

MINE
ACTION
REVIEW

CLEARING THE MINES 2023

A REPORT BY MINE ACTION REVIEW FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST MEETING
OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION

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Other information

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Mine Action Review welcomes comments from national authorities and other relevant stakeholders. Please email any comments to MineActionReview@npaid.org

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FOREWORD

The conflicts in Ukraine and Yemen have seen massive new use of landmines and other explosive ordnance, bringing the importance of mine action to the forefront of international policy discussions once again. But in addressing these humanitarian emergencies with the urgency they demand, we must take care not to lose sight of the contamination—sometimes decades old—that still remains from other conflicts the media have long forgotten.

It is true that great progress has been made to clear and release minefields back to local communities for the safe and productive use of the land, as this year's *Clearing the Mines* report attests. Huge strides have been taken to strengthen capacities in many countries, enabling their national programmes to drive forward mine action, supported by coherent and realistic national strategies and strong national standards. Gender and diversity are being mainstreamed into mine action programming, increasingly and rightfully joined by action to integrate environmental and climate change considerations amid the environmental crisis that worsens each year. But while celebrating progress is important, it would not be fair to mine-affected communities around the world if we did not clearly acknowledge the need to go further and faster.

At the Third Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) in Maputo in 2014, the target was set to strive to complete global mine clearance by 2025. Although renewed commitment was made in Oslo five years later, most affected States will fall short. Frequently, though, this is not due to a lack of political will, expertise, or understanding, but simply reflects a widening gap between needs and resources. Resources must be better mobilised and coordinated to ensure that States with medium or low levels of contamination are not forced into repeated extensions of their Article 5 clearance deadlines, despite knowing exactly what needs to be done. Where, however, the cause is rather a lack of prioritisation by affected States, the work of Mine Action Review and our organisations is to call it out and offer our support.

Mine action has learned many lessons over the past three decades of its existence as a distinct humanitarian and

developmental endeavour. We know how to survey and clear more efficiently than ever before. We have the expertise to address anti-personnel mines, including of an improvised nature, weapons that have been used increasingly in conflicts over the past decade. We appreciate how realistic strategies can mobilise and channel expertise and resources. We endorse the view that completing clearance requires a continued spirit of transparency, accountability, and genuine partnership. And experience has shown us that generalised, aspirational targets do not speed this process up – only ambitious Article 5 deadlines based on an accurate understanding of the problem in each case, and implemented through good work plans and with sufficient funding, can do that.

Next year will see the adoption of a new five-year Action Plan at the Fifth Review Conference in Cambodia to help guide the implementation of the Convention. As the three member organisations of the Advisory Board to the Mine Action Review, we strongly support the continued use of clear, simple indicators that help both affected States and donor governments to monitor progress. Where States fall behind or fail to meet applicable indicators, we must, and we will work together to ensure the necessary support is provided to get back on track. It is also important that during the proactive phase of clearance operations, we support States to prepare for the reactive residual phase, ensuring they have sustainable national capacity to deal with residual risk. The aim should always be for national authorities to be prepared and able to address previously unknown contamination, if and when it arises after major clearance operations have ended.

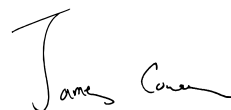
To the donors we say that your generous assistance to national authorities and operators to respond to emerging or changing needs is ever more critical to ensure we can protect civilians from these indiscriminate weapons. And not just in those countries currently in the headlines or where the contamination is greatest, but also those closing in on the finishing line who just need a little more help to complete the work. Flexible, sustained, and responsive funding is the key to meeting the needs of mine-affected communities everywhere. We can and we will get the job done.



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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KEY FINDINGS

- **In 2022, a global total of nearly 189 square kilometres of mined area was cleared of anti-personnel (AP) mines.** This increase in clearance output of nearly one quarter, compared to the previous year, resulted largely from a huge increase in clearance in State Party Cambodia. Globally, area clearance operations and spot tasks destroyed a combined total of over 213,750 AP mines in 2022. Behind the good news, however, lie multiple challenges including the most serious violation of the APMBBC in its 25-year history, with respect to State Party Ukraine.
- **Ukraine**, which continues to be embroiled in major armed conflict following Russia's renewed aggression in late February 2022, has committed serious violations of its international legal obligation never under any circumstances to use AP mines. Its conduct amounts to the gravest breach of Article 1 since the Convention's adoption in 1997. The lack of a robust response to-date from the overwhelming majority of States Parties threatens to weaken the international norm prohibiting the use of AP mines under any circumstances by any State Party.
- **Eritrea** was subject to the first ever invocation of the formal compliance process under Article 8, having been in serious violation of its clearance obligations for several years following the expiry of its Article 5 deadline at the end of 2020 and its decision not to seek an extension. In response, Eritrea claimed misconduct by the UN in Eritrea and stated its decision to withdraw from the APMBBC.¹ Further to this communication, in a note verbale dated 2 October 2023, submitted to the UN Secretary General, Eritrea indicated that "after consultation with the relevant authority", Eritrea has "decided to withdraw its notification letter of 21 June 2023 addressed to the UNSG regarding the 'withdrawal from the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention'".²
- No States Parties to the 1997 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBBC) declared fulfilment of their Article 5 clearance obligations in the course of 2022. **As at 1 September 2023, 57 States and 3 "other areas"³ were contaminated with AP mines.**⁴ This is one more than a year earlier following the addition of **Burkina Faso** to the list. Furthermore, on 19 September 2023 Azerbaijan launched a 24-hour military offensive, which resulted in it regaining control of the rest of **Nagorno-Karabakh**.⁵ Nagorno-Karabakh, which Mine Action Review classified as an "other area", is now fully under Azerbaijan's jurisdiction and control.⁶
- Based on Mine Action Review's assessment of the extent of contamination in affected States Parties, Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Iraq are massively contaminated (defined as covering more than 100km² of land), while heavy contamination (covering more than 20km²–100km²) exists in Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Thailand, Türkiye, and Yemen. In addition, the extent of Ukraine's mine threat has been upgraded from medium to heavy based on massive Russian use in 2022 and 2023 to date, as at the time of writing. In other affected States Parties, the extent of anti-personnel mine contamination is medium or light.
- Of the 57 affected States around the world, 35 are party to the APMBBC. As at writing, **four of these States Parties (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Eritrea, and Mali) did not have a legal Article 5 deadline in force** even though each has ongoing survey and clearance obligations under the Convention. The Article 5 obligations of Cameroon and Mali result from new use of AP mines of an improvised nature by non-State armed groups on their sovereign territory, which has occurred since their deadlines expired (2013 and 2009, respectively). In June 2023, Burkina Faso announced to the Intersessional Meetings that it too was contaminated by new use of AP mines by non-State armed groups on its territory.⁷ Each of these three States Parties must request a new Article 5 deadline and submit annual Article 7 reports detailing contamination and plans to clear all AP mines, including those of an improvised nature.

1 Letter from Osman Saleh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea, to the UN Secretary-General, dated 21 June 2023.

2 Note Verbale from the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations, 2 October 2023.

3 These are territories not recognised as States by the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) in his capacity as treaty depositary for the APMBBC.

4 **Afghanistan, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, DR Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, India, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Dem. Rep., Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Myanmar, Nagorno-Karabakh, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Peru, Russia, Senegal, Serbia, Somalia, South Korea, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Türkiye, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Western Sahara, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.** States Parties to the APMBBC are in bold. Other areas are in italics.

5 "Azerbaijan halts Karabakh offensive after ceasefire deal with Armenian separatists", *BBC*, 21 September 2023, at: <https://bbc.in/3rCVK0e>.

6 "Nagorno-Karabakh's breakaway government says it will dissolve itself", *The Guardian*, 28 September 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/45ozvJ7>.

7 Statement of Burkina Faso, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 21 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/4816vtv>.

- Some 97% of AP mined area cleared worldwide in 2022 occurred in States Parties to the APMBC. The largest clearance output was reported for Cambodia, which recorded an impressive 88km² of clearance in 2022⁸ (double the clearance output in 2021), followed by Croatia, which recorded more than 40km² in 2021. The greatest number of AP mines destroyed in 2022 a single State was in Türkiye (58,078), followed by Zimbabwe (31,178).

- The extent of implementation of Article 5 clearance obligations varies widely between States Parties. **Of the 35 mine-affected States Parties as at 1 September 2023, only two were believed to be firmly on track to meet their respective treaty deadlines: Oman (February 2025) and Sri Lanka (June 2028). Peru** was still just on track to meet its extended Article 5 deadline of end of 2024.

It was unclear, but looked very unlikely, whether Cambodia could meet its end-2025 deadline. **Progress to complete Article 5 implementation in both Cambodia and neighbouring Thailand is now largely contingent on the two States reaching an agreement to clear the border minefields.** This has not been done at the time of writing. It is also unclear whether **Croatia** will complete clearance by its extended Article 5 deadline of March 2026.

All other States Parties with an Article 5 deadline in place were either not on track to fulfil Article 5 in time or were in violation of their obligations under the Convention.

- **No AP mine clearance was recorded or reported for 2022 in 9 States Parties:** Burkina-Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Cyprus, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria did not report any AP mine clearance during the year. While lower than in 2021—when 12 States Parties did not engage in mine clearance—this is still an unacceptably high level of failure among States Parties to implement their Article 5 clearance obligations “as soon as possible”.
- In **Mine Action Review’s assessment of national programme performance for 2022**, only Zimbabwe was rated Very Good. Angola, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand were all rated Good, as was the case the previous two years. Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Croatia, Iraq, Mauritania, Oman, Peru, Serbia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tajikistan, and Türkiye were all

ranked as Average. Chad, DR Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Senegal, Somalia, Ukraine, and Yemen were all rated Poor, with Niger and Senegal having improved their respective performance category for 2022, from that of Very Poor for the previous year. Eritrea and Nigeria both continued to be ranked as Very Poor for 2022, although Nigeria achieved the biggest increase in score for the year, reflecting positive progress made in several aspects of its programme in 2022. Overall performance increased for 2022 compared to 2021, with 16 States Parties having increased performance; 11 remaining the same; and 3 having decreased in performance.

- **Donors should reward good performance.** Despite currently being the best performing State Party, **Zimbabwe** still currently lacks sufficient international funds needed to enable it to fulfil its Article 5 obligations by its clearance deadline of end of 2025. The international donor community has a significant opportunity to support the mine action programme in Zimbabwe to meet its 2025 completion deadline and, in doing so, provide a valuable example of success.
- We encourage readers to also refer to Mine Action Review’s ***Guide to the Oslo Action Plan and results of 2023 monitoring: survey and clearance***, which is available on the Mine Action Review website. This separate report details the latest results of Mine Action Review’s assessment of progress in implementation of the Oslo Action Plan, with respect to 24 indicators which are relevant to survey and clearance.
- The importance of **environmental and climate change considerations** has justly become increasingly prominent in mine action as it has across all sectors. The Oslo Action Plan, adopted in 2019, does not address the environment or climate change, but valuable lessons can be drawn from the way in which the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) integrated environmental considerations into the Lausanne Action Plan adopted in September 2021. Elaboration of the next five-year Action Plan of the APMBC, to be adopted by States Parties at the Fifth Review Conference in Cambodia in 2024, offers an excellent opportunity for States Parties to integrate and mainstream this important topic, helping ensure implementation of the Convention is responsible and sustainable.

8 This was largely the result of increased clearance of mined area by national operators, notably the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC). However, without having seen the breakdown of clearance output and clearance capacity in 2022, Mine Action Review has not been able to verify the accuracy of the data.

OVERVIEW

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

Global mine clearance in 2022 of nearly 189km² was a significant increase on the previous year, thanks in large part to a massive increase in clearance output reported by Cambodia. But the year also witnessed the most serious violation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) in its 25-year history. Ukraine, which continues to be embroiled in major armed conflict following Russia's renewed aggression in late February 2022, has committed serious violations of its international legal obligation never under any circumstances to use anti-personnel (AP) mines. Its conduct amounts to the gravest breach of Article 1 since the Convention's adoption in 1997.

As at 1 September 2023, 57 States and 3 "other areas"¹ were contaminated with AP mines (see Table 1). This is one more than a year earlier following the addition of Burkina Faso to the list. Furthermore, on 19 September 2023 Azerbaijan launched a 24-hour military offensive, which resulted in it regaining control of the rest of Nagorno-Karabakh.² Nagorno-Karabakh, which Mine Action Review classified as an "other area", is now fully under Azerbaijan's jurisdiction and control.³

Of the 57 affected States, 35, including Burkina Faso, are party to the APMBC. At the time of writing, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Mali—did not have an Article 5 deadline in force, having failed to request one from the other States Parties following new use of AP mines of an improvised nature on their respective territories by non-State armed groups. Eritrea also did not have an Article 5 deadline at the time of writing, having failed to request an extension to its 31 December 2020 clearance deadline. No State Party declared fulfilment of its Article 5 clearance obligations in the course of 2022 or 2023 through to the end of August.

Global mine clearance output in 2022 was up significantly on the previous year, with a total of nearly 189km² released through clearance, compared to 152km² in 2021. The increase in 2022 clearance output of nearly one quarter, compared to the previous year, is an impressive achievement, which results largely from a doubling of output in State Party Cambodia from 43.73km² in 2021 to 88.48km² in 2022.⁴ Globally, area clearance operations and spot tasks destroyed a combined total of over 213,750 AP mines in 2022, including several thousand of an improvised nature. The total recorded mine clearance and number of AP mines destroyed for 2022 again understate the true level of clearance, given that detailed results in some affected countries such as Iran and Syria have not been made public.

Behind the good news, however, lie multiple challenges, including the most serious threat to the Convention since its adoption, with respect to the violation by Ukraine of its obligations never under any circumstances to use AP mines, as set out in Article 1(1)(a) of the APMBC. On 19 June 2023, at the Interessional Meetings of the APMBC, Steve Goose, head of delegation for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), justly described Ukrainian use of AP mines as "without doubt the most serious violation of the Convention since it was negotiated in 1997". In response, Ukraine 'protested' the remarks by civil society, but did not deny the substance of the allegations. The reaction of States Parties during the Interessional Meetings was disappointing. Several States Parties condemned use of AP mines in Ukraine—but focusing on use by Russia, a State not party—and expressed their "concern" at allegations of Ukrainian use. Strongest on this issue was Belgium, which called for Ukraine to take "all necessary measures" to ensure its "full compliance" with its obligations under the Convention. In contrast, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands⁵ each stated that the situation would not have arisen but for Russian aggression, which potentially suggests this might mitigate the seriousness of the violation of the Convention. In their statements, Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, and the UK called on Ukraine or welcomed its commitment to investigate the alleged use by its armed forces and report to the Convention on its findings in a transparent manner. Other States Parties remained silent. As a consequence of a general failure to condemn a manifest and serious violation, the international norm prohibiting the use of AP mines under any circumstances by any State Party is under significant threat.

In 2023, Eritrea was the subject of the first ever invocation of the formal compliance process set forth in Article 8. Eritrea has been in serious violation of its clearance obligations for several years following the expiry of its Article 5 deadline at the end of 2020 and its decision not to seek an extension. In 2023, States Parties initiated the process envisaged under Article 8(2) of the Convention with a written request for clarification of compliance through the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN). In response to the letter, Eritrea stated that, since 2019, it had "opted not to correspond to the States Parties' call for implementation or request for extension of deadlines on account of unseemly phenomenon [sic]". Eritrea claimed misconduct by the UN in Eritrea and stated its decision to withdraw from the APMBC.⁶ Further to this communication, in a note verbale dated 2 October 2023, submitted to the UN Secretary General, Eritrea indicated

1 These are territories not recognised as States by the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) in his capacity as treaty depositary for the APMBC.

2 "Azerbaijan halts Karabakh offensive after ceasefire deal with Armenian separatists", *BBC*, 21 September 2023, at: <https://bbc.in/3rCVK0e>.

3 "Nagorno-Karabakh's breakaway government says it will dissolve itself", *The Guardian*, 28 September 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/45ozvJ7>.

4 This was largely the result of increased clearance of mined area by national operators, notably the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC). However, without having seen the breakdown of clearance output and clearance capacity in 2022, Mine Action Review has not been able to verify the accuracy of the data.

5 Intervention of the Netherlands on Cooperative Compliance, Interessional Meetings, Geneva, 21 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/45WNYgo>.

6 Letter from Osman Saleh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea, to the UN Secretary-General, dated 21 June 2023.

that “after consultation with the relevant authority”, Eritrea has “decided to withdraw its notification letter of 21 June 2023 addressed to the UNSG regarding the ‘withdrawal from the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention’.”⁷ Germany, President of the Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties (21MSP), welcomed the news and said it looked forward to “working with Eritrea in the Convention’s traditional spirit of transparency and cooperation to ensure Eritrea’s return to full compliance with the Convention in order to meet our collective desire of putting an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines.”⁸

The Article 5 obligations of Cameroon and Mali result from new use of AP mines of an improvised nature by non-State armed groups on their sovereign territory, which has occurred since their deadlines expired (2013 and 2009, respectively). In June 2023, Burkina Faso announced to the Intersessional Meetings that it too was contaminated by new use of AP mines by non-State armed groups on its territory.⁹ Each of these three States Parties must request a new Article 5 deadline and submit annual Article 7 reports detailing contamination and plans to clear all AP mines, including those of an improvised nature. Burkina Faso last submitted an Article 7 report in 2021; Cameroon last did so in 2009; and Mali in 2005. States in a position to provide assistance should support the development of sustainable national capacities in the three States so they are able to collect, disaggregate, and record contamination data correctly, and accurately report AP mines of an improvised nature under the APMBC, as well as destroy them.

Senegal also continues to be of serious concern. Unjustified delays in clearing military bases, borders, or other “sensitive areas” of all AP mines is not just a violation of Article 5 of the Convention, but also potentially constitutes prohibited use under Article 1. Senegal acknowledged in 2020, after claiming for several years that all of its military bases had been cleared, that mines were laid between one of its bases and a non-State armed group against which it is involved in hostilities. Senegal stated that the identity of the user of the mines “remained to be determined”. It did not specify when the mines were laid.¹⁰ Taking operational advantage of existing mined areas in armed conflict, even when laid by another party, constitutes prohibited use of AP mines.¹¹

Senegal has failed to address this issue, including in its statements to the Intersessional Meetings in both June 2022 and June 2023,¹² and to the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties in November 2022.¹³

The situation with respect to the border between Cambodia and Thailand also continues to raise concern. A decision by Cambodian authorities in July 2020 to halt clearance by international operators on the K5 mine belt¹⁴ along the border, later extended to a seven kilometre-wide zone along all international borders, has contributed to the major drop in area released through clearance by Cambodia in 2021 and Thailand in 2022 and delays clearance of the two States’ densest contamination. Failure by Thailand and Cambodia to jointly conclude a bilateral cooperation agreement to enable survey and clearance of all mined areas along the shared border, including the particularly sensitive areas not demarcated, will be brought into increasingly sharp focus as Thailand completes clearance of all other mined areas and is left with only the border minefields to release. But Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen declared in November 2022 that he had agreed with his Thai counterpart that mine clearance should take precedence over border demarcation,¹⁵ indicating that real progress could be made on this important issue.

One affected State Party was seeking an extension to its respective Article 5 deadline for consideration at the Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties in November 2023 – Ukraine.¹⁶ Already in serious violation of its Article 4 obligation to destroy stockpiles, Ukraine was seeking a further ten-year extension to its Article 5 clearance deadline while having been revealed to have engaged in use of AP mines itself on its own territory. The APMBC Committee on Article 5 Implementation indicated that a five-year extension would be more appropriate, but at the time of writing Ukraine had reiterated that it intended to ask for the full ten years which, if accepted, would extend its clearance deadline to 1 December 2033. The extension should also stipulate that Ukraine must immediately cease all use of AP mines.

Disappointingly, only two States Parties were on course to meet the target of completing clearance by 2025, as set at the Maputo Review Conference in 2014: Oman and Peru. Zimbabwe could still meet its deadline of end of 2025, but only if it receives additional international funding and rapidly

7 Note Verbale from the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations, 2 October 2023

8 Letter from the President of the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties (21MSP), to interested international and non-governmental organisations, regarding “Communication from Eritrea to the United Nations Secretary General, 30 October 2023”, 30 October 2023.

9 Statement of Burkina Faso, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 21 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/4816vtv>.

10 “Clarifications du Senegal aux questions du comité d’examen de la 3ème demande d’extension”, 22 September 2020, Reply to Question 4.

11 See, e.g., ICBL, “Treaty in Detail”, at: <https://bit.ly/3ns6oTd>.

12 Statement of Senegal, “Point sur la mise en oeuvre du programme de déminage humanitaire au Sénégal”, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 21 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/30XBuOy>.

13 Statement of Senegal, “Presentation du Senegal 20EME MSP”, Twentieth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, November 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/46nba7T>.

14 The K5 mine belt, which was installed along the border with Thailand in the 1980s in an effort to block infiltration by armed opposition groups, ranks among the densest mine contamination in the world.

15 “Cambodia, Thailand agree to clear all mines in border areas”, *Phnom Penh Post*, 23 November 2022.

16 Eight States Parties were granted an extension to their respective Article 5 deadlines at the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties in 2022: Afghanistan, Argentina, Ecuador, Guinea-Bissau, Serbia, Sudan, Thailand, and Yemen.

upscales clearance capacity. Cambodia is making a massive effort to do likewise, but is likely to fall short. The other 31 affected States Parties will not complete clearance by 31 December 2025 although Croatia could conceivably complete clearance by its extended deadline of March 2026 and Sri Lanka is on course to meet its initial clearance deadline of

2028. The broader aim of a mine-free world by 2025, set in Maputo in 2014 and recommitted to in Oslo in 2019, was an aspiration that was never going to be fully realised, but it has succeeded in focusing minds and attention to the need to accelerate land release.

GLOBAL MINE CONTAMINATION

As at 1 September 2023, 57 States and 3 other areas were contaminated by AP mines globally, as summarised in Table 1. Asia (including the Middle East) is the most affected continent by number of countries, with 23 mine-contaminated States, most of which are not party to the APMBC. Across Asia, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Iraq, Oman, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, and Yemen are all States Parties. China, India, Iran, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Lebanon, Myanmar, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), Pakistan, the Republic of Korea (South Korea), Syria, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam are all States not party.

Africa is the second most affected region with 20 States and Western Sahara (the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, an African Union member) remaining contaminated with AP mines. Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, the

Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo), Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Zimbabwe are all States Parties to the APMBC. Egypt, Libya, and Morocco are States not party, along with other area, Western Sahara.

In Europe, 10 States along with Kosovo and Nagorno-Karabakh¹⁷ are still mine-affected. The six States Parties are: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Serbia, Türkiye, and Ukraine. Affected States not party are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Russia, as well as other areas Kosovo and Nagorno-Karabakh.¹⁸

In the Americas, only four States remain affected by AP mines: States Parties Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru; and State not party Cuba.

Table 1: Mine-Affected States and Other Areas (at 1 September 2023)

States Parties		States not party		Other areas
Afghanistan	Niger	Armenia	Russia	Kosovo
Angola	Nigeria	Azerbaijan	Syria	Nagorno-Karabakh ¹⁹
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Oman	China	Uzbekistan	Western Sahara
Burkina Faso*	Palestine	Cuba	Vietnam	
Cambodia	Peru	Egypt		
Cameroon*	Senegal	Georgia		
Chad	Serbia	India		
Colombia	Somalia	Iran		
Croatia	South Sudan	Israel		
Cyprus	Sri Lanka	North Korea		
DR Congo	Sudan	South Korea		
Ecuador	Tajikistan	Kyrgyzstan		
Eritrea*	Thailand	Lao PDR		
Ethiopia	Türkiye	Lebanon		
Guinea-Bissau	Ukraine	Libya		
Iraq	Yemen	Morocco		
Mali*	Zimbabwe	Myanmar		
Mauritania		Pakistan		
35 States Parties		22 States Not Party		3 Other Areas

* Has not yet submitted a request to extend its already expired Article 5 deadline.

17 On 19 September 2023 Azerbaijan launched a 24-hour military offensive, which resulted in it regaining control of the rest of Nagorno-Karabakh. Nagorno-Karabakh is now fully under Azerbaijan's jurisdiction and control.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

Mine Action Review has now added Burkina Faso to the list of States Parties with Article 5 obligations. Neighbouring Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Togo have also seen incidents in recent years involving improvised explosive devices (IEDs), but publicly available data are scarce and it is unclear whether the devices in question were victim-activated. Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Togo have not submitted an APMBC Article 7 transparency report since 2008, 2014, and 2003, respectively.

In addition, States Parties the Central African Republic (CAR), Mozambique, and Venezuela may also be newly contaminated by victim-activated IEDs that meet the definition of an AP mine under the APMBC. Each of these situations will be the subject of further investigation by Mine Action Review in 2024.

In CAR, the United Nations said AP mines were found for the first time in April 2022 on a highway five kilometres from the town of Bambari in the centrally located Ouaka prefecture. No details were available on the number or type, even though the mines were cleared by the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The UN reported a sharp increase in 2023 in incidents and casualties involving explosive ordnance, including landmines, but has not disaggregated the number involving AP mines, whether conventional or improvised.²⁰ The worst affected regions are said to be the prefectures of Ouham, Ouham-Pendé, Mambéré-Kadei, and Nana-Mambéré. The Wagner Group has also reportedly used landmines²¹ and obstructed MINUSCA from mine clearance.²² CAR has not submitted an APMBC Article 7 transparency report since 2004.

In its Article 7 report covering 2021, Mozambique stated that it "has already been declared a mine-free country in 2015, however, [it] is now dealing with residual cases a little throughout the country, with no identified areas, but rather there are occasional isolated cases that sometimes cause some accidents."²³ In October 2021, the UN Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) reported that small-scale attacks and use of IEDs by insurgents were seen with increasing

frequency in Cabo Delgado province.²⁴ Weekly and monthly reports from the Conflict Observatory project have recorded numerous IED-related incidents in Cabo Delgado in 2023, some of which appear to be victim activated.²⁵ In April 2023, two incidents involving the detonation of IEDs were reported in the northern district of Muidumbe. One killed a civilian – the device detonated when he was clearing his field.²⁶ In May 2023, global risk management company Castor Vali posted details of further IED attacks, which it said highlighted the growing threat from the ongoing insurgency.²⁷ Mozambique had not submitted its Article 7 report for 2022 at the time of writing.

There were further reported mine incidents in Venezuela resulting from use by Colombian non-State armed groups in 2022. In April 2021, the Venezuelan government had requested technical on-the-ground assistance from the UN to deactivate an undisclosed number of devices that had been discovered in the state of Apure, on the border with Colombia. The Venezuelan Minister of Defence reported eight civilian deaths in early 2022 from improvised mines said to have been produced in Colombia.²⁸ Venezuela declared itself free of AP mines in 2013 and in full compliance with Article 5. References to improvised mines used in Venezuela in Apure state included the death of two peasants on 31 January 2022, and in an interview the mayor of Páez municipality in Apure claimed that several improvised AP mines had been laid in his municipality.²⁹ Venezuela has not submitted an APMBC Article 7 transparency report since 2012.

Table 2 overleaf summarises what is known or reasonably believed about the extent of contamination in affected States Parties. It is an independent assessment by Mine Action Review of the extent of AP mine contamination based on available evidence. The extent of Ukraine's mine threat has been upgraded from medium to heavy based on massive Russian use in 2022 and 2023 to date, as at the time of writing.

20 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "Central African Republic: The ever-growing threat of explosive devices", Last updated 24 October 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3MgSH4S>. The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) has a Weapons and Ammunitions Management project in CAR focused on building capacity of CAR security forces and supports risk education but it is not directly engaged in mine clearance. In the past year it reported having four meetings with national authorities to discuss the creation of a national mine action authority but provided no further information on the issue. Humanity & Inclusion (HI) started a risk education programme in 2022 in the north-eastern Ouham-Pendé prefecture.

21 "Architects of Terror: The Wagner Group's blueprint for state capture in the Central African Republic", *The Sentry*, June 2023, p. 9.

22 "CAR Violence Grows With Addition of Russian Land Mines", *ADF*, 13 October 2021.

23 Mozambique Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

24 UNICEF, "Mozambique Humanitarian Situation Report", October 2021, at: <https://uni.cf/3BwKi80>, p. 2.

25 The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), Zitamar News, and Media fax Conflict Observatory project, March 2023 report, at: <https://bit.ly/3Z8EvQH>, and Weekly report, May 2023, p. 2, at: <https://bit.ly/3r4xpAb>.

26 OCHA, "Mozambique Access Snapshot – Cabo Delgado Province – May 2023", Posted 18 July 2023, available at: <https://bit.ly/44BiCuE>.

27 Castor Vali Admin, "IEDs in Mozambique", Posted 4 May 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3Z14Y2L>.

28 "Venezuela informa de ocho muertes por minas antipersona en la frontera con Colombia", *El País*, 11 February 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3q608yl>.

29 "Venezuela, el país que otra vez es campo minado", Macky Arenas, Aleitea Venezuela, 5 February 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3EqmuUp>; and FundaRedes, Boletín #40, 23 May 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3Z0ZMMg>.

Table 2: Extent of AP Mined Areas in Affected States Parties (at 1 September 2023)

Massive (>100km ²)	Heavy (>20–100km ²)	Medium (2–20km ²)	Light (<2km ²) or extent of contamination unclear
Afghanistan	Angola	Chad	Burkina Faso
Cambodia	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Colombia	Cameroon
Iraq	Thailand	Croatia	Cyprus
	Türkiye	Eritrea	DR Congo
	Ukraine	Ethiopia	Ecuador
	Yemen	Mauritania	Guinea-Bissau
		Palestine	Mali
		Somalia	Niger
		South Sudan	Nigeria
		Sri Lanka	Oman
		Sudan	Peru
		Tajikistan	Senegal
		Zimbabwe	Serbia

Every State should establish a national baseline of contamination as soon as security permits. This is the basis for effective planning. A number of States Parties to the APMBC still do not have a comprehensive baseline despite having adhered to the APMBC more than two decades ago. Once a national baseline has been established, release through evidence-based non-technical and technical survey is a critical focus. Such survey serves to confirm the specific areas that are contaminated and require clearance on the basis of evidence, thus significantly reducing the size of hazardous areas from exaggerated estimates.

Clearing suspected mined areas without also employing survey continues to occur with respect to far too many mined areas that prove to contain no AP mines (or any other explosive ordnance). In 2022, among States Parties this concerned especially Cambodia, Croatia, and Somalia. Official data in Cambodia indicated that total area cleared included

25 tasks covering a total of almost 1.57km² that were found to have no mines.³⁰ Furthermore, reported clearance of 9.6km² in Svay Rieng yielded only 678 AP mines while reported clearance of 7.6km² in Preah Vihear destroyed only 532 AP mines. This suggests huge area clearance was conducted without encountering AP mines.

In 2022, mined areas which did not in fact contain AP mines accounted for 22% of all cleared areas in Croatia, a similar proportion to 2021.³¹ In Somalia, clearance by the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Galmudug state accounted for more than 70% of all mined area cleared in the country in 2022 but only destroyed 2 AV mines and no AP mines, raising serious questions about the quality of its survey. In accordance with good practice in land release, full mine clearance should only occur on land where firm evidence exists that contamination is present.

ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES OF AN IMPROVISED NATURE

While use by States has almost ended globally, significant numbers of AP mines, especially those of an improvised nature, continued to be laid by non-State armed groups in 2022, including in Burkina Faso, Colombia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Yemen. Improvised munitions are both captured by and prohibited under the APMBC whenever they are designed to be exploded by the presence, proximity, or contact of a person. It does not matter under the Convention how these weapons were produced or employed, nor by whom they were laid; if they are located within the jurisdiction or control of a State Party, all of the Convention's provisions apply.

Improvised AP mine contamination in Afghanistan covers more than 53km² of area according to the latest data.³² In 2022, greater access to formerly high-conflict areas saw a doubling of improvised mine clearance from 1km² to 2km², predominantly in Helmand and Kandahar provinces. Iraq has the largest extent of mined area containing improvised AP mines in the world, estimated at more than 520km² in Federal Iraq, the result of mine production and laying by Islamic State on a massive scale. In addition, there is more than 4km² of improvised mine contamination in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). In 2022, 8km² of land affected with improvised mine contamination was cleared in Federal Iraq in 2022 with the destruction of 10,577 improvised AP mines³³ and another 23 square kilometres of suspected improvised mined area were cancelled through non-technical survey (NTS).

30 Email from Tep Kallyan, Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA), 29 April 2023.

31 Emails from Dejan Rendulić, Senior Advisor for EU Funds and International Cooperation, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023 and 3 August 2022.

32 Email from Abdul Habib Rahimi, Chief of Operations, Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC), 3 May 2023.

33 Iraq Article 7 Report (covering 2022), pp. 24, 28.

The obligations to clear mined areas and report on progress under Article 5 and Article 7, respectively, apply to AP mines of an improvised nature just as they do to conventionally manufactured landmines.³⁴ Technical guidance on how to dispose of IEDs, including AP mines of an improvised nature, has been incorporated into the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).³⁵ Reporting guidelines that encompass improvised AP mines have also been adopted under the IMAS.³⁶

STATES THAT HAVE COMPLETED MINE CLEARANCE SINCE 1997

Since the adoption of the APMB in 1997, clearance has been completed by 33 States (see Table 3), 32 of which are party to the Convention, as well as in one other area (Taiwan). In 2020, the United Kingdom reported fulfilment of its Article 5 clearance obligations, after the conclusion of demining operations in the Falkland Islands.³⁷ Argentina, however, has not accepted this declaration, stating that it continues to be prevented from accessing the territory and cannot verify the United Kingdom's demining operations. It therefore sought and received a three-year extension to its Article 5 deadline on the basis of the jurisdiction it asserts over the islands. Since AP mine clearance on the islands was completed in 2020, Mine Action Review does not consider Argentina to be mine-affected.

Mauritania and Nigeria were removed from the list of States having completed AP mine clearance in 2020 and Guinea-Bissau was removed in 2021, as each of these reported newly discovered mined areas under their respective jurisdiction or control. Under the Convention's agreed framework, in the event mined areas are discovered after the expiry of a State Party's Article 5 deadline, it should immediately inform all other States Parties of this discovery and undertake to destroy or ensure the destruction of all AP mines as soon as possible. If, however, a State Party believes that it will be unable to destroy or ensure the destruction of all AP mines in the mined area before the next Meeting of the States Parties or Review Conference (whichever falls earlier), it should submit a request for an extended deadline, which should be as short as possible and no more than ten

years. The process proposed at the Twelfth Meeting of States Parties was accepted unanimously by the participating States Parties,³⁸ and the request should follow the obligations for ordinary extension requests in Article 5.

Following its submission of a new Article 5 deadline extension request in 2021, Mauritania now has a new Article 5 deadline of 31 December 2026. In November 2020, prompted by the growth of a jihadist insurgency making extensive use of improvised AP mines in northern states, Nigeria was granted a one-year extension until 31 December 2021 in which to prepare a detailed assessment of contamination and propose steps to address it. In 2021, at the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties, Nigeria was granted a further extension until the end of 2025. Guinea-Bissau, whose interim deadline of the end of 2022 was approved at the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties, submitted a further extension request in 2022 seeking another interim extension to 31 December 2024, which was granted at the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties.

Twelve of the States that completed clearance are from Africa; nine are from Europe; seven are from the Americas; and five are from Asia (including the Pacific and the Middle East). Nepal is the only State not party to have completed mine clearance on its territory. The small number of AP mines found on the territory of Mozambique and Venezuela in 2022 have not yet led to either State being removed from the list of those that have completed clearance, but the situations continue to be under review.

Table 3: The 33 States That Have Completed Clearance Since 1997 (at 1 September 2023)

Albania	Costa Rica	Guatemala	Nepal***	Tunisia
Algeria	Denmark	Honduras	Nicaragua	Uganda
Bhutan	Djibouti	Hungary	North Macedonia	United Kingdom
Bulgaria	France	Jordan	Palau*	Venezuela
Burundi	The Gambia	Malawi	Rwanda	Zambia
Chile	Germany	Montenegro*	Suriname	
Republic of Congo	Greece	Mozambique**	Swaziland	

* States Parties not listed on the AMPBC Implementation Support Unit (ISU)'s former list, "States Parties That Have Completed Article 5", at: <https://bit.ly/3r3AjFr>, on the basis that they did not officially report having mined areas under the APMB and/or did not formally declare fulfilment of their clearance obligations.

** Mozambique has four very small suspected mined areas that remain underwater. *** State not party to the APMB.

34 Oslo Declaration, adopted the Fourth Review Conference of the APMB, 29 November 2019, at: <http://bit.ly/2DFNrqY>, para. 6.

35 IMAS 09.31: "Improvised Explosive Device Disposal", First Edition, February 2019, at: <https://bit.ly/37eGI2P>.

36 IMAS 05.10: "Information Management for Mine Action", Second Edition, Last amended 6 March 2023, available at: <https://bit.ly/3P34GDY>.

37 There is a sovereignty dispute over the Falkland Islands/Malvinas with Argentina, which claims jurisdiction over the Malvinas. Argentina has been granted an extension to its APMB Article 5 clearance deadline until 1 March 2026.

38 Final Report of the Twelfth Meeting of States Parties, APMB doc. APLC/MSP.12/2012/10, 21 January 2013, para. 28.

MINE CLEARANCE IN 2022

Total global clearance of AP mined area in 2022 was 188.55km², which represents a 24 per cent increase on clearance of 152.04km² in 2021. This is largely due to a huge increase in State Party Cambodia, which alone reported more than 88km² of mine clearance, double its output the previous year, predominantly due to increased clearance of mined area by national operators, notably the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC). However, without having seen the breakdown of clearance output and of clearance capacity in 2022, Mine Action Review has not been able to verify the accuracy of the data. The increase in global mine clearance in 2022 compared to the previous year was also achieved despite a significant drop in mine clearance in Azerbaijan compared to 2021 of almost 15km².

A total of 213,756 AP mines were destroyed in area clearance and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) spot tasks in 2022. This compares to 157,467 AP mines destroyed in the course

of the previous year. The greatest number of mines destroyed in 2022 in a single State (58,078) was in Türkiye, followed by Zimbabwe (31,178). Cambodia destroyed 14,402 AP mines, equating to approximately one mine for every 6,000 square metres of clearance and bringing into serious question the targeting of its clearance. Of the 13 States that cleared 1km² or more of mined area in 2022,³⁹ only Azerbaijan and Syria were States not party to the APMBC. In addition, in a relatively small area of clearance (some 0.22km²), Lebanon destroyed 22,737 AP mines.

Some 97% of AP mined area cleared worldwide in 2022 occurred in States Parties to the APMBC. But of the 35 affected States Parties, DR Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Palestine, Peru, and Senegal conducted less than 0.5km² of AP mine clearance in 2022; and Burkina-Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Cyprus, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria did not report any AP mine clearance during the year.

Table 4: AP Mine Clearance in 2022

States Parties	Area cleared in 2022 (km ²)	AP mines destroyed in 2022*	Comparison to 2021 clearance (+/- km ²)	Comments
Afghanistan**	13.85	4,803	-3.86	Area cleared in 2022 is based on official data which was significantly lower than the 30.39km ² of clearance reported by operators. The number of AP mines destroyed is based on operator data and includes 1,954 mines of an improvised nature.
Angola	5.95	4,002	+1.95	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.92	3,527	+0.23	
Burkina Faso**	0	0	0	
Cambodia	88.48	14,402	+44.75	
Cameroon**	0	0	0	
Chad	0	0	-1.45	
Colombia	1.84	322	+0.57	
Croatia	40.18	1,098	+5.70	
Cyprus	0	0	0	
DR Congo**	0.03	4	-0.01	Partial report based on operator data.
Ecuador**	<0.01	43	+0.01	
Eritrea**	0	0	0	
Ethiopia**	0.04	1	+0.04	
Guinea-Bissau	0	0	0	
Iraq	17.43	20,921	+5.83	
Mali**	0	0	0	
Mauritania**	0.05	Not reported	-1.15	

39 Afghanistan, Angola, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Colombia, Croatia, Iraq, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Syria, Türkiye, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

Table 4 Continued

States Parties	Area cleared in 2022 (km ²)	AP mines destroyed in 2022*	Comparison to 2021 clearance (+/- km ²)	Comments
Niger	0	0	0	
Nigeria	0	0	0	
Oman**	0.16	Not reported	+0.16	
Palestine	0.03	37	+0.03	
Peru	0.02	529	+0.01	
Senegal	<0.01	1	+0.01	
Serbia	0.17	0	-0.12	
Somalia**	2.05	109	-0.47	
South Sudan	0.28	136	+0.03	
Sri Lanka	5.27	27,177	+0.90	
Sudan**	0.08	63	+0.05	
Tajikistan	0.58	1,221	+0.37	
Thailand	0.33	11,421	-0.20	
Türkiye	1.29	58,078	+0.88	
Ukraine	0.17	59	-1.09	
Yemen	2	2,369	+0.50	Mine Action Review estimate, including by Project Masam.
Zimbabwe	2.13	31,178	-0.31	
Subtotals	183.35	181,501	+53.36	

States not party and other areas	Area cleared in 2022 (km ²)	AP mines destroyed in 2022*	Comparison to 2021 clearance (+/- km ²)	Comments
Azerbaijan	3.52	9,190	-14.86	
Georgia	0.28	108	-0.12	
Kosovo	0.02	12	-0.08	
Lao PDR	<0.01	54	0.01	
Lebanon	0.22	22,737	-0.03	
Syria	1.15	110	-1.76	
Other States not party and other areas ⁴⁰	0	44	-0.01	
Subtotals	5.20	32,255	-16.85	

GRAND TOTALS	188.55	213,756	+36.51	
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* Includes AP mines destroyed in spot tasks and during technical survey. ** Article 7 report covering 2022 had still to be submitted as at September 2023.

40 Nagorno-Karabakh (a single AP mine was destroyed in 2022); Morocco (34 AP mines destroyed in 2022), and Vietnam (9 AP mines destroyed in 2022). No AP mine clearance or AP mine destruction was recorded or reported in 2022 in Armenia, although HALO reported finding three AP mines to the national authorities but did not know whether or not they were destroyed), China, Cuba, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Myanmar, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, South Korea, Uzbekistan, and other area Western Sahara in 2022.

CLEARANCE DEADLINES AND PROGRESS IN ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION IN MINE-AFFECTED STATES PARTIES

While all affected States and territories are obligated under international human rights law to clear AP mines as soon as possible on the basis of their customary law duty to protect life, States Parties to the APMBC have specific time-bound deadlines. Article 5 of the APMBC requires affected States Parties to complete mine clearance **as soon as possible**, but **not later than ten years** from becoming party to the Convention.

The extent of implementation of Article 5 clearance obligations varies widely between States Parties. Of the 35 mine-affected States Parties as of 1 September 2023, only two were believed to be firmly on track to meet their original treaty deadlines: Oman (February 2025 deadline) and Sri Lanka (June 2028 deadline). Peru was still just on track to meet its extended Article 5 deadline of end of 2024. It was unclear, but looked very unlikely, whether Cambodia could meet its end-2025 deadline. Progress to complete Article 5 implementation in both Cambodia and neighbouring Thailand is now largely contingent on the two States reaching an agreement to clear the border minefields. This has not been done at the time of writing. It is also unclear whether Croatia will complete clearance by its extended Article 5 deadline of March 2026. As previously mentioned, Zimbabwe is not on track to meet its end of 2025 deadline, but it could still do so if international funding were increased and clearance capacity rapidly upscaled.

The other 24 States Parties with a current Article 5 deadline in place were either not on track to fulfil Article 5 in time or were in violation of their obligations under the Convention. In addition, Burkina Faso needs to seek a new Article 5 deadline following its acknowledgement of contamination in June 2023, and Cameroon and Mali must also each submit a request to extend their already expired respective Article 5 deadlines to address new contamination, having failed for several years to do so and having also failed to report through their respective Article 7 transparency reports. Eritrea is in serious violation for having failed to extend its clearance deadline which expired on 31 December 2020. No clearance was recorded or reported for 2022 in nine States Parties: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Cyprus, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria. While lower than in 2021—when 12 States Parties did not engage in mine clearance—this is still an unacceptably high level of failure among States Parties to implement their Article 5 clearance obligations “as soon as possible”.

Table 5 sets forth the Article 5 deadlines for all affected States Parties in alphabetical order, assessing progress in implementation of their international legal obligations. Those whose deadline has expired—and are therefore in violation of the Convention—are marked in bold.

Table 5: Progress in Implementing Article 5 Obligations

State Party	Article 5 Deadline	Status of progress	Implementation priorities
Afghanistan	1 March 2025	Interim Article 5 deadline. Will need to seek a new extension in 2024.	Ensure no use of AP mines, including those of an improvised nature, in accordance with Article 1 of the APMBC. Following the lifting of the suspension of the Liaison Office on 2 October 2023, the Afghan government and the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC) should engage constructively with the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) through what is now known as the Mine Action Technical Cell (MATC).
Angola	31 December 2025	Not on track.	Continue to impress upon all operators the importance of applying proper land release principles to reduce clearance of uncontaminated areas. Angola should declare as completed each province where land release of all mined areas has been achieved.
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 March 2027	Not on track.	Set a revised completion deadline that is achievable and realistic and develop a detailed and costed multiyear work plan with an updated national mine action strategy. Bosnia and Herzegovina should also fully embrace the “Country Coalition” approach, in partnership with Germany, which has been moribund since 2020.
Burkina Faso	1 March 2009	Needs to request new Article 5 deadline and submit an annual Article 7 report, including information on AP mines of an improvised nature.	Submit an Article 7 report detailing all mined areas on its territory to the extent this is known and report on all explosive device incidents detailing the number, location, and device type. Burkina Faso should also request a new Article 5 deadline as soon as possible.

Table 5 Continued

State Party	Article 5 Deadline	Status of progress	Implementation priorities
Cambodia	31 December 2025	Unclear whether on track.	Agree with Thailand that survey and clearance of all mined areas along the shared border can proceed and lift restrictions on clearance in border areas. Set out a clear and transparent policy and programme of work for mine clearance on the border with Thailand.
Cameroon	1 March 2013	In violation. Needs to inform other States Parties of the discovery of any newly mined areas, request an extension to its Article 5 deadline, and submit an annual Article 7 report, including information on AP mines of an improvised nature.	Request a new Article 5 deadline in order to return to compliance with the Convention and seek to mobilise assistance to put in place sustainable national capacity to address newly mined areas and respond to any future residual risk or new use of AP mines of an improvised nature.
Chad	1 January 2025	Not on track. Will need to request a new extension to its Article 5 deadline in 2024.	Intensify and report on resource mobilisation with a view to securing funding and attracting international technical and operational support.
Colombia	31 December 2025	Not on track.	Conduct an evidence-based baseline survey wherever security considerations permit to determine the location and extent of mine contamination. Establish a national mine action platform to ensure regular dialogue among all stakeholders, including donors.
Croatia	1 March 2026	Unclear whether on track.	Increase survey capacity in order to meet the targets outlined in its revised work plan through to 2026 and conduct survey to confirm mine contamination before embarking on full clearance of an area.
Cyprus	1 July 2025	Not on track (lack of control of mined areas). Will need to request a new extension to its Article 5 deadline in 2024.	The Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot authorities in the north should comply with the UN Security Council's call for an agreed work plan to complete the demining of Cyprus.
DR Congo	31 December 2025	Not on track.	Elaborate new annual work plans and timelines that take into account the increased estimate of contamination. Conduct the long-delayed survey of Aru in Ituri province and Dungu in Haut-Uele province and engage proactively with potential donors.
Ecuador	31 December 2025	Not on track.	Systematically apply evidence-based land release methodologies, including by prioritising NTS to determine accurately the baseline of contamination.
Eritrea	31 December 2020	In serious violation. Eritrea should request an extension to its Article 5 deadline without delay.	Submit an Article 5 deadline extension request for consideration at 21MSP and re-start clearance operations.
Ethiopia	31 December 2025	Not on track.	Elaborate and submit the updated work plan requested by States Parties in accordance with its 2019 Article 5 deadline extension. This should include, among other things, revised estimates of contamination, annual survey and clearance targets, and a detailed budget.
Guinea-Bissau	31 December 2024	Interim Article 5 deadline. Will need to seek a new extension in 2024.	Ensure funding and capacity to survey suspected mined areas, ensuring that the national survey clearly disaggregates areas that contain AP mines from areas containing other explosive ordnance.

Table 5 Continued

State Party	Article 5 Deadline	Status of progress	Implementation priorities
Iraq	1 February 2028	Not on track.	Modernise and streamline data management and tasking procedures. Establish a national mine action platform for regular dialogue among all stakeholders, including donors, to support implementation of Article 5 and the national mine action strategy for 2023–28.
Mali	1 March 2009	In violation. Needs to inform other States Parties of the discovery of any newly mined areas, request an extension to its Article 5 deadline, and submit an annual Article 7 report, including information on AP mines of an improvised nature.	Submit an Article 5 extension request in order to return to compliance with the Convention. Set up a national mine action centre with UN and NGO support to coordinate the humanitarian response to mine contamination, including seeking to put in place sustainable national capacity to address newly mined areas and respond to any future residual risk or new use of AP mines of an improvised nature.
Mauritania	31 December 2026	Not on track.	Proceed swiftly to mobilise funds to survey and clear remaining mined areas within its jurisdiction or control, and put in place sustainable national capacities that will be able to respond to any future residual risk.
Niger	31 December 2024	Not on track. Will need to seek a new extension in 2024.	Elaborate and make publicly available a detailed work plan with realistic targets for survey and clearance and provide details of its resource mobilisation strategy.
Nigeria	31 December 2025	Not on track.	Accelerate action to establish a national mine action centre. Develop a national mine action strategy in consultation with implementing partners, including plans to determine a more accurate picture of contamination. As a matter of urgent priority, build domestic capacities to enable mine clearance to be conducted when the security environment permits.
Oman	1 February 2025	On track.	Establish a national mine action centre to oversee survey and clearance and ensure release of all mined areas as by its Article 5 deadline. Ensure timely and public submission of its Article 7 reports.
Palestine	1 June 2028	Not on track (lack of control of mined areas).	Support HALO to complete clearance of the two minefields in the Jordan Valley as soon as possible.
Peru	31 December 2024	Just on track.	Survey outstanding mined areas to develop an accurate baseline of contamination and systematically apply evidence-based land release methodologies.
Senegal	1 March 2026	Not on track and compliance with Article 5 in serious doubt.	Immediately clear the minefield around its military cantonment in the village of Djirak and clarify who laid the minefield and when. As soon as possible, complete survey to establish a comprehensive baseline of contamination.
Serbia	31 December 2024	Interim Article 5 deadline. Will need to seek a new extension—hopefully its last—in 2024.	Survey the contamination newly discovered in 2019 and 2021 in order to determine the size of the mined area and mobilise the necessary resources to release it.
Somalia	1 October 2027	Not on track.	Elaborate a new multiyear national mine action strategic plan and associated annual work plans. Issue a capacity development plan and resource mobilisation strategy.
South Sudan	9 July 2026	Not on track.	Publish updated work plans through to 2026 matched with a detailed budget and resource mobilisation plan. Increase national financial support for mine action as well as to the National Mine Action Authority.

Table 5 Continued

State Party	Article 5 Deadline	Status of progress	Implementation priorities
Sri Lanka	1 June 2028	On track.	Complete the process of developing a comprehensive baseline of remaining contamination. Ensure the national mine action database is accurate and up to date.
Sudan	1 April 2027	Not on track.	Apply land release principles, basing decisions to clear land on evidence-based survey. Update and issue a new multiyear national mine action strategic plan as soon as the conflict allows.
Tajikistan	31 December 2025	Not on track.	Expedite survey in order to establish a clear national baseline of mine contamination.
Thailand	31 December 2026	Not on track.	Agree with Cambodia that survey and clearance of all mined areas along the shared border may proceed and improve local priority setting.
Türkiye	31 December 2025	Interim Article 5 deadline. Will need to seek a new extension—hopefully its last—in 2024.	Accelerate the pace of clearance. Plan, implement, and report on mine clearance in areas controlled by Turkish forces in northern Cyprus and northern Syria.
Ukraine	31 December 2023	Not on track – ten-year extension requested to 1 December 2033.	Ensure the national mine action authority is fully functioning and, as soon as conditions allow, undertake a baseline survey of AP mine contamination in areas that can be safely accessed.
Yemen	1 March 2028	Not on track.	Houthi authorities and the forces that support them should cease emplacement of mines and improvised devices and conform to the obligations of the APMBC. Mine action authorities in the North and South should develop plans with clear targets for survey and clearance, build operational capacity, and ensure all operators provide independently verified data.
Zimbabwe	31 December 2025	Not on track.	Prioritise efforts to secure additional national and international funding to meet its 2025 clearance deadline and start elaborating a demobilisation strategy.

As of 1 September 2023, only Oman, Palestine, and Sri Lanka were still within their respective original 10-year clearance deadline. All other States Parties had either been granted one (or more) extension periods or were currently in violation of the Convention. In 2022, the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties granted further extensions to eight States Parties: Afghanistan, Argentina, Ecuador, Guinea-Bissau, Serbia, Sudan, Thailand, and Yemen. Argentina sought and was granted a three-year extension of its deadline through to 1 March 2026, despite the United Kingdom having reported fulfilment of its Article 5 clearance obligations with respect to the Falkland Islands in 2020. Argentina has said that it continues to be prevented from accessing the territory of the Malvinas Islands in order to comply with the obligations assumed under the Convention and that it cannot verify the unilateral British demining tasks.⁴¹

At the time of writing, only Ukraine had submitted a request for a further extension to its Article 5 deadline for consideration at the Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties. Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Eritrea, and Mali all need to submit (and be granted) an Article 5 deadline extension request to return to compliance with the APMBC.

As at 1 September 2023, seven mine-affected States Parties—Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Eritrea, Mali, Oman, and Somalia—have failed to provide information on implementation of their Article 5 obligations through their Article 7 transparency reports for two or more consecutive years (i.e. with respect to the 2021 and 2022 reporting periods, or even longer). Reporting under Article 7 is a legal obligation under the Convention and States Parties must report on the previous year no later than 30 April. As per Action number 49 of the Oslo Action Plan, any State Party implementing Article 5 obligations that “has not submitted an Article 7 report detailing progress in implementing these obligations each year will provide in close cooperation with the ISU an annual update on the status of implementation in line with Article 7 and will provide information to all States Parties in the most expeditious, comprehensive and transparent manner possible. If no information on implementing the relevant obligations for two consecutive years is provided, the President will assist and engage with the States Parties concerned in close cooperation with the relevant Committee.”

41 Article 5 deadline extension request, 25 March 2022.

As a matter of international law, Afghanistan is now represented by the Taliban following its takeover in August 2021. Since the change of regime, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has affirmed its commitment to fulfilling its obligations in relation to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and other international conventions to which Afghanistan is already a State Party,⁴² which includes the APMBC. The IEA has submitted an Article 7 report covering 2022 under the CCM and should also submit an Article 7 report under the APMBC as a matter of urgency to the UN Secretary-General (as depositary to the Convention).

It is important to understand that the Taliban regime is bound directly by the prohibitions on production, stockpiling, transfer, or use under Article 1 of the APMBC as well as by the duty to destroy or ensure the destruction of AP mines

in Afghanistan under Article 5 and the duty to report on progress under Article 7. That is so, notwithstanding whether that governmental authority is recognised as such by other States or the United Nations. Afghanistan will need to submit a new Article 5 deadline extension request by the end of March 2024.

In September 2023, UNMAS agreed to resume resource mobilisation for operational activities in Afghanistan through the UN Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF) for mine action.⁴³ In October 2023, DMAC lifted its suspension of the Liaison Office enabling what is now known as the Mine Action Technical Cell (MATC) to resume operations and provide technical assistance to DMAC, including with respect to planning, tasking, prioritisation, and quality management.⁴⁴

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE IN MINE-AFFECTED STATES PARTIES

To help affected States Parties and their partners focus their capacity development and technical assistance efforts on areas of need, and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of survey and clearance programmes, a performance scoring system is used by Mine Action Review. The scoring criteria were developed in consultation with the Mine Action Review's Advisory Board Members (The HALO Trust (HALO), Mines Advisory Group (MAG), and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)), and with input from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

For their survey and clearance work in 2022, affected States Parties were scored on the basis of seven criteria: Understanding of contamination; National ownership and programme management; Gender and diversity; Information management and reporting; Planning and tasking; Land release system; and Land release outputs and Article 5 compliance. In the scoring, given their relative importance, additional weighting is accorded to Understanding of contamination; Land release system; and Land release outputs and Article 5 compliance. An average is then calculated that determines the overall score. The text box below outlines the seven programme performance criteria and key factors affecting scoring in detail.⁴⁵

A score of 8 or more is ranked Very Good. A score of 7.0–7.9 is ranked Good. A score of 5.0–6.9 is ranked Average. A score of 4.0–4.9 is ranked Poor. A score of less than 4 is ranked Very Poor. The results of the scoring for 2022 are summarised in Table 6. The country-specific assessments of the seven criteria, which should be viewed alongside the Recommendations for Action in the country reports, are

intended as an implementation tool, offered in the spirit of constructive dialogue, to assist States Parties to identify and overcome challenges and fulfil their Article 5 obligations as efficiently as possible.

For 2022, only Zimbabwe was rated Very Good. Angola, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand were all rated Good, as was the case the previous two years. Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Croatia, Iraq, Mauritania, Oman, Peru, Serbia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tajikistan, and Türkiye were all ranked as Average. Chad, DR Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Senegal, Somalia, Ukraine, and Yemen were all rated Poor, with Niger and Senegal having improved their respective performance category for 2022, from that of Very Poor for the previous year. Eritrea and Nigeria both continued to be ranked as Very Poor for 2022, although Nigeria achieved the biggest increase in score for the year, reflecting positive progress made in several aspects of its programme in 2022. Overall performance increased for 2022 compared to 2021, with 16 States Parties having increased performance; 11 remaining the same; and 3 having decreased in performance. As mentioned, the greatest improvement in programme performance for 2022 was registered in Nigeria, followed by Colombia and Senegal. The greatest drop in programme performance was registered in Afghanistan, followed by Eritrea.

Five affected States Parties were not ranked: Cyprus and Palestine (not assessed due to issues related to jurisdiction or control of mined areas); and Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Mali (not assessed due to insufficient information available for performance in 2022).

42 Afghanistan statement to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Intersessional Meeting, 16 May 2022, available at: <https://bit.ly/3ZXIthty>.

43 Email from UNMAS Headquarters, 4 October 2023.

44 Email from Nick Pond, Chief, Mine Action Programmes, UNAMA, 2 October 2023.

45 We encourage readers to also refer to Mine Action Review's *Guide to the Oslo Action Plan and results of 2023 monitoring: survey and clearance*, which is available on the Mine Action Review website. This separate report details the latest results of Mine Action Review's assessment of progress in implementation of the Oslo Action Plan, with respect to 24 indicators which are relevant to survey and clearance.

Table 6: Mine Action Programme Performance in Affected States Parties for 2022

State Party	Performance Rating in 2022	Score in 2022	Change from 2021 Score
Zimbabwe	Very Good	8	No change
Thailand	Good	7.7	No change
Angola	Good	7.5	No change
Cambodia	Good	7.4	+0.4
Sri Lanka	Good	7.1	+0.1
Sudan	Average	6.9	No change
Croatia	Average	6.8	+0.3
Colombia	Average	6.7	+0.6
South Sudan	Average	6.7	No change
Iraq	Average	6.2	No change
Tajikistan	Average	6.2	No change
Türkiye	Average	6.2	+0.2
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Average	5.8	+0.4
Oman	Average	5.7	-0.1
Serbia	Average	5.7	No change
Peru	Average	5.6	+0.3
Afghanistan	Average	5.4	-0.4
Mauritania	Average	5.2	No change
Somalia	Poor	4.7	+0.1
Yemen	Poor	4.7	+0.1
DR Congo	Poor	4.6	No change
Ukraine	Poor	4.6	+0.2
Ecuador	Poor	4.5	+0.1
Chad	Poor	4.4	No change
Guinea-Bissau	Poor	4.4	+0.4
Senegal	Poor	4.4	+0.5
Ethiopia	Poor	4.3	+0.3
Niger	Poor	4.0	+0.2
Nigeria	Very Poor	3.3	+0.7
Eritrea	Very Poor	1.9	-0.2

Mine Action Review Criteria to Assess Mine Action Programme Performance of APMBC States Parties

CRITERION	KEY FACTORS AFFECTING SCORING
UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Has a national baseline of AP mine contamination been established and is it up to date and accurate? ■ If no national baseline, or only a partial or inaccurate baseline, exists, is survey and/or re-survey being conducted or is it planned? ■ Are mined areas disaggregated from areas with other types of explosive ordnance (e.g. other explosive remnants of war (ERW) such as submunitions)? ■ Is contamination classified into suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) and confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs), based on whether there is indirect or direct evidence of mines, respectively? ■ Is there a high ratio of CHAs to SHAs?
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is there a national entity, such as a national mine action authority, overseeing mine action? ■ Is there a national mine action centre coordinating operations? ■ Are the roles and responsibilities in mine action clear and coherent within the national programme? ■ Is the mine action centre adequately staffed and skilled? ■ Are clearance operators involved in key decision-making processes? ■ Does national legislation, or other suitable administrative measures, effectively underpin the mine action programme? ■ Have the authorities created an enabling environment for mine action? ■ Has the government facilitated the receipt and efficient use of international assistance? ■ Is there political will for timely and efficient implementation of Article 5 of the APMBC? ■ Does the affected State contribute national resources to support the cost of the mine action centre and/or survey and clearance of mined areas? ■ Does the affected State have a resource mobilisation strategy in place for Article 5 implementation?
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Does the national mine action programme have a gender policy and implementation plan? Do the main mine action operators have one? ■ Is gender mainstreamed in the national mine action strategy and national mine action standards? ■ Are women and children in communities affected by mined areas consulted during survey and community liaison activities? ■ Are survey and community liaison teams inclusive and gender balanced, to facilitate access and participation by all groups, including women and children? ■ Are the needs of women and children in communities affected by mined areas considered in the prioritisation, planning, and tasking of survey and clearance activities? ■ Are ethnic or minority groups in communities affected by mined areas consulted during survey and community liaison activities? ■ Do survey, clearance, and community liaison teams include representatives from different ethnic or minority groups, to facilitate access and participation by all groups? ■ Are the needs of ethnic or minority groups in communities affected by mined areas considered in the prioritisation, planning, and tasking of survey and clearance activities? ■ Is relevant mine action data disaggregated by gender and age? ■ Is there equal access to employment for qualified women and men in survey and clearance teams, including for managerial level/supervisory positions?

CRITERION	KEY FACTORS AFFECTING SCORING
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is there a national information management system in place (e.g. IMSMA), and is the data accurate and reliable? ■ Are data collection forms consistent and do they enable collection of the necessary data? ■ Is data in the information management system disaggregated by type of contamination and method of land release? ■ Is the data in the information management system accessible to all operators? ■ Are ongoing efforts being made to ensure or improve the quality of data in the mine action database? ■ Does the affected State Party submit accurate and timely annual Article 7 reports on Article 5 progress? ■ Are Article 5 deadline extension requests of a high-quality and submitted in a timely manner? ■ Is the survey and clearance data reported by the affected State Party (e.g. in Article 7 reporting) accurate and disaggregated by type of contamination (i.e. mines from ERW) and method of land release? ■ Does the affected State Party report on progress in Article 5 implementation at the Meetings of States Parties and Intersessional Meetings and is reporting accurate and consistent between reporting periods?
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is there a national mine action strategy in place and does it include realistic goals for land release? ■ Is there a realistic annual work plan in place for land release? ■ Are there agreed and specified criteria for prioritisation of tasks? ■ Are key stakeholders meaningfully consulted in planning and prioritisation? ■ Is clearance of AP mines tasked in accordance with agreed prioritisation? ■ Are task dossiers issued in a timely and effective manner? ■ Where relevant, is there a plan for dealing with residual risk and liability? Is it realistic and sustainable?
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Does the affected State have national mine action standards in place for land release? ■ Do the standards enable or impede efficient evidence-based survey and clearance? ■ Are national standards reflected in SOPs? ■ Are standards and SOPs periodically reviewed against IMAS and international best practice, in consultation with clearance operators? ■ Is there an effective and efficient: i) non-technical survey capacity, ii) technical survey capacity, iii) clearance capacity in the programme? Does this include national capacity? ■ Are areas being cleared that prove to have no mine contamination? ■ Where relevant, is there national survey and clearance capacity in place to address mines discovered after the release of mined areas or post completion? ■ Is there an appropriate range of demining assets (manual, mechanical, and animal detection systems) integrated into land release operations? ■ Is there an effective quality management system in place for survey and clearance operations? ■ Where an accident has occurred within a mine action programme, was there an effective investigation? Were lessons learned shared between operators?
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is the affected State seeking to clear all AP mines from territory under its jurisdiction or control, including along national borders, in and around military installations, and in hard to access areas? ■ Have national mine action authorities set a target date for the completion of mine clearance and is this within the State Party's Article 5 deadline? ■ Is the target date for completion ambitious, yet realistic, based on existing capacity? ■ What were the outputs of survey and clearance of mined area in 2022, and were they greater or lesser than the previous year and why? ■ Are survey and clearance outputs in line with plans and Article 5 obligations? ■ Is the affected State on track to meet the target completion date and/or Article 5 deadline?

MONITORING OF THE OSLO ACTION PLAN

The five-year Oslo Action Plan adopted by States Parties at the Fourth Review Conference in Oslo in 2019 supports States Parties and their implementing partners to complete survey and clearance as soon and as safely as possible. For the first time, the Action Plan had actions with measurable indicators. A baseline of the current status of implementation has been established against which progress is being measured year-on-year through to the Fifth Review Conference in 2024.

In addition to the official APMBC monitoring of the Oslo Action Plan, Mine Action Review is providing civil society monitoring and analysis of its implementation with respect to survey and clearance. This is based on our broader research, which includes not only official treaty reporting (Article 7 reports and official government statements and updates under the Convention), but also liaison with national authorities, clearance operators, UNMAS, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the GICHD.

This year's results of Mine Action Review's 2023 monitoring of survey- and clearance-related indicators can be found on the Mine Action Review website.⁴⁶ This separate publication also includes a guide describing the Oslo Action Plan actions and indicators relevant for survey and clearance, along with supporting commentary on the meaning and importance of each action, with regards to efficient and effective Article 5 implementation.

As the results of the 2023 assessment of relevant indicators illustrates, States Parties have not yet fully implemented the actions applicable to them. But the hope is that through the efforts of national authorities, with the support of implementing partners, they can identify where there are gaps and make progress in addressing them. Mine Action Review welcomes feedback from States Parties and other stakeholders on the results of the 2023 assessment. Please send an email with any feedback or additional information for Mine Action Review's consideration to MineActionReview@npaid.org.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Progress to mainstream gender and diversity in mine action programmes was recorded in several mine-affected States Parties in 2022. Policies and strategies are typically supportive of gender equality in recruitment, but overall the picture remains a work in progress. The mainstreaming of gender and diversity is in line with Action 3 of the APMBC Oslo Action Plan for all States Parties to: "Ensure that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men are considered and inform all areas of Convention implementation and mine action programmes, in order to deliver an inclusive approach. Strive to remove barriers to full, equal and gender balanced participation in mine action and in Convention meetings."

A workshop on "Best practices and lessons learned from practical mainstreaming of gender and diversity in mine action" took place in May 2022, hosted by the Gender and Diversity Working Group (of which Mine Action Review is a member), and co-sponsored by Colombia and the United Kingdom in their respective capacity as president of the APMBC Twentieth Meeting of States Parties and the CCM Tenth Meeting of States Parties. The workshop examined how gender and diversity considerations can be better mainstreamed in survey and clearance, risk education, victim

assistance and international cooperation and assistance. It also sought to understand how to overcome the obstacles to full, equal, and meaningful women's participation in mine action operations and Convention meetings, and to raise awareness of the intersection between gender and other factors of vulnerability and exclusion (e.g. age, religion, ethnicity, language, and disability). The summary report of the workshop, that is available online,⁴⁷ contains some of the key findings and recommendations.

A selection of examples from Mine Action Review's research on affected States Parties is included below, but for additional information please see the *Gender and Diversity* section of the individual Clearing the Mines 2023 country reports.

Mine Action Review again scored Cambodia as the highest ranking State Party for its performance in 2022 with respect to implementing gender and diversity considerations in its survey and clearance programme, and was the only country to achieve a rating of 'Very Good'. Cambodia provides a good example to other mine-affected States Parties on what efforts can be taken to mainstream gender. It is the only programme that has drafted a national mine action standard (NMAS) on gender. The Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance

⁴⁶ See the *Guide to the Oslo Action Plan and Results of 2023 Monitoring*, available on the Mine Action Review website.

⁴⁷ Summary report of virtual workshop on "Best practices and lessons learned from the practical mainstreaming of gender and diversity in mine action", 30–31 May 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3MtdLUW>.

Authority (CMAA) has developed a Gender Mainstreaming in Mine Action Plan (GMMAP) in line with the objectives of the National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, and launched the latest version of the GMMAP 2021–2025, at a workshop in March 2022. This includes approaches for developing implementation of GMMAP guidelines through monitoring and evaluation of the performance of Mine Action Planning Units (MAPUs) and operators; building capacity of CMAA gender teams, MAPUs, and operators, and collecting sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data to promote inclusive participation in mine action, and advocating for the inclusion of more women in decision-making positions. A CMAA Gender Mainstreaming Team was established in 2019 to coordinate with the Technical Reference Group on Gender (TRG-G), one of eight TRGs ensuring coordination of the sector. The group is composed of representatives from the CMAA, relevant ministries and institutions, national and international operators, and UNDP.

