Rapid Needs Assessment

Explosive Ordnance Risk Education in the West Bank

Summary

In the West Bank, decades of conflict left behind considerable **Explosive Ordnance (EO) contamination**, including minefields and military training grounds, posing threats to the safety and livelihoods of the local population. Since September 2023, the ground and air operations of the Israeli Forces also significantly increased, especially in the north governorates of Jenin, Tulkarm, and Nablus. Due to the increase in the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) has witnessed an increase in Risk-Taking Behaviour (RTB) towards EO in the West Bank as well. The increased presence of EO and an uprising trend of RTB underscore the urgent need for comprehensive, age-appropriate, and tailored Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) to inform the public about the dangers of EO and to promote safe practices. However, with very few existing programmes and little information available on the context and EO contamination in the West Bank, it was essential for DRC to conduct the first-ever rapid EORE needs assessment to inform the start of such activities.

This **report analyses a rapid mix-method needs assessment on EORE** undertaken by DRC and its local partner, The Agriculture Development Association (PARC), between September and December 2024. The assessment included an online survey with 95 respondents and three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with 16 adult men and women across Jordan Valley, Nablus, Jericho, Jenin, and Tulkarm, as some of the most EO-affected communities. Following international best practices, the needs assessment sought to collect essential data required to develop and implement emergency EORE programming. As such, it included questions on, *inter alia*, the types of EO identified, the most at-risk groups from EO accidents, and the most trust-worthy communication channels for safety messages.

Key Findings

The following are some of the key findings of the rapid EORE needs assessment:

- 52% of people in the West Bank perceive the presence of EO as dangerous to them;
- 83% of respondents believe there was an increase in the presence of EO since October 2023;
- 47% of respondents know someone who has been a victim of or directly impacted by EO contamination;
- 56% of the respondents were not aware who they can rely on for Victim Assistance information or support;
- 25% report that their access to essential services, livelihoods, and infrastructure is directly affected by EO;
- 69% of respondents have not heard of or participated in EORE activities;
- The greatest perceived risks from EO incidents are concentrated among young men aged six to 34 years, with male children and adolescents (six to 17 years old) perceived as particularly high-risk;
- Hand grenades were the most frequently sighted in the West Bank (14%), followed by aircraft bombs and anti-vehicle mines (both at 7%);
- Official sources, such as government websites and social networks, have been reported as both the most used source of safety information (49%) as well as the most trusted sources of information (72%).

Key Recommendations

The following are some of the key recommendations resulting from the rapid EORE needs assessment:

- Expand EORE funding, outreach, and awareness raising in the West Bank;
- Target Areas C and A as well as young males for priority interventions;
- Support the National Authority in systematically collecting data on EO and impacts on EO victims;
- Integrate EORE with livelihood and development programmes;
- Diversify EORE delivery methods through official sources, community-based outreach, and television;
- Incorporate psychosocial support and victim referral mechanisms into and conduct conflict sensitivity screenings of EORE initiatives;
- Further assess the necessity for and ability to implement IED Risk Education activities;
- Conduct a comprehensive Knowledges, Attitudes, Behaviours, and Practices (KABP) survey to further inform EORE programming in the West Bank.

Content

Abbreviations

DRC	Danish Refugee Council
EO	Explosive Ordnance
EORE	Explosive Ordnance Risk Education
HMA	Humanitarian Mine Action
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
KABP	Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviours, and Practices
LSA	Land Service Ammunition
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
oPt	occupied Palestinian territory
PARC	The Agriculture Development Association
PMAC	Palestinian Mine Action Centre
RTB	Risk-Taking Behaviour

Introduction

> *There is no excuse, even in a fully-fledged emergency, for not taking a few minutes to try to find the answers (as best you can) to basic questions to help you design a professional EORE project.* – IMAS MRE Best Practice Guidebook 9: Emergency MRE

In the West Bank, decades of conflict left behind considerable EO contamination, posing threats to the safety and livelihoods of the local population. As per the limited data available to the Mine Action Area of Responsibility, there are an estimated 14 minefields located in the six West Bank governorates of Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqiliya, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Hebron, and two in Jerusalem which were laid by Jordanian Forces over 50 years ago. Most of the minefields, located in the heart of the West Bank as well as in some cases in the centres of villages and towns, have posed a threat to civilian lives and continue to negatively impact the communities surrounding them. They undermine resilience in the region by impeding safe movement and precluding productive use of the land, in areas where the pressure on land is already high given the increasing numbers of illegal Israeli settlements as well as Israeli imposed restrictions on access to land. In addition to the minefields, the Palestinian Mine Action Centre (PMAC) has mapped 46 areas in the West Bank that have recorded EO contamination. These areas are either Israeli Forces training sites—which occupy 20% of the West Bank—or hotspot areas that see regular demonstrations. It is assumed that the EO pose particular risks to farmers and shepherds, who are predominantly male, while performing their daily livelihood activities and impede their access to the land. It also impacts on the lives of the highly secluded Bedouin communities who live and perform their livelihood activities near military sites.

As reported by UNICEF, since September 2023, however, the ground and air operations of the Israeli Forces significantly increased – in the first six months of 2024, the number of operations was double (670) what was recorded in the first nine months of 2023. In August 2024, Israeli Forces also initiated a wide-scale operation in the north of the West Bank (e.g., Jenin, Tulkarm, and Nablus), resulting in mass casualties and the destruction of infrastructure. DRC has noted a steady deterioration of the protection situation for Palestinians with the following activities:

- Use of explosive weapons in populated areas;
- Employing arial attacks, armed drones, and the use of helicopter gunship attacks;
- Use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and urban EO contamination;
- The militarisation of settlers;
- Increase in the activities of the Palestinian armed groups;
- Increased movement restrictions, demolitions, and forced displacements.

Due to the increase in the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and based on DRC's ongoing experience in Gaza, it is likely that there will be an increase in RTB towards EO in the West Bank as well. Driven by various motivations, from curiosity to economic necessity, individuals—and especially children—are likely to engage in practices that significantly increase their risk of EO-related accidents. One of these RTB is the tendency for people to approach unexploded devices to film or take photographs. This act, often motivated by the desire to document the conflict or to share the grim reality of their circumstances, overlooks the immediate danger posed by the EO. The quest for powerful imagery can lead to severe injuries or fatalities if the item detonates.

The Bedouin community and youth have also been seen collecting EO to sell for scrap metal, a trend observed in previous years as well. This practice is not only dangerous for the individuals who retrieve these items but also for the wider community, as these potentially unstable EO are brought into refugee camps, creating a risk for all occupants. Furthermore, directly following kinetic incidents, there is a tendency for individuals to rush into the hazardous area without taking safety precautions. This reaction, often driven by a desire to help or to assess the damage, neglects the possibility that additional EO items may be present and could detonate. These RTB underscore the urgent need for comprehensive, age-appropriate, and tailored EORE to inform the public about the dangers of EO and to promote safe practices. However, with very few existing EORE programmes and little information available on the context and EO contamination in the West Bank, it was essential for DRC to conduct a needs assessment to inform the start of such activities.

Methodology

> *Experience has shown that assumptions about who is at risk and why are frequently wrong. The consequence is that the targets and strategy of EORE are therefore also probably wrong. An assessment can minimise the chances of projects failing to address those most at risk.*
>
> – UNICEF Emergency MRE Toolkit: Emergency MRE Handbook

Between September and December 2024, DRC and its local partner PARC, initiated a rapid EORE needs assessment to refine EORE intervention to the most at-risk locations and communities. Following international best practices and DRC EORE Standard Operating Procedures in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), the needs assessment sought to collect data on, *inter alia*, the types of EO identified, the most at-risk groups from EO accidents, as well as the most trust-worthy communication channels for safety messages. The needs assessment specifically targeted residents of the Jordan Valley, Nablus, Jericho, Jenin, and Tulkarm, as some of the most EO-affected parts of the West Bank. The assessment was co-designed with PARC and included 17 questions, covering the following key topics needed for informing emergency EORE programming:

- Perceptions of safety and/or danger due to the presence of EO;
- Increase of EO presence in the West Bank since 7 October 2023;
- Types of EO encountered by people;
- Perceptions of the most at-risk groups from accidents with EO;
- Participation in or knowledge of EORE;
- Impact of the presence of EO on access to schools, medical centres, water points, fuel, income generating activities (or other essential services and infrastructure);
- Knowledge of EO victims or people otherwise impacted by EO accidents;
- Knowledge of emergency contacts to receive support for recovering from EO accidents;
- Sources of information on safety issues;
- Generally most trust-worthy sources of information;
- Usage of social network channels.

