensified operations in civilian residential areas. Approximately twelve civilian houses were damaged as security forces opened fire, killing livestock and causing destruction to homes.

On 23 December 2025, Mr Magayang and his wife went to their garden to harvest crops for Christmas. While his wife was digging sweet potatoes, Mr Magayang went to a garden near the house of a friend who had been arrested some time ago and had since abandoned the property. He made his way through the overgrown garden with the help of a wooden stick and entered the house. On the way back,

he stepped on what appeared to be a large rock on the ground. He felt a slight, unusual movement beneath his foot and, looking down, noticed a loose wire. He immediately suspected it was a booby-trapped explosive. His younger brother had previously warned him that the military had planted devices in the area around his house, though Mr Magayang had never encountered one himself until that moment.

To prevent detonation, he pressed the wooden stick down onto the spot where his foot rested, hoping to hold the device in place. However, a wooden branch fell and scraped against the explosive, triggering it. As the explosive detonated, Mr Magayang threw himself backwards and was flung to the ground by the force of the blast.

The explosion caused shrapnel to enter multiple parts of his body, including his left upper arm, left eyebrow, left temple, the top of his head, his left ribs, his right thigh, and his right calf. Six fragments in total were found embedded in his body. Four were surgically removed, with operations, but two, one in his head and one in his right thigh, remained. He reports continued pain, itching, and occasional difficulty walking as a result. Following his treatment in hospital, Mr Magayang chose to continue his recovery and take medication at home. In the aftermath of the incident, he warned the local community not to return to the surrounding forest.

From the perspective of the Mine Ban Treaty, the incident raises serious compliance concerns. Witnesses described a device that detonated when stepped on. The explosion occurred on a civilian path used for daily movement, not in a combat zone. Devices that detonate by the presence, proximity, or contact of a person meet the treaty definition of anti-personnel mines. If such devices were placed by security forces, their use would be prohibited under Article 1 of the Mine Ban Treaty.

The alleged placement of explosive devices on civilian paths is incompatible with the obligation under international humanitarian law to distinguish between civilians and combatants. Devices placed near residential areas and subsistence gardens are inherently indiscriminate and cannot reliably target a lawful military objective. Under Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Indonesia has a duty to protect the right to life and prevent foreseeable harm to civilians. The alleged use of victim-activated devices near homes and gardens runs counter to these obligations.

Under Article 7 of the Mine Ban Treaty, States Parties must report on implementation measures, including incidents involving anti-personnel mines. If the December 2025 explosion involved a prohibited device, it should be reflected in Indonesia's future treaty reporting. There is no public information indicating that the paths or surrounding areas in Jalan Gunung were surveyed, marked, or cleared for explosive hazards following the incident, or that civilians were given risk communication. These measures would be required under the Mine Ban Treaty to prevent further injuries.

5. Attribution and assessment under international law

The legal framework for attribution under international law

Establishing state responsibility for alleged violations of the Mine Ban Treaty requires showing that the conduct can be attributed to Indonesia under international law. The relevant rules are set out in the International Law Commission's Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts. International courts and tribunals have consistently applied these rules. State responsibility depends on two elements. The first is attribution of conduct to the state. The second is a breach of an international obligation. Attribution can arise through different legal routes. Under Article 4 of the Articles on State Responsibility, actions carried out by state organs are treated as actions of the state itself under international law. Members of the armed forces fall within this category. Acts conducted by TNI personnel during military operations are therefore attributable to Indonesia. It is not decisive whether such acts were ordered by senior authorities or resulted from decisions taken in the field. What matters is that they were carried out by state organs acting in an official capacity. The Articles also address other situations in which conduct may be attributed to a state. Article 5 covers persons or entities exercising elements of governmental authority. Article 8 concerns conduct carried out under the direction or control of the state. Article 11 applies where a state later acknowledges and adopts conduct as its own. These provisions are relevant where acts are committed by non-state actors or auxiliaries but remain attributable to the state because of the level of involvement or subsequent acceptance.