Among demining operators in Cambodia, HALO again employed the most women deminers, who comprised more than 440 of its roughly 1,000 operations staff.⁴⁸ HALO said it aims to maintain a 50:50 balance among its operations staff and in 2023 it sought to increase the number of women in managerial positions. In contrast, CMAC, Cambodia's biggest operator, employed 204 women of a total of 1,276 deminers and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) staff (16%) while women accounted for 5% of its management and 20% of office staff.

Sri Lanka also performed well and its National Mine Action Completion Strategy for 2023–2027 contains a specific section on gender and diversity. As Sri Lanka nears completion, integrating gender and diversity considerations during the staff transition process will be crucial for sustainable and successful outcomes, as outlined in strategic objective 4.⁴⁹ The National Mine Action Centre (NMAC) reported that only 5% of its total employees in 2022 were female, with no women in managerial or operational positions, a dramatic decrease from the previous year. In 2022, for the first time, the Sri Lankan Army (SLA)'s Humanitarian Demining Units (HDUs) trained and deployed two female demining teams.⁵⁰ In 2022, HALO collaborated with other demining operators to conduct a staff survey, which will inform the sector's Staff Livelihood Transition strategy, with a specific focus on supporting groups like female heads of households in their transition to sustainable livelihoods post-2027/28.⁵¹

Iraq's new mine action strategy for 2023–28 recognises the different impact of contamination shaped by gender, age, and ethnic or religious affiliations and requires specific activities targeting those needs, for which disaggregated

data is a prerequisite.⁵² Conservative social attitudes to women's employment hamper recruitment in what has been a male-dominated sector but demining organisations are slowly increasing the number of women they employ, including in supervisory positions and in survey, community liaison, and clearance. Thus, graduates of an EOD Level 3 course at the Ministry of Interior's training centre in 2022 included the first female Civil Defence staff member. Fifteen women participated in EOD Levels 1 and 2 courses conducted by UNMAS. Additionally, nine female Civil Defence officers completed an explosive hazard first-responder training course and a DMA female staff member passed a course on drone-supported NTS conducted by UNMAS Iraq's technical support unit.⁵³

Despite some State Parties taking concrete and comprehensive measures to mainstream gender in their mine action programmes, in many others, reality does not meet the rhetoric. Too many States Parties lack policies or guidelines on gender, and many fail to provide updates on what measures, if any, they are taking to mainstream gender in their national mine action programmes. Gender policies need to be adopted, implemented, and mainstreamed in all affected States.

In Afghanistan, Taliban bans on women's employment have reversed DMAC's pre-2021 plans to increase the level of female employment in the mine action programme and prevented many women in the mine action sector from working. After its takeover in August 2021, the Taliban imposed progressively greater restrictions on women and girls, banning women from working for foreign non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in December 2022⁵⁴ and from working for the United Nations in April 2023.⁵⁵ However, implementation of the bans has varied according to locality and some openings for women remained both in field operations and administrative support positions.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 makes it explicit that it is aligned with the 2003 Law on Gender Equality. But women continue to represent a small portion of staff within the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BHMAC) and clearance operators' programmes, especially in field operations, despite BHMAC's express commitment to integrating gender in all mine action activities. NPA reported that the overall gender split of its staff in 2022 was 12% female, with eight women (8% of the total) employed in operational roles and four women (22%) holding managerial positions. This is largely the same as the proportion of women overall working for NPA in 2021. In 2022, NPA Bosnia and Herzegovina continued implementing NPA's Global Gender Equality Policy through

48 HALO reported employing 450 women deminers among 939 operations staff (48%). Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 16 May 2023. SADD statistics reported by the UNDP Clearing for Results Stage IV (CfRIV) showed HALO had 441 female deminers among 1,029 field staff (43%); UNDP CfRIV, *Annual Project Progress Report 2022*, p. 15.

49 Sri Lanka National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, pp. 16–17.

50 Email from Jayalath Rohana, NMAC, 6 July 2023.

51 Email from Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023.

52 Iraq National Mine Action Strategy 2023–2028, p. 15.

53 Email from Shinobu Mashima, Programme Officer, UNMAS Iraq, 11 May 2023.

54 UNMAS estimated the ban would result in 150 women working in mine action losing their jobs, 456,300 women and girls being deprived of risk education, and 8,700 women would not benefit from VA, including physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support, and social/economic inclusion. Participant notes from UNMAS meeting with MAPA directors, 3 January 2023.

55 Reuters, "Taliban bans female NGO workers, jeopardising aid efforts", 24 December 2022; and Reuters, "Taliban ban on women working for the UN an 'internal' issue", 12 April 2023.

its annual work plans, with access to equal opportunities for all staff regardless of gender, age, or ethnic and religious background. NPA remains the only demining organisation in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a woman deminer—but only one—in its clearance teams.⁵⁶

Even more work is needed to meaningfully start mainstreaming diversity considerations into mine action programmes. Mine action can and should counteract systemic discrimination based on diversity factors such as race, ethnicity, language, religion, disability, sexual orientation, social class, and age, and should ensure that diversity is mainstreamed alongside gender in mine action programmes. Components of a person's identity interrelate and therefore taking an intersectional approach can help identify where different diversity aspects are overlapping and creating interdependent systems of discrimination. Steps are being taken in some mine action programmes to factor in diversity considerations, as the following examples illustrate, but the paucity of concrete examples across States Parties shows just how far programmes and operators have to go in making diversity an integral part of their work.

In Colombia, where almost one in seven of the population come from an indigenous or ethnic minority group, data are disaggregated by ethnicity as well as by gender and age. Humanity & Inclusion (HI)'s institutional policy on Disability, Gender and Age is supplemented in Colombia by the inclusion of ethnicity as a fourth transformational issue. It is generally necessary to choose a representative for each ethnic group, no matter how large the area of intervention. If a given territory has Afro, indigenous, and farmer communities, a person must be contracted from each group

for community liaison. HI has noted that the standard NTS forms do not require collection of data on disability, which is a significant drawback.⁵⁷ Humanicemos DH—a demining organisation comprising personnel that signed the 2016 Peace Agreement with the government and who are in the process of being reintegrated economically and socially into civilian life—surpassed its initial target of hiring 31 women into the organisation in early 2023 and obtained a national seal of approval on non-discrimination for its best practices concerning gender, diversity, and inclusion by the Colombian National Institute of Technical Norms (ICONTEC).⁵⁸

In Somalia, all operators confirmed that clan affiliation is also an important consideration when recruiting and deploying operational staff. It is important that the hiring process includes people from the different clan and ethnic groups to ensure diversity and sensitivity to this issue is reflected in the deployment of demining teams.⁵⁹ Ethnic identity is also an important consideration for survey and clearance teams in South Sudan, to help ensure safe access and acceptance by local communities.

In Zimbabwe, gender and diversity are integrated into the National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 and annual work plans. The mine action centre, ZIMAC, says that all community groups are routinely consulted in survey and community liaison activities. Survey and community liaison teams are said to be gender-balanced and diverse, with personnel recruited locally from affected areas to incorporate ethnic and minority groups who speak the language of the community. Demining and community liaison teams also include some women as leaders.⁶⁰

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION IN AFFECTED STATES PARTIES

Every mine action programme should be considering the environmental impact of both contamination and clearance. Clearance programmes have a responsibility to “do no harm” to the communities in which they work, which includes mitigating the negative environmental impact of their activities and systematically integrating environmental assessments into the planning process. A policy brief, *Mitigating the Environmental Impacts of Explosive Ordnance and Land Release*, published in 2021, is available for download on the Mine Action Review website.

During the 2023 APMBC Intersessional Meetings in June 2023, a panel session took place on “Cross-cutting priorities of the Presidency, Green Implementation: Integrating Environmental Considerations in the Convention’s implementation”. The panel session was moderated by the President of 21MSP German Ambassador Göbel, and Mine Action Review presented on behalf of the Environmental

Issues in Mine Action (EIMA) Working Group, BHMAG on behalf of a mine-affected State, and Germany on behalf of a donor State. The thematic panel session explored the importance of integrating environmental considerations into implementation efforts. It also provided a timely opportunity for States Parties to consider the place of the environment in the next five-year Action Plan, due to be adopted at the Fifth Review Conference in late 2024.

In addition, Mine Action Review also moderated a plenary session on “Mine Action, Climate and the Environment” at the 26th International Meeting of Mine Action National Directors and United Nations Advisors (NDM-UN) in June 2023. The panel discussion, a recording of which is available online,⁶¹ explored why this topic is of utmost importance for national authorities, implementing partners and donors alike. Panellists included NPA, on behalf of the EIMA Working Group; the Director of PM/WRA in the US Department of

56 Emails from Valerie Warmington, Programme Manager, NPA, 6 April and 29 June 2023.

57 Email from Arturo Bureo, Operations Manager, HI, 26 May 2023.

58 The Instituto Colombiano de Normas Técnicas (ICONTEC) is affiliated to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

59 Emails from Mustafa Bawar, UNMAS, 17 March 2020; Claus Nielsen, NPA, 14 April 2020; and Lawrie Clapton, HALO, 14 June 2020.

60 Article 7 Report, Annex A, p. A-1; and email from Åsa Massleberg, GICHD, 8 July 2022.

61 UN, 26th International Meeting of Mine Action National Directors and United Nations Advisors (NDM) webpage, available at: <https://bit.ly/3YFCGdR>.

State; the Director of BHMAG; and Chief, Policy, Advocacy, Donor Relations and Outreach, UNMAS.

International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) 07.13 concerns environmental management in mine action. As the IMAS notes, the protection of the environment is receiving growing attention from national governments and international institutions, which is reflected in the increasingly rigorous demands of national legislation in many countries and the terms of international treaties on the environment. Poor environmental management during mine action operations can generate short- and long-term adverse impacts on land, water, soil, and air, with potentially harmful effects on the communities living in the vicinity of mine action work sites. But proper assessment of the environment throughout the land release process can help mitigate negative impacts. First published in 2017, IMAS 7.13 is currently being reviewed and revised by the IMAS review board. The existing IMAS 7.13 only has one small reference to climate change, but the updated IMAS, expected to be adopted by the end of 2023, is planned to include several climate change considerations and be accompanied by a Technical Note on Mine Action (TNMA) to support its implementation.

The consequences of mine action for the environment should be taken into consideration before land release takes place (during planning and tasking); during survey and clearance; and after completion of land release. Clearing ordnance inevitably has an environmental impact, but employing efficient and effective land release methods minimises this impact by making sure that survey is used to confirm contaminated areas and release those areas not found to be contaminated, ensuring that full clearance is only conducted on contaminated land.

Every State Party seeking an extension to its Article 5 deadline is required to describe the environmental implications of that extension.⁶² While some Article 5 deadline extension requests considered and granted by States Parties have briefly referred to how contamination affects the environment, most make little or no reference to the environmental implications of land release operations. We encourage States seeking an extension to include, for example, how environmental considerations will be addressed during planning and tasking for survey and clearance, in order to minimise potential harm from land release activities or how climate change may impact planned operations or the affected country's prioritisation for clearance.

The APMBC's Oslo Action Plan, adopted in 2019, does not address the environment or climate change, but valuable lessons can be drawn from the way in which the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) integrated environmental considerations into the Lausanne Action Plan adopted in September 2021. Elaboration of the next five-year Action Plan of the APMBC, to be adopted by States Parties at the Fifth Review Conference in Cambodia in 2024, offers an excellent

opportunity for States Parties to integrate and mainstream this important topic, helping ensure implementation of the Convention is responsible and sustainable.

There has been considerable progress recorded either in national programmes as a whole or at the least among individual clearance operators. Examples of some of the positive developments are included below, but for additional information please see the *Environmental Policies and Action* sub-section of the report for each State Party. Several States Parties, such as Afghanistan, Cambodia, Sudan, and Zimbabwe, now have a dedicated NMAS on environmental management, while Tajikistan's NMAS contains a chapter on the environment, health, and safety.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the use of certain machines has been banned from clearing agricultural areas to protect the soil and in mountain pastures to protect against removal of layers of grasses that have taken many years to grow. NPA in Bosnia and Herzegovina has a dedicated environment and climate country policy in place. MAG is increasingly examining the interaction between wildfires, landslides, and explosive ordnance contamination. A joint GICHD-UNDP 2022 study on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and mine action in Bosnia and Herzegovina identified the direct contribution of land release to 12 SDGs and 35 of their associated targets, including relating to flood prevention.⁶³ Following the 2014 flood in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a recovery needs assessment initiated by the government found that mines contaminated more than 70% of the flood-affected zone and were a major safety hazard to implementing recovery efforts.⁶⁴ In Donji Svilaj and Novi Grad (FBiH) along the border with Croatia, mines along the Sava River and very close to the road hindered flood protection and safe mobility. Contamination also impeded access to land for the purpose of establishing flood prevention measures. Clearance allowed channels to be accessed to allow the construction of the first major motorway in BiH, connecting the country with Croatia. The motorway also serves as a flood protection barrier.⁶⁵

The Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) issued a national standard, CMAS 20, on "Environmental Management in Mine Action" in 2022. This requires operators to minimise the adverse impact of their operations on the environment, identify steps necessary to mitigate harm, and ensure that land is left in a suitable condition for its intended use. Operators are required to take account of erosion or soil degradation; possible pollution of air, water, or soil; and damage to infrastructure, wildlife, and vegetation, while also dealing with litter, debris, and other waste as well as damage to heritage sites or objects.⁶⁶

In Croatia, no specific national standards regulate environmental management in mine action but several synchronised cross-ministry policies and laws require environmental protection.⁶⁷ In accordance with the 2015 Act on Mine Action (as amended) mine action operations are to

62 Art. 5(4)(c), APMBC.

63 GICHD and UNDP, "The Sustainable Development Outcomes of Mine Action in Bosnia and Herzegovina", 2 June 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3X9qv8z>.

64 Ibid., p.59.

65 Ibid., pp. 60–61.

66 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 6; and CMAS 20.

67 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

minimise adverse impact on the environment. Furthermore, planning for mine action operations must identify and assess relevant environmental issues and determine appropriate and effective mitigation measures. Croatia's annual mine action plans are coordinated through several ministries, including the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, and with local and regional administrations. Specific nature protection measures are described in detail within conceptual demining plans and operators are obliged to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the environment is left in a state suitable for its intended use once mine action operations cease. As a high proportion of the remaining contaminated land is in forested areas, Croatia is putting sustainable development and environmental stewardship at the forefront and will focus on preserving and restoring forest ecosystems.⁶⁸

The Serbian Mine Action Centre (SMAC) has stated its commitment to taking environmental aspects into account and minimising potential harm from demining activities ever since its foundation. It reported that for each survey or clearance project task there is an obligation on the contractor (the demining operator) to include in its execution plan an environmental protection and a fire protection plan, together with a plan for health and safety at work.⁶⁹

In Somalia, HALO stated that its close attention to environmental considerations has been welcomed by local communities in Somalia's fragile environmental situation. For example, the community has prohibited the cutting of vegetation, unless completely necessary. While this slows down operations, HALO has been able to operate on most minefields with minimal disturbance to vegetation. There are a number of minefields within HALO's area of operations, which are situated along the 50km Ethiopian border in the El Barde region, where wild frankincense trees are found, many of which grow on sloped ground, where soil has been washing away, exposing roots. Although populations had moved away from the area due to the presence of mines, the return of local communities has placed the land at greater risk of harm from human activity. HALO has also been experimenting with creating bunds (soil or stone structures, which can be stabilised with vegetation, to help reduce water

run-off and soil erosion), around some of the trees most at risk from desertification and drought. This has, so far, helped prevent soil erosion and allowed some trees to regenerate.⁷⁰

Sri Lanka does not have a separate national standard or policy on environmental management. Operators reported that when working in contaminated forests, permissions must be obtained from the National Forestry & Wildlife Commissions and Archaeology Department who conduct routine visits to help ensure no harm is done to wildlife, forests, and land of archaeological value.⁷¹ In 2022, HALO organised, on behalf of the NMAC and other operators, a Wildlife & Forestry Commission Technical Working Group. The purpose of the Working Group was to agree a more collaborative approach to the clearance of jungle/forested tasks in the most efficient and environmentally sensitive way, including with the use of small, mechanised assets. HALO and MAG have now received ad-hoc authorisation to use mechanised assets in certain forested tasks.⁷²

In Zimbabwe, APOPO is also engaged in establishing "food forests" through syntropic agroforestry, including through a pilot project that aims to increase food yield per acre, regenerate soil, restore eco-systems, minimise the need for irrigation, and maximize climate resilience for crops.⁷³ Waste generation and disposal at HALO's field camps in Zimbabwe are closely monitored and the camps have been run on solar power since 2016. In 2022, HALO began trials of electric vegetation trimmers, with the eventual aim of fully replacing the existing petrol fleet.⁷⁴

Clearance operators also have environmental policies and management systems in place at their headquarters and sometimes also in country programmes, although the comprehensiveness of these varies across organisations. Some international clearance operators, such as HALO and NPA, now have dedicated personnel working on the environment at head office level. In addition, the Environment in Mine Action (EIMA) working group met regularly in 2022. It is open to any interested stakeholder in the sector and launched a website in 2023, which also contains a resources page containing useful environmental and climate change information, tools, and database resources.⁷⁵

68 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

69 Emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 March and 11 April 2022.

70 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 7 July 2023.

71 Emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023; Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023; Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023; and Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 30 April 2023.

72 Emails from Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023; and Cristy McLennan, MAG, 16 August 2023.

73 APOPO presentation, National Stakeholder Dialogue on Humanitarian Demining: For a Mine-Free Zimbabwe by 2025, Harare, 24 January 2023.

74 Emails from Samuel Fricker, HALO, 30 May and 14 August 2022; and Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

75 Visit the EIMA Working Group website at: <https://environmentinmineaction.org>.

OUTLOOK

Huge progress has been made in implementing the obligations set out in Article 5 of the APMBC in States Parties and in improving the practices of the mine action sector more broadly. But as States Parties begin to look beyond the Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties in 2023 to the Fifth Review Conference in 2024, one challenge in particular looms large, namely the manifest use of anti-personnel mines by State Party Ukraine in grave violation of Article 1 of the Convention, and the lack of a robust response from the overwhelming majority of States Parties.

Having revoked its decision to withdraw from the Convention, Eritrea should submit an Article 5 deadline extension request for consideration at 21MSP and should implement its clearance obligations once again, with the backing of the international community.

The Fifth Review Conference should aim to ensure that, at the least, Angola, Cambodia, Chad, Croatia, DR Congo, Ecuador, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Niger, Peru, Serbia, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Zimbabwe are all free of mines, at the latest, by the Sixth Review Conference in 2029, and in many cases, much earlier. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Türkiye should aim to join this list. Should armed conflict end, Cameroon, Colombia, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Sudan could also achieve completion by then or in the early 2030s. Such an agenda is ambitious, but it is also achievable with political will, good planning, and sustained funding. Donors should reward good performance. Zimbabwe was the only affected State Party whose national mine action programme performance in 2022 was rated as “Very Good” by Mine Action Review. Despite its good performance, Zimbabwe still currently lacks sufficient international funds needed to enable it to fulfil its Article 5 obligations by its clearance deadline of end of 2025. The international donor community has a significant opportunity to support the mine action programme in Zimbabwe to meet its 2025 completion deadline and, in doing so, provide a valuable example of success. In the case of Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Ukraine, and Yemen, another decade or more are likely to be needed to complete clearance, along with a significant change for the better in the security situation.

STATES PARTIES

The background of the page is composed of several overlapping geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in two shades of green: a dark forest green and a lighter, vibrant lime green. These shapes are arranged in a dynamic, non-representational pattern that fills the entire page, creating a modern and abstract visual texture.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2025

NOT ON TRACK TO COMPLETE CLEARANCE (INTERIM DEADLINE)

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: MASSIVE

NATIONAL DATABASE ESTIMATE
AT END 2022

180_{KM²}

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

13.85_{KM²}

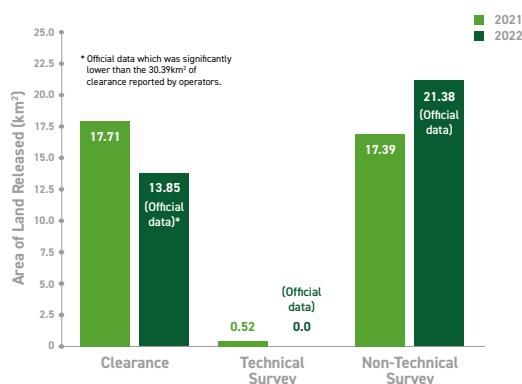
(OFFICIAL DATA WHICH WAS
SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER THAN
THE 30.39_{KM²} OF CLEARANCE
REPORTED BY OPERATORS)

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

4,803

(INCLUDING 1,954 MINES OF
AN IMPROVISED NATURE)
(OPERATOR DATA)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Afghanistan was granted an interim two-year extension to its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline in 2022. The request was prepared and submitted by the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations in Geneva representing the former government and consequently of questionable validity but it was endorsed by Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA)-appointed management of the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC).

In June 2022, three months after DMAC terminated a United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) emergency coordination centre, UNMAS established a Liaison Office to provide coordination and information management. The Liaison Office closed in November 2022 due to lack of funding, reopened in January 2023 with funding for the year but closed again in April after the IEA required it to co-locate with DMAC, an action seen as prohibited by international sanctions on the IEA. DMAC resumed control of information management and the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database in February 2023. The Liaison Office suspension was lifted by DMAC on 2 October 2023 and technical assistance provided to DMAC through what is now known as the Mine Action Technical Cell (MATC). UNMAS decided in November 2022 to halt funding for survey and clearance operations through the Voluntary Trust Fund for mine action (VTF) with effect from end-March 2023. In September 2023, UNMAS agreed to resume resource mobilisation for operational activities through the VTF.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The Afghan government and DMAC should engage constructively with the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) through the Mine Action Technical Cell (MATC).
- DMAC should similarly collaborate with the UN, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), and implementing partners (IPs) to strengthen information management, update Afghanistan's IMSMA database and resume annual submission of Article 7 reports.
- DMAC in collaboration with the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) IPs and the UN should conduct a nationwide survey, taking advantage of improved security and access to all provinces, in order to establish an up-to-date baseline estimate of mine contamination, including from anti-personnel (AP) mines of an improvised nature.
- The IEA and DMAC should support the participation of women in mine action.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	7	7	Afghanistan has a good, but still incomplete, knowledge of pre-2001 or "legacy" AP mine contamination and continues to add significant amounts of previously unrecorded mined area to the database. Improved security and regional access since the change of government in August 2021 and the cooperation of former Taliban fighters has contributed to significant progress in understanding the threat posed by mines of an improvised nature.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	4	5	The MAPA is nationally managed but heavily dependent on international funding, which previously covered most DMAC salaries. Diplomatic isolation and international sanctions targeting the Taliban government cut off donor funding for DMAC leaving only a skeleton management team in place with minimal capacity to discharge its oversight and coordination functions. DMAC opposed UNMAS' proposals for interim coordination mechanisms until June 2022 when, in agreement with DMAC, UNMAS set up a Liaison Office funded by the UN to coordinate mine action on a temporary basis. It closed in November 2022 after running out of funding, reopened in January 2023, but closed again in April 2023 after the IEA and DMAC required it to co-locate with DMAC, a move prohibited by international rules on cooperation with the IEA. The Liaison Office suspension was lifted by DMAC on 2 October 2023 and technical assistance provided to DMAC through what is now known as the MATC.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	4	5	Until August 2021, DMAC was committed to mainstreaming gender, which was one of four main goals in the 2016–20 strategic plan. Progress implementing it was slow but most IPs had gender focal points, hired some women in community liaison and risk education (and in rare cases, for clearance). Since August 2021, however, stringent IEA regulations have sharply reduced public space for women although some IPs were able to continue to employ women in office and field (risk education and community liaison) roles.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	4	4	Information management (IM) suffered major disruption after the change of government. DMAC has an IMSMA database but lost its IM personnel after the end to international funding. IPs continued to report operating results to DMAC but database operations largely halted after August 2021. The UN Humanitarian Mine Action Coordination Centre for Afghanistan (UN-HMACCA) resumed data processing early in 2022 but this was terminated at the end of March. The Liaison Office established by UNMAS in June 2022 took on information management for the MAPA until it ran out of money in November. DMAC took back data entry from February 2023 but with limited capacity for uploading the substantial backlog of IP reports and without quality assuring the data. The land release data suffered from major inconsistencies with IP's reported results. As of September 2023, Afghanistan had not submitted an Article 7 report covering 2022.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	4	6	DMAC planning and tasking of the MAPA suffered disruption after the August 2021 change of government but survey and clearance has continued on a project-by-project basis as international donors continued to fund IPs bilaterally or through UNMAS and the UN VTF.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	6	6	The MAPA has national mine action standards (AMAS) in Dari and English that are subject to regular review and in 2019 it introduced new standards for clearance of mines of an improvised nature. International experts believe the AMAS need comprehensive updating. Land release is achieved largely by full clearance, underscoring weaknesses in IP application of non-technical survey. Upheavals in DMAC after August 2021 disrupted quality management, which has continued but only sporadically.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	6	6	Despite the political and financial turmoil impacting mine action, the MAPA continues to release substantial amounts of mined area but data weaknesses prevent a clear determination of how much. Clearance of nearly 14km ² in 2022, based on latest DMAC data provided by the UN, is about half the average rate of clearance over the last five years but may understate the MAPA's output. IPs recorded clearance of 30km ² in 2022, assisted by improved security and better provincial access. The IEA, meanwhile, affirmed its commitment to fulfilling Afghanistan's APMBC treaty obligations. Although Afghanistan's request for a two-year extension to its deadline was submitted by the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the UN in Geneva in July 2022 (representing the former regime), DMAC advised Mine Action Review that it endorsed the request. The extension was granted at the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC.
Average Score	5.4	5.8	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA)
- Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Afghan Technical Consultants (ATC)
- Agency for Rehabilitation and Energy Conservation in Afghanistan (AREA)
- Demining Agency for Afghanistan (DAFA)
- Mine Clearance Planning Agency (MCPA)
- Mine Detection and Dog Centre (MDC)

- Organisation for Mine Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation (OMAR)
- 18 commercial companies accredited in 2021, but only one reported active in AP mine clearance

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Danish Refugee Council Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding Sector (DRC)
- FSD
- The HALO Trust (HALO)

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

DMAC estimated Afghanistan's contamination from AP mines, including mines of an improvised nature, as covering 180km² at the end of 2022 (see Table 1). This represents a drop of a little under 6% on the estimate a year earlier (191km²). The decline occurred in estimates of conventional or "legacy" AP mines but Afghanistan is still discovering areas affected by improvised mines widely used in the two decades of conflict that preceded the August 2021 change of regime and its estimate of improvised mine contamination rose by a quarter in 2022.¹

Table 1: Mined area by contamination type (at end 2022)²

Contamination type	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
Anti-personnel mines	1,568	104,106,701	68	22,997,703	127,104,404
Improvised mines	1,178	40,557,784	12	12,715,540	53,273,324
AP mine total	2,746	144,664,485	80	35,713,243	180,377,728
Anti-vehicle mines	996	150,561,192	158	56,727,559	207,288,751
Total mined area	3,742	295,225,677	238	92,440,802	387,666,479

CHA = Confirmed hazardous area SHA = Suspected hazardous area

Most of Afghanistan's conventional AP mine contamination resulted from the decade-long war of resistance that followed the Soviet invasion of 1979, the 1992–96 internal armed conflict, and the 1996–2001 fighting between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. Big concentrations of "legacy" mines in the north-east, centre, and west (see Table 2) account for close to three-quarters of the total. Afghanistan estimated the area affected by these so-called "legacy" mines dating from before 2001 amounted to 127km² at the end of 2022, down from 147km² a year earlier.

Operators say some of the survey carried out in the past lacked rigour resulting in inflated suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) that will require significant amounts of cancellation in the future.³ After decades of demining, the remaining confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) are increasingly located in remote and difficult mountainous terrain that has slowed the pace of clearance.

1 Email from Abdul Habib Rahimi, Chief of Operations, DMAC, 3 May 2023.

2 Ibid.

3 Interview with Farid Homayoun, Country Director, HALO, 4 June 2022.

Table 2: AP mined area by region, excluding improvised mines (at end 2022)⁴

Region	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
Central	395	23,220,687	12	1,285,624	24,506,311
East	168	12,238,854	2	136,900	12,375,754
North	178	3,826,370	0	0	3,826,370
North East	543	34,346,170	12	8,682,246	43,028,416
South	71	5,839,533	30	4,773,932	10,613,465
South East	100	7,018,155	10	1,611,001	8,629,156
West	113	17,616,932	2	6,508,000	24,124,932
Totals	1,568	104,106,701	68	22,997,703	127,104,404

Survey continues to identify previously unrecorded hazardous areas. In 2022, with improved security permitting access to areas previously closed off by conflict, DMAC reported this amounted to nearly 20km² (see Table 3).⁵ This included significant areas affected by anti-vehicle (AV) mines but more than half the total consisted of improvised mines as operators stepped up survey and clearance in what were previously some of the most fiercely contested areas. However, DMAC's estimate may understate the total. The HALO Trust (HALO) reported finding more than 12km² of legacy AP mined areas in 2022 and mined areas with AP mines of an improvised nature amounting to 40km² across 19 provinces.⁶

Table 3: Newly recorded contamination in 2022⁷

Contamination type	Mined areas	Area (m ²)	Provinces affected
AP mines	67	2,717,355	5
AP/AV mines mixed	6	571,749	6
Anti-vehicle mines	54	5,836,526	3
Totals	127	9,125,630	
Improvised mines	434	10,740,855	20
Sum totals	561	19,866,485	

Seventy per cent of mined areas with improvised mines recorded by DMAC are in the southern region, particularly Helmand and Kandahar (see Table 4) with the extent of CHAs rising from 16km² in 2021 to 25km² at the end of 2022.⁸

Table 4: Improvised mine contamination by region (at end 2022)⁹

Region	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
Central	45	901,301	0	0	901,301
East	281	8,655,892	4	111,973	8,767,865
North	42	1,586,044	3	50,188	1,636,232
North East	63	1,094,458	6	86,199	1,180,657
South	562	24,906,041	10	12,467,180	37,373,221
South East	46	305,127	0	0	305,127
West	138	3,108,921	0	0	3,108,921
Totals	1,177	40,557,784	23	12,715,540	53,273,324

⁴ Email from Abdul Habib Rahimi, DMAC, 3 May 2023.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Email from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 22 June 2023.

⁷ Email from Abdul Habib Rahimi, DMAC, 3 May 2023.

⁸ Emails from Olivier Demars, Information Management Advisor, UNMAS, 24 April 2022; and Abdul Habib Rahimi, DMAC, 3 May 2023.

⁹ Email from Abdul Habib Rahimi, DMAC, 3 May 2023.

HALO, however, after extensive survey, reported that improvised mines were contaminating 27 provinces and estimated their extent at close to 118km². According to HALO's estimate, Kandahar province alone accounted for 60.2km² of the remaining contamination, followed by Uruzgan (15.4km²) Helmand (12.5km²) and Nangahar (6.95km²).¹⁰

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Afghanistan also contends with a significant threat from AV mines and from unexploded ordnance (UXO), which caused close to 90% of accidents in 2022.¹¹ DMAC reports over 200km² of confirmed and suspected AV mined areas, much of it a low-priority threat scattered over wide areas of sparse population. Since the change of government, however, IPs have worked in areas previously shut off by insecurity such as Ghazni, Wardak, and Zabul, identifying AV mined areas inside villages that are high priority for clearance.¹²

Afghanistan has massive contamination by a wide range of explosive remnants of war, including around 10km² of cluster munition-contaminated area¹³ (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Afghanistan for further information). The UN reported in 2022 that Afghanistan had 39 former NATO firing ranges covering 681km² to be cleared of UXO, of which one, covering 51km², was being addressed.¹⁴ It is unclear what funding or IP capacity was available in 2022 to address these tasks.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The MAPA's management structure remained unchanged by the Taliban takeover of government in August 2021 but the impact of international sanctions and financial pressures disrupted the sector in 2022. The IEA retained Afghanistan's National Disaster Management Authority in the role of a national mine action authority, setting overall policy, while DMAC continued to be responsible for managing and coordinating operations, information management, and quality management (QM). The IEA-appointed director of DMAC said that the only change resulting from the change of government was in the personnel running it.¹⁵

The lack of international recognition of the IEA and financial sanctions imposed by the United States and Western governments has severely limited DMAC's ability to function. DMAC completed the transition from being a project of UNMAS to national management in June 2018. From its headquarters in Kabul and seven regional offices, DMAC coordinated the work of national and international IPs, prepared strategic plans and annual work plans, set priorities and standards, accredited operators, conducted quality assurance (QA), managed the mine action database, and liaised with international donors.¹⁶

However, DMAC remained almost entirely dependent on international financing. By 2021, the Government of Afghanistan paid salaries of only 15 of DMAC's 155 staff, the rest being paid by UNMAS and the US Department of State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM/WRA) through ITF

Enhancing Human Security.¹⁷ After August 2021, international sanctions imposed on the IEA halted cooperation between UNMAS and DMAC, and the staff working for DMAC on internationally funded salaries transferred to UNMAS. As of June 2022, DMAC's active staff consisted of the director and 15 other staff, including the heads of planning and operations and an information management officer.¹⁸

DMAC's director maintained close contact with IPs and sought actively to facilitate MAPA operations, intervening to resolve occasional difficulties between IPs and local authorities or to facilitate equipment imports, but DMAC acknowledged it lacked capacity to conduct previous levels of coordination and management. DMAC's regional offices closed and quality management staff were able to conduct only sporadic visits to IP operating sites to accredit teams and mechanical assets. IPs continued to submit progress reports to DMAC but the Directorate lacked capacity to upload them into the database.¹⁹

To maintain some continuity in MAPA operations, DMAC and UNMAS reached agreement on setting up an emergency coordination mechanism independent of the government and identified from November 2021 as the UN Humanitarian Mine Action Coordination Centre for Afghanistan (UN-HMACCA). The mechanism was agreed as a "temporary project" pending international recognition of the IEA. DMAC would remain responsible for mine action sector governance, strategy, and accreditation, and international treaty compliance.

10 Email from Farid Homyoun, HALO, 22 June 2023.

11 Email from Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, Deputy Programme Manager and Chief of Operations, UNMAS, 12 July 2023.

12 Interview with Farid Homyoun, HALO, 4 June 2022 and email 22 June 2023.

13 Email from Abdul Habib Rahimi, DMAC, 3 May 2023.

14 UNMAS, "Humanitarian Mine Action in Afghanistan", 10 February 2022.

15 Interview with Qari Nooruddin Rustamkhail, Director, DMAC, in Kabul, 4 June 2022.

16 Email from Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, Chief of Staff, UNMAS/DMAC, 16 May 2017.

17 Email from Mohammad Akbar Oriakhil, DMAC, 17 March 2021.

18 Interview with Qari Nooruddin Rustamkhail, DMAC, Kabul, 4 June 2022; and email, 15 June 2022.

19 Interviews with international and national implementing partners, Kabul, 4–10 June 2022.

UN-HMACCA would take on planning, prioritisation, and land release; data collection and information management; accreditation and training; and public relations, as well as resource mobilisation.²⁰ The formula proved unacceptable to DMAC, and UN-HMACCA was terminated at the end of March 2022, ending the employment of 118 national staff.²¹

In June 2022, DMAC and UNMAS agreed on the creation of a Liaison Office providing coordination for the MAPA, tasking of IPs, and management of the IMSMA database. The Liaison Office suspended operations in November 2022 because of a shortage of funding. UNMAS obtained international funding for the Liaison Office for 2023 and resumed operations in January 2023. In February 2023, DMAC took back responsibility for data entry and running the IMSMA database and suspended the Liaison Office with effect from the start of April.²² A directive subsequently issued by the Office of the Prime Minister required DMAC and the Liaison Office to work from the same building. Donor restrictions did not allow UNMAS to comply, causing the Liaison Office to close.²³ Negotiations continued between the IEA and the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) and as at June

2023, the UNMAS office in Kabul had 25 staff supporting operations of MAPA IPs, including 16 QM inspectors.²⁴

DMAC lifted its suspension of the Liaison Office on 2 October 2023 enabling what is now known as the Mine Action Technical Cell (MATC) to resume operations and provide technical assistance to DMAC, including with respect to planning, tasking, prioritisation, and QM.²⁵ At the time of writing, the MATC did not include support for information management.

UNMAS decided in November 2022 that it would cease providing funding through the VTF for survey and clearance operations from 1 April 2023 and that VTF funding would only support coordination, reportedly returning approximately US\$10 million to donors. IPs criticised the decision, which they said would severely impact national demining organisations that lacked direct contact with international donors. It added to the financial pressures resulting from the downturn in donor support and which has already led to significant deminer lay-offs.²⁶ In September 2023, UNMAS agreed to resume resource mobilisation for operational activities through the VTF.²⁷

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Afghanistan has a national standard on environmental management in mine action. In addition, individual operators, such as the Danish Refugee Council Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding sector (DRC), the FSD, and HALO have policies applied globally and standing operating procedures (SOPs) aligned with the local context. Use of intrusive technologies such as flails by some operators has caused friction with local communities in past years and no longer appear to be in use.

HALO's global policy sets three goals, calls for mitigating any adverse environmental impacts, designing projects to take account of environmental issues, and communicating its findings to stakeholders, including the local community affected by its work. It has hired an environmental expert to assess the impact of its operations and recommend measures to mitigate any negative effects.²⁸ FSD has also introduced an Environmental and Social Management Plan along with a "Socio-Economic Baseline Assessment" tool applied during survey to take full account of local community issues and interests.²⁹

HALO employs manual teams to remove dense vegetation while mechanical assets used for AP mine (including improvised mine) clearance by HALO, DRC, and other IPs, including ploughs and cultivators, which excavate to a depth of 30 centimetres, are broadly welcomed by local communities which take advantage of area clearance to irrigate land and plant crops.³⁰ IPs commented that farmers welcomed use of assets such as rippers which softened land that had hardened as a result of long non-use due to mine or UXO contamination.³¹

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Taliban bans on women's employment have reversed DMAC's pre-2021 plans to increase the level of female employment in the MAPA and prevented many women in the mine action sector from working. However, implementation of the bans has varied according to locality and some openings for women remained both in field operations and administrative support positions.

20 UNMAS, "Humanitarian Mine Action in Afghanistan", 10 February 2022.

21 Interview with Paul Heslop, Chief of Mine Action Programme, UNMAS, 7 June 2022; and UNMAS, "Humanitarian Mine Action in Afghanistan", 9 April 2022.

22 Email from Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, UNMAS, 20 March 2023.

23 Email from Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, UNMAS, 7 May 2023.

24 Interview with Nick Pond, Chief of Mine Action Section, UNAMA, in Geneva, 22 June 2023.

25 Email from Nick Pond, UNAMA, 2 October 2023.

26 Joint statement of the MAPA implementing partners, 23 January 2023.

27 Email from UNMAS Headquarters, 4 October 2023.

28 Email from Farid Homayoun, Country Director, HALO, 21 June 2023.

29 Email from Din Mohammad Nickwah, FSD, 30 June 2023.

30 Interviews with Farid Homayoun, HALO, 4 June 2022; and Soeren Adser Soerensen, Head of Humanitarian Disarmament in Afghanistan, DRC, 6 June 2022.

31 Email from Mir Mohammad, Executive Operation Manager, MCPA, 12 April 2023.

Before the Taliban takeover of August 2021, DMAC's 2016–20 strategic plan included gender mainstreaming as one of four main goals. It stated that "achievable targets, reflecting prevailing circumstances and conditions, will be adopted to support and encourage progress wherever possible."³² Levels of female employment in the sector remained low but by the start of 2021, the MAPA's workforce included over 200 women.³³ After August 2021, Taliban imposed progressively stricter regulation on women and girls, banning women from working for foreign NGOs in December 2022³⁴ and from working for the United Nations in April 2023.³⁵

National IPs, forced to lay off hundreds of deminers as a result of funding cuts, have sharply reduced the number of their female staff. DAFA employed 12 women in 2022, including a gender mainstreaming officer and four explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) staff but in 2023 it had only one female employee working from home.³⁶ OMAR said it employed 53 women in 2022 but in 2023 had reduced the number to three.³⁷

Some exceptions have remained for humanitarian work, including mine action. In 2022, DMAC said it remained possible for women to work in the MAPA³⁸ and some IPs reported employing more women in 2022 than before the Taliban takeover. UNMAS convened the first

post-regime-change meeting of a Gender and Diversity Technical Working Group in February 2022³⁹ and IPs continued to employ female staff in office and field jobs.⁴⁰ UNMAS also provided grants to four Afghan IPs (AREA, DAFA, MDC, and OMAR) early in 2022 to support equality and inclusion mainstreaming.⁴¹

In 2023, IPs say female office staff have worked from home and in a number of areas some women have been able to conduct risk education field visits but access depends on relations between individual IPs and local authorities.⁴² Among international operators, DRC and HALO sought and gained permission from local authorities in some localities to deploy mixed-gender *mahram* teams⁴³ for EORE. DRC said negotiations continued to deploy all its mixed non-technical survey (NTS) and EORE teams.⁴⁴ HALO reported that in May 2023 it was able to deploy 15 mixed-gender teams in Ghor, Kabul, Kunduz, and Nangarhar provinces. It received permission to deploy two more teams in Takhar province in June 2023 and expected to deploy all mixed-gender EORE teams from July 2023. HALO said mine action data continue to be disaggregated by gender and age, including in pre- and post-clearance collection of socio-economic data. HALO also said it employs members of all ethnic groups and its database tracks the organisation's ethnic diversity.⁴⁵

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Prior to the August 2021 change of government, DMAC had embarked on upgrading the MAPA's IMSMA database from New Generation to IMSMA Core. UNMAS, with support from the GICHD, proposed to migrate data from IMSMA NG to IMSMA Core in 2022 but DMAC did not agree.⁴⁶ Since the Taliban takeover, information management for the MAPA has suffered severe disruption as a result of the financial crisis and diplomatic isolation facing the IEA, DMAC's loss of staff, and upheavals in the working arrangements between DMAC and UNMAS.⁴⁷

IPs have continued reporting their operating results to DMAC but disagreements over information management and the role of the UN resulted in extended interruptions when IP reports were not uploaded and the database was not up to date. DMAC resumed management of the IMSMA database in February 2023 after receiving government funding that enabled it to hire four data entry staff but without capacity for data quality management. Stakeholders reported DMAC's IM team were effectively processing current IP reports but still dealing with a backlog of hazard reports. HALO reported it sends a member of its staff to DMAC to assist uploading its operating results.⁴⁸

32 DMAC, "National Mine Action Strategic Plan 1395–1399 (2016–2020)", State Ministry for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs, undated but 2016, p. 17.

33 Email from Mohammad Akbar Oriakhil, DMAC, 17 March 2021.

34 UNMAS estimated the ban would result in 150 women working in mine action losing their jobs, 456,300 women and girls being deprived of EORE, and 8,700 women would not benefit from VA, including physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support, and social/economic inclusion. Participant notes from UNMAS meeting with MAPA directors, 3 January 2023.

35 Reuters, "Taliban bans female NGO workers, jeopardising aid efforts", 24 December 2022; and Reuters, "Taliban ban on women working for the UN an 'internal' issue", 12 April 2023.

36 Email from Bismillah Haqmal, Operations and Planning Manager, DAFA, 10 April 2023.

37 Email from Abid K. Fazel, Deputy Director Programme, OMAR, 6 April 2023.

38 Interviews with Gari Nooruddin Rustamkhail, Director, DMAC, 4 June 2022; Soeren Adser Soerensen, DRC, 6 June 2022; Farid Homayoun, HALO, 4 June 2022; and with Awal Khan, QA Manager, OMAR, and Zarina Omar, EORE Manager & Gender Focal Point, OMAR, 8 June 2022.

39 Email from Sohaila Hashemi, UNMAS, 23 February 2022.

40 Interviews with international and national IPs, Kabul, 4–10 June 2022.

41 Email from Sohaila Hashemi, UNMAS, 6 March 2022.

42 Email from MAPA IP, May 2023.

43 Mahram teams partner women with a male family member.

44 Email from Soeren Adser Soerensen, DRC, 21 May 2023.

45 Email from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 22 June 2023.

46 Email from Nick Pond, UNAMA, 25 August 2023.

47 Interviews with international and national implementing partners, Kabul, 4–10 June 2022; and emails from IPs, April–May 2023.

48 Email from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 22 June 2023.

DMAC submitted a Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Article 7 report covering 2022 at the end of May 2023,⁴⁹ but as of September 2023 had not submitted an APMBBC Article 7 report since 2021.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Afghanistan's mine action sector has operated without a strategic plan since the Taliban took power in August 2021. International sanctions and Afghanistan's financial crisis have left DMAC with insufficient human resources to put into effect the Afghan year 1400–1404 (April 2021–March 2026) strategic plan under preparation with the GICHD before August 2021 or to pursue a detailed work plan.

IPs are implementing tasks determined by their donor(s) and their own priorities and submitted to DMAC for approval. DMAC's technical board reportedly reviews and prioritises hazards and encourages IPs to include tasks that meet its criteria of very high or high priority. DMAC, in consultation with operators, also reportedly sets IP teams clearance targets for different types of hazard taking account of results in the previous year. DMAC conducted periodic coordination meetings with IPs but also had ad hoc meetings with individual IPs on operational issues, approving hazard completion reports, accrediting teams and equipment and monitoring the progress of field operations.⁵⁰

DMAC lifted its suspension of the Liaison Office on 2 October 2023 enabling what is now known as the MATC to resume operations and provide technical assistance to DMAC, including for planning, tasking, prioritisation, and QM.⁵¹

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

The MAPA has comprehensive national mine action standards that are compliant with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). Before the change of government in August 2021 and the disruption to MAPA management, DMAC had reviewed them annually and amended them in consultation with IPs. No further updates of the national mine action standards (AMAS) or SOPs has occurred since August 2021.⁵²

In 2019, Afghanistan became the first country programme to release a standard for tackling mines of an improvised nature. AMAS 06.10 (Abandoned Improvised Mine Clearance) was released in March 2019, emphasising the neutrality of humanitarian mine action. The standard was reviewed in a series of technical working group meetings and a revised version issued in 2020. The standard requires operators to secure prior written consent from local authorities and other “key local stakeholders”, including armed opposition groups, and confirmation by the party that laid devices that they are abandoned and that clearance may proceed. It stipulates clearance should take place only in a rural or semi-rural setting. All action to neutralise abandoned improvised mines (AIMs) should be conducted remotely or semi-remotely, and, where possible, devices should be destroyed in situ.⁵³

A GICHD capacity assessment in 2019 noted that DMAC had been “proactive in introducing new AMAS as and when needed” but had not updated them regularly. It noted that most of the AMAS were developed between 2011 and 2013 and said some chapters needed to be reviewed and updated to promote greater efficiency.⁵⁴ The persistently high percentage of land released through full clearance—averaging 78% between 2018 and 2020—called into question the efficiency of the MAPA's survey and land release practices. In 2021, the percentage of full clearance fell to below half (48%) but primarily as a result of HALO's cancellation of land affected by improvised mines and in 2022 full clearance again accounted for close to two-thirds of reported land release.

49 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2022), 31 May 2023.

50 Emails from Soeren Adser Soerensen, DRC, 21 May 2023; and Farid Hodayoun, HALO, 22 June 2023.

51 Email from Nick Pond, UNAMA, 2 October 2023.

52 Email from Soeren Adser Soerensen, DRC, 27 March 2022.

53 AMAS 06.10, March 2019, p. 5; Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form F, p. 15.

54 GICHD, Integrated Capacity Assessment Report, 5 July 2019 (draft), p. 7.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

The MAPA has experienced a sharp fall in its workforce since the Taliban takeover in August 2021 and UNMAS decision in November 2022 to stop funding survey and clearance operations through the VTF. MAPA operating results for 2022 show that six national IPs (AREA, ATC, DAFA, MCPA, MDC and OMAR) were active clearing mines together with three international NGOs (DRC, FSD, and HALO).⁵⁵ Total MAPA employment dropped from 5,910 in the last quarter of 2020⁵⁶ to between 4,000 and 5,000 at the end of 2021, and to around 3,000 by early 2023.⁵⁷

DAFA, with a total staff of 400 people in 2022, underscored the impact of the MAPA's funding crisis. In 2022, it was the only IP conducting clearance of cluster munitions but it also cleared mines with eight manual teams working in Baghlan and Paktika provinces. DAFA reported that UNMAS's suspension of operations funding through the VTF led to early closure of two projects, including clearance of improvised mines in Helmand and operations of a quick response team in Kandahar. It completed the last of four projects on which it was working in 2022 at the end of January 2023 and at that point had no further contracts, and said it was retaining only a small core of staff while it looked for additional work.⁵⁸

MCPA deployed 37 manual clearance teams in 2022 employing 370 deminers of a total workforce of 537, which included 19 two-person survey teams, 10 mechanical teams and 2 quick response teams. As a result of funding shortfalls, MCPA said in early 2023 that it was losing 240 staff.⁵⁹ OMAR conducted some clearance of improvised mines in the south in 2022 but focused mainly on legacy AP mines in 10 provinces. OMAR ended 2022 with 738 manual deminers among a total of more than 1,000 staff but released 660 once the projects were completed and said its priority in 2023 was to mobilise resources in order to retain trained staff.⁶⁰

End-year data was not immediately available from ATC but in mid-2022 it reported that it deployed nine manual teams, an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team, and a mechanical demining unit in Maydan Wardak on a US-funded project for clearing conventional mines and other capacity working on BAC tasks. The organisation's priority for 2022, though, was tackling improvised mines. ATC reported it had 16 deminers trained by Artios for clearing improvised mines and another 10 people undergoing training. It said it was developing proposals for clearing improvised mines in the Musa Qala and Nad Ali districts of Helmand province.⁶¹

Among the three international operators, DRC was able to increase the number of clearance personnel from 160 to 220 in 2022 with support from European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and receipt of additional funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). It also increased DRC's survey/EOD capacity from 20 personnel to 52 and trained two teams for improvised mine clearance who received accreditation from DMAC in early 2023. DRC expected further expansion in 2023, increasing the number of clearance personnel to 280, and would convert two survey/EOD teams to quick response teams. In 2022, DRC added Minehound and Wirehound detectors and a new type of excavator to assist the clearance of improvised mines.⁶²

FSD continued to be based in northern Kunduz province, conducting clearance in both Kunduz and Badakhshan that focused on Soviet-era butterfly mines. The loss of a German donor following the change of government in August 2021 resulted in a drop in clearance capacity from 5 teams with 79 deminers in 2021 to 2 teams and 32 deminers.⁶³

HALO also experienced a drop in overall staff numbers from 3,010 to 2,794 and deployed 47 manual teams on "legacy" mines, compared with 64 teams and 1,716 deminers the previous year. But HALO received more funding to tackle improvised mines, increasing the number of clearance teams from 32 to 37, supported by 16 mechanical teams, up from the previous year, and 18 survey teams. HALO continued testing a range of detectors and new equipment for potential productivity benefits, including a STORM commercial excavator for use in complex terrain, a linear mine comb, and the vehicle-mounted AMULET explosive ordnance detection system. It is also testing a differential GPS system for more precise polygon mapping.⁶⁴

55 Email from Olivier Demars, UNMAS, 24 April 2022.

56 Email from Mohammad Akbar Oriakhil, Head of Planning and Programme, DMAC, 17 March 2021.

57 Interview with Nick Pond, UNAMA, in Geneva, 22 June 2023.

58 Emails from Bismillah Haqmat, DAFA, 10 April and 21 June 2023.

59 Emails from Mir Mohammad, MCPA, 5 and 12 April 2023.

60 Email from Abid K. Fazel, Deputy Director, Programmes, OMAR, 6 April 2023.

61 Interview with Abdul Qahir Rahmanzai, ATC, Kabul, 8 June 2022.

62 Email from Soeren Adser Soerensen, DRC, 21 May 2023.

63 Email from Din Mohammad Nickwah, FSD, 30 June 2023.

64 Emails from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 12 May 2022 and 21 June 2023.

Table 5: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2022⁶⁵

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers	Machines/personnel	Comments
ATC ⁶⁶	9	80	1/NR	
DAFA	8	136	3/9	
DRC	22	220	2/6	
FSD	2	32		
HALO	87	1,024	32/216	Mechanical assets included 16 for AP mines, 16 for AIMs. HALO also tackled AIMs with 37 manual and 9 survey teams which, with AIM mechanical teams, employed a total of 478 personnel.
MCPA	41	390	10/30	Manual capacity included 4 AIM teams with 20 deminers. Also operated 2 quick response teams with 10 personnel.
OMAR	45	762	4/48	Manual capacity includes 4 AIM teams with 24 deminers
Totals	214	2,644	52/309	

DEMINER SAFETY

MAPA IPs sustained a number of deminer deaths and injuries resulting from demining accidents and security incidents in 2022. A DRC deminer was killed as a result of the detonation of a PMN-2 AP mine during clearance operations in Paghman district of Kabul province. Investigation concluded he may have disturbed the mine during excavation or moving his base stick as he leaned forward but could not determine precisely the cause of the detonation. DRC's response included a review of QA/quality control (QC) methodology, SOPs, field risk assessment and task implementation plan procedures. Two other DRC deminers were injured by an AP mine detonation during clearance in Kabul province. Investigations found shortcomings relating to lane marking and safety distances and concluded the deminers were wearing visors and PPE incorrectly, prompting immediate retraining of the team.⁶⁷

An OMAR deminer was killed in Laghman province after slipping into a mined area. After investigation of the accident, which occurred during a break in work, OMAR dismissed the team leader, section leader, and medic for poor management and control of the team.⁶⁸ MCPA reported one deminer was seriously injured by the detonation of an Iranian-made M4 AP mine.⁶⁹ A HALO deminer was wounded by gunfire during a security incident in Nangahar province when armed men attacked a local gathering.⁷⁰ The attack was later attributed to Islamic State – Khorasan Province (ISKP).

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

The MAPA continued to release substantial amounts of land in 2022 despite the organisational and financial disruption it experienced, but big discrepancies between DMAC and IP data prevent a precise determination of the extent. DMAC initially reported that Afghanistan released a total of 27.68km² in 2022: 15.54km² cancelled through NTS and 12.14km² through clearance.⁷¹ This would represent a drop of nearly one quarter from the 35.6km² released the previous year and similar to results reported in 2020 the last full year of operations before the change of government. Mine Action Review later received

65 Emails from Bismillah Haqmal, DAFA, 10 April 2023; Soeren Adser Soerensen, DRC, 21 May 2023; Din Mohammad Nickwah, FSD, 30 June 2023; Farid Homayoun, HALO, 22 June 2023; Mir Mohammad, Executive Operation Manager, MCPA, 12 April 2023; and Abid K. Fazel, OMAR, 6 April 2023.

66 Data applicable as at June 2022.

67 Email from Soeren Adser Soerensen, DRC, 21 May 2023.

68 Email from Abid K. Fazel, OMAR, 6 April 2023.

69 Email from Mir Mohammad, MCPA, 12 April 2023.

70 Email from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 22 June 2023.

71 Email from Abdul Habib Rahimi, DMAC, 3 May 2023.

updated DMAC survey and clearance data from the UN (see Tables 6, 8, and 9), which showed release of a total of more than 35.22km² in 2022: nearly 21.38km² cancelled through NTS and almost 13.85km² of clearance.⁷² Mine Action Review has used this more recent data for Afghanistan's land release totals in the "Key Data" section of this report, pending an update of the IMSMA database.

However, operations of the MAPA's IMSMA database suffered from long interruptions after Afghanistan's change of government delaying the entry of IP results and official data appears to understate the amount of land released in 2022. The results reported by six national and international IPs indicate they released AP and improvised AP mined areas totalling 52.07km² in 2022, including 21.68km² through survey and 30.39km² as a result of clearance, which would represent the highest rate of clearance in the last four years.⁷³

SURVEY IN 2022

IPs cancelled a total of 21.38km², according to the latest DMAC data provided by the UN (see Table 6).⁷⁴ This included cancelling suspected AP mined areas amounting to 9km², nearly double the result in 2021, and more than 12km² of suspected improvised mine contamination, almost the same as in the previous year. DMAC also did not report any area reduction through technical survey of AP or improvised AP mined areas.

Table 6: Release of AP mined area through NTS in 2022 (DMAC data as at October 2023)⁷⁵

Operator	Province	Area cancelled (m ²)
Legacy AP mines		
DAFA	Baghlan	285,000
DRC	Nangahar	95,542
HALO	Ghazni, Maydan Wardak	696,741
MCPA	Baghdis, Farah, Ghazni, Paktika, Kunduz, Takar, Logar, Maydan Wardak	7,349,514
OMAR	Helmand, Kandahar	590,570
Subtotal		9,017,367
Improvised mines		
DRC	Logar	51,829
HALO	Helmand, Kandahar, Khost, Kunduz, Logar, Samangan, Uruzgan	4,050,325
MCPA	Helmand, Kunduz	1,527,856
OMAR	Helmand, Kandahar	6,728,319
Subtotal		12,358,329
Total		21,375,696

DMAC's survey results, however, differ sharply from those of the IPs. The latest DMAC data recorded cancellation of 0.7km² of AP mined areas by HALO, which reported cancelling 7.83km² in 2022. It also attributed cancellation of more than 7km² to MCPA which reported that it cancelled only 0.6km² (see Table 7).⁷⁶ IPs also reported area reduction through technical survey totalling 0.7km².

⁷² Email from UNMAS Headquarters, 4 October 2023.

⁷³ Emails from Bismillah Haqmat, DAFA, 10 April 2023; Soeren Adser Soerensen, DRC, 21 May 2023; Din Mohammad Nickwah, FSD, 30 June 2023; Farid Homayoun, HALO, 22 June 2023; Mir Mohammad, Executive Operation Manager, MCPA, 12 April 2023; and Abid K. Fazel, OMAR, 6 April 2023.

⁷⁴ Email from Abdul Habib Rahimi, DMAC, 3 May 2023; and Mir Mohammad, Executive Operation Manager, MCPA, 12 April 2023.

⁷⁵ Email from UNMAS Headquarters, 4 October 2023.

⁷⁶ Emails from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 22 June 2023; and Mir Mohammad, MCPA, 12 April 2023.

Table 7: Release of AP mined area through survey in 2022 (IP data)⁷⁷

	AP mined area (m ²)		AIM-affected area (m ²)	
	NTS	TS	NTS	TS
DAFA	261,980	37,000	22,845	0
DRC	429,594	242,161	0	0
HALO	7,831,222	125,662	1,731,813	0
MCPA	571,695	17,600	0	13,203
OMAR	4,706,663	301,952	5,383,326	0
Totals	13,801,154	724,375	7,137,984	13,203

CLEARANCE IN 2022

Clearance data for 2022 suffers from similar inconsistencies. The latest DMAC data provided by the UN recorded clearance of 13.85km² of AP mined area in 2022 (see Tables 8 and 9), which would represent a fall of nearly one third from the previous year. The big drop in DMAC's results was in clearance of legacy mined areas, down from 16.7km in 2021 to 11.5km². By contrast the greater access to formerly high-conflict areas saw a doubling of improvised mine clearance from 1km² to 2.4km², predominantly in Helmand and Kandahar provinces, and destruction of 1,402 improvised mines, nearly four times the number destroyed in the previous year. Overall, according to DMAC data, the number of conventional and improvised AP mines destroyed during clearance in 2022 was less than half the level of the previous year in official data and down by more than one third compared to IP results.

Table 8: AP mine clearance in 2022 (DMAC data as at October 2023)⁷⁸

Operator	Province/district	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
AREA	Nuristan	245,263	27	0	4
ATC	Kunar, Maydan Wardak	447,898	13	0	25
DAFA	Baghlan, Paktika	1,083,976	248	0	383
DRC	Kabul, Maydan Wardak	1,049,417	155	0	626
FSD	Badakshan	166,632	1,068	0	50
HALO	Badakshan, Balkh, Kabul, Kunduz Maydan Wardak, Nangahar, Samangan, Takar, Zabul	2,010,857	438	26	51
MCPA	Ghazni, Kunduz	1,468,310	203	6	7
MDC	Baghlan	1,471,979	155	0	6
OMAR	Balkh, Faryab, Ghaznia, Kabul, Laghman, Nangahar, Nimroz, Paktya, Panjshir, Sari Pul,	3,445,537	313	2	779
SDL	Balkh	84,251	18	0	14
Totals		11,474,120	2,638	34	1,945

Table 9: Clearance of improvised mines in 2022 (DMAC data as at October 2023)⁷⁹

Operator	Province/district	Area cleared (m ²)	Improvised mines destroyed
DAFA	Kandahar	241,524	21
HALO	Balkh, Farah, Ghazni, Ghor, Helmand, Kandahar, Khost, Kunduz, Samangan, Uruzgan, Zabul	2,074,817	1,312
MCPA	Kunduz	54,993	69
Totals		2,371,334	1,402

⁷⁷ Emails from Bismillah Haqmal, DAFA, 10 April 2023; Soeren Adser Soerensen, DRC, 21 May 2023; Din Mohammad Nickwah, FSD, 30 June 2023; Farid Homayoun, HALO, 22 June 2023; Mir Mohammad, Executive Operation Manager, MCPA, 12 April 2023; and Abid K. Fazel, OMAR, 6 April 2023.

⁷⁸ Email from UNMAS Headquarters, 4 October 2023.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

IPs reported clearing more than double the area recorded by DMAC, including nearly 26km² of AP mined area and 4.5km² of improvised AP mined area as well as 4,803 AP and improvised AP mines (see Tables 10 and 11). The number of AP mines cleared in 2022 was well below the 7,304 mines recorded as destroyed during clearance operations in the previous year.

HALO, much the biggest operator, reported destroying only 515 AP mines in 2022 compared with 2,252 the previous year, explaining that after August 2021 it had taken advantage of improved security and provincial access to focus on areas such as Ghazni, Wardak, and Zabul where insecurity previously hindered access but where AV mine tasks had a higher priority. Remaining AP mined areas are mostly in mountainous locations whereas AV mines, although often spread sparsely across large area, were used on flat land now in demand for cultivation, resulting in recent casualties.⁸⁰

Table 10: AP mine clearance in 2022 (IP data)⁸¹

Operator	Area cleared (m²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
DAFA	1,996,124	262	387	413
DRC	4,255,796	146	9	4,427
FSD	202,007	1,444	0	636
HALO	2,529,544	515	14	58
MCPA	10,848,906	150	238	518
OMAR	6,051,278	332	13	4,219
Totals	25,883,655	2,849	661	10,271

Table 11: Improvised AP mine clearance in 2022 (IP data)⁸²

Operator	Area cleared (m²)	Mines destroyed
DAFA	241,524	21
DRC	0	0
HALO	4,100,036	1,394
MCPA	92,650	11
OMAR	72,424	528
Totals	4,506,634	1,954

IP results indicate a sharp acceleration in clearance of improvised mines made possible by improved security and access to provinces and facilitated by information forthcoming from former fighters. Five IPs reported clearing four times as much mined area with improvised AP mines in 2022 as the previous year, led by HALO, which accounted for around 90% of the total in 2022 and said tackling improvised mines was its main priority for 2023.⁸³ Clearance in 2022 was heavily concentrated on the previously fiercely contested areas of Helmand and Kandahar but also occurred in Balkh, Farah, Ghazni, Khost, Uruzgan, and Zabul.⁸⁴

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



80 Email from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 22 June 2023.

81 Emails from Bismillah Haqmat, DAFA, 10 April 2023; Soeren Adser Soerensen, DRC, 21 May 2023; Din Mohammad Nickwah, FSD, 30 June 2023; Farid Homayoun, HALO, 22 June 2023; Mir Mohammad, Executive Operation Manager, MCPA, 12 April 2023; and Abid K. Fazel, OMAR, 6 April 2023.

82 Emails from Bismillah Haqmat, DAFA, 10 April 2023; Soeren Adser Soerensen, DRC, 21 May 2023; Din Mohammad Nickwah, FSD, 30 June 2023; Farid Homayoun, HALO, 22 June 2023; Mir Mohammad, Executive Operation Manager, MCPA, 12 April 2023; and Abid K. Fazel, OMAR, 6 April 2023.

83 Email from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 22 June 2023.

84 Email from Abdul Habib Rahimi, DMAC, 3 May 2023.

Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the two-year extension granted in 2022), Afghanistan is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 March 2025. This is, however, only an interim extension which Afghanistan will use "to understand how the demining situation in Afghanistan will develop in Afghanistan in terms of institutional arrangements and continued support from donors."⁸⁵ DMAC informed the Mine Action Review it intended to submit a request for a further extension to its Article 5 deadline by March 2024.⁸⁶

The IEA committed to fulfilling its obligations under the APMBC and other international conventions to which Afghanistan is already a State Party⁸⁷ and it has retained the MAPA's institutional framework but by the end of 2022 there was little clarity on other issues. DMAC's ability to discharge its designated functions of regulator and coordinator remained severely constrained by lack of UN funding that paid the salaries of most DMAC personnel before the change of government. Despite these constraints, DMAC has sought to retain control of critical functions such as information management and disagreements with UNMAS over a mechanism for cooperation have caused interruptions in delivery of available support.

In March 2022, DMAC terminated the UN Humanitarian Mine Action Coordination for Afghanistan (UN-HMACCA), set up by UNMAS to provide mine action coordination and support. It agreed to the creation of a smaller Liaison Office in June 2022 but in February 2023 DMAC applied to the Office of the Prime Minister for a decision on working arrangements between DMAC and the Liaison Office. The Office of the Prime Minister issued a directive requiring DMAC and UNMAS to revert to arrangements that existed in 2018 after the transition of management from the UN to DMAC and to work from the same building as DMAC.⁸⁸ The Liaison Office was unable to comply with an arrangement precluded by donor restrictions and DMAC suspended its operations. UNMAS continues to work in Afghanistan but as the Mine Action Section of the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA). The UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of UNAMA informed the Security Council in June 2023 that "discussions continue with the de facto authorities to lift the suspension as soon as possible and enable us to provide full support within our mandate to this vital sector."⁸⁹ On 2 October 2023, the Liaison Office suspension was lifted by DMAC and the UN resumed the provision of technical assistance to DMAC through what is now known as the MATC.⁹⁰

After decades of conflict, improved security in Afghanistan allowing IPs to work in areas previously inaccessible due to insecurity presents an opportunity for major advances in tackling landmine contamination in one of the world's most affected countries but unstable institutional arrangements are among a number of obstacles to progress.

An arguably greater challenge is lack of funding. The breakdown in interim arrangements for UNMAS technical support to the MAPA had sent a negative signal to donors at a time when Taliban policies towards women have deepened the isolation and stigmatisation of de facto authorities and donors face demands for massive and sustained support to Ukraine. DMAC subsequently lifted the suspension of the Liaison Office in October 2023 and UN technical support through the MATC had resumed. Against this background, the November 2022 decision of UNMAS headquarters to halt funding for survey and clearance operations through the VTF and to return millions of dollars of assistance available to Afghanistan had looked particularly unfortunate, notably for national IPs that do not have the same degree of bilateral relations with donors and alternative channels of financial support and in 2023 laid off hundreds of deminers as a result of reduced funding. In September 2023, the decision was reversed and UNMAS resumed resource mobilisation for operational activities through the VTF.

Clearance of AP mines in line with the APMBC may also face more competition for resources from demands for tackling other types of explosive ordnance, underscoring the need for greater clarity on MAPA task prioritisation. Clearance of improvised mines, which previously accounted for a high percentage of casualties, remains a high priority but UXO now account for the vast majority of casualties. Meanwhile, HALO reports higher community demand for clearance of AV mines placed across flat land suitable for cultivation and given a higher priority than legacy AP mines found mainly in mountainous and more remote locations.⁹¹

Table 12: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance (2018–22)*

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	13.85
2021	17.71
2020	24.24
2019	28.01
2018	30.90
Total	114.71

* Including improvised mines

⁸⁵ 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request.

⁸⁶ Email from Qari Nooruddin Rustamkhail, DMAC, 3 October 2023.

⁸⁷ Statement of Afghanistan, CCM Intersessional Meetings, 16 May 2022.

⁸⁸ Email from the United Nations, 7 May 2023.

⁸⁹ Special Representative of the Secretary-General Roza Otunbayeva, Briefing to the UN Security Council, 21 June 2023.

⁹⁰ Email from Nick Pond, UNAMA, 2 October 2023.