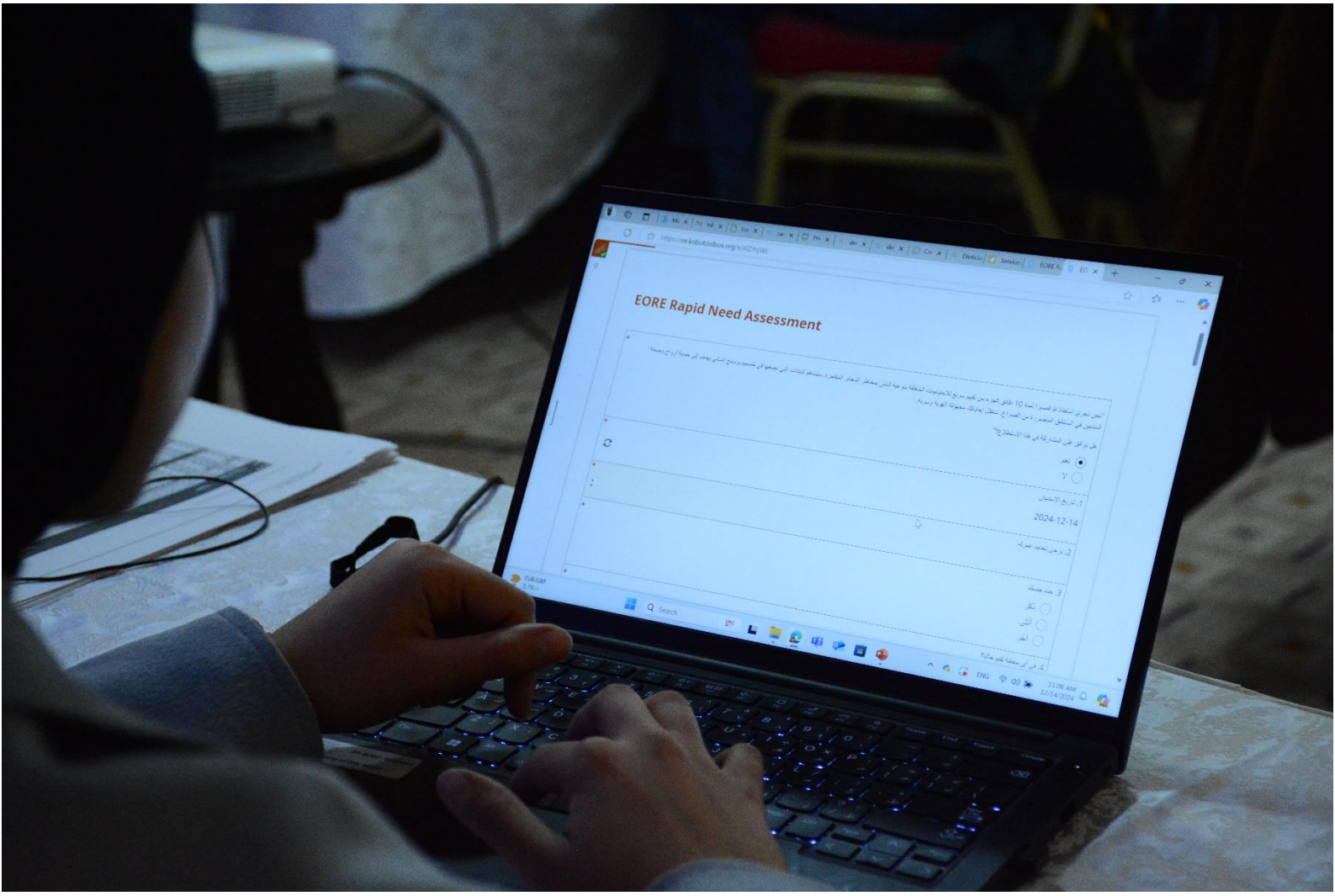
The mix-method needs assessment included an online survey and FGDs. The online survey used a non-probability sampling methodology utilising PARC's extensive networks in the targeted areas in the West Bank to reach 95 people. Additionally, DRC conducted three FGDs with 16 adult men and women (12 and four, respectively). The following are the demographic characteristics of all the needs assessment participants:

- Regarding their age, 1% were underage, 20% were between 18 and 24 years of age, 33% between 25 and 34 years, 25% between 35 and 44 years, 18% between 45 and 54 years, and 3% were 55 years and above;
- As for the gender breakdown, 51% were women and 49% were men;
- 37% of respondents resided in Area A, 18% in Area B, and 45% in Area C;
- Most (87%) lived in rural areas of the West Bank and 13% in urban parts.

There are, generally, limitations to rapid needs assessments and as such they cannot replace the need for a fully-fledged KABP survey in the future to provide more in-depth insights into designs of EORE programmes and projects in the West Bank. The following limitation should be noted:

- This needs assessment focused on quickly identifying immediate needs and general trends. The rapid needs assessment thus provides broad insights, such as the perceptions of EO types, high-risk groups, and communication channels. However, it lacks detailed data on why certain behaviours or beliefs persist;
- The assessment endeavoured to primarily address urgent, short-term needs and targeted a limited sample of affected populations. In doing so, it could have overlooked diverse community dynamics;
- The assessment provides no information on behavioural drivers, such as why people enter dangerous areas or how they perceive EO risks;
- The assessment identified general communication needs but did not explore the effectiveness of specific channels (e.g., social media, radio, word-of-mouth) for the spread of EORE messaging;

- Since the assessment was designed for immediate planning and action, it lacks the capacity to inform long-term strategies or evaluate the sustainability of EORE interventions;
- Data collection was rapid, with limited triangulation and verification, which could have created gaps or inaccuracies;
- The assessment provides a snapshot of the current situation but does not establish a baseline for monitoring and evaluating the impact of EORE interventions.



Picture 1: DRC and PARC have circulated the rapid needs assessment survey using a snowball method reaching 95 people across the Jordan Valley, Nablus, Jericho, Jenin, and Tulkarm as some of the most EO-affected parts of the West Bank | Ramallah, December 2024 | Photo: PARC.