Attribution in the West Papua cases depends first on whether TNI personnel placed the explosive devices. In the May 2025 incident in Intan Jaya Regency, TNI units were present in Sugapa and Hitadipa on 13 and 14 May. During this period, access to the area was restricted, and civilians could not enter the villages. Explosive devices were later reported near burial sites when access was allowed again on 23 May. The devices were discovered after the military operations had ended. The timing of the operations and the discovery of the devices is therefore relevant. In the November 2023 incident, a police official stated publicly that security forces may have been involved in placing the device. The statement does not establish responsibility. It does, however, indicate that the authorities themselves considered state involvement.

Assessing the available evidence and its limits

The material available so far raises questions that need to be examined. On its own, it does not show that a treaty violation has taken place. The amount and quality of evidence differ from case to case. Each incident, therefore, needs to be considered on its own facts. In the case of the grave-site allegations from May 2025, several witnesses described explosive devices placed around burial sites after military operations. Those providing accounts were members of the local community who took part in the recovery of bodies. They were not reporting second-hand information. Their descriptions follow the same sequence of events. TNI operations took place in the area on 13 and 14 May. Access to the villages was restricted during that time, and bodies could not be recovered. Entry was allowed again on 23 May. During recovery, members of the evacuation team reported

finding an explosive device near the graves. Based on how the device was described, it was intended to detonate when someone approached the burial site.

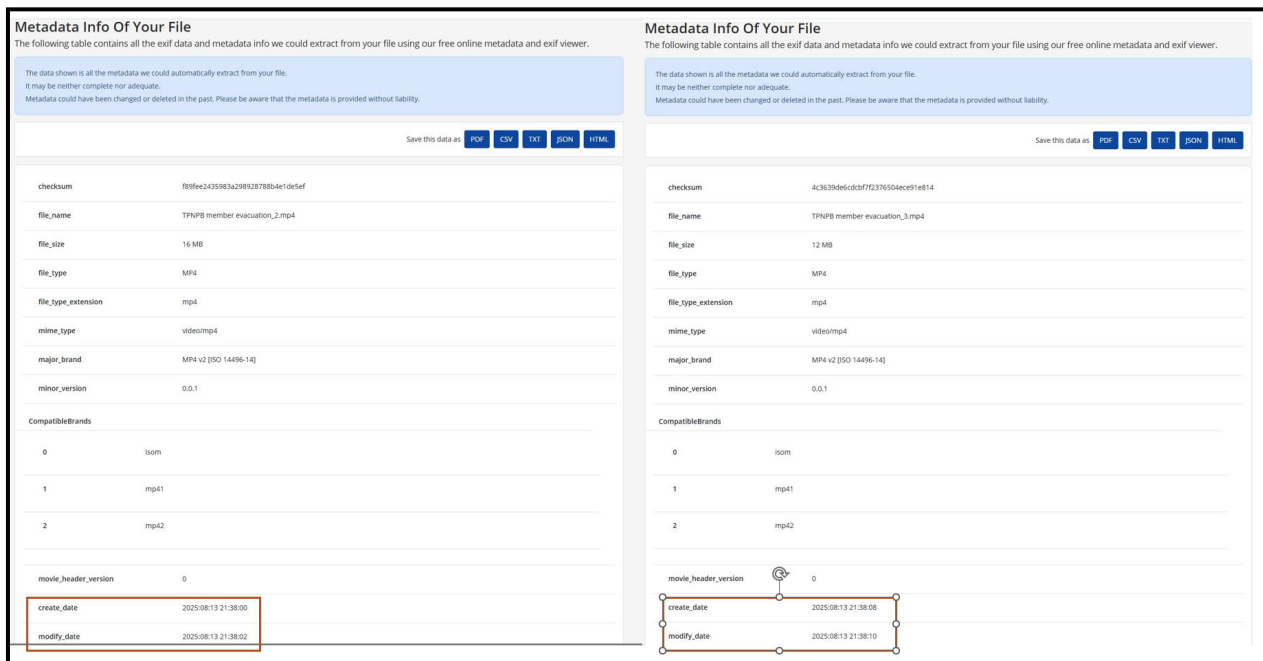
TNI forces were present in the area during the military operations and controlled access to the affected locations at that time. Explosive devices were reported after the military operations had ended. The reports concerned locations linked to those operations, including areas that civilians later entered to recover bodies. From the information available, it is not clear who placed the devices. Clarification would require additional information, including technical examination of the devices, identification of the units deployed in the area, review of their operational orders and activities, and accounts from those involved in the recovery, as well as from relevant military personnel.