⁹¹ Email from Farid Homayoun, HALO, 22 June 2023.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2025
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: HEAVY

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

30km²

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

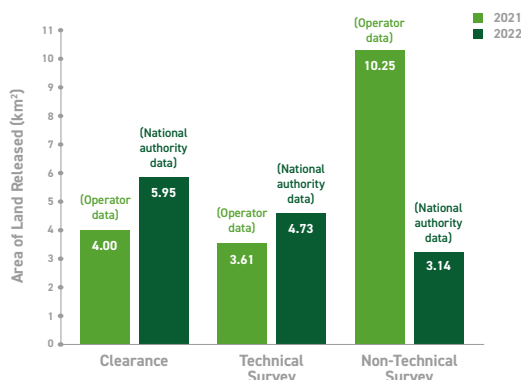
5.95km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

4,002

(INCLUDING 225 DESTROYED
DURING SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Angola has continued to strengthen and restructure its mine action programme. The transition from the National Intersectoral Commission on Demining and Humanitarian Assistance (CNIDAH) into the National Mine Action Agency (ANAM) was completed in 2021. In 2022, the Executive Commission for Demining (CED), together with all the public operators that had been working under it, was dissolved and replaced by the National Demining Centre (CND). This restructuring is intended to remedy the longstanding challenges Angola has faced in consolidating its oversight over its mine action data and operations. Some of the demining tasks conducted by the CND in support for the development projects were still being recorded outside of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database in 2022. But ANAM expected the CND to start working on releasing mined areas inside the IMSMA database in 2023, with a view to a full integration once its land release practices become fully compliant to the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).

Angola released nearly 13.81km² of anti-personnel (AP) mined area in 2022,¹ falling 3.25km² short of the 2022 target for land release in Angola's 2020–25 Article 5 work plan. In addition, almost 4.4km² of AP mined area was added to the database in 2022, and it is likely that additional contamination will continue to be found as operators gain more access to remote areas. With the currently established contamination baseline, Angola will need to release at least 23km² per year over the next three years if it is to meet its current Article 5 deadline.

In July 2023, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) published a new country strategy for Angola for 2023–25. The strategy foresaw the completion of all mapped contamination in the provinces of Bengo, Cuanza Norte, Uíge, and Zaire by December 2025. NPA believes that country-wide clearance may not be feasible by Angola's Article 5 deadline of end-December 2025.

¹ There is a discrepancy between land release data reported by operators and data reported in Angola's Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 7 transparency report. According to the latter, Angola released 13.75km² of AP mined area in 2022, of which, 3.14km² was cancelled through non-technical survey (NTS), 4.73km² reduced through technical survey (TS), and 5.88km² cleared. According to operator data, a total of 16.04km² of AP mined area was released in 2022. Of this, 5.84km² was reported as cancelled through NTS, 4.73km² reduced through TS, and 5.47km² cleared.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Angola should continue to impress upon all operators the importance of applying proper land release principles to reduce clearance of uncontaminated areas.
- Angola should continue the consolidation of its mine action structures and integrate all survey and clearance data, including those of the newly created public operator, CND, into the IMSMA database.
- Angola should replace its draft resource mobilisation strategy and increase its international advocacy to attract new and former donors.
- Angola should continue developing and applying its National Mine Action Standards (NMAS).
- Angola should declare as completed each province where land release of all mined areas has been achieved.
- Angola should finalise its national strategy on the management of residual contamination.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	8	8	Angola has completed its nationwide re-survey of AP mine contamination and there is a high ratio of confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) compared to suspected hazardous areas (SHAs). The discovery of new contamination is likely to continue over the coming years as operators gain more access into remote areas. A total of almost 4.4km ² of AP mined area across 65 new CHAs was added to the database in 2022.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	8	7	CNIDAH completed the transition of its legal status from a commission to a national agency, becoming ANAM. The CED was dissolved in 2022 and replaced by the CND. This transition is hoped to resolve the longstanding issues in coordination and information sharing between CNIDAH and the CED. The CED was expected to start working on release of mined areas registered in the IMSMA database in 2023. It is estimated that Angola has a funding shortfall of almost \$240 million through to the end of 2025. A resource mobilisation strategy was drafted in 2018, but was never finalised.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	6	6	Gender and diversity are included as a cross-cutting issue in Angola's new National Mine Action Strategy but there are no outcomes or targets related to gender or diversity in the updated work plan. Of ANAM's 2022 workforce, 36% were women. Women held 48% of operational positions and 33% of managerial positions.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	8	7	CND survey and clearance data continued to be excluded from the IMSMA database in 2022, but ANAM expected that this would change in 2023. ANAM has requested support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) for a transition to IMSMA Core. Angola has submitted timely Article 7 reports in recent years. Unlike in previous years, Angola's latest Article 7 report (covering 2022) has classified hazardous areas into SHAs and CHAs. Discrepancies in the reported land release figures between ANAM and international operators in 2022 seemed to be mostly a result of the tasks pending to be verified and entered into the database.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	7	7	Angola has adopted an Article 5 implementation Work Plan 2022–2025, but its new National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2025 has yet to be formally approved by the Government. Angola should increase its annual land release targets if it is to meet its Article 5 deadline of 2025. A re-discussion of the prioritisation criteria is still underway, but the production of a master operator tasking plan through to 2025 did not materialise as was foreseen in 2022. NPA published a 2023–25 country strategy that aims to complete clearance in Bengo, Cuanza Norte, Uige, and Zaire by Angola's Article 5 deadline of December 2025.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	7	7	Three chapters of the National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) were drafted and still awaiting approval in 2022. Quality management (QM) continues to be a challenge for ANAM due to a lack of financial resources. NPA continued to provide capacity development support to ANAM targeting QM functions and covering direct costs for training and quality monitoring visits for ANAM teams.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	8	9	Land release outputs decreased in 2022 compared to the previous year due to an increase in the proportion of land released through clearance. The decrease in land release through survey has been anticipated following the large land cancellation that happened in 2019. Angola fell short of its land release target for 2022 by 3.25km ² . CNIDAH had estimated in early 2021 that completion of clearance could take ten years, far exceeding its current Article 5 deadline of end 2025, although this time could be substantially reduced with sound and strict land release principles.
Average Score	7.5	7.5	Overall Programme Performance: GOOD

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- National Mine Action Agency (Agência Nacional de Acção Contra as Minas, ANAM).

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- The Association of Angolan Mine Professionals (Associação de Profissionais Angolanos de Acção Contra Minas, APACOMINAS) (NGO)
- The National Demining Centre (Centro Nacional de Desminagem, CND).

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- APOPO
- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

As at the end of 2022, according to ANAM, a total of 1,070 AP mined areas with an estimated size of 68km² remained to be addressed in 16 of Angola's 18 provinces (see Table 1). Cuando Cubango and Moxico are believed to be the most heavily contaminated. Clearance in Huambo province has been completed since the end of 2021, and, as at May 2023, the declaration of completion in Huambo was reportedly imminent.² In Malange province, which was previously thought to only contain residual contamination, and at the request of ANAM, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) conducted additional non-technical survey (NTS) identifying 173,395m² of AP mined area across nine CHAs.³

Table 1: AP mined area by province (at end 2022)⁴

Province	CHA	Area of CHA (m ²)	SHA	Area of SHA (m ²)	Total HA	Area of HA (m ²)
Bengo	44	3,024,891	0	0	44	3,024,891
Benguela	19	960,959	0	0	19	960,959
Bié	135	5,160,762	0	0	135	5,160,762
Cabinda	27	1,188,151	0	0	27	1,188,151
Quando Cubango	262	16,805,804	0	0	262	16,805,804
Cuanza Norte	16	1,204,361	0	0	16	1,204,361
Cuanza Sul	104	8,664,509	1	35,000	105	8,699,509
Cunene	42	2,325,517	0	0	42	2,325,517
Huambo	0	0	0	0	0	0
Huíla	36	3,339,594	0	0	36	3,339,594
Luanda	9	1,121,211	0	0	9	1,121,211
Lunda Norte	48	1,672,480	10	143,913	58	1,816,393

2 Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), Capacity Development Advisor to ANAM, NPA, 10 May 2023.

3 Emails from Robert Iga Afedra, Country Director, NPA, 30 March and 12 August 2023.

4 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

Table 1 Continued

Province	CHA	Area of CHA (m ²)	SHA	Area of SHA (m ²)	Total HA	Area of HA (m ²)
Lunda Sul	48	7,430,262	21	1,009,799	69	8,440,061
Malange	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moxico	203	11,789,031	40	1,458,846	243	13,247,877
Namibe	3	155,100	0	0	3	155,100
Uige	1	206,350	0	0	1	206,350
Zaire	1	315,000	0	0	1	315,000
Totals	998	65,363,982	72	2,647,558	1,070	68,011,540

CHA = confirmed hazardous area SHA = suspected hazardous area HA= hazardous area

This is a 3.5km² reduction in the overall amount of AP mined area from the 71.5km² reported at the end of 2021.⁵ In addition, a total of almost 4.4km² of AP mined area across 65 new CHAs was added to the database in 2022. Of this, NPA identified and recorded 14 new CHAs covering an estimated 484,097m²; Mines Advisory Group (MAG) identified six new areas in Moxico and one in Lunda Sul, totalling 867,623m²; and The HALO Trust (HALO) found 36 new mined areas totalling 1,798,420m² in Benguela, Bié, and Cuando Cubango provinces.⁶

Since the end of 2021, all known mined areas in Huambo have been released. Four additional provinces (Cuanza Norte, Namibe, Uige, and Zaire) were very close to completion. NPA reported that 10 remaining uncleared tasks in Cuanza Norte were expected to be completed by May 2024, while land release activities in Uige have not concluded as four additional tasks were identified by their NTS team in 2022. As at March 2023, Uige had five tasks yet to be completed, and NPA planned to release the remaining minefields in Uige by the end of 2024.⁷ HALO received approval from ANAM on 21 July 2023 to begin work on the three remaining areas in Namibe. Clearance began in August 2023.⁸ In Zaire, NPA met its target of releasing the last mined area in June 2023. An impact assessment was to be conducted by the end of 2023 to ensure that no previously unknown areas remain before declaration of completion.⁹

In 2019, NTS of all 18 provinces across the country was completed, ensuring that previously inflated mined areas have largely been redefined or cancelled. ANAM, together with the international operators, agree that Angola now has its most accurate baseline of AP mined area ever.¹⁰ According

to ANAM, after several decades of demining in Angola, a national survey to establish a new baseline would be an unnecessary undertaking. Instead, ANAM's approach has been to keep residual contamination to a minimum, with the intention of conducting post-demining socio-economic impact assessments when conditions allow.¹¹ APOPO believes that additional survey/resurvey is still needed to cancel some hazardous areas from the national database.¹²

According to HALO, mine contamination in Angola is well documented, and new minefields are generally discovered on an ad-hoc basis often in close proximity to existing areas known to be contaminated with mines. That not all mined areas have yet been identified is understandable given the size and remoteness of some areas of the country.¹³ MAG believes that all suspected mined areas should be confirmed using evidence-based surveys.¹⁴ According to NPA, and based on the pattern of newly identified mined areas in last two years, contamination will continue to be discovered. A new country-wide assessment would not be an efficient use of resources, NPA believes.¹⁵

As several armed forces participated in Angola's armed conflict and the mines were laid in an atypical manner, many mined areas are not known to the communities and were not identified in the surveys that served as the baseline to determine the level of contamination in Angola. Taking this into consideration and the occurrence of sporadic accidents, the Government of Angola has determined that technical survey (TS) and clean-up must be systematically carried out in areas awarded for public and private investment projects to ensure safety in their implementation.¹⁶

5 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form C.

6 Emails from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023; Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023; Nelson Verissimo, Country Director, MAG, 6 June 2023; and Chris Pym, Programme Manager, HALO, 14 June 2023.

7 Emails from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March and 12 August 2023.

8 Email from Susanna Smale, Head of Region (South Africa), HALO, 29 August 2023.

9 Ibid.; and emails from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March and 12 August 2023.

10 ANAM Updated Article 5 Implementation Work Plan 2020–2025, June 2021, p. 4; and emails from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, on behalf of CNIDAH, 1 April 2020; Ralph Legg, Programme Manager, HALO, 30 March 2020; Jeanette Dijkstra, MAG, 20 May 2020; and 22 March 2022; Miroslav Pisarević, NPA, 28 March 2020 and 10 March 2022; Christelle Mestre, Programme Officer, Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), 4 May 2022; Manuel João Agostinho, Programme Manager, APOPO, 14 March 2022; and Daniel Richards, HALO, 25 June 2022.

11 Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

12 Email from Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 14 March 2022.

13 Email from Daniel Richards, HALO, 25 June 2022.

14 Email from Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023.

15 Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023.

16 Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

In the updated Article 5 Implementation Work Plan 2020–2025, ANAM states that NTS will remain an integral component of all operations and will be conducted in areas that may need additional verification during the implementation period. In addition, ANAM acknowledged the gap in coordination and monitoring of the, now dissolved, CED operations at provincial level, and that areas cleared by the CED-coordinated entities may need further assessment and verification before they can be removed from the database.¹⁷ It is also expected that, as people return to previously uninhabited areas, previously unrecorded mined areas will be added to the database and that new areas of contamination will be found as operators revisit more remote areas and address minefields where clearance has yet to begin.¹⁸

Besides the national re-survey with standardised reporting formats compatible with the IMSMA, data clean-up efforts also led to deletion of hazardous areas from the national database. This further contributed to the reliability of the national contamination baseline. Angola's Mine Action Strategy emphasises that ANAM and operators will continue with systematic analysis of existing survey reports to ensure that the classification of hazardous areas into SHAs and CHAs

has been done in accordance with the NMAS. According to the Geneva International Centre of Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), the accuracy of the data and information given in the strategy and the related work plan should be verified and updated.¹⁹

Angola's contamination is the result of more than 40 years of internal armed conflict that ended in 2002, during which a range of national and foreign armed movements and groups laid mines, often in a sporadic manner. Historically, the most affected provinces have been those with the fiercest and most prolonged fighting, such as Bié, Huambo, Cuando Cubango, and Moxico. In addition to its AP mine contamination, at the end of 2020 Angola had 1.02km² of anti-vehicle (AV) mine contamination.²⁰ Many minefields contain a mix of AP and AV mines. MAG found some earlier evidence of AP mines being laid and reinforced with other explosive ordnance to maximise damage.²¹ HALO also confirmed the presence of improvised AP mines using mortars or grenades. These were found recently in Benguela province, and HALO estimates that more will be encountered in Benguela, Bié, and Cuando Cubango. HALO destroyed six AP mines of an improvised nature in 2022.²²

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Angola also has a significant problem of explosive remnants of war (ERW), especially unexploded ordnance (UXO). In addition, evidence suggests that Angola contains a residual threat from cluster munition remnants (CMR) (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Angola for further information).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Angola's mine action programme is managed by the recently established ANAM. ANAM is a government agency formerly known as CNIDAH; it received approval in April 2021 to change its legal status from a commission to a national agency.²³ This was endorsed by a presidential decree 171/21 on 7 July 2021. The aim of this transition was to define the legal framework of the regulatory body of mine action, and to improve the coordination between the bodies that intervene in the mine action sector.

The purpose of ANAM is to regulate and supervise mine action work by public and private institutions, as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs). ANAM, which is under the Head of State through the Minister of State and Chief of Staff,²⁴ is mandated to ensure implementation of the national strategic mine action framework by all mine action actors in the country.²⁵ The transition to ANAM has strengthened Angola's oversight of mine action, which is now overseen and regulated solely by ANAM, and improved operational efficiency.²⁶

17 ANAM, updated Article 5 Implementation Work Plan 2020–2025, June 2021, p. 5; and telephone interview with Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 22 February 2021.

18 Email from Ralph Legg, HALO, 30 March 2020.

19 Email from Christelle Mestre, GICHD, 4 May 2022; and National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2025, p. 19.

20 Comprising 934,525m² across 89 CHAs and 84,235m² across 21 SHAs. Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form C.

21 Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023.

22 Email from Chris Pym, HALO, 14 June 2023.

23 Telephone interview with Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 22 February 2021; and email, 28 April 2021.

24 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form A.

25 Email from Christelle Mestre, GICHD, 4 May 2022.

26 Emails from Christelle Mestre, GICHD, 4 May 2022, and Daniel Richards, HALO, 25 June 2022.

In previous years, there were tensions between CNIDAH and CED, the other national coordination body whose main role was to manage four national operators: the Demining Brigades of the Security Unit of the President of the Republic, the Angolan Armed Forces, the National Demining Institute (INAD), and the Brigades of the Angolan Border Guard Police. There were overlaps and ambiguities as to the exact division of labour and the related roles and responsibilities between the two entities with CED reporting to the Ministry of Social Action, Family, and Women's Promotion (MASFAMU).²⁷ This has made it difficult for Angola to describe in detail and with any degree of accuracy the extent of land release over the years as the CED operators were not accredited by CNIDAH, nor were their activities quality assured in line with the IMAS.²⁸

In September 2022, the CED, together with all the operators that have been working under it, have been dissolved.²⁹ In 2022, a National Demining Centre (Centro Nacional de Desminagem, CND) was created by presidential decree. The CND is currently the only public operator in Angola. It is mandated to participate in clearance in support of socio-economic development projects, and to contribute to the fulfilment of Angola's obligations under Article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC).³⁰

Despite financial constraints, the Government of Angola has continued to allocate funding to support ANAM and CND. Government funds covered mostly overhead costs, but also some of ANAM's operational costs, particularly the monitoring and quality control (QC) teams. In addition, the Government continued to financially support HALO in clearing protected areas along the Okavango Delta in Cuando Cubango province. As to international funding, mine action in Angola continued to receive donations from the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom (UK), Norway, Belgium, Sweden, Japan, and a number of private entities. These donations benefited the projects of HALO, MAG, NPA, and APOPO, as well as the national NGO Association of Angolan Experts of Action against Landmines (APACOMINAS).³¹ As at February 2023, Angola believed to still needed a staggering figure of more than \$238.5 million to complete mine clearance.³²

In 2018, a draft resource mobilisation strategy was developed, but as at July 2023, the strategy had not yet been finalised.³³ According to Objective 5 of the

National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2025, the resource mobilisation strategy should have been approved before the end of 2020 with CNIDAH taking the lead in its development.³⁴ In 2018, Angola participated in the APMBC Individualised Approach following which donor support was increased with funding from Belgium, Japan, Norway, the UK, and USA, along with private sector funding from, among others, British Petroleum (BP).³⁵

Operators continue to report generally smooth collaboration with the Angolan authorities. Two longstanding challenges, visas and tax exemptions, eased in 2022 as these responsibilities were transferred from MASFAMU to ANAM. Following this transition, ANAM has the authority to issue visa invitation letters, and to intervene on behalf of the operator with the Migration and Foreigners Services so that visas are granted expeditiously and within the legally prescribed duration. ANAM has also been an intermediary in the request of short-term visas for employees of mine action organisations who travel to the country on a work visit.³⁶ MAG and HALO, however, reported that the application for work visas remains lengthy as they must be applied for in the country of origin. Since 2021, however, international demining NGOs have reached an agreement with the Angolan Government that international staff can enter the country with a tourist or business visa, and apply for the relevant work visa once in Angola. This workaround, however, was said to be cumbersome as it requires monthly renewal of the visa and leaving the country every three months.³⁷

In 2022, ANAM has engaged with the tax authorities and the Angolan Government to secure tax exemption status for all the mine action equipment on behalf of the entire sector. As at June 2023, the process was still ongoing and proving difficult.³⁸ For example, NPA's application for tax exemptions was not approved by the Angolan authorities. According to ANAM and NPA, tax exemptions are granted in accordance with the Government directives on imports and exports. These stipulate that core demining equipment such as detectors and personal protective equipment (PPE) are tax exempt, while vehicles are not.³⁹ Despite not being explicitly described in the law, ANAM has approached the tax administrations to advocate for some exceptions on the grounds of facilitating the humanitarian work.⁴⁰ ANAM has also acted in support of operators with importation processes, benefitting APOPO on two occasions in 2022.⁴¹

27 Angola National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2025, pp. 5–6.

28 Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA (on behalf of CNIDAH), 14 July 2020.

29 Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 14 September 2022.

30 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F; and emails from Mário Nunes, NPA, 14 September 2022 and 10 May 2023.

31 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form J, and email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

32 "Angola Needs U.S.\$ 238.5 Million to Complete Clearing Landmines", All Africa, 2 February 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/434Ey0J>.

33 Emails from Robert Iga Afedra (on behalf of CNIDAH), 1 April 2020; and Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 14 September 2022 and 10 May 2023.

34 Angola National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2025, pp. 29–31.

35 Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, on behalf of CNIDAH, 22 March 2021.

36 Emails from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023, and Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023.

37 Email from Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023, and Susanna Smale, HALO, 29 August 2023.

38 Ibid.

39 Emails from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023, and Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

40 Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

41 Email from Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023.

In 2022, multiple coordination and technical meetings were held between ANAM and operators.⁴² Topics discussed included technical contributions for the update and compliance of the NMAS to IMAS, specially on animal detection procedures of mine detection dogs (MDDs) and mine detection rats (MDRs) when used for technical survey (TS); elaboration of the national mine action strategies and plans; operational coordination and updates; approach to donors and fundraising; as well as sectorial activities.⁴³ One meeting discussed technical procedures, equipment, challenges faced by operators, and their experience in overcoming them.⁴⁴ Another focused on reconciliation of 2021 and 2022 operational data.⁴⁵

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

There are no formal policies related to environmental management that are specific to mine action in Angola,⁴⁶ but ANAM has been developing additional standards on occupational health, safety, and the environment. ANAM has also enforced some measures to mitigate the environmental impact, including the prohibition of vegetation burning, tree cutting, and control over the use of fuel and lubricants for demining machines.⁴⁷

APOPO considers environmental protection as a cross-cutting issue, which is taken into consideration during planning and tasking. APOPO conducts an impact assessment prior to using machines for ground preparation in any area. Machine interventions are also communicated and agreed upon with the authorities based on the post-clearance use of the land.⁴⁸ APOPO has been stepping up its environmental efforts globally with a view to develop applications for scent detection animals and to implement programmes to protect wildlife species and facilitate environmental restoration, and to expand the HeroTREE⁴⁹ programme and contribute to carbon sequestration, clean water and air, increased biodiversity, and food security. APOPO established partnerships with two agriculture associations in Cuanza Sul, which will develop projects for post-clearance use of the land. These include the implementation of organic agriculture and further promotion of syntropic farming and planting of trees.⁵⁰

HALO initiated a mine action and conservation project in 2022, alongside its existing programme, that aims to

understand and explore the linkages between mine action and environmental protection in coordination with local conservation partners.⁵¹ HALO ensures that it meets Angolan environmental regulations and has launched several projects to reduce its' environmental impact, including the introduction of solar systems into field camps and the testing of clean cook stoves to reduce deforestation and pollution. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) and policies contain environmental guidance, rather than there being a stand-alone environmental policy.⁵²

MAG clearance operations involve the use of manual and machine methods in an integrated fashion as needed and where suitable. MAG ensures all trees are left in place during operations to minimise the impact and footprint on the environment. When setting up camps, MAG makes every effort to recycle all building materials and reuse it in the next camp. MAG's houses, office, and camps use a hybrid system of generators for charging and solar panels for lights and backup. All teams, offices, and houses cook on gas bottles as much as possible. With every new grant, MAG makes an effort to increase the use of solar panels for lights and as these systems improve, MAG will be looking to fully integrate the system into its daily power consumption needs.⁵³

NPA Angola does not have a country-specific environmental policy, but it follows environmental guidelines from head office. NPA Angola also participated in the environmental mapping exercise of the head office in 2022.⁵⁴

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Gender and diversity are integrated into Angola's National Mine Action Strategy 2020–25 as a cross-cutting issue. The strategy recognises that mine action activities need to reflect the distinct needs of different ages, genders, and other

diverse groups through targeted design with the collection, analysis and reporting of data disaggregated by sex and age a key precursor for this. Disaggregated data collection requirements have been integrated into all relevant SOPs,

42 Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

43 Email from Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023.

44 Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

45 Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023.

46 Emails from Jeanette Dijkstra, MAG, 22 March 2022; Christelle Mestre, GICHD, 4 May 2022; Miroslav Pisarević, NPA, 10 March 2022; Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 14 March 2022; and Daniel Richards, HALO, 25 June 2022.

47 Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

48 Email from Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 14 March 2022.

49 The HeroTree Programme, which APOPO implements in partnership with Agriculture Tanzania (SAT), promotes sustainable agricultural techniques and climate-smart farming practices to contribute to food security, poverty reduction, and socio-economic development. APOPO Annual Report 2022, p. 83.

50 Email from Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023.

51 Email from Daniel Richards, HALO, 25 June 2022.

52 Email from Robert Syfret, HALO, 14 September 2022.

53 Email from Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023.

54 Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023.

forms, and other data collection tools.⁵⁵ Although Angola has no gender and diversity implementation plan, the Angolan mine action sector has made significant strides with regards to gender balance. This is demonstrated in

the increased participation of women in mine action at all hierarchical levels. In 2022, 36% of ANAM's employees were women. Women held 48% of operational positions and 33% of managerial positions.⁵⁶

Table 2: Women participation in the mine action workforce 2022.⁵⁷

Operator	Female proportion of total employees	Proportion of operational positions held by women	Proportion of managerial positions held by women
ANAM	36%	48%	33%
APOPO	12%	11%	None
HALO	40%	60%	12%
MAG	26%	33%	17%
NPA	15%	18%	None

APOPO encourages women to apply for roles and include gender and diversity perspectives when planning and implementing its demining operations as one of its core values.⁵⁸ In 2022, 12% of APOPO's employees were women. Women held 11% of operational positions but no managerial positions.⁵⁹ HALO has been working towards achieving gender balance in its programme over the past five years, starting with its "100 Women in Demining" project launched in 2017. Since then, HALO has been prioritising women during recruitment and selection for promotional training in order to increase the proportion of women at all levels of the programme, including senior management. As a result, the proportion of women within HALO Angola's workforce increased from 3.6% in 2017 to 45% by the end of 2022. Gender balance was achieved amongst its operational staff in 2022 as 60% of its operational staff were women. HALO is also developing other initiatives to empower women in the workforce and provide better healthcare provisions for women. Women who work for HALO now also receive a childcare stipend to support returning to work after maternity leave and retention in the workforce by

supporting childcare burdens which commonly fall upon women in Angola.⁶⁰

MAG keeps records of beneficiary data that are disaggregated by gender and age for each area cleared and conducts a post-clearance impact assessment to document the impact. All community members are consulted on an equal basis.⁶¹ In 2022, 26% of MAG's employees were women. Women held 33% of operational positions and 17% of managerial positions.⁶²

NPA organises gender sensitivity training for its staff and, whenever possible, gender equality is raised with the national and provincial authorities. NPA ensures that job opportunities are accessible to women and men equally, and do not contain requirements that unnecessarily discourage female applicants or preclude their employment.⁶³ NPA Angola appointed gender and diversity focal points within its programme and prepared an implementation plan for gender equality policy. All NPA data are disaggregated by gender.⁶⁴ In 2022, 15% of NPA's employees were women. Women held 18% of operational positions, but no managerial positions.⁶⁵

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

ANAM manages a national IMSMA database which is now considered to be a reliable source of information,⁶⁶ as it has been fully reconciled with operators' data, and the previous data backlog and inflated contamination figures have been cleared.⁶⁷ ANAM has requested IMSMA Core from the GICHD to improve its information management. This would allow operators to send the data directly to ANAM.⁶⁸

⁵⁵ Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA (on behalf of CNIDAH), 1 April 2020.

⁵⁶ Article 7 report (covering 2021), Form J; and email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

⁵⁷ Emails from Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023; Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023; Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023; Chris Pym, HALO, 14 June 2023, and Susanna Smale, HALO, 29 August 2023.

⁵⁸ Email from Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 22 March 2021.

⁵⁹ Email from Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023.

⁶⁰ Email from Susanna Smale, HALO, 29 August 2023.

⁶¹ Email from Jeanette Dijkstra, MAG, 22 March 2022.

⁶² Email from Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023.

⁶³ Email from Miroslav Pisarević, NPA, 5 April 2021.

⁶⁴ Email from Miroslav Pisarević, NPA, 10 March 2022.

⁶⁵ Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023.

⁶⁶ Emails from Jeanette Dijkstra, MAG, 22 March 2022; and Miroslav Pisarević, NPA, 10 March 2022.

⁶⁷ Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA (on behalf of CNIDAH), 22 March 2021; Statement by Angola on Article 5 implementation, Fourth APMB Review Conference, Oslo, November 2019.

⁶⁸ Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

In previous years, Angola's mine action programme suffered from significant problems with information management, in particular the poor quality of the CNIDAH national database. Since 2018, an NPA Capacity Development Adviser has been embedded in CNIDAH/ANAM, and focused on establishing an up-to-date and more accurate mine contamination database, with assistance from operators.⁶⁹ As part of the improvements to information management, a monthly data-sharing mechanism between CNIDAH/ANAM and operators has been in place since 2018.⁷⁰

ANAM's information management system does not yet gather all mine action data across the country, but this issue has been discussed with the public operators and challenges to the verification and integration of historic data had yet to be mastered.⁷¹ According to the 2023 plan, the CND, which is now the only public operator in Angola, will perform demining of mined areas registered in the IMSMA database, in addition to tasks assigned by provincial governments to support development.⁷²

PLANNING AND TASKING

ANAM, in collaboration with operators, established a 2022 work plan to release 97 mined areas covering a little over 10km² by the end of 2022. Out of the total, 77 were cleared leaving 20 to be released.⁷³

Angola's National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2025 was developed by CNIDAH, in 2019, with support from the GICHD. As at June 2023, the strategy had yet to be formally adopted by the Government of Angola.⁷⁴ There are five objectives within the proposed strategy, three of which relate to completion of Angola's Article 5 obligations and which contain specific outcomes and targets:

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: LAND RELEASE

That appropriate land release activities result in the release of safe land and the facilitation of sustainable development. All hazardous areas are to be addressed by 31 December 2025 in line with the Article 5 extension request work plan. The programme's key strategic orientation for achieving its land release objective will focus on developing and fully implementing IMAS-compliant NMAS on land release, including by defining "all reasonable effort".

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

A national strategy on the management of residual contamination will be developed by the end of 2020 under the lead of CNIDAH and the CED with the participation of all relevant actors. A national capacity to manage residual contamination was to be trained within the first quarter of 2021.⁷⁵ As at July 2023, the strategy for management of residual contamination had been drafted but not yet finalised. The draft strategy sees for the CND, in partnership with the

national police, to be the entities responsible for managing residual contamination. (See the section below Planning for residual risk after completion, for further information.)⁷⁶

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: ADVOCACY, COMMUNICATION, AND COORDINATION

Effective coordination and information sharing are stated to be pre-conditions for achieving all strategic objectives. In addition to the twice-yearly coordination meetings with relevant stakeholders that began in 2019, ANAM will take the lead in developing a communications plan on the completion process by the middle of 2021, to facilitate effective information sharing.⁷⁷ Although the development of a communication plan was still outstanding at July 2023, ANAM engages with operators and donors, and media has been invited to cover events with donors and other stakeholders. ANAM intends to hold awareness-raising events in provinces where clearance is completed and make representations to the provincial governments for the declaration of completion of demining of mined areas in Huambo province, and subsequently in the provinces of Cuanza Norte, Malange, Uíge, and Zaire.⁷⁸

In June 2021, Angola released an updated work plan which includes an updated list of all areas confirmed or suspected to contain explosive ordnance, annual clearance projections and milestones, and revised funding projections. The updated land release targets, set out in Table 3, are based on an estimate of outstanding AP mined area as at June 2021. In 2022, the majority of land release was planned to take place in Bié, Cuando Cubango, Cuanza Norte, Cuanza Sul, Lunda Sul, and Moxico, with a land release target of 17.1km².⁷⁹

69 Email from Miroslav Pisarević, NPA, 10 March 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form J.

70 Emails from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 3 June 2019; Ralph Legg, HALO, 30 March 2020; and Jeanette Dijkstra, MAG, 20 May 2020.

71 Email from Christelle Mestre, GICHD, 4 May 2022.

72 Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

73 Ibid.

74 Email from Christelle Mestre, GICHD, 4 May 2022.

75 Angola National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2025, pp. 27–29.

76 Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

77 Angola National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2025, pp. 29–31.

78 Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

79 ANAM, Updated Article 5 Implementation Work Plan 2020–2025, June 2021, p. 10.

Table 3: Annual targets for release of mined area in 2021–25⁸⁰

Year	Targets (m²)
2021	17,075,262
2022	17,075,262
2023	15,672,399
2024	14,288,955
2025	7,826,779
Total	71,938,657

Guidelines for a new tasking and prioritisation system were adopted in 2021.⁸¹ A key feature of the new prioritisation

system is that provinces are assigned to operators giving them responsibility over that province.⁸² ANAM stated that priority is given to the most contaminated areas and those close to the communities. The criterion is to prioritise the tasks in the provinces close to completion, so that resources are focused to the other provinces and geared towards completion.⁸³

A workshop aiming to produce a master tasking plan was envisaged to take place in the last quarter of 2022, but did not take place as planned.⁸⁴

In July 2023, NPA published a new country strategy for 2023–25. The strategy foresaw the completion of all identified contaminated areas in the provinces of Bengo, Cuanza Norte, Uíge, and Zaire by Angola's Article 5 deadline of December 2025.⁸⁵

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Ten chapters of NMAS were completed and fully adopted in 2021.⁸⁶ Angola's NMAS are adequate and cover the main topics related to land release.⁸⁷

Three additional standards on animal detection systems, EOD, and residual contamination management, have been drafted with support from the GICHD.⁸⁸ These standards have been translated into Portuguese, and presented to the mine action stakeholders in 2022. Both the animal detection and EOD standards were accepted by all. Finalisation of the residual contamination management standard depends on the completion of the residual contamination management strategy.⁸⁹ NPA expected government approval for these three additional standards in 2023.⁹⁰ ANAM is developing additional NMAS on occupational health, safety, and the environment, in addition to other covering PPE, minefield marking, medical support for mine clearance operations, and accident and incident investigation.⁹¹

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Four international NGOs conducted demining in Angola in 2022: APOPO, HALO, MAG, and NPA. Of the national operators, APACOMINAS was active in 2022. Since the dissolving of the CED and the organisations that work under its supervision, the CND has become the only public operator conducting demining activities in Angola.⁹²

Table 4: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2022⁹³

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers*	Animal detection capacity	Machines**	Comments
APOPO	2	18	7 handlers, 10 rats	2	Deminers and rat handlers are TS and clearance personnel. Rats are applied only for TS.
APACOMINAS	4	60			
CND	16	657	5 handlers, 2 dogs	38	

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 4 July 2021.

⁸² Interview with Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 22 February 2021.

⁸³ Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

⁸⁴ Emails from Miroslav Pisarevic, NPA, 10 March and 14 September 2022; and CNIDAH, Minefield Tasking, Planning, and Prioritisation Guideline, 2021.

⁸⁵ Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 12 August 2023.

⁸⁶ Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form J.

⁸⁷ Email from Christelle Mestre, GICHD, 4 May 2022.

⁸⁸ Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form J; and emails from Christelle Mestre, GICHD, 4 May 2022; and Miroslav Pisarević, NPA, 10 March 2022.

⁸⁹ Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

⁹⁰ Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023.

⁹¹ Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

⁹² Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form J.

⁹³ Emails from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023; Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023; Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023; Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023; and Chris Pym, HALO, 14 June 2023.

Table 4 Continued

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers*	Animal detection capacity	Machines**	Comments
HALO	92	826	0	4	An additional 25 teams were hired and trained in 2022.
MAG	8	89	0	6	Six manual teams and two mechanical teams. TS personnel are allocated to the manual teams.
NPA	5	28	5 handlers, 5 dogs	4	The number of teams is an average across the year as the number of teams was reduced twice in 2022.
Totals	127	1,678	17 handlers, 10 rats, and 7 dogs	54	

* Excluding team leaders, medics, and drivers. ** Excluding vegetation cutters and sifters

The national operator, APACOMINAS, deployed six personnel across two teams of NTS in 2022.⁹⁴

APOPO almost maintained the same capacity it had in 2021 throughout 2022, with the exception of sending its MDD team to another programme in June. In 2022, APOPO deployed one team of two personnel for its NTS. For TS and clearance, APOPO deployed one team of 18 deminers, 1 mine detection rat (MDR) team of seven handlers and ten rats, and, until May 2022, one TS team of two handlers and two MDDs. APOPO expected to maintain the same structure in 2023.⁹⁵

HALO increased its number of staff across all operational teams in 2022 to support the expansion of the programme as part of the contract with the Government of Angola. Alongside its clearance teams, HALO deployed 5 NTS teams totalling 20 personnel and 3 TS teams of 6 personnel each. In 2023, HALO expected to increase its survey capacity and planned to further upscale its clearance capacity to an expected additional 10 trained and deployed teams in 2023.⁹⁶ In 2022, HALO began trialling the Minelab GPZ 7000 detector as a primary search method in Mavinga, where minefields along the Cubia river have highly mineralised magnetic soil and contain No. 8 AV mines. This type of soil leads to a constant signal when using a standard Minelab F3 detector that is unable to discriminate between the soil and the potential presence of mines. The remoteness of the area prevents mechanical clearance, and until now, these minefields had to be cleared through full manual excavation, which is a slow and laborious process. The trials have proven the GPZ detector to be highly effective in detecting low-metal-content mines in mineralised soil, which could significantly increase clearance rates in these areas.⁹⁷

HALO is using more Handheld Standoff Mine Detection System (HSTAMIDS) dual-sensor detectors, which employ ground penetrating radar technology alongside metal detection. HSTAMIDS enables a trained operator to

differentiate between scrap metal fragments, or clutter, and metal signals associated with larger mass. Metal signals identified as clutter can be rapidly excavated from the ground, reducing the amount of time deminers spend on carrying out time-consuming excavations and therefore potentially increasing clearance productivity rates.⁹⁸

HALO also continued its drone trials in 2022, particularly the M-600 LIDAR scanner and the MAVIC-2, which is outfitted with a standard red, green, and blue (RGB) wavelengths camera. The MAVIC-2 is used to capture aerial photos of the surface of the ground, while the M-600 can penetrate through the vegetation, using pulses of light to record the heights of objects on the ground, generating accurate three-dimensional information about the area and its characteristics. Drones have helped the HALO programme to be more efficient in identifying evidence points and guiding clearance teams. However, one of the main challenges is the weather. Thunderstorms and strong wind gusts can be unpredictable, making it impossible to fly drones, especially during the rainy season.⁹⁹

Alongside its clearance teams, MAG deployed 3 NTS teams with 12 personnel. MAG increased its number of teams in April 2022 as funding from Japan was renewed. In 2022, MAG mobilised additional two mine action teams, one community liaison team, and one rapid response team. However, these additional teams were discontinued in March 2023 MAG's grant from Japan ended.¹⁰⁰

NPA decreased its manual teams due to funding constraints in 2022. In June 2022, the programme contracted from six to four manual teams. Then in December 2022, was further reduced from four manual to two manual teams due to same funding challenges. NPA's manual teams carry out clearance and TS. NPA also deployed one NTS team of two personnel. NPA expected to maintain the current number of teams in 2023.¹⁰¹

⁹⁴ Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

⁹⁵ Email from Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023.

⁹⁶ Emails from Chris Pym, HALO, 14 June 2023; and Susanna Smale, HALO, 29 August 2023.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Email from Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023.

¹⁰¹ Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023.

NPA has also introduced drones into its operations since 2021 as an additional tool to support NTS and operational planning. In 2022, NPA used drones especially during the NTS as they provided good visualisation of hazardous areas, terrain, and evidence. Drones were also used during pre-implementation visits to new tasks before the deployments of teams as they assist in evidence-based planning of where to start from or to focus the activities.¹⁰²

NPA also plans to test the information collection of the Vallon VMH-4 detectors including the global positioning system (GPS) that can track the daily productivity per deminer, among other data. Such data will be collected through daily operations reports, incorporated within the information management system, and further analysed to potentially improve operational results, programme efficiency, and safety.¹⁰³

DEMINER SAFETY

APOPO reported one accident during clearance operations in Cuanza Sul in June 2022. The deminer suffered minor injuries. ANAM carried out a prompt accident investigation sending two of its officers. Lessons learned were shared and immediate actions were taken.¹⁰⁴

HALO reported five demining accidents in 2022, two in Bie province and three in Cuando Cubango province. Four of these accidents were caused by AP mines and led to deminers suffering injuries, some of which were serious. The fifth accident was caused by an AV mine and led to the death of one deminer. All accidents were investigated by HALO and ANAM, with lessons learned and recommendations shared and implemented within the HALO Angola programme. Key technical information on the accidents was presented to other operators during an ANAM-led technical workshop held in Huambo and organised by HALO.¹⁰⁵

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

According to Mine Action Review's analysis, a total of more than 13.81km² of mined area was released in Angola in 2022: 5.95km² through clearance, 4.73km² through TS, and 3.14km² through NTS,¹⁰⁶ with the destruction of 4,002 AP mines.

Data reported by ANAM did not fully align with those reported by the operators, according to which a total of 16.04km² of mined area was released in 2022: 5.84km² cancelled through NTS, 4.73km² reduced through TS, and 5.47km² cleared.

A reported area of 5.16km² was also cleared in 2022 outside of the IMSMA database, during which a total of 454 AP mines, 7 AV mines, and 311 items of UXO have been destroyed in 12 provinces. To ensure data are not inflated, from the reported clearance that occurred outside areas recorded in the IMSMA

database, only 67,244m² in Huila has been included in the total 2022 clearance figure for Angola of 5.95km² reported by Mine Action Review. The 19 AP mines destroyed in other areas have been recorded as spot tasks. A further 21.62km² of TS and NTS by APACOMINAS and CND took place in 2022 outside the IMSMA system as part of development projects.¹⁰⁷ This TS and NTS have not been included in Mine Action Review's survey totals for 2022.

ANAM expected that, from 2023 onwards, the CND would actively participate in clearing minefields registered in the database, and all areas that are identified as mined will be registered in the national database.¹⁰⁸

SURVEY IN 2022

ANAM reported the release of nearly 7.87km² through survey in 2022: cancelling 3.14km² through NTS (see Table 5) and reducing 4.73km² through TS (see Table 6).¹⁰⁹ This represents a little over half of the 14km² released through survey in 2021.¹¹⁰

Survey continues to account for the majority of land released in Angola. This, however, varied largely from one area to another and across the operators. According to operator data, land released through survey accounted for approximately 97% the total released by each of APOPO and NPA, 69% of land released by HALO, and 7% of land released by MAG, who relied primarily on mechanical clearance in 2022. Land cancellation took place in seven provinces, while land reduction and clearance took place in nine provinces in 2022.¹¹¹

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Emails from Miroslav Pisarević, NPA, 10 March and 14 September 2022; and Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023.

¹⁰⁴ Email from Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023.

¹⁰⁵ Email from Susanna Smale, HALO, 29 August 2023.

¹⁰⁶ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F; and emails from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023; Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023; Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023; Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023; and Chris Pym, HALO, 14 June 2023.

¹⁰⁷ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F; and email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.; and emails from Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023; Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023; Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023; and Chris Pym, HALO, 14 June 2023.

¹¹⁰ Emails from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 14 September 2022; Jeanette Dijkstra, MAG, 22 March 2022; Miroslav Pisarević, NPA, 10 March 2022; Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 14 March 2022; and Daniel Richards, HALO, 25 June 2022.

¹¹¹ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

Considering the national survey that has been completed in 2019, ANAM and operators believe that the remaining contamination should be released through a combined application of TS and clearance, with the expectation that the ratio of land cleared to that released through survey will increase over time.¹¹²

Table 5: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022¹¹³

Province	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Bengo	NPA	294,249
Benguela	HALO	84,444
Bié	HALO	64,000
Cuando Cubango	HALO	390,446
Cuanza Norte	NPA	1,122,592
Cuanza Sul	APACOMINAS	387,912
Cuanza Sul	APOPO	796,884
Total		3,140,527

Table 6: Release of mined area through TS in 2022¹¹⁴

Province	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
Benguela	HALO	532,073
Bié	HALO	340,259
Cuando Cubango	HALO	1,089,220
Cuanza Norte	NPA	336,440
Cuanza Sul	APACOMINAS	149,764
Cuanza Sul	APOPO	1,320,019
Lunda Sul	MAG	180,000
Moxico	MAG	11,000
Zaire	NPA	769,432
Total		4,728,207

As mentioned above, a total of 21.62km² of additional survey took place outside of the IMSMA by APACOMINAS and CND as part of development projects in 2022. Of this, 3.13km² was cancelled through NTS by APACOMINAS in the province of Cabinda (Table 7), and 18.82km² was reduced through TS by APACOMINAS and CND in eight provinces (Table 8). These development projects have not been included in Mine Action Review's survey data total for 2022.

Table 7: Release of mined area outside IMSMA through NTS in 2022¹¹⁵

Province	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Cabinda	APACOMINAS	3,129,594
Total		3,129,594

Table 8: Release of mined area outside IMSMA through TS in 2022¹¹⁶

Province	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
Benguela	CND	322,413
Bié	CND	10,000,000
Cabinda	APACOMINAS	1,233,582
Cuando Cubango	CND	114,000
Huambo	CND	198,230
Huila	CND	130,245
Lunda Norte	CND	2,800,474
Zaire	CND	4,017,194
Total		18,816,138

CLEARANCE IN 2022

According to Mine Action Review's analysis, a total of 5.95km² of mined area was cleared in 2022 (see Tables 9 and 11), destroying in the process 4,002 AP mines. This is an almost 50% increase on the 4km² of mined area cleared in 2021.¹¹⁷ Of the total number of AP mines destroyed in 2022, 3,342 were destroyed in mined areas in the IMSMA database; 435 were destroyed by the CND in Huila province in mined area not included in the database; and 225 were destroyed during spot tasks. Also destroyed during mine clearance in 2022 were 1,572 AV mines and 9,194 items of UXO.¹¹⁸

¹¹² Emails from Mário Nunes on behalf of ANAM, NPA, 14 September 2022; Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 6 September 2022; Miroslav Pisarević, NPA, 14 September 2022; Jeanette Dijkstra, MAG, 6 September 2022; and Robert Syfret, HALO, 14 September 2022.

¹¹³ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F; and emails from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023; Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023; Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023; Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023; and Chris Pym, HALO, 14 June 2023. HALO reported a total of 3,076,529m² of cancellation through NTS as follows: 179,180m² in Benguela, 141,231m² in Bié, 2,359,624m² in Cuando Cubango, 167,465m² in Huila, and 229,029m² in Cunene. Taking HALO's figures in consideration, the total area cancelled through NTS is 4,979,285m².

¹¹⁴ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F; and emails from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023; Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023; Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023; Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023; and Chris Pym, HALO, 14 June 2023. In response to the Mine Action Review questionnaire, HALO reported having reduced 1,077,587m² through TS in Cuando Cubango, and 740,717 in Benguela, and APOPO 1,330,314m² in Cuanza Sul. Taking operators' figures in consideration, total area reduced through TS is 4,785,749m².

¹¹⁵ Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F; and emails from Jeanette Dijkstra, MAG, 22 March 2022; Miroslav Pisarević, NPA, 10 March 2022; Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 14 March 2022; and Daniel Richards, HALO, 25 June 2022.

¹¹⁸ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F; and emails from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023; Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023; Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023; Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023; and Chris Pym, HALO, 14 June 2023.

The increase in area cleared in 2022 is largely attributable to the additional number of HALO's manual clearance and survey teams and MAG's extensive use of mechanical assets and deployment in minefields with ground and vegetation that favoured mechanical clearance.¹¹⁹ But the number of square metres cleared for every AP mine destroyed in 2022 has increased by almost 40% on 2021: from 1,081m² per mine in 2021 to 1,574m² per mine in 2022. It remained significantly lower than the 4,166m² per mine in 2020.

Table 9: Mine clearance in 2022¹²⁰

Province	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Benguela	HALO	495,467	142	0	11
Bié	HALO	484,348	87	19	58
Cuando Cubango	HALO	1,690,787	1,866	1,496	65
Cuanza Norte	NPA	62,734	120	0	6
Cuanza Sul	APACOMINAS	513,616	41	0	129
Cuanza Sul	APOPO	54,724	164	0	115
Moxico	MAG	918,571	440	6	219
Lunda Sul	MAG	1,642,696	463	1	331
Zaire	NPA	15,247	19	1	40
Totals		5,878,190	3,342	1,523	974

In addition, ANAM reported the destruction of 206 AP mines during spot tasks: 2 by APOPO, 13 by HALO,¹²¹ 4 by NPA,¹²² 48 by MAG, and 139 by CND.¹²³

According to ANAM, a total of more than 13.81km² of mined area was released in 2022: 5.95km² through clearance, 4.73km² through TS, and 3.14km² through NTS.¹²⁴ Land release output decreased by almost 25% in 2022 compared to 2021, when a total of 17.86km² of land was released, of which 4km² was cleared, 3.61km² reduced through TS, and 10.25km² cancelled through NTS. Land cancellation and reduction accounted for nearly 60% of total land release in 2022. Clearance and TS outputs increased, while NTS output significantly decreased compared to 2021 (see Table 10).

Table 10: Land release in 2022 compared to 2021¹²⁵

Land release	2021 (Operator data km ²)	2022 (ANAM data km ²)	2022 (Operator data km ²)
Cancelled through NTS	10.25	3.14	5.68
Reduced through TS	3.61	4.73	4.94
Cleared	4.00	5.95	5.47
Totals	17.86	13.82	16.09

119 Emails from Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023; Chris Pym, HALO, 14 June 2023; and Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023.

120 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F; and emails from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023; Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023; Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023; Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023; and Chris Pym, HALO, 14 June 2023. In Angola's Article 7 report, the clearance figures of Cuanza Norte and Zaire are reversed (15,247m² in Cuanza Norte and 62,734m² in Zaire). The clearance figures of these two provinces are provided as per the data provided by NPA. MAG reported having cleared 1,650,869m² in Luanda Sul destroying 64 AP mines, no AV mines, and 331 items of UXO; HALO reported clearance of 495,467m² in Benguela, destroying 368 AP mines and 68 items of UXO; 374,998m² in Bié, destroying 87 AP mines, 19 AV mines, and 316 items of UXO; and 1,382,052m² in Cuando Cubango, destroying 1,866 AP mines, 1,496 AV mines, and 51 items of UXO. NPA reported having destroyed 426 items of UXO in Cuanza Norte and 14 in Zaire. With this operator data taken into account, the total AP mines area cleared in Angola in 2022 would be 5,468,278m², with the destruction of 3,169 AP mines, 1,522 AV mines, and 1,694 items of UXO.

121 HALO reported having destroyed 14 AP mines during spot tasks.

122 NPA did not report destruction of any AP mines in spot tasks.

123 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F; and emails from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023; Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023; Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023; Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023; and Chris Pym, HALO, 14 June 2023.

124 Ibid.

125 Includes land release data of APOCOMINAS in Cuanza Sul province.

APOPO reduced TS but increased clearance in the tasks carried out during 2022. There were no specific technical reasons for the decrease in land cancellation.¹²⁶

HALO reported a significant increase in the amount of land released in 2022 largely due to the increase in their number of manual clearance and survey teams as part of its contract with the Government of Angola. The number of manual clearance teams expanded by 25 to 92 teams in 2022 with a total of 848 deminers. This is an increase of 213 deminers compared to 2021. HALO expected 3 additional clearance teams to be trained and deployed in 2023.¹²⁷

MAG saw a 42% increase in land released in 2022 compared to 2021 due to a combination of extensive use of mechanical assets and deployment in minefields with ground and vegetation that favoured mechanical clearance. The number of teams and deminers that MAG deployed also temporarily increased from April 2022 to March 2023 thanks to a grant from Japan.¹²⁸

NPA adjusted its operations approach to focus more on efficiency of land release activities. A more targeted and systematic TS approach was employed, which increased reduction figures and reduced clearance efforts. However, the number of NPA clearance teams decreased from six at the beginning of 2022 to two by the end of the year. NPA expects to maintain its two teams in 2023.¹²⁹

Of the international operators, APOPO, MAG, and NPA combined accounted to approximately 8–15% of the human demining capacity in Angola, but to 47% of the land release outputs of international operators. Both APOPO and NPA have released 97% of AP mined area through other than clearance, compared to 70% for HALO, and 7% for MAG, which mainly relied on mechanical clearance in 2022.

Since 2021, all known mined areas in Huambo had been released. As at May 2023, ANAM said that declaration of completion of land release in all known mined areas was imminent.¹³⁰ Four additional provinces (Uige, Cuanza Norte, Namibe, and Zaire) were very close to completion. Malange province, which was previously thought to only contain residual contamination, is now subject to additional survey following NTS conducted by NPA at the request of ANAM that discovered four new hazardous areas. NPA expected to verify all remaining reports in Malange by June 2023 to establish a new provincial baseline.¹³¹

In Cuanza Norte, NPA reported that there are ten remaining uncleared tasks that were expected to be completed by May 2024. In the province of Uige, land release activities have not been completed as four additional tasks were identified by NPA's NTS team in 2022.¹³² As at August 2023, the five remaining tasks in Uige were expected to be completed in 2024.¹³³ HALO received approval from ANAM in July 2023 to begin work on the three remaining areas in Namibe. Clearance began in August 2023.¹³⁴ In Zaire, release of the last mined area was completed by NPA in June 2023. An impact assessment was planned by the end of 2023 to ensure no previously unknown areas remain before a declaration of completion is made.¹³⁵

The CED cleared a total area of 5.16km² outside the IMSMA database as part of development projects, during which a total of 454 AP mines, 7 AV mines, and 311 items of UXO were destroyed in 12 provinces (see Table 11).¹³⁶ Only the 67,244m² of mined area cleared in Huila, during which 435 AP mines were destroyed, has been considered in Mine Action Review's total 2022 clearance figure for Angola (5.95km²). The remaining areas reported as cleared outside mined areas in IMSMA were not included, as they concerned large areas with little or no contamination. The AP mines destroyed in provinces other than Huila are reported as spot tasks.

Table 11: Mine clearance by CND in 2022 (outside mined areas in IMSMA)¹³⁷

Province	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Bengo	CND	459,483	0	0	77
Benguela	CND	383,917	2	0	6
Bié	CND	1,380,715	2	1	34
Cabinda	CND	188,550	0	0	0
Cuando Cubango	CND	36,000	2	6	165
Cuanza Norte	CND	28,212	0	0	0
Huambo	CND	126,900	0	0	0

¹²⁶ Email from Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023.

¹²⁷ Email from Chris Pym, HALO, 14 June 2023.

¹²⁸ Email from Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023.

¹²⁹ Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023.

¹³⁰ Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

¹³¹ Email from Robert Iga Afedra, Country Director, NPA, 30 March 2023.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Statement of Angola, APMBIC Intersessional Meetings 2023, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023; and email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 12 August 2023.

¹³⁴ Email from Susanna Smale, HALO, 29 August 2023.

¹³⁵ Emails from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023; and Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March and 12 August 2023.

¹³⁶ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F; and email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

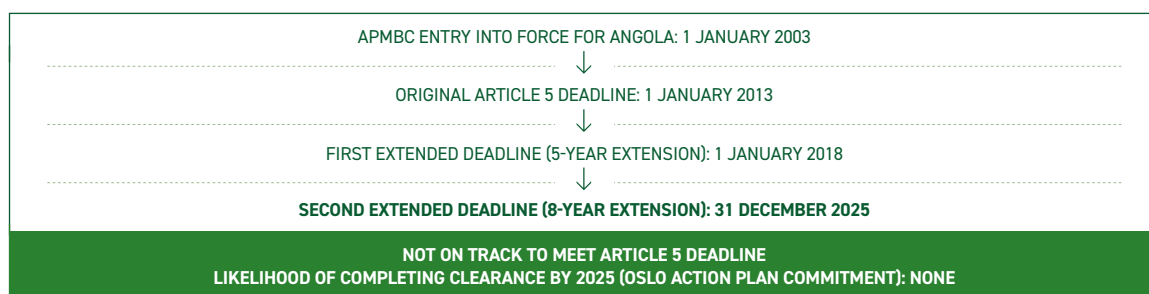
¹³⁷ Ibid.

Table 11 Continued

Province	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Huila*	CND	67,244	435	0	6
Lunda Norte	CND	1,159,886	10	0	1
Lunda Sul	CND	130,500	0	0	1
Moxico	CND	578,672	3	0	11
Zaire	CND	620,000	0	0	10
Totals		5,160,079	454	7	311

* Only the area cleared and the number of AP mines destroyed in Huila are considered in Mine Action Review's 2022 clearance figure for Angola. The remaining areas were not considered as area clearance for the purpose of Mine Action Review's reporting as they concerned vast areas with little or no contamination. The AP mines destroyed in provinces other than Huila are reported as spot tasks.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the eight-year extension granted by States Parties in 2017), Angola is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2025. Angola is unlikely to meet this deadline.

The year 2022 saw Angola fail to meet its Article 5 work plan land release target of 17.1km² by 3.25km². This is a regression from 2021 where Angola has exceeded its 2021 land release target of 17.1km² by 2.77km².¹³⁸ According to Angola's latest statement to the APMBC Intersessional Meetings in June 2023, Angola will need to release 25.44km² in 2023, 20.76km² in 2024, and 20.29km² in 2025 to meet its Article 5 deadline.¹³⁹ These annual land release targets are higher than those set out in Angola's Updated Article 5 Implementation Work Plan 2020–2025, which foresaw the need to release 15.7km² in 2023, 14.3km² in 2024, and 7.8km² in 2025 to meet its Article 5 deadline.¹⁴⁰ ANAM had anticipated in 2020 that after the completion of NTS in all provinces and better definition of minefields sizes, there would be reduced cancellation on the remaining mined areas across the country.¹⁴¹ There was

indeed an decrease in the ratio of land released through survey in 2022 compared to the previous year.

Despite the positive developments in Angola's mine action structures, and in light of the current rate of land release outputs, the continued and expected future discovery of previously unknown mined areas, Angola needs to accelerate the pace of its progress and continue to apply sound and rigorous land release techniques in order to meet its Article 5 deadline of 31 December 2025. However, with almost 23% of land released in 2022 resulting from cancellation, if indeed most of the remaining contamination is expected to be dealt with through clearance and TS activities, Angola will need to request a further extension to its Article 5 deadline. As stated in its recently published country strategy of 2023–25, NPA strongly believes that, although releasing all AP mined areas by the end of December 2025 might not be feasible, completion of clearance in Bengo, Cuanza Norte, Uíge, and Zaire provinces is possible. NPA's strategy is hoped to demonstrate Angola's strong commitment to fulfilling its obligations to the Convention.¹⁴²

138 CNIDAH, "Detailed work plan for the implementation of Article 5 of the Convention (2019–2025)", Annex 1; and emails from Jeanette Dijkstra, MAG, 22 March 2022; Miroslav Pisarević, NPA, 10 March 2022; Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 14 March 2022; and Daniel Richards, HALO, 25 June 2022.

139 Statement of Angola, Intersessional Meetings 2023, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

140 ANAM, Updated Article 5 Implementation Work Plan 2020–2025, p. 10.

141 Ibid., p. 5.

142 Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 12 August 2023.

Table 12: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	5.9
2021	4.0
2020	1.8
2019	1.6
2018	1.0
Total	14.3

CNIDAH stated in early 2021 that it would take ten years for Angola to complete national clearance of AP mined areas. However, if capacity is increased and operators implement efficient and effective land release methodologies then this timeline could be significantly reduced.¹⁴³ Angola has indeed accelerated its land release by investing additional resources

and deploying sound land release methodology throughout 2021 and 2022, but it will need to further upscale this pace if it has any chance of meeting its 2025 Article 5 deadline. Despite continued funding support from multiple donors, Angola said in February 2023 that it still needed more than US\$238 million to complete its mine clearance.¹⁴⁴

ANAM has reported that strict implementation of land release principles during clearance has improved operational efficiency of demining in Angola. Operational assets are being effectively used on clearance and TS with improved results. Effective implementation of NTS has ensured considerable cancellations, which has saved time and financial resources.¹⁴⁵ In 2022, APOPO cleared one area of 142,356m² with no mines found;¹⁴⁶ HALO worked on 10 areas, totalling 301,353m², which proved to contain no mines;¹⁴⁷ MAG completed two clearance sites totalling 14,142m² without finding mines;¹⁴⁸ and NPA released two areas totalling 271,008m² which contained no AP mines, although these two areas were reduced through TS.¹⁴⁹

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

In accordance with Strategic Objective 4 of the draft National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2025, CNIDAH and the CED, with the participation of all relevant actors, aimed to establish a national strategy on the management of residual contamination by the end of 2020. This was delayed due to movement restrictions imposed by COVID-19.¹⁵⁰ As at May 2023, Angola reported that a strategy for the management of residual contamination had not yet been finalised. The draft strategy identifies the CND, which is present in all 18 provinces with adequate human resources and technical capacity, as the appropriate entity to manage residual contamination in partnership with the defence and security forces, particularly the national police.¹⁵¹

A national standard on residual contamination management has also been developed by the GICHD for the transition phase. This includes process maps that outline the responsibilities of the currently involved stakeholders.¹⁵² The finalisation of the residual contamination management standard depends on the finalisation of the residual contamination management strategy,¹⁵³ which is a work-in-progress.¹⁵⁴ Under its ongoing capacity development

project, NPA planned to train the Angolan military and police on management of residual contamination of explosive ordnance.¹⁵⁵

ANAM recognises the importance of establishing a residual contamination strategy because Angola lacks procedures for the declaration of completion within provinces and there is no common understanding of residual risk. CNIDAH prioritised the provinces of Huambo, where clearance has been completed, Malange, and Namibe, which (or in the case of Malange, was thought to be) approaching completion, and in 2021, continued to hold sensitisation meetings with the provincial leadership in Cuanza Norte, Huambo, Malange, Namibe, and Uige provinces to prepare them for the potential declaration of their provinces clear of all known mined areas, and allay fears about job losses within the demining sector.¹⁵⁶ As at May 2023, however, none of these areas had been declared mine-free.¹⁵⁷ ANAM hoped that fulfilling Angola's Article 5 obligations is still possible following the planned deployment in 2023 of its newly created national operator, the CND, to mined areas registered in the IMSMA database, and expected this to significantly reinforce demining capacity.¹⁵⁸

143 Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, on behalf of CNIDAH, 22 March 2021.

144 "Angola Needs U.S.\$ 238.5 Million to Complete Clearing Landmines", *All Africa*, 2 February 2023.

145 ANAM, Updated Article 5 Implementation Work Plan 2020–2025, June 2021, p. 6.

146 Email from Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023.

147 Email from Susanna Smale, HALO, 29 August 2023.

148 Email from Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023.

149 Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023.

150 Telephone interview with Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 8 June 2021; and ANAM, Updated Article 5 Implementation Work Plan 2020–2025, p. 8.

151 Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

152 Email from Christelle Mestre, GICHD, 4 May 2022.

153 Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

154 Emails from Manuel João Agostinho, APOPO, 30 March 2023; Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 30 March 2023; Nelson Verissimo, MAG, 6 June 2023; and Chris Pym, HALO, 14 June 2023.

155 Email from Miroslav Pisarević, NPA, 10 March 2022.

156 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form J.

157 Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 10 May 2023.

158 Email from Mário Nunes (on behalf of ANAM), NPA, 14 September 2022.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

MINE
ACTION
REVIEW

CLEARING THE MINES 2023

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2027
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: HEAVY

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

50 km²

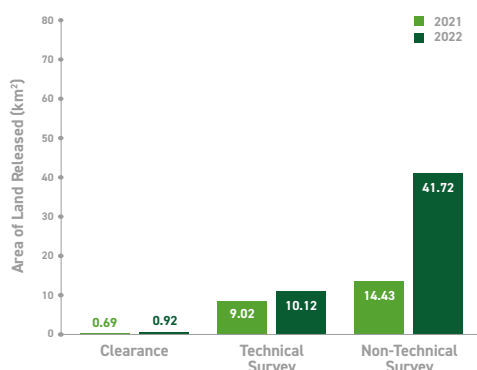
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

0.92 km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

3,527

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) doubled its land release output in 2022 compared to the previous year and met its clearance target for the year as set out in its 2020 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline extension request. However, its non-technical survey (NTS) output continues to be significantly lower than is required for timely completion of clearance. BiH is not on course to complete clearance by its current Article 5 deadline and was planning to set a new deadline in the course of 2023, following a mid-term review of its National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The BiH Mine Action Centre (BHMIC) should promptly establish a revised completion deadline that is both achievable and realistic and develop a detailed and costed multiyear work plan with attainable and measurable milestones aligned with an updated national mine action strategy.
- The amended demining law drafted in 2017, which had still to be adopted as of writing, should be revised and re-submitted to Parliament for adoption. Liability policy and clearly defining “all reasonable effort” in the context of BiH should be discussed in parallel with the revision.
- BiH should strengthen the governance and management of its mine action programme by improving communication and coordination with clearance operators and other key stakeholders, including through the re-establishment of a “Country Coalition” approach and technical working groups (TWGs).
- BHMIC should fully adopt international best practice in land release and ensure that all stakeholders in all parts of BiH, including BHMIC’s regional offices, are empowered to use evidence-based survey to confirm and delineate areas of actual contamination prior to clearance.
- BHMIC should detail the steps it plans to take to further mainstream gender and diversity within its mine action programme and improve gender balance in the sector, at the least by meeting the target of 40% female staff set by the 2003 Law on Gender Equality.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	5	4	BiH estimates that over 869km ² of anti-personnel (AP) mined area remains in its territory. In an encouraging development, BiH reported the extent of its remaining contamination in a manner consistent with international standards by classifying it into suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) and confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs). However, only 2% of the contamination estimate is in CHAs and it is understood that many of the SHAs are considerably inflated and that significant further cancellation through NTS is to be expected.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	5	5	National ownership of mine action in BiH falls under the responsibility of the Demining Commission and BHMAL, with a new Commission appointed in July 2022. The process to adopt the amended demining law (2017) was restarted in 2022 but had not concluded as at March 2023. Governance of the national mine action programme needs to be strengthened and Article 5 implementation better coordinated. Regrettably, the Country Coalition established between BiH and Germany in 2020 has not met since and the technical working group has not been re-formed.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	4	4	The National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 aligns with the 2003 Law on Gender Equality. However, women continue to represent a small portion of staff within BHMAL and clearance operators' programmes, especially in field operations, despite BHMAL's commitment to integrating gender in all mine action activities. One of the three people in the Demining Commission appointed in 2022 is a woman.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	6	6	BHMAL is transitioning to IMSMA (Information Management System for Mine Action) Core from its own information management system. The first phase concluded in 2020, and the final phase is scheduled for completion by mid 2024. BHMAL submitted its Article 7 transparency report for 2022, disaggregating mine contamination into SHAs and CHAs. However, land release data is divided into contamination that is within Mine Suspected Areas (MSAs – groups of SHAs and CHAs) and outside MSAs causing unnecessary confusion.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	7	7	A first revision of BiH's National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 was scheduled for 2020 but is now planned to be completed in 2023. Whole MSAs are assigned to operators for land release. However, operators report that task dossiers are often not issued in a timely manner and frequently lack comprehensive NTS information.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	7	7	BHMAL had planned to revise and develop its national mine action standards (NMAS) in 2020. After a three-year delay, the NMAS had been updated and were under review by BHMAL as at June 2023. In 2022, a total of 17 organisations were deployed for mine action operations in BiH.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	6	5	Land release output more than doubled from 2021 to 2022 but still fell far short of BiH's land release target for the year. BiH is highly unlikely to meet its current Article 5 deadline and expects to submit a further extension request with a new completion date of approximately 2030 although this had yet to be confirmed at the time of writing. In order to achieve timely completion BiH will need to increase its annual land release output, particularly release through NTS.
Average Score	5.8	5.4	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- The Demining Commission (representatives from three ministries (Civil Affairs, Security, and Defence) elected to represent BiH's three main ethnic groups (Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs))
- Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BHMAL)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Armed Forces of BiH
- BHMAL
- Civil Protection Administration of Republika Srpska (CPA RS)
- Federal Administration of Civil Protection (FACP)

Non-governmental organisations:

- DEMIRA
- Mine Detection Dog Centre (MDDC)
- Pro Vita
- Stop Mines

Commercial demining companies:

- Detector
- Heksogen d.o.o
- In Demining N.H.O
- N&N Ivsa
- Udruga "Pazi mine"
- UEM d.o.o (UEM is also an NGO)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

OTHER ACTORS

- European Union Force Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR)
- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

BHMAC reported that at the end of 2022, more than 869km² of (mostly) suspected mined area remained (see Table 1). This included only some 18km² of CHA, equating to 2% of the total mined area.¹ This is a decrease compared to the 922km² of mined area remaining in BiH a year earlier, which is largely consistent with the land release reported by BHMAC for 2022.² It is also a sizeable reduction on the 883km² of remaining mined area (which equated to 1.7% of its total territory), as reported by BiH at the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties in November 2022.³

Table 1: Mined area (at end 2022)⁴

Province	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total CHAs and SHAs	Total area (m ²)
Unsko-Sanski	120	2,455,601	509	84,334,399	629	86,790,000
Posavski	3	255,060	163	14,584,940	166	14,840,000
Tuzlanski	49	1,298,628	675	73,471,372	724	74,770,000
Zeničko-Dobojski	39	1,457,650	572	108,242,350	611	109,700,000
Bosansko-Podrinjski	14	915,190	186	43,134,810	200	44,050,000
Srednjobosanski	78	2,392,871	583	99,557,129	661	101,950,000
Hercegovačko Neretvanski	64	2,566,992	941	131,073,008	1,005	133,640,000
Zapadnohercegovački	3	228,308	6	591,692	9	820,000
Kanton Sarajevo	23	666,497	172	49,183,503	195	49,850,000
Kanton 10	26	631,640	356	61,898,360	382	62,530,000
Republika Srpska	266	5,100,758	135	172,509,242	401	177,610,000
Brčko district	5	197,383	2,299	12,862,617	2,304	13,060,000
Totals	690	18,166,578	6,597	851,443,422	7,287	869,610,000

In 2017, BHMAC, clearance operators, and the EU formalised plans for a country assessment project to establish a more accurate baseline of mine contamination and improve clearance efficiency.⁵ The project, conducted from 2018 to 2020, involved a nationwide NTS by BHMAC, the Armed Forces of BiH, and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). The project processed data for 143 municipalities, confirming mined areas in 118 of them.⁶ During the project, 103km² of land were released, reducing the total mined area from 1,069km² to 966km². The NTS corrected 1,151 minefield GEO positions, added 300 new minefield records, and removed 6,023 records from the database.⁷

The remaining mined area was divided into 478 Mine Suspected Areas (MSAs), averaging 1.94km² in size.⁸ MSA is a BiH-specific term, not consistent with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), and defined as "an area made up of SHAs and CHAs which encompasses one or more impacted communities and due to economic, cultural or geographical and other reasons is selected as a logical unit".⁹ In addition, there is some mine contamination outside the MSAs that is also being assigned to operators for survey and clearance. BHMAC has not specified how much of the contaminated area is within MSAs and how much is outside. It had been expected that the project would result in a significant amount

1 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, Interpreter, BHMAC, 23 March 2023; and Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C.