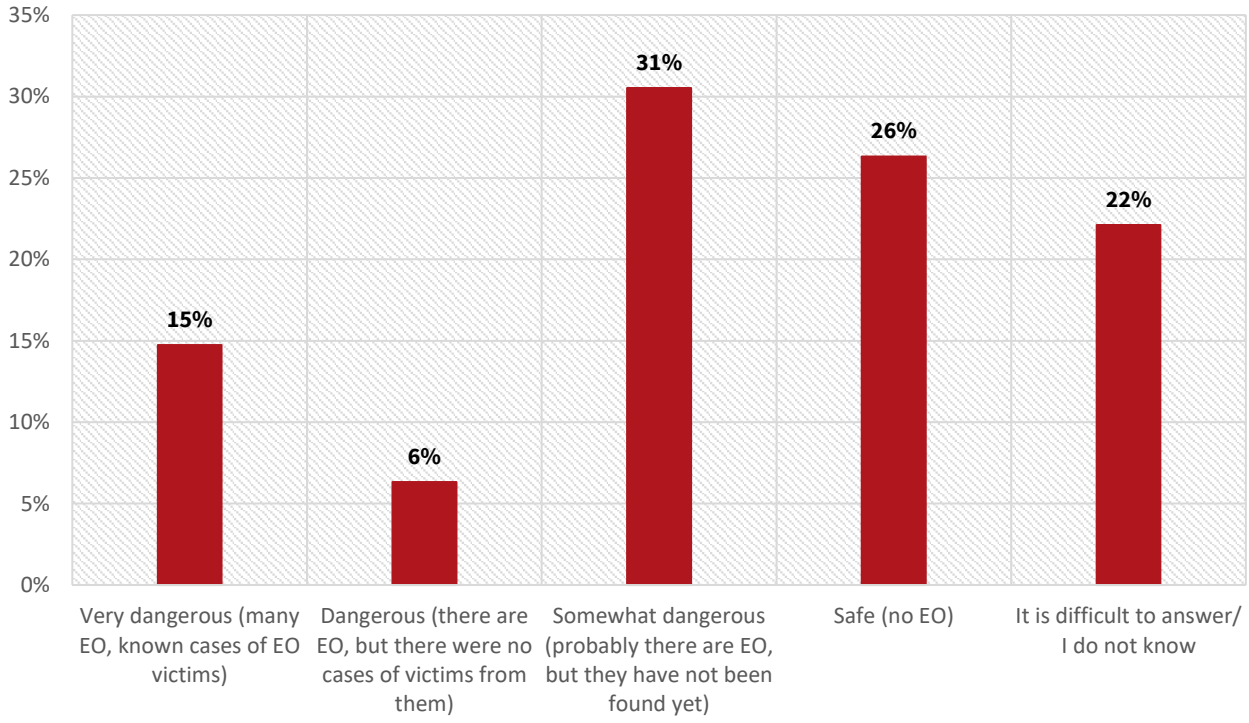
Needs Assessment Findings

Perceptions of Safety Due to EO Presence

Measuring perceptions of EO danger is crucial for effective EORE programming as it provides valuable insights into how communities understand and prioritise the risks posed by EO. These perceptions directly influence the design, relevance, and impact of EORE interventions. By understanding how people view the danger associated with EO, programmes can better tailor their messaging to resonate with the target audience. For instance, if communities perceive EO as a significant threat, messaging can emphasise safety behaviours, while in cases where risks are underestimated, education efforts can focus on correcting misconceptions. Perception data also helps identify which groups within a community are most at risk. Different age and gender groups may have differing levels of awareness or exposure to EO threats. This information enables EORE programmes to target the most vulnerable populations, ensuring that interventions address the specific needs and behaviours of those at highest risk. Furthermore, measuring perceptions can help prioritise locations for intervention. Communities with heightened perceptions of danger may already exercise caution and require more advanced education, whereas areas where EO risks are not perceived as significant may need urgent awareness campaigns to prevent accidents.

In many cases, there can be a gap between actual EO contamination and how the community perceives it. If EO is present in an area but perceived as "safe," this indicates an urgent need to raise awareness about hidden risks. Alternatively, overestimations of EO danger in areas with little to no contamination might lead to unnecessary fear and hinder economic or social activities. By addressing these gaps, EORE programmes can align community awareness with the realities of EO threats, ensuring that efforts are focused and effective. Understanding perceptions also enhances the overall impact of EORE programming by enabling culturally and contextually appropriate interventions. Programmes that are responsive to local perceptions are more likely to resonate with the population and lead to lasting behaviour change. Additionally, engaging with communities to gather perception data fosters trust and encourages dialogue which supports the co-creation of solutions that are better suited to the local context.

Graph 1: What do you think is the situation with EO in your area?



Based on the data, **more than half (52%) of respondents perceive the presence of EO as dangerous** to varying degrees: 15% see it as "very dangerous," 6% as "dangerous," and 31% as "somewhat dangerous". When these responses are juxtaposed against the three areas of West Bank, people in Area C perceive to be most in danger from EO (53%), followed by people in Area A (35%). Men more often believe to be in danger from EO (58%). A quarter (26%) of the overall responses, however, believe their area is "safe" and a significant 22% stated that "it is difficult to answer/I do not know." For these responses, the differences between areas are less pronounced: 40% in Area C, 33% in Area A, and 27% in Area B. This could thus indicate either a lack of awareness of EO risks (in Areas C and A) or genuine absence of EO in their specific locations (such as in Area B). This perception highlights the urgent need for a focused and robust EORE programming in the West Bank, particularly in Areas C and A. Finally, it is quintessential for even more accurate targeting of EORE interventions that information on the presence of EO across the West Bank is systematically collected and made transparently available to the Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) community.

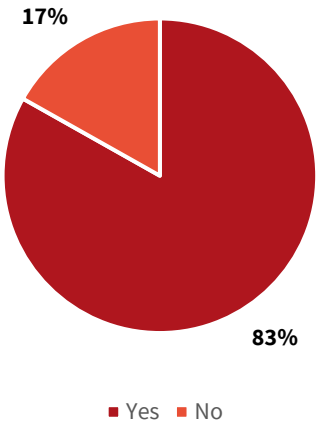
Increase of EO Since 7 October 2023

Measuring the increase of EO since 7 October 2023 in the West Bank is crucial for the EORE community for several reasons. First, it helps assess the new scale of the threat. An increase in EO contamination indicates a growing risk to civilian populations, particularly in newly affected or more dangerous areas. By understanding the extent of the contamination, EORE programmes can prioritise interventions and advocate for the additionally needed resources. Furthermore, tracking EO increases allows EORE programmes to better target their risk education efforts. If certain areas are experiencing a surge in EO contamination, these regions should be prioritised for awareness campaigns.

> *I live in a village close to Nablus. Since September 2024, we are often attacked by the Israeli Forces, and we frequently find Unexploded Ordnance afterwards.*
>
> – FGD participant, adult man

Moreover, the increase in EO contamination highlights the need for stronger coordination between different stakeholders. EORE programming can serve as a bridge, ensuring that the right information is shared and that all partners work together effectively to address the growing risk. Lastly, measuring the increase in EO contamination is critical for Victim Assistance and emergency response planning. If EO-related accidents increase due to rising EO contamination levels, EORE programmes can assist by identifying areas that may need urgent Victim Assistance. Coordinated mapping of contaminated areas ensures that resources are focused on providing care and support to those affected. Moreover, understanding the scope of the contamination aids in planning for long-term trauma care and recovery for those injured by EO, contributing to a holistic response to the crisis.

Graph 2: Has the presence of EO increased since 7 October 2023?

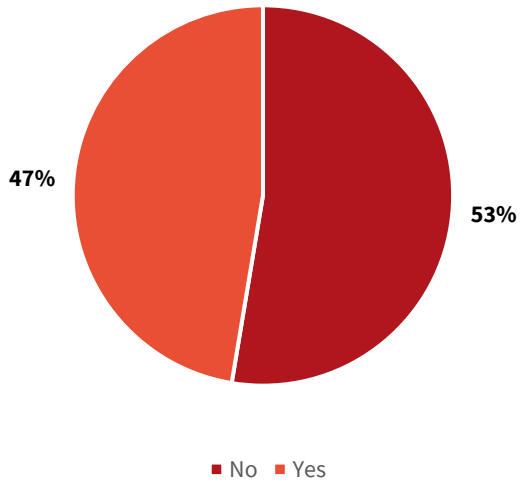


The needs assessment **overwhelmingly confirmed that 83% of respondents believe there was an increase in the presence of EO in the West Bank since October 2023.** The increase of EO presence has been particularly felt in Area C (46%), followed by Area A (35%). The reported increase in EO presence highlights the need for enhanced resources for HMA in the West Bank, particularly to expand EORE, clearance, and Victim Assistance programmes. Given that Areas C and A have been identified as the regions where the increase in EO presence is most acutely felt, EORE efforts should prioritise interventions in these areas.

Knowledge of EO Victims

Asking people if they know any victims of EO provides essential insights into the community's direct exposure to EO hazards. If a significant number of people report knowing EO victims, it indicates the presence of a tangible and immediate threat. Furthermore, knowing that community members have personal connections to EO victims strengthens the relevance of EORE messaging. When individuals are aware of real-life consequences and have direct emotional connections to victims, they are more likely to take the risk seriously and engage with educational content. This personal connection increases the likelihood of behaviour change, ensuring that EORE programming has a meaningful impact. Understanding whether community members know EO victims also provides insights into the psychological toll that EO incidents may have on a population. Such incidents often leave emotional scars, especially for those who have close relationships with victims. By considering this context, EORE practitioners can design interventions that address not only safety and awareness but also psychological resilience, ensuring programming is sensitive to the emotional needs of affected populations.

Graph 3: Do you know any EO victims?