The November 2023 incident near the school involves a different set of facts. The explosion itself and the injuries suffered by the child are documented through medical records and a police response. Witnesses stated that the device detonated when the child disturbed it. There is no indication that it was triggered by remote control. This supports the conclusion that the device functioned through contact or proximity. After the incident, a police spokesperson stated publicly that security forces may have been responsible for placing the device. The statement does not confirm responsibility, and no further findings have been released. The outcome of the police investigation has not been made public. Without technical examination of the device, it is not possible to determine whether it was deliberately emplaced by military personnel, left behind during an earlier operation, or placed by another actor. Later incidents are supported by visual material. In the case from Puncak Regency, HRM received a photograph that was reported to have been taken at the site. The image shows a hand grenade with a thin string attached to the safety lever, consistent with a booby-trap configuration (see photos below).



In the Intan Jaya case involving the body of a combatant, video material documents parts of the evacuation process and the location where the body was recovered. While the footage does not show the explosive device itself, it records the scene and the precautions taken during recovery.

The same video material shows additional details from the site. In one recording, a hole is visible next to the body, which was reported to have been prepared to place an explosive device beneath it. The footage captures the evacuation site, members of the humanitarian team, and the body during recovery. Although the device itself is not visible, the material documents the conditions under which the evacuation took place. Metadata extracted from both videos indicates that they were created on 13 August 2025, shortly after the reported incident (see Metadata2Go results for the examined files).



Several incidents reported from the same regency share similar features. The allegations concern victim-activated explosive devices and were reported over a period of roughly 18 months. In each instance, the devices were allegedly located near populated areas or locations associated with civilian activities. While repetition alone does not establish responsibility, the recurrence of similar allegations in the same conflict environment warrants careful examination.

Additional reports from outside Intan Jaya suggest that this pattern may not be limited to a single regency. In August 2025, the [West Papua National Liberation Army \(TPNPB\) issued public statements](#) alleging that anti-personnel landmines had been attached to the bodies of combatants in Yahukimo Regency in August 2025. Although these allegations concern a separate incident and require independent verification, they describe a similar operational pattern, namely the alleged placement of victim-activated explosive devices in connection with human remains. Taken together, the reports from Intan Jaya and Yahukimo raise concerns that such practices may not represent isolated incidents but could reflect a broader pattern requiring further investigation.

Forensic considerations relevant to the allegations

More information is needed about the devices and the circumstances in which they were found. One aspect relates to how the devices were set up to operate, in particular, whether they were designed to detonate through human presence, proximity, or contact. Another aspect concerns the origin of the devices. If the devices were

factory-made, comparison with known military stockpiles or retained training mines could provide context. If they were assembled locally, examination of the components used may be informative. Fragment analysis may reveal manufacturing marks, serial elements, or design features that help to narrow the possible source and time of production.

The location and way the devices were placed also require attention. Examination of the scene may assist in estimating when devices were emplaced, based on factors such as soil disturbance, vegetation growth, or weathering of materials. Witness accounts may help to narrow timeframes. Military records, including unit logs, movement orders, communications, and operational reports, may also be relevant in determining which units were present in specific locations and what activities were authorised during that period.

Records relating to the handling and movement of explosive materials may also be relevant. If military units keep logs of explosive devices and ordnance, such records could show what materials were issued, where they were deployed, and when this occurred. Comparing these records with what was found in the field may help to identify gaps or inconsistencies. Records relating to training mines retained under Article 3 of the Mine Ban Treaty may also be relevant, particularly where the location or use of retained devices cannot be accounted for.

The way in which investigations are conducted is another factor to consider. Investigations carried out solely within military structures may raise questions where those involved share institutional ties. In this context, participation or oversight by Indonesia's National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) may assist in providing external scrutiny. In some cases, the involvement of independent technical specialists with experience in explosive ordnance disposal may also be relevant, particularly where detailed technical examination of devices is required.

6. Implications for treaty compliance

Article 1: Issues related to the core prohibition

If the allegations were confirmed, they would have implications under Article 1 of the Mine Ban Treaty. Article 1(1)(a) sets out the prohibition on the use of anti-personnel mines and applies without exception. Devices that are placed so that they can detonate through human presence, proximity, or contact fall within this prohibition. This includes devices placed near graves or along paths used by civilians. The rule does not depend on whether a device later explodes. A mine that is laid and left in place remains covered by the treaty.