2 BiH draft Mine Action Report for 2021, undated, p. 5.; and emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 15 April 2022 and Mirjana Marić, Senior officer for analysis and reporting, BHMAC, 21 September 2022.

3 Statement of BiH on Article 5, APMB Twenty Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 21 to 25 November 2022.

4 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023; and Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C.

5 Interviews with Darvin Lisica, then Programme Manager and Regional Director, NPA, Sarajevo, 8 May 2017; Fotini Antonopoulou, EU, Sarajevo, 8 May 2017; and Tarik Serak BHMAC, Sarajevo, 10 May 2017.

6 BiH draft Mine Action Report for 2020, undated draft, p. 11.

7 Email from Jonas Zachrisson, Country Director, NPA, 26 March 2020.

8 2020 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, pp. 5 and 10–11; BiH draft Mine Action Report for 2020, undated draft, pp. 3 and 13; and Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form C.

9 2020 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, pp. 6 and 16.

of cancellation, but it amounted to less than 10% of the total mined area.¹⁰ Significant further cancellation is therefore expected during land release of the MSAs.

Minefields in BiH generally contain relatively small numbers of mines, which are typically either "in groups or randomly laid". The quality of approximately 30% of minefield records was not sufficiently accurate for the identification of the precise minefield location and shape. Furthermore, it seems that approximately 40% of minefield records were never made or handed over, and records were often destroyed or lost for several reasons, such as the death or emigration of

the persons who created the relevant record.¹¹ In its Article 7 report for 2020, BiH reported it had collected 70% of all minefield records.¹² Physical changes to mined areas (such as in vegetation) and a lack of witnesses to the laying of the mines pose additional challenges.¹³

BiH is heavily contaminated with mines, primarily as a result of the 1992–95 conflict related to the break-up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. All warring factions in BiH laid mines, primarily between confrontation lines.¹⁴ More than twenty-five years after the end of the conflict, BiH is still heavily contaminated with mines.

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

BiH is also contaminated with explosive remnants of war (ERW). The last cluster munition remnants (CMR) were destroyed at the end of August 2023, and BHMAC declared completion of its Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Article 4 clearance obligations at the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the CCM in Geneva in September 2023.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Demining Commission, under the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs, supervises the State-wide BHMAC and represents BiH in its relations with the international community on mine-related issues.¹⁵ The Demining Commission is composed of representatives from three ministries (Civil Affairs, Defence, and Security) elected to represent BiH's three main ethnic groups (Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs). Whereas the Minister for Civil Affairs remains ultimately responsible for mine action, the Demining Commission is the body responsible for setting mine action policy, and it proposes the appointment of BHMAC senior staff, for approval by the Council of Ministers.¹⁶ The mandate of the most recent Commission ended on 30 April 2022, and a new Commission was appointed on 28 July 2022.¹⁷

BHMAC is responsible for regulating mine action and implementing BiH's survey and clearance plans.¹⁸ BHMAC operates from its headquarters in Sarajevo, two main offices in Sarajevo and Banja Luka, and eight regional offices (Banja Luka, Bihac, Brčko, Mostar, Pale, Sarajevo, Travnik, and Tuzla).¹⁹

Since 2008, efforts have been made to adopt new mine action legislation in BiH with a view to creating a stable

platform for mine action funding by the government and local authorities. The process was restarted again in 2022 after being suspended the previous year but, as at August 2023, is not yet concluded.²⁰ The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) believes the amended demining law should be revised further and re-submitted for adoption, with the topics of "All Reasonable Effort" and liability discussed in parallel to the revision.²¹ Clearer legislation on liabilities related to mine action activities would be beneficial to all stakeholders in BiH.

Since 2010, NPA has been helping to build the capacity of the Armed Forces of BiH Demining Battalion.²² National capacity development remains NPA's strategic commitment, and in close cooperation with national stakeholders, it elaborated a Capacity Development plan for 2022–25. The plan, which will depend on the availability of funding, focuses on capacity development of the BiH Demining Battalion as a key national stakeholder in implementation of BiH's Mine Action Strategy. NPA provides direct operational support for the Demining Battalion's clearance tasks, and in 2022 assessed the Demining Battalion's information management system, identifying a need to enhance the Battalion's data collection,

10 Based on BiH's draft Mine Action Report for 2020, undated draft, p. 11. In BiH's 2020 Revised Article 5 extension request, August 2020, the amount of mined area cancelled was reported to be nearly 966.7km² (p. 5), but this figure is believed to be an error, given that 1,030km² of mined area was addressed during the country assessment (p. 11) and remaining mined area as at the beginning of 2020 was nearly 966.7km² (p. 16 and Annex 2). The 966.7km² referred to incorrectly as cancelled on p. 5 is believed by Mine Action Review to refer to the total remaining mined area as at the end of the assessment at the beginning of 2020, as indicated on pp. 7 and 16, and in Annex 2.

11 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.

12 Article 7 report (covering 2020), Form C.

13 Audit Office of the Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, "Performance Audit Report. Efficiency of the Demining System in Bosnia and Herzegovina", 4 November 2016, p. 26.

14 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, p. 4.

15 BHMAC Organisational chart, accessed 6 May 2022 at: <http://bit.ly/2Ycj4xl>.

16 UNDP, Draft Mine Action Governance and Management Assessment for BiH, 13 May 2015, p. 22.

17 Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAC, 21 September 2022.

18 Bosnia and Herzegovina Official Gazette, Sarajevo, 17 March 2002.

19 BiH, National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, p. 8.

20 Emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March and 31 August 2023.

21 Email from the GICHD, 14 May 2021.

22 Email from Jonas Zachrisson, NPA, 14 March 2021.

processing, and analysis to improve the efficiency of its mine action. These activities were continuing into 2023.²³

In 2022, the GICHD and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) delivered training on mine action and the sustainable development goals (SDGs) to BHMAG, the Demining Commission, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, demining operators, the European Union Force Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in BiH. In addition, the GICHD and UNDP co-authored a study, "The Sustainable Development Outcomes of Mine Action in Bosnia and Herzegovina", which was launched in June 2022.²⁴ UNDP BiH, through the "MAGMA" project that aims to complete clearance,²⁵ supported mine action in BiH during 2022 by providing training for BHMAG quality inspectors.²⁶

After a 10-year hiatus, Board of Donors meetings resumed in September 2015.²⁷ BiH's new National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 specifies that at least two such meetings should be organised every year.²⁸ One meeting was held in April 2022 and one meeting is planned for October 2023.²⁹

The Country Coalition established between BiH and Germany was intended to facilitate regular dialogue among mine action stakeholders, demonstrate national ownership, strengthen coordination of APMB Article 5, as well as implementation of CCM Article 4 (now completed), address challenges, and monitor progress against the 2018–25 strategy. The first meeting in October 2020 has representatives from non-governmental organisation (NGO) clearance operators and donors, but no further meetings had been convened as at August 2023. Although the Demining Commission has submitted a proposal to the Council of Ministers that the

Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Demining Commission be instructed to formally establish the Country Coalition as an international body that will be part of the demining process in BiH.³⁰

MAG had hoped the Country Coalition would lead to the reform of TWGs, which would allow operators, the BHMAG, and its regional offices to share lessons learned, challenges, and successes across the different parts of BiH. However, no meetings had been held in 2022 or to date in 2023. However, MAG report that, at a regional level, there is ongoing open dialogue during land release projects.³¹

National funding supports BHMAG and survey and clearance activities implemented by the BiH Armed Forces. Operations of the Armed Forces are supported by the Council of Ministers from the national budget, while the Government of the Federation of BiH finances the operations of the Federal Administration of Civil Protection (FACP).³² The Civil Protection Administration of Republika Srpska (CPA RS) is financed by the Government of Republika Srpska.³³ According to a statement of the Demining Commission in November 2020, international donors provided 55% of mine action funding with 45% coming from national sources.³⁴ According to BiH, as at 2020, available financial resources had not met the projected funding of the Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, which may not allow "full realisation" of the goals set.³⁵ In 2022, BHMAG was funded by BiH to the sum of over BAM6.14 million (over US\$3.47 million), an increase from 2021. In addition, over BAM10.16 million were allocated by domestic institutions for demining (BAM2.8 million by the BiH Armed Forces; BAM3.6 million by FACP; BAM3.45 million by the CPA RS; and BAM0.3 million by the Government of Brčko district).³⁶

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

BiH does not have a national mine action standard (NMAS) on environmental management. However, BHMAG claimed that existing demining procedures (e.g. methods for vegetation removal, removal of metals and waste, and use of machinery) generally contribute to environmental management and protection. In certain cases modifications are made to safeguard the environment, and local communities are consulted during the approval of demining plans "as and where necessary". Threshing machines are banned in agricultural areas due to soil disturbance

and compaction, and machines are not used on mountain pastures to protect against removal of layers of grasses. In forests, as part of procedures to ensure the use of metal detectors at the required height, BHMAG consults landowners to make informed decisions about vegetation removal and tree preservation.³⁷

The 2022 study on SDGs and mine action in Bosnia identified the direct contribution of land release to 12 SDGs and 35 of their associated targets, including relating to flood prevention.³⁸ Following the 2014 flood in BiH, a recovery

23 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.

24 Email from Stanislav Damjanovic, Advisor, GICHD, 25 May 2023.

25 See: <https://bit.ly/3qELnYZ>.

26 Email from Sanja Corovic, UNDP, 14 June 2023.

27 Interview with Tarik Serak, BHMAG, Sarajevo, 10 May 2017; and emails from Fotini Antonopoulou, EU, 19 June 2017; and Suad Baljak, Mine Action Officer, UNDP, 15 June 2017; and UNDP BiH, "Mine Action Board of Donors Meeting", 31 March 2016, at: <http://bit.ly/300f4lp>.

28 BiH, National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, p. 20.

29 Emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAG, 23 March and 31 August 2023.

30 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAG, 31 August 2023.

31 Email from Pauline Boyer, Country Director, MAG, 6 April 2023.

32 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAG, 22 March 2022.

33 Email from Suad Baljak, UNDP, 18 September 2020.

34 Statement of BiH, APMB Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties, 16 to 20 November 2020.

35 2020 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, p. 7.

36 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAG, 23 March 2023.

37 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAG, 22 March 2022.

38 GICHD and UNDP, "The Sustainable Development Outcomes of Mine Action in Bosnia and Herzegovina", 2 June 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3X9qv8z>.

needs assessment was initiated by the government which found that mines contaminated more than 70% of the flood-affected zone and were a major safety hazard to implementing recovery efforts.³⁹ In Donji Svilaj and Novi Grad (FBiH) along the border with Croatia, mines along the Sava River and very close to the road hindered flood protection and safe mobility. Contamination also impeded access to land for the purpose of flood prevention measures. Clearance allowed channels to be accessed to allow the construction of the first major motorway in BiH, connecting the country with Croatia. The motorway also serves as a flood protection barrier.⁴⁰

NPA is implementing an Environmental Assessment and Management System (EAM) for its country programmes, starting with assessing offices and administration. In addition, NPA's BiH country programme has an Environment and Climate Country Policy in place.⁴¹ NPA BiH is advocating for increased inclusion of environmental impacts in the forthcoming updates to the national mine action strategy. In 2022, NPA BiH staff attended training on environmental

safeguarding in operations and promoted waste separation and litter removal at task sites. NPA BiH also worked to eradicate single-use plastic packaging waste among all personnel.⁴²

The FACP takes the environment into consideration when drafting operational plans for the destruction of mines and UXO on site.⁴³

MAG has both an environmental policy and environmental standard operating procedure (SOP) in place and applies both when possible in its operations. Its programme also endeavours to increase staff awareness concerning the importance of reducing the impact on the environment, not only during clearance but also within the office environment and programmes support services in Sarajevo.⁴⁴ MAG ensures that field-generated rubbish, including unserviceable equipment, is disposed of at specialised recycling or disposal facilities. Reusable plastic bottles have replaced single-use plastic on demining sites, and field sanitation practices have been adapted to be more eco-friendly.⁴⁵

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 specifies that: “Under the leadership of BHMAG, relevant actors will include gender and diversity into all phases of planning, realisation and follow-up of all mine activities”.⁴⁶ The mine action strategy considered and supported the 2003 Law on Gender Equality in BiH, which includes equal treatment of the genders and equality of opportunity, and prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the ground of gender. The Law on Gender Equality determines that equal representation of men and women exists when the percentage of either gender in bodies at all levels in BiH (State, entity, cantonal, and municipality level) is at least 40%. BiH's national mine action strategy also considered the 2017 Gender Equality Action Plan.⁴⁷

Table 2: Gender composition of mine action operators in 2022⁴⁸

Operator	Total staff	Women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Women in operational positions
BHMAG	157	36	20	4	121	20
FACP	201	43	9	5	148	16
MAG	95	11	20	4	86	7
NPA	124	15	18	4	102	8

39 Ibid. p. 59.
40 Ibid. pp. 60–61.
41 Email from Charles Frisby, NPA, 19 March 2022.
42 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.
43 Email from Muamer Husilović, FACP, 23 March 2023.
44 Email from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 6 April 2023.
45 Email from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 14 August 2023.
46 BiH, National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, p. 14.
47 Ibid.
48 Emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAG, 23 March 2023; Muamer Husilović, FACP, 23 March 2023; Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023; and Pauline Boyer, MAG, 6 April 2023.

As at the end of 2022, however, as Table 2 illustrates, only 23% of BHMAL's employees were female, with women employed in 20% of managerial or supervisory positions and 11% of operational positions.⁴⁹ This is largely the same proportion as in 2021. BHMAL reported having a gender and diversity policy in place and said that it upholds the Law on Gender Equality and routinely includes it in the development of strategies and standards.⁵⁰ One of the three new members of the newly appointed Demining Commission is a woman.⁵¹ BHMAL has reported that it consults all groups affected by mines, including women and children, during survey and community liaison activities, and BHMAL's survey and community liaison teams are inclusive with a view to facilitating this. Relevant mine action data are disaggregated by gender and age.⁵²

NPA reported that the overall gender split of its staff in 2022 was 12% female, with eight (8%) women employed in operational roles and four (22%) women holding managerial positions.⁵³ This is largely the same as the proportion of women overall working for NPA in 2021. In 2022, NPA BiH continued implementing NPA's Global Gender Equality Policy through its annual work plans, with access to equal opportunities for all staff regardless of gender, age, or ethnic and religious background. NPA BiH remains the only demining organisation in BiH with a woman deminer—but only one—in its clearance teams.⁵⁴

MAG has a comprehensive gender policy, actively promoting gender mainstreaming and equal employment opportunities for qualified women and men, particularly in operational positions. Diversity is also a priority, with efforts to employ staff from different ethnic backgrounds. The community liaison team maintains a balanced gender and ethnic representation, fostering strong acceptance among local populations in all operational areas. They actively involve community members from diverse backgrounds in their liaison work. However, recruiting women, especially for deminer positions, is a significant challenge due to workforce trends in BiH. Many Bosnian youth emigrate to EU countries for employment opportunities. In 2022, despite training several women for deminer roles, none accepted job offers. Some candidates did not attend interviews.⁵⁵

The CPA RS reported that in 2022 nearly 24% of its staff were female, including 30% of managerial/supervisory positions. It has six female medics that support its demining operations, but none of its deminers are women.⁵⁶ During survey and community liaison activities, it cooperates with the local population, regardless of ethnicity, and where needed has representatives from different ethnic groups.⁵⁷

As at July 2022, the Demining Battalion of the Armed Forces of BiH had a workforce of 455 personnel, including 28 women (6% of the total). This included 1 (2%) of the 55 managerial/supervisory positions and 27 (7%) of the 391 operations positions.⁵⁸

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

BHMAL currently uses its own Paradox-based information management system, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Information System (BHMAIS),⁵⁹ but installation of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core has been ongoing since 2019. The first phase of IMSMA Core implementation was completed in May 2020.⁶⁰ A new project to migrate the remaining data and workflows from BHMAIS to IMSMA Core, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) and conducted in partnership with the GICHD and NPA, started in February 2023 and is due to be completed by mid 2024.⁶¹

BiH's national information management system needs to improve in terms of accuracy and sustainability. During implementation and migration from BHMAIS to IMSMA Core, data quality will be checked and improved wherever feasible. Data-collection forms will also be reviewed and improved as part of the process.⁶² NPA believes that IMSMA Core will help to ensure BiH has reliable mine action data, all of which will be stored and managed by BHMAL. It will also contribute to better operational planning, including for fulfilment of BiH's APMBC and CCM obligations.⁶³ At present, while clearance operators do have access to data on specific tasks being undertaken, they do not have access to BHMAL's full Information Management database.⁶⁴

49 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAL, 23 March 2023.

50 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAL, 24 April 2019.

51 Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAL, 6 October 2022.

52 Emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAL, 24 April 2019; Goran Šehić, Deputy Programme Manager, NPA, 25 February 2019; and GICHD, 27 April 2022; and BiH, National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, p. 52.

53 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 29 June 2023.

54 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.

55 Email from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 6 April 2023.

56 Emails from Milisav Pantic, on behalf of Dragan Kos, Assistant Director, Civil Protection Administration of Republika Srpska (CPA RS), 3 June 2021 and 12 September 2022.

57 Emails from Dragan Kos, CPA RS, 2 April 2020; and Milisav Pantic, CPA RS, 12 September 2022.

58 Email from Brig. Dzevad Zenunovic, Demining Battalion of the Armed Forces of BiH, 13 July 2022.

59 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAL, 22 March 2022.

60 2020 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 5; and email from the GICHD, 27 April 2022.

61 Emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAL, 23 March 2023; Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023; Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May 2023; and Henrik Rydberg, GICHD, 29 June 2023.

62 Email from the GICHD, 27 April 2022.

63 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.

64 Emails from Kristina Duric, NPA, 30 July 2021; and Clement Meynier, MAG, 30 July 2021.

In addition, UNDP developed a Geographic Information System (GIS) mobile application, which allows the general public to access information on the location of hazardous areas through their mobile electronic devices.⁶⁵

BHMAC has submitted its APMBC Article 7 transparency report covering 2022 and disaggregated remaining mine contamination into SHAs and CHAs. However, that some AP mine contamination is classified as being within the MSAs and some remains outside MSAs in “classic tasks” creates a lack of clarity in land release data.

PLANNING AND TASKING

BiH's National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 addresses all mine and CMR contamination. BHMAC initially planned the first revision of the strategy by the end of 2020, based on the country assessment project and progress in implementation, with a second revision set for 2023.⁶⁶ In November 2020, the Demining Commission sent a request to the Council of Ministers to initiate a first revision.⁶⁷ BHMAC later reported that the first revision only was planned to be completed in 2023.⁶⁸ BHMAC also elaborates and implements annual work plans, which are adopted by the Demining Commission.

According to BiH's 2020 Article 5 deadline extension request, from 2020 to 2027 BiH plans to release a total of 967km²: 816.6km² through cancellation; 141.7km² through reduction; and 7.8km² through clearance, see Table 3 for annual targets.⁶⁹ While BiH did disaggregate the amount cancelled, reduced, and cleared each year, in its operational plan the totals in several columns did not correctly sum to the annual total.⁷⁰ BiH has fallen well behind its land release targets from 2020 to 2022 and will need to release on average 173.5km² per year in order to reach its current completion deadline. It is unlikely to do so.

Table 3: Planned land release 2023–2027⁷¹

Year	Land release target (km ²)
2020	71.8
2021	91.3
2022	110.3
2023	126.4
2024	145.5
2025	155.7
2026	131.4
2027	134.6

In its extension request, BiH describes its prioritisation system for releasing MSAs, which is said to accord with humanitarian, developmental, and safety needs of municipality and local communities, as well as the level of threat (high, medium, or low).⁷² Of the 478 MSAs created, 189 were high-risk MSAs, 274 medium-risk MSAs, and 15 low-risk MSAs.⁷³ BHMAC has not yet completed the preparation of project documentation/task dossiers for all 478 MSAs created during the country assessment.⁷⁴

In 2022, BHMAC prepared 27 MSAs and 17 tasks outside of MSAs for technical survey (TS) and clearance, which includes both mines and CMR.⁷⁵ Operators are assigned whole MSAs by BHMAC, inside which BHMAC designates specific areas (CHA or SHA polygons) for either systematic TS or targeted TS as well as clearance (if contamination is confirmed). Officially, only BHMAC can conduct NTS and release mined area through cancellation.⁷⁶ In 2023, BHMAC reported that TS and clearance was underway on 25 MSAs and 15 clearance tasks.⁷⁷

65 Email from Suad Baljak, UNDP, 18 February 2021.

66 BiH, National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, p. 34.

67 Statement of BiH, APMBC Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties, 16 to 20 November 2020.

68 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023.

69 2020 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, p. 24.

70 Ibid., Table, p. 24.

71 Ibid., p. 24.

72 Ibid., pp. 6 and 19–22.

73 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form C.

74 Email from Mirjana Marić, BHMAC, 21 September 2022.

75 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023.

76 Emails from Muamer Husilović, FACP, 12 March 2021; Clement Meynier, MAG, 11 March 2021; and Jonas Zachrisson, NPA, 14 March 2021.

77 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 31 July 2023.

The FACP, NPA, and MAG reported that task dossiers were not always issued in a timely manner, as the BHMAL regional offices do not have sufficient personnel to issue project documentation.⁷⁸ MAG also highlighted that resource constraints limit the number of survey and clearance tasks a regional office can oversee in any given operational year, as other demining activities (e.g. from State operators) may also be conducted simultaneously within their area of responsibility.⁷⁹ NPA reported that task dossiers lacked the detailed NTS information needed for efficient TS and clearance.⁸⁰ Operators have found they need to conduct additional survey/community liaison to supplement the task dossier and provide further information to BHMAL.⁸¹

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

In 2016, the Demining Commission formally adopted three revised chapters of the NMAL on land release, NTS, and TS, drafted in cooperation with EU technical assistance through the Land Release pilot project, UNDP, and the GICHD.⁸² Plans to revise the NMAL and further develop relevant chapters was planned by BHMAL for 2020. As at June 2023, the NMAL had been updated and they were under review by BHMAL.⁸³

In recent years, various land release projects, which have included use of systematic TS and TS with targeted investigation, have revealed that around 90% of mined area can be cancelled through NTS; around 8 or 9% reduced through TS; and less than 2% needs to be cleared.⁸⁴ These and previous land release data indicate that actual AP mine contamination in BiH is only a small proportion of the total hazardous area currently on the database and deployment of clearance assets is therefore only required for relatively small areas.⁸⁵

It is crucial that NTS is used to identify the location of mine contamination more accurately before TS and clearance are conducted. However, current NMAL and SOPs in BiH stipulate that only BHMAL can formally conduct NTS and cancel land. BHMAL conducts NTS and cancels some area before an MSA is assigned to an operator although, as previously mentioned, operators often find they need conduct additional survey/community liaison to supplement the information provided. Most cancellation through NTS by BHMAL occurs following the completion of TS and clearance of all hazardous areas within an MSA.⁸⁶

NPA and MAG both advocate for BHMAL to consider allowing operators with adequate capacity and experience to take responsibility for cancellation through NTS. This

could improve the efficiency of the land release process, by alleviating the strain on essential BHMAL resources responsible for NTS, including the preparation of land release projects. MAG believes operators should make recommendations for cancellation to BHMAL, who then formally approve and therefore take responsibility for the cancellation, as part of the overall site completion and handover process.⁸⁷ NPA stressed the importance of BHMAL enabling operators to plan and implement land release projects effectively in line with international best practice.⁸⁸

NPA BiH said it will continue to work to promote the IMAS and compliance of the NMAL on land release, and to advocate for further development of national procedures to increase operational efficiency and enhance confidence in the land release process itself.⁸⁹ MAG believes that, in general, the NMAL in BiH are suitable to enable the conduct of efficient land release. However, NPA and MAG continued to notice differences in the processes and approach to land release between the BHMAL regional offices.⁹⁰ It is important, therefore, that land release workshops are organised at all levels, including BHMAL headquarters and all BHMAL regional offices, to ensure consistent application of land release methodology.⁹¹

BHMAL has stated previously that it will ensure through quality management (QM) that all organisations accredited for TS and clearance comply with the principles of land release.⁹² In January 2022, BHMAL, in cooperation with UNDP and funded by Germany, held a workshop to enhance the NTS process in BiH. The workshop, attended by BHMAL staff from head office and regional offices, focused on survey, QC, and QA.⁹³

78 Emails from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023; and Muamer Husilović, FACP, 23 March 2023.

79 Email from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 6 April 2023.

80 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.

81 Email from Jonas Zachrisson, NPA, 14 March 2021.

82 BHMAL, "Report on Mine Action in BiH for 2016", February 2017, p. 18; and Audit Office of the Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, "Performance Audit Report. Efficiency of the Demining System in Bosnia and Herzegovina", No. 01-02-03-10-16-11101/16, October 2016, p. 26; BHMAL, "Adoption of three new chapters of Mine Action Standard for land release, the new approach for solving the mine problem", 28 January 2016; and email from Fotini Antonopoulou, EU, 18 September 2017.

83 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAL, 7 June 2023.

84 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 5 and 10; and Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, p. 7.

85 BiH, National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, pp. 6 and 11; and Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, p. 17.

86 Emails from Clement Meynier, Country Director, MAG, 14 March 2022; and Charles Frisby, Country Director, NPA, 11 April 2022.

87 Email from Clement Meynier, MAG, 14 March 2022.

88 Email from Charles Frisby, NPA, 11 April 2022.

89 Ibid.

90 Email from Clement Meynier, MAG, 14 March 2022; and Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.

91 Email from Charles Frisby, NPA, 11 April 2022.

92 Draft Demining plan in BiH for 2020, Annex 6 to the 2020 Revised Article 5 deadline extension request, August 2020, p. 20.

93 BHMAL website, "Workshop on improving the process of non-technical survey in BiH", 26 January 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3PfvM8G>.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2022, a total of 17 organisations were deployed in BiH: four government organisations (Armed Forces of BiH, Federal Administration of Civil Protection (FACP), Civil Protection Administration of Republika Srpska (CPA RS), and Brčko District Civil Protection (only conducts removal and destruction of ERW, not mine clearance)); nine commercial organisations, all national (Point, Detector, CHR, Heksogen, DCM Media, In Demining, N&N Ivša, UG EKO DEM, and UEM); and three national (Mine Detection Dog Centre (MDDC), Pro Vita, and Stop Mines) and two international NGOs (NPA and MAG).⁹⁴

Table 4: Operational TS and clearance capacities deployed in 2022⁹⁵

Operator	No. of teams	Total personnel*	Dogs and handlers	Machines	Comments
Point d.o.o	1	9	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
Detector	1	11	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
CHR d.o.o	1	8	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
N&N Ivša	1	8	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
Heksogen d.o.o	1	9	N/R	N/R	Only clearance
UEM d.o.o	1	10	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
DCM Media d.o.o	1	8	N/R	N/R	Only clearance
In Demining N.H.O	2	22	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
MDDC	1	8	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
Stop Mines	3	21	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
NPA	8	48	4 dogs, 4 handlers	2	Clearance and TS
MAG	7–8	49–56	2–4 dogs, 2–4 handlers	0	Clearance and TS
UG EKO DEM	1	9	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
FACP	(TS) 6 (Clearance) 11	(TS) 48 (Clearance) 63	4 dogs, 4 handlers	2	Clearance and TS
Brčko District Civil Protection	1	6	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
Armed Forces of BiH	32	200	N/R	N/R	Clearance and TS
CPA RS	7	50	2 dogs, 2 handlers	N/R	Clearance and TS
Totals	86–87	587–94	12–14 dogs, 12–14 handlers	4	

* Excluding team leaders, medics, drivers, etc. N/R = Not reported

⁹⁴ Emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAG, 23 March 2023 and 31 July 2023.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

MAG does not conduct its own NTS in BiH but contributes information gathered by its community liaison teams through identification and interviews with informants during TS and clearance operations.⁹⁶ Similarly, NPA has a two-person NTS team that reports collated information to BHMAL to be incorporated into their NTS data.⁹⁷ BHMAL integrated drones into NTS after their successful use in the country assessment project. Drone records help identify confrontation line trenches, roads, areas in use, and other crucial elements for demining project development. Targeted investigation is used to identify risk areas during NTS.⁹⁸

Clearance and TS operations in BiH involve mechanical land preparation, manual clearance, and the use of MDDs depending on geographical conditions.⁹⁹ Much of the remaining mined area is in hilly or mountainous terrain, which restricts machinery use. The CPA RS maintains an MDD team of two dogs that were used in demining in 2022. However, this marks a significant decrease compared to previous years. The operator is of the opinion that the limited deployment of MDDs in land release tasks across BiH is an issue that needs to be addressed and changed.¹⁰⁰

BHMAL reports that they expect an increase in the overall number of TS and clearance personnel in 2023 because of two new demining projects, IPA III and demining of the Sava river.¹⁰¹ MAG reported that its clearance capacity increased in 2022 from seven teams to eight in August due to the start of a new project but MDD capacity decreased, due to two dogs retiring in April, so now they have only one MDD team. MAG expects that its capacity would remain the same in 2023.¹⁰² NPA reported no change in its operational capacity from 2021 to 2022 and expected to maintain its capacity in 2023.¹⁰³ The number of deminers employed by FACP reduced by seven in 2022 due to employee retirement and termination of contracts and it did not expect a change in capacity in 2023.¹⁰⁴

The State operators, the BiH Armed Forces' Demining Battalion and the Civil Protection entities, are good partners and have effective capacities, but have suffered from logistical challenges and equipment deficits, which can prevent them from working at full capacity.¹⁰⁵

The teams of the FACP are trained in rapid response to remove the injured (civilians or deminers) from mined areas. The FACP believes that accident and incident investigation, which is currently only conducted by BHMAL staff, should be expanded to include representatives from the wider demining community, such as the entities civil protection authorities, the armed forces, and EUFOR, to help improve the safety and quality of operations. According to the FACP, there are no obstacles to including representatives from the wider demining community in accident investigation.¹⁰⁶

With the exception of MAG and NPA, clearance operators in BiH typically compete for international tenders in order to secure their funding. A UNDP evaluation suggested that this resulted in considerable capacity being underused and recommended alternative contracting models more appropriate for land release (either by having longer term contracts or being contracted for the clearance of larger areas). This could be more attractive to the demining organisations in terms of security and could also make best use of capacity in the long run.¹⁰⁷ National demining NGOs, such as Stop Mines or Pro Vita, which are registered in a similar way to companies, potentially have capacity to quickly mobilise additional resources and up-scale operations.¹⁰⁸ According to the CPA RS, a lack of demining personnel is becoming a problem.¹⁰⁹

The Demining Commission is responsible for considering the periodic re-accreditation of field operators, following the recommendation from BHMAL. QC and QA is conducted by BHMAL.¹¹⁰

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

In 2022, a total of 52.76km² of AP mined area was released, of which 41.72km² was cancelled through NTS, 10.12km² was reduced through TS, and 0.92km² was cleared, based on national authority data. In total, 3,527 AP mines were found and destroyed, of which 194 during were found during TS and 3,333 during clearance.

96 Emails from Clement Meynier, MAG, 11 March 2021 and 14 March 2022.

97 Emails from Jonas Zachrisson, NPA, 14 March 2021; Kristina Duric, NPA, 30 July 2021; and Charles Frisby, NPA, 11 April 2022.

98 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAL, 15 April 2022.

99 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 11.

100 Email from Milisav Pantić, CPA RS, 17 August 2023.

101 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAL, 23 March 2023.

102 Email from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 6 April 2023.

103 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.

104 Email from Muamer Husilović, FACP, 23 March 2023.

105 UNDP, Draft Mine Action Governance and Management Assessment for BiH, 13 May 2015, p. 29; and interviews with Darvin Lisica, NPA, Sarajevo, 8 May 2017; Haris Lokvancic, Swiss Embassy, Sarajevo, 9 May 2017; and Tarik Serak, BHMAL, Sarajevo, 10 May 2017.

106 Emails from the Cabinet, Federal Administration of Civil Protection, 29 August 2019; and Muamer Husilović, FACP, 18 March 2022.

107 UNDP, Draft Mine Action Governance and Management Assessment for BiH, p. 35.

108 Email from Fotini Antonopoulou, EU, 18 September 2017.

109 Email from Milisav Pantic, CPA RS, 23 September 2022.

110 2020 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, p. 8.

SURVEY IN 2022

In 2022, a total of 51.84km² was released through survey. BHMAC cancelled 41.72km² through NTS, of which 38.11km² was cancelled by BHMAC following completion of TS and clearance of assigned tasks by operators (see Table 5), and 3.61km² was cancelled by BHMAC through NTS before the tasks were assigned.¹¹¹ A total of 10.12km² was reduced through TS, of which 8.26km² was within the MSAs and 1.86km² was within tasks outside of MSAs with 194 AP mines found and destroyed.¹¹² This is more than double the survey output from 2021 when more than 9.02km² of mined area was reduced through TS; and almost 14.43km² was cancelled through NTS.¹¹³

BHMAC is directly responsible for reporting all cancellation of mined areas in BiH and does so only upon completion of whole MSAs.

Table 5: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022 by canton¹¹⁴

Province	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
CANTON 10	Armed Forces of BiH	10,371,497
Zenica-Doboj	MAG	1,551,283
Tuzla	Armed Forces of BiH	1,772,677
Central Bosnia	NPA	4,172,646
Central Bosnia	MDDC	1,735,316
Una-Sana	Stop Mines	1,550,890
Una-Sana	Armed Forces of BiH	284,087
Una-Sana	NPA	2,211,834
Una-Sana	MDDC	2,579,564
SARAJEVO	"In Demining" N.H.O.	2,341,573
Herzegovina-Neretva	MAG	2,624,955
Herzegovina-Neretva	Armed Forces of BiH	561,786
Total BiH Federation		31,758,108
Republika Srpska	CPA RS	2,993,202
Republika Srpska	NPA	2,545,342
Republika Srpska	MAG	811,567
Total Republika Srpska		6,350,111
Grand totals		38,108,219

CLEARANCE IN 2022

In 2022, BHMAC reported clearance of 0.92km² with 3,333 AP mines destroyed, based on national authority data. Of this, 0.57km² was within MSAs, with 3,180 AP mines found and destroyed (see Table 6), and 0.35km² was in tasks outside of MSAs with 153 AP mines found and destroyed (see Table 7).¹¹⁵ A further 194 AP mines were destroyed during TS as reported above. BHMAC only records clearance data upon completion of tasks, which likely accounts for the differences between BHMAC and operator clearance data provided to Mine Action Review (see footnotes), as the latter is reported on an ongoing basis.

This is an increase from the 0.69km² of mined area cleared in 2021, of which 0.06km² was in tasks outside of MSAs, 0.60km² was in MSAs, and 0.03km² was clearance in TS tasks with a total of 1,717 AP mines found and destroyed.¹¹⁶

111 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023; and Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C.

112 Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C; and email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 1 August 2023.

113 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 15 April 2022.

114 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023. MAG and FACP did not report any cancellation by NTS; NPA reported working with BHMAC to conduct non-technical survey on NPA tasks which resulted in BHMAC cancelling 2,042,134m² in Brčko District and 559,764m² in Republika Srpska in 2022.

115 Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C; and email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 1 August 2023.

116 BiH draft Mine Action Report for 2021, undated, p. 35.

Table 6: Clearance of MSAs in 2022 by canton¹¹⁷

Canton	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	UXO Destroyed
Tuzla	Armed Forces of BiH	25,680	158	42
Sarajevo	"In Demining" N.H.O.	5,079	19	4
Central Bosnia	NPA, MDDC,	67,747	552	137
Zenica-Doboj	MAG	53,803	187	71
Una-Sana	Stop Mines, Armed Forces of BiH, MDDC, NPA	44,457	225	45
Herzegovina-Neretva	MAG, Armed Forces of BiH	94,913	248	22
Canton 10	Armed Forces of BiH	65,993	1,156	50
Totals BiH Federation		357,672	2,545	371
Republika Srpska	MAG, NPA, CPA RS	212,995	635	97
Grand totals		570,667	3,180	468

Table 7: Mine clearance outside MSAs in 2022 by canton¹¹⁸

Canton	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed
Central Bosnia	"In Demining" N.H.O., Detector	40,321	12
Zenica-Doboj	Armed Forces of BiH, Detector	24,325	1
Sarajevo	Armed Forces of BiH	2,798	0
Canton 10	FACP, UEM d.o.o.	29,521	26
Una-Sana	N&N Ivša, Stop Mines	121,679	23
Tuzla	FACP, Detector	14,369	1
Totals BiH Federation		233,013	63
Republika Srpska	Detector, "In Demining" N.H.O., N&N Ivša, UEM d.o.o., CPA RS	119,075	90
Grand totals		352,088	153

BHMAC stated that 19 tasks totalling 120,839m² were cleared in 2022 with no AP mines found.¹¹⁹ FACP reported that it cleared two tasks totalling 62,507m² with no AP mines found.¹²⁰ While MAG and NPA both confirmed that all clearance tasks in 2022 contained AP mines.¹²¹

BHMAC reported an increase in the amount of mined area cancelled, reduced, and cleared in 2022 compared to 2021 because more demining organisations were accredited and deployed and there were no longer restrictions in place due to COVID-19.¹²²

117 Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C; and emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 1 and 31 August 2023. FACP reported clearing 55,926m² across the cantons of Posavina, Una-Sana, Sarajevo, Bosnian-Podrinje Canton Goražde, and Zenica-Doboj with 188 AP mines destroyed. MAG reported clearing 498,779m² across the cantons of Herzegovina-Neretva, Tuzla, Zenica-Doboj, Brčko District and Republika Srpska with 147 AP mines destroyed. NPA reported clearing 29,044m² across the cantons of Tuzla, Brčko District and Republika Srpska with 113 AP mines destroyed.

118 Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C; and emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 1 and 31 August 2023. BHMAC only records clearance data upon completion of tasks, which likely accounts for the differences between BHMAC and operator clearance data, as the latter is reported on an ongoing basis. FACP reported clearing 55,926m² across the cantons of Posavina, Una-Sana, Sarajevo, Bosnian-Podrinje Canton Goražde, and Zenica-Doboj with 188 AP mines destroyed. MAG reported clearing 498,779m² across the cantons of Herzegovina-Neretva, Tuzla, Zenica-Doboj, Brčko District and Republika Srpska with 147 AP mines destroyed. NPA reported clearing 29,044m² across the cantons of Tuzla, Brčko District and Republika Srpska with 113 AP mines destroyed.

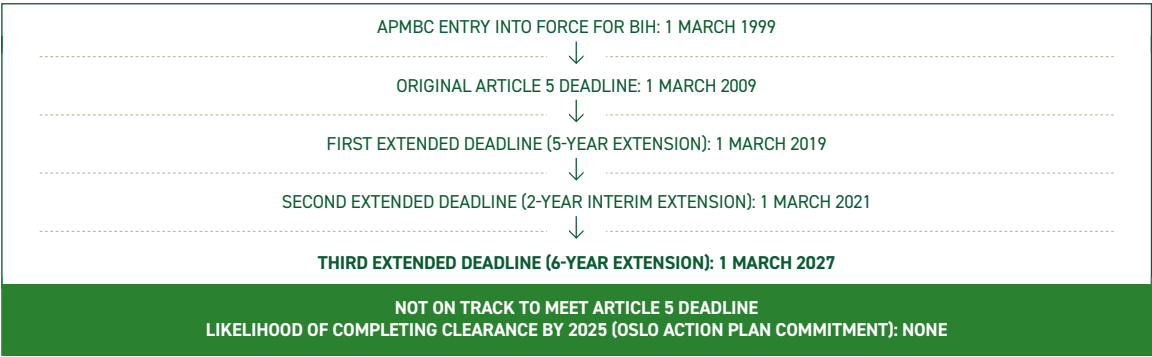
119 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023.

120 Email from Muamer Husilović, FACP, 23 March 2023.

121 Emails from Pauline Boyer, MAG, 6 April 2023. and Valerie Warmington, NPA, 6 April 2023.

122 Email from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAC, 23 March 2023.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC and in line with the third extension (for six years) of its deadline, BiH is required to destroy all AP mines under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 March 2027. While BHMBC is making efforts to meet the current deadline, they expect clearance of AP mines to be completed only by 2030. After the planned revision of the mine action strategy through to 2025, they expect to have a more precise projection of their completion date.¹²³

The 2020 extension request, granted by the Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties, was for the purpose of non-technical and technical survey “to better define the precise perimeter of mined areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina”.¹²⁴ It is, however, assumed that there was an accidental omission of land release through clearance, and that BiH intends to complete both survey and clearance of remaining mined areas by the requested deadline. Prior to this, BiH had been granted a second extension request in 2018, for an interim two-year extension to 1 March 2021, during which it conducted a “country assessment”, to better understand the remaining AP mine contamination and plan more effectively for its release.¹²⁵

Over the last five years, BiH has released less than 4km² thorough clearance (see Table 8). Since the ten-year extension to its initial Article 5 deadline, granted in 2008, BiH has continuously fallen far short of its annual land release targets. The painfully slow pace of survey and clearance has resulted in lack of confidence in the national mine action programme from donors but also from people living in mine-affected communities, who felt disillusioned that the mines have not been cleared.¹²⁶

BiH more than doubled its land release output from 2021 to 2022 although it still fell considerably short of its land release target for the year. According to BiH's 2020 Article 5 extension request, BiH planned to release 110.3km² in 2022 (92.9km² through cancellation; 16.4km² through reduction, and 0.9km² through clearance although this actually adds up to 110.2km²).¹²⁷ While BiH did not meet its overall land release target, it did meet its clearance target and came close to reaching its target for reduction through TS but where it delivered a significant shortfall was in its NTS output, achieving less than half the target amount. Unfortunately, BiH has been consistently lagging behind its land release targets since 2020, and will need to release an average of 173.5km² per year to 2027 in order to reach its completion deadline. At the current rate of land release output, it would take BiH approximately 16 years to complete clearance.

Table 8: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	0.92
2021	*0.69
2020	*0.53
2019	0.54
2018	0.92
Total	3.60

* Combined TS and clearance output for MSAs

123 Ibid.

124 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, p. 17.

125 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 19; and “BiH Statement on Interim Request for Extension to the Deadline for Fulfilling Obligations as per Article 5”, 7 June 2018, Geneva.

126 UNDP, Draft Mine Action Governance and Management Assessment for BiH, 13 May 2015, p. 14.

127 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2020, p. 24.

Systematic survey conducted in BiH over recent years has determined that 90% of mined area can be cancelled through NTS. The land release targets to 2027 in its 2020 extension request also reflect this finding, as BHMAL has allocated the majority of annual land release output to be achieved through NTS. However, it is now highly unlikely that BiH will be able to release the amount of hazardous area required in the next four years and BHMAL has itself acknowledged that it will not meet its current Article 5 deadline.

To address this challenge, BHMAL should focus on enhancing NTS resources and capacity. The current approach does not seem effective enough, warranting a shift towards empowering operators to conduct NTS while BHMAL assumes an oversight and approval role. This change will open up more potential resources and capacity and could lead to substantial increases in NTS output. Provided that BHMAL also ensures that all stakeholders adopt a more consistent and efficient approach to land release operations, it could also lead to an overall improvement in land release practices. By using NTS in this way, BiH could make significant progress towards achieving its clearance goals.

In addition, BHMAL (both headquarters and its regional offices) must ensure stronger coordination and an enabling operating environment, with a more sustained and efficient mobilisation of strategic national demining resources such as the Demining Battalion and Civil Protection entities. This will, however, require political will and strong oversight and commitment from BHMAL, the Demining Commission, and their superiors in the government, which is lacking at present.

It is disappointing that no Country Coalition meetings have taken place since the first one in 2020. BiH should fully embrace and use the Country Coalition formed with Germany, as a useful platform to help strengthen coordination and actively address and overcome the ongoing challenges in Article 5 implementation. In order to achieve completion, BiH must sustain national and international funding to its Mine Action Programme, and mechanisms such as the Country Coalition and Board of Donor meetings are an essential element in achieving this.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

The National Mine Action Strategy for 2018–2025 required the development of a strategy for the management of residual contamination by 2022. As at August 2023, the strategy had still to be elaborated but according to BHMAL an NMA on management of residual contamination will be included in the updated standards once they are launched and that once the first revision of the national strategy is completed a plan for residual contamination will be prepared.¹²⁸

128 Emails from Ljiljana Ilić, BHMAL, 23 March and 31 August 2023.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2009

NEW EXTENDED DEADLINE NEEDED TO RETURN TO COMPLIANCE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION:**

EXTENT UNKNOWN

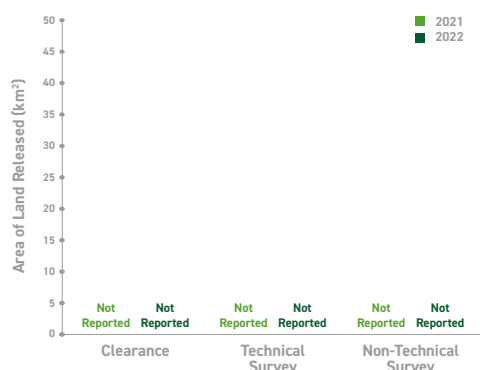
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

NOT REPORTED

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

NOT REPORTED

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Having previously reported that there were no mined areas in its territory, during a presentation at Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) intersessional meetings in June 2023, Burkina Faso declared that improvised anti-personnel (AP) were mines being emplaced by non-State armed groups (NSAGs) and that there had been an escalation in the number of reported incidents from 2017 to May 2023. Given Burkina's Faso acknowledgement of its new AP mine contamination, it should now submit an APMBC Article 5 deadline extension request for consideration by the other States Parties.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Burkina Faso should submit an Article 7 report detailing all suspected or confirmed mined areas under its jurisdiction or control and should report systematically on explosive device incidents detailing the number, location, and device type.
- Burkina Faso should request a new APMBC Article 5 deadline from the other States Parties as a matter of urgent priority.
- Burkina Faso should establish a central mine action database and collect data on the location, type, and extent of mined areas.
- Burkina Faso should seek assistance to build a national mine action programme, including survey and clearance capacities.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- National Commission for the Control of Arms (CNCA)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) unit of the Military Engineers

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- Mine Advisory Group (MAG)
- Humanity & Inclusion (HI)
- Danish Refugee Council (DRC)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Burkina Faso remains embroiled in ongoing violence perpetrated by armed groups, in particular Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimen (JNIM). The violence is concentrated in the Liptako-Gourma area, spanning the border areas with Mali and Niger. This encompasses several regions: the Sahel, Est, Nord, and Boucle du Mouhoun in Burkina Faso; Gao Menaka, and Mopti in Mali; and Tillabery in Niger. ISGS first emerged in Burkina Faso in September 2016, launching its first major attack near the city of Markoye. The following year, al-Qaeda affiliates merged to form JNIM, which has gained control over territory in northern and central Mali. As a result of clashes with JNIM that began in 2020, ISGS has been confined to northern Burkina Faso and western Niger.¹ Successive coups in Burkina Faso, the most recent occurring in September 2022, have further complicated efforts to quell the violence.

The extent of AP mine contamination in Burkina Faso is not known. In June 2023, Burkina Faso, during the APMBC

intersessional meetings, reported before the Committee on Article 5 Implementation that deployment of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by NSAGs was increasing. Burkina Faso has limited access to the areas where the contamination is found, which complicates its efforts to identify the type of device and confirm whether they are victim-activated. From 2017 to end-May 2023, Burkina Faso documented 592 IED incidents resulting in 569 fatalities and 582 injuries. The majority of the IEDs encountered are said to have been improvised AP mines. They amounted to 26 of the 45 IEDs discovered during a logistics escort mission from 6 to 27 March 2023.²

Incidents have been recorded in 11 of Burkina Faso's 13 regions with most occurring in the Sahel region (186), followed by Est (139), Centre-Nord (103), Nord (75), and Boucle du Mouhoun (45).³ While the defence and security forces were originally the targets, civilians account for 42% of total casualties.⁴

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The National Commission for the Control of Arms (Commission Nationale de Contrôle des Armes, CNCA) is responsible for overseeing mine action in Burkina Faso.

The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) first deployed to Burkina Faso in 2019 as part of the UN Secretary-General's Emergency Task Force for Burkina Faso, and then established a presence following a request from the Government of Burkina Faso and the UN Resident Coordinator. UNMAS is working with the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Security, and the CNCA to enhance mine action capabilities and develop a sustainable, long-term capacity. UNMAS provides advisory and technical support, including in information management at national and regional levels, as well as training and equipment, and assistance in developing national strategies and norms to help improve the management of IED mitigation activities.⁵

Burkina Faso reported that the Anti-Mine Task Group (GTLAM) was established in 2019 bringing together the CNCA, Military Engineers, UNMAS, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Humanity & Inclusion (HI), and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC).⁶ In 2020, UNMAS established a Mine Action Area of Responsibility in partnership with the CNCA.⁷

In July and August 2018, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) supported Burkina Faso to undertake a comprehensive national Weapons and Ammunition Management (WAM) baseline assessment.⁸ In September 2022, UNIDIR, in partnership with UNMAS, assisted the CNCA to apply UNIDIR's Counter-IED Capability Maturity Model (CMM) and self-assessment tool in order to inform the development of Burkina Faso's national strategy to counter threats posed by IEDs.⁹

1 The Center for Preventive Action, "Violent Extremism in the Sahel", 10 August 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/47GoFR6>.

2 Statement of Burkina Faso, APMBC Intersessionals meeting, 20 June 2023.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.; and UNMAS, Burkina Faso, data as at January 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3P0Cra6>.

5 UNMAS, Burkina Faso, data as at January 2022.

6 Presentation of Burkina Faso, Intersessional Meetings, 20 June 2023.

7 UNMAS, Burkina Faso, data as at January 2022.

8 UNIDIR, 'Country Insight Series: Burkina Faso weapons and ammunitions management', 2020.

9 Email correspondence with the Associate Researcher, UNIDIR Conventional Arms and Ammunition Programme, 3 October 2023.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of AP mines in Burkina Faso in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Burkina Faso reported that it has an agenda on women, peace and security in line with UN Resolution 1325 (2000). Women and young people are engaged in explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) in Burkina Faso and recently the first woman was registered for explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) 2 training.¹⁰

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Burkina Faso reported that as at June 2023, that it was in the process of developing a national information management system and expected an initial version to be available by the end of the year.¹¹

As at September 2023, Burkina Faso had yet to submit an APMBC Article 7 transparency report covering 2022, but as of writing, informed Mine Action Review that they were working with the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) of the APMBC to submit an Article 7 report.¹² Its last Article 7 report was submitted in November 2021. No information was provided on the extent of contamination, or on any AP mine survey or clearance.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Burkina Faso reported that it has a National Strategy for Countering IEDs for 2023–27 with four main objectives:

- Strengthening the legal and institutional framework
- Building the capacities of stakeholders engaged in countering IEDs (providing technical equipment, laboratories, etc.)
- Fostering stronger regional and international cooperation
- Enhancing the coordination and management of the strategy.¹³

It is not known if this strategy includes any realistic goals for land release.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Burkina Faso reported that it has developed eight national mine action standards: a glossary of terms and abbreviations, accreditation of organisations, risk education, information management, victim assistance, community liaison, task allocation procedures, and non-technical survey (NTS).¹⁴

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

The EOD unit of the Military Engineers made up of personnel from the military, police, and Gendarmerie, have sole responsibility for locating and destroying mines and IEDs. The EOD unit is deployed to regions with substantial security challenges and is supported by the Combat Engineers. Since 2019, military, police, and Gendarmerie personnel have been undergoing training on IED threat mitigation with EOD training conducted with the support of the United States (US) between 2019 and 2021. As at June 2023, a mine detection dog training and breeding centre had been established and a demining training centre was under construction with support of Germany through the German Expert Group in Military Engineering.¹⁵

There are currently no international or national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) conducting mine survey or clearance activities in Burkina Faso.

10 Email from Capitaine Ollo Palenfo, Chef de service des mines et des explosifs, CNCA, 25 September 2023.

11 Interview with Capitaine Ollo Palenfo, CNCA, at the Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

12 Email from Pambary Cyrille Pascal Bonzi, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Burkina Faso to Geneva, 29 September 2023.

13 Presentation of Burkina Faso, Intersessional Meetings, 20 June 2023.

14 Presentation of Burkina Faso, Intersessional Meetings, 20 June 2023.

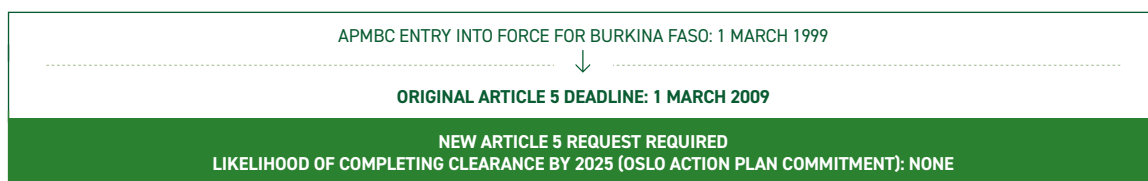
15 Presentation of Burkina Faso, Intersessional Meetings, 20 June 2023; and email from Capitaine Ollo Palenfo, CNCA, 25 September 2023.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

Burkina Faso has reported to Mine Action Review that mine clearance operations were conducted during 2022 but has not provided any data on the amount of area surveyed or cleared, nor has it clarified on whether any devices were found and destroyed.¹⁶

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC, Burkina Faso was required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control not later than 1 March 2009. In its last Article 7 report, submitted in November 2021, Burkina Faso said it had no mined areas containing AP mines.¹⁷ But in June 2023, Burkina Faso reported new use of improvised AP mines by NSAGs. Burkina Faso reported its data on IED incidents in its territory since 2017 which included improvised AP mines but could only provide very limited information on the extent of contamination and did not say whether any survey or clearance activities have taken place.

Burkina Faso should request a new extended Article 5 deadline, which should be for no more than two years, affording it the opportunity to conduct any necessary survey and provide an assessment of the extent of AP mine contamination. It must also fulfil its reporting obligations under the APMBC, including by reporting on the location of all suspected or confirmed mined areas under its jurisdiction or control and on the status of programmes for the destruction of all AP mines therein. Burkina Faso informed Mine Action Review that it was planning to submit an Article 5 deadline extension request with the support of the APMBC ISU but did not provide a timeframe for submission.¹⁸

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

It is not known whether Burkina Faso has plans in place to address residual contamination once its Article 5 obligations have been fulfilled.

¹⁶ Email from Capitaine Ollo Palenfo, CNCA, 25 September 2023.

¹⁷ Article 7 Report (2021), Form C.

¹⁸ Email from Pambarry Cyrille Pascal Bonzi, Permanent Mission of Burkina Faso to Geneva, 29 September 2023.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2025
UNCLEAR WHETHER ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: MASSIVE

NATIONAL AUTHORITY ESTIMATE

681 km²

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

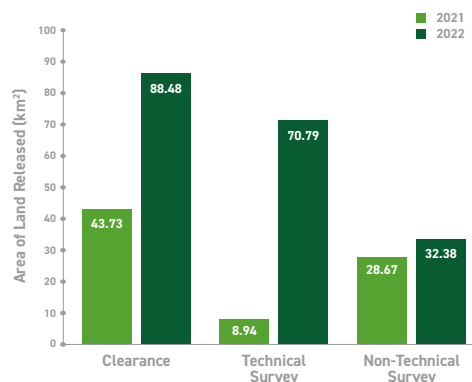
88.48 km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

14,402

(INCLUDING 1,354
DESTROYED IN SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Prime Minister Hun Sen reasserted Cambodia's determination to complete clearance of anti-personnel (AP) mines by the end of 2025, launching an appeal for private donations which raised \$18.6 million and announcing the government would provide \$30 million for mine action. Operators released 191km² through survey and clearance, double the 2021 achievement. The government deployed deminers from the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) and the National Centre for Peacekeeping Forces (NPMEC) to accelerate clearance. Cambodia declared five provinces and Phnom Penh municipality mine free in 2022 as part of a strategy expected to complete clearance in another 13 provinces in 2023, leaving mine action operators to focus on seven provinces along the border with Thailand. Prime Minister Hun Sen said he had reached agreement with his opposite number in Thailand to allow clearance along the border without waiting for resolution of border demarcation disputes although no further agreements were concluded in the first half of 2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Cambodia should lay out a clear and transparent policy and programme of work for mine clearance on the border with Thailand.
- Cambodia should implement Prime Minister Hun Sen's statement that border clearance need not wait for agreement on border demarcation and seek agreement with Thailand on specific areas for clearance.
- The government should clarify the funding it will allocate for mine action from the national budget in 2024 and 2025.
- The CMAA should expand its quality assurance (QA) capacity to cope with the increased number of demining teams and ensure effective monitoring of RCAF and NPMEC as well as demining non-governmental organisations (NGOs).
- Cambodia should continue to improve information management capacity to cope with the increased volume of reporting generated by accelerating land release and eliminate persistent significant discrepancies between official and operator data.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	7	7	Cambodia sharply accelerated land release through extensive cancellation and area reduction as well as clearance in 2022 and by the end of 2023 expected to have declared all but 7 of its 25 provinces mine free. Its estimate of total contamination, however, dropped a modest 5% as a result of continued additions to the database of hazardous areas and it has yet to determine the extent of mined areas in un-demarcated areas of the border with Thailand, which are believed to be densely mined. Cambodia still does not disaggregate confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) in line with international best practice.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	8	8	The government's decision to allocate substantial funding from the national budget to mine action and deploy up to 2,000 deminers from RCAF and NPMEC underscored strong national ownership of mine action. The Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) convened regular meetings of a Technical Working Group on Mine Action (TWG-MA), which brings all stakeholders together, as well as a Mine Action Coordination Committee (MACC) and eight Technical Reference Groups (TRGs), including one on survey and clearance.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	8	8	The CMAA launched a new version of its action plan for gender mainstreaming which has undergone three updates. The CMAA's quality management teams and the mine action planning units (MAPUs) have all received training on implementing gender mainstreaming. The percentage of women employed by operators varies from around 18% in the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) to 49% in NPA but more women appear to be holding senior positions. The CMAA also has a Gender Mainstreaming Team (GMT) that was established to coordinate with the technical reference group on gender and in 2023 had drafted a national standard on gender and diversity.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	7	7	Strengthening information management is one of the goals of Cambodia's national mine action strategy and the CMAA has continued to make improvements in recent years. The Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database is upgrading to IMSMA Core with Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) support but in 2022 was still migrating data from the old to the new system. The CMAA requested reports from operators to try to synchronise reporting and eliminate discrepancies, but these continue to afflict land release data in particular. Cambodia submits Article 7 reports annually.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	7	7	Cambodia has a comprehensive National Mine Action Strategy 2018–25, a detailed three-year implementation plan 2021–23, and land release targets set out in its 2019 Article 5 deadline extension request. The announcement of more government funding and deployment of military deminers injected new momentum in the drive to complete clearance by the end of 2025.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	7	7	Cambodia has national mine action standards (CMAS) that are broadly compliant with the International Mine Action Standards. The CMAA is reviewing and developing standards in consultation with operators. It has also taken steps to accelerate land release through survey but also needs to strengthen quality management to cope with rapid expansion in the number of operational deminers.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	8	6	Cambodia more than doubled the amount of land released through survey and clearance in 2022, although Mine Action Review did not receive data directly from CMAC and therefore it has not been possible to assess the accuracy of the sharp increase in clearance output reported in Cambodia's Article 7 transparency report. Initial reports indicated that momentum has carried over into 2023. Most of the land cleared was lightly contaminated. A ban on international demining organisations working within 7km of Cambodia's borders has halted clearance of areas with the country's densest mine contamination and talks with Thailand have yet to open up access to disputed areas of their common border.
Average Score	7.4	7.0	Overall Programme Performance: GOOD

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC)
- Cambodian Self-help Demining (CSHD)
- National Centre for Peacekeeping Forces Management, Mines and Explosive Remnants of War Clearance (NPMEC)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- APOPO
- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Cambodia estimated it had 681km² of AP mine contamination in 12 provinces at the end of 2022 (see Table 1), down from 716km² in 22 provinces and Phnom Penh municipality at the end of 2021 and 801km² two years previously at the end of 2020.¹ Cambodia believes that 353km² or 52% of the remaining contamination is located within a 7km-wide zone along its borders, including 90km² of dense contamination, and 328km² (48%) lies outside the border zone.²

Despite a sharp acceleration in land released through survey and clearance in 2022, the 5% net drop in Cambodia's contamination estimate in 2022 was smaller than in the previous year because operators also identified 138km² of previously unrecorded mined area. This included 266 mined areas totalling 67km² reported in Preah Vihear and 38km² in Battambang province.³ As at May 2023, the newly identified mined areas remained on the database workbench pending CMAA verification.⁴

Table 1: AP mined area (at end 2022)⁵

Province or Region	SHAs	Area of SHA (m ²)
Banteay Meanchey	1,664	103,581,047
Battambang	1,251	112,751,444
Kampong Thom	410	37,589,564
Koh Kong	355	22,846,585
Kratie	103	15,903,394
Mondulkiri	62	8,399,249
Oddar Meanchey	1,011	90,303,393
Pailin	327	17,654,046
Preah Vihear	904	149,401,611
Pursat	722	72,308,226
Rattanakiri	15	2,288,674
Siem Reap	568	48,257,278
Totals	7,392	681,284,511

By a mixture of cancellation, reduction and clearance, Cambodia was able to declare five of its twenty-five provinces (including Phnom Penh, technically a municipality) free of mines in 2022.⁶ By the end of March 2023, Cambodia had declared five more provinces as mine-free (as well as Phnom Penh municipality),⁷ and by the end of the year it expected to be left with seven mine-affected provinces, all located along the border with Thailand. This achievement provides greater clarity on the challenge and gives impetus to its ambitious drive to complete clearance of all AP mined areas by its Article 5 deadline at the end of 2025.⁸

Three quarters of the remaining contamination is located in five provinces (Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Oddar Meanchey, Pursat and Preah Vihear). One of the major remaining challenges is that Cambodia does not have a clear determination of the extent of contamination along the border with Thailand, but it is clear that these areas holds the densest minefields and some of the most difficult terrain, and access remains problematic because of a long-running border demarcation dispute with Thailand.

1 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), #4.
2 2019 Article 5 Extension Request, Revised Work Plan, submitted 10 May 2023, p. 4; and email from Tep Kallyan, Deputy Secretary General, CMAA, 3 May 2023.
3 Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 29 April 2023.
4 2019 Article 5 Extension Request, Revised Work Plan, submitted 10 May 2023, p. 1.
5 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), #4.
6 The provinces declared mine-free in 2022 were Kep, Preah Sihanouk, Prey Veng, Stung Treng, and Tbung Khmum, together with Phnom Penh, a municipality.
7 Provinces declared mine-free in the first quarter of included 2023 Kampong Cham, Kampong Chhnang, Kandal and Svay Rien.
8 Additional provinces due to be declared mine-free by the end of 2023 included Kampong Thom, Kratie, Mondulkiri, Rattanakiri, and Siem Reap.

Cambodia's mine hazards are a legacy of 30 years of conflict that ended in the 1990s concentrated in, but not limited to, 21 north-western districts along the border with Thailand, which have accounted for the large majority of mine casualties. The conflict also left significant contamination from explosive remnants of war (ERW), including hundreds of square kilometres affected by unexploded United States (US) submunitions (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Cambodia for further information).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) was established by royal decree in 2000 to regulate, monitor, and coordinate the mine action sector in Cambodia. The CMAA has Prime Minister Hun Sen as its President and Senior Minister, Ly Thuch, as first vice president. Its Secretary General, Ly Panharith, appointed in January 2023, manages CMAA's planning and operations.⁹ The CMAA has noticeably strengthened in recent years, and its roles and responsibilities have become more clearly defined.¹⁰ The Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC), established in 1992, had been responsible for regulating and coordinating the sector in addition to undertaking clearance. After 2000, however, CMAC relinquished its role as regulator and coordinator and concentrated on conducting demining, risk education, and training.¹¹ CMAC, which conducts both humanitarian and commercial survey and clearance, is Cambodia's largest mine action operator.¹²

Since 2004, Cambodia has had Provincial Mine Action Committees (PMACs) and Mine Action Planning Units (MAPUs) in mine-impacted areas tasked with establishing clearance priorities in consultation with affected communities to ensure that clearance addresses their housing, agricultural, and infrastructure needs.¹³ MAPUs meet regularly with all mine action operators to plan annual mine action activities.¹⁴ Through village visits and questionnaires collected from communities the MAPUs also conduct post-clearance monitoring to collect socio-economic data on use of cleared land which is passed on to the CMAA. This data, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), produced five performance monitoring reports in 2022.¹⁵

The Cambodian government established a Technical Working Group on Mine Action (TWG-MA) as a consultative mechanism facilitating coordination between the government and implementing partners.¹⁶ TWG meetings were suspended in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic¹⁷ but resumed online in 2021 and in-person in 2022.¹⁸ The CMAA also chairs a Mine Action Coordination Committee (MACC) which convened in March 2022 with 42 participants from the CMAA, operators and international organisations, including UNDP and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), discussing issues that included the challenges of border clearance and the timeline for deployment of Royal Cambodian Army deminers.¹⁹ Additionally, the CMAA convened eight Technical Reference Groups (TRGs) to facilitate coordination and feedback at a strategic and technical level in survey and clearance, explosive ordnance risk education, victim assistance, information management, gender, performance monitoring, cluster munitions, and capacity development.²⁰

The mine action sector receives technical support from a range of international organisations. UNDP's Clearing for Results programme has supported Cambodian mine action since 2006, aiming to ensure clearance supports development priorities. The programme, now in its fourth phase (1 April 2020 to 31 December 2025), focuses on releasing mined areas in the most affected provinces through Land Reclamation Non-Technical Survey (LR-NTS) and clearance, supporting victim assistance, risk education, and gender mainstreaming, and strengthening the CMAA's capacity to lead the sector and support the development of national sustainable capacity to address residual threats.²¹ UNDP and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) also share the cost of the CMAA database unit.²²

9 CMAA, "Legal framework and mandate", at: <http://bit.ly/2W7r3dJ>.

10 Interviews with Su Yeon Yang, Project Coordination Officer, and Tong Try, UNDP, 23 April 2019; and Rebecca Letven, Programme Manager, MAG, Phnom Penh, 25 April 2019.

11 CMAC, "20 Years' Achievement in Mine Action 1998-2018 and Path Ahead", 2018.

12 Interview with Heng Rattana, Director General, CMAC, Phnom Penh, 25 April 2019.

13 Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), "Landmines and Land Rights in Cambodia", December 2010, pp. 9 and 13.

14 Email from Zlatko Vezilic, Programme Manager, NPA, 5 May 2020.

15 UNDP Briefing Paper, Post-Clearance Monitoring, undated but 2022.

16 CMAA, National Mine Action Strategy 2018-2025, p. 24; and email from Tong Try, National Mine Action Adviser, UNDP, 18 June 2019.

17 Email from Matthew Hovell, Head of Region South-East Asia, HALO, 9 April 2021.

18 Emails from HALO, 25 March 2022 and 16 May 2023; phone interview with Portia Stratton, NPA, 13 May 2022.

19 UNDP, Clearing for Results Phase IV, Annual Project Progress Report 2022, p. 19.

20 CMAA, National Mine Action Strategy 2018-2025, p. 24; and emails from Tong Try, UNDP, 18 June 2019 and 27 July 2021; Article 5 Extension request, Revised Work Plan, submitted 10 May 2023, p. 7.

21 Emails from Tong Try, UNDP, 28 July 2021; and Naomi Konza, Project Coordination Specialist, UNDP, 18 April 2022; UNDP Clearing for Results Phase IV, Annual Project Progress Report 2022.