47% of respondents know someone who has been a victim of or directly impacted by EO contamination. These findings suggest that nearly every second person surveyed has a direct or indirect connection to EO incidents, emphasising the immediacy and relevance of addressing this issue within affected communities. 44% of those that know EO victims come from Area A, followed by 40% from Area C, showing again the prevalence of EO in these areas.

> *My grandfather died in a landmine accident and our family lost a primary breadwinner. Afterwards, my grandmother had a hard time in the community – she was bullied, mocked, called the 'mother of orphans.' My father, the oldest in the family, had to stop his education and start working to provide for the family. We feel the impact of the accident until today.*
>
> – FGD participant, adult woman

The needs assessment also sought to verify if people are aware whom to contact if they or someone they know is recovering from an EO incident – **56% of the respondents were not aware who they can rely on for Victim Assistance information or support**. It would, therefore, be crucial to include such information in EORE messaging as well as incorporate referral mechanisms to Victim Assistance providers.

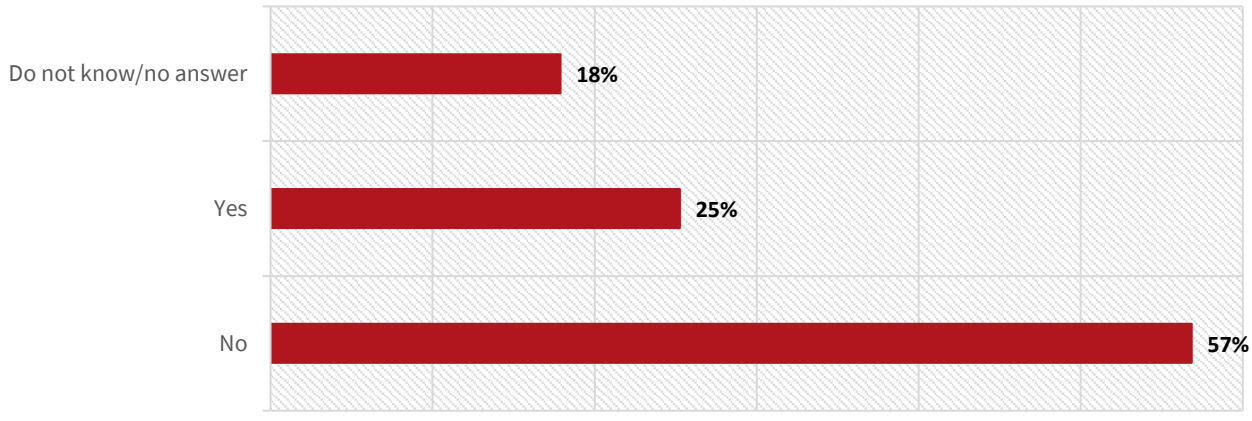
Another recommendation from these findings is to enhance the collection and sharing of EO victim data, in line with minimum data requirements set out by IMAS, as part of broader HMA efforts. Gathering detailed information on EO victims, including their age, gender, occupation, and the circumstances of their exposure, is crucial for designing EORE interventions that address the specific risks and behaviours that lead to accidents. Sharing this data with the National Authority and EORE implementers ensures that programming is tailored to the realities of those most affected. Additionally, the significant proportion of the population that does not know EO victims (52.5%) highlights the importance of broad-based EORE campaigns. These campaigns should not only target individuals directly impacted by EO but also engage those who may underestimate the risks or assume they are not affected. Generalised EORE messaging should emphasise the hidden and unpredictable nature of EO hazards, ensuring that all community members understand the potential threats and take preventive measures.

EORE programmes should also consider incorporating psychosocial support elements, particularly in areas where many individuals know EO victims. Such support can help communities cope with the emotional and psychological impact of EO incidents while fostering a culture of safety. Engaging communities in discussions about EO victims may also reduce stigma or misconceptions about risk, ensuring that all at-risk groups, including marginalised or overlooked populations, are included in programming efforts.

EO as a Barrier to Essential Services, Livelihoods, and Infrastructure

Asking communities whether EO contamination is a barrier to accessing basic services, livelihoods, and infrastructure is crucial for understanding the extent of its impact. EO contamination often goes beyond immediate physical danger, creating long-term socioeconomic and developmental challenges. Understanding how EO restricts access to resources and opportunities provides a more holistic view of the problem, enabling tailored interventions.

Graph 4: Is your access to essential services and infrastructure affected by the presence of EO?



EO can severely disrupt access to basic services such as education, healthcare, and clean water. Schools and health facilities located in or near contaminated areas may be avoided due to fear of accidents, depriving communities of critical support. Similarly, pathways to water sources, markets, or places of worship might be considered unsafe, forcing residents to take longer or more dangerous routes. Livelihoods are also deeply affected by EO contamination. Farmers, shepherds, and other workers who rely on land and natural resources may be unable to access fields or grazing areas, leading to economic hardship. Asking about the impact on livelihoods provides insights into how EO

disrupts local economies and community resilience. Moreover, asking about these barriers helps identify the indirect impacts of EO on community well-being. Restricted access to services and livelihoods exacerbates poverty, inequality, and social tensions, especially in areas already struggling with resource scarcity such as the West Bank.

The collected data indicates that **a quarter of respondents (25%) report that their access to essential services, livelihoods, and infrastructure is directly affected by the presence of EO**. This significant proportion underscores the critical need to address EO contamination not only as a safety issue but also as a barrier to socioeconomic development and access to basic services. While the majority (57%) report no disruption, the remaining respondents who are uncertain (18%) highlight potential gaps in awareness or understanding of the extent to which EO affects their daily lives.

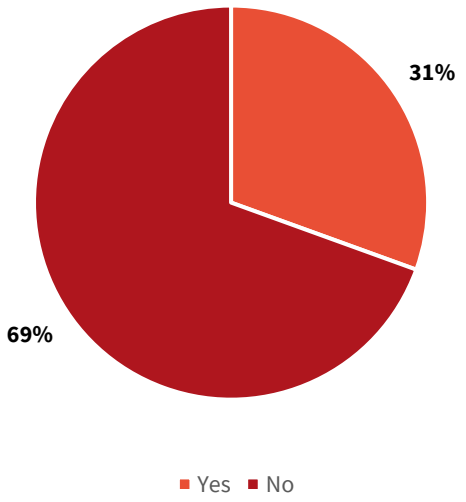
> *We all know not to go near the illegal Israeli settlements: they have barbed wires around them, snipers, and we often see suspicious items there.* – FGD participant, adult man

It is recommended to expand the scope of data collection to include detailed mapping of EO-contaminated areas and their proximity to essential services. This data will enable the development of national HMA plans with more precise targeting, coordination, and prioritisation of clearance and EORE activities, ensuring interventions address the most pressing needs without duplications. Following a better understanding of the locations of EO, it is recommended to integrate EORE activities with the broader livelihood and other development programmes in the West Bank. Tailored EORE should be developed for specific occupational groups (such as farmers, shepherds, and other professions at-risk of EO) for the most effective reach.

Participation in EORE Activities

Asking people whether they have already participated in EORE activities is essential for designing effective and impactful future programming. Understanding prior participation helps organisations assess the reach and coverage of past initiatives, identifying gaps and ensuring that communities or groups who have been overlooked are prioritised. This information also enables practitioners to avoid duplicating efforts, ensuring that resources are directed toward communities or demographics that have not yet received EORE. Finally, tracking participation in EORE helps create a baseline for monitoring and evaluation. Knowing who has already been reached allows organisations to track progress, measure coverage rates, and demonstrate impact to donors and stakeholders.

Graph 5: Have you participated in/heard of EORE activities?



69% of respondents have not heard of or participated in EORE activities, whilst 31% of respondents have. This disparity highlights a critical gap in awareness and outreach that needs to be addressed for future EORE programming to be effective and reach those most at risk. The fact that only a third of the population has been exposed to EORE activities or information suggests that a large portion of the community remains vulnerable to EO hazards due to lack of awareness. Without effective education, the risk of accidents and injuries caused by EO will likely rise. This also indicates that existing EORE programmes may not have been sufficiently comprehensive in reaching all areas or populations, and there may be challenges in communication channels or delivery methods that need to be addressed.

