Quick facts on unplanned explosions at munitions sites (UEMS)*

UEMS: A global problem

UEMS ARE A GLOBAL PROBLEM WITH INCIDENTS TAKING PLACE ON EVERY CONTINENT AND AFFECTING MORE THAN HALF OF UN MEMBER STATES

UEMS incidents by casualties

UEMS incidents with largest numbers of casualties.

UEMS: Main causes

Improper physical security and stockpile management (PSSM) practices increase the probability of UEMS occurring. During the period examined (1979–2019), the main causes behind UEMS incidents were:

- **25.3%** Cause currently undetermined or unrecorded
- **20.8%** Handling errors and inappropriate working practices
- **16.6%** Inappropriate storage systems and infrastructure
- **9.5%** Lack of surveillance leading to ammunition deterioration
- **11.6%** Poor security
- **16.2%** Failure to take into account external environmental influences and events

UEMS: Consequences

A single UEMS incident can lead to a number of consequences, including:

- **Human costs**: deaths and injuries
- **Material costs**: damage to private and public property and infrastructure
- **Environmental impacts**: environmental contamination by unexploded ordnances (UXO) and dangerous chemicals
- **Socio-economic costs**: displacement, loss of livelihoods, and decrease in gross domestic product (GDP)
- **Political impacts**: loss of government and military staff due to loss of life, criminal prosecutions, or other career impacts
- **Military impacts**: decrease in operational readiness due to loss of materiel and personnel

Average annual casualties per decade

1980s: 378.1
1990s: 318
2000s: 1,377.9
2010s: 875.9

*Figures for 2019 cover data up to 1 March.*