22 Emails from Rune Dale-Andresen, Country Director, NPA, 26 September 2020; and Portia Stratton, NPA, 21 June 2021.

The GICHD supported the upgrading of the CMAA's information management system as well as gender mainstreaming and the development of Cambodian national mine action standards.²³ NPA, funded by Norway, conducts capacity development of the CMAA on gender equity and mainstreaming, information management, knowledge management, planning and prioritisation, quality management (QM), and strategic planning.²⁴

The Cambodian government has contributed regular funding for clearance and management of the sector²⁵ but in 2022 announced a sharp hike in funding to support its goal of completing AP mine clearance by the end of 2025.²⁶ Previous support included covering the expenses of the CMAA and providing funds to support planning and prioritisation, Quality assurance (QA)/quality control (QC), database management, the Cambodia mine/ERW victim information system (CMVIS), and risk education.²⁷ Cambodia has also funded mine and ERW survey and clearance by the National Centre for Peacekeeping Forces Management, Mines and Explosive Remnants of War Clearance (NPMEC).²⁸ The Cambodian government reported contributing just under

30% of the total funding to the mine action sector (US\$99.49 million of US\$340.2 million) in 2010–18.²⁹ In 2022, it provided \$4,458,086 for mine action.³⁰

Prime Minister Hun Sen appealed to the private sector in July 2022 to provide financial support for mine action and by the end of the year had raised \$18.6 million.³¹ The Prime Minister said he had appealed to China for funds and for China to send deminers to help Cambodia achieve its end-2025 clearance target but at the time of writing there was no indication of the response.³²

In December 2022, Prime Minister Hun Sen announced the government would allocate \$30 million for mine clearance in 2023³³ and "similar" payments in 2024 and 2025.³⁴ In December 2022, he created the Foundation for Mine-Free Cambodia to channel funding for the sector and announced disbursement would be overseen by the Minister of Finance. The Prime Minister also appealed to the private sector for financial support for mine action which raised an additional \$18.6 million.³⁵

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

The CMAA issued a national Cambodian standard, CMAS 20, on "Environmental Management in Mine Action" in 2022. This requires operators to minimise the adverse impact of their operations on the environment, identify steps necessary to mitigate harm, and ensure that land is left in a suitable condition for its intended use. Operators are required to take account of: erosion or soil degradation; possible pollution of air, water, or soil; and damage to infrastructure, wildlife, and vegetation, while also dealing with litter, debris, and other waste as well as damage to heritage sites or objects.³⁶ Operators noted that a workshop held by the GICHD in November 2022 had proposed amendments to the standard,³⁷ but the CMAA said it did not foresee any changes to the CMAS in 2023.³⁸

In the meantime, operators already apply their own environmental standard operating procedures (SOPs). Mines Advisory Group (MAG) rolled out its Global Technical Standards in 2022, including a chapter on environment, which set out an International Mine Action Standard (IMAS)-compliant, minimum baseline for all programmes to update their SOPs.³⁹ APOPO, drawing on experience of post-mine clearance agricultural development, planned to develop a syntropic farm combining reforestation and food production.⁴⁰

23 Email from the GICHD, 1 July 2020.

24 Emails from Portia Stratton, NPA, 21 April 2021; and Rune Dale-Andresen, NPA, 7 September 2023.

25 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 12.

26 Lay Samean, "Mine-free kingdom 2025 goal gets big funding boost via new decree", *Phnom Penh Post*, 5 December 2022.

27 Email from Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, 1 July 2020.

28 Email from Ros Sophal, on behalf of Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, 14 May 2021.

29 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 6.

30 Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 29 April 2023.

31 Cambodia statement to the MBT Intersessionals, 21 June 2023.

32 C. Sokny, "Hun Sen asks China for support to achieve 2025 mine free target", *Phnom Penh Post*, 26 December 2022.

33 "Government decides to release additional \$30 million for mine clearance", *Khmer Times*, 2 December 2022.

34 Statement of Cambodia, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19 June 2023.

35 Statement of Cambodia, Intersessional Meetings, 21 June 2023.

36 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 6; and CMAS 20.

37 Emails from Tony Fernandes, Technical Operations Manager, MAG, 31 March 2023; Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 16 May 2023; and Sron Rithea, NPA, 6 May 2023.

38 Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 9 May 2023.

39 Emails from Tony Fernandes, MAG, 31 March 2023.

40 Email from Mikael Bold, Programme Manager, APOPO, Zimbabwe, 12 May 2023.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The CMAA established a Gender Mainstreaming Team (GMT) in 2019 to coordinate with the Technical Reference Group on Gender (TRG-G), one of eight TRGs ensuring coordination of the sector. The TRG-G is composed of representatives from UNDP, Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), MAPU, operators, and international and national organisations working in risk education and victim assistance.⁴¹

The CMAA is implementing a Gender Mainstreaming in Mine Action Plan (GMMAP) in line with the objectives of the National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025. Two earlier GMMAPs covered the periods 2013–15 and 2018–22. The latest version, covering 2021–25, was approved at the end of 2021 and launched by CMAA First Vice-President Ly Thuch at a workshop in March 2022.⁴² It sets out three strategies building on the earlier plans: developing implementation of GMMAP guidelines through monitoring and evaluation of the performance of MAPUs and operators; building capacity of CMAA gender teams, MAPUs, and operators, and collecting data on the mine action needs of women; promoting inclusive participation in mine action, including through collecting sex, age, and disability disaggregated data (SADDD); developing a CMAS on gender mainstreaming; and advocating for more women in decision-making positions.⁴³

The CMAA followed up in 2022 by drafting revised gender mainstreaming guidelines to promote equal and inclusive participation of women, men, girls, boys, and persons with disabilities and by drafting a national standard gender mainstreaming with support from the GICHD, NPA, and UNDP, believed to be the first country to develop a standard on this issue. It conducted a workshop on GMMAP for mine

action stakeholders and organised two courses conducted by the GICHD for CMAA staff and for MAPUs and operators in August 2022.⁴⁴ The CMAA also convened a TRG meeting on gender mainstreaming with participation by operators and MAPUs. With support from UNDP and NPA, the CMAA made a video, "Women are the catalyst for success in Mine Action in Cambodia", which was based on a number of case studies and released in December 2022.⁴⁵

Women represented a little over a quarter of the CMAA's 157 employees at the end of 2022, up from 20% a year earlier, and made up 18 of the CMAA's 75 management staff (19%) as well as 20 of the 25 office staff (44%). But women occupied only 4 of the 57 field staff (6%) working on quality management and victim assistance. MAPUs also employed a low number of women (10 of 83 posts: 11%).

Among operators, The HALO Trust (HALO) employed the most women deminers, who comprised more than 440 of its roughly 1,000 operations staff.⁴⁶ HALO said it aims to maintain a 50:50 balance among its operations staff and in 2023 aimed to increase the number of women in managerial positions. CMAC, Cambodia's biggest operator, employed 204 women of a total of 1,276 deminers and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) staff (16%) while women accounted for 5% of its management and 20% of office staff. Women made up 38% of MAG's total workforce, including 57% of management support staff and one-third of management's technical staff.⁴⁷ NPA reported women made up about half of its total staff and management and 28 of 52 field jobs (54%), and it was seeking to increase the proportion of female staff in senior technical positions.⁴⁸ The armed forces (RCAF) and peacekeeping forces (NPMEC) did not employ any women deminers.⁴⁹

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

The CMAA's database unit (DBU) is responsible for collecting, storing, analysing, and disseminating data in support of planning and prioritisation.⁵⁰ The DBU previously used the Information Management System for Mine Action New Generation (IMSMA-NG) but in 2022 continued the installation of, and migration of data to, IMSMA Core.⁵¹ The process was expected to be completed in 2023. Risk education and EOD reports were reportedly uploaded to IMSMA Core in 2022 but operators said land release reports were still submitted in IMSMA NG and also noted that accelerating non-technical survey (NTS) and the large

41 CMAA, National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, p. 22; and email from Tong Try, UNDP, 27 July 2021.

42 Voun Dara, "CMAA lauds female deminers", *Phnom Penh Post*, 10 March 2022.

43 Gender Mainstreaming in Mine Action Plan 2021–25, December 2021, pp. 6–7.

44 Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 9 May 2023; UNDP Clearing for Results Phase IV, Annual Project Progress Report 2022, p. 16.

45 Ibid.

46 HALO reported employing 450 women deminers among 939 operations staff (48%). Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 16 May 2023. SADDD statistics reported by UNDP CfRIV showed HALO had 441 female deminers among 1,029 field staff (43%); UNDP CfRIV, Annual Project Progress Report 2022, p. 15.

47 Email from Alexey Kruk, MAG, 30 August 2023.

48 Emails from Sron Samrithea, NPA, 6 May 2023; and Rune Dale-Andresen, NPA, 2 July 2023. SADDD data showed NPA employed 17 women among 32 office staff (52%) and women held 22 of 47 deminer/EOD positions (47%). UNDP Clearing for Results Phase IV, Annual Project Progress Report 2022, p. 15.

49 UNDP, Clearing for Results Phase IV, Annual Project Progress Report 2022, p. 16.

50 Email from Ros Sopha, on behalf of Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, 10 May 2022.

51 Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 9 May 2023.

volume of polygons being added to the database was causing delays and underscored the need for more data QA capacity.⁵² The DBU receives financial and technical support from Norway through NPA, which pays the salaries of seven of its staff.⁵³

The CMAA convenes meetings of its TRG on information management to identify solutions for data reporting and sharing challenges. These were conducted online in 2021 in accordance with COVID-19 regulations but in 2022 CMAA organised an in-person meeting which agreed on action to improve data quality. This included CMAA distributing a data verification check list and arranging a quarterly call with operators to verify data and resolve any issues.⁵⁴ Operators said the need for quality management team field visits and checks resulted in delays uploading results to the database.⁵⁵

PLANNING AND TASKING

Cambodia launched a National Mine Action Strategy for 2018–2025 in May 2018 which set eight goals for clearance of mines, cluster munition remnants (CMR), and other ERW. The first goal was to release all known mined areas by 2025 through planned land release of 110km² a year from 2020. The CMAA also issued Three-Year Implementation Plans setting out activities and indicators to implement the strategy.⁵⁶

Cambodia's Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in 2019 revised land release targets for 2019–25 in a work plan that proposed a rise in the area released from 110km² a year in 2020–21 to 146km² for the remainder of the extension period when additional deminers were projected to come on board and become operational.⁵⁷ Cambodia did not achieve those targets. Following up the Prime Minister's initiative, Cambodia aims to release 345km² in 2023 and 168km² in each of the two remaining years.⁵⁸ A revised work plan submitted in 2023 said Cambodia would release 356km² in 2023 and 168km² in each of 2024 and 2025. It said the CMAA would coordinate clearance of mined areas located outside the 7km-wide border zone in 2023 and address the remaining mined areas on the border from late 2023 until the end of 2025.⁵⁹

The CMAA discussed general plans for clearance with operators in technical working group meetings in 2022 but operators said it needed more information on available mine clearance capacity in order to develop more detailed plans. The CMAA said the government planned to mobilise significant military capacity to help accelerate land release, including some 910 personnel from RCAF and 805 personnel from NPMEC.⁶⁰

Cambodian authorities had halted clearance of the K5 mine belt on the border with Thailand in July 2020 and then banned international operators from working within a 7km-wide zone along all international borders. CMAC continued to have access to border areas and the CMAA established a task force with RCAF in early 2023 to conduct a joint inspection of minefields in each of the border provinces to assess options for assigning operators to clear them. RCAF was expected to produce a report for CMAA recommending the next steps towards border clearance.⁶¹ The CMAA said RCAF and NPMEC had been tasked to clear border areas.⁶²

In 2022, Cambodia embarked on a strategy of completing clearance of the remaining AP mined areas in less-contaminated provinces in order to declare them mine free and concentrate resources in areas posing the biggest challenge to completion. The process started with the south-eastern province of Kep in February 2022 and by the end of the year seven provinces and Phnom Penh municipality were declared free of mines. Provinces earmarked by the CMAA for being declared mine free in 2023 included Kampong Thom, Kratie, Mondulhiri, Rattanakiri, and Siem Reap, which, at the end of 2022, had a total of 113km² of confirmed and suspected mined areas.⁶³ By the end of 2023, Cambodia planned to have released all known mined areas from 18 provinces, leaving seven provinces along the border with Thailand to clear.⁶⁴

Cambodia has followed a top-down and bottom-up approach to planning and prioritisation. The CMAA drew up a list of priority villages based on agreed criteria and national priorities while MAPUs coordinated with operators at the provincial level to develop a list of clearance tasks for their annual work plans using agreed criteria.⁶⁵

52 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 16 May 2023.

53 Email from Sron Samrithea, NPA, 6 May 2023.

54 Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 9 May 2023.

55 Emails from Tony Fernandes, MAG, 31 March 2023.

56 Email from Ros Sophal, on behalf of Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, 14 May 2021.

57 Statement of Cambodia, Fourth Review Conference, Oslo, 27 November 2019.

58 Statement of Cambodia, Intersessional Meetings, 19 June 2023.

59 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Revised Work Plan, submitted 10 May 2023.

60 Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 3 May 2023.

61 Emails from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 29 April and 3 May 2023; Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 16 May 2023; and Alexey Kruk, MAG, 30 May 2023.

62 Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 3 May 2023.

63 Ibid.

64 Statement of Cambodia, Intersessional Meetings, 19 June 2023.

65 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Mine action is conducted according to the CMAS, which are broadly consistent with IMAS.⁶⁶ The National Mine Action Strategy (NMAS) 2018–2025 emphasised the need for efficient use of resources and the CMAA has worked on developing CMAS with support from NPA and in consultation with other clearance operators.⁶⁷

Cambodia reported in June 2022 that it had approved 17 standards for implementation.⁶⁸ CMAA data in August 2022⁶⁹ showed 18 standards to have been approved and in use, although seven of these were listed as due to be updated.⁷⁰ Newly approved standards included a CMAS chapter on explosive ordnance risk education and a standard for the protection of the environment. A new standard for mechanical demining was ready in final draft but awaiting comments from CMAC. Drafts of standards for Gender and Victim Assistance required further discussion and standards for Management of Training and Underwater Clearance required development.⁷¹ CMAA said three standards covering baseline survey (CMAS 14), land release (15), and cluster munition remnant survey (16) would be revised in the course of 2023 in order to expedite and accelerate survey and clearance of mines and CMR.⁷²

In a bid to accelerate land release, the CMAA launched a "ground data verification" project in December 2020 which involved revisiting mined areas that had already been surveyed to confirm whether they required clearance, had been reclaimed for agricultural use, or could be cancelled through NTS. A pilot project by NPA in 2021 visited mined areas totalling nearly 73km² and found that 25.6km² could be cancelled through NTS.⁷³ In 2022, NPA said it visited 90.9km² leading to the release of 12.9km², of which 12.7km² was land already reclaimed for use and the remaining 0.2km² was cancelled.⁷⁴

The CMAA operated in 2022 with eight three-person quality management teams, which aimed to visit each demining team roughly once a month.⁷⁵ The surge in operational capacity with the planned addition of up to 2,000 RCAF and NPMEC deminers has posed a challenge for CMAA quality management. In response, the CMAA planned to increase the number of teams to 12 in 2023 by downsizing the size of the teams to two people and by doubling field deployments from 10 days a month to 20 days monthly.⁷⁶

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Mine clearance in Cambodia continued to be led in 2022 by national operator CMAC and two international NGOs HALO and MAG. Smaller operators active in 2022 included APOPO, working with CMAC and MAG, and national operator Cambodian Self-help Demining (CSHD). The main change in 2022 was the additional capacity deployed by RCAF in response to Prime Minister Hun Sen's drive to mobilise the funding and manpower needed to complete AP mine clearance by the end of 2025.

Land release targets set in Cambodia's Article 5 extension request assumed the addition of 2,000 RCAF deminers and their absence from operations in 2020 and 2021 left a significant question mark against the prospects for completion by 2025. The Prime Minister's December 2022 announcement of substantial additional funding for mine action changed the outlook. By December 2022, Cambodia's

military had mobilised 25 platoons with approximately 675 personnel, including 16 platoons of RCAF engineers and nine platoons from NPMEC.⁷⁷ Plans to deploy additional military capacity depended on mobilising detectors, personal protective equipment (PPE) and training but in April 2023 the CMAA reported RCAF had mobilised 35 platoons with a total of 910 personnel, of which 16 platoons were operational.⁷⁸ A revised Article 5 extension request work plan submitted in May 2023 identified RCAF as providing 1,150 deminers and NPMEC providing 806 deminers.⁷⁹

The capacity of international operators in 2022 remained broadly similar to the previous year. MAG's capacity remained unchanged in 2022 and was expected to continue at the same level for most of 2023. This included two MDD teams subcontracted from CMAC and a mine detection rat team operated in partnership with APOPO.⁸⁰ APOPO added

⁶⁶ Emails from Rebecca Letven, MAG, 7 April 2020; and Zlatko Vezilic, NPA, 19 March 2020.

⁶⁷ Emails from Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, 11 September 2019; and Zlatko Vezilic, NPA, 4 April 2019.

⁶⁸ Statement of Cambodia, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20 June 2022.

⁶⁹ Email from Ros Sopha, on behalf of Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, 5 September 2022.

⁷⁰ Seven standards due for updating were: Reporting for investigation of demining incidents; Safety and occupational health (two standards); Personal Protective Equipment; Baseline survey; Land release; and Cluster munition remnant survey (CMRS).

⁷¹ Email from Ros Sopha, on behalf of Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, 5 September 2022.

⁷² Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 29 April 2023.

⁷³ Email from Ros Sopha, on behalf of Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, 26 July 2022.

⁷⁴ Email from Sron Samrithea, NPA, 6 May 2023.

⁷⁵ Interview with Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, Phnom Penh, 7 December 2022; "Quality Assurance and Quality Control", UNDP-CMAA Briefing Paper, 2022.

⁷⁶ Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 29 April 2023.

⁷⁷ Interview with Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, Phnom Penh, 7 December 2022.

⁷⁸ Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 29 April 2023.

⁷⁹ Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Revised Work Plan, submitted 10 May 2023, p. 5.

⁸⁰ Email from Alexey Kruk, MAG, 30 May 2023.

a technical survey dog (TSD) team in early 2023 which was deployed in Siem Reap province's Koh Ker temple, an area where it already had five TSDs working.⁸¹ NPA did not conduct mine clearance but deployed four Land Release NTS (LR-NTS) teams, each four-strong, funded by UNDP's Clearing for Results programme. The teams contributed to land release by revisiting nearly 91km² to verify the status of previously surveyed areas and releasing 12.7km².⁸²

The number of HALO manual clearance teams dipped from 85 teams with 765 deminers in 2021 to 83 teams and 747 deminers in 2022 but it added another NTS team.⁸³ HALO added around 20 dual-sensor Handheld Standoff Mine Detection System (HSTAMIDS) detectors to its inventory and also field tested VMX10 large-loop detectors used on mixed AP and anti-vehicle (AV) mine tasks. By August 2022, it also equipped all manual clearance teams with tablets enabling

them to report from the field direct to HALO's database rather than the previous procedure which involved radioing in results to a location office that then uploaded the results to the database.⁸⁴

CMAC deployed seven demining units, including a Pailin Frontline Demining Unit, which employed a total of 1,121 full-time personnel in 2022 and another 137 so-called short service agreement staff out of a total staff of 1,725⁸⁵ but CMAC did not provide details requested of the number of manual clearance teams and deminers or its NTS and technical survey (TS) capacity. CMAC also deployed an unspecified number of mine detection dogs and, after performance trials conducted with APOPO, it deployed 19 mine detection rats.⁸⁶

Table 2: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2022

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers	Animal detection and handlers	Machines	Comments
APOPO	3	19	4 MDR teams 62 rats/32 handlers 1 TSD team 4 dogs/4handlers	4	Total of 62 rats/32 handlers: 1 MDR team (10 rats with 8 handlers) worked with MAG; 3 MDR teams with 36 rats and 24 handlers working in partnership with CMAC; 16 rats working in the visitors centre/retired rats; 4 TSD dogs and 4 handlers worked in partnership with MAG.
CMAC	N/K	*1,121	N/K	11	*The total number of staff CMAC reported as employed on full-time contracts in seven demining units. ⁸⁷
CSHD	1	12	0	0	
HALO	83	747	0	3	Also 12 NTS teams with 36 personnel
MAG	17	136	2 MDD teams, 8 dogs, 8 handlers (in partnership with CMAC)	5	Also 5 NTS teams with 10 personnel
RCAF	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	
Totals	104	2,035	62 rats/32 handlers 12 dogs/12 handlers	23	

81 Emails from Michael Raine, Programme Manager Cambodia, APOPO, 24 May and 2 August 2023.

82 Email from Sron Samrithea, NPA, 6 May 2023.

83 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 16 May 2023.

84 Interview with Claire Fearn, Deputy Programme Manager, HALO, in Siem Reap, 5 December 2022.

85 CMAC Annual Report 2022, Part 2, p. 45.

86 Ibid., p. 44.

87 Ibid., p. 45.

DEMINER SAFETY

Three CSHD deminers were killed and another injured in January 2022 during clearance of an AV mine in Prey Vihear province. The CMAA said it conducted an investigation, but no further details were available. Shortly before the accident, a local villager was reportedly killed by the detonation of unexploded ordnance as he burned vegetation.⁸⁸

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

Cambodia reported release of 191.5km² through survey and clearance in 2022,⁸⁹ well over double the 81.3km² it said was released in 2021. The result was led by a massive jump in area released through TS as well as more than doubling the amount of land that was cleared, to more than 88km². A total of 34.25km² was released under UNDP's Clearing for Results programme.⁹⁰

SURVEY IN 2022

Cambodia released 103km² through survey in 2022,⁹¹ more than triple the 2021 result (37.61km²) underscoring the greater emphasis put on releasing land where possible by means other than full clearance in the drive for completion by 2025.

The CMAA reported 32km² cancelled through NTS in 2022⁹² (see Table 3), 13% more than the area it recorded as cancelled in the previous year. Official data attributed most of the area cancelled to international NGOs. However, significant discrepancies with the results reported by operators left uncertain which organisation conducted it and whether it included results from before 2022 as a result of delays uploading operator results to the database.⁹³

The result included almost 12km² identified by NPA's four LR-NTS teams as land already reclaimed for use.⁹⁴ The teams, funded by UNDP's Clearing for Results programme, visited 1,031 minefields in Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Pailin with a total size of 90.93km², releasing 11.8km², 13% of the areas surveyed.⁹⁵

Table 3: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022⁹⁶

Province	Area cancelled (m ²)
Banteay Meanchey	1,081,369
Battambang	2,526,043
Kampong Speu	1,278,546
Kampong Thom	7,134,833
Kampot	642,668
Kratie	1,213,921
Oddar Meanchey	9,386,187
Phnom Penh	1,380,306
Preah Vihear	1,428,594
Pursat	254,794
Rattanakiri	132,897
Siem Reap	5,493,757
Takeo	189,703
Tboung Khmum	133,164
Total	32,276,782

88 Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 29 April 2023; S. Cheang, "Anti-tank mine kills three demining experts in Cambodia", *Associated Press*, 10 January 2022.

89 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), #4.

90 UNDP, Clearing for Results Phase IV, Annual Project Progress Report 2022, p. 7.

91 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), #4.

92 Ibid.

93 Emails from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 29 April 2023; Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 16 May 2023; and Alexey Kruk, MAG, 30 May 2023. Official data attributed more than half the total area cancelled to HALO, including a large area in Oddar Meanchey province, but HALO reported cancelling 8,944,649m² in 2022, mostly in Siem Reap, Kampong Speu, and Kratie. Official data also attributed cancellation of approximately 2km² to MAG, while MAG reported cancelling 9,066,006m² in 2022, mostly in Battambang province.

94 Emails from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 29 April 2023; and Sron Samrithea, NPA, 6 May 2023.

95 UNDP, Clearing for Results Phase IV, Annual Project Progress Report 2022, p. 7.

96 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), #4.

The biggest jump in land release results was in area reported as reduced through TS, which increased to almost 71km² in 2022⁹⁷ (see Table 4) from 9km² reported in 2021, almost all of it attributed to CMAA, which says it does not cancel land on the basis of NTS, with the remaining reduction attributed to HALO, MAG, and RCAF.⁹⁸

HALO, which roughly doubled the amount of reduction it conducted in 2022 to 0.95km², noted that it had worked on a large number of A4 (scattered or nuisance mines) tasks in Banteay Meanchey and Siem Reap where the smaller number of mines offered more scope for area reduction.⁹⁹ MAG also increased the amount of reduction to 3.1km² using mechanical and animal detection assets.¹⁰⁰

Table 4: Release of mined area through TS in 2022¹⁰¹

Province	Area reduced (m ²)
Banteay Meanchey	3,070,578
Battambang	12,518,487
Kampong Speu	16,334,706
Kampong Thom	5,050,598
Kampot	14,801,408
Kandal	30,595
Kep	847,609
Pailin	2,858,016
Preah Sihanouk	1,922,013
Preah Vihear	63,811
Pursat	4,665,437
Rattanakiri	221,848
Siem Reap	4,648,406
Takeo	3,756,147
Total	70,789,659

CLEARANCE IN 2022

Cambodia reported release of 88km² through clearance in 2022,¹⁰² a record-setting result and more than double the area cleared in 2021 (see Tables 5 and 6). In the process, operators destroyed 13,048 AP mines, also more than double the 6,087 in 2021, and 132,456 other items of explosive ordnance. But reported clearance of 9.6km² in Svay Rieng yielded only 678 AP mines while reported clearance of 7.6km² in Preah Vihear destroyed only 532 AP mines.

Operators also destroyed large numbers of AP mines in the course of spot tasks. HALO destroyed 17,339 AP mines and 25 AV mines during EOD operations. This included 16,155 AP mines cleared from a military store in Kampong Speu province (which are thus stockpiled not emplaced mines), therefore only the remaining 1,184 are included in Mine Action Review's total for 2022.¹⁰³ MAG destroyed 170 AP mines in EOD tasks.¹⁰⁴

Official data indicated the area cleared included 25 tasks covering a total of 1,567,548m² that were found to have no mines.¹⁰⁵ HALO recorded 35 AP mine tasks covering 694,460m² that contained no AP mines and MAG recorded the same result from nine tasks totalling 276,500m².¹⁰⁶

Table 5: Mine clearance in 2022¹⁰⁷

Province	Area (m ²)	AP mines destroyed
Banteay Meanchey	9,696,037	916
Battambang	31,842,709	5,983
Kampong Cham	475,355	30
Kampong Chhnang	1,488,577	209

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 29 April 2023.

⁹⁹ Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 16 May 2023.

¹⁰⁰ Email from Alexey Kruk, MAG, 30 May 2023.

¹⁰¹ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), #4.

¹⁰² Article 7 Report (covering 2022), #4.

¹⁰³ Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 16 May 2023.

¹⁰⁴ Email from Alexey Kruk, MAG, 30 May 2023.

¹⁰⁵ Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 29 April 2023.

¹⁰⁶ Emails from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 16 May 2023; and Alexey Kruk, MAG, 30 May 2023. HALO recorded another 13 A2-2 tasks (scattered mixed AP and AV mines) covering 1.4km² which had no AP mines but contained 15 AV mines.

¹⁰⁷ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), #4.

Table 5 Continued

Province	Area (m ²)	AP mines destroyed
Kampong Speu	6,915,542	1,118
Kampong Thom	557,227	306
Kampot	414,111	625
Kandal	25,627	37
Kep	31,051	1
Oddar Meanchey	4,203,560	254
Pailin	4,582,062	550
Preah Sihanouk	0	31
Preah Vihear	7,636,653	532
Prey Veng	5,900	0
Pursat	6,261,024	958
Rattanakiri	105,291	1
Siem Reap	3,615,509	502
Svay Rieng	9,646,085	678
Takeo	288,082	312
Tboung Khmum	684,789	5
Totals	88,475,191	13,048

Most of the clearance is attributable to CMAC, much the biggest of the operators but it did not provide Mine Action Review with the requested details of its demining operations in 2022 and therefore it has not been possible to assess the accuracy of the sharp increase in CMAC's reported clearance output in 2022.¹⁰⁸ CMAC won three contracts awarded under UNDP's Clearing for Results programme in Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Pailin, clearing 22.45km² (see Table 6), a more than 50% increase on the 14.86km² cleared under the programme in 2021 which resulted in destroying nearly 3,000 AP mines compared with 1,723 in 2021.¹⁰⁹

Table 6: UNDP Clearing for Results 2022¹¹⁰

Operator	Provinces	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
CMAC	Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Pailin	22.45	2,922	9	2,706

HALO reported clearing 4,661,915m² in 2022, mostly in Banteay Meanchey, Battambang and Oddar Meanchey, destroying 685 AP mines but it did not have access to border areas where it worked before authorities' 2021 decision to close a 7km-wide border zone.¹¹¹ MAG cleared 5.2km² in 2022, double the 2.6km² cleared the previous year, although the number of AP mines destroyed, amounting to 357 in 2022, was almost one third less than in 2021.¹¹²

108 CMAC's 2022 annual report said it released 194km² of land contaminated by mines and explosive remnants of war in 2022 and destroyed 17,667 AP mines and 98 AV mines.

109 UNDP, Clearing for Results Phase IV, Annual Project Progress Report 2022, p. 7.

110 Ibid.

111 Interview with Claire Fearn, HALO, in Sim Reap, 6 December 2022.

112 Emails from Alexey Kruk, MAG, 6 May 2022 and 30 May 2023.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the second extension, of 5 years and 11 months, granted by States Parties in 2019), Cambodia is required to destroy all AP mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2025.

At the end of 2021, with 716km² of confirmed and suspected AP mined area to release, Cambodia's prospects of meeting its Article 5 deadline looked highly improbable. Land release in the first three years of the extension period consistently fell well short of targets.¹¹³ A year later, with at least 641km² still to be released, the goal looked ambitious, but not impossible. The outlook changed with the Prime Minister's 2022 announcement that the government would allocate \$30 million to mine action in 2023 as well as mobilising \$18.6 million in private contributions which has enabled deployment of RCAF and NPMEC deminers.

Cambodia's 2019 request for an extension of just under six years was based on the deployment of 2,000 additional deminers from the armed forces.¹¹⁴ Without the additional

military capacity, the CMAA calculated in 2020 that it would need 11 years to achieve completion.¹¹⁵ Since the funding boost announced in July 2022, the government has developed plans to deploy 910 RCAF and 810 NPMEC deminers. By April 2023 the CMAA reported the government had mobilised 35 platoons of RCAF deminers of which 16 platoons were already operational.¹¹⁶ With the additional funding and capacity and building on the accelerating land release results in 2022, Cambodia set ambitious targets aiming to release 345km² in 2023 and 168km² a year in 2024 and 2025.¹¹⁷

CAMBODIA'S FUTURE RATE OF PROGRESS WILL BE INFLUENCED BY A NUMBER OF CHALLENGES:

- The rapid acceleration in land release since 2021 partly reflects the predominance of A2 and A4 category tasks consisting mainly of low levels of contamination in relatively easy terrain. Heavily contaminated A1 tasks made up less than 1% of the area cleared in 2022 and barely half of one per cent of the total area released (see Table 7).¹¹⁸

Table 7: Land release (m²) by land classification in 2022

Land Classification	C1	C2	C3	Totals
A1	43,287	382,839	737,911	1,164,037
A2	752,729	0	2,118,037	2,870,766
A2.1	8,408	0	63,110	71,518
A2.2	3,297,705	4,652,370	45,640,571	53,590,646
A3	477,060	206,992	13,547,699	14,231,751
A4	18,494,127	64,409,512	38,049,585	120,953,224
B2	9,680,526	1,344,938	1,865,977	12,891,441
Totals	32,753,842	70,996,651	102,022,890	205,773,383

C1 = Area cancelled by NTS C2 = Area reduced by TS C3 = Area cleared.

113 Mine Action Review recorded land released through survey and clearance totalling 55.3km² in 2019, 78.7km² in 2020, and 81.3km² in 2021.

114 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 45.

115 Interview with Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, Geneva, 11 February 2020.

116 Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 29 April 2023.

117 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Revised Work Plan, submitted 10 May 2023, p. 4.

118 Email from Tep Kallyan, CMAA, 29 April 2023.

- Cambodia is likely to continue to find previously unrecorded mined areas to add to the database of contamination to be cleared, although the CMAA expects that as a result of the survey and verification already carried out this will not be as much as in previous years.¹¹⁹
- The pace of clearance may slow towards the end of the extension period. On the basis of past experience, Cambodia still estimates that approximately 20% of its mine contamination may be cancelled through NTS but survey by LR-NTS teams in 2022 resulted in release of 13% of the surveyed area and operators indicate there are fewer remaining tasks that meet the criteria for cancellation. After the drive to release land that has been reclaimed operators will increasingly face denser contamination and tasks located in more difficult terrain on the border with Thailand.
- Cambodian authorities excluded international operators from a 7km-wide border zone and have yet to clarify which operators will be tasked for clearing an area estimated to hold more than half Cambodia's remaining contamination and the most difficult hazardous areas.¹²⁰ HALO applied to the CMAA to return to work on tasks where it worked until the border ban came into effect.¹²¹ The CMAA has indicated border clearance will be limited to national operators, including CMAC, RCAF and NPMEC.¹²²
- Cambodia and Thailand need to negotiate agreement on access to mined areas located in disputed border areas. Both governments say they are interested in cooperation but despite years of discussion they have agreed so far on just one pilot project. This was conducted in 2020,

resulting in release of 95,000m², but without destroying any mines.¹²³ Cambodia reportedly proposed two pilot projects covering several square kilometres to be conducted in 2023 with Thailand.¹²⁴ Prime Minister Hun Sen declared in November 2022 that he had agreed with his Thai counterpart that mine clearance should take precedence over border demarcation.¹²⁵ The Cambodian government subsequently set up a joint border task force including representatives of the CMAA, CMAC, and RCAF to engage with Thailand on the issue but no agreement had emerged as of August 2023. Thai mine action authorities said Cambodian troops had blocked access by Thai deminers to certain border locations and they were waiting for Cambodian authorities to engage on the issue.¹²⁶ It was unclear whether the change of government leadership in both nations in 2023 would affect their approach to the border.

Table 8: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	88.48
2021	43.73
2020	49.99
2019	*45.62
2018	41.00
Total	268.82

* May include significant AV mine clearance

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL RISK AFTER COMPLETION

Goal 7 of Cambodia's National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 calls for establishing sustainable national capacity to address residual threats after completion. Additional information provided to Cambodia's 2019 Article 5 deadline extension request said that by 2025 Cambodia would have the necessary legal, institutional, and operational framework in place for dealing with residual risks and said "it is likely the Royal Cambodian Army will be the national capacity [that] remains to address the residual threats."¹²⁷ The CMAA partnered with the GICHD in a report making 10 recommendations on the legal, normative, structural, and procedural issues to be addressed in setting up residual risk management capacity.¹²⁸ The CMAA said it is developing a National Mine Action Transition Policy for managing residual mine contamination and expected to finalise the plan in 2023.¹²⁹

119 Interview with Prum Sophakmonkol, CMAA, Phnom Penh, 7 December 2022.

120 Ibid.

121 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 16 May 2023.

122 S. Chandara, "Five provinces, capital, reach 'mine free' status as year ends", *Phnom Penh Post*, 21 December 2022.

123 See Mine Action Review, *Clearing the Mines 2021*, p. 256.

124 Interview with Heng Rattana, Director General, CMAC, Phnom Penh, 12 December 2022.

125 "Cambodia, Thailand agree to clear all mines in border areas", *Phnom Penh Post*, 23 November 2022.

126 Interview with Thailand Mine Action Centre, Geneva, 23 June 2023.

127 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Additional Information, 8 August 2019, p. 5.

128 UNDP, *Clearing for Results Phase IV, Annual Project Progress Report 2022*, p. 18.

129 Email from Tep Kallan, CMAA, 29 April 2023.

CAMEROON

MINE
ACTION
REVIEW

CLEARING THE MINES 2023

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2013

NEW EXTENDED DEADLINE NEEDED TO RETURN TO COMPLIANCE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: LOW
EXTENT UNKNOWN**

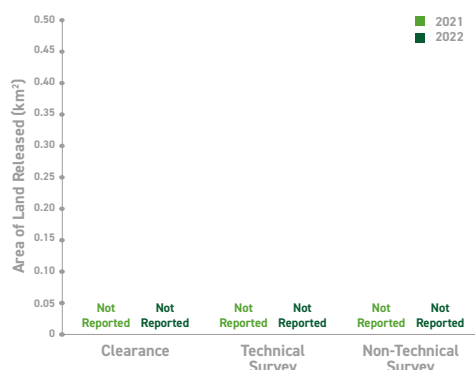
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

NOT REPORTED

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

NOT REPORTED

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Cameroon faces an ongoing threat from improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including mines of an improvised nature, primarily in the Far North region, deployed by the Boko Haram insurgency, and in the North West and South West regions, by the anglophone separatist movement. Cameroon has still not submitted a request to extend its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline despite its known mine contamination and is therefore in violation of the convention.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Cameroon should inform States Parties to the APMBC of the discovery of any anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination, including mines of an improvised nature.
- Cameroon should submit an Article 7 transparency report detailing all suspected or confirmed mined areas under its jurisdiction or control and should report systematically on explosive device incidents detailing the number, location, and device type.
- Cameroon should request a new Article 5 deadline from the other States Parties to the APMBC.
- Cameroon should put in place a sustainable national capacity to respond to the contamination, seeking international assistance to achieve this, as required.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- No national mine action authority or national mine action centre

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Army Engineer Corps

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

There is an increasing threat from explosive devices in Cameroon, including mines of an improvised nature, resulting from conflict in three regions. They include a widening Boko Haram insurgency spilling over from Nigeria into Far North region¹ and an increasingly violent separatist insurgency in the Anglophone North West and South West regions. The extent of the area affected by explosive devices is unknown. Non-State armed groups (NSAGs) continue to use IEDs in the three regions, primarily targeting military convoys.² Nevertheless, civilian casualties have also been documented, including an incident on 4 February 2022, where two children were killed when they stepped on an improvised AP mine in their village in the Sagmé locality, in the Far North region.³

According to UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports, there were at least 53 reported incidents involving IEDs in the North-West, South-West, and Far North regions in 2022.⁴ The UN did not specify which of these incidents involved victim-activated devices. In 2023, Cameroon experienced a surge in IED incidents in the North West and South West regions during February, with approximately 20 reported cases.⁵ The prevalence of IED incidents continued in May, in the North West and South West regions, leading to restricted civilian movements and limited humanitarian access in the affected regions.⁶ In the Far North, two IED incidents involved military convoys detonating improvised anti-vehicle (AV) mines, in March and April respectively, causing numerous deaths and injuries.⁷

The UN reported that more than 10 IED incidents occurred every month during 2021. It said attacks targeting civilians increased in the south-west during the last quarter of 2021 and reported 35 incidents in the North-West region in October 2021.⁸ Cameroon's Defence Minister Joseph Beti Assomo said in May 2021 that IEDs in western Cameroon had killed 24 people in the preceding two weeks and that the military was seizing or destroying them on an almost daily basis.⁹

In August 2020, customs authorities in northern Cameroon intercepted 207 improvised devices weighing more than two tons being transported across the border from Nigeria. In the second half of 2020, customs officers also seized large quantities of hydrogen peroxide and other chemicals used in producing IEDs.¹⁰

A senior army officer commented in 2017 that some roads in areas bordering Nigeria were "riddled with mines."¹¹ A Cameroonian analyst commented that insurgents were using "homemade mines" with increasing frequency on roads and in houses.¹² The effect has been to reduce access for humanitarian organisations working in the area. International Organization for Migration (IOM) personnel who visited the Far North region in September 2018 were denied permission to visit a number of towns in Mayo-Tsanaga,¹³ a department bordering Nigeria, because of the presence of mines and reports of kidnappings.¹⁴

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Cameroon does not have a functioning mine action programme. Mine clearance and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) are mainly the responsibility of the Cameroon Military Engineer Corps. Cameroon's gendarmes and police officers have also attended training courses for tackling IEDs.¹⁵

Cameroon informed the United Nations in 2019 that casualties from mines and improvised devices had increased 43% in the previous year requiring a change of approach by the government. It appealed for international assistance but provided no information about any action to address the issue.¹⁶ However, Cameroon has not reported systematically on incidents

1 See, e.g., C. Delanga, "La menace des engins explosifs pèse sur l'Extrême-Nord du Cameroun", Institute for Security Studies, 16 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3siaul8>.

2 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Humanitarian Needs Overview*, March 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3YJHBL0>.

3 OCHA, "West and Central Africa: Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot (8-14 February 2022)", at: <https://bit.ly/3E3fD3d>.

4 OCHA, "Cameroon: North-West and South-West – Situation Report No. 40 (As of 28 February 2022)", at: <https://bit.ly/44d0hSH>; OCHA "Cameroon: North-West and South-West - Situation Report No. 42 (As of 30 April 2022)", at: <https://bit.ly/30EBliH>; OCHA "Cameroon Situation Report, 31 May 2022", at: <https://bit.ly/47xokjL>; OCHA "Cameroon: North-West and South-West – Situation Report No. 44 (June 2022)", at: <https://bit.ly/3s97K9z>; UN OCHA, "Cameroon Situation Report, 13 July 2022", at: <https://bit.ly/3QOCYgq>; OCHA "Cameroon: North-West and South-West – Situation Report No. 47 (October 2022)", at: <https://bit.ly/3DYty9H>.

5 OCHA, "Cameroon: North-West and South-West – Situation Report No. 51 (February 2023)", at: <https://bit.ly/3KOiosV>.

6 OCHA, "Cameroon: North-West and South-West – Situation Report No. 54 (May 2023)", at: <https://bit.ly/44fmXDx>.

7 ACLED, "Filters: 01/01/2023-18/08/2023, Remote explosive/landmine/IED, Cameroon", accessed 18 August 2023, at: www.acleddata.com; Fenix Insight Online database, accessed 18 August 2023, at: <https://fenix-insight.online/>.

8 OCHA, *Cameroon Humanitarian Bulletin*, Issue No. 29, January 2022, p. 3.

9 M. E. Kindzeka, "Military says rebels turn to IEDs as numbers fall", *Voice of America*, 11 May 2021.

10 "La douane camerounaise intercepte 2000 litres d'un produit entrant dans la fabrication des Engins explosifs improvisés", *Agence ecofin*, 21 December 2020; P. N. Ngouern, "Cameroon: saisie record par la douane de plus de deux tonnes d'engins explosifs improvisés", *Le360afrique.com*, 31 August 2020.

11 P. Kum, "Landmine explosion kills two Cameroon soldiers", *Anadolu Agency*, 28 September 2017, at: <https://bit.ly/2LxKjQ0>.

12 "Boko Haram landmines inflict heavy toll on Cameroon", *Latin American Herald Tribune*, 30 May 2019.

13 The towns were Talla-Katchi, Assighassia, Cherif Moussari, and Zéméné.

14 IOM, "Cameroon, Far North Region, Displacement Report, Round 15, 3-15 September 2018", p. 8.

15 "Cameroon: formation de 1 000 policiers et gendarmes à la lutte contre les engins explosifs improvisés" *Xinhua*, 20 June 2019.

16 Statement of Cameroon to the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 23 October 2019.

involving improvised explosive devices or identified incidents involving victim-activated devices that constitute mines of an improvised nature.

In the past six years, the Army has received military training in demining and counter-IED measures, mainly from the France and the United States.¹⁷ A Twitter feed by the US mission in Yaoundé in May 2021 reported provision of equipment for countering IEDs and training.¹⁸

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in Cameroon in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Cameroon has not provided information on whether it has mainstreamed gender and diversity in the context of its mine action programme.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

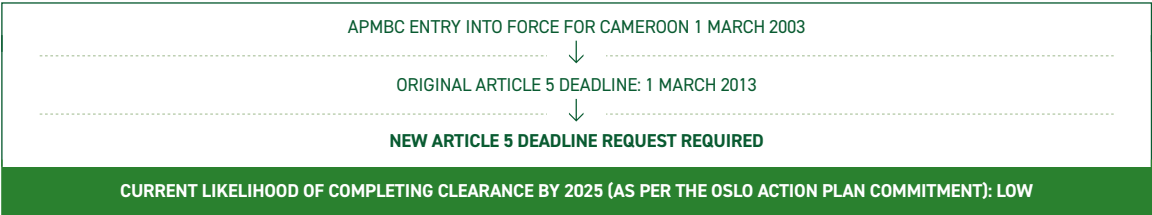
As at August 2023, Cameroon had yet to submit an Article 7 transparency report covering the previous calendar year or for previous years stretching back over a decade. Its last annual report was submitted in 2009.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

Cameroon did not report results of clearance and EOD conducted by its Army engineers.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Cameroon's Article 5 deadline to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control expired on 1 March 2013. It has not sought to extend the deadline and is therefore in violation of the Convention.

Cameroon has not submitted an Article 7 report since August 2009 when it reported there were no areas of mine contamination under its jurisdiction or control. In view of the casualties reported by Cameroon from mines and/or victim-activated mines of an improvised nature, Cameroon needs to revise its position.

Under the APMBC's agreed framework, Cameroon should immediately inform all States Parties of any newly discovered AP mines following the expiry of its Article 5 deadline in 2013 and ensure their destruction as soon as possible. It should request a new extended Article 5 deadline, which should be for no more than two years, affording it the opportunity to conduct any necessary survey and provide an assessment of the extent of AP mine contamination. Cameroon must also fulfil its reporting obligations under the Convention, including by reporting on the location of any suspected or confirmed mined areas under its jurisdiction or control and on the status of programmes for the destruction of all AP mines within them.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Cameroon does not have plans in place to address residual contamination once its Article 5 obligations have been fulfilled.

17 "Military Cooperation: mine clearing training (Sept. 19-30th 2016)", French embassy in Yaoundé webpage at: <http://bit.ly/2Z3ShnY>; and M. E. Kindzeka, "Cameroon Vigilantes Hunt for Boko Haram Landmines", Voice of America News, 4 March 2016, at: <http://bit.ly/2XZGxGM>.

18 US Embassy Yaoundé, @USEmbYaounde, 8 May 2021.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JANUARY 2025
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM

NATIONAL AUTHORITY ESTIMATE

77.6km²

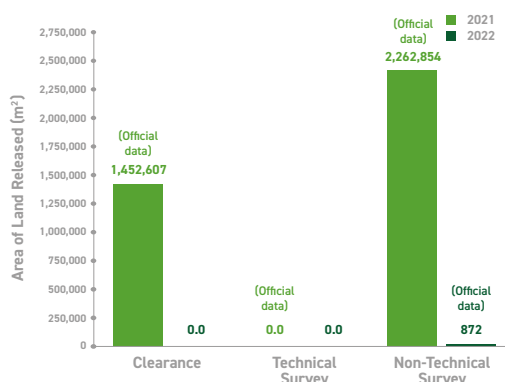
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

0km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

0

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The European Union (EU) PRODECO programme, which had funded mine action operations in Chad since 2017, officially ended in April 2022. No donor support has been provided since, leaving Chad's mine action programme at a standstill. The government funded some clearance of explosive ordnance, believed to be the first national funding of operations for some years.

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

- Chad should seek international support to re-establish a functioning mine action programme.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	5	5	In 2020–21 Chad assessed its AP mine contamination at around 77km ² . In 2022 the estimate increased marginally to 78km ² but most of the mined area is in the northern Tibesti region where insecurity has prevented any survey for years.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	4	4	Chad's national mine action authority coordinates the sector and since 2019 has downsized drastically because of funding constraints. The government pays salaries of national staff in the mine action sector but operations remain largely dependent on international funding.

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	3	3	Chad's last Article 5 deadline extension request did not address gender and diversity and at a point when the mine action has experienced major cuts in human resources they remain low on Chad's list of mine action priorities.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	5	5	A clean-up of Chad's database by FSD in 2020 and 2021 and verification of survey results led to cancellation of more than 155,000m ² , but in 2021, only a year after Chad announced sharply reduced estimates of its mine challenge, down to 42km ² , it assessed mine contamination at almost double that amount.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	4	4	Chad's Article 5 deadline extension request in 2019 set general goals for survey and clearance and a 2022–24 work plan provided more detailed targets but its ability to implement them depends on attracting international donor support, which has not been forthcoming.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	6	6	Chad has national standards in place, which were updated by Humanity & Inclusion (HI) in 2017. These are said to comply with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). FSD completed the revision of 17 national standards in 2021.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	3	3	The progress of Chad's survey and clearance is unclear as official data bears little relation to available operator data. Chad has reported no land release for 2022.
Average Score	4.4	4.4	Overall Programme Performance: POOR

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- National High Commission for Demining (HCND)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- HCND

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Humanity & Inclusion (HI)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

OTHER ACTORS

- Secours Catholique et Développement (SECADEV) (Victim Assistance)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Chad estimated its anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination amounted to 78.3km² at the end of 2022 (see Table 1).¹ The number of confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) remained unchanged but this total represented a small increase from 77.6km² recorded at the end of 2021 after a sharp drop from 111km² in 2019. An increase of 0.7km² in estimates of Ennedi province's CHAs accounted for most of the increase.

Table 1: AP mined area (at end 2022)²

Province	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
Borkou	9	13,491,891	8	2,271,699	15,763,900
Ennedi	12	18,908,366	2	418,024	19,326,390
Tibesti	51	24,191,026	38	19,049,801	43,240,827
Totals	72	56,591,283	48	21,739,524	78,331,117

¹ Email from Soultani Moussa, Director of Operations and Logistics, HCND, 30 May 2023; Article 7 Report (covering 2022), #4. Chad reported CHAs totalling 56,016,433m² and SHAs totalling 21,678,562m² but the sum of contamination recorded in each of the provinces exceeds the recorded totals.

² Email from Soultani Moussa, HCND, 30 May 2023.

More than half Chad's mine contamination is located in its northern province of Tibesti. Maps accompanying Chad's April 2019 Article 5 deadline extension show most mines in Tibesti as being around Aouzou, Bardai, south-west of Goubonne, Wour, and Zouzou but no survey or clearance has been conducted in the province for more than a decade due in part to insecurity.³ Mined areas in Borkou are

reported mainly around Faya and Yarda and in Ennedi West close to Fada. Chad also reported one mined area each in the southern province of Moyen Chari and western Chari Baguirmi.⁴ Chad reported that Ennedi West's Wadi Doum minefield alone covers 16.4km².⁵ Unlike other countries in the region, Chad said it does not have any contamination from mines of an improvised nature.⁶

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Chad's mine action programme is coordinated by the National High Commission for Demining (Haut Commissariat National de Déminage, HCND) which comes under the Ministry of Economy and Development Planning.⁷ The National Demining Centre (Centre National de Déminage, CND), which earlier conducted clearance operations, appears to have been dissolved. The headquarters is supported by four regional centres and two sub-centres.⁸

The HCND is responsible for preparing a national demining strategy and annual work plans, and proposing a budget to support their implementation.⁹ Chad's 2019 Article 5 deadline extension request observed that its mine action programme had lacked a strategic vision, operational planning, and effective coordination, weakening its credibility nationally and internationally.¹⁰ Operators say constant changes in coordination staff have hampered efficiency.¹¹ A June 2019 decree provided for re-organisation, resulting in HCND setting up four main divisions covering: Operations and

Logistics, Planning, Administrative and Financial Affairs and Human Resources.¹²

HCND, meanwhile, has undergone drastic downsizing in recent years. A government decree in July 2017 ordered the HCND to restructure and it reduced the number of personnel by more than half from 744 to 329. By the time Chad submitted its revised Article 5 extension request in 2019, the HCND reported having 320 staff, a number unchanged at the end of the year.¹³ At the end of 2022, it reported employing a total of 113 people.¹⁴

Government funding for mine action has been limited to payment of salaries for national staff. The HCND reported the government paid approximately US\$1.5 million for salaries in 2019¹⁵ and has committed to paying \$3.4 million for three years over 2022–24.¹⁶ The HCND received a small amount of government funding for operations in 2022¹⁷ but its director told the 2023 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Intersessional Meetings that State funding was insufficient.¹⁸

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of AP mine survey and clearance in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Gender and diversity are not priority issues for the HCND. Chad's 2019 Article 5 deadline extension request did not address the issue. The number of women employed by the HCND dropped from 9 among a total of 207 staff in 2019 to 7 among 113 staff at the end of 2022. They included a deputy director of administration, a personnel manager, an equipment officer, a training officer, an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) Level 3-qualified demining team leader and two secretaries.¹⁹

3 Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Article 4 deadline Extension Request, 30 May 2022, p. 3.

4 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2019, Annexes 5–9.

5 Presentation of Chad, Individualised Approach side event, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20 June 2022.

6 Email from Soultani Moussa, HCND, 30 May 2023.

7 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, April 2019, p. 9.

8 Ibid., p. 12. The four centres are Abéché (Ouaddaï), Bardai (Tibesti), Fada (West Ennedi), and Faya-Largeau (Borkou region); the two sub-centres are at Am-timan (Salamat) and Zouar (Tibesti).

9 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, April 2019, p. 10.

10 Ibid., p. 26.

11 Email from Seydou Gaye, HI, 3 June 2020.

12 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, April 2019, p. 10.

13 Ibid., p. 11; and emails from Soultani Moussa, HCND, 14 May 2019 and 27 April 2020.

14 Email from Soultani Moussa, HCND, 30 May 2023.

15 Emails from Soultani Moussa, HCND, 14 May 2019 and 27 April 2020.

16 Presentation of Chad, Individualised Approach side event, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20 June 2022.

17 Emails from Soultani Moussa, HCND, 30 May 2023; and Caroline Bruvier, MAG, 22 August 2023.

18 Statement to the MBT Intersessionals by Brahim Djibrine Brahim, Coordinator, HCND, 19 June 2023.

19 Email from Soultani Moussa, HCND, 30 May 2023.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

The HCND has an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database which underwent a substantial clean-up conducted by FSD between 2017 and 2021 under the European Union-funded PRODECO project. Poor maintenance and shortages of trained information technology (IT) staff meant data available had become unreliable because of lost reports and duplication. FSD's clean-up resulted in cancellation of large numbers of duplicate entries,²⁰ including eight areas deleted in 2021 alone.²¹ International support for the database ended with the conclusion of the PRODECO project.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Chad acknowledged in its 2019 Article 5 deadline extension request that its mine action programme had lacked a strategic vision, operational planning, and effective coordination.²² The request set out some very general goals and approximate timelines for survey and clearance, with a particular emphasis on Tibesti province (see Table 2) but it did not set out an annual work plan or guide operations. From 2017 to 2021, Chad's mine action consisted of the PRODECO programme, which never operated in Tibesti due to security considerations. A Plan of Action for 2020–24 stated it was not possible to set detailed plans in the absence of clear data about the location and extent of contamination.²³

Table 2: Planning for the Article 5 extension period 2020–25²⁴

Region	Activities	Areas to be addressed	Timeline
Borkou	NTS, TS, clearance	39	January 2020–September 2021
Chagri	NTS, TS, clearance	1	January 2020–September 2021
Ennedi	NTS, TS, clearance	7	July 2020–December 2024
Moyen-Chari	NTS, TS, clearance	1	January 2020–September 2021
Tibesti	NTS, TS, clearance	89	January 2020–December 2024

NTS = Non-technical survey TS = Technical survey

Chad unveiled a three-year work plan for 2022–24 at the Intersessional meetings in June 2022, but acknowledged at the time that it had no funding to implement it. The plan proposed to deploy nine “units”, three to each of the Borkou, Ennedi and Tibesti regions, to survey and clear priority minefields. The work plan set out detailed annual targets for tackling a total of 33 out of 72 CHAs and all 48 SHAs, including 22.6km² in 2022, 25.8km² in 2023, and 24.8km² in 2024 for a total of 73km².²⁵

The plan laid out a number of priorities: in West Ennedi it planned that teams would install permanent marking of the Wadi Doum minefield and clear all other mined areas; in Tibesti, operations would focus on the Zouarké area covering important communications routes for the towns of Aouzou and Bardai, the main population centres in the extreme north. The plan projected total costs of €15.6 million, of which €3.4 million would be provided by Chad's government for salaries and administrative costs and €12.2 million would be required from international donors to fund operating costs.²⁶ However, in a statement to the June 2023 Intersessionals, HCND's coordinator identified lack of donor enthusiasm as a challenge to its plans²⁷ and HCND has confirmed it had not attracted any additional funding in 2023.²⁸

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Chad introduced national mine action standards in April 2016. Humanity & Inclusion (HI) reported it conducted a review in 2016–17 and updated 11 standards²⁹ and FSD conducted a review of standards,³⁰ which it completed in November 2021 and in

20 Email from Moussa Soltani, HCND, 27 April 2020.
21 Email from Eugenio Balsini, Programme Manager, FSD, 28 April 2022.
22 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, April 2019, p. 30.
23 HCND, Provisional Plan of Action 2020–2024, July 2018, p. 24.
24 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 33–34.
25 Presentation of Chad, Individualised Approach side event, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20 June 2022.
26 Ibid.
27 Statement to the MBT Intersessionals by Brahim Djibrine Brahim, HCND, Geneva, 19 June 2023.
28 Email from Soultani Moussa, HCND, 30 May 2023.
29 Email from Julien Kempeneers, HI, 5 September 2017.
30 Email from Gérard Kerrien, MAG, 4 April 2022.

the course of which it revised 17 standards.³¹ HCND said in 2020 that it planned to update national standards for land release, supervision of organisations, and quality assurance, but gave no details and it was unclear if additional action was taken.³²

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Mine action operations between 2017 and 2021 were conducted under the auspices of the EU-funded PRODECO project. The conclusion of that project without agreement on a successor or alternative source of donor funding appeared to leave Chad with minimal active survey and clearance capacity in 2022.

The HCND reported it had 107 operations employees at the end of 2022, including 4 manual demining teams with 73 deminers. It also had 2 NTS teams with a total of 12 personnel, 2 EOD teams with 16 staff, and 2 mechanical teams.³³

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) has a weapons and ammunition management operation in Chad but demobilised its demining team in April 2022 and maintained only a community liaison/NTS team with seven liaison staff.³⁴

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

Chad's mine action programme continues to be crippled by a lack of funding or international donor interest since the end of the EU-funded PRODECO programme. The HCND reported cancelling a handful of small tasks in 2022 but in the absence of funding did not release any other mined area in 2022.

SURVEY IN 2022

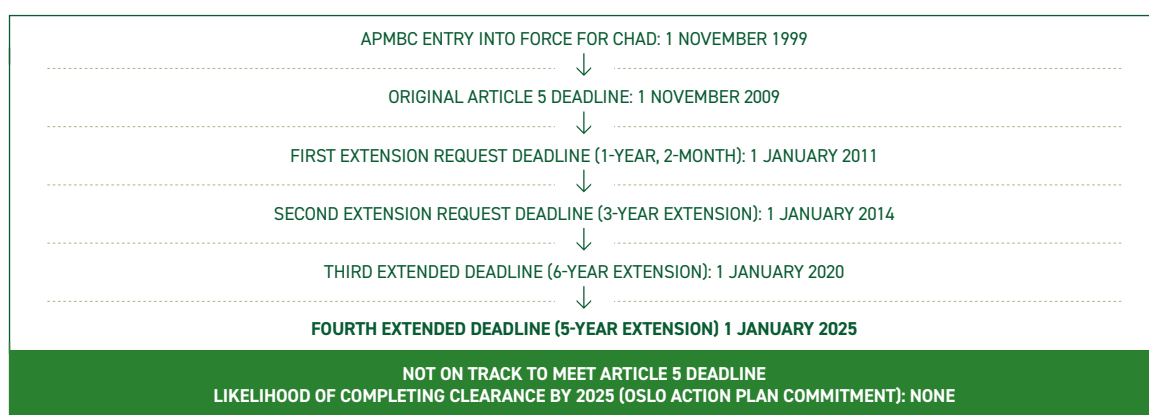
HCND reported that non-technical survey (NTS) led to cancellation of four tasks in Lake province totalling 1,005m².³⁵ Chad's Article 7 report identified five NTS tasks undertaken in 2022 covering a total area of 872m².³⁶

MAG conducted NTS in seven locations in 2022 identifying five spot tasks and two SHAs around roads in Moudeina and Adé in south-eastern Chad but HCND did not include these areas in its Article 7 report.³⁷

CLEARANCE IN 2022

HCND reported release of 42.7km² through clearance in its latest Article 7 Report but it was not clear when the work was conducted and the tasks appear to have involved battle area clearance (BAC) and no AP mines were destroyed.³⁸

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



31 Email from Eugenio Balsini, Programme Manager, FSD, 28 April 2022.

32 Email from Moussa Soltani, HCND, 27 April 2020.

33 Email from Soultani Moussa, HCND, 30 May 2023.

34 Email from Caroline Bruvier, Project Manager, Lake Chad Basin, MAG, 24 July 2023.

35 Email from Soultani Moussa, HCND, 30 May 2023.

36 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), #5.

37 Email from Caroline Bruvier, MAG, 24 July 2023.

38 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), #5.

Under Article 5 of the APMBC and in line with the fourth extension (for five years) of its clearance deadline, Chad is required to destroy all AP mines under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 January 2025.

The prospects of Chad achieving its Article 5 deadline in the near to medium term are remote. Chad has not received any international donor funds since the closure of the PRODECO project in 2022. MAG has submitted proposals for a number of BAC and risk education projects but was awaiting funding.³⁹ The HCND's coordinator told the APMBC Intersessional meetings in Geneva that Chad faced "enormous difficulties" that were primarily financial due to the lack of donor enthusiasm for supporting Chad and the insufficient funding allocated from the national budget.⁴⁰ The HCND three-year work plan for 2022–24⁴¹ aimed to tackle all Chad's identified SHAs by the end of 2024 but only 33 of its 72 CHAs. In the absence of funding, it has already missed the plan's 2022 target of releasing 22.6km².

Lack of data prevents a precise determination of what Chad was able to release in 2021 but a provisional tally of results since 2017, when Chad embarked on the €23 million PRODECO programme, shows it has cleared a total of 1.65km² of AP mined area in the last five years (see Table 4). In the process, operators destroyed 58 AP mines along with modest amounts of anti-vehicle (AV) mines, cluster munition remnants, and other unexploded ordnance.

Table 4: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	0
2021	1.45
2020	0.2
2019	*0.0
2018	0.0
Total	1.65

* A total of 423,934m² cleared in 2019 was AV mined area only.

39 Email from Caroline Bruvier, MAG, 24 July 2023.

40 Statement of Brahim Djibrine Brahim, HCND, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19 June 2023.

41 Presentation of Chad, Individualised Approach side event, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20 June 2022.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2025
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

10km²

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

1.84km²

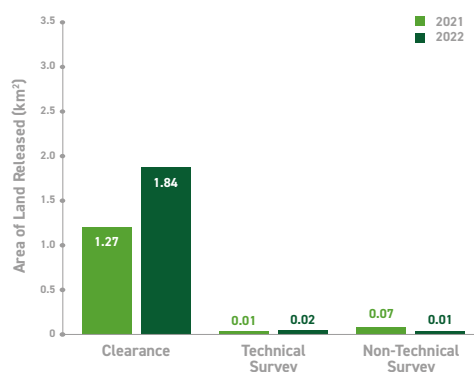
(OFFICIAL DATA)

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

322

(INCLUDING 43 DESTROYED
IN SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Clearance output increased in 2022 compared to the previous year despite the deteriorating security situation in some affected municipalities but Colombia will not meet its second extended clearance deadline under Article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) of the end of 2025. An updated and revised Operational Plan for Mine Action 2023–2025 was presented to the Article 5 Implementation Committee in May 2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Colombia should conduct a baseline survey of contamination as and where this is possible, while continuing to clean data in the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database.
- Quality management of operations should be targeted towards making operations more efficient rather than imposing unnecessary delays on operators.
- Colombia should consider changing its approach on security risk assessments from a military lens to a community lens and remove mine action as a pre-requisite before other peace, stabilisation, and developmental activities can proceed.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	6	5	The precise extent of anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination continues to remain unknown. While a nationwide baseline survey has yet to be conducted, Colombia is now presenting a more evidence-based estimate of remaining contamination that is at least partially based on survey. Non-technical survey (NTS) is taking place in accessible areas and Colombia has developed a baseline for its operations for 2023–25. Of the areas surveyed so far, Colombia estimates AP mined area at 3.82km ² as at end 2022. Insecurity remains an obstacle to access all suspected mined areas and mines are still being emplaced in some areas by non-State armed groups (NSAGs).
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	8	7	There is strong national ownership in Colombia with overall responsibility for the mine action programme sitting with the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP), and decision-making on demining is the responsibility of a body within the Ministry of Defence. Roles and responsibilities at a national level are generally clear. Mine action has become a key component in the peace process under a law adopted in 2022. Demining operators were invited to participate in the preparatory dialogues and the National Dialogue to provide inputs for the 2023–25 Operational Plan. In 2022 and the first half of 2023, Colombia elaborated the Operational Plan in compliance with the Article 5 deadline extension granted to Colombia. A resource mobilisation strategy developed in 2021 achieved increased international and national funding for mine action in 2022.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	7	7	Colombia has Gender Guidelines for Mine Action in place and gender is included within the framework of the new 2023–25 Plan. The needs of different groups are considered during community liaison with gender-balanced teams and gender and diversity provisions reflected in the land release technical standards. The Vice President of Colombia is an Afro-descended woman who presides over the Intersectorial National Mine Action Commission (CINAMAP) and women are two thirds of the staff dedicated to mine action in the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP) – AICMA Group. However, among deminers overall this figure drops to less than 3%. This proportion varies widely between operators, especially for the military demining groups: the Humanitarian Demining Brigade (BRDEH) has one woman deminer and two female EOD personnel.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	6	5	Improvements have been made to information management in Colombia following a review of the IMSMA database. However, Colombia continues to rely on “events” where more recent survey data is unavailable as the main indicator of contamination, even though these are beset with errors and are often cancelled or discarded once investigated. Discrepancies between operator data and figures from the national authority are also frequent, due to the fact that the OACP only reports on land release after completion of tasks and the External Monitoring Component (CEM) has certified the process. Meanwhile, delays in information processing continued to be reported by operators. Article 7 reports are submitted on a timely basis and the latest report also included information in relation to the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	6	6	Colombia has a new three-year operational plan through to 2025 for demining which includes land release targets per municipalities and areas and defined outputs for NTS, technical survey (TS) and clearance. Colombia has allocated all the tasks to operators that can be performed, but 124 municipalities remain inaccessible due to insecurity or contain areas where mine-laying may reoccur. The micro focus on “safe” areas within difficult-to-access municipalities continues to be implemented. Prioritisation and task allocation continue to be an issue within the mine action programme, with operators often locked into inaccessible tasks or deployed into new areas without consideration of their capacity.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	7	7	In 2020, Colombia developed a new set of 17 national mine action standards (NMAS) but the TS NMAS is yet to be used by almost all civilian demining operators given debates on how to operationalise the norm. Furthermore, there are challenges regarding cancellation through NTS, including potential differences in methodology between operators with respect to “cancelling” mined area after investigating IMSMA events versus only cancelling mined area previously identified through NTS and which is already recorded in the information management system. This further adds to ongoing information management challenges.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	7	6	Overall land release output rose in 2022, in particular for clearance. But Colombia is not on track to meet its extended Article 5 clearance deadline of end 2025. The authorities have consistently maintained that achieving mine-free status depends on access to all affected communities, which in turn demands peace.
Average Score	6.7	6.7	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP – AICMA Group)
- Intercollegiate Humanitarian Demining Body (Instancia Interinstitucional de Desminado Humanitario (IIDH))
- Intersectorial National Mine Action Commission (Comisión Intersectorial Nacional para la Acción contra las minas Antipersonal (CINAMAP))

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Humanitarian Demining Brigade (Brigada de Desminado Humanitario (BRDEH))
- Batallón de Desminado e Ingenieros Anfíbios (BDIAN)
- Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas (CCCM)
- Corporación HUMANICEMOS DH (HUMANICEMOS DH)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Danish Refugee Council's Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding Sector (DRC)
- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Humanity & Inclusion (HI)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- Organization of American States (OAS) Comprehensive Mine Action Program (AICMA Program – OAS)
- FSD
- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of anti-personnel (AP) mined area in Colombia remains unknown. At the end of 2022, survey had identified a total of almost 3.82km² of AP mined area, of which more than 1.9km² was in confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and nearly 1.9km² in suspected hazardous areas (SHAs). Contamination was spread across 25 departments and 226 municipalities (see Table 1).¹ The department of Sucre was declared mine free in 2022.² As at end 2022, 25 out of 32 departments and 226 of 1,122 municipalities in Colombia contain mined areas. One fifth of all municipalities have some sort of AP mine contamination.

Table 1: AP mined area by department (at end 2022)³

Department	Affected municipalities	CHA (m ²)	SHA (m ²)	Total area (m ²)	Municipalities with data on size
Antioquia	37	267,036.86	296,207.42	563,244.28	16
Arauca	7	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Bolívar	14	6,647.00	58,488.00	65,135.00	2
Boyacá	4	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Caldas	4	35,234.00	90,362.00	125,596.00	3
Caquetá	11	256,872.00	541,081.00	797,953.00	8
Casanare	4	3.79	0.00	3.79	2
Cauca	18	73,231.00	7,296.00	80,527.00	4
Cesar	8	75,840.00	7,503.00	83,343.00	2
Choco	27	0.00	3,173.00	3,173.00	1
Cordoba	4	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Guainía	1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Guaviare	4	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Huila	2	225,463.00	133,210.00	358,673.00	2
La Guajira	5	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Meta	11	791,749.11	68,356.52	860,105.63	8
Nariño	21	0.00	2,470.00	2,470.00	2
Norte de Santander	17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0

1 Email from Mariany Monroy Torres, Coordinator, Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – Integrated Action on Anti-Personnel Mines (OACP – AICMA Group), 31 July 2023.

2 "Sucre declarado Libre de Sospecha de contaminación con Minas Antipersonal", Press release, 5 September 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/47rxD4J>.

3 Telephone interview with Mariany Monroy Torres, and Maicol Velásquez, OACP – AICMA Group, 30 July 2023; and email from Mariany Monroy Torres, OACP – AICMA Group, 31 July 2023. The data provided by the OACP – AICMA Group are more accurate and updated than those provided in the Article 7 Report for 2022.