> *I was one of the people that ran towards the Iranian missile that fell on Jericho in October. Until you told me about safe behaviour around Explosive Ordnance, I did not think this was dangerous.* – FGD participant, adult man

Given that a significant portion of the population has not heard of or participated in EORE activities, there should be a concerted effort to expand EORE outreach in the West Bank. To engage more people and overcome barriers to participation, diversifying the ways in which EORE messages are delivered is also needed. This could include using official sources, television, social media, and printed materials as well as identifying which groups specifically have not been reached by previous EORE programmes, particularly the vulnerable and at-risk populations.

Groups Most Exposed to EO Accidents

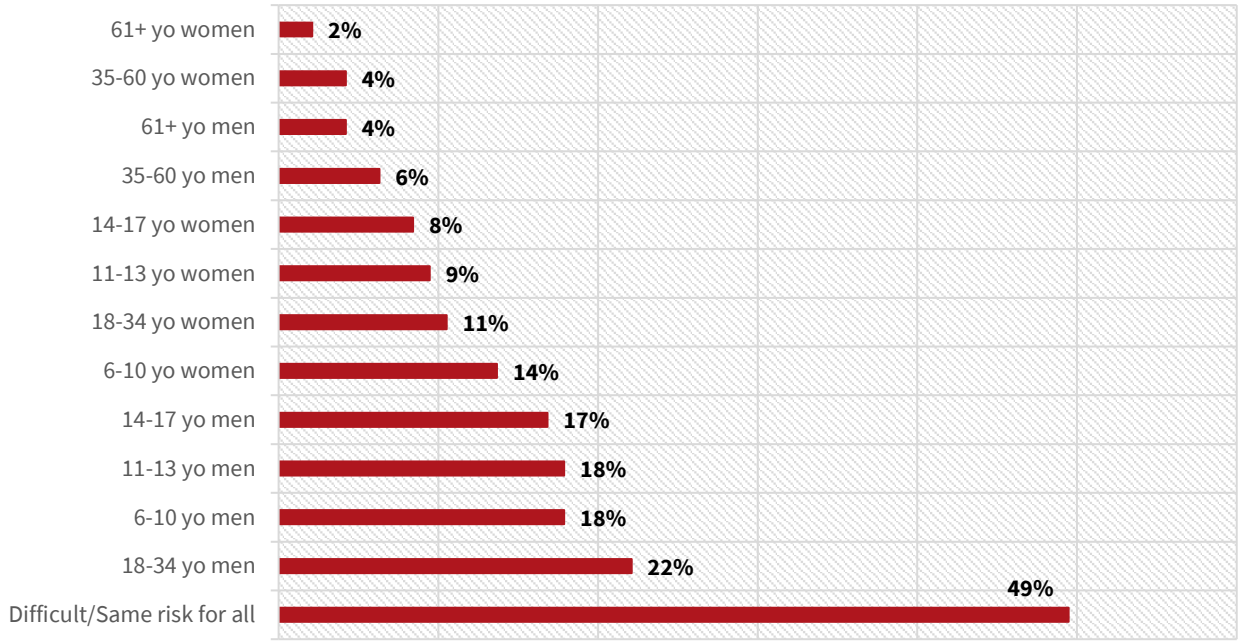
Measuring perceptions of which age and gender groups are most at risk from EO accidents is critical for designing effective EORE programmes. Understanding these perceptions helps tailor interventions to the specific vulnerabilities and needs of different demographic groups. By identifying these at-risk groups, EORE messaging and outreach efforts can be focused where they are needed most, maximising their impact. Gender-specific data is particularly important because men and women often face different types of EO risks due to their roles in society. Men may be at higher risk because of occupational exposure, while women might face risks when gathering firewood, collecting water, or accompanying children in rural areas. Tailoring EORE activities to address these gendered differences ensures that messages are relevant and resonate with their intended audience.

Additionally, understanding the perception of risk across age and gender groups helps to challenge assumptions or misconceptions within communities. For instance, if a community underestimates the risk to children or overemphasises the danger to men, EORE programmes can work to correct these views, ensuring everyone at risk receives appropriate education. Measuring these perceptions also helps HMA organisations identify gaps in awareness and prioritise interventions for underrepresented or overlooked groups, such as adolescent boys or elderly women. Finally, incorporating age and gender considerations into risk assessments allows for more inclusive programming. It ensures that vulnerable groups are not excluded from safety messaging and that their unique needs are addressed. This approach is essential for promoting community-wide resilience and fostering a culture of safety, ultimately reducing the incidence of EO accidents for all.

The data highlights that the greatest perceived risks are concentrated among young men aged six to 34 years, with children and adolescents (six to 17 years old) representing a significant portion of those at heightened risk. Young women also face notable risks, although at lower levels compared to their male counterparts, while older men and women are perceived to be at the lowest risk. Given this, EORE programming should prioritise the development and dissemination of targeted messages and interventions for young males, particularly between ages six to 17, as they represent a critical at-risk group. These activities should focus on settings where boys in this age range are likely to be exposed to EO risks, such as schools, playgrounds, or rural areas where children may wander unsupervised. For young men aged 18 to 34, messaging should emphasise occupational risks, particularly for those engaged in farming, herding, construction, or other activities that bring them into contact with potentially contaminated areas.

> *I remember an incident when some youth went behind a military camp, and they found several bullets and other items they thought were made from brass metal. So, they collected the items, wanting to sell them for money – I even saw them going into the area on donkeys. One of the teenagers lost his eye and a hand after an item exploded. I have also seen the Bedouin collect Explosive Ordnance to sell for scrap metal.* – FGD participant, adult man

Graph 6: Who is exposed to the greatest risk of EO accidents?



Although women are perceived to be at lower risk, the data indicates that girls—particularly those aged six to 17—still require attention. For groups perceived to be at lower risk, such as adults over 35 and the elderly, it is essential to ensure that they still have access to EORE information. While their inclusion may not require the same level of intensity, efforts should be made to raise their awareness to prevent accidents that could result from their role in guiding or supervising younger family members. Finally, the significant percentage (49%) of respondents who perceive the risk as "difficult to assess" or "the same for all" suggests the need for further education and awareness-raising across the entire population. This perception highlights the importance of broad-based community awareness campaigns to address misconceptions and ensure that all community members understand the specific risks associated with EO and how they can be mitigated.

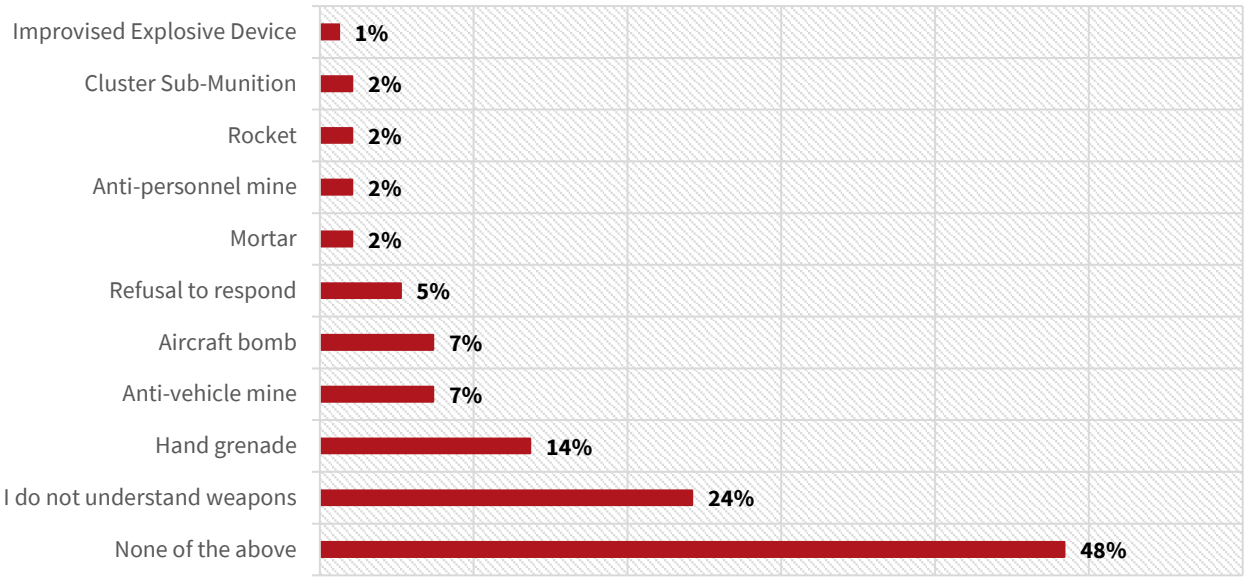
Types of EO Witnessed

Understanding the specific types of EO that individuals and communities have encountered provides valuable insight into the local threat landscape. This knowledge enables EORE programmes to tailor their messages and educational materials to address the most prevalent and immediate dangers. Additionally, understanding the types of EO witnessed can inform the geographical prioritisation of EORE interventions. Finally, collecting data on the types of EO witnessed contributes to broader HMA efforts. This information can be shared with clearance teams and authorities to help map contamination patterns and prioritise clearance operations.