Article 1(1)(c) extends the prohibition to conduct that involves assisting, encouraging, or enabling prohibited acts. Where devices are placed by state forces, the conduct falls within this provision. Where placement results from actions taken by individual personnel or sub-units, questions arise about command oversight, supervision, and follow-up. These points relate to how the treaty is applied in real situations. Article 1 does not provide for exceptions based on operational conditions. It does not provide for military necessity, proportionality, or emergencies. The prohibition applies regardless of location or security context, including areas affected by armed

activity. The treaty reflects the position taken by States Parties that the humanitarian harm caused by anti-personnel mines outweighs any claimed military value.

Article 5: Obligations related to clearance

Article 5 of the Mine Ban Treaty addresses the identification and clearance of areas where anti-personnel mines are known or suspected to be present. The provision applies where information emerges indicating possible contamination within a State Party's jurisdiction or control. It is not limited to situations identified at the time of assessment but also covers reports that arise later. In the case of the sites reported in Intan Jaya, the areas around the reported grave locations would fall within the category of suspected hazardous areas. Under Article 5, reports of explosive devices place these locations in a category that requires attention. Civilians may still pass through or return to such places, to recover bodies or carry out burials, often without knowing that a danger may be present. To address this, information is gathered about where such devices may be located. Initial information is often collected through non-technical survey activities. These focus on gathering reports and mapping locations before any technical clearance work takes place. These focus on collecting reports, mapping locations, and outlining areas where hazards may be present, without the need for immediate technical clearance. Such surveys can help to define suspected hazardous areas and guide subsequent steps. Where non-technical surveys indicate the possible presence of explosive devices, further action may follow. This can include technical survey and clearance activities carried out by personnel trained in explosive ordnance disposal. These activities involve searching affected areas, locating devices, and either destroying them in place or removing them for controlled destruction, depending on the circumstances.

Article 5 further links clearance to planning and reporting. States Parties are expected to maintain information on contaminated areas, set out clearance plans, and provide updates on progress. The treaty sets a deadline for clearance after it enters into force, although extensions are possible. When new contamination is reported after that deadline has passed, it becomes unclear how earlier clearance efforts are reconsidered and how the situation is reflected in later reporting.

Article 7: Issues related to transparency and reporting

Indonesia did not submit a report under Article 7 for the 2024 reporting year. Article 7 relates to the regular exchange of information by States Parties. Such reports usually contain factual details on matters such as stockpiles, retained mines, and areas where explosive devices are known or suspected, as well as activities linked to destruction or clearance. In November 2023, a child was injured by a suspected explosive device near a school. Information about incidents of this kind relates to areas where explosive hazards may be present and to actions taken after such events, particularly where no such risks had previously been recorded. In May and August 2025, further reports emerged from Intan Jaya concerning burial sites where explosive devices were suspected. These reports described the locations involved and the circumstances in which the devices were encountered. Article 7 provides a channel to be transparent and share important information. If there is no reporting material provided by the Indonesian authorities, there is limited information for the public on how reported incidents were addressed.

Article 9: Domestic Implementation

Article 9 deals with how the obligations of the Mine Ban Treaty are reflected within a State Party's own legal and institutional arrangements. It refers to the existence of legal rules, administrative structures, and other measures that relate to conduct prohibited by the Convention. The article is concerned with how these internal arrangements operate in practice. Where allegations involve members of the military or security forces, attention shifts to how domestic systems respond to such situations. This includes the legal framework in place, the way investigations are carried out, and how reported incidents are handled by the authorities.

In relation to the November 2023 incident in Intan Jaya, a police spokesperson stated publicly that security force involvement could not be ruled out. The statement shows that the matter was acknowledged by the authorities at the time. Article 9 also concerns how responsibility is handled within the armed forces. This includes how rules are communicated to personnel, how operations are overseen, and what happens after incidents are reported. These points relate to how compliance with the treaty is managed within existing military structures.