Table 1 Continued

Department	Affected municipalities	CHA (m ²)	SHA (m ²)	Total area (m ²)	Municipalities with data on size
Putumayo	7	56,684.51	179,314.66	235,999.17	6
Risaralda	2	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Santander	4	25,596.00	156,304.00	181,900.00	4
Tolima	4	61,061.00	278,789.00	339,850.00	3
Valle del Cauca	8	71,913.00	53,913.00	125,826.00	3
Vaupés	1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Vichada	1	186.43	653.89	840.32	1
Totals	226	1,947,517.70	1,877,121.49	3,824,639.19	67

While a nationwide baseline survey has yet to be conducted in Colombia, discussions on the possibility restarted in 2022 but did not progress.⁴ The Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP), the OAS – AICMA Program, The HALO Trust (HALO), Humanity & Inclusion (HI), and FSD all believe that the dynamics of the Colombian conflict and the size of the country effectively preclude the possibility of a nationwide baseline survey.⁵ In addition, the new national mine action standard (NMAS) on land release, the increase in operator capacity for non-technical survey (NTS), and the improved security conditions in some mine-affected municipalities as a result of the Final Peace Agreement with the FARC-EP in 2016, make it possible to determine the extent of contamination more accurately based on evidence from the communities themselves.⁶ Nevertheless, one of the primary sources of information for tasking of demining operators continues to be the “events” in the IMSMA database, which continue to be a generally unreliable source.⁷ For the AICMA Program – OAS, the first step on clarifying the contamination should be a desktop evaluation of existing areas in the database. Newly recorded areas identified by operators while conducting NTS are more accurate and can be included as mined areas. But significant cancellation of areas recorded earlier, especially unconfirmed “events”, is likely.⁸

The Operational Plan 2023–2025 presents the new baseline on suspected contamination and operational projections for

the three years of the plan.⁹ The Plan was approved by the Intersectoral National Mine Action Commission (CINAMAP) on 4 May 2023. The baseline uses a range of data including statistical analysis of demining operations concluded and certified by the External Monitoring Component (CEM) between 2016 and December 2022; information provided by the demining operators during the National Dialogues on Mine Action as a contribution to the Total Peace Policy; data from the Armed Forces and the Police gathered while conducting military operations; and finally community and local authorities reports.¹⁰ During 2022, new mined areas were recorded by the Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines (CCCM), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), HALO, Humanity & Inclusion (HI), and Corporación HUMANICEMOS DH (HUMANICEMOS DH).¹¹

In previous years, and as part of the Final Peace Agreement (2016) with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), a tripartite mechanism (OACP/FARC-EP/United Nations Verification Mission (UNVMC), with technical support from the United Nations Mine Action Service – UNMAS) was established with a view to collecting all available information on areas that may have been contaminated by explosive ordnance in Colombia by former FARC-EP combatants. The data started to be collected in 2021.¹² UNMAS acted as technical support to the UNVMC,¹³ and continued to do throughout 2022 and

4 Telephone interview with Mariany Monroy Torres, OACP – AICMA Group, 5 August 2023; and Tammy Hall, General Coordinator, Mine Action Program, Department of Public Security, Organization of American States (OAS), 5 August 2023; and email from Arturo Bureo, Operations Manager, HI, 30 June 2022.

5 Emails from Aderito Ismael, Demining Operations Manager /Senior Project Manager on Land Release & EOD, Humanity & Inclusion, 22 August 2023; Angela de Santis, Country Director, FSD Colombia, 16 August 2023; Oliver Ford, Programme Manager Colombia, HALO, 16 June 2023; telephone interview with Mariany Monroy Torres, OACP – AICMA Group, 18 June 2023; and Tammy Hall, OAS, 13 March 2023; and emails from Yessika Morales, Coordinator, OACP – AICMA Group, 20 July 2022; Mariany Monroy Torres, and Diana Marisol Peñalosa, OACP – AICMA Group, 30 September 2022; Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 20 September 2022; and Angela de Santis, FSD Colombia, 13 September 2022.

6 Emails from Yessika Morales, OACP – AICMA Group, 20 July 2022; Diana Marisol Peñalosa, OACP – AICMA Group, 23 and 26 August 2022; and Mariany Monroy Torres and Diana Marisol Peñalosa, OACP – AICMA Group, 30 September 2022.

7 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023 and Tom Griffiths, HALO Regional Director for Latin America, 20 June 2022; Arturo Bureo, HI, 7 May 2021 and 30 June 2022; and Maria Sanz, Resources Mobilisation Manager, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

8 Telephone interview Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 9 April 2023; email Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 20 September 2022.

9 Operational Plan for Mine Action 2023 – 2025, 8 May 2023, pp. 15 – 18.

10 Ibid. pp. 16–18; email from Mariany Monroy Torres, OACP – AICMA Group, 22 April 2023; OACP – AICMA Group Presentations, Roundtable on Cooperation and Donors Assistance, 11 May 2023.

11 Emails from Francisco Moreno, Projects and Monitoring Director, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, Programmes Manager, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August and 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

12 Email from Yessika Morales, OACP – AICMA Group, 20 July 2022.

13 UNMAS Colombia Newsletter, March 2021.

into 2023, developing in the process, a methodology in IMSMA forms with the former combatants who laid the mines.¹⁴ However, six years after the signature of the peace accord Colombia has still to implement a fully fledged project to support the gathering of data from former combatants, which could result in a significant loss of information and accuracy.¹⁵

All the mines remaining in Colombia are said to have been laid by non-state armed groups (NSAGs) and all are of an improvised nature. According to HALO, mined areas in Colombia are low-density, nuisance minefields.¹⁶ Mines were planted in isolated rural areas to protect strategic positions; often coca cultivations and illegal gold mining sites. In other cases, they were laid by the side of communal paths, which were used also by the military, as well as around hamlets, schools, on hills, and in riverbanks. The depth to which the mines were laid can vary between 10 and 13 centimetres.¹⁷ HUMANICEMOS DH has reported in their area of operations in Caquetá, that mined areas coincided with NSAG camps.¹⁸

HUMANICEMOS DH also said that there is no pattern to mine laying in Colombia, and further that the form of use varies in each department.¹⁹ The CCCM has found that the patterns of minelaying correspond to illicit cultivation areas as well as areas where the military stop and rest.²⁰ The intended victims were the military or paramilitaries.²¹

NEW CONTAMINATION

New minelaying by NSAGs continues to occur in Colombia. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in its Annual Report for 2023, refers to more improvised AP mines being used, with armed groups seeking greater territorial and social control.²² In 2022, the most affected departments were Antioquia, Arauca, Chocó, Meta, Nariño, and Norte de Santander.²³ According to UNMAS, new AP mines are laid to control the transit of communities and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has recorded more displacements and confinements as a result.²⁴

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

A new national government took office on 7 August 2022 with the goal of achieving “Total Peace” in Colombia and a new High Commissioner for Peace came into office as well as a new AICMA – Group Coordinator. Mine Action was included as a key element of the new public policy of Total Peace, reflected in Law 2272 of 4 November 2022.²⁵ On 30 December 2022, Presidential Decree 2647 modified the structure of the Administrative Department of the Presidential Office and clarified the structure and functions of the OACP, making it responsible for elaborating a national mine action strategy and concluding national standards.²⁶ The new National Development Plan 2022–2026, highlights the role of mine action and calls for gender and diversity to be incorporated in humanitarian demining.²⁷

In February 2019, Descontamina Colombia was ostensibly made Colombia’s national mine action authority by presidential decree and reallocated to the OACP. It became Grupo AICMA (Integrated Action on Anti-Personnel Mines), one of three working groups of the OACP. The Instancia Interinstitucional de Desminado Humanitario (IIDH: Intercollegiate Body for Humanitarian Demining) was

created in 2011, bringing together representatives from the Ministry of National Defence, the General Inspectorate of the Military Forces, and OACP – AICMA Group. It is responsible for recommending or suspending the certification of humanitarian demining organisations to the Ministry of National Defence as well as for prioritising, at national level, areas, zones, and municipalities to be demined and assigning specific demining tasks. Responsibility for drafting and adopting national mine action standards, their dissemination, implementation, and compliance was reassigned to the OACP under Presidential Decree 1784 of 2019.²⁸ The OACP – AICMA Group capacity continued to be reduced in 2022 and 2023.

Operators have reported a largely enabling environment for mine action in Colombia, although the approval and decision-making process can be slow. For some operators the change of government and pivot towards the Total Peace Policy is considered a key milestone for addressing mine contamination as it directs efforts towards peace negotiations with all NSAGs. This, it is hoped, will expand the humanitarian space available for demining.²⁹ In general, operators noted that in the second half of 2022 there was

14 Email from Pablo Parra, Chief Mine Action Programme, UNMAS Colombia, 22 August 2023; UNMAS Colombia Newsletter, May 2023.

15 Email from Pablo Parra, UNMAS Colombia, 22 August 2023.

16 Email from Tom Griffiths, HALO Latin America, 20 June 2022.

17 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form E.

18 Emails from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023 and 19 July 2022.

19 Emails from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 September 2023 and 8 June 2023.

20 Email from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023 and 15 June 2022.

21 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO, 6 August 2020; and Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D.

22 ICRC, Annual Report 2022, p. 232.

23 ICRC, “Humanitarian Challenges 2023 Colombia”, pp. 6–7; and UNMAS Colombia Newsletter, August–September 2022.

24 Email from Pablo Parra, UNMAS Colombia, 22 August 2023.

25 Law 2272, Article 16, 4 November 2022.

26 Law 1421, 21 December 2010.

27 National Development Plan 2022–2026, Law 2294, 19 May 2023.

28 OACP – AICMA Group “Instancia Interinstitucional de Desminado Humanitario – IIDH”, undated, last accessed 19 July 2022.

29 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

increased consultation between the OACP – AICMA Group and civilian demining organisations. Nonetheless, decisions on demining continue to be taken almost entirely by the Group and the IIDH.³⁰ HUMANICEMOS DH has raised the issue of a lack of balance in the composition of the IIDH: two military organisations and one organisation from the civilian part of the Government and no representation from civilian demining operators.³¹ Moreover, operators have been confronted with more bureaucracy in seeking to obtain visas for international staff and tax exemptions.³²

In 2022, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) continued to support the OACP – AICMA Group, including on linking mine action with broader agendas and national dialogues.³³ In 2022, a study on “Mine Action’s contributions to sustainable development” was published.³⁴ The findings underlined the importance of mine action for economic growth, social cohesion, environmental protection, confidence-building, and peace efforts. The study provided evidence of the “transformative and multidimensional role of comprehensive mine action in Colombia, identifying direct contributions to 16 Sustainable Development Goals and at least 83 of their associated targets”.³⁵ But a proposed study on the effect of ageing on improvised AP mines, particularly pertinent to the Colombian context due to the large proportion of non-functioning mines found, was shelved. This was, according to the GICHD, the result of a lack of sufficient data and the ban on taking samples from the ageing mines out of Colombia.³⁶ The GICHD provided training on IMSMA and inclusion and gender equality.³⁷

The Organisation of American States (OAS) provides technical and capacity support to the OACP – AICMA Group for mine action through its AICMA Program – OAS, in particular for humanitarian demining. It is now responsible for external monitoring of all demining in Colombia (CEM).³⁸ In previous years, UNMAS conducted CEM of HUMANICEMOS DH, but since April 2023, this is the task of the OAS.³⁹ The OAS, also assesses demining personnel for accreditation, with additional support provided by the Group of Interamerican

Monitors (GMI) of the Interamerican Defense Board.⁴⁰ In addition, the AICMA Program – OAS monitors compliance with the NMAS and operator standard operating procedures (SOPs); and inspects released land before handover to local authorities and communities.⁴¹

FSD has provided advice through technical experts to the national mine action authority (NMAA) in areas such as explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), use of mine detection dogs (MDDs), mechanical demining, information management, environmental protection, operational efficiency, and hazard cartography. During 2022, FSD concentrated its support to the OACP – AICMA Group on refinement of the land release standards.⁴²

In 2022, UNMAS, working with the OACP – AICMA Group at the Tolemaida Base, delivered the first EOD Level II training,⁴³ certifying 21 deminers at the end of the course of whom seven were women. It also provided technical support to local authorities in preparing 13 regional annual mine action plans and 39 contingency plans. UNMAS enhanced the methodology of Post-Clearance Impact Assessment (PCIA) by incorporating “new artificial intelligence models to monitor changes in land use, such as the emergence of buildings and roads, changes in vegetation cover and installation of new human settlements”. In support of the UNVMC, UNMAS produced more than 200 reports on explosive ordnance contamination based on information from former FARC-EP combatants.⁴⁴

Initially, Colombia had estimated the total cost of the mine action programme for 2020–25 would be almost US\$250 million, of which the government would fund 30% and the remainder would come from the international community.⁴⁵ Of this, the projected cost of demining activities was estimated at \$183 million, of which the government would fund \$55 million.⁴⁶ For demining, Colombia was seeking almost \$128 million from the international community to build the quality management capacity within the national authority, to fund civilian operators, and for equipment servicing and replacement for the military.⁴⁷

30 Emails from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 September 2023; Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

31 Email from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 September 2023.

32 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

33 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D, p. 61; GICHD, *Annual Report 2022*, June 2023, p. 16.

34 GICHD, *Annual Report 2022*, June 2023, p. 16.

35 Email from Angela Hoyos Iborra, Advisor, GICHD, 22 August 2023.

36 Ibid.

37 Operational Plan for Mine Action 2023–2025, 8 May 2023, pp. 103–04.

38 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form H, p. 96; Operational Plan for Mine Action 2023 – 2025, 8 May 2023, p. 20; and email from Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 21 July 2022.

39 Telephone interviews Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 13 March 2023 and 18 May 2023; and emails from Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 14 April 2023, and 21 July 2022; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

40 Email from Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 31 August 2023; “Grupo de Monitores Interamericanos de Desminado Humanitario en Colombia Apoya Certificación para Operaciones Desminado Humanitario”, Inter American Defense Board, 26 April 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3qs896K>; and “Evaluación de nuevos operadores en el manejo, identificación y destrucción de artefactos explosivos (EOD)”, at: <https://bit.ly/3dzzFIP>.

41 “Programa de Acción Integral contra Minas Antipersonal de la OEA (AICMA – OEA)”, at: <https://bit.ly/3RDT3TD>; Informe a la Comisión de Seguridad Hemisférica, Programa de Acción Integral contra Minas Antipersonal de la OEA en Colombia, 30 March 2023; AICMA – OEA Infographic 2022; Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form H, p. 104; and email from Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 20 September 2022.

42 FSD, *Annual Report 2022*, p. 17; and email from Angela de Santis, FSD, 13 September 2022.

43 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form H, p. 104.

44 UNMAS Annual Report 2022, pp. 47–49; UNMAS Colombia Newsletter, May 2023.

45 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 86–87.

46 Ibid, p. 96.

47 Ibid.; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form H, pp. 94–95.

During 2022, the allocated funds from the national budget to the OACP – AICMA Group amounted to COP\$4.4 billion (some US\$915,000) all of which went to risk education and victim assistance. The National Army's Humanitarian Demining Brigade (BRDEH) was allocated COP\$29.5 billion (some US\$6.13 million) and the Batallón de Desminado e Ingenieros Anfibios (BDIAN) (almost US\$1.23 million). Colombia says that it supported mine action operators in raising approximately US\$39 million from donors during the year.⁴⁸

Colombia does not have a platform in place which brings all stakeholders together to discuss the strengths and challenges of Article 5 implementation as recommended by the APMB Committee on Article 5 Implementation.⁴⁹ The Swiss Embassy in Colombia has promoted a forum to bring together the OACP – AICMA Group, operators, and other partners from the mine action sector with the

aim of eventually bringing in other donors and national entities. HALO continues to advocate for a more effective strategic-level dialogue between the OACP – AICMA Group and its partners.⁵⁰ UNMAS has been advocating for a coordination platform led by the NMAA. The UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Peace Building (MPTF), which has reintroduced mine action as a result of UNMAS's advocacy, has become a "proxy" for the coordination platform where the Colombian Government, the UN, donors, and civil society meet and discuss projects.⁵¹ A National Dialogue on Mine Action as a contribution to the Total Peace Policy was convened on 6–7 December 2022 in Bogota, bringing together all stakeholders in country to discuss development of the next national work plan. Mine Action Review gave a virtual presentation its key recommendations for the national mine action programme.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Colombia has not produced a specific NMA for environmental management although Presidential Decree 1195 of 2017 outlines mitigation and correction measures that must be applied by operators when demining in national parks and other areas of ecological value. During 2022, there were no further developments but according to the OACP – AICMA Group there have been inconsistencies in the application of Decree 1195 at regional and local levels. In response, the OACP – AICMA Group with support from FSD created a set of tools that clarify the obligations of demining operators and the process they must follow. The roles and responsibilities at local, regional, and national levels of environmental authorities have also been clarified.⁵²

All the civilian operators have SOPs in line with Decree 1195 of 2017, which they apply especially when working in environmentally protected areas.⁵³ The CCCM's policy on environment for within the organisation and while implementing operations is committed to "Do No Harm with Action" ("Acción sin daño") and focuses on reducing risk and/

or impact in relation to environmental degradation, climate change, and natural disasters. An SOP on the environment provides instruction and guidance for all demining phases, camps, medical support, and EOD.⁵⁴

DRC has been seeking to mitigate the impact of demining in local communities for several years. Deminer camps all functioned with 100% energy generated from solar panels during 2021.⁵⁵ In addition, the organisation's environmental management SOP reflects best practices for environmental management in land release operations, including the possible effects on soil, water, air, and flora and fauna.⁵⁶ Small-scale mitigation measures are conducted, such as reforestation with 250 native tree species after demining operations in an indigenous reserve in San José del Fragua, Caquetá, in June 2023. For DRC, "it was one of the most meaningful experiences in this regard since we merge both our environmental commitment and our ethnic and diversity responsibility with the communities."⁵⁷

48 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form A, pp. 17–18.

49 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations", Intersessional Meetings, 19–21 June 2023, p. 4.

50 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; and Tom Griffiths, HALO Latin America, 20 June 2022.

51 Email from Pablo Parra, UNMAS Colombia, 22 August 2023.

52 Email from Yessika Morales, OACP – AICMA Group, 20 July 2022.

53 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August and 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

54 Email from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023.

55 Paula Cadena, DRC, 16 August 2023.

56 Email from Paula Ximena Cadena, Programme Officer, DRC Colombia, 23 September 2022.

57 Email from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023.

HALO's management system includes SOPs on interaction with the environment during clearance, from waste management in camps and location bases, to minimising cutting trees over 10cm in diameter and only cutting if it blocks an evacuation route. HALO includes in its SOPs guidance on the location of septic tanks and mitigation measures on use of plastics and action to reduce the risk of fires, explosions, or pipeline spills. In 2022, HALO developed

an environmental marker pilot to assess environmental pre-conditions in its assigned municipalities.⁵⁸

HI seeks to protect the environment in natural parks, in several of which HI has had demining operations. This includes the planting of trees in coordination with the local communities and environmental authorities. Budget for this is systematically incorporated in all demining operations.⁵⁹

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Colombia's diversity and gender policy is included in the Operations Plan 2023–2025, in line with the National Development Plan 2022–2026, which refers to the essential need to transform the gender relationships embedded in cultural, economic, and social structures so as to overcome gender-based violence, discrimination, and inequality. As highlighted by HI, the new NMAS on Land release (NTC 6469) recognises that different groups of populations call for different attention and protection needs. Those include responses related to gender, ethnic, age, disability condition, socio-economic condition, and cultural identities, in order to ensure that mine action interventions promote equal opportunities and respect for their differences.⁶⁰ During 2022, the so-called "Differential Approach" was mainstreamed towards different ethnic minority, gender, age, and disabilities groups, including AP mine victims, in demining and risk education operations and victim assistance programmes.⁶¹

In the seven humanitarian demining operators, there are a total of 817 NTS personnel of whom 17% (143) are women, while of the 3,633 deminers, 125 are women and of the 208 EOD personnel, 20 are women. The Government

recognises the challenges ahead in order to increase the participation of women in the sector and they are committed to the empowerment of women as agents of change and for sustainable development.⁶²

In the case of the military operators, the BRDEH has the highest number of demining personnel which includes 460 men and 1 woman in the NTS teams, 3,059 male deminers and 1 woman, and 80 EOD men and 2 women. This is in addition to 3 women and 286 men support in the support and administrative staff. The BDIAN on the other hand has no women in their operations personnel nor in its administrative and support section.⁶³

Data are disaggregated by gender, age, and ethnicity. The CCCM, DRC, HALO, HI, and HUMANICEMOS DH all reported consulting women and children as well as men during NTS and community liaison and employing women in their NTS teams and or demining teams.⁶⁴

The five civilian operators have reported 1,256 staff members of whom 518 are women.⁶⁵ For details see Table 2.

Table 2: Gender composition of mine action operators⁶⁶

Operator	Total staff	Total women	Total staff in managerial/supervisory positions	Total women in managerial/supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Total women in operational positions
CCCM	394	181	81	36	313	131
DRC*	186	70	17	6	67	22
HALO	437	167	82	29	355	139
HI	136	66	35	18	101	48
HUMANICEMOS DH	103	34	13	7	66	21
Totals	1,256	518	228	96	902	361

* Data cover 1 January 2022 to 23 May 2023.

58 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023.

59 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

60 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 30 June 2022.

61 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D, pp. 65.

62 Presentation of Colombia, Intersessional Meetings, 19 June 2023, pp. 2–3.

63 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form A, Table 3, p. 22.

64 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, Programmes Manager, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August and 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

65 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June and 9 September 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August and 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

66 Ibid.

Colombia has a significant indigenous and ethnic minority group population (13.7% of the total population), who are afforded constitutional protections and therefore require a specific approach during demining. Indigenous communities are said to have been disproportionately affected by AP mines. According to UNMAS, almost three (28.5%) of every 10 victims registered in 2021 were indigenous or Afro descended persons.⁶⁷ The OACP and the demining operators have developed annexes to the NMAS on NTS and territorial management in order to facilitate negotiation with ethnic communities on demining interventions.⁶⁸ The NTS Technical Note has a specific methodology for interacting and negotiating with ethnic communities, so as to guarantee direct participation throughout the land release cycle.⁶⁹

Operators reported that in 2022 they continued to request special permissions to gain access to indigenous reserves and to work closely with concerned communities to build trust by employing community liaison officers, deminers, and NTS personnel directly from those communities. Operators involve local ethnic minority communities in the liaison process ahead of any operations, working with them to map contamination and prioritise tasks.⁷⁰ The involvement of local indigenous communities gives operators an understanding of the preparations that must take place before survey or clearance can be conducted on sacred land.⁷¹

The CCCM has indicators for showing the evolution of gender and diversity mainstreaming within the organisation, including a minimum of 30% women in operational teams. The CCCM is looking at other indicators to include such as on ethnicity and disability. There is currently no mechanism that would allow identification of the needs of women, girls, and boys directly within the national process of task prioritisation.⁷²

DRC has highlighted that during 2022 the following managerial and supervisory positions were held by women:

head of programme, programme coordinator, EORE coordinator, country director, and NTS team leaders. DRC has also started to implement its age, gender, and diversity approach strategy, applied to the entire mine action project cycle.⁷³

HALO reported that all internal information management records and indicators are set up by gender, age, and ethnic status (if relevant), and that projects always include disaggregated data on beneficiaries according to gender and diversity policies and guidelines. These are included in the different phases of the project cycles, including needs assessments, planning and monitoring. HALO stated that their gender implementation policies have been mainstreamed across recruitment policies, training plans, the code of conduct, and safeguarding practices. HALO promotes compliance while employees are required to agree to uphold them as part of their employment contracts.⁷⁴

HI's institutional policy on Disability, Gender and Age requires programmes to assess their degree of consideration concerning sensitivity and transformational programming for the three categories. In Colombia, ethnicity is also included. It is generally necessary to choose a representative for each ethnic group, no matter how large the area of intervention. If a given territory has Afro, indigenous, and farmer communities, a person will have to be contracted from each group for community liaison.⁷⁵ HI has noted that the standard NTS forms do not require collection of data on disability, which is a significant drawback.⁷⁶

HUMANICEMOS DH surpassed its initial target of hiring 31 women into the organisation in early 2023 and obtained a national seal of approval on non-discrimination for their best practices concerning gender, diversity, and inclusion.⁷⁷ Its staff comes from different regions of the country and identify themselves belonging to diverse ethnic groups.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Colombia's national information management system is managed by the OACP – AICMA Group. The Information Management System uses both Periferico, where weekly reports are uploaded using Survey123, and IMSMA (once the uploaded through Periferico have been verified and validated). Once data on each individual task have been uploaded to IMSMA they are released to the general public.

As at end 2022, there were 278 licensed active users for the Periferico and 28 licensed active users for IMSMA.⁷⁸

During 2022, improvements continued to be made to the information management system, mainly on filtering data and clearing duplications on the database.⁷⁹ Meetings between individual operators and the OACP – AICMA Group are held periodically to address data uploading delays, which can

⁶⁷ UNMAS Colombia Newsletter, February 2022.

⁶⁸ Email from Yessika Morales, OACP – AICMA Group, 20 July 2022.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023 and 15 June 2022; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023 and Caterina Weller, DRC, 9 June 2022; Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Tom Griffiths, HALO Latin America, 20 June 2022; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023 and 30 June 2022; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023 and 19 July 2022.

⁷¹ Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 July 2020.

⁷² Email from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023.

⁷³ Email from Paula Cadena, DRC, 16 August 2023.

⁷⁴ Email from Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023.

⁷⁵ Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ The Instituto Colombiano de Normas Técnicas (ICONTEC) is affiliated to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

⁷⁸ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form A, p. 29; telephone interview Mariany Monroy, OACP – AICMA Group, 11 August 2023.

⁷⁹ Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

be prolonged.⁸⁰ HALO has found that delays have led to material inaccuracies in the publicly available information.⁸¹ Other operators agree there are often delays between data processing, updating of the database, and publishing after they have fed information into the Periferico system.

According to DRC, the information management system is accurate enough to cover mine action operations at the administrative level of municipalities (1:100,000) but not to the hazardous areas scale (usually ranging between 1:500 to 1:200).⁸²

Article 7 reports are submitted on a timely basis and Colombia's latest Article 7 report also includes detailed information on its implementation of the Oslo Action Plan. There are, however, large disparities in the clearance data recorded in the reports compared to the data recorded on the humanitarian demining dashboard that is regularly updated by the OACP – AICMA Group. In 2022, inconsistencies in reporting continued, including with respect to the extent of contamination and land release in Colombia's Article 7 report covering 2022 between narrative, summary tables, and Annexes which contain the official data. This may be an internal communication problem within the OACP – AICMA Group.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Colombia's goal for 2023–2025 is to declare 102 municipalities free from suspicion of AP mines. These are the municipalities currently being addressed by demining operations.⁸³

The IIDH continued assigning demining tasks in 2022, which can correspond to a whole municipality, or a zone or a sector within a municipality. Operators note, though, that a key issue in tasking is the Body's assessment of security. A total of 124 municipalities have not been assigned for intervention so far, even though these have the highest humanitarian need and

micro focalisation could be used to identify zones or sectors where demining could take place safely.⁸⁴ HUMANICEMOS DH has called for security determinations to accord greater weight to the information that the affected communities themselves provide.⁸⁵

HALO recognises that Colombia continues to treat all areas as mined until proven otherwise. This means that developmental action is blocked until mine action has taken place, which in turn is obstructed by strict security protocols.⁸⁶

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

The set of 17 NMAS (NTC)⁸⁷ were formally issued in 2021 but have not yet been fully operationalised, in particular due to debate on the technical survey (TS) standard. The key issue is whether areas reduced through TS can be considered free of contamination, as improvised AP mine laying does not follow any kind of pattern. The absence of patterns in Colombia's mined areas is agreed upon by all operators.⁸⁸ In 2022, the AICMA Program – OAS invited demining stakeholders to discuss TS techniques and compare other experiences with the Colombian context. But the issue remains unresolved.⁸⁹ DRC wants the criteria that will be taken into account to be detailed in the discussion of TS techniques.⁹⁰ For HI it is not clear how the OACP – AICMA Group can accept responsibility

for released land after handover where only a part of the initially identified suspicion has been physically cleared.⁹¹

HALO also notes the concern that more than 60% of all CHAs/SHAs cleared in Colombia do not contain any mines. By granting NTS teams greater flexibility in assessing and identifying hazardous areas, HALO believes it may be possible to enhance the efficiency and success rate of demining. Other topics that could usefully be considered are a greater focus on TS and more flexible clearance approaches that adapt to the actual threat posed by devices as they rapidly degrade over time and their lethality decreases.⁹²

80 Email from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023.

81 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023.

82 Email from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023.

83 Presentation of Colombia, Intersessional Meetings, 19 June 2023, p. 3.

84 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

85 Email from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

86 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO 16 June 2023.

87 The Normas Técnicas Colombianas (NTC) are equated to NMAS, but with a higher level of obligation.

88 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

89 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

90 Email from Paula Cadena, DRC, 16 August 2023.

91 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

92 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO 16 June 2023.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Colombia has a large operational clearance capacity at its disposal with a total of seven operators accredited to carry out demining: two military operators and five non-governmental organisations (NGOs). By far the largest clearance operator is the National Army's Humanitarian Demining Brigade (BRDEH). BDIAN (previously known as the Marine Corps Explosives and Demining Association, AEDIM), a smaller military operator, conducts clearance and destruction of AP mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) in areas under the jurisdiction of the National Navy. Demining is also conducted by civilian organisations: two national NGOs the CCCM and HUMANICEMOS DH; and three international NGOs: DRC, HALO, and HI.

A successful experience arising from the 2016 Peace Agreement with the FARC-EP is the national Demining and Risk Education organisation HUMANICEMOS DH. Comprising personnel that signed the 2016 Peace Agreement with the government, and who are in the process of being reintegrated economically and socially into civilian life, HUMANICEMOS

DH was first accredited in August 2017.⁹³ In November 2020, HUMANICEMOS DH began survey and clearance operations in La Montañita, Caquetá.⁹⁴ UNMAS was designated the agency responsible for external quality management and monitoring of HUMANICEMOS DH, as in previous years US funding policies did not allow the OAS to work directly with HUMANICEMOS DH.⁹⁵ The OAS CEM component took over this function in April 2023 in order to integrate the organisation into overall national monitoring framework, using funding from the Swiss Government for one year.⁹⁶ HUMANICEMOS DH said the long delay in having the CEM component certifying their demining operations resulted in planning problems for them.⁹⁷

In general, civilian operators reported increasing survey personnel during 2022 with 293 accredited staff in comparison to 222 in 2021 (see Table 3). Civilian operators are moving towards using multitask teams (MTTs), which can conduct both NTS and clearance.

Table 3: Survey capacities in 2022 (as reported by demining operators)⁹⁸

Operator	NTS teams	NTS personnel	TS teams	TS personnel	Comments
CCCM	31	151	0	0	Average for the year 2022, as teams multitask between NTS and clearance.*
DRC	10	36	*	*	TS teams also conduct full clearance (see Table 4 on clearance capacities). Data for 1 January to 2 December 2022.
HALO	13 (monthly average)	46 (monthly average)	0	0	
HI	9	36	0	0	Average personnel per month including team leaders (in HI they actively conduct NTS).
HUMANICEMOS DH	5	24	0	0	Staff are not trained for TS.
Totals	68	293	0	0	

* See the narrative below on clearance capacities.

DRC reported that throughout 2022, there was a significant increase in the programme's operational capacity in Colombia, going from 117 to 176 staff. This growth was particularly evident in NTS (from 22 to 35).

In 2022, the 5 accredited NGOs: CCCM, DRC, HI, HALO and HUMANICEMOS DH had their respective accreditations renewed.⁹⁹

⁹³ Email from Maria Sans, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 September 2023.

⁹⁴ Emails from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023 and 19 July 2022; and HUMANICEMOS DH, *Boletín Externo No. 2*, 14 February 2023.

⁹⁵ Email from Pablo Parra, UNMAS Colombia, 22 August 2023.

⁹⁶ Email from Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 31 August 2023. UNMAS Facebook post, 1 June 2020, at: <http://bit.ly/3f3UI1Z>.

⁹⁷ Emails from Matia Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June and 8 September 2023.

⁹⁸ Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

⁹⁹ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D, p. 58.

Operators, consider that the annual accreditation renewals requirement (despite several years of successful interventions) hinders the fluidity of land release operations. Similarly, waiting times for the evaluation and accreditation of trained personnel tend to be excessive (up to three months after completion of training), resulting in operational and resource downtime for the organisations. In addition, it is still not possible to accredit personnel at EOD Level III.¹⁰⁰

With regard to clearance capacities during 2022, civilian operators reported a total of 314 manual deminers, a drop of ten from 2021. (See Table 4 on clearance capacities).

Table 4: Clearance capacities deployed in 2022 (as reported by demining operators)¹⁰¹

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers	Comments
CCCM	13	77	Average for 2022 as teams multitask between NTS and clearance.
DRC	7	63	Manual teams also conduct TS. Data for 1 January to 2 December 2022.
HALO	27 (monthly average)	135 (average 5 deminers per team)	
HI	3	18	A ground preparation machine was tested in 2021, but not used in 2022. No further explanation was provided.
HUMANICEMOS DH	3	21	
Totals	53	314	

The CCCM reported that for 2022, their NTS and clearance teams move between NTS and manual clearance depending on operational need, and there was no reduction in the overall personnel. In total during 2022, they had 228 personnel accredited for both NTS and clearance. EOD-accredited personnel increased by 77% as 4 women and 13 men received EOD Level I certification. At the time of writing, the CCCM had 22 people certified for EOD. The CCCM planned to increase the number of manual deminers in 2023 to speed up clearance of areas confirmed by the NTS teams. This will allow MTTs to be more cost efficient and provide more flexibility during deployments.¹⁰²

HALO's number of deployed survey and clearance personnel reduced in 2022 compared to 2021 due to the completion of assigned municipalities in Boyacá and Putumayo departments and the finalisation of a five-and-a-half-year contract with Canada.¹⁰³

HI saw a drop in the number of deminers of almost one half in comparison to 2021, due to several factors including a "transition phase" from demining to NTS, due to the completion of clearance in several municipalities (Inza, Puracé, and Santander de Quilichao) as well as the deteriorating security conditions in Vista Hermosa (Meta), but NTS staff numbers increased in 2022 following the allocation

of six new municipalities (Carepa, Puerto Concordia, Remedios, Segovia, Vegachi, and Yali).¹⁰⁴ For 2023, HI planned to have 12 NTS teams which will be trained as MTTs and five clearance teams with six to eight deminers each, as per the requirements of the new tasks in the recently allocated municipalities.¹⁰⁵

HUMANICEMOS DH had a drop of seven deminers in 2022 compared to 2021; however, this did not affect operations in 2022, as their teams are multitask and deminers are trained to conduct NTS and risk education as well as clearance. For 2023 it plans to increase the number of deminers to 32.¹⁰⁶

With regard to operational tools, only the CCCM has been working on testing of new tools. It is implementing a pilot project on dual detection, which combines a Japanese-designed ALIS (Advanced Landmine Detection System) prototype, dual-sensor mine detector. The detector combines electromagnetic induction sensors and ground penetrating radar (GPR) which gives it the capacity to differentiate AP mines from buried metal. ALIS was developed by scientists at Tohoku University in Japan in 2002 and has already been used in Cambodia. Since 2022, the CCCM has been testing the ALIS in areas tasked for demining.¹⁰⁷

100 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.
 101 Ibid.; and email from María Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.
 102 Email from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023.
 103 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; and Tom Griffiths, HALO, 8 September 2023.
 104 Email from Aderito Ismael, HI, 22 August 2023.
 105 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.
 106 Email from María Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June and 8 September 2023.
 107 Email from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023.

DEMINER SAFETY

No accidents involving landmines occurred in 2022. However, security incidents were reported by both the CCCM and HALO for the year 2022.

According to CCCM some municipalities saw the access restricted due to NSAGs “violent” actions. The municipalities of Murindó, Puerto Leguizamo, and Vista Hermosa tasked to the CCCM were not actioned as the security context did not allow operations to be conducted in safety. Between 5 and 10 May, an attack by a demobilised group of the Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (AGC) led to a halt in demining operations in several regions of the country. On 6 May, the AGC approached one of the NTS teams that had set up their camp and demanded their immediate departure from the area. The CCCM decided to move the NTS team to a locality in Urrao municipality where the CCCM has a local office. On their way there, the NTS team was stopped by another group of armed men from the AGC, who told the NTS team they were not permitted to move around the municipality. The men became very aggressive and ordered them to leave the vehicles, which they later burnt. This was the first time CCCM personnel had faced such a complex security risk.¹⁰⁸

In November 2022, HALO was involved in a non-violent security incident in Ondas del Cafre, an indigenous reserve in Mesetas in Meta department. During the incident, HALO staff were detained by local FARC dissidents for around four hours but were released without harm and a vehicle was stolen.¹⁰⁹

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

Colombia reported clearing 1.84km² of mined area in 2022 along with cancellation of 0.01km² through NTS and reduction of 0.02km² through TS. Total land release was thus 1.87km². This is based on the latest official data reported by the OACP – AICMA Group as at end-June 2023.¹¹⁰ These figures differ to those included in Colombia's Article 7 Report but are more accurate.¹¹¹ Land release data provided by the OACP – AICMA Group comprises only data for release that has been certified by the CEM and therefore differs from operator data.

New previously unrecorded mined areas were identified by operators in 2022. The CCCM reported 60 new areas in six departments (Antioquia, Boyacá, Casanare, Chocó, Putumayo and Vichada) covering 70,142m²; DRC identified 10 new areas covering 34,432m² in Caquetá; HALO identified 49 areas measuring 75,283m²; HI identified and cleared nine new areas, measuring 11,286m²; HUMANICEMOS DH identified one new area in Solita Caquetá measuring 26,066m².¹¹² All these newly identified areas are legacy contamination and all have been incorporated in the national database.¹¹³

In 2022, operators reported clearing substantial areas of land without finding AP mines. The CCCM cleared 52 areas covering 39,551m² without finding AP mines; DRC cleared four areas in Caquetá covering 2,803m² without encountering any AP mines; HALO cleared 43 minefields which proved to contain no AP mines (covering a total of 80,519m²); and for HI, only one of nine clearance tasks they conducted in 2022 contained mines: a single improvised AP mine.¹¹⁴

SURVEY IN 2022

In 2022, through civilian operators conducting NTS a total of 116,426m² were cancelled in eight departments (see Table 5).

Mine Action Review and some of the operators have identified issues regarding cancellation through NTS. First, there is a potential difference in methodology between operators with respect to “cancelling” mined area after investigating IMSMA events versus only cancelling mined area previously identified through NTS and which is already recorded in the information management system. The second potential difference is in methodology and understanding or interpreting NTS survey in municipalities tasked to an operator that are not coming from SHAs or CHAs and that cannot be considered as cancelled through NTS, as per the NTCs.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Email from Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023.

¹¹⁰ Email from Mariany Monroy Torres, OACP – AICMA Group, 31 July 2023.

¹¹¹ Article 7 Report (covering 2022). The data in the report were accurate to 31 March 2023.

¹¹² Email from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 3 August 2023.

¹¹³ Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June and 3 August 2023.

¹¹⁴ Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

¹¹⁵ Email and telephone interview with Maicol Velázquez, OACP – AICMA Group, 4 and 5 August 2023; and telephone interview with Tammy Hall, OAS, 5 August 2023.

Table 5: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022 (demining operator data)¹¹⁶

Department	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Antioquia	HALO	1,284
Caquetá	DRC	15,184
Caquetá	HUMANICEMOS DH	116
Casanare	HALO	2,202
Cauca	HI	67,314
Chocó	HI	1,831
Putumayo	CCCM	5,290
Tolima	HI	23,205
Total		116,426

HALO cancelled land on the basis of community members using the land they had been tasked to release.¹¹⁷ HI's cancellation in 2022 was the result of discarding "IMSMA events" which had no contamination in the assigned area.¹¹⁸ HUMANICEMOS DH for the first time reported cancellation through NTS in La Montañita, Caquetá.¹¹⁹ CCCM cancellation increased by 1,504m² over the 3,786m² cancelled in 2021.¹²⁰ DRC reported cancelling through NTS 15,184m² "during the conduct of clearance tasks due to the evidence found in the areas".¹²¹ Its report of 25,256km² as being "free of suspicion of mines" through NTS in the departments of Caquetá (25,084km²) and Bolivar (172.5km²) do not correspond to cancellation as the term is understood in the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).

Only the military operator BRDEH (in Antioquia) and DRC (in Caquetá) reduced area through TS in 2022 (see Table 6). That civilian operators are not using TS in Colombia is due to several problems: first, a lack of clarity in the NTC on TS which they feel would either duplicate efforts or delay the land release process in some cases; and second, the dynamics of the Colombian conflict, which mean that devices do not reflect predictable patterns. The OAS has shown an interest in again addressing the issue of efficiency in 2023.¹²²

Table 6: Release of mined area through TS in 2022 (operator and OACP – AICMA Group data)¹²³

Department	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
Antioquia	BRDEH	19,151
Caquetá	DRC	251
Total		19,402

HI noted that given the nature of contamination in Colombia, and based on the evidence found in the field by HI's NTS teams, the average size of areas reported are often up to 4,000m². Most of the time, the polygon is a shape where the safety distance between deminers required by the NTC on TS makes it difficult to deploy more than six deminers and therefore area reduction is almost impossible if procedures and safety are to be fully respected.¹²⁴

CLEARANCE IN 2022

Clearance output was significantly greater in 2022 in comparison to the previous year, with a total of 1.84km² cleared manually by the seven demining operators (two military and five civilian) (see Table 7).

¹¹⁶ Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August and 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

¹¹⁷ Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August and 16 June 2023.

¹¹⁸ Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

¹¹⁹ Email from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

¹²⁰ Email from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023.

¹²¹ Emails from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; and Paola Paula Ximena Cadena, DRC Colombia, 3 August 2023.

¹²² Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023 and 13 September 2022; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023 and Paola Paula Ximena Cadena, DRC Colombia, 3 August 2023; Caterina Weller, DRC, 9 June 2022; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August, 16 June 2023 and 15 September 2022; Tom Griffiths, HALO Latin America, 20 June 2022; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023 and 30 June 2022; Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023 and 19 July 2022.

¹²³ Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August and 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023; and email from Mariany Monroy Torres, OACP -AICMA Group, 31 July 2023.

¹²⁴ Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

Table 7: Mine clearance in 2022 (OACP – AICMA Group data)¹²⁵

Department	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed during clearance/TS	AP mines destroyed during spot tasks	UXO destroyed during mine clearance/TS
Antioquia	BRDEH	294,599	22	2	1
Antioquia	CCCM	7,118	8	0	0
Antioquia	HALO	53,329	86	10	0
Bolívar	BDIAN	20,064	1	6	9
Boyacá	CCCM	1,773	0	0	0
Boyacá	HALO	2,327	0	0	1
Caldas	BRDEH	129,196	16	1	0
Caquetá	BRDEH	162,133	13	9	0
Caquetá	DRC	28,285	9	0	4
Caquetá	HUMANICEMOS DH	3,360	3	0	0
Casanare	CCCM	3,960	0	0	0
Casanare	HALO	8,753	0	0	2
Cauca	HI	5,541	0	7	0
Choco	CCCM	1,081	2	1	0
Huila	BRDEH	162,446	9	1	3
La Guajira	BRDEH	0	0	0	0
Meta	BRDEH	106,976	0	0	0
Meta	HALO	24,801	2	0	5
Nariño	HALO	0	0	1	0
Putumayo	BRDEH	53,023	2	0	0
Putumayo	CCCM	86,543	60	0	0
Putumayo	HALO	30,053	2	3	0
Santander	BRDEH	124,316	5	0	2
Tolima	BRDEH	159,834	10	1	2
Tolima	HALO	10,719	2	0	1
Tolima	HI	160	0	0	0
Valle del Cauca	BRDEH	306,739	10	1	0
Valle del Cauca	HALO	56,932	17	0	0
Vichada	CCCM	0	0	0	0
Totals		1,844,061	279	43	30

125 Email from Mariany Monroy Torres, OACP – AICMA Group, 31 July 2023.

Table 8: Mine clearance in 2022 (civilian demining operator data)¹²⁶

Department	Operator	Area cleared (m²)	AP mines destroyed during clearance and TS	AP mines destroyed during spot tasks	IEDs destroyed during clearance and TS	IEDs destroyed during spot tasks	UXO destroyed during clearance and TS
Antioquia	CCCM	7,118	8	4	0	1	4
Boyacá	CCCM	1,773	0	0	0	0	0
Casanare	CCCM	3,960	0	0	0	0	3
Chocó	CCCM	1,081	2	1	0	0	1
Putumayo	CCCM	90,092	48	12	9	13	5
Vichada			0	0	0	0	7
Subtotals	CCCM	104,024	58	17	9	14	20
Caquetá	DRC	21,758	5	0	4	5	4
Subtotals	DRC	21,758	5	0	4	5	4
Antioquia	HALO	91,147	133	4	0	2	0
Boyacá	HALO	2,327	0	0	0	0	1
Casanare	HALO	20,543	0	0	0	1	2
Meta	HALO	19,396	4	0	0	1	5
Nariño	HALO	0	0	0	0	0	0
Putumayo	HALO	29,816	2	0	0	0	0
Tolima	HALO	1,060	0	0	0	0	0
Valle del Cauca	HALO	46,372	14	1	0	0	0
Subtotals	HALO	210,661	153	5	0	4	8
Tolima	HI	6,473	0	0	0	0	0
Cauca	HI	4,813	0	0	1	1	0
Subtotals	HI	11,286	0	0	1	1	0
Caquetá	HUMANICEMOS DH	18,889	6	0	0	1	0
Subtotals	HUMANICEMOS DH	18,889	6	0	0	1	0
Totals		366,618	222	22	14	25	32

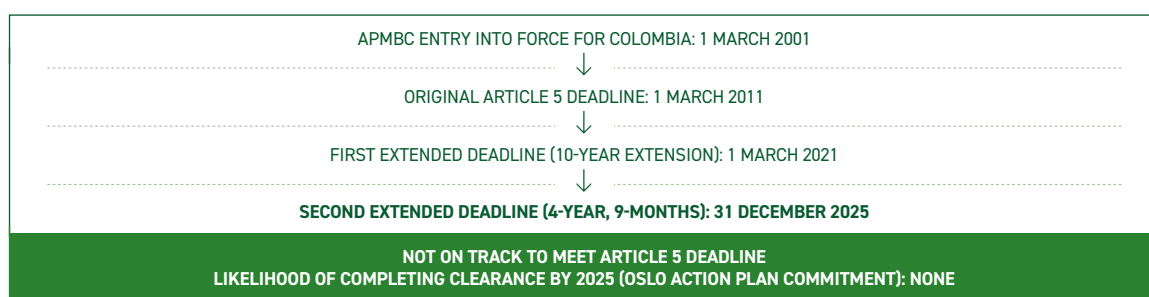
In total, according to the OACP – AICMA Group, 322 improvised AP mines, 147 items of UXO, and 57 IEDs were destroyed during 2022 (see Table 9).

¹²⁶ Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, Programmes Manager, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August and 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

Table 9: Reported destruction of explosive ordnance in 2022 (OACP – AICMA Group data)¹²⁷

Operator	AP mines destroyed	UXO destroyed	IEDs destroyed
BDIAN	7	16	5
BRDEH	101	47	16
CCCM	71	27	10
DRC	9	4	10
HALO	124	27	10
HI	7	26	6
HUMANICEMOS DH	3	0	0
Totals	322	147	57

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC, and in accordance with the four-year and nine-month extension granted by States Parties in 2020, Colombia is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2025.

Colombia will not be able to meet this deadline given the numerous challenges it faces. Its current goal is to declare free of landmines the 102 municipalities currently being cleared by the end of 2025.¹²⁸

Table 10: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	1.84
2021	1.27
2020	1.08
2019	0.79
2018	0.96
Total	5.94

It remains to be seen whether implementation of the new technical standards will improve the efficiency of land release in Colombia. A high percentage of mined areas are still being cleared without any mines found and HALO believes that a large proportion of the old legacy mines being found are non-functional.¹²⁹ The challenging terrain and climatic conditions along with an over-reliance on full clearance means that demining in Colombia is very expensive. Demining can and should be conducted more efficiently.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Colombia does not yet have a plan in place to manage residual contamination after clearance is completed in accordance with Article 5. The OACP – AICMA Group is aware of the importance of management of residual contamination, although an official plan has not been drafted yet.

Annex A to Land Release Technical Note NTC6469 is dedicated to residual risk, but this should not be confused with the management of residual contamination once clearance is completed as per Article 5. The Annex refers to the methodology for managing residual risk within the framework of land release. It addresses the responsibilities of the operators for the six months after handover.

¹²⁷ Email from Maicol Velásquez, OACP – AICMA Group, 2 August 2023.

¹²⁸ Presentation of Colombia, Intersessional Meetings, 19 June 2023, p. 3.

¹²⁹ Email from Oliver Ford, HALO, 15 September 2022.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2026
UNCLEAR WHETHER ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: HEAVY**

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

30_{km²}

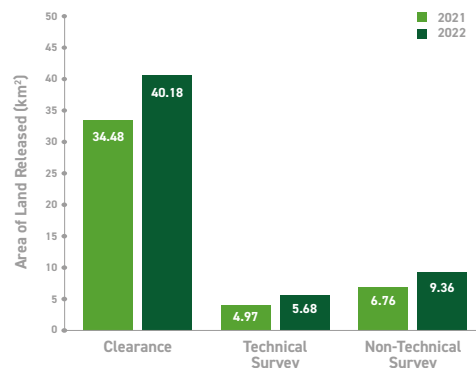
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

40.18_{km²}

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

1,098

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Croatia increased its clearance output in 2022 from the previous year and exceeded its land release target despite a reduction in technical survey (TS) and non-technical survey (NTS) output. However, Croatia continues to clear land without any mines being found and there was a decrease in the proportion of mines found per square metre in 2022, indicating the need for better targeting of clearance activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Civil Protection Directorate – Croatia Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) should increase its survey and clearance capacity in order to meet the targets outlined in its revised work plan 2022–26.
- In addition to survey of suspected hazardous areas (SHAs), CROMAC should also review the basis on which confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) are established. In particular, it should conduct survey to confirm evidence of mine contamination before embarking on full clearance.
- CROMAC should fulfil the pledge in Croatia's 2018 extension request to explore the potential for mine detection dogs (MDDs) to enhance TS efficiency. The 2015 demining law, which only allows MDDs to be used in clearance and not for survey, should be amended

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	7	7	Croatia considers its current national baseline of anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination to be reasonably accurate, evidence-based, and complete. However, as one third of remaining mined area is SHA and the remaining CHA has a low density of mine contamination, continued survey remains necessary.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	8	8	There is strong national ownership of mine action in Croatia, with political will to implement Article 5. In 2022, Croatia contributed approx. €35 million (68% of the total) to the overall mine action budget.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	5	4	The proportion of women employed at CROMAC remains low. However, Croatia is now collecting data on the different needs, vulnerabilities and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men from diverse populations and all age groups.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	8	8	Croatia provides regular, accurate, and consistent updates on its progress in Article 5 implementation at Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) meetings and in its Article 7 reports. However, a more detailed breakdown of land release output should be provided in its Article 7 reports.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	7	7	Croatia approved an updated draft of its National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2026 in February 2023. Croatia also has a work plan in place for 2022–26 with annual targets for land release.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	5	5	There is a continued need for Croatia to conduct survey prior to any clearance, to avoid clearance of CHAs where no contamination is found. In 2022, hazardous areas which did not contain AP mines accounted for 22% of all cleared areas, a similar proportion to 2021.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	8	7	Clearance output in 2022 increased by 18% from the previous year. Croatia exceeded its land release targets for year and there was also an increase in clearance of mined areas under military control.
Average Score	6.8	6.5	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Ministry of the Interior (MoI), in which CROMAC and the Government Office for Mine Action (GOMA) are integrated within the Civil Protection Directorate.

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Forty-two commercial demining companies are accredited for mine and CMR clearance operations.
- Pioneer Company of the Engineering Regiment, Croatian Armed Forces

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

At the end of 2022, Croatia reported a total of more than 149km² of mined area remaining, excluding military areas.¹ Of this 99.39km² is in confirmed hazardous area (CHA), and 50.30km² in suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) (see Table 1).² This represents an 27% decrease in estimated contamination excluding military areas compared to 204km² of mined area at the end of 2021.³ Survey in 2022 by the Civil Protection Directorate sector of CROMAC added 0.52km² of previously unrecorded mined areas to Croatia's information management database.⁴ Croatia believes that hazardous areas, excluding the military zones, contain 11,898 anti-personnel (AP) mines and 827 anti-vehicle (AV) mines.⁵

A further 19.8km² of confirmed mined area existed in areas under military control as at the end of 2022 compared to 29.5km² as at the end of 2021.⁶ This mined area, which is also contaminated with unexploded ordnance (UXO), is across military barracks, training sites, radar stations, and storage sites.

Table 1: AP mined area (in civilian areas) (at end 2022)⁷

County	Municipal areas with hazardous areas	CHA (m ²)	SHA (m ²)	Total mined area (m ²)
Karlovac	5	6,200,152	12,689,324	18,889,476
Lika-Senj	9	56,522,659	18,023,649	74,546,308
Osijek-Baranja	1	6,772,726	0	6,772,726
Split-Dalmacija	2	13,173,346	3,342,569	16,515,915
Sisak-Moslavina	8	10,949,529	14,069,940	25,019,469
Šibenik-Knin	3	5,770,632	2,170,390	7,941,022
Totals	28	99,389,044	50,295,872	149,684,916

A further 19.8km² of mined area exists in areas under military control.

Six of Croatia's twenty-one counties are still mine-affected, one fewer than in 2021. At the end of 2022, 98.7% of mine contamination was on forested land, 1.2% was on agricultural land, and the remaining 0.1% was on other areas (e.g. marshland).⁸ Much of the remaining mined area is mountainous and has not been accessed for 20 years, so the terrain and conditions will pose challenges to demining.⁹

According to Croatia's Civil Protection Directorate, the baseline of AP mine contamination has been established through inclusive consultation with women, girls, boys, and men, including, where relevant, with minority groups. Croatia considers its current baseline of contamination to

be evidence-based and reasonably accurate, following the completion of a baseline survey.¹⁰ However, the high ratio of SHAs to CHAs, and the fact that mined areas continue to be cleared without AP mines being encountered, calls this into question.

Aside from mines Croatia is affected, to a much lesser extent, by explosive remnants of war (ERW), a legacy of four years of armed conflict associated with the break-up of the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. On 1 August 2020, Croatia declared compliance with Article 4 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, having completed clearance of cluster munition-contaminated areas.¹¹

1 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Senior Advisor for EU Funds and International Cooperation, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

2 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

3 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Head of Unit, Civil Protection Directorate, Ministry of Interior, 23 May 2022.

4 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

5 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

6 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023; and email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, Ministry of Interior, 23 May 2022.

7 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

8 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

9 Interview with Nataša Mateković, CROMAC, Sisak, 18 May 2017.

10 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 8 April 2020.

11 Statement of Croatia on Clearance, CCM Second Review Conference, 25–27 November 2020.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

In August 2018, the Croatian government decided that 54 government agencies, including CROMAC and the Government Office for Mine Action (GOMA), were to be integrated within existing State administration bodies. This was formally concluded through legislation which entered into force on 1 January 2019.¹² As a consequence, CROMAC and GOMA ceased to exist as separate government entities and CROMAC became an “operational sector” within the Civil Protection Directorate, under the Ministry of the Interior (MoI).¹³ The main rationale for this was said to be “the establishment of a more relevant and operationally wider national institution (Civil Protection Directorate) that could more efficiently and effectively tackle all of the aspects of civil protection in the Republic of Croatia, including mine action activities”.¹⁴ Prior to 2019, both CROMAC (established in 1998 as the umbrella organisation for mine action coordination),¹⁵ and the GOMA (created in 2012 as a government focal point for mine action),¹⁶ had operated as independent entities.

A new law on mine action was adopted by the Croatian parliament on 21 October 2015.¹⁷ While the Law marked an improvement in certain respects (for instance, by permitting land release through TS), there were concerns that it would impede efficient and effective mine action.¹⁸ For accreditation, the MoI provides three separate permits: approval for manual mine detection; approval for mechanical mine detection; and approval for operations by mine and explosive detection dogs (EDDs). This replaces the former unified accreditation licence.¹⁹

The Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC is not responsible for survey and clearance of military areas, which comes under the remit of the Ministry of Defence (MoD). But in order

to address the slow progress in release of mined areas under military control, CROMAC and the MoD held joint meetings to outline further cooperation between the ministries. This included plans for joint NTS and TS to identify CHA and SHA which fall within the MoD’s responsibility.²⁰

In 2022, representatives from the Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC received training on quality management from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).²¹

In its 2018 Extension request, Croatia estimated that fulfilment of its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 obligations would cost a further €459 million in total.²² In its Revised Work Plan 2022–2026 Croatia estimated it would cost €219 million to clear the remaining hazardous area.²³ Funding for land release through to 2025, is expected to come from the Croatian government (51%) and from the European Union (EU) and other sources (49%).²⁴

In 2022, the overall annual mine action budget for survey and clearance in Croatia was €51.4 million.²⁵ The State contribution was 68% of the total (approx. €35 million),²⁶ an increase on the €33.2 million in 2021, when it was almost 70% of the budget.²⁷ EU funding remained a significant contribution in 2022, at 29.7% of the total, while the Swiss-Croatian Cooperation Programme contributed 2.3% of the total.²⁸

Croatia does not have a resource mobilisation strategy for Article 5 implementation.²⁹ The Civil Protection Directorate reported in 2023 that an in-country platform for dialogue, consisting of representatives from the MoI and the association of private companies in demining, meets on a regular basis.³⁰

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

There are no specific national standards for environmental management in mine action in Croatia but several synchronised cross-ministry policies and laws regulate environmental protection.³¹ In accordance with the 2015 Act on Mine Action (as amended) mine action operations are to minimise adverse impact on the environment. Furthermore, planning for mine action

12 Act on Amendments to the Act on Mine Action (OG No. 118/2018); and Act on Amendment to the Act on the Government (OG No. 116/2018).

13 Emails from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2019 and 8 April 2020; and Article 7 Report (covering 2018), Form J; and Article 7 Report (covering 2019), p. 1.

14 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form 4.1.

15 CROMAC, “National Mine Action Strategy of Croatia 2009–2019”, Zagreb, June 2009, p. 2.

16 Interviews with Dijana Pleština, Director, GOMA, in Geneva, 23 May 2012 and 10 April 2014; and email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 4 July 2013.

17 OG No. 110/15; and Article 7 Report (covering 2017), Form A.

18 Interviews with Neven Karas, CROMAC; and Tomislav Ban, Assistant Director and Head of Sector for Operational Planning and Programming, CROMAC, Sisak, 18 May 2017.

19 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 24 August 2016.

20 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

21 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

22 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 44.

23 Revised Work Plan 2022–2026, April 2022, p. 13.

24 Ibid.

25 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

26 Ibid.

27 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

28 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

29 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 8 April 2020.

30 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

31 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

operations must identify and assess relevant environmental issues and determine appropriate and effective mitigation measures. Croatia's annual mine action plans are coordinated through several ministries, including the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, and with local and regional administrations. Specific nature protection measures are described in detail within conceptual demining plans and operators are obliged to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the environment is left in a state suitable for its intended use once mine action operations cease.

For EU and international projects targeting Natura 2000 Ecological Network areas or national park areas, particularly recent projects financed by the EU Cohesion Fund, the environmental considerations are more complex. Every clearance project is subject to a comprehensive environmental study, which details specific measures that must be performed before, during, and after clearance.³² Three of these projects, "Naturavita", "Fearless Velebit", and "Karlovac Karst", finalised their clearance activities in 2022 and were subject to strict restrictions on when clearance activities could take place and which methods could be used so that the disruption to the local species and habitats were minimised. As a high proportion of the remaining contaminated land is in forested areas, Croatia is putting sustainable development and environmental stewardship at the forefront and will focus on preserving and restoring forest ecosystems.³³

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The Gender Equality Act,³⁴ which establishes national guidelines for gender equality, prohibits gender-based discrimination, and creates equal opportunities for men and women, including with regard to employment.³⁵

According to the national authorities, women, men, boys and girls are all effectively consulted during survey and community liaison activities.³⁶ CROMAC gathers all relevant data during NTS.³⁷ In 2023, a Swiss-Croatian Cooperation Programme was completed, an output of which is the establishment of a comprehensive database on explosive ordnance where information has been collected on the different needs, vulnerabilities and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men from diverse populations and all age groups.³⁸

The Civil Protection Directorate does not compile or disclose data regarding commercial demining companies, which are privately owned.³⁹ According to Croatia, the low proportion of women working in the Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC (see Table 2) is due to the fact that when CROMAC ceased to exist as an independent centre and was downsized when it was integrated within the Civil Protection Directorate/Mol in 2019, a significant portion of woman (including in managerial positions) were transferred or promoted into other sectors and managerial positions in the Mol or in other State or local authority institutions.⁴⁰

Table 2: Gender composition of CROMAC⁴¹

Total staff	Women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Total women in operational positions
87	11	8	0	64	2

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

For the purpose of mine action information management, CROMAC established a mine information system (MIS), which is said to be compliant with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and customised to meet CROMAC's needs. The MIS uses databases and a geographic information system (GIS) to deliver a fully integrated information management system.⁴² Efforts

32 Ibid.

33 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

34 Official Gazette 82/08 and 69/17.

35 Article 7 Report (covering 2017), Form C; Statement of Croatia, APMBIC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 7 June 2018; and email from Davor Laura, CROMAC, 6 April 2018.

36 Article 7 Report (covering 2017), Form C; Statement of Croatia, APMBIC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 7 June 2018; and email from Davor Laura, CROMAC, 6 April 2018.

37 Email from Ivana Odalj, Civil Protection Directorate, 16 August 2021.

38 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

39 Email from Ivana Odalj, Civil Protection Directorate, 16 August 2021.

40 Ibid.

41 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

42 CROMAC website, "CROMAC's Mine Information System", accessed 26 June 2018.

are ongoing to improve the quality of mine-related data by CROMAC's survey personnel.⁴³ In 2022, Croatia was accepted into the eurozone so all financial data was converted into euros.⁴⁴

Croatia submits timely and accurate annual Article 7 transparency reports and reports on its progress in Article 5 implementation at the APMBC intersessional meetings and meetings of States Parties. However, it would be valuable if Croatia were to provide a more detailed breakdown of its land release output in its Article 7 reports.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Croatia has a National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2026, an updated draft of which was submitted to the relevant government ministries and to mine action stakeholders and approved in February 2023.⁴⁵

In 2018, Croatia was granted a seven-year request to extend its APMBC Article 5 deadline from 1 March 2019 to 1 March 2026. In its extension request, Croatia stated it had prioritised the remaining mined areas according to those which affect safety, pose barriers to socio-economic development, and impact the environment in other ways. Priorities at the operational level are elaborated in annual demining action plans.⁴⁶

A “Mine Action Revised Work Plan 2020–26” was adopted by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior in 2019.⁴⁷ However, following Croatia's failure to meet work plan targets in 2020 a revised mine action work plan was issued for 2022–26.⁴⁸ This sets out how it proposes to release the remaining 234km² of mined area as at the end of 2021 (204.4km² under the MoI/Civil Protection Directorate and 29.5km² under the MoD's jurisdiction), with higher land release targets to make up for previous shortfalls (see Table 3).

Table 3: Planned land release output (in km²) (2022–26)⁴⁹

	Total	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Clearance	136.8	34.3	34.6	33.1	34.8	0
Clearance in combination with TS	17.4	3.8	8.4	5.2	0	0
Technical Survey	19.8	7.8	5.0	5.0	2.0	0
NTS	30.4	10.0	12.6	7.8	0	0
Subtotals	204.4	55.9	60.6	51.1	36.8	0
Croatian Army (MoD area)	29.5	7.4	3.1	8.8	10.2	0
Totals	233.9	63.3	63.7	59.9	47.0	0

Based on approved funding, CROMAC drafts annual work plans, which are submitted to the responsible ministries and other State bodies for comment and approval.⁵⁰ CROMAC reported to Mine Action Review that in 2023 it in fact planned to release 43km² through clearance, 7.4km² through TS, and 12.6km² through NTS, totalling 63km² (an increase from the 60.6km² in its work plan).⁵¹

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

The 2015 law on mine action allowed use of TS to confirm the presence or absence of contamination.⁵² The law introduced a new procedure for “supplementary general survey” (a form of NTS) and enabled “exclusion” (i.e. reduction) of SHAs through

43 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2019.

44 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

45 Ibid.

46 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 8 and 11.

47 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.

48 Revised Work Plan 2022–2026, April 2022, p. 10.

49 Ibid.

50 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2019.

51 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

52 National Gazette No. 110/15; and CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2017), Form A.

TS, which was not possible under the previous law.⁵³ The law also eliminated the need for standing operating procedures (SOPs), as all aspects of mine action were defined in detail.⁵⁴ National mine action standards are also encompassed within it and no changes were made in 2022.⁵⁵

In recent years, a significant number of CHAs have been cleared in which no AP mines were found, although the Civil Protection Directorate said many of these areas did, however, contain AV mines or UXO. Furthermore, other oversized CHAs were cleared with very few AP mines discovered. In 2022, hazardous areas which did not contain AP mines accounted for 22% of all cleared areas, a similar proportion to 2021.⁵⁶ The high proportion of cleared land containing no AP mines in recent years calls into question the efficiency of the demining and strongly suggests the need for better use of pre-clearance, evidence-based survey to confirm contamination before time- and cost-intensive full clearance is undertaken on mined areas recorded by CROMAC as “confirmed”.

Croatia organises an annual Mine Action Symposium, which discusses new detection and clearance technologies. The 2022 symposium brought together more than 140 participants from 26 countries on topics such as mine action in Ukraine, training standards, research and development of new technologies in mine action and best practice in land release.⁵⁷

In 2022, at the Croatian Mine Action Centre – Centre for Testing, Development and Training (HCR-CTRO) test sites, a team from Manchester University has been testing an advanced multi-frequency metal detector, an integrated frequency domain ground penetrating radar and several options for cm level position sensing. In addition, field testing of a Norwegian UAV 3D GPR system created a 3D subsurface volumetric image for each lane to facilitate target recognition, using a 17-channel lightweight GPR antenna array and a heavy-lift UAV platform. The GICHD has been conducting a trial of the Mine Kafon airborne demining system.⁵⁸

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2022, 42 commercial companies were engaged in mine clearance operations in Croatia (see Table 4). While all survey is conducted by CROMAC with eight NTS personnel and 28 TS personnel deployed in 2022.⁵⁹ As a result of conditions for earlier World Bank funding, Croatia has an unusually commercialised mine action sector, with almost all civil clearance conducted by local companies competing for tenders. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are barred from competing for commercial tenders as CROMAC views their subsidy by other funds as unfair.⁶⁰ The Pioneer Company of the Engineering Regiment is responsible for clearing all military facilities.⁶¹

Table 4: Clearance capacity (in 2022)⁶²

Clearance capacity	No.	Comments
Deminers	388	Reduction from 397 in 2021.
Mine detection dogs	46	Reduction from 104 in 2021.
Demining machines	44	One more than 2021.

Clearance operations in Croatia are conducted manually as well as with mechanical assets and with the support of mine detection dogs (MDDs). In accordance with the 2015 Act on Mine Action and its prescribed demining methodologies, MDDs are used only for clearance and not TS.⁶³ Croatia had previously reported plans to develop methods and techniques for use of MDDs for TS, as a potentially more effective tool to address mined areas in mountainous terrain.⁶⁴ However, this would require amendment to the 2015 demining law.

DEMINER SAFETY

In November 2022, in the county of Lika-Senj, an auxiliary worker operating an MV-4 mine clearance machine was injured by a PROM-1 bounding fragmentation AP mine while conducting ground preparation within the marked hazardous area. The worker received immediate first aid and was taken to hospital. An on-site inspection by the Civil Protection Directorate found no

53 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2017), Form A; and emails from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 and 18 May 2016.

54 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016; and Article 7 Report (covering 2015), Form A.

55 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016; and email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

56 Emails from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023 and 3 August 2022.

57 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Interview with Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, Sisak, 14 April 2014.

61 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 25; and email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.

62 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

63 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2019.