While asking people what types of EO they have witnessed provides valuable insights for EORE programming, there are notable limitations to the accuracy of EO identification by the public. Most individuals lack the technical knowledge or experience required to correctly identify specific types of EO, especially when these items can vary

greatly in size, shape, and appearance depending on their origin or conditions. Factors such as damage, camouflage, or decomposition of the EO can further complicate identification efforts. As a result, the data collected from these inquiries may include misidentifications, vague descriptions, or instances where people simply cannot identify the item at all.

Graph 7: What types of EO have you personally seen?



To address this challenge, this needs assessment employed basic schematics and simplified visuals to assist respondents in recognising the types of EO they may have encountered. These schematics, designed to depict general types of Land Service Ammunition (LSA) as well as IEDs, provided a baseline for participants to match their observations. While this approach facilitated a more structured way of collecting information, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The simplified images cannot capture the full range of variations or subtleties in EO design, and some respondents may have struggled to confidently match what they had seen with the schematics provided. Furthermore, public perception can be influenced by fear, rumours, or incomplete understanding of EO threats. For instance, individuals may over-report sightings due to heightened anxiety or under-report because they fear repercussions from authorities should they report EO. These factors can skew the accuracy of the data and should be considered when interpreting findings. Despite these limitations, the use of basic schematics remains a practical solution in contexts where the knowledge of EO presence is limited. It helps gather useful, albeit imperfect, information about the types of EO people are encountering. However, this data should be cross-referenced with first-hand evidence of identified EO, data on EO victims (i.e., type of injuries), clearance team reports, and other reliable sources to build a more accurate understanding of the contamination landscape.

As seen in Graph 7, the collected data indicates that almost half of the respondents (48%) could not identify any type of EO, 24% explicitly stated they do not understand weapons, and 5% refused to respond. Among those who could provide some level of identification, **hand grenades were the most frequently mentioned (14%), followed by aircraft bombs and anti-vehicle mines (both at 7%).** Other LSA categories—such as mortars, anti-personnel mines, rockets, and sub-munitions—as well as IEDs were identified at rates between 1 and 2%.[1] These findings highlight significant gaps in EO recognition, which have implications for the design and implementation of EORE programmes.

[1] Note that LSA categories of guided missiles, artillery, and rocket-propelled grenades were identified at lower than 1% and are hence not included in Graph 7.

> *The Israeli forces have put landmines around the annexed villages and there are firing ranges around the West Bank as well. I have also seen warning signs about landmines in the Jordan Valley.* – FGD participant, adult woman

Given that a substantial proportion of respondents could not identify any EO type or felt they lacked sufficient knowledge about weapons, EORE programming should prioritise raising awareness and enhancing basic EO recognition. Programmes should utilise simple, clear visuals and community-appropriate language to describe common EO types to increase understanding among at-risk populations. Additionally, visual and contextual education tools need to be expanded. Improved materials, such as schematics and/or videos, can make recognition more accessible. These tools should also be localised, reflecting the specific types of EO present in the area, ensuring the content is directly applicable.

Targeted outreach efforts are essential to address knowledge gaps, particularly among groups that reported limited understanding of weapons. Tailored sessions for these demographics can bridge knowledge gaps and provide specific guidance on what actions to take if EO is encountered. While hand grenades, aircraft bombs, and anti-vehicle mines were among the most frequently identified items, their relatively low recognition rates suggest the need for additional emphasis on these EO types in EORE programming. This focus can increase preparedness and reduce potential accidents. Another key finding is the refusal of some respondents (5%) to provide answers, which may indicate fear, stigma, or uncertainty surrounding EO-related discussions. To address this, EORE initiatives should foster an environment of trust and safety, emphasising the importance of reporting EO sightings without fear of judgment or reprisal. It is recommended that all EORE activities in West Bank undergo a conflict sensitivity screening.

Finally, recognising the limitations of community-based EO identification, it is recommended that the National Authority and HMA operators in West Bank share detailed information about the types of EO found. By sharing this information transparently with local communities and EORE providers, they can ensure that EORE materials and training are tailored to the specific threats present in the area. This approach will enhance community awareness, improve EO recognition, and empower individuals to take informed precautions to reduce accidents.

Trusted Sources of Safety Information

Understanding where and from whom people get their safety information, which information sources they trust, and which social media channels they use most frequently is essential for the design of effective EORE in the West Bank. These insights allow for targeted messaging that aligns with the communication habits and preferences of the local population, ensuring that safety information reaches its intended audience in a way that is effective and engaging.

First, identifying the sources people trust helps EORE practitioners focus their efforts on these trusted channels, whether those are family and friends, community-based organisations, or government officials. Trust plays a critical role in the success of any educational initiative. If the community does not trust the source of the information, they are less likely to absorb or act upon it. By leveraging these trusted sources, EORE programmes can improve the credibility and acceptance of the safety messages being shared. Second, understanding the social media channels that people use most frequently is crucial in today's digital age. In the West Bank, social media platforms can serve as a powerful tool for reaching large numbers of people. By identifying which platforms are most popular, EORE programmes can optimise their outreach to ensure maximum visibility. Whether it's Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, or another platform, knowing where people are most active enables the creation of tailored, timely content that resonates with the audience. Moreover, by understanding the specific preferences for receiving information, EORE programmes can tailor their messages to fit the preferred communication styles of different demographic groups, including age, gender, and geographical location. A mix of communication methods ensures that all segments of the population are adequately informed about EO risks and safety measures, regardless of their media preferences or technological access.

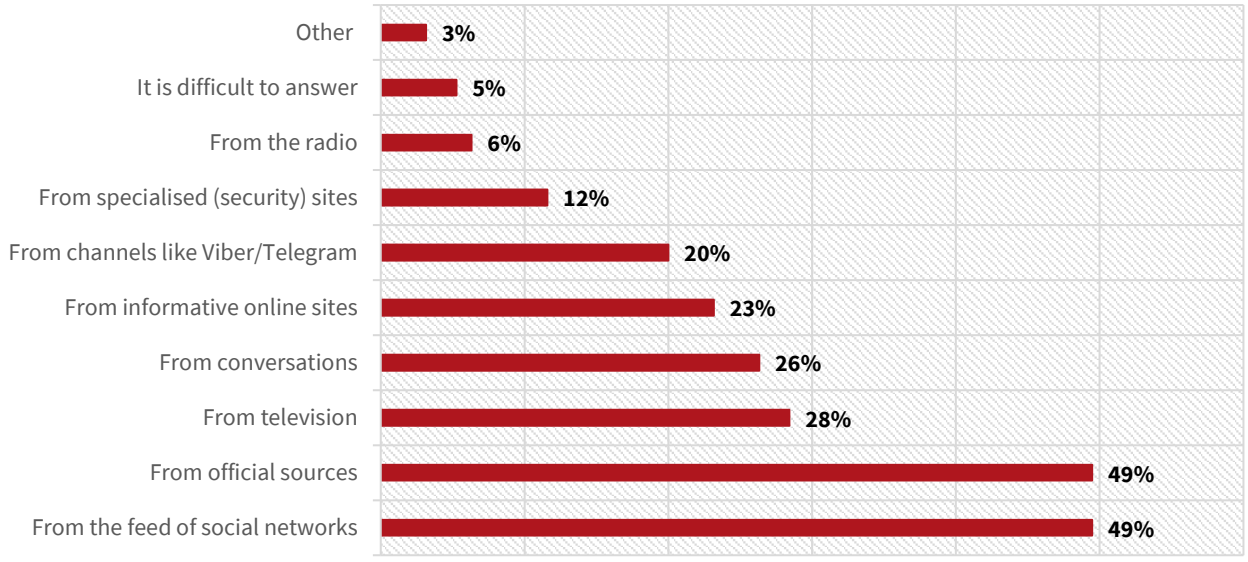
Based on the assessment findings, several key insights can guide the development of effective EORE programming in the West Bank. **Official sources, such as government websites and social networks, are considered as the most**

used (49%) and the most trusted sources of information, with 72% of respondents expressing trust in them. Collaborating with local authorities, trusted institutions, and media outlets is essential for ensuring the credibility of the messages being communicated. Working with these trusted entities will help amplify EORE messaging through official channels, reaching a broad audience with accurate and timely information.