7. Accountability mechanisms under the treaty

Mine Ban Treaty compliance mechanisms

The Mine Ban Treaty contains arrangements that are used when questions arise about how it is being applied. These arrangements are based on the exchange of information and interaction between States Parties. They are not designed as enforcement tools but are used to discuss situations as they develop. States Parties meet once a year and provide an opportunity to raise questions, ask for clarification, or refer to reported situations. During such meetings, states may ask for information about incidents and about steps that have been taken or are being considered.

Discussion can also take place outside the annual meetings through diplomatic contact. This may involve communication with the Treaty President or other representatives. Such exchanges usually focus on sharing experience or discussing available support, including technical assistance related to survey, clearance, or domestic arrangements. Standing committees under the Convention are also used for more detailed exchanges on specific topics.

Article 8 refers to steps that can be used when questions arise between States Parties. It allows one State Party to ask another for clarification about reported conduct. Such requests describe the issue and the information being sought. These steps have been used only on rare occasions.

The Implementation Support Unit (ISU) is based in Geneva and supports the practical functioning of the Convention. It assists with the circulation of information. Material may also be submitted to the ISU by organisations outside government, including civil society groups and community representatives. This information can then be shared with States Parties.

Domestic investigation and legal processes

Questions related to alleged conduct under the Mine Ban Treaty are addressed within Indonesia's domestic legal system. Where such allegations arise, they are dealt with through existing investigative and judicial processes. This involves gathering information and reviewing available material to determine how the situation is handled under national law. In this setting, different institutions may be involved in reviewing the information collected. In the past, Komnas HAM has been involved in observing or following investigations. The way, how information is handled is an important part of the process. Within the security forces, decisions are taken at different levels. These include orders given to personnel, training arrangements, the use of equipment, and decisions made during operations.

8. Conclusion

Information collected in relation to West Papua points to a number of unresolved issues under the Mine Ban Treaty. Several reports describe explosive devices that were triggered by human presence or contact. These reports concern different moments and locations, but they relate to similar situations. Some of the incidents described involve burial sites. Others involve places used by civilians, including an area close to a school in Intan Jaya. If the devices functioned as described, they would fall within the scope of the treaty. Further examination is needed to confirm the details in each case.

The Mine Ban Treaty does not allow the use of anti-personnel mines in any setting. The prohibition applies regardless of location or security situation. Civilian areas and burial activities are therefore directly relevant when such allegations are reported. People in these settings are not in a position to recognise or avoid explosive hazards. The treaty also refers to actions taken after information of this kind becomes known. In practice, this relates to how areas are identified, how details are shared, and how reported incidents are looked into at the national level. From the material that is publicly available, it remains unclear how these points have been addressed in relation to the incidents described. Several points remain open. These include questions about the type of devices involved, the circumstances in which they were placed or discovered, and the actions taken afterwards.

There is also limited public information on how existing legal and institutional processes have been used in response. Therefore, the situation leaves several factual questions unanswered. Further information would help clarify how the treaty is being applied in this context and how reported risks are being addressed. This matters for understanding both treaty implementation and the situation faced by people living in the affected areas.

9. Recommendations

Based on the information reviewed, HRM sets out the following aspects for consideration by the Indonesian Government and authorities:

- Access to affected areas remains important. Allowing humanitarian organisations to enter these locations would make it possible to identify places where explosive devices may be present. Initial information can be gathered through non-technical surveys. Basic marking of areas where risks are suspected would help reduce exposure for civilians.
- Explosive disposal capacity should be deployed to areas affected by conflict in West Papua. Such teams would be needed to search locations where devices are suspected, locate remaining hazards, and deal with them safely, either at the site or through controlled removal.
- The information currently made public by the Indonesian authorities under Article 7 does not cover all elements expected under the treaty's reporting framework. Gaps remain in relation to stockpiles, retained devices, and locations where contamination is known or suspected. Incidents reported in recent years would usually appear in this type of report, but information on destruction or clearance activities is still extremely limited.
- Within the security forces, existing arrangements need closer review and evaluation. Important aspects involve how personnel are informed about treaty obligations, how operations are conducted in practice, and how departures from applicable rules are dealt with once identified.
- If the available information indicates that anti-personnel mines or booby-traps were placed, the issue should be dealt with through existing legal and administrative processes. Responsibility may arise at the level of those who carried out the acts and at higher levels where orders were given, or conduct was permitted. Any resulting cases would proceed through the regular court system.