64 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 43, 44, and 45; and Additional information submitted 21 June 2018, p. 1.

circumstances indicating misdemeanour liability under the Mine Action Act or related by-laws governing machine clearance/surface preparation activities. The responsible individuals at the work site promptly took appropriate actions to care for the injured worker. Based on all the available information, the inspection concluded that the incident qualifies as an accident.⁶⁵

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

In total, almost 65km² of mined area was released in 2022 (including military areas), of which more than 40km² was cleared by commercial demining companies, over 5.7km² was reduced by CROMAC through TS, and nearly 9.4km² was cancelled through NTS.⁶⁶ A total of almost 9.7km² was released by the Croatian army on military sites, including through 0.49km² of clearance.⁶⁷

SURVEY IN 2022

CROMAC released a total of more than 15.04km² through survey in 2022, a 28% increase from the 11.73km² released through survey in 2021.⁶⁸ Close to 9.36km² was cancelled through NTS and more than 5.68km² was reduced through TS in 2022 (see Tables 5 and 6).⁶⁹ In addition, the MoD in partnership with CROMAC cancelled 9.2km² through NTS in military areas.⁷⁰

Table 5: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022⁷¹

County	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Karlovac	CROMAC	2,217,390
Lika-Senj	CROMAC	2,261,299
Osijek-Baranja	CROMAC	1,689,533
Split-Dalmacija	CROMAC	448,220
Sisak-Moslavina	CROMAC	2,739,276
Total		9,355,718

Table 6: Release of mined area through TS in 2022⁷²

County	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
Karlovac	CROMAC	717,335
Lika-Senj	CROMAC	1,973,595
Osijek-Baranja	CROMAC	37,587
Požega-Slavonija	CROMAC	1,856,396
Sisak-Moslavina	CROMAC	591,358
Šibenik-Knin	CROMAC	505,455
Total		5,681,726

CLEARANCE IN 2022

In 2022, nearly 40.7km² of mined area was released through clearance (40.2km² by operators working under the direction of CROMAC (see Table 7) and a further 0.5km² by the Croatian army). During land release, a total of 1,107 AP mines were destroyed (1,098 by the Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC and 9 by the MoD); along with 25 AV mines.⁷³ This is an 18% increase from the 34.5km² of mined area released through clearance in 2021 (nearly 34.11km² by operators working under the direction of CROMAC and a further 0.38km² by the Croatian army).⁷⁴

The 488,200m² of military facilities cleared in 2021 by the Pioneer company of the Engineering Regiment of the Croatian army was an increase from the 375,961m² of military facilities cleared in 2021.⁷⁵

⁶⁵ Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 24 July 2023.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Emails from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023; and Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022; and Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C.

⁶⁹ Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

⁷² Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

⁷³ Ibid.; and Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C.

⁷⁴ Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

⁷⁵ Emails from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023; and Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

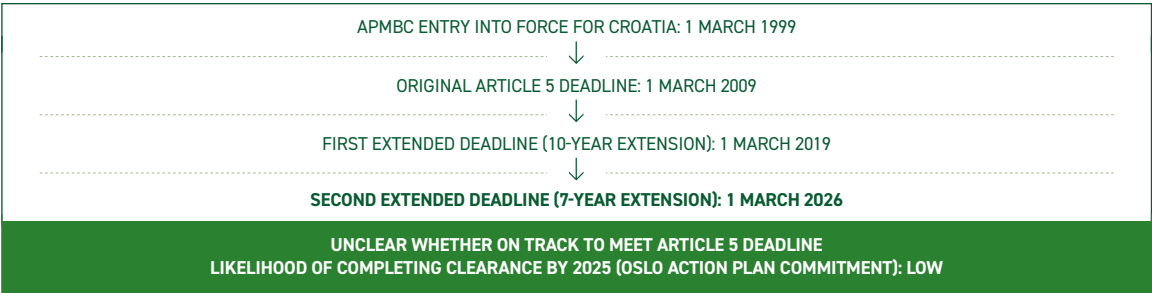
Table 7: Mine clearance in 2022 (excluding military clearance)⁷⁶

County	Operator	Area cleared (m²)*	AP mines destroyed*	AV mines destroyed*	UXO destroyed
Karlovac	LLCs authorised for clearance	16,317,632	620	2	49
Lika-Senj	LLCs authorised for clearance	8,417,223	172	22	233
Osijek-Baranja	LLCs authorised for clearance	2,604,260	4	1	6
Požega-Slavonija	LLCs authorised for clearance	4,432,447	42	0	22
Split-Dalmacija	LLCs authorised for clearance	1,088,426	16	0	4
Sisak-Moslavina	LLCs authorised for clearance	6,471,269	230	0	2,023
Šibenik-Knin	LLCs authorised for clearance	850,057	14	0	63
Totals		40,181,314	1,098	25	2,400

* An additional 488,200m² of mined area was cleared by the MoD on military areas with 9 AP mines, 1 AV mine and 711 items of UXO destroyed.

While the amount of area cleared in 2022 has increased from the previous year, the proportion of mines cleared per square metre equates to approximately one AP mine destroyed for every 36,000m² of cleared area (excluding the items of UXO and AV mines destroyed). This is a decline from the—already poor—average of one AP mine per 28,000m² Croatia managed in 2021. This indicates very poor targeting of clearance and suggests that Croatia could be releasing much greater areas through survey. CROMAC reported that in 2022 that 19 tasks totalling over 8.73km² were cleared with no AP mines found, a poor use of limited resources.⁷⁷

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC, Croatia is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 March 2026. It is unclear whether Croatia will meet this deadline.

Croatia exceeded its clearance target for 2022 of 34.3km² by nearly one fifth and its overall land release target for 2022 of 63.3km² by 3%, with the small shortfall in survey output made up by increased clearance of military areas. Croatia will need to release around 50km² of hazardous area annually over the next three years in order to meet its Article 5 deadline. This should be possible as 50km² of remaining contamination is in SHAs and, furthermore, given that an extremely low proportion of mines are found during clearance, with greater targeting Croatia could be releasing more of its CHA through survey. In addition, the military will need to release 6.6km² per year which is all planned to be released through clearance. A total of more than 200km² of mined area has been cleared over the last five years (see Table 8).

76 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

77 Ibid.

Table 8: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	40.67
2021	34.48
2020	49.66
2019	39.16
2018	49.01
Total	212.98

Croatia remains confident that survey and clearance operations will be completed by the end of 2025, leaving only administrative/paperwork issues to be finalised before its Article 5 deadline of 1 March 2026.⁷⁸ This is an ambitious goal,

made more difficult as the remaining areas to be released are mainly forested (98.7%), implying a significant reduction in the use of demining machinery, especially medium and heavy machines.⁷⁹ Croatia foresees that more use will be made of small, mobile machines that can be efficiently transported and used in affected areas, and that the resulting increase in manual demining will reduce productivity and increase the cost of clearance and technical survey. Use of mechanical assets is also further restricted in the "Natura 2000" protected area.⁸⁰

In order to ensure that Croatia meets its Article 5 obligation, CROMAC will need to significantly increase its capacity and implementation of survey to determine the size and location of contamination more accurately before starting clearance, and to cancel and reduce areas in which no evidence of contamination is found.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

CROMAC has reported that the management of residual contamination will be the joint responsibility of several departments within the Mol.⁸¹ Activities which must be conducted upon discovery of residual contamination are predefined by the Act on Mine Action.⁸²

⁷⁸ Revised Work Plan 2022–2026, April 2022, p. 11.

⁷⁹ Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021; and 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 43.

⁸⁰ 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 45; and email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2019.

⁸¹ Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

⁸² Statement of Croatia on Clearance, CCM Second Review Conference (Part 1, virtual meeting), 25–27 November 2020.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JULY 2025

NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE (LACK OF EFFECTIVE CONTROL)

KEY DATA

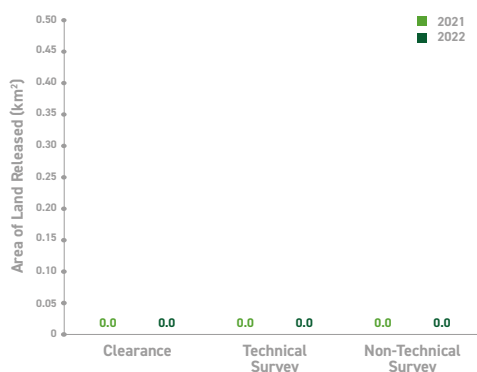
ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: LIGHT

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

1 km²AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 20220 km²AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

0

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): NONE

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot authorities in northern Cyprus made no progress towards an agreement to complete mine clearance on the island in 2022, and for a third consecutive year no mined area was released.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot authorities should both comply with the UN Security Council's call for leaders of the two communities to agree and continue a plan of work to achieve a mine-free Cyprus, and make expeditious progress towards releasing the 29 remaining hazardous areas on the island.¹
- The Republic of Cyprus and the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) should update, consolidate and align data on remaining mined areas.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- No national mine action authority or mine action centre

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None (Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and DOK-ING were last active in 2017)

OTHER ACTORS

- UN-supported mine action in Cyprus is coordinated by the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) on behalf of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)

1 UN Security Council Resolution 2674 (2023) operative para. 16.

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination in Cyprus is unclear. The Article 7 Report submitted by Cyprus in April 2023 stated that 21 AP minefields laid by Turkish Armed Forces remained: one in the buffer zone and the other twenty north of but “overwhelmingly situated adjacent to the buffer zone”. Cyprus said it did not know the size of these mined areas or if they contained mines other than AP mines.²

Contamination data in the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)’s mine action database cited by the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) differs significantly from that

provided by Cyprus. It showed that across Cyprus 29 mined areas covered a total of 1.5km² at the end of 2022, a level unchanged since the end of 2019,³ but that contamination consisted mostly of anti-vehicle (AV) mines – see Table 1. North of the buffer zone, mined areas include one confirmed hazardous area (CHA) and five suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) thought to contain a mixture of AP and AV mines. Nineteen hazardous areas recorded south of the buffer zone contain only AV mines (13 CHAs and 6 SHAs) as do three of four CHAs in the buffer zone (the mine type in the fourth was unknown).⁴

Table 1: Mined area in Cyprus (at end 2022)⁵

Location	CHAs	Contamination	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Contamination	Area (m ²)	Total SHA/CHA	Total area (m ²)
South of the buffer zone (territory under effective control of the Government of Cyprus)	13	AV mines	418,543	6	AV mines	174,014	19	592,557
Buffer Zone	4	AV mines (3 areas) Unknown (1 area)	703,581	0	N/A	N/A	4	703,581
North of the buffer zone (territory controlled by the Turkish Cypriot authorities)	1	Mixed (AV mines and AP mines)	170,493	5	Mixed	65,281	6	235,774
Totals	18		1,292,617	11		239,295	29	1,531,912

Cyprus has been divided since 1974 by a 180km-long buffer zone, following Turkish Armed Forces’ operations in the north of the island. Minefields were laid by both the Greek Cypriot National Guard and the Turkish Armed Forces. Permission for UNFICYP to access areas within and outside the buffer zone remains limited.⁶

In 2021, Cyprus sought and was granted a fourth extension to its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline on the basis it still does not have effective control over areas in the north in which AP mines have been or are suspected to have been emplaced, so cannot fulfil its mine

clearance obligations.⁷ The request was granted and the deadline extended until 1 July 2025.⁸

The most recent reported release of mine-contaminated area was in 2019 when 18 SHAs (nine under the effective control of Cyprus and nine in the north of the island) were checked and declared mine-free.⁹ UNFICYP had defined the 18 areas as potentially hazardous as a result of mines laid in the areas. The successful inspection of the 18 SHAs was achieved following a 2019 agreement between the President of the Republic of Cyprus and the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community in the context of confidence building measures.¹⁰

² Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

³ Emails from Mark Connelly, Chief of Operations, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), 8 April 2020, 26 June 2020, 28 May 2021, 12 May 2022, and 22 March 2023.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 26 September 2017.

⁷ Cyprus Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 9 February 2021.

⁸ Decision of the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC, November 2021.

⁹ Cyprus Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Additional Information, 11 August 2021.

¹⁰ Ibid.; and email from Aysan Mullahasan Atılğan, Director for Political Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (MoFA TRNC), 12 August 2022.

Despite repeated calls from the Security Council for the two sides to agree on "a plan of work to achieve a mine-free Cyprus" and to, "overcome existing barriers to this work", most recently in January 2023,¹¹ 2022 passed without progress¹² and there was no change in the situation as of the end of July 2023.¹³ UNFICYP continues to follow up on the calls by the Security Council, engaging with military representatives on both sides in order to make progress towards releasing the 29 remaining suspected hazardous areas on the island.¹⁴ While the Turkish Cypriot authorities expressed potential interest if it involved reciprocity from the other side, setting out proposals for cooperation via the UN Secretary-General,¹⁵ the Greek Cypriot National Guard did not wish to discuss the matter.¹⁶ The Government of the Republic of Cyprus maintains that mined areas in which AP mines have been or are suspected to be emplaced are in areas outside its effective control.¹⁷ UNFICYP will continue to consider options for the next phase of clearance activities to be presented to the two sides, with a particular focus on the buffer zone.¹⁸

TERRITORY UNDER THE EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Cyprus' latest Article 7 report (covering 2022) reiterates that no AP mines remain in the minefields laid by the National Guard that are in territory under its effective control.¹⁹ In total, between becoming a State Party on 1 July 2003 and its original Article 5 deadline of 1 July 2013, Cyprus released 20 mined areas under its effective control.²⁰

BUFFER ZONE

Four mined areas remained in the Buffer Zone at the end of 2022, three of which belong to the Greek Cypriot National Guard and contain only AV mines. The fourth belongs to Turkish Armed Forces and the mine type is unknown.²¹ The Government of Cyprus considers the three minefields with only AV mines to be under its control and not within the buffer zone.²²

TURKISH-CONTROLLED TERRITORY IN THE NORTHERN PART OF CYPRUS

The extent of mine contamination in areas controlled by Turkish Armed Forces is not known. Cyprus made its 2021 Article 5 extension deadline request, for the same reason as the previous three extension requests (in 2012, 2015, and 2018), on the grounds that certain parts of its territory outside its effective control contained mined areas "in which anti-personnel mines have been or are suspected to be emplaced."²³ Since the end of 2019, Cyprus has estimated that 20 Turkish-laid AP minefields remain north of and mostly adjacent to the buffer zone, plus one in the buffer zone near Deryneia village. The size of the minefields and whether they include mines other than AP mines, was reported as unknown.²⁴

One minefield has been reported just north of the buffer zone in Mammari, where heavy rains led to mines being washed into the buffer zone in 2014 and 2015. UNFICYP has raised the issue of clearance of this minefield with the Turkish Armed Forces and has offered assistance in this regard.²⁵ In 2017, a small area of the Mammari minefield was cleared by a Croatian commercial operator contracted by the Turkish Armed Forces.²⁶

11 UN Security Council 2674 (2023), operative para. 16.

12 Email from Mark Connelly, UNFICYP, 23 March 2023.

13 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2023/498, 5 July 2023, operative para. 25; and email from Mark Connelly, UNFICYP, 23 March 2023.

14 Ibid.

15 Email from Aysan Mullahasan Atılgan, MoFA, TRNC, 12 August 2022; Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2023/6, 3 January 2022, Annex II, pp. 22–23; and Letter from Damla Güçlü, Director-General, MOFA TRNC, 2 May 2023, attached to email from Aysan Mullahasan Atılgan, MoFA TRNC, of 3 May 2023.

16 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN Doc S/2023/498, 5 July 2023, operative para. 25.

17 Email from Giorgos Samouel, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the United Nations Office, 10 August 2023; and 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request.

18 Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2023/498, 5 July 2023, para. 25.

19 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

20 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Observations on implementation of Article 5 by Cyprus", 23 June 2015; and Article 7 Report (covering 2013), Form G.

21 Emails from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 10 September 2018; and Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 17 July 2019, 12 May 2022, and 23 March 2023. Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2018/676, 6 July 2018, para. 44.

22 Interview with Demitris Samuel, Deputy Permanent Representative, Cyprus Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva, Geneva, 19 May 2016.

23 Cyprus Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 9 February 2021.

24 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

25 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form C; and email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.

26 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 10 September 2018.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus are coordinated by UNMAS on behalf of UNFICYP.²⁷ UNMAS is a component of UNFICYP, providing expertise in mine action planning and coordination, quality assurance (QA) oversight, and management of mine action information.²⁸ UNMAS also provides assistance to the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) to ensure safe access to areas where it conducts activities and to UNFICYP for small arms ammunition storage.²⁹

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

There was no available information on environmental policies relevant to demining in Cyprus, but given that UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus are said to be conducted in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS),³⁰ it is assumed that this includes IMAS environmental standards.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

UNFICYP uses the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database and in 2020 upgraded it from Version 6 to New Generation.³¹

In 2017, a review and reconciliation of all minefield database information revealed that a number of SHAs had already been cleared and/or cancelled. However, due to capacity limitations between 2011 and 2016, the information had not been removed from the database. The review resulted in the removal of seven SHAs (totalling more than 950,000m²) from the database.³²

Cyprus has submitted annual Article 7 reports regularly since acceding to the APMBC in July 2003, most recently in 2023, for calendar year 2022. Cyprus has submitted four Article 5 deadline extension requests: in 2012, 2015, 2018, and most recently in 2021. Cyprus submitted most of the reports in a timely manner but provided only limited information due to it not having effective control over the remaining AP mined areas.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Neither the Republic of Cyprus nor Turkish Cypriot side have disclosed plans to survey and clear the remaining mine contamination. The self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) has reported that it made a proposal for a mine-free island on 8 July 2022 (see the section below, *Land Release Outputs and Article 5 Compliance*, for further detail) and that it had previously made comprehensive proposals for clearing mines from the island in 2014, 2015, and 2018.³³

As indicated above, non-technical survey (NTS) conducted in 2019 was initiated as a confidence-building measure agreed in February 2019 by President of Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akıncı in the context of long-running discussions on a political settlement and “with a view to working towards a mine-free Cyprus”.³⁴

27 Ibid.

28 UNMAS, “Cyprus” webpage, accessed 18 August 2022, at: <http://bit.ly/2GtTXje>.

29 UNMAS, “Cyprus” webpage, accessed 4 May 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3VzNd8L>.

30 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.

31 Email from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 16 June 2021.

32 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2018/25, 9 January 2018, para. 12.

33 Email from Aysan Mullahasan Atılğan, MoFA TRNC, 12 August 2022; and Letter from Damla Güçlü, MOFA, TRNC, 3 May 2023.

34 Security Council Press Statement on Cyprus, 27 February 2019, UN doc. SC/13722, at: <http://bit.ly/2JKyYus>.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

All UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus are said to be conducted in accordance with IMAS.³⁵ In 2016, UNMAS updated the national technical standards and guidelines that are used in UNFICYP to reflect current best practice and to ensure the highest standards are applied for UNFICYP clearance operations.³⁶

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

UNMAS conducts NTS and technical survey (TS) in cooperation with representatives of the National Guard and Turkish Cypriot Security Force.³⁷ No clearance has been conducted since 2017 when the Turkish Armed Forces contracted DOK-ING to conduct clearance, and Mines Advisory Group (MAG) to conduct QA of demining in the Mammari minefield.³⁸

The focus for UNFICYP is the four CHAs in the buffer zone (three AV minefields belonging to Cyprus, and one mined area, where the mine type is unknown, which is the responsibility of Turkish forces). UNFICYP has a mandate to support the removal of all mines in Cyprus.³⁹

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

No mine survey or clearance was reported in Cyprus between 2020 and 2022.⁴⁰

The last land release occurred in 2019 when UNFICYP announced release of 18 SHAs covering 210, 882m² under confidence-building measures agreed in February 2019.⁴¹ The SHAs included nine on each side of the island divide and were selected by UNMAS in cooperation with the National Guard and Turkish Armed Forces. The respective militaries conducted NTS and UNMAS and UNFICYP then visited one site in the north and one site in the south to receive documentation certifying completion of the tasks. Some of the sites were located in military areas and respective military forces took the opportunity to conduct training resulting in some area reduction but no items were found.⁴²

UNMAS reported that 2022 saw no substantive progress towards demining. UNFICYP continues to raise the issue of demining in accordance with its mandate, but despite continued dialogue between UNFICYP senior managers and key leaders, there has been no agreement on options to continue demining yet.⁴³ In its most recent proposal for a mine-free island, dated 8 July 2022, reported to have been conveyed to the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus through the UN Secretary-General, the TRNC said that it proposed that the ultimate goal be clearance of the 29 remaining SHAs to free the Island from all landmines; demining activities to be facilitated by UNFICYP in coordination with the two sides; demining activities to commence in areas adjacent to the buffer zone (one minefield under the "jurisdiction" of the Turkish Cypriot authorities in Deryneia, the other three under Cypriot control); demining activities in each side to be conducted proportionately and simultaneously; and that both sides convene to discuss, in detail, the modalities of the implementation of the demining operations.⁴⁴

35 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.

36 Ibid.

37 Email from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 26 July 2019.

38 Ibid.

39 Email from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 12 May 2022.

40 Article 7 Reports (covering 2020, 2021, and 2022), Forms C and F; emails from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 28 May 2021, 12 May 2022, and 23 March 2023.

41 UNFICYP, "18 Suspected Hazardous Areas declared mine free", Press release, 9 December 2019.

42 Emails from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 26 June and 3 July 2020.

43 Emails from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 12 May 2022 and 23 March and 29 July 2023.

44 "Proposal of the TRNC for a Mine-Free Island", provided via an email from Aysan Mullahasan Atilgan, MoFA TRNC, 12 August 2022; see also Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2023/6, 3 January 2022, Annex II, pp. 22–23.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Cyprus is obligated to destroy or ensure the destruction of all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control, as soon as possible but not later than 1 July 2025.

Cyprus reported clearing all AP mines in mined areas that it accepted were under its control within ten years of becoming a State Party, namely by 1 July 2013. In 2012, Cyprus submitted the first of four Article 5 deadline extension requests, on the grounds that Cyprus does not have effective control over remaining contaminated areas in the northern part of the island under the control of Turkish Armed Forces.⁴⁵ Cyprus has provided the same justification for all subsequent extension requests. The fourth request, submitted in February 2021, sought an extension of three years until 1 July 2025,⁴⁶ which was granted at the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties.

Türkiye received a three-year, nine-month extension to its Article 5 clearance deadline until 31 December 2025 but did not request additional time for clearance of the areas it controls in northern Cyprus.⁴⁷

As indicated above, the UN Security Council continues to urge both sides in Cyprus to agree upon and implement a plan of work to achieve a mine-free Cyprus, most recently in January 2023.⁴⁸

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

It is not known whether plans are in place to address residual contamination once Cyprus' Article 5 obligations have been fulfilled.

⁴⁵ 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Türkiye's Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2021. On the issue of Turkish jurisdiction, see, e.g., European Court of Human Rights, *Güzelyurtlu and others v. Cyprus and Turkey*, Judgment (Grand Chamber), 29 January 2019.

⁴⁸ UN Security Council Resolution 2674 (2023), operative para. 16.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



CLEARING THE MINES 2023

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2025
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: LIGHT

0.4km²

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

28,628m²

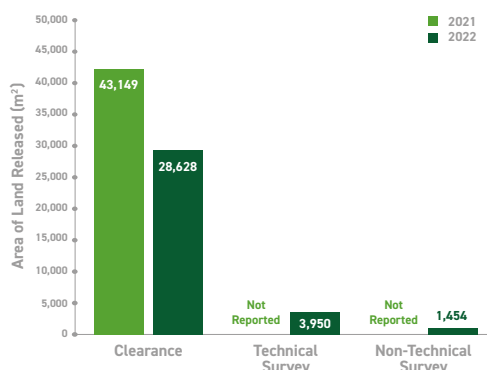
(PARTIAL REPORT BASED ON
OPERATOR DATA)

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

4

(OPERATOR DATA)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) submitted an Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 7 report in May 2022 declaring that survey in 2021 had identified previously unrecorded mined areas covering a total 421,557m², thereby tripling its estimate of contamination. The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) signed an agreement with the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) in November 2022 for a two-year project to support mine action in DR Congo.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- DR Congo should update its latest Article 5 deadline extension request, including a new work plan and new timelines that take account of the increased estimate of contamination.
- DR Congo should conduct survey to verify the exact area of mine contamination.
- The Congolese Mine Action Centre (CCLAM) should specify what arrangements it is making for the long-delayed survey of Aru and Dungu territories.
- DR Congo should detail its plans for sustainable capacity to tackle previously unidentified hazards.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	5	5	DR Congo's anti-personnel (AP) mined area appears to be small but estimates of its extent have fluctuated sharply in recent years and more than tripled on the basis of finding previously unidentified hazardous areas in 2021–22. DR Congo still needs to survey Aru and Dungu districts, adding further uncertainty about the extent of its mine threat.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	6	6	CCLAM coordinates mine action with financial support from the government but it depends on the United Nations and international donors, including the United States, to fund operations and also receives technical support from UNMAS and other international organisations.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	6	6	DR Congo's Article 5 deadline extension request pledges to encourage operators to employ up to 30% women in operations teams and at least half of the risk education teams. CCLAM recognised the significance of gender in mine action by including a section on it in the 2018–19 national mine action strategy. All activities, especially risk education and victim assistance, are required to take account of the needs of different age groups and genders, and women should participate in all essential stages of mine action planning.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	4	4	DR Congo submitted an Article 7 report in May 2022 but it covered a 27-month period from 1 January 2019 to 31 March 2022, underscoring the lack of consistency in CCLAM's reporting. As at September 2023, DR Congo had yet to submit an Article 7 report for the whole of 2022 as required by the APMBC. The quality of data in CCLAM's information management database is poor and operators say they are still being deployed for survey and clearance to tasks that contain no mines.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	4	4	The July 2021 Article 5 extension request included a calendar for operations with monthly targets for clearance and cost projections but these were overturned by release of new data tripling the estimate of contamination. Moreover, implementation is dependent on international donor funding. The request allowed a year for survey and clearance in Aru and Dungu but did not indicate when survey is expected to start.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	5	5	CCLAM has 24 chapters of National Technical Standards and Guidelines which it reportedly revised in 2018, making amendments to standards dealing with demining techniques and deminer safety. CCLAM still required support from UNMAS for quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC).
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	3	3	The DR Congo has not reported details of land released in 2020 or 2021. DanChurchAid (DCA), which appears to be the only organisation conducting AP mine clearance, reported clearing 28,628m ² in 2022, a significant drop from the 43,139m ² it reported clearing in 2021.
Average Score	4.6	4.6	Overall Programme Performance: POOR

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Centre Congolais de Lutte Antimines (CCLAM)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Afrique pour la Lutte Antimines (AFRILAM)
- National NGOs conduct non-technical survey and mine risk education

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- DanChurchAid (DCA)
- G4S
- TDI

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

DR Congo is believed to have very limited anti-personnel (AP) mined area of less than 0.5km² but the precise extent is obscured by fluctuating and inconsistent official accounts and incomplete survey.

A new assessment of its contamination provided in an Article 7 transparency report in May 2022 said DR Congo had 37 hazardous areas affecting 399,969m² (see Table 1),¹ more than triple the estimate of contamination it had submitted eight months earlier in its 2021 request for an extension of its APMBC Article 5 deadline.² The new estimate included five mined areas identified by the national non-governmental organisation (NGO) AFRILAM working under contract to UNMAS.³ In June 2022, DR Congo presented another estimate to the APMBC Intersessional Meetings, reporting that it had 36 hazardous areas covering 397,569m².⁴

DR Congo informed the June 2022 Intersessional Meetings that several accidents had occurred between October and December 2021 in Kasai province in areas that were not previously suspected as hazardous. It said

subsequent surveys had identified 328,726m² of additional contamination in Kasai and further surveys in Tanganyika province conducted during April 2022 had found 27,000m² of previously unreported mined area.⁵ It said the new discoveries raised total contamination to 40 areas affecting 421,557m² although clearance of four areas in Tshopo province had removed 26,747m².⁶ The figures cited were not consistent with the data presented in either the Article 5 deadline extension request⁷ or the Article 7 report, which raised the estimate of contamination in Kasai from 700m² to 302,426m² while in Tanganyika province it rose from 6,943m² to 36,343m².

The latest assessments also do not include any contamination in Aru district of Ituri province and Dungu in Haut-Uele province which it still plans to survey following up a preliminary assessment in 2013. The areas were not previously surveyed due to insecurity but since 2019 DR Congo has indicated that lack of financing was the factor holding back survey.⁸

Table 1: AP mined area (at end-March 2022)⁹

Province	Mined areas	Area (m ²)
Ituri	4	6,100
Kasai	7	302,426
Maniema	2	4,752
North Kivu	9	12,760
South Kivu	2	851
North Ubangi	4	35,417
Tanganyika	8	36,343
Tshuapa	1	1,320
Totals	37	399,969

Survey in 2022 identified eight additional mined areas covering 304,511m² in Kasai Central province but also led to reduction of 295,299m² in three provinces, suggesting a net increase in total contamination of 9,212m².¹⁰

DR Congo has AP and anti-vehicle (AV) mine contamination left by decades of conflict with neighbouring states, rebel groups, and militias since independence in 1960. At the end

of 2016, UNMAS reported DR Congo still had 54 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) covering a total of 851,228m²,¹¹ but subsequent re-survey found that a number of areas were contaminated by the more prevalent problem of unexploded ordnance (UXO) and contributed to a sharp fall in the estimate of contamination.

1 Article 7 Report (covering 1 January 2019 to 31 March 2022), Form C.
2 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 9 July 2021, p. 22. The request estimated AP mine contamination at 117,031m².
3 Email from Jean-Denis Larsen, Chief of Mine Action Programme, UNMAS, 31 May 2022.
4 Statement of DR Congo, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20 June 2022.
5 The newly identified contamination included three hazardous areas (HAs) in Tanganyika/Kabalo totalling 27,000m², four HAs in Kasai Central/Demba (2) and Dimbelenge (2) totalling 283,686m², and two HAs in Kasai/Dekese totalling 18,040m².
6 Statement of DR Congo, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20 June 2022.
7 The extension request recorded six hazardous areas in Tshopo province totalling 48,188m². DR Congo's 2022 Intersessional statement referred to clearance of four HAs clearing 26,747m² but gave no indication of what action, if any, accounts for the contamination previously reported in Tshopo province.
8 Statement of DR Congo, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, 25–29 November 2019.
9 Article 7 Report (covering 1 January 2019 to 31 March 2022), Form C.
10 Email from Erly Munoz, Programme Officer, UNMAS, 16 August 2023.
11 Email from Steven Harrop, Chief of Operations, UNMAS, 20 September 2017.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The mine action sector is overseen by the National Mine Action Committee (la Commission Nationale de Lutte Antimines, CNLAM), a multisectoral body which is supposed to meet twice a year and is composed of deputies from both parliamentary chambers, officials from four ministries, and representatives of five civil society organisations linked to mine action.¹²

Management of the sector is under the Centre Congolais de Lutte Antimines (CCLAM), established in 2012 with support from the UN Mine Action Coordination Centre (UNMACC) and UNMAS. It is responsible for setting strategy, accrediting operators, information management, budgeting, and resource mobilisation. Law 11/007 of 9 July 2011 underpins the national mine action programme.¹³ CCLAM took over from UNMAS as the national focal point for demining in early 2016 overseeing accreditation, issuing task orders, conducting quality assurance (QA)/quality control (QC) and managing the national database but lack of capacity remained a concern for operators.¹⁴

The government has provided funding for CCLAM's operating expenses but has not funded operations. In 2018, that support amounted to US\$530,000¹⁵ but the Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in 2021 indicated this would fall to US\$272,271 and CCLAM indicated it would argue for government support for operations.¹⁶

CCLAM organised four online coordination meetings with all the mine action stakeholders in 2022 where actors were able to share information on their activities and the challenges faced while undertaking the operations, such as the security conditions.¹⁷

UNMAS started working in DR Congo in 2002, when it established UNMACC as part of the UN Stabilisation Mission in the DR Congo (MONUSCO), coordinating mine action through offices in the capital, Kinshasa, and five other cities. In 2014, in accordance with Security Council Resolution 2147 (2014), humanitarian mine action was removed from

MONUSCO's mandate although it has continued financial support and in 2020 and 2021 UNMAS was funded exclusively by MONUSCO.¹⁸

UNMAS supported mine action in DR Congo in 2022 operating with 19 staff (10 national and 9 international), but in 2023 UNMAS added seven staff for a project funded by the Korean International Cooperation Agency for a total of 26 staff (12 national and 14 international, including 6 provided as in-kind assistance by Switzerland). UNMAS has offices in Kinshasa, Beni, and Goma, as well as three staff in the supply office in Entebbe in Uganda which supports UNMAS in DR Congo in procurement, logistics, human resources, finance, and contracting.¹⁹

UNMAS contracted an international operator, G4S, for improvised explosive device disposal (IEDD) as well as explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) training. It awarded national operator AFRILAM a three-year contract to conduct EOD, which runs until June 2024. UNMAS signed an agreement with the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) on 22 November 2022 for capacity building support to mine action with an implementation period running from 1 December 2022 to 30 November 2024. The project encompasses training of national Congolese operators on clearance and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) as well as on-the-job support for CCLAM. In 2023, UNMAS conducted training sessions for three national NGOs, focusing on EORE and non-technical-survey (NTS). In addition, UNMAS has selected an international contractor, TDI, to build the capabilities of national operators in clearance activities.²⁰

UNMAS provided technical advice to support national authorities preparing the Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in September 2021 and participating in a meeting convened by the APMBC Implementation Support Unit in November 2020 on what was needed for DR Congo to fulfil its Article 5 obligations.²¹

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTIONS

DR Congo does not yet have national standards or policies covering the protection of the environment during mine action operations. A national standard on environmental management has reportedly been prepared as part of a review of national standards by CCLAM but it has not been officially released.²²

12 CCLAM, "Stratégie Nationale de Lutte Antimines 2018–2019", November 2017, p. 11. The government ministries represented in CNLAM include defence, health, interior, and humanitarian affairs.

13 Email from Maître Sudi Alimasi Kimputu, Director, CCLAM, 3 June 2019.

14 Emails from Jean-Denis Larsen, NPA, 5 March 2018; Bill Marsden, MAG, 11 May 2018; and Guillaume Zerr, Humanity & Inclusion (HI), 24 May 2018.

15 Email from Maître Sudi Alimasi Kimputu, CCLAM, 3 June 2019.

16 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 6 July 2021, p. 11.

17 Email from Erly Munoz, UNMAS, 16 August 2023.

18 UN Security Council Resolution 2147, 28 March 2014; and email from Aurelie Fabry, Programme Officer, UNMAS, 28 April 2021.

19 Emails from Erly Munoz, UNMAS, 16 and 17 August 2023.

20 Email from Erly Munoz, UNMAS, 25 August 2023.

21 Email from Aurelie Fabry, UNMAS, 28 April 2021.

22 Email from Erly Munoz, UNMAS, 25 August 2023.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The national mine action strategy for 2018–19 stipulated that all mine action activities, particularly those related to risk education and victim assistance, must reflect the different needs of individuals according to age and gender, in a non-discriminatory manner. It also stated that the principles of non-discrimination against women as set out in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) are to be respected, ensuring that women are involved in all essential stages of mine action (planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation), and that activities take into account the special needs of women and girls.²³

CCLAM reported in 2019 that approximately 30% of operational staff in survey and clearance teams were female and only around 7% of managerial or supervisory positions were held by women, but that local customs about the employment roles appropriate for women were an obstacle to hiring female staff.²⁴ DR Congo's 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request said CCLAM would work closely with

operators to integrate women deminers into mine action so that women make up 30% of the staff in operations teams and at least half the members of risk education teams. It said risk education task orders would focus on increasing the participation of women in outreach sessions.²⁵

CCLAM had previously reported that mine action survey teams were already gender balanced and that efforts were undertaken to ensure that all community groups, including women and children, are consulted. It also noted, however, the need to continue raising awareness on gender equality in certain communities as local customs can discriminate against women undertaking certain categories of work.²⁶

DCA reported it has a policy of equal access to employment for men and women and mine action data are disaggregated by gender and age. DCA's 32 demining programme personnel included two women both of whom were employed in field roles.²⁷ UNMAS reported women made up 42% of 22 staff in its DR Congo programme and that seven of 29 AFRILAM staff were also female.²⁸

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

CCLAM took over responsibility for information management from UNMAS in 2016 but has lacked the capacity and resources to manage and maintain the national Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database. As a result, mine action stakeholders reported that in 2022 data suffers from gaps and the database is not considered up to date or reliable.²⁹ As at September 2023, DR Congo had yet to submit an Article 7 report for the whole of 2022.

The 2018–19 national strategy acknowledged a need to build staff capacity, improve data collection, update the database on a regular basis, and provide data disaggregated by age and gender.³⁰ Persistent issues have included gaps in data, lack of maintenance, reporting on land release that did not comply with international terminology, misreporting items of UXO as mines, and a lack of verification of incoming reports.³¹

Until 2020, CCLAM information management received support from UNMAS, which assisted monthly updates of data to improve operational coordination, collaborated on developing an information management work plan, and provided a range of computer and digital hardware.³² Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) also previously provided refresher training for CCLAM staff in use of IMSMA and the associated Geographic Information System (GIS).³³ In 2020, CCLAM did not request IM support from UNMAS and a request for support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) was not met due to the Centre's lack of capacity and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.³⁴

UNMAS maintains an internal mine action database, which is said to be updated regularly.³⁵ From August 2023, all operators submit data directly to the UNMAS database using ARC123 software.³⁶

23 "Stratégie Nationale de Lutte Antimines 2018–2019", November 2017, pp. 15–16.

24 Email from Maître Sudi Alimasi Kimputu, CCLAM, 3 June 2019.

25 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 30–31.

26 Email from Maître Sudi Alimasi Kimputu, CCLAM, 3 June 2019.

27 Email from Miroslav Skoumal, Country Director, DCA, 23 April 2023.

28 Email from Francois A: Lewis, EOD Project Officer/OPS/QA Officer, UNMAS, 17 August 2023.

29 Emails from Erly Munoz, UNMAS, 16 August 2023.

30 "Stratégie Nationale de Lutte Antimines 2018–2019", November 2017, p. 14.

31 Skype interview with Jean-Denis Larsen, Programme Manager, NPA, 24 April 2019; and email, 24 May 2019.

32 Email from Aurelie Fabry, UNMAS, 13 April 2020.

33 Email from Jean-Denis Larsen, NPA, 24 May 2019.

34 Emails from Aurelie Fabry, UNMAS, 28 April and 7 June 2021.

35 Email from Jean-Denis Larsen, UNMAS, 31 May 2022.

36 Email from Erly Munoz, UNMAS, 16 August 2023.

PLANNING AND TASKING

An Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in July 2021 included a work plan with monthly clearance targets which would provide for tackling a total of 4,370m² in 2022, 59,644m² in 2023, 37,868m² in 2024, and 19,482m² in 2025.³⁷ This made for a total of more than 120,000m², which exceeded the 117,030m² that the request has identified as remaining contamination. The request allowed a year for the survey of Aru and Dungu districts and said it plans to conduct non-technical and technical survey at the same time so as to facilitate manual clearance of areas identified as hazardous. The request allowed a year for these operations but did not state when it expected to implement them.

In January 2022, DR Congo completed a "National Strategic Plan for the Fight Against Anti-Personnel Mines and Explosive Remnants of War", including cluster munitions, for 2023 to 2032. The plan sets out general objectives for the coming decade, including completing mine clearance by 2025 and cluster munition remnants (CMR) by 2032. The strategy aims to ensure all mined areas are cleared, that survey of CMR and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) is completed rapidly, and that a decentralised EOD capacity is established to tackle residual contamination.³⁸ The 76-page strategy sets out a detailed budget for the 10 years of the plan³⁹ but provides no details or timeline for survey or clearance of hazardous areas.

The new strategy follows on from the National Mine Action Strategy 2018–19, prepared with support from UNMAS and the GICHD, which focused on seeking to fulfil DR Congo's Article 5 mine clearance obligations by 2020, one year ahead of its extended 2021 deadline.⁴⁰ The strategy also set out the objective of completing procedures for ratifying the Convention on Cluster Munitions by the end of 2018.⁴¹ CCLAM has not reported any action to seek to implement this plan. The strategy identified three strategic pillars: effective and efficient management of the explosive threat; ensuring the national programme had the capacity to manage residual contamination in a sustainable manner; and that the legal framework of the mine action programme was strengthened through the adoption of national laws and other implementing measures and adherence to relevant treaties.⁴² None of these goals was met.

Tasking continues to be challenged by the remote location of many hazardous areas and database weaknesses, including misidentification of ERW as mines and the addition of hazards to the database without robust evidence of the presence of explosive ordnance.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

DR Congo has 24 national standards developed with support from the GICHD⁴³ and the national strategy for 2018–19 called for revision of the standards and awareness raising of their content through training.⁴⁴ CCLAM reported in June 2019 it had revised the National Technical Standards and Guidelines (NTSGs) during 2018, amending mainly the standards relating to demining techniques and safety of deminers.⁴⁵

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

International engagement with DR Congo's mine action programme has decreased following the closure of programmes by NPA in 2019 and TDI in February 2020. Since 2021, DCA has been the only international humanitarian organisation active in DR Congo. In 2022, it had a total staff of 85, of whom 33 (1 international and 32 national staff) worked full time on its humanitarian demining programme funded by the US State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM/WRA). DCA capacity included one manual clearance team of ten, a four-person EOD team, and a two-person

survey team. The programme worked from a country office in Goma, a support office in Kabalo, and a field camp in Kasinge for operations in Tanganyika province. DCA expected to add nine staff to the demining programme in 2023, including a multitask team of seven (including the team leader and deputy), an operations manager, and a national medical staff member, as well as three drivers. The extra capacity was intended to address some big SHAs in Kasai Central province and added by CCLAM to the national database in 2022.⁴⁶

37 2021 Article 5 Extension Request, Table 14, p. 65.

38 "Plan Stratégique National de Lutte Contre les Mines Antipersonnel et les Restes Explosifs de Guerre en République Démocratique du Congo 2023–2032", January 2022, p. 11.

39 Ibid., January 2022, p. 63.

40 "Stratégie Nationale de Lutte Antimines 2018–2019", November 2017, p. 4.

41 "Plan Stratégique National de Lutte Contre les Mines Antipersonnel et les Restes Explosifs de Guerre en République Démocratique du Congo 2023–2032", January 2022, p. 23.

42 "Stratégie Nationale de Lutte Antimines 2018–2019", November 2017, p. 5.

43 Statement of DR Congo, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 2 July 2020.

44 "Stratégie Nationale de Lutte Antimines 2018–2019", November 2017, p. 34.

45 Skype interview with Jean-Denis Larsen, NPA, 24 April 2019; and email, 24 May 2019.

46 Email from Miroslav Skoumal, DCA, 23 April 2023.

UNMAS contracted a three-person IED disposal team from G4S with two international staff in Beni in North Kivu province. UNMAS also contracted five multitask teams of national NGO AFRILAM in 2022, which comprised 44 operations personnel and 6 management and support staff (see Table 2). Three of these teams were engaged largely in a range of tasks supporting MONUSCO in North and South Kivu and Tanganyika provinces, while the other two were assigned to supporting DR Congo's mine action programme in Kasai and Kasai Central.⁴⁷

Table 2: Mine action capacity under contract to UNMAS 2022⁴⁸

Capacity	Location	Coverage areas	No. of personnel
AFRILAM Management	Goma	Management and support	6
AFRILAM Multitask Team 1	Goma	North Kivu province	8
AFRILAM Multitask Team 2	Bukavu	South Kivu province	8
AFRILAM Multitask Team 3	Beni	North Kivu and Ituri provinces	8
AFRILAM Multitask Team 4	Tshikapa	Kasai province	10
AFRILAM Multitask Team 5	Kanaga	Kasai Central province	10
G4S IEDD team	Beni	North Kivu province	3

DEMINER SAFETY

No accidents were reported in the course of demining or EOD operations in 2022. Insecurity, however, posed a persistent challenge and UNMAS reported numerous EOD tasks had to be postponed or replanned due to the activities of armed groups such as M23 and ADF in North Kivu province and Mambasa in Ituri province. UNMAS also reported a surge in IED incidents starting in the second half of 2021, recording a total of 51 in 2021 and 57 in 2022 compared with a total of 16 in the three years from 2018 to 2020.⁴⁹

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

DCA appears to have conducted the only AP mine clearance in DR Congo in 2022, releasing a total of 34,032m² through survey and clearance in two provinces, Tshopo and Tanganyika resulting in destruction of four AP mines and ninety items of UXO (see Table 3). This marked a drop from 43,139m² released by DCA in 2022 and 13 AP mines destroyed in 2021.⁵⁰

Table 3: Land release by DCA in 2022⁵¹

Province/region	Area cancelled (m ²)	Area reduced (m ²)	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Tanganyika/Kabalo	0	3,950	26,254	4	76
Tanganyika/Kalemie	800	0	0	0	0
Tshopo/Kisangani	654	0	2,374	0	14
Totals	1,454	3,950	28,628	4	90

AFRILAM, mandated by UNMAS to conduct protection of civilians threat mitigation, was mainly active clearing IEDs, undertaking 172 tasks in 2022 which resulted in releasing 295,299m² through technical survey and destroying 178 items of UXO. G4S conducted six tasks, disposing of 30 IEDs and 6 other UXO items.⁵²

⁴⁷ Emails from Jean-Denis Larsen, UNMAS, 31 May 2022 and Erly Munoz, UNMAS, 16 August 2023.

⁴⁸ Email from Erly Munoz, UNMAS, 16 August 2023.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Email from Miroslav Skoumal, DCA, 23 April 2023.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Email from Erly Munoz, UNMAS, 16 August 2023.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the 42-month extension granted by States Parties in November 2021), DR Congo is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2025. It is unlikely to meet this deadline based on progress to date.

The lack of clear or consistent data released by CCLAM prevents a clear determination of DR Congo's operating results or progress towards its Article 5 targets. In November 2019, the DR Congo said it had 49 hazardous areas totalling 469,338m² but it would not need to extend its January 2021 Article 5 deadline.⁵³ In August 2020, after reviewing data, it said there were 128,842m² to release and it asked for its third extension of 18 months to complete the job.⁵⁴ Less than a year later, having released a little over 13,000m², and reporting it still had 33 hazardous areas covering around 117,000m², DR Congo submitted its fourth extension request asking for 42 more months to complete clearance.⁵⁵ That request was overtaken 10 months later by new data that more than tripled the DR Congo's estimate of contamination, reporting 37 hazardous areas affecting 399,969m² and undermining the proposed land release work plan and financial projections.⁵⁶

The decision by the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties in 2021 that accepted DR Congo's latest extension request asked DR Congo to submit a detailed updated work plan by April 2023 with annual projections of which areas remained to be addressed and by which organisations.⁵⁷ CCLAM had not produced an updated work plan as of September 2023 and had not submitted an Article 7 report covering the full year 2022.

Table 4: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2022	28,628
2021	43,149
2020	10,562
2019 ⁵⁸	146,761
2018	275,700
Total	504,800

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

DR Congo does not have plans in place to address residual contamination once its Article 5 obligations have been fulfilled but is reportedly developing with partners a work plan to address this issue. The plan will detail the necessary training in coordination and demining and the equipment needed for the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC), the Congolese National Police (PNC) and civilian staff in CCLAM.⁵⁹

⁵³ Statement of DR Congo, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 26 November 2019.

⁵⁴ Statement of DR Congo, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 2 July 2020.

⁵⁵ Article 5 deadline Extension Request, July 2021, p. 8.

⁵⁶ Article 7 Report (covering 1 January 2019 to 31 March 2022), Form C.

⁵⁷ Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties, Decision on the DR Congo request for an extension of its Article deadline, 6 November 2021.

⁵⁸ Article 7 Report (covering 2018), p. 7. Although ostensibly a report for 2018, it included results for the first three months of 2019.

⁵⁹ Email from Erly Munoz, UNMAS, 25 August 2023.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MAY 2023
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: LIGHT

GOVERNMENT ESTIMATE

31,953M²

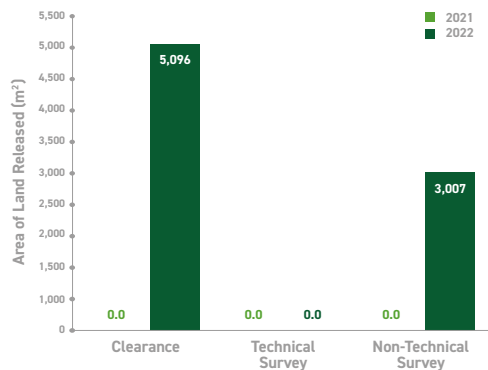
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

5,096M²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

43

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2022, Ecuador requested and was granted a fourth extension to its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline through to the end of 2025. This latest extension request, granted for an additional three years, was based on Ecuador claiming to have the resources and funding in place to complete clearance. Despite having become a State Party to the APMBC in 1999, Ecuador still does not have an accurate baseline of contamination and has made extremely slow overall progress in Article 5 implementation, raising compliance concerns with Article 5. For the first time since, 2019 when it cleared 2,899m², and after two years of inactivity due to the COVID-19 Pandemic; Ecuador announced that it had cleared 5,096m² of mined area in 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Ecuador should prioritise necessary non-technical survey (NTS) to accurately determine its baseline of anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination and thereby inform its completion planning.
- Ecuador should further clarify why retrospective quality control is required, how much released area this relates to, what quality control will involve, and what the planned time scale is for conducting the quality control.
- Ecuador should develop National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) in line with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), in addition to standard operating procedures (SOPs) for demining through to completion.
- Ecuador should develop a strategy for managing any residual contamination discovered after Article 5 completion.
- Ecuador should elaborate a gender and diversity policy and mine action data should be systematically disaggregated by sex and age.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	5	5	Ecuador's estimate of AP mine contamination was mostly unchanged in 2022. Ecuador now has only suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) that require NTS and accordingly the size of contamination may be far smaller than reported. In its 2022 Article 5 deadline extension request, Ecuador pledged to conduct NTS and technical survey (TS) of all hazardous areas in order to cancel, confirm, or reduce SHA as per IMAS. A specific plan for this work has annual targets through to 2025.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	6	6	There is clarity of roles and responsibilities at a national level and Ecuador has the necessary demining infrastructure in place. National funding was provided to the mine action programme in 2022. Ecuador has estimated it requires almost US\$9.5 million to complete clearance by the end of 2025, all of which has now been allocated from the national budget. This budget does not include funds for quality control (QC) of some of the already cleared areas. The Organization of American States (OAS) Integrated AP Mine (AICMA) Program will provide technical assistance and cooperation, as well as implement external QC. Ecuador needs to develop national standards and SOPs in line with IMAS and update land release methodologies
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	3	3	Ecuador does not have a gender and diversity policy or plan for Mine Action. There are female deminers within the Army Battalion of Engineers "Cotopaxi", but no further details were provided on the proportion of women in 2022 or on their position. Women, children, and ethnic minorities are said to be informed about planned demining operations.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	4	5	Ecuador uses the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) and geo-referenced tools are being incorporated into the general database. Ecuador submitted its latest Article 5 deadline extension request in March 2022, providing details of its planned survey and clearance to 2025. In August 2022, Ecuador submitted a revised request with additional information requested by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation. Ecuador had not submitted its Article 7 report covering 2022, as of September 2023.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	6	6	Ecuador restarted demining in August 2022. Its revised annual land release targets in its latest extension request amount to around 10,000m ² per year to 2025. In addition, Ecuador plans to carry out QC of some of the areas released since 2000 but has not yet given details on the time and resources required.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	5	6	Ecuador claims to conduct survey and clearance according to the IMAS. It does not have national standards and SOPs but only operational manuals (one binational with Peru and one national). To date, all clearance has been conducted manually with mechanical demining support. The remaining clearance will also be manual due to the terrain in the Cordillera del Condor.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	3	1	Ecuador cleared AP mined area in 2022 but is not on track to meet its Article 5 deadline and was granted an extension of its Article 5 deadline to 2025, its fourth such request since 2016. It should be able to complete clearance by the new deadline, but this will still require increased land release output and greater political will.
Average Score	4.5	4.4	Overall Programme Performance: POOR

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- National Centre for Humanitarian Demining (CENDESMI)
- General Command for Demining and EOD (CGDEOD)
- Humanitarian Demining Certification Unit (UCDH)

Army Corps of Engineers (CEE)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- CEE Battalion No. 68 Cotopaxi
- Joint Ecuador-Peru Binational Humanitarian Demining Unit (Not operational since end of 2018)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- Mine Action Integral Program Ecuador– Organisation of American States (AICMA EC Mission – OAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Ecuador reported that, as at end 2022, 31,953m² of AP mined area remained in Zamora Chinchipe province containing an estimated 2,866 mines. The estimated area is found in 47 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) across four cantons in Zamora Chinchipe province (see Table 1).¹ CENDESMI considers that the new baseline is accurate, since the data on contamination were assembled through technical data sheets ("fichas técnicas") and different reports (Hazardous Area Reports) and all contain geo-referenced sketches revised by the same technical engineering personnel who laid the different minefields. Moreover, the communities in the affected municipalities are said to have been consulted, including women and children from diverse ethnic groups.² But In its revised 2022 Article 5 deadline extension request, Ecuador had said that of all the hazardous areas in Zamora Chinchipe province, 26 SHAs measuring 7,521m² had no geospatial coordinates and thus would require further survey for localisation.³

Table 1: AP mined area by canton (at end 2022)⁴

Province	Canton	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)
Zamora Chinchipe	Chinchipe (Chito)	0	0	1	7,009
	Yanzatza	0	0	3	6,565
	Nangaritzza	0	0	9	1,490
	El Pangui	0	0	34	16,889
Totals		0	0	47	31,953

The amount of land released during 2022 is consistent with the baseline provided in the 2022 extension request. Ecuador plans to conduct NTS and technical survey (TS) on all remaining hazardous areas with cancellation and reduction of areas expected.⁵ No previously unknown mined areas were reported during 2022.⁶

With respect to one hazardous area (PV2_07), located on the Ecuadorian side of the border with Peru, the Army Engineers (Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejercito, CEE) and the Peruvian Army's Directorate General for Humanitarian Demining (DIGEDEHUME) were planning to meet virtually during September 2022 in order to exchange information that would allow to find the exact location of this area.⁷ At the time of writing, no further information on the outcome of this meeting had been reported.

Mine contamination in Ecuador results from its 1995 border conflict with Peru. The most heavily mined section of the border is the Condor mountain range (Cordillera del Condor) which was at the centre of the dispute between the two countries.

The additional information on Ecuador's extension request submitted in 2022 mentions the negative impact on indigenous communities and their livelihoods, with hunting and food gathering spaces reduced and communication lost between families on both sides of the Ecuador-Peru border.⁸

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The national mine action programme is managed by the National Centre for Humanitarian Demining (CENDESMI). The Ecuadorian government created CENDESMI by executive decree in 1999.⁹ It is an interministerial body chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility and comprising the Ministry of National Defence through the General Command for Demining and EOD (CGDEOD), the Ministry of Public Health, and the CEE.¹⁰

1 Emails from CENDESMI, 4 August, and 6 and 7 September 2023. The information provided to Mine Action Review mistakenly referred to 53 SHAs owing to a mathematical error.

2 Email from CENDESMI, 4 August 2023.

3 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request (revised), 17 August 2022, pp. 30–31.

4 Emails from 4 August, and 6 and 7 September 2023; 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request (revised), 17 August 2022, p. 31; and Article 7 report (covering 2021), Form C.

5 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 28 and 29; 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request (revised), 17 August 2022, pp. 7, 30–34.

6 Email from CENDESMI, 4 August 2023.

7 Binational Act No. 27 between the Director General of the CEE and DIGEDEHUME, 26 July 2022: "Acta de Entendimiento No. 27, para la Realización de Desminado Humanitario en la Frontera Terrestre Común Ecuador - Perú", Third Agreement, 26 July 2022, §2.3.b, p. 12.

8 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request (revised), 17 August 2022, pp. 37–38.

9 Executive Decree No. 1297, 22 September 1999.

10 Revised 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 17 August 2022, pp. 26–27.

CENDESMI is responsible for overseeing compliance with the APMBC, while the CEE is responsible for coordinating the planning of demining and COTOPAXI is tasked with conducting land release operations and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD).¹¹

Engineer Battalion No. 68 "Cotopaxi" is the national operator responsible for demining along with its mission to conduct EOD throughout Ecuador.¹²

The Humanitarian Demining Certification Unit (UCDH) was created in 2018 through interministerial agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence. It sits at CENDESMI and has as mission to conduct quality control (QC) of cleared areas by the Cotopaxi Battalion, before the released land is declared mine-free.¹³

The national mine action authorities of Ecuador and Peru have made six agreements related to humanitarian demining, risk education, exchange of information about hazardous areas to be released, approval of an air medevac protocol, and an analysis of the basis on which Peru may enter Ecuadorian territory to conduct clearance.¹⁴

Ecuador currently funds all its demining operations. It previously reported allocating almost US\$21 million for demining personnel, materials, and equipment for 2014–22.¹⁵ This should have amounted to around \$2 million per year from 2019 to 2022.¹⁶ However, only \$821,953 was provided to the demining programme in 2019 and no national funding was allocated to the demining programme in 2020 or in 2021

due to the reallocation of the demining budget to the public health response following the COVID-19 outbreak.

Ecuador estimated in its latest Article 5 deadline extension request that it would require almost US\$9.5 million for demining from June 2022 to December 2025, all of which has been allocated from the national budget.¹⁷ In 2022, according to the Ministry of Defence, the allocated funds achieved an almost 95% implementation rate.¹⁸ In February and March 2022, the Office of Security Cooperation and the United States (US) Southern Command donated demining equipment and supported the training and retraining of demining personnel and paramedics.¹⁹

In March 2022, a Cooperation and Technical Assistance Agreement was signed by Ecuador and the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) through its Integrated AP Mine (AICMA) Programme.²⁰ The Agreement foresees that the AICMA-EC Mission will support Ecuador to fulfil the obligations of the APMBC, and in particular Article 5. The OAS will provide technical assistance for capacity building; training and accreditation in quality assurance (QA); external monitoring; international fundraising; and the provision of equipment and supplies.²¹ For the external QC monitoring component, the Interamerican Defense Board (Junta Interamericana de Defensa (JID) will support the AICMA-EC Mission to create teams of monitors and provide technical advisors. They will be responsible for developing a quality management system and ensure the certification of land released according to IMAS.²²

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Ecuador is not believed to have any specific environmental policies in place for its mine action programme. Nonetheless, CENDESMI has reported to Mine Action Review that Ecuador has detailed national environmental legislation. The environment is taken into account during demining, for example using prefabricated wooden sticks or in the management of waste in the demining camps through recycling methods and the evacuation of non-organic waste.²³

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

According to CENDESMI, gender equality is promoted among the Ecuadorian Armed Forces and in the different units and there are women EOD-qualified officers.²⁴

11 2017 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 39 and 40.

12 Revised 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 17 August 2022, p. 27.

13 Interministerial Accord No. 000001 (Acuerdo Interministerial 000001), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility – Ministry of Defence, 11 July 2018, at: <https://bit.ly/47GDdjW>.

14 Accountability Report 2022, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility, 19 May 2023, pp. 5–6.

15 Ecuador Demining Action Plan 2019–2022, p. 20.

16 Ibid.; and Statement of Ecuador, Committee on Article 5 implementation, Geneva, 22 May 2019; and Statement of Ecuador, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 27 November 2019.

17 Revista Ejército Ecuador No. 205, 2023, pp. 75; and Revised 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 17 August 2022, p. 28.

18 Ministry of Defence, Institutional Management Report 2022, 2023, pp. 30; Ministry of Defence, Annual Allocated Plan 2022, 17 March 2022, p. 15.

19 Email from Engineers Battalion No. 68 Cotopaxi, 11 March 2022.

20 "Programa de Acción Integral contra Minas Antipersonal de la OEA (AICMA – OEA)", at: <https://bit.ly/3RDT3TD>.

21 Email from Tammy Hall, General Coordinator, OAS Mine Action Program, Department of Public Security, 13 August 2022.

22 Cooperation and Technical Assistance Agreement between the Republic of Ecuador and the General Secretariat of the Organisation of American States in relation to the Integral Mine Action Program in Ecuador, 15 March 2022, Annex 1, p. 8.

23 Email from CENDESMI, 4 August 2023.

24 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2022, p. 25.

Since 2014 and until 2020, Ecuador has employed three women deminers, equating to 3% of the total trained.²⁵ Ecuador has said it will continue to include and train female personnel “according to their availability”.²⁶ In its August 2022 revised deadline extension request, Ecuador indicated that training of new women deminers depends on the assignment by the General Directorate of Human Resources of the Ecuadorian Army to the battalion but it has provided no further information on plans to mainstream gender and diversity within the mine action programme.²⁷ Information on the gender distribution of personnel in 2022 was provided for Cotopaxi (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: Gender distribution at Battalion No. 68 Cotopaxi in 2022²⁸

Battalion No. 68 “Cotopaxi”	Total staff	Total number of women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Total women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Total women in operational positions
	163	3	20	0	140	3

As such, the 20MSP, in granting the extension request reminded Ecuador of the significance of providing detailed information on how it will mainstream gender and diversity within the Mine Action Programme.²⁹

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Ecuador continues to use the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA). During 2022 and 2023, the general database was being upgraded with geo-referenced tools to improve the quality of information.³⁰

Ecuador has submitted its Article 7 report consistently but they are often late and there have been issues with data accuracy in the past. In May 2022, Ecuador submitted its Article 7 report covering 2021 although the information provided is mostly unchanged since 2019. As at September 2023, Ecuador had not yet submitted its Article 7 Report covering 2022.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Ecuador presented a plan for mine clearance for 2022 to 2025 in its 2022 Article 5 deadline extension request. Ecuador planned to restart demining in June 2022 to release 10,056m² across 17 CHAs in Nangaritza and El Pangui in Zamora Chinchipe province by the end of the year, which did not happen as planned. Operations started only in August 2022. A further 10,000m² is planned to be released annually in 2023–25 (see Table 3 overleaf).³¹

Table 3: Planned land release in Zamora Chinchipe in 2022–25³²

Year	Mined areas	Area (m ²)
2022	17	10,056
2023	9	10,000
2024	8	10,004
2025	19	9,996
Totals	53	40,056

The Twentieth Meeting of States Parties, in granting Ecuador's request for an Article 5 deadline extension until 2025, has requested that Ecuador submit an updated, detailed work plan by 30 April 2024, based on the progress made until that date. The work plan should include an updated list of all contaminated CHAs and SHAs remaining to be released, annual projections of the areas and which areas will be addressed during the remaining period covered by the request, and a revised budget.³³

As noted above, one particular hazardous area (PV-2_07) requires a specific approach by Ecuador. The area in Yanzatza canton, which covers an estimated 6,215m² and contains 240 PRB M35 mines, needs help in identifying the precise location from Peru.³⁴ It is not known if this issue has been resolved.

25 2017 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 39 and 41; and email from Engineers Battalion No. 68 Cotopaxi, 25 March 2020.

26 Ecuador Demining Action Plan 2019–2022, p. 20.

27 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request (revised), 17 August 2022, p. 27.

28 Emails from CENDESMI, 4 August, and 6 and 7 September 2023.

29 Decision on the Article 5 deadline extension request by Ecuador, 20MSP, 21–25 November 2022, p. 4.

30 Emails from CENDESMI, 4 August, and 6 and 7 September 2023; and from Engineers Battalion No. 68 Cotopaxi, 11 March 2022.

31 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request (revised), 17 August 2022, p. 31.

32 Ibid.

33 Decision on the request submitted by Ecuador for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention, 20MSP, 21–25 November 2022, p. 1.

34 Binational Act No. 27 between the Director General of the CEE and the DIGEDEHUME, 26 July 2022 “Acta de Entendimiento No. 27, para la Realización de Desminado Humanitario en la Frontera Terrestre Común Ecuador - Perú”, Third Agreement, 26 July 2022, §2.3.b, p. 12.

In addition, Ecuador has stated that it is necessary to carry out QC of some of the areas released since 2000, but not yet handed over to communities. These areas had no QC due to the departure of the OAS from Ecuador in 2013 before the process had been finalised. There were discrepancies in the figures provided by Ecuador in the extension request, which alternatively stated the area concerned to amount to 551,742m²,³⁵ 262,711m²,³⁶ or 220,525m²,³⁷ in the provinces of Morona Santiago, Pastaza, and Zamora Chinchipe. In the additional information Ecuador provided on its extension request in August 2022, it clarified that full clearance has been conducted in 94 mined areas covering 220,524m² in Morona Santiago province, 8 areas covering 41,186m² in Zamora Chinchipe, and one area covering 1,000m² in Pastaza, where QC is still needed.³⁸ In October 2023, CENDESMI clarified to Mine Action Review that 103 mined areas cleared between 2000 and 2013, covering 262,710m², are still awaiting QC.³⁹ CENDESMI also clarified that the 551,742m² corresponds to the total land cleared since 2000 by Ecuador. Along the border with Peru, there were 53 areas covering 40,056m² which were pending demining between 2022–25.⁴⁰

Ecuador did not include this in its work plan to 2025 and it should therefore clarify exactly what this QC process will involve in terms of additional time and resources, as well as the budget and resource mobilisation strategy. Ecuador expects, with the support of the AICMA - EC Programme, to raise funds internationally to finalise the quality management (QM) process.⁴¹

Furthermore, cleared areas in the provinces of Loja and El Oro still need to be officially declared mine free by the Humanitarian Demining Certification Unit (UCDH). Ecuador has said it is working on the procedure needed for this purpose and expected the procedure to be finalised in the second half of 2022.⁴² So far, no information has been provided on the stage of development of the procedure.

The situation as at 2022 of QC for mined areas cleared between 2000 and 2013 is set out in Table 4. More recent information has not been provided.⁴³

Table 4: Released land requiring QC

Province	Land release process Status	Observations
Loja	In handover process	Cotopaxi has concluded demining and the file has been delivered to CENDESMI for handover of released land.
El Oro	In handover process	Cotopaxi has concluded demining and the file has been delivered to CENDESMI for handover of released land.
Morona Santiago	QC of cleared areas remains to be conducted	Cleared areas requiring QC total 220,525m ² .
Province	Land release process Status	Observations
Pastaza	QC remains to be conducted in one cleared area	One cleared area still requires QC covering 1,000m ² .
Zamora Chinchipe	QC of cleared areas remains to be conducted	Total cleared land requiring QC amounts to 41,186m ² .

Ecuador prioritises contaminated areas for clearance according to their proximity to the local population and the impact on socio-economic development.⁴⁴ CENDESMI has informed Mine Action Review that the sectors still contaminated by AP mines are very distant from human settlements. Nevertheless, whenever there has been a need, the demining teams have supported logistically the communities and even transported people in and out of the sectors.⁴⁵

35 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request (revised), 17 August 2022, p. 4.

36 Ibid., p. 5.

37 Ibid., p. 4.

38 Ibid., pp. 4 and 8.

39 Ibid., p. 7; and telephone interview CENDESMI 5 October 2023; and emails from CENDESMI 5 and 6 October 2023.

40 Telephone interview with CENDESMI, 5 October 2023; and emails from CENDESMI 5 and 6 October 2023.

41 Revised 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 17 August 2022, p. 5.

42 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2022, p. 6; and Revised 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 17 August 2022, p. 8.

43 Emails from CENDESMI, 4 August, 7 September, and 5 and 6 October 2023.

44 Demining Action Plan 2019–2022, p. 17; and 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request (revised), 17 August 2022, p. 30.

45 Email from CENDESMI, 4 August 2023.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

The process of humanitarian demining in Ecuador is carried out in accordance with the Binational Manual for Humanitarian Demining developed under the cooperation programme with Peru. But the 2015 Manual had not been updated as at August 2023.⁴⁶ The Manual is said to be based on the IMAS but adapted to the Ecuadorian context.⁴⁷

Ecuador has not adopted national mine action standards (NMAS) for land release, NTS, TS, clearance, and EOD, nor has it developed standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the work beyond the Binational Manual.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, CENDESMI has informed that all documentation for demining is revised annually, as well as deminers' knowledge, with two refresher trainings delivered to deminers, supervisors, and QM personnel.⁴⁹

Ecuador stated in its 2022 Article 5 deadline extension request that it plans to conduct NTS on all hazardous areas with cancellation of areas listed in the planned activities. Once this has been completed, TS will be conducted as and where necessary to further reduce areas prior to clearance.⁵⁰ Ecuador also plans for QC of these areas as land is released, which will be conducted by the AICMA-EC Mission of the OAS.⁵¹

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Ecuador did not provide a detailed plan for pending QC in its extension request. The APMBC Committee on Article 5 Implementation highlighted the importance of Ecuador providing such a plan as soon as possible including annual milestones, methodology to be employed, and budget for the carrying out of QC operations. The Committee further noted the importance of Ecuador ensuring that the most efficient and effective methods are employed for QC in line with IMAS.⁵²

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Cotopaxi restarted survey and clearance activities in August 2022. A Binational Humanitarian Demining Unit with Peru operated between 2015 and 2018. During the four years it was operational it cleared a common area located in the Tiwinza square kilometre.⁵³

Table 5: Cotopaxi survey capacities in 2022

Operator	NTS teams	NTS personnel	TS teams	TS personnel
CRD "ZAMORA"	10	54	10	30
Totals	10	54	10	30

Ecuador uses multitask teams, trained and qualified to conduct NTS, TS, and manual clearance in accordance with IMAS.⁵⁴

Table 6: Cotopaxi clearance capacities deployed in 2022

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers
CRD "Zamora"	10	84
Totals	10	84

Ecuador started using drones in 2022 for NTS and was using geo-referenced information tools for TS.⁵⁵

DEMINER SAFETY

No accidents in 2022 involving AP mines were reported.⁵⁶

46 Ibid.

47 Demining Action Plan 2019–2022, p. 17; and 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request (revised), p. 5.

48 Demining Action Plan 2019–2022, p. 17; 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request (revised), p. 17; and 2022 Revised Article 5 Extension Request, 17 August 2022, pp. 11–24.

49 Email from CENDESMI, 4 August 2023.

50 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2022, p. 29; and 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request (revised), 17 August 2022, p. 8.

51 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2022, p. 6; and Cooperation and Technical Assistance Agreement between the Republic of Ecuador and the General Secretariat of the Organisation of American States in relation to the Integral Mine Action Program in Ecuador, 15 March 2022, Annex 1, p. 8.