The second most prominent (44%) and trustworthy source (31%) of safety information are relatives, friends, and the broader social environment (see Table 1). Thus, community-based outreach is vital, leveraging informal channels like conversations within families and communities to spread EORE messages. By working with local influencers and leaders, EORE programmes can expand their reach in areas where formal communication might be less effective. Television is also an important platform, with 28% of people relying on it for safety information. Television also remains a relevant medium when considering that 38% of participants trust it for accurate safety-related content. EORE programmes should explore opportunities for public service announcements, safety-related news segments, or even specific TV campaigns to increase awareness. In addition, conversations with friends, family, and peers play a significant role in disseminating information, with 44% of people turning to their social circles for safety updates (see Table 1). This highlights the importance of community-based education and peer-to-peer communication.

While 49% of participants relying on social networks for safety updates (see Graph 8), they are less trust-worthy (23%). 80% of respondents regularly use Facebook and 68% use WhatsApp (see Graph 10). Given these figures Facebook and WhatsApp may be prioritised for EORE messaging. These platforms provide an opportunity to reach a large segment of the population with safety updates, risk awareness, and educational content. Establishing dedicated social media channels or groups on Facebook and WhatsApp can ensure the consistent dissemination of EORE messages.

Graph 8: Where do you usually get safety information?



Viber and Telegram also stand out as trusted sources of safety information (see Graph 10), with 24% of people relying on them. These platforms are commonly used for group communication and information sharing, making them valuable for circulating EORE content. Creating dedicated groups or channels on Viber and Telegram can effectively distribute safety alerts and educational materials to communities. Furthermore, specialised and informative online sites also contribute to safety information gathering, with 23% of participants using them. By partnering with such platforms, EORE programmes can ensure that their messages reach those who seek specific and timely information.

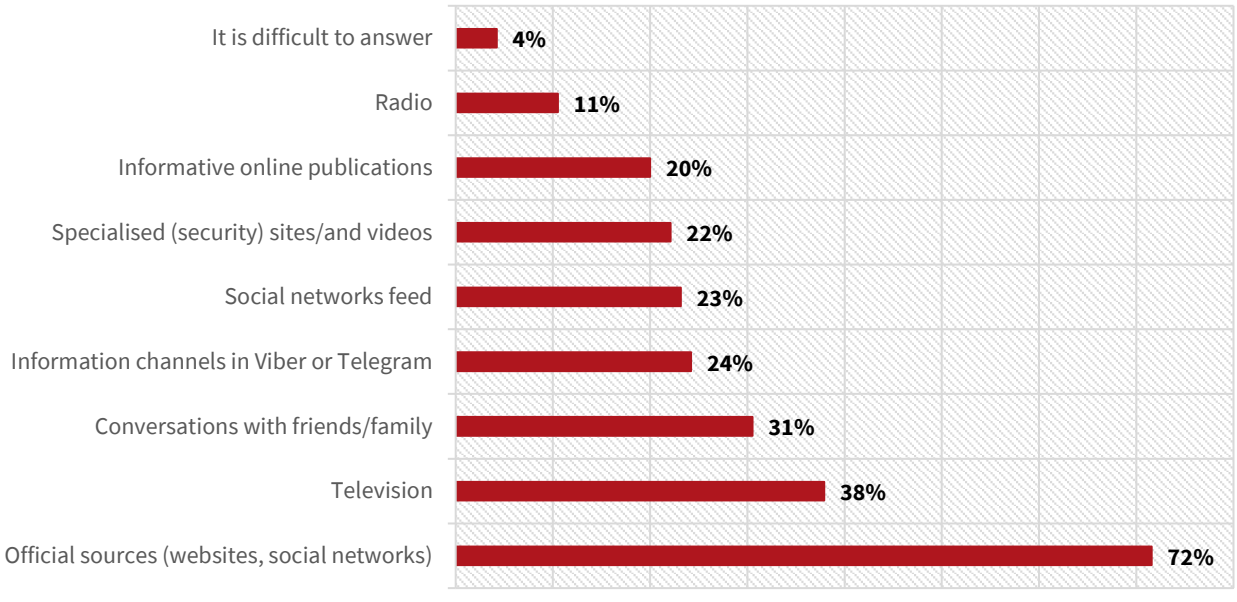
While radio is less frequently used (6%) as a primary source of safety information, it remains an important tool for reaching certain populations, especially those in rural or remote areas. Local radio stations can serve as key partners

in broadcasting EORE messages, particularly to populations that may not have access to the internet or social media. This ensures that all demographic groups, including older and rural populations, are reached by EORE.

Table 1: From Whom do You Usually Receive Safety Information?	
From information resources (e.g., WhatsApp channels, television, websites, etc.)	47%
From relatives/friends/social environment	44%
From officials and state institutions	26%
From public and charitable organizations/volunteers	21%
I do not receive such information	17%
From representatives of the enterprise / educational institution	8%
It is difficult to answer	6%
From the military	3%

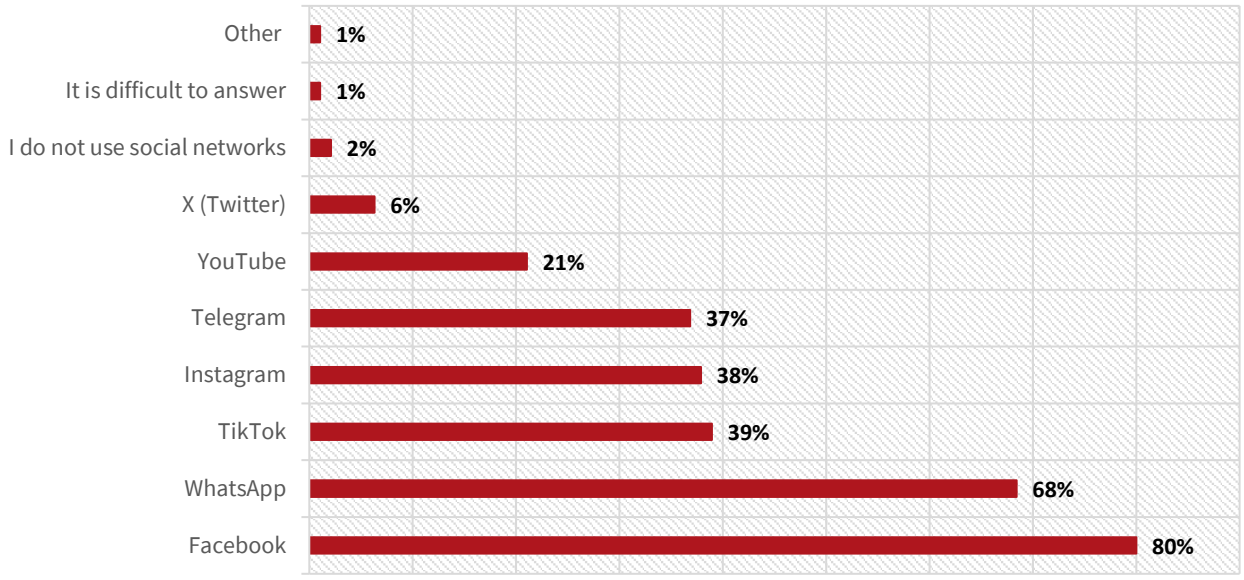
Given these findings, several recommendations emerge for EORE programming. First, enhancing the digital presence of EORE messages on social media, particularly Facebook and WhatsApp, is crucial for reaching most of the population. Regular updates, infographics, and video content should be shared to engage users effectively. Second, collaborating with official sources such as government bodies, local authorities, and trusted NGOs will help reinforce the credibility of the information being shared.

Graph 9: Choose Three Most Trust-Worthy Information Sources



Additionally, investing in television campaigns or collaborating with local broadcasters can ensure that EORE content reaches a wider audience, particularly through public service announcements or news segments. The use of Viber and Telegram may also be explored, as these platforms are trusted by a significant portion of the population. Setting up dedicated groups or channels can facilitate the distribution of timely safety alerts and updates. Finally, while radio is less popular, it remains a valuable tool for reaching rural populations, and partnerships with local radio stations can ensure the broadcast of important safety messages to communities in remote areas. By aligning EORE programming with these insights and recommendations, efforts can be better targeted to the most effective and trusted channels of communication. This approach will enhance the reach and impact of EORE messages, ensuring that all community members, regardless of their preferred information source, receive the vital safety information they need to protect themselves from EO hazards.

Graph 10: What social networks do you use regularly?



Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on key findings from the rapid EORE needs assessment conducted in the West Bank between September and December 2024 by DRC and PARC. The assessment highlights critical gaps in public awareness and perceptions of EO risks with specific geographic and demographic variations. These recommendations aim to enhance the effectiveness of EORE programming by prioritising key areas such as targeted interventions, improved data collection, and diversified outreach strategies:

1. Expand EORE funding, outreach, and awareness raising in the West Bank

A substantial portion of the surveyed people in the West Bank (89%) attested to the increased presence of EO since 7 October 2023. More than half perceive the presence of EO as dangerous to them (52%) and are aware of EO victims (47%). Nevertheless, a large majority of people have never heard of or participated in EORE (69%). This highlights the need for an increase in broad-based EORE programming. EORE should focus not only on most at-risk individuals directly impacted by EO but also on those who may underestimate the risks or assume they are not affected, given their low exposure to EORE. Addressing this need will require an increase in funding to EORE in the West Bank.

2. Target Areas C and A as well as young males for priority interventions

Given the heightened perception of EO risks in Areas C (53%) and Area A (35%), especially after October 2023 (46% and 35%, respectively), it is essential to prioritise EORE programming in these regions. These areas report a significant perceived presence of EO, making it critical to design focused and robust interventions to address the specific risks and increase awareness. Moreover, the assessment highlighted a general assumption as well as self-perception that young men aged six to 34 years—with children and adolescents (six to 17 years old) particularly—represent the most at-risk group from EO incidents. Given this, EORE programming should prioritise the development and dissemination of targeted messages and interventions for young males. Once a more thorough assessment is conducted (see recommendation 8), adapting and tailoring EORE messages and curricula to enable the teaching of safe behaviours known to reduce EO risks is further recommended.

3. Support the National Authority in systematically collecting data on EO and impacts on EO victims

To enhance the accuracy of targeting EORE interventions, it is recommended that data on the presence of EO across the West Bank be systematically collected, consolidated within the National Authority, and made transparently available to the HMA community. This data should be used to guide both clearance and EORE efforts. To improve the effectiveness of HMA efforts, it is essential to include detailed mapping of EO-contaminated areas and their proximity to essential services. This will allow for better planning of interventions, ensuring that resources are directed to areas where the risk is most acute. Additionally, EO victim data should be collected more comprehensively and shared as part of broader HMA efforts to ensure that interventions are responsive to the needs of affected populations. Given that 56% of the assessment respondents were not aware who they can rely on for Victim Assistance information or support, more information sharing on those services should also be part of all EORE interventions.

4. Integrate EORE with livelihood and development programmes

The assessment showed that a quarter of respondents (25%) report their access to essential services, livelihoods, and infrastructure being directly affected by the presence of EO. This significant proportion underscores the critical need to address EO contamination not only as a safety issue but also as a barrier to socioeconomic development and access to basic services. EORE programming should hence be integrated with broader livelihood and development initiatives in the West Bank. Specific tailored EORE messages should be developed for occupational groups at risk of EO exposure, such as farmers, shepherds, and construction workers. These targeted interventions will ensure more effective outreach and protection for the high-risk groups.

5. Diversify EORE delivery methods through official sources, community-based outreach, and television

The data highlights that a significant portion of the population has not yet heard of or participated in EORE activities. It has also made clear that the understanding of EO risks, impacts, and their basic recognition is low. Therefore, a concerted effort should be made to expand outreach and ensure that EORE messages reach as many people as possible. Diversifying the methods through which EORE messages are delivered—especially through those that are

both oft-used and trusted—will help overcome barriers to participation and increase the reach of EORE programmes. The assessment showed that, primarily, EORE messaging will be most effectively shared via official sources, such as government websites and social networks. Partnerships with official sources, including local authorities, government bodies, and NGOs, will help reinforce the credibility of the information and increase its impact. The second most used and highly trusted medium are family, friends, and the broader community. Thus, community-based outreach is vital, leveraging informal channels like conversations within families and communities to spread EORE messages. By working with local influencers and leaders, EORE programmes can expand their reach in areas where formal communication might be less effective. Finally, a large percentage use television as sources of safety information. Collaborations with local broadcasters can help disseminate EORE messages through public service announcements or news segments.

6. **Incorporate psychosocial support and victim referral mechanisms into and conduct conflict sensitivity screenings of EORE initiatives**

In areas where many individuals are affected by EO incidents, psychosocial support and referral mechanisms should be integrated into EORE programming to assist people injured by EO, survivors, other persons with disabilities, and indirect victims. Such support can help communities cope with the emotional and psychological impact of EO incidents while fostering a culture of safety. Engaging communities in discussions about EO victims may also reduce stigma or misconceptions about risk, ensuring that all at-risk groups, including marginalised or overlooked populations, are included in programming efforts. Moreover, there has been anecdotal information that Palestinians are reluctant to report EO in Area C since that could incriminate them for being present there. Within this needs assessment, there was a proportion of respondents that refused to report any EO sightings, potentially out of fear of reprisal. It is thus essential to foster an environment of trust and safety in EORE programmes, where communities feel comfortable reporting EO and EO victims. It is also recommended that EORE activities in West Bank undergo a conflict sensitivity screening to ensure that the content, methodologies, and expectations are not doing further harm.

7. **Further assess the necessity for and ability to implement IED Risk Education activities**

While not in significant percentages, the assessment did uncover some reporting of IEDs in the West Bank which is also consistent with anecdotal information from the ground. IEDs pose unique challenges for EORE due to their improvised nature, diverse designs, concealment, and resemblance to everyday objects, making them harder to recognise than other EO. These factors complicate message design, materials, and delivery methods needed to support behaviour change effectively. Additionally, IED contamination often occurs in non-permissive environments, where EORE activities may be perceived as interference or bias, increasing risks to beneficiaries and operators. Given the above, more information is required to assess the need for delivering IED-focused EORE in the West Bank. In any case, however, this will also require a conflict-sensitive context analysis, considering diversity factors (e.g., age, gender, disability), and a robust risk management approach to mitigate various potential protection risks.

8. **Conduct a comprehensive KABP survey to further inform EORE programming in the West Bank**

Rapid needs assessments, such as the one conducted by DRC and PARC, are valuable for identifying immediate needs and general trends but have notable limitations. These assessments focus on urgent, short-term needs and target limited samples, potentially overlooking diverse community dynamics and failing to capture detailed insights into why certain behaviours or beliefs persist. They lack information on behavioural drivers, such as why individuals enter dangerous areas, and do not evaluate the effectiveness of specific communication channels for EORE messaging. Additionally, rapid assessments are not designed to inform long-term strategies, assess the sustainability of interventions, or establish baselines for monitoring and evaluation. Given these gaps, conducting a comprehensive KABP survey is essential to gain a deeper understanding of community dynamics, behavioural drivers, and effective communication strategies, ensuring the development of more impactful and sustainable EORE programmes.

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DRC Dansk Flygtningehjælp | Borgergade 10, 3. | 1300 København K | Tel.: 3373 5000 | drc@drc.ngo | www.drc.ngo