52 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Analysis of Ecuador's Article 5 deadline extension request of 2022, p. 4.

53 Binational Act between the Director General of DIGEDEHUME and the CEE, 26 July 2022, §2.1, p. 10.

54 Emails from CENDESMI, 6 and 7 September 2023.

55 Email from CENDESMI, 4 August 2023.

56 Ibid.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

After two years of inactivity of demining operations, in February 2022 the vice ministers of Foreign Affairs of Ecuador and Peru met in Lima and reactivated the binational dialogues with a view to strengthening cooperation. As part of the meeting the topic of demining and binational cooperation in the border between the two countries was addressed, paving the way for more dialogue and cooperation between the Ecuador and Peru on demining.⁵⁷

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

During 2022, in Zamora Chinchipe province, Ecuador cancelled 3,007m² of land through NTS and cleared 5,096m² of mined area.

SURVEY IN 2022

During 2022, only NTS was conducted in Ecuador as per Table 7 below.

Table 7: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022⁵⁸

Province	Canton	Sector	Area cancelled (m ²)
Zamora Chinchipe	Pangui	Condor Mirador	3,007
Total			3,007

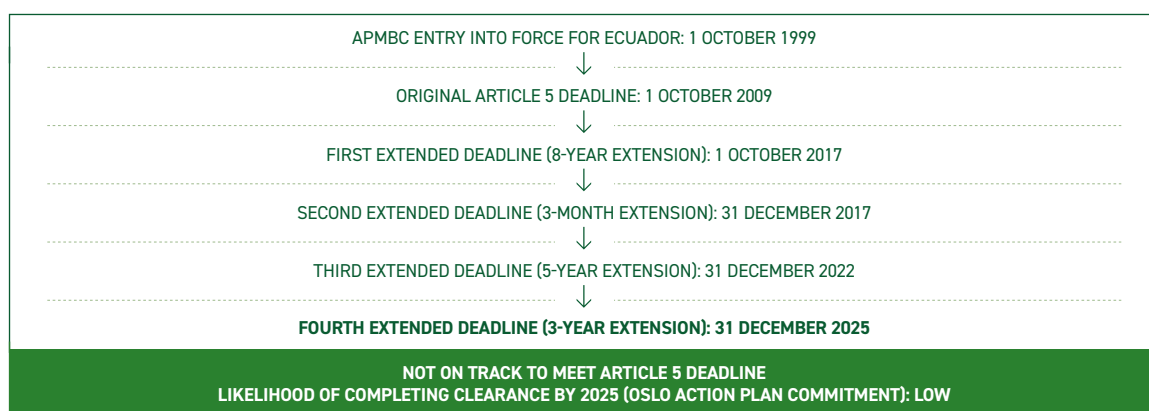
CLEARANCE IN 2022

During 2022, 5,096m² of mined area was cleared with the destruction of 43 AP mines.⁵⁹

Table 8: Mine clearance in 2022

Province	Canton	Sector	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed
Zamora Chinchipe	El Pangui	Condor Mirador	2,684	14
Zamora Chinchipe	Chinapintza	Chinapintza	2,186	17
Zamora Chinchipe	Chinapintza	Shaime (Heroes del Condor)	226	12
Totals			5,096	43

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



⁵⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ecuador, "Ecuador y Perú reactivan el dialogo binacional y fortalecen la cooperación" 11 February 2022.

⁵⁸ Email from CENDESMI, 4 August 2023.

⁵⁹ CEE Management Report 2022, pp. 25–26.

Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the three-year extension granted by States Parties in 2022), Ecuador is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2025.

Ecuador has now submitted four Article 5 deadline extension requests. Ecuador explained that the failure to meet its 1 October 2017 deadline was due to a serious earthquake on 16 April 2016, which required the diversion of the armed forces away from demining, as well as to the physical characteristics of the land and climate conditions in the areas requiring clearance. COVID-19 was given as a reason for subsequent failure to meet its subsequent extended deadline.

Table 9: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2022	5,096
2021	0
2020	0
2019	2,899
2018	14,068
Total	22,063

In 2022, Ecuador released 5,096m² through clearance and 3,007m² via NTS. For 2021 and 2020 there was no survey and clearance outputs, with the mine action programme grounding to a halt due to lack of funding. In 2019, area cleared dropped significantly in comparison to 2018.

Ecuador had set itself a land release target of approximately 10,000m² per year in order to complete clearance of remaining contamination in 53 hazardous areas in the Zamora Chinchipe province by its requested Article 5 deadline. As it stands, the target for 2022 was not achieved, and although funds have been assigned through the pluriannual national budget and has sufficient operational capacity in place, it should be able to easily complete mine clearance by the new deadline. However, given the slow pace and poor productivity levels of the clearance operations to date, this is by no means certain.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Ecuador does not have a strategy in place for managing residual risk post completion but has stated that it will use its current capacity to address areas of residual contamination.⁶⁰ Thus, once Ecuador has fulfilled its obligations to clear AP mines under Article 5 of the APMBC, all the personnel, material, and equipment used for demining will become part of the EOD teams with the competencies and capacities to address any new mined areas that might appear.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Email from Engineers Battalion No. 68 Cotopaxi, 25 March 2020.

⁶¹ Revised 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 17 August 2022, p. 26.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2020
IN SERIOUS VIOLATION OF THE CONVENTION
(NEW EXTENDED DEADLINE AND RENEWED DEMINING NEEDED TO RETURN TO COMPLIANCE)

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM**

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

10_{km²}

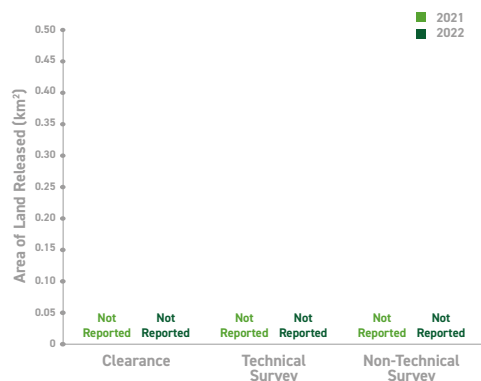
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

NOT REPORTED

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

NOT REPORTED

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Eritrea's Article 5 deadline expired on 31 December 2020 after it was granted an interim extension a year earlier. Eritrea was expected to submit a more detailed extension request by 31 March 2020 but failed to do so and did not seek a further extension, placing it in serious violation of the Convention. Eritrea has also not submitted an Article 7 transparency report since 2014.

Eritrea has wilfully failed to comply with its obligation under Article 5 of the APBMC to complete clearance as soon as possible. There is no indication of any demining since the end of 2013, which, without exceptional justification, would itself amount to a serious violation of the Convention. On 9 June 2023, the President of the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties to the APBMC announced that, following the Decision of the Twentieth Meeting concerning the situation of non-compliance by Eritrea, a request for clarification from Eritrea through the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General had been launched in accordance with Article 8(2) of the

Convention.¹ This is the first time in the history of the Convention that this formal procedure for the facilitation and clarification of compliance has been invoked.

Subsequently, on 3 July 2023, the President of the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties to the APBMC announced that, on 21 June 2023, Eritrea responded to the request for clarification from the UN Secretary-General, indicating that the "Government of the State of Eritrea has decided to withdraw from the Convention in accordance with Article 20 of the Convention".² Eritrea cited its reason for withdrawal from the Convention as "experts on mission for the United Nations assigned to oversee the implementation process ... engaged themselves in unlawful activities, for the purpose of gathering unauthorized information of the state, which could have compromised the state's classified intelligence and thereby threaten the national security."³

¹ Email newsletter, "On the eve of the 2023 Intersessionals", Implementation Support Unit (ISU), 9 June 2023.

² Letter from the President of the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties (21MSP) regarding "Response from Eritrea to the Request for Clarification under Article 8.2", 3 July 2023.

³ Letter from Osman Saleh, Minister, Government of Eritrea, regarding "Decision for the withdrawal of the State of Eritrea from the Anti-Personal [sic] Mine Ban Convention" to the UN Secretary-General, 21 June 2023.

Further to this communication, in a note verbale dated 2 October 2023, submitted to the UN Secretary-General (UNSG), Eritrea indicated that "after consultation with the relevant authority", Eritrea has "decided to withdraw its notification letter of 21 June 2023 addressed to the UNSG regarding the 'withdrawal from the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention'."⁴ Germany, President of 21MSP, welcomed the news and said it looked forward to "working with Eritrea in the Convention's traditional spirit of transparency and cooperation to ensure Eritrea's return to full compliance with the Convention in order to meet our collective desire of putting an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines."⁵

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Eritrea should urgently submit an Article 5 deadline extension request with an up-to-date list of all confirmed or suspected mined areas and a detailed timeline of activities planned for the period sought.
- The authorities in Asmara should re-start release of mined areas confirmed or suspected to contain anti-personnel (AP) mines as a matter of urgency.
- Eritrea must urgently submit its outstanding annual Article 7 reports, the latest of which was due by 30 April 2023.
- Eritrea should reconsider its policy of excluding international technical assistance in mine action, which would support efficient land release and re-open international funding paths.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	3	4	The last estimate of mine contamination in Eritrea dates back to the end of 2013, when Eritrea reported that 434 mined areas remained with a size of 33.4km ² . All area is reportedly suspected hazardous area (SHA). Mine Action Review is unaware of any indication of progress in land release or updated information on the extent of contamination since this time.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	3	3	Eritrea's mine action programme is entirely nationally managed. The Eritrean Demining Agency (EDA) is believed to be still responsible for mine clearance.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	3	3	It is not known if Eritrea has policies in place relating to gender and diversity in mine action.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	0	0	Details on Eritrea's current information management system are not known. Its failure to submit annual Article 7 reports over the past eight years is also a violation of the Convention. Eritrea has also failed to provide any updates on the implementation of its mine action obligations under Article 5 in recent years by other means.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	1	1	Recent details on Eritrea's planning and tasking system are not available.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	3	3	Eritrea is reported to have national mine action standards dating back to 2012. The EDA was responsible for the implementation of quality management activities.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	0	0	Eritrea seemingly made no progress in land release to meet its obligations under its second Article 5 extension period. In 2014, Eritrea reported it would need a third extension. Eritrea submitted an interim request for a third extension in November 2019 with the apparent intention of making a more detailed request by 31 March 2020. As at September 2023, no such request was forthcoming and Eritrea remains in violation of the Convention both for failing to work towards the completion of mine survey and clearance as soon as possible, and for not respecting the procedural provisions of the Article 5 of the Convention.
Average Score	1.9	2.1	Overall Programme Performance: VERY POOR

4 Note Verbale from the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations, 2 October 2023.
5 Letter from the President of the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties (21MSP), to interested international and non-governmental organisations, regarding "Communication from Eritrea to the United Nations Secretary General, 30 October 2023", 30 October 2023.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Eritrea Demining Agency (EDA)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Engineering units of the Eritrean Armed Forces

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Eritrea is affected by mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) dating back to the Second World War, but largely as the result of the struggle for independence in 1962–91 and its armed conflict with Ethiopia in 1998–2000.

In May 2015, in response to Mine Action Review's request for updated information on the state of contamination and mine action activities in Eritrea, the Deputy General Manager of the Eritrea Demining Agency (EDA) reported "no significant progress registered by the EDA currently". He claimed, though, that the EDA was being reorganised in an effort to make "better progress".⁶ Since then, the EDA has not responded to repeated requests from Mine Action Review for further information.

The last estimate of mine contamination reported by Eritrea dates back to the end of 2013, when Eritrea reported 434

mined areas covering an estimated 33.4km.⁷ This was a two-thirds reduction on the earlier estimate of 99km² of June 2011,⁸ and significantly lower than the 129km² identified by the 2004 landmine impact survey.⁹ The UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), which was terminated in 2008 due to restrictions imposed by Eritrea and the cutting off of fuel supplies, has stated that there are 995 "dangerous areas", 914 "mined areas", and 702 minefields in Eritrea. UNMEE estimated that some 250,000 landmines were scattered across the country, with the most common being anti-vehicle (AV) mines and blast and fragmentation AP mines.¹⁰

All contaminated areas in Eritrea are thought to be still, classified as suspected hazardous areas (SHAs). Eritrea has not reported on any plans to establish a more accurate baseline of contamination.

Table 1: Mined area by region (at end 2013)¹¹

Zoba (region)	SHAs	Estimated area (m ²)
Semienawi Keih Bahri	166	9,462,537
Anseba	144	10,230,940
Gash Barka	63	6,252,951
Debub	29	3,894,036
Maakel	24	2,423,325
Debubawi Keih Bahri	8	1,169,029
Totals	434	33,432,818

SHA = Suspected hazardous area

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

UNMEE also estimated that three million items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) are scattered across Eritrea, ranging from small arms ammunition to bombs dropped from aeroplanes.¹²

⁶ Email from Habtom Seghid, Deputy General Manager, Eritrean Demining Agency (EDA), 6 May 2015.

⁷ 2014 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7. This was despite finding 49 previously unrecorded suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) in five regions across an estimated area of 9km² during non-technical survey in 2013. Analysis of Eritrea's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, submitted by the President of the Thirteenth Meeting of the States Parties on behalf of the States Parties mandated to analyse requests for extensions, 20 June 2014, p. 2.

⁸ Eritrea's reply to questions from the Article 5 Analysing Group about its Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 7 June 2011, p. 2.

⁹ Survey Action Center (SAC), "Landmine Impact Survey, Eritrea, Final Report", May 2005, p. 7.

¹⁰ UNMEE, "UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea is withdrawn", accessed 5 June 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/43K5S15>.

¹¹ 2014 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.

¹² UNMEE, "UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea is withdrawn".

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Eritrea mine action programme is entirely nationally managed. The EDA, established in July 2002, is responsible for policy development, regulation of mine action, and the conduct of mine clearance operations. The EDA is believed to report directly to the Office of the President.

Eritrea projected that costs during its Article 5 extension period to 1 February 2020 would amount to more than US\$7 million, all to be raised nationally.¹³ In 2011–13, Eritrea had managed to raise only \$257,000 annually. Eritrea acknowledged at the time that its progress in clearing mines would be slow due to its lack of resources, but it has never been clear how Eritrea intended to secure the funding for its survey and clearance activities, particularly in light of its policy of not accepting international technical assistance.¹⁴ It is not known if Eritrea contributed any national resources to support the cost of the EDA or any survey or clearance of mined areas carried out in 2022. Nor is it known if Eritrea has made any progress on a resource mobilisation strategy in place for Article 5 implementation.

It is not known if there is any forum in Eritrea for convening relevant stakeholders on a regular basis to discuss challenges, progress, and support for Article 5 implementation.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in Eritrea in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Eritrea did not respond to Mine Action Review's inquiries in 2023 about the national mine action programme's policies relating to gender and diversity.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Details on Eritrea's current information management system are not known. Its failure to submit any Article 7 transparency report over the past eight years is itself a violation of the Convention. As at September 2023, Eritrea had yet to submit its latest Article 7 report covering 2022. It has also failed to provide an updated Article 5 work plan or detailed extension request.

PLANNING AND TASKING

There is no recent information available on whether Eritrea has a national mine action strategy or how Eritrea plans its demining operations. Re-survey during the second extension period was planned to involve both technical and non-technical survey of all remaining mined areas across six regions, and to run concurrently with clearance in priority areas in the Anseba, Maakel, and Semienawi Keih Bahri regions.¹⁵

Eritrea submitted an interim Article 5 deadline extension request on 11 November 2019, which was granted at the Fourth Review Conference in November 2019. The request did not contain any updated information on the extent of remaining mined area or on Eritrea's plans to address it. Eritrea committed to submit a detailed follow-on extension request by 31 March 2020, but as at September 2023 had still to do so.¹⁶

13 2014 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 11.
14 Statement of Eritrea, Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 6 December 2013.
15 Statement of Eritrea, Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Geneva, 9 April 2014.
16 Interim Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 11 November 2019, pp. 2–3.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Eritrea reportedly has national mine action standards (NMAS) that date back at least to 2012. It is not known if any updates to the standards have been made in the eleven years since. It has previously been reported that the EDA was responsible for the implementation of quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) activities.¹⁷ It is not known if Eritrea still has any national capacity for survey or clearance of mined areas. Nor is it known if there have been any demining accidents in 2022 or recent years.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In the past, demining has been primarily conducted by the engineering units of the Eritrean defence forces under the supervision of the EDA.¹⁸ According to its 2014 Article 5 deadline extension request, Eritrea planned to deploy “at least” five demining teams during its second extension period.¹⁹ No information is available as to whether any such capacity was deployed.

Since the expulsion of international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in 2005, the authorities have not allowed international operators to conduct survey or clearance in Eritrea.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Under its 2014 extension request, Eritrea projected that up to 15.4km² of mined area could be cleared within five years. It reported that 67.3km² of contaminated area had been cancelled through non-technical survey and that 5.7km² was cleared over 38 mined areas in 2011–13.²⁰

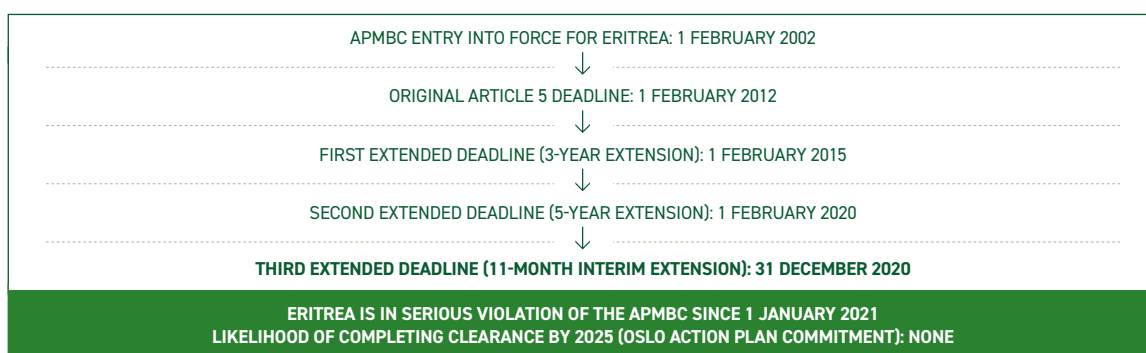
Eritrea has not provided any updates to States Parties to the APMB, nor responded to Mine Action Review recent requests for information on any mine action activities (including survey) undertaken since 2014. In 2013, Eritrea had reported release of 157 SHAs totalling 33.5km², leaving 385 mined areas of close to 24.5km² to be surveyed.²¹ Forty-nine new mined areas with a total size of 9km² were discovered in five of the country's six regions during non-technical survey in 2013: Anseba, Debub, Gash Barka, Maakel, and Semienawi Keih Bahri.²²

Likewise, Eritrea has not made public any information on any mine clearance that it has undertaken in the last nine years. In 2013, Eritrea seemingly cleared approx. 2.26km² of mined area, almost twice the amount cleared in 2012 (1.2km²).²³ The number of AP and AV mines destroyed was not reported.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

As stated, no land release output, whether through survey or clearance, was reported for 2022.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



¹⁷ Article 7 Report (covering 2012), Form F, p. 5.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 10.

²⁰ Analysis of Eritrea's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 20 June 2014, p. 2.

²¹ Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 23 January 2014, p. 7.

²² Analysis of Eritrea's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 20 June 2014, p. 2.

²³ Article 7 Report (covering 2012), Form F, p. 10.

Table 2: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2022	N/R
2021	N/R
2020	N/R
2019	N/R
2018	N/R
Total	N/R

N/R = Not reported

Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the three-year extension granted by States Parties in 2011, a five-year extension granted in 2014, and an interim 11-month extension in 2019), Eritrea was required to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2020. It did not do so and, having failed to submit a more detailed extension request by 31 March 2020, or any further extension request to date has remained in serious violation of the Convention.

Eritrea submitted its last extension request in November 2019, just before the Fourth APMBC Review Conference. In January 2014, Eritrea had previously secured a second Article 5 deadline extension to continue clearance and to complete re-survey of SHAs. The States Parties granted Eritrea its extension request, but noted that five additional years beyond Eritrea's previous February 2015 deadline "appeared to be a long period of time to meet this objective".²⁴

In the interim extension request submitted on 11 November 2019, just two weeks before the start of the Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Eritrea stated it had not gained any clarity on the remaining AP mine contamination during the second extension period as Eritrea's demining capacity had been diverted to other government development programmes, such as construction and agriculture, and that mine action had faced financial and resource shortfalls and required external assistance to continue operations. At the time, Eritrea stated it believes that it has the necessary experience and expertise to address the challenges but would require international support.

As at November 2019, the EDA was said to be in the process of restructuring and an interim request was submitted as no information could be provided on outstanding contamination, survey or clearance. Eritrea claimed it was planning to submit a more detailed extension request by 31 March 2020 with information on remaining mine contamination, progress made and a detailed work plan for implementation.²⁵ However, no further extension request has ever been submitted.

At the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties in November 2021, the States Parties collectively expressed grave concern that Eritrea had not engaged in a cooperative dialogue and remained in a situation of non-compliance. The Meeting noted that if a cooperative dialogue was not established and the status of non-compliance resolved then States Parties should consider seeking clarification and resolving questions relating to compliance by Eritrea through the UN Secretary-General in accordance with Article 8(2) of the Convention.²⁶

In April 2022, one of the Convention's Special Envoys, His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Zeid Al Hussein, met with Amanuel Giorgio, Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations in New York to discuss the situation of non-compliance by Eritrea. During the meeting, the Special Envoy and the Implementation Support Unit recalled the decision of the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties and highlighted the support available to Eritrea to overcome the current impasse.²⁷

Serious concern over Eritrea's continued non-compliance was voiced again by numerous states and civil society organisations at the APMBC Intersessional Meetings in Geneva in June 2022. States again urged Eritrea to re-engage and several put forward the suggestion to collectively consider invoking Article 8(2).

At the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties in November 2022 it was mandated, in accordance with Article 8(2) of the Convention, that the President of the Twenty-first Meeting of the States Parties should, failing the establishment of a cooperative dialogue with Eritrea and resolution of the current status of non-compliance through Eritrea's submission of an extension request by 31 March 2023, seek clarification and resolve questions on compliance by Eritrea through the good offices of the UN Secretary-General.²⁸ On 9 June 2023, the APMBC announced that, following the Decision of the Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties concerning the situation of non-compliance by Eritrea, a request for clarification had been launched through the UN Secretary-General in accordance with Article 8(2) of the Convention.²⁹

24 Decision on Eritrea's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Third APMBC Review Conference, Maputo, 26 June 2014.

25 Interim Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 11 November 2019, pp. 2–3.

26 Draft Final Report of the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC, 18 November 2021.

27 Preliminary Observations of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022, p. 2.

28 Email newsletter, "Colombia concludes presidency, 20MSP recap", ISU, 16 December 2022.

29 Email newsletter, "On the eve of the 2023 Intersessionals", ISU, 9 June 2023.

In July 2023, following Eritrea's lengthy period of wilful non-compliance with the Convention, the President of the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties to the APBMC announced Eritrea's decision to withdraw from the Convention.³⁰ Further to this communication, in a note verbale dated 2 October 2023, submitted to the UNSG, Eritrea indicated that "after consultation with the relevant authority", Eritrea has "decided to withdraw its notification

letter of 21 June 2023 addressed to the UNSG regarding the 'withdrawal from the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention'.³¹ Germany, President of 21MSP, welcomed the news and said it looked forward to "working with Eritrea in the Convention's traditional spirit of transparency and cooperation to ensure Eritrea's return to full compliance with the Convention in order to meet our collective desire of putting an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines."³²

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

As at June 2023, Eritrea had not provided any information on whether it has made any provision for a sustainable capacity to address previously unknown mined areas following completion.

30 Letter from the President of the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties (21MSP) regarding "Response from Eritrea to the Request for Clarification under Article 8.2", 3 July 2023.

31 Note Verbale from the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations, 2 October 2023.

32 Letter from the President of the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties (21MSP), to interested international and non-governmental organisations, regarding "Communication from Eritrea to the United Nations Secretary General, 30 October 2023", 30 October 2023.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2025
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM**

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

20_{km²}

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

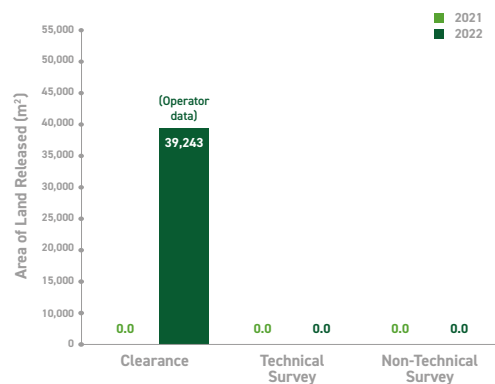
39,243_{m²}

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

1

(OPERATOR DATA)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Ethiopia did not report any survey or clearance in 2022 and, as of writing, had not yet submitted the updated work plan as requested by States Parties in accordance with the decision taken on Ethiopia's 2019 Article 5 deadline extension request. The work of the Mine Action Area of Responsibility, co-ordinated by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), as well as the initiation of survey and clearance by The HALO Trust (HALO) in 2022 are positive steps. But given technical and logistical challenges and a critical lack of funding and capacity, Ethiopia's already ambitious land release targets are now wholly unrealistic.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- As a priority, Ethiopia should re-survey all mined areas to establish an accurate baseline of contamination.
- Ethiopia should ensure the national mine action centre has sufficient resources to sustain an effective mine action programme and mobilise resources to complete clearance.
- Ethiopia should produce an updated work plan, with revised estimates of contamination, annual survey and clearance targets, and a detailed budget, in accordance with the terms of its extension.
- Ethiopia should review of its existing information management capacity and finalise the transfer of its existing data to the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	4	4	Ethiopia has an inflated baseline of mine contamination, 99% of which are in suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) in the Somali region. Ethiopia estimates that only 2% of the total mined area actually contains mines. Ethiopia has requested international assistance for a baseline survey to revise contamination data from the 2001–04 landmine impact survey. HALO began non-technical survey (NTS) in Somali state in 2022.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	4	4	In 2019, it was announced that the national programme would report directly to the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Ethiopia did not report if any funding was made available for survey or clearance in 2022.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	4	3	Ethiopia claims to have a gender policy in place for its mine action centre and which is reflected in its national mine action standards (NMAS). HALO trained and deployed 28 female deminers in 2022.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	4	4	Ethiopia's reports in recent years have demonstrated improvements in accuracy although they lack detail. While Ethiopia submitted an Article 7 report covering 2021 and the first quarter of 2022, it had not submitted one covering the remainder of the year as at September 2023. No updated work plan, as requested by the decision taken by States Parties on Ethiopia's 2019 Article 5 deadline extension request, had been submitted.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	3	3	Ethiopia's 2019 Article 5 deadline extension request contained annual targets for survey and clearance. No survey of anti-personnel mine clearance took place in 2021 and only limited clearance took place in 2022.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	6	6	An update to the NMAS is long overdue and, as at July 2023, Ethiopia had not reported on whether this has happened. Urgent progress is still needed on NTS at scale, given the high degree of uncertainty over the extent and location of contamination.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	4	3	Since April 2020 only minimal land release has occurred. Challenges remain around capacity, funding, and access due to insecurity. In June 2023, Ethiopia acknowledged it would be "impossible" to meet its 2025 deadline. The arrival of HALO has improved the long-term prospects for Article 5 implementation in Ethiopia.
Average Score	4.3	4.0	Overall Programme Performance: POOR

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Head Office of the Ministry of Defence (MoD)
- Ethiopia Mine Action Office (EMAO)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- National Demining Companies (Ethiopian Armed Forces)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust (HALO) (technical agreement with the Ethiopian Ministry of Defence signed in June 2022)

OTHER ACTORS

- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

In its most recent Article 7 Report, submitted in September 2022, Ethiopia reported a total of 152 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) and confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) with a size of 726km² remaining (see Table 1).¹ Ethiopia records mine contamination in six of its twelve² states. Almost all of the anti-personnel (AP) mined area is in SHAs, with just under 99%

¹ Article 7 Report (covering 1 January 2021 to 31 March 2022), Form C.

² On 19 June 2023, Ethiopia's Upper House of parliament voted to form a twelfth regional state called Southern Ethiopian Region. "Ethiopia: Upper House votes to form 12th regional state", *africanews*, accessed 30 August 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/3qP7RHf>.

of the total estimate located in the Somali region.³ UNMAS notes, however, that there is a further, unknown threat along the border with Eritrea, where contamination may be dense. Furthermore, additional contamination is expected to result from the conflict in Tigray,⁴ which has more recently spread into the regions of Amhara and Afar.⁵ Ethiopia has not yet provided an estimate of contamination disaggregated between areas known or suspected to contain AP or anti-vehicle (AV) mines.

Ethiopia's 2019 Article 5 deadline extension request projected that a total of 27km² would require clearance, while the remaining 1,029km² would be cancelled or reduced.⁶ While high levels of cancellation are likely, HALO cautions that additional minefields could be found in the Somali region, which were not captured in the Ethiopian Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) in 2001–04.⁷

Table 1: AP mined area by region (at end March 2022)⁸

Region	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total SHAs/ CHAs	Total area (m ²)
Somali	18	1,027,500	82	718,769,532	100	719,797,032
Gambela	0	0	20	838,000	20	838,000
Afar	6	1,755,049	8	1,915,300	14	3,670,349
Tigray	3	691,989	0	0	3	691,989
Oromia	0	0	13	1,026,105	13	1,026,105
Benishangule Gumuz	2	45,000	0	0	2	45,000
Totals	29	3,519,538	123	722,548,937	152	726,068,475

It is expected that survey of the buffer zone between Ethiopia and Eritrea will be undertaken once demarcation of the border is completed.⁹ Positively, the second extension request predicted negotiations through a joint border commission would allow mine action to be implemented in previously inaccessible areas. Specifically, new “military humanitarian demining” operations were expected to start in the Tigray border minefield.¹⁰ That said, no progress on demarcation of the border has been reported and conflict in northern Ethiopia has severely impeded progress in survey or clearance along the border.

In March 2022, the Federal Government of Ethiopia declared an “indefinite humanitarian truce” to allow aid into Tigray, although unrest and armed clashes continued elsewhere in the country and the situation deteriorated in Amhara and

Oromia.¹¹ On 2 November 2022, a permanent cessation of hostilities was agreed between the Federal Government and armed groups in the Tigray. Ethiopia reported that the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) had agreed to fully disarm but that fighting had left behind significant contamination from explosive remnants of war (ERW). Ethiopia claimed in November 2022 that, since the onset of the conflict, its Combat Engineering Units had cleared a total of 1,000km² contaminated with mines and ERW in the north and east of Amhara region, Afar region, and west Tigray region.¹² This figure is not credible. UNMAS has not received reports of such clearance.¹³

Despite the ceasefire agreement, instability and insecurity has continued. Violence erupted in Amhara region in April 2023 over a federal decision to dissolve regional paramilitary

3 Statement of Ethiopia, Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

4 Email from Abel Tesfai, Chief of Mine Action Programme Ethiopia, UNMAS, 26 August 2022.

5 Email from Abel Tesfai, UNMAS, 17 August 2023.

6 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 48.

7 Emails from Ralph Legg, Ethiopia Programme Manager, HALO, 13 July and 25 August 2022.

8 Article 7 Report (covering January 2021–March 2022), Form C.

9 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 11.

10 Ibid., pp. 9 and 35. Ethiopia said it was difficult to determine which areas were under the responsibility of Ethiopia or Eritrea. The area was previously under the control of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE). Ethiopia reported in 2015 it had conducted clearance behind its own defensive lines, but said it was not possible to enter the area between the two States' defensive lines due to security concerns, and clearance would have to wait for demarcation to be completed.

11 International Crisis Group, “Crisis Watch Digest Ethiopia”, April 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/39gxCY8>.

12 Statement of Ethiopia on Article 5, APMBC Twentieth Meeting of States Parties (20MSP), Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

13 Email from Abel Tesfai, Chief of Mine Action Programme Ethiopia, UNMAS, 17 August 2023.

groups. Talks between the federal government and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) ended without agreement in May 2023. Authorities denied the TPLF's request to restore its legal registration as a political party, marking a setback in otherwise improving relations with the Federal government.¹⁴ Although the security situation in some parts of northern Ethiopia appeared uncertain, Ethiopia's Ministry of Defence did agree in April 2023 that UNMAS could resume operations in the Amhara, Afar, and Tigray regions, a positive step for mine action.¹⁵ Ethiopia claimed in June 2023 that conflict in northern parts of the country had "recently ended".¹⁶

In 2022, HALO began non-technical survey (NTS) operations in Somali region. This work is likely to have a significant impact on the overall national understanding of contamination, as the previous LIS data identified the region as having the largest proportion of legacy contamination in Ethiopia.¹⁷

The 2001–04 LIS had identified mine and ERW contamination in 10 of Ethiopia's 11 regions, with 1,916 SHAs across more than 2,000km² impacting more than 1,492 communities.¹⁸ The Ethiopian Mine Action Office (EMAO) stated that the LIS overestimated the number of both SHAs and impacted communities, citing lack of military expertise among the survey teams as the major reason for the overestimate.¹⁹

EMAO, with support from donors and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), subsequently sought to confirm the results of the LIS and conduct mine clearance throughout the country.²⁰ In 2019, however, Ethiopia requested international assistance to conduct a new baseline survey.²¹

Ethiopia's mine problem is a result of internal and international armed conflicts dating back to 1935, including the Italian occupation and subsequent East Africa campaigns (1935–41), a border war with Sudan (1980), the Ogaden war with Somalia (1977–78), internal conflict (1974–2000), and the Ethiopian-Eritrean war (1998–2000). It is unclear whether Ethiopia also has contamination from AP mines of an improvised nature. Ethiopia stated in November 2022 that it had previously deployed its Combat Engineering Units to clear landmines in Somali region, "due to the cause of international extremist Al Shabaab activity by using IEDs" [improved explosive devices].²² HALO is not aware of any evidence of IEDs within its current area of operations in the Somali region.²³ However, UNMAS states that reports from the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) show evidence of IED threats in the Somali region, with seven such incidents recorded between August and September 2022 alone.²⁴

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

In 2001, following the end of the conflict with Eritrea, Ethiopia's Council of Ministers established the Ethiopian Mine Action Office (EMAO), as an autonomous civilian body responsible for mine clearance and mine risk education reporting to the Office of the Prime Minister.²⁵ In 2011, EMAO's governing board decided that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) was better suited to clear the remaining mines.²⁶ The transition of EMAO to the MoD appeared to be in limbo until 2015, when Ethiopia reported that oversight of national mine action activities had been re-established as "one Independent Mine Action Office" under the Combat Engineers

Main Department.²⁷ In 2017, Ethiopia confirmed that this "autonomous legal entity" had been re-named EMAO, and was responsible for survey, clearance, and risk education.²⁸ In 2019, however, Ethiopia reported that the responsibility for the national mine action programme had been transferred back to the headquarters of the MoD.²⁹

According to Ethiopia's second extension request (2019), more than US\$40 million was required to fulfil its Article 5 obligations by 2025.³⁰ The government pledged to cover 20% of the total,³¹ but in its most recent Article 7 Report (covering January 2021 to March 2022), Ethiopia did not provide details

14 International Crisis Group, "Crisis Watch Digest Ethiopia", 13 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3Q9unVF>.

15 Email from Abel Tesfai, UNMAS, 17 August 2023; and letter to Dr. Catherine Sozi, UN Resident and Humanitarian Co-ordinator, from Colonel Nizam Mudeser, General Acting Director, Ministry of Defence Foreign Relations and Military Cooperation Directorate, Government of Ethiopia, 27 April 2023.

16 Statement of Ethiopia on Article 5 Implementation, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19 June 2023.

17 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April 2023.

18 Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), "Landmine Impact Survey Report, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia", May 2004.

19 In 2012, Ethiopia reported that subsequent technical survey (TS) and NTS of the SHAs identified during the LIS had confirmed mine contamination in only 136 areas. However, 60 previously unrecorded hazardous areas were also identified, which were confirmed as mined through TS, resulting in a total of 196 confirmed mined areas. Ethiopia also reported that 358 SHAs across an area of 1,200km² from the LIS data needed to be re-surveyed.

20 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.

21 Statement on Article 5 deadline extension request, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 27 November 2019.

22 Statement of Ethiopia on Article 5, 20MSP, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

23 Email from Rob Syfret, Head of Region, Horn of Africa, HALO, 10 April 2023.

24 Email from Abel Tesfai, UNMAS, 17 August 2023.

25 Council of Ministers, Regulation No. 70/2001, 5 February 2001.

26 Statements of Ethiopia, Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Geneva, 25 June 2015, April 2014, and 24 May 2012.

27 Statements of Ethiopia, Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Geneva, 9 April 2014 and 25 June 2015; "Response to Committee on Article 5 Implementation request for additional information on its Article 5 deadline Extension Request", submitted 26 September 2015; and Analysis of Ethiopia's Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 19 November 2015, p. 3.

28 Revised National Mine Action Plan for 2017–20, October 2017, pp. 2 and 32.

29 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 9.

30 Ibid., p. 51.

31 Ibid., p. 11.

of any government funding, simply stating that: "Ethiopia made realistic initiatives to improve the overall performance of the country's mine action sector in the period ending March 2022. This must be supplemented with adequate resources to allow the country to become landmine-free."³²

Ethiopia has made numerous requests for international assistance, for vehicles, detectors, and personal protective equipment (PPE); assistance to conduct a baseline survey; and for IMSMA training for staff.³³ Ethiopia has not reported if any national funding was made available for survey or clearance in 2022 and EMAO did not clarify if Ethiopia has a resource mobilisation strategy in place for Article 5 implementation.

As at July 2022, UNMAS had received contributions from the Government of Japan and the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), through the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund, supporting the programme's activities in its mobilisation phase through to the middle of 2022. At that time, UNMAS Ethiopia was seeking US\$2.5 million to scale up its mine action intervention in northern Ethiopia, and provide necessary technical assistance and capacity development for EMAO.³⁴ From March to August 2022, UNMAS undertook 35 field assessment missions in the northern part of the country including Tigray. UNMAS cautions that re-assessment is required in locations that may have been further contaminated by the armed conflict between August and November 2022. UNMAS' mission report emphasised the urgency of establishing a mine action response in northern Ethiopia.³⁵

Despite a UN-led initiative involving non-governmental organisations (NGOs), HALO has observed that there is currently no formal mechanism for involving clearance operators in the decision-making process by the national authorities.³⁶ HALO is currently the only international

humanitarian demining operator working in Ethiopia, having signed a Technical Agreement with the Mine Action Office at the Ethiopian MoD in June 2022 and beginning training of its first demining sections in August 2022.³⁷ HALO is not currently conducting capacity development support to the national authority in Ethiopia but is exploring options to do so in the future.³⁸ The Government of Ethiopia has requested capacity building support from UNMAS, with a plan to attach an international capacity building specialist to EMAO and an aspiration to add a second. UNMAS also reports that EMAO is developing a request to seek support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) for information management and strategic planning.³⁹

HALO has encountered various challenges in the mine action environment in Ethiopia. HALO was able to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Somali regional state authorities in early 2023, allowing HALO to initiate operations in the region, but has been unable to sign a federal level MoU with the MoD and is therefore still unable to import demining equipment into Ethiopia free of tax. EMAO does not yet have a mechanism for accrediting national and international mine action operators.⁴⁰ However, the Government of Ethiopia, supported by UNMAS, has developed the first standard on accreditation,⁴¹ which is a notable first step.

Ethiopia has reported that it considers its national implementation measures and existing legislation to be sufficient for the national mine action programme.⁴² Ethiopia's 2019 Article 5 deadline extension request also notes the availability of trained and highly experienced demining teams.⁴³ However, there has been a lack of clarity during Ethiopia's extension period regarding the national operational capacity available or any strategy to increase this in order to fulfil Ethiopia's Article 5 obligations.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Ethiopia does not have a national mine action standard (NMAS) on environmental management and/or a policy on environmental management.⁴⁴ It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in Ethiopia in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

HALO has a global standard operating procedure (SOP) for the environmental management of operations, which serves as a basis for programme-specific environmental management.⁴⁵ HALO is also in the process of developing pre-clearance environmental assessments for mine-impacted communities and is actively building partnerships with regional-based national NGOs in the Somali region, with the aim of facilitating post-clearance land regeneration projects to support resilience building against climate shocks.⁴⁶ HALO aimed to commence such activities in late 2023 or early 2024.

32 Article 7 Report (covering January 2021–March 2022), Form J.

33 Statement on Article 5 deadline extension request, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 27 November 2019.

34 Email from Abel Tesfai, UNMAS, 19 July 2022.

35 Email from Abel Tesfai, UNMAS, 17 August 2023.

36 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April 2023.

37 Emails from Ralph Legg, HALO, 13 July and 25 August 2022.

38 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April 2023.

39 Email from Abel Tesfai, UNMAS, 17 August 2023.

40 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April 2023.

41 Email from Abel Tesfai, UNMAS, 17 August 2023.

42 Article 7 Report (situation as of 30 April 2017), Form A.

43 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 10.

44 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April 2023.

45 Ibid.

46 Emails from Ralph Legg, HALO, 25 August 2022; and Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April 2023.

HALO has long-established clearance procedures that help mitigate the impact of operations on the environment. These include only cutting trees during clearance operations when absolutely necessary and limiting any cutting to as few branches as possible and/or to young trees that are growing too densely to work around. Teams from HALO Ethiopia and HALO Somaliland⁴⁷ share field camps and all HALO field camps on the Ethiopia-Somaliland border are solar-powered to reduce the need for diesel generators or wood burning. HALO's Ethiopia programme plans to extend solar power to future field camps in elsewhere in the country.⁴⁸

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

In August 2019, EMAO claimed to have a gender and diversity plan in place and to have mainstreamed gender in the national standards. It stated that all groups affected by AP mines are consulted during survey and community liaison through face-to-face interviews and using elders to disseminate information to local communities. It also noted, though, that no female deminers were employed in the demining companies. At the time of writing, UNMAS was engaging with EMAO to undertake a gender mainstreaming assessment.⁴⁹

HALO has a global policy on equality, diversity and inclusion, which serves as the basis for programme-specific approaches.⁵⁰ HALO actively pursues a policy of equal employment for women and men in Ethiopia for both operations and support staff, including the prioritisation of recruitment of women as deminers for HALO's first operational deployment in the Somali region.⁵¹ In 2022, HALO recruited, trained and deployed women for survey and clearance teams in Ethiopia. To date, two deminer training courses have taken place, with women making up a significant proportion of trainees on both courses. As at March 2023, women made up 30% of HALO Ethiopia staff, with women occupying 20% of managerial/supervisory positions and 31% of operational positions (see Table 2). HALO Ethiopia plans to continue to work to increase the proportion of women in operational roles, through liaison with local community leaders in the rural mine-impacted communities, where recruitment takes place.⁵²

HALO's NTS teams contain both men and women to facilitate engagement by all groups during survey. HALO will continue to maintain gender balance in its survey teams as its operational capacity expands. HALO also recruits both men and women for survey teams from the mine-impacted communities in which it works. This helps to encourage participation from, and ongoing liaison with, different social groups, to ensure the impact of mines on all segments of the community is considered during survey.⁵³

All beneficiary data collected during survey are disaggregated by gender and age. HALO also collects information on the current and expected future use of contaminated land, as well as for nearby land where access is restricted due to contamination. HALO uses this beneficiary and land-use data to assist in the prioritisation and planning of clearance and additional survey. This process includes consideration of the specific impact of contamination or suspected contamination on different groups, including women and children. During pre-clearance and post-clearance surveys, HALO uses diverse approaches, including household interviews and community meetings, to encourage wide participation from all parts of the community.⁵⁴

47 Somaliland is a self-proclaimed, though generally unrecognised, State in the north-west of Somalia.

48 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April 2023.

49 Email from Abel Tesfai, UNMAS, 17 August 2023.

50 Ibid.

51 Email from Ralph Legg, HALO, 25 August 2022.

52 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April 2023.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

Table 2: Gender composition of mine action operators in Ethiopia in 2022⁵⁵

Organisation*	Total staff	Total women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Total women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Total women in operational positions
EMAO	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K
National Demining Companies	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K
HALO*	103	31	20	4	89	28

* Figures are as at March 2023. Some supervisory positions are also operational.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Although a version of IMSMA was installed and customised by EMAO prior to 2015, in 2019, Ethiopia continued to report it was still using an “alternative data processing package” alongside the IMSMA database, due to a “gap” in the system’s installation. EMAO claims it requested additional training and assistance from the GICHD to finalise the transfer of the data into IMSMA.⁵⁶ The GICHD, however, has no record of a request for such assistance nor for any application by Ethiopia for its mine action personnel to attend any training courses.⁵⁷ In August 2023, UNMAS stated that, having assisted in drafting a request for such assistance from the GICHD, it was awaiting approval from senior officials before proceeding.⁵⁸

UNMAS has established and employed its own global information management system (GIMS), and field enumerators, and assessment is conducted using Survey 123. A strategic decision has yet to be made as to whether use of the GIMS system will continue in Ethiopia in the long term.⁵⁹

EMAO did not clarify what steps, if any, were taken in 2022 to improve the quality of information in Ethiopia’s database.

There is currently no national guidance for the collection of NTS data in Ethiopia. The data collection forms HALO uses are in line with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and global best practice and, as such, collect data in a form compatible with IMSMA. HALO reports all its land release data to the MoD each month. At this stage it is not clear to what extent the information that HALO reports is

being used by the national authority. HALO will continue to report to the government and other stakeholders and will encourage its data to be used to improve the quality of information in the national database.⁶⁰

Ethiopia’s Article 7 reports covering 2020 and 1 January 2021 to 1 March 2022 were mostly unchanged from the report it submitted for 2019, aside from 60,000m² of land release through survey and clearance of AV mined area. As at September 2023, Ethiopia had still to submit an Article 7 report covering the remainder of 2022.

In the decision on Ethiopia’s 2019 Article 5 deadline extension request, the States Parties requested that Ethiopia submit by 30 April 2021 an updated work plan for the period covered by the extension request. As at July 2023, Ethiopia had not done so.

In June 2022, Ethiopia stated its plans to conduct a desk assessment of remaining contamination in the database and conduct re-survey of mined areas to establish an accurate baseline, as well as strengthen technical capacity for emergency response while building towards nationwide survey and clearance.⁶¹ However, no timeframe for these activities was given. In June 2023, Ethiopia again stated its commitment to “employ advanced technical survey in different regions of the country” adding that “the recent peace agreement provides good opportunity for mine action”. Ethiopia stated it was “in preparation to develop a new work plan that encompasses the current situation”.⁶²

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 30–31.

⁵⁷ Email from Dominic Wolsey, Advisor, Gender and Diversity, GICHD, 17 July 2020.

⁵⁸ Email from Abel Tesfai, UNMAS, 17 August 2023.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April 2023.

⁶¹ Statement of Ethiopia, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

⁶² Statement of Ethiopia on Article 5 Implementation, APMBIC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19 June 2023.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Ethiopia's second Article 5 extension request for the period 2020–25 aims to achieve the following:

- Address the remaining 1,065km² of mine contamination
- Complete survey of the buffer zone between Ethiopia and Eritrea once demarcation is completed
- Obtain the support of donors and international advisors
- Fully equip and train the demining companies, Rapid Response Teams (RRTs), and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams
- Implement risk education in affected communities and mark SHAs; and
- Finish the building of the demining training centre.⁶³

Table 3: Planned land release in 2019–25⁶⁴

Year	Area to be reduced/ cancelled (m ²)	Area to be cleared (m ²)	Totals (m ²)
2019	171,507,352	1,905,438	173,412,790
2020	171,507,352	4,300,000	175,807,352
2021	171,507,352	4,300,000	175,807,352
2022	171,507,353	4,300,000	175,807,353
2023	171,507,352	4,300,000	175,807,352
2024	171,507,352	4,300,000	175,807,352
2025	0	3,900,000	3,900,000
Totals	1,029,044,113	27,305,438	1,056,349,51

The work plan included in the 2019 extension request is neither realistic nor achievable and has already been surpassed by events. In its Article 7 Report covering 1 January 2021 to 31 March 2022, Ethiopia reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had again “affected the Ethiopian mine action sector” but gave no further details. Ethiopia has not provided any updated land release targets since then.

At the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC in 2022, Ethiopia shared an amended list of strategic priorities, which reflected the outbreak of conflict in the north of the country, namely:

- Clearance of mines and ERW by Ethiopia's Combat Engineering Units focused in the regions of Amhara, Afar, Benishangule, Gambela, Gumuze, and Tigray. Ethiopia described the risks to people going about their daily activities as “high”, and appealed for international aid to support clearance
- Cross-border liaison and co-operation to support implementation of the Oslo Action Plan.
- A risk education programme.
- Training of military personnel to conduct humanitarian demining.

- Reduction of ERW and other hazards.
- A concerted NTS effort.
- Pro-active planning for victim assistance.⁶⁵

Ethiopia was due to submit to the States Parties, by 30 April 2021 and then a second time by 30 April 2023, updated work plans for the remaining period covered by the extension request. The decision at the Fourth Review Conference had further requested that these work plans contain an updated list of all areas known or suspected to contain AP mines, annual projections of which areas would be dealt with each year and by which organisations during the remaining period covered by the request, and a revised detailed budget.⁶⁶ As at July 2023, Ethiopia had not submitted even the first of the requested updated work plans.

There were no nationally agreed criteria for the prioritisation of land release tasks in Ethiopia at the time of writing. HALO uses its own survey information to assess the impact of contamination and prioritise clearance tasks. HALO also produces its own survey and task dossiers for all operations,⁶⁷ which is normally the responsibility of the national authorities and the national mine action centre.

⁶³ 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 10–11.

⁶⁴ 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Additional Information, p. 48; and Article 7 Report (covering January 2021–March 2022), Form C.

⁶⁵ Statement of Ethiopia on Article 5, 20MSP, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

⁶⁶ Decision on 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 November 2019.

⁶⁷ Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April 2023.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Ethiopia previously reported in 2017 that its NMAS would be “developed and updated” and that SOPs for mine clearance and other land release would be revised according to the IMAS. As at July 2023, however it was unclear whether any revisions had been completed. HALO has not had access to any previously developed NMAS and has developed its own SOPs, which are in line with IMAS.⁶⁸

Ethiopia's second Article 5 deadline extension request detailed the land release methodology it intended to employ in demining operations.⁶⁹ The request claimed that manual demining is the most efficient and least costly method of clearance, and states that machines cannot be used due to the terrain of the remaining contaminated areas.⁷⁰

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

HALO is the only international humanitarian mine action operator currently working in Ethiopia. In June 2022, HALO signed a Technical Agreement with the Mine Action Office at the Ethiopian MoD. In August, it began training its first demining sections to clear high-priority minefields on the border with Somaliland.⁷¹ HALO also plans to undertake a resurvey of 100 known CHAs and SHAs in the Somali region with the objective of producing a baseline assessment of mine contamination in the east of Ethiopia. Based on existing survey information, the requirement for both clearance and survey is expected to be much greater than the operational deployment that HALO's secured funding will currently permit.⁷²

As planned, by April 2023, HALO had recruited, trained, and deployed eight manual mine clearance teams and two NTS teams (see Tables 4 and 5). HALO planned to maintain this capacity for 2023. HALO cautions that expansion of NTS and clearance operations may be impeded by an inability to import essential demining equipment into Ethiopia, due to a lack of a federal-level MoU with the MoD, as well as on its need for increased donor funding.⁷³

HALO Ethiopia notes that is using HALO's experience, technological innovations and operating procedures, built during its time conducting clearance and survey operations in Somaliland since 1999, where terrain and field conditions are similar to those in Somali region of Ethiopia. HALO will share lessons learned and operating procedures with the national authorities should opportunities to undertake capacity development arise. Additionally, HALO will share

lessons learned should other international or national clearance operators become registered and accredited in Ethiopia.⁷⁴

Prior to HALO commencing operations, all survey and clearance in Ethiopia was conducted by the national demining companies of the Ethiopian Armed Forces. Ethiopia's second extension request forecasted a “rearrangement” of its four demining companies and four RRTs, which would be deployed each year through to the end of its Article 5 extension in 2025.⁷⁵ The request indicates that one additional “demining company” would be added during the extension period, but did not specify when this would occur. EMAO informed Mine Action Review in 2019 that there would be an additional 90 deminers.⁷⁶

UNMAS explains that it had planned to launch a request for proposals from organisations wishing to undertake survey and clearance in Ethiopia through third party agreement. However, due to the lack of accredited implementing partners, in the absence of a finalised accreditation mechanism, UNMAS has had to change its operating mode to direct implementation; deploying its operational personnel in the field to undertake surveys and removal of explosive ordnance in close collaboration with government entities. UNMAS describes this as a measure of last resort.⁷⁷

Ethiopia has reported that it has six ground-preparation machines but that these were not in use as all remaining hazardous areas are located in remote areas, which it claims are only suitable for manual clearance.⁷⁸

68 Ibid.

69 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 24–25 and 27–29.

70 Ibid, p. 51.

71 Emails from Ralph Legg, HALO, 13 July and 25 August 2022.

72 Emails from Ralph Legg, HALO, 13 July 2022; and Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April 2023.

73 Emails from Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April and 4 August 2023.

74 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April 2023.

75 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 46–48.

76 Email from Col. Tadege Yohala, EMAO, 5 August 2019.

77 Email from Abel Tesfai, UNMAS, 17 August 2023.

78 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 50.

Table 4: Operational survey capacities deployed in 2022⁷⁹

Operator	Survey teams	Total personnel	Mechanical assets	Comments
HALO	1	4	0	Deployed for NTS. See Table 5 for technical survey capacity. Initiated operations in 2022. Second NTS team deployed January 2023.
Ethiopia Armed Forces*	2	N/K	0	Deployed for technical survey.
Totals	3	N/K	0	

* Based on most recent data from 2019 for capacity deployed in 2018. It is not known if this information remains correct.

Table 5: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2022⁸⁰

Operator	Manual clearance teams	Total deminers	Mechanical assets	Comments
HALO	8	64	0	Deployed for clearance and technical survey. Commenced operations in 2022.
Ethiopia Armed Forces*	2	N/K	0	Also deployed one EOD team.
Totals	10	N/K	0	

* Based on most recent data from 2019 for capacity deployed in 2018. It is not known if this information remains correct.

DEMINER SAFETY

EMAO did not clarify if any accidents involving deminers took place in 2022. There were no accidents involving HALO deminers during survey or clearance operations in 2022.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

Ethiopia did not report any release of land contaminated with AP mines during 2022. HALO reported that, during its first year of operation in Ethiopia in 2022, it cancelled no areas through NTS, reduced no areas through TS, and cleared 39,243m², destroying one AP mine. HALO recorded 2.16km² of previously unrecorded AP mined area through NTS.⁸¹

Prior to 2021, the last reported land release of AP mined area in Ethiopia took place between May 2019 and May 2020, when a total of 330km² of mined area was released across 128

hazardous areas. Of this, almost 1.8km² was cleared, 10km² was reduced through TS, and 318km² was cancelled through NTS. A total of 128 AP mines were found and destroyed.⁸²

In January 2021 to 31 March 2022, some 60,000m² of AV mined area was released with the destruction of 46 TM-57 AV mines.⁸³

⁷⁹ Emails from Col. Tadege Yohala, EMAO, 5 August 2019; and Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April and 4 August 2023.

⁸⁰ Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April 2023.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Statement of Ethiopia, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

⁸³ Article 7 Report (covering January 2021–March 2022), Form C.

SURVEY IN 2022

Ethiopia did not report any land release through survey during 2022. HALO did not release any mined area survey but did record 2,162,961m² of AP mined area through NTS.⁸⁴

CLEARANCE IN 2022

Ethiopia did not report any clearance of AP mined area during 2022. HALO reported that, during 2022, it cleared 39,243m², destroying one AP mine (see Table 6).⁸⁵

Ethiopia stated in November 2022 that, since the onset of the regional conflict which began in late 2020, Ethiopia's Combat Engineering Units had cleared a 1,000km² area contaminated with "mines and ERW" in the north and east of Amhara region, Afar region, and west Tigray region.⁸⁶ No specific dates for this activity were provided. The figure is not credible.⁸⁷

As previously noted, it is unclear if and how much land was released by clearance in Ethiopia in 2021.

Table 6: Mine clearance by HALO in 2022⁸⁸

State/Zone/District (woreda)	CHAs cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed
Somali/Jarar Zone/Gashamo	0	39,243	1	0
Totals	0		1	0

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC, Ethiopia is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2025.⁸⁹ It will not meet this deadline.

Ethiopia has been at best, overly ambitious, or at worst, seriously remiss in its projections and estimations for completion of survey and clearance in recent years. Its 2017–20 work plan, submitted in October 2017, it stated that it was "realistic" that all 314 areas then remaining could be addressed using "all available demining assets in Ethiopia" within the extension time period, and that donor funding will enable it "successfully to complete the clearance of

contaminated areas from land mines and fulfil the legal obligations of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention by 2020".⁹⁰ This did not occur.

The second extension request clearly sets out primary assumptions and risk factors in implementing its targets: that donor funding will increase steadily; that old demining equipment is replaced by "licensed" demining equipment; that one deminer will clear on average as much as 50 square metres per day, 22 days a month, and 10 months a year; and that one additional demining company will be added, for a total of five deployed. This average clearance rate per deminer appears unrealistically high.⁹¹

84 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April 2023.
85 Ibid.
86 Statement of Ethiopia on Article 5, 20MSP, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.
87 UNMAS is not aware of any such clearance having taken place and Mine Action Review was unable to verify such reports with EMAO. UNMAS notes that similar claims have been made by Tigray regional forces, who claim to have surveyed and cleared around 1,700 schools, removing thousands of items of explosive ordnance, but without any operational detail provided. Email from Abel Tesfai, UNMAS, 17 August 2023.
88 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April 2023.
89 Ethiopia's original Article 5 deadline expired on 1 June 2015. In March 2015, Ethiopia submitted a request for an extension of five years until 1 June 2020 to complete survey and clearance of all remaining mined areas.
90 For example, in just one year, 2018, the work plan stated that more than 518.5km² would be addressed through NTS and NTS with clearance of just under 8km².
91 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 42.

The pace of clearance in Ethiopia has been exceedingly slow in recent years. In May 2019 to May 2020, Ethiopia cleared 1.76km² and exceeded its land release through survey target by 91%.⁹² Ethiopia's most recent Article 7 report, however, covering January 2021 to end-March 2022, indicated that only a further 60,000m² had been released to date.⁹³ In 2022, HALO was able to release a further 39,243m² through clearance.⁹⁴

At the 20MSP in November 2022, Ethiopia stated that it is not in a position to complete clearance by 2025.⁹⁵ Apart from the lack of an accurate baseline of contamination, the ongoing conflict and insecurity in the north of the country since November 2020 has impeded any ongoing efforts towards completion. The ongoing work of the "Mine Action Area of Responsibility" launched in 2021 and coordinated by UNMAS, and the commencement of HALO's survey and clearance operations in Ethiopia in 2022, are significant positive steps. Ethiopia would benefit from finally providing an updated work plan with realistic and costed annual targets for land release, including a realistic plan for comprehensive NTS.

Table 7: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	*0.04
2021**	0
2020***	0
2019****	1.76
2018	1.10
Total	2.90

* Represents clearance reported by HALO

** Reporting year was January 2021 to March 2022

*** Reporting year was April–December 2020

**** Reporting year was 31 April 2019–31 April 2020

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

The scope of residual contamination remains unknown in Ethiopia. Ethiopia acknowledges that landmines may have been left because of lack of information during clearance operations, because of ground movements, or exposure to rain. It is also possible that more mines have been laid in recent armed conflicts.⁹⁶ As at July 2023, Ethiopia had not reported on whether it has a strategy for managing residual contamination after completion of large-scale clearance.

⁹² Article 7 Report (covering 31 April 2019–31 April 2020), Form D.

⁹³ Article 7 Report (covering January 2021–March 2022), Form C.

⁹⁴ Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 April 2023.

⁹⁵ Statement of Ethiopia on Article 5, 20MSP, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

⁹⁶ 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 16.

GUINEA-BISSAU

MINE
ACTION
REVIEW

CLEARING THE MINES 2023

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2024
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION:

1.09_{km²}

(PARTIAL NATIONAL ESTIMATE, BUT LIKELY TO INCLUDE
AREAS ONLY CONTAINING EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR)

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2021

0_{km²}

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2021

0

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Guinea-Bissau has not made progress in implementing its survey and clearance obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), although as at July 2023 it was planning to initiate a long-awaited national non-technical survey (NTS) of suspected hazardous areas (SHAs).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- In order to comply with the APMBC, Guinea-Bissau should urgently conduct the national non-technical survey of all hazardous areas in order to confirm or deny the presence of anti-personnel (AP) mines, and accurately determine the location and extent of any contamination.
- Guinea-Bissau should reinforce its resource mobilisation efforts, both nationally and internationally, to enable the mine action activities necessary to fulfil its Article 5 obligations.
- Guinea-Bissau should adopt national mine action standards (NMAS) as soon as possible and ensure they are in line with the international mine action standards (IMAS).
- Guinea-Bissau should proceed with its efforts to establish a reliable Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database.
- Guinea-Bissau should adopt clear and efficient procedures for organisational accreditation process to allow for an efficient functioning of operators.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	4	4	An NTS by national operator Humanitarian Aid (HUMAID) in 2014 revealed a little over 1.09km ² of area suspected to contain landmines or other explosive ordnance. Since then, no progress has been made to better understand the contamination. In July 2023, however, a new national NTS was about to start. It is unclear to what extent—and indeed whether—the hazardous areas contain anti-personnel mines as opposed to other types of explosive ordnance.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	4	3	Guinea-Bissau's National Mine Action Centre (CAAMI)'s activities have been limited since 2012 due to a lack of funding. CAAMI's workforce in 2022 consisted of 16 staff members, some of whom do not receive salaries. The Government of Guinea-Bissau does not fund operational costs, but thanks to secured funding in 2022, Guinea-Bissau has started rehabilitating and capacity building CAAMI, which has started to assume its lead role for mine action nationwide.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	4	4	Guinea-Bissau's 2022 Article 5 deadline extension request states that the proposed action plan promotes gender and diversity inclusivity at all stages of the mine action programme. It also promises that CAAMI will elaborate its own gender and diversity policy and require operators to constitute their operational teams taking into consideration these issues. The extension request and work plan do not, however, contain specific policies nor measurable gender and diversity targets.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	3	3	Guinea-Bissau does not have a functioning information management system for mine action. Guinea-Bissau made a formal request to the Geneva International Centre of Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) in 2023 for assistance in seeking to retrieve its old data, which had been lost since its declaration of completion. Guinea-Bissau's work plan of 2022–24 has allocated US\$367,000 for that purpose. As at March 2023, Mines Advisory Group (MAG) was discussing with GICHD its recommendations on the suitable technology for the information management following an assessment carried out by the latter in October 2022. CAAMI is yet to formally request an information management system from the GICHD. In the meantime, data are being kept on Excel-based databases. MAG organised an IM workshop in August 2023, with participation of HUMAID and The HALO Trust (HALO). The workshop defined the data collection processes and reviewed the content of data collection forms. Guinea-Bissau's Article 7 report, submitted in 2023 (covering 2022), was timely and comprehensive.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	7	6	In its 2022 extension request, Guinea-Bissau presented a detailed two-year work plan, costed at almost US\$5.7 million. The work plan aims to conduct a national technical and non-technical survey, and to submit a final extension request for completion of its Article 5 obligations by 31 March 2024. As at June 2023, Guinea-Bissau has started implementing some of the provision of its work plan, albeit with delayed timelines due to the lack of sufficient funding.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	4	3	At the reporting of discovery of new contamination (2021), Guinea-Bissau did not have national standards in place, but sought US\$112,000 for the development of new NMAS. As at June 2023, seven standards had been drafted with the support of MAG, but they had not yet been approved. The need to continue developing NMAS, prioritising the most critical ones, is paramount.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	5	5	Guinea-Bissau was granted an interim extension request with a deadline of 31 December 2022, but did not achieve progress during the interim period due to the lack of resources. Guinea-Bissau then sought another interim deadline extension request, through to 31 December 2024, which was granted by the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties (12MSP) to the APMBC. Despite the start of activities in 2022, Guinea-Bissau had yet to secure funding to be able to advance as per its proposed work plan, although it aimed to submit a final Article 5 deadline extension request by March 2024.
Average Score	4.4	4.0	Overall Programme Performance: POOR

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- National Council for Humanitarian Demining (Concelho Nacional de Desminagem Humánitaria, CNDH)
- The National Mine Action Coordination Centre – (Centro Nacional de Coordenação da Acção Anti-Minas, CAAMI)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Humanitarian Aid (HUMAID)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Guinea-Bissau declared fulfilment of its Article 5 obligations on 5 December 2012 at the Twelfth Meeting of States Parties (12MSP) to the APMBC,¹ but reported the discovery of previously unrecorded mined areas suspected to contain AP mines at the Intersessional Meetings in June 2021.² In 2014, a survey by the national non-governmental organisation (NGO) Humanitarian Aid (HUMAID) revealed explosive ordnance covering a little over 1.09km² across nine confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and a further 43 SHAs whose size had not been determined.³ An additional 402,304m² of contamination was identified across five battle areas as well as three sites of spot tasks. The identified areas are suspected to be contaminated by different types of explosive ordnance, including AP mines, anti-vehicle (AV) mines, and explosive remnants of war (ERW).

The HUMAID survey was based on reports by the local populations and used only rough estimates of the extent of contamination and non-technical methods to determine its presence.⁴ It did not delimit the SHAs or disaggregate by type of hazard. Since then, there was no progress in better understanding the nature or extent of contamination due to the lack of national capacity for survey.⁵ Following the funding to MAG from the Netherlands and Norway in 2022, Guinea-Bissau has been building up its mine action capacities, and was planning to start a national NTS in August and September 2023.⁶ As at August 2023, there were also discussions about the possibility of conducting TS.⁷

Contamination in Guinea-Bissau is spread mostly across the north, south, and east of the country.⁸ Accidents caused by explosive ordnance have also been reported in sectors where no hazardous areas were identified, which indicates that the

contamination data is incomplete, and highlights the need to conduct a comprehensive and evidence-based national survey to confirm the extent and nature of contamination.⁹ It is unclear to what extent—and indeed whether—the hazardous areas contain AP mines as opposed to other types of explosive ordnance. But according to Guinea-Bissau, the contamination caused by unexploded ordnance (UXOs) is far more widespread than that caused by AP mines.¹⁰

In June 2021, Guinea-Bissau submitted an interim Article 5 deadline extension request through to 31 December 2022, which was granted by the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties (19MSP) in November 2021. This was the second Article 5 deadline extension request since Guinea-Bissau became a State Party to the APMBC.¹¹ According to the request, the interim period would allow Guinea-Bissau the opportunity to mobilise national and international resources, investigate the suspected contamination, and better determine the nature and scale of the problem.¹² Following this work, Guinea-Bissau would be in a position to submit a follow-up extension request by 31 March 2022 for consideration at the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties (20MSP).¹³

Given the lack of financial resources, however, Guinea-Bissau did not achieve the intended progress, and in June 2022, it submitted a third interim Article 5 extension request seeking another two-year extension. The interim request was granted by the 20MSP in November 2022, and a new deadline was set for 31 December 2024.¹⁴ During the period between the two latest extension requests (June 2021 to June 2022), the National Mine Action Coordination Centre (Centro Nacional de Coordenação da Acção Anti-Minas, CAAMI) engaged in

1 Guinea-Bissau declaration of completion of implementation of Article 5 of the APMBC at the Twelfth Meeting of States Parties (12MSP), Geneva, 3–7 December 2012.

2 Presentation of Guinea-Bissau, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, 22–24 June 2021, slide 9; and Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 22 June 2021, pp. 9–12.

3 Ibid.

4 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request to the APMBC (dated April 2022 but submitted in June 2022), p. 9.

5 Emails from Nautan Mancabu, National Director of CAAMI, 28 March 2023; and Nicole Ntagabo, Regional Programmes Manager, MAG, 13 April 2023.

6 Interview with Nautan Mancabu, CAAMI, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20 June 2023.

7 Email from Francois Fall, Humanitarian Mine Action Advisor, MAG, 30 August 2023.

8 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 9–11.

9 Ibid., pp. 11 and 30–31.

10 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 15.

11 Guinea-Bissau had submitted a two-month Article 5 Extension Request before its declaration of completion in 2011.

12 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 22 June 2021, para. 11.

13 Presentation of Guinea-Bissau, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, 22–24 June 2021, slides 10 and 11.

14 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 4.

dialogue with national and international stakeholders, leading to the identification of five key elements: the widespread explosive ordnance contamination across Guinea-Bissau, which is only partially known and was never systematically assessed; the lack of capacity to demarcate, mark, and remove the threat posed by explosive ordnance; the lack of a functional information management system to support mine action; the lack of NMAS to frame and improve the safety, quality, and efficiency of mine action; and the current exposure of population to the threat of explosive ordnance.¹⁵

According to its latest request, submitted in June 2022, Guinea-Bissau will accomplish the following goals during

the new two-year extension period: completion of a national NTS, preparation of resources for spot tasks, technical surveys and clearance, development of a national information management system and national standards in line with the IMAS, resumption of explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), carrying out emergency spot tasks, preparation of a strategy to address residual risk, and fundraising. The extension request featured a two-year work plan (2022–24) with a planned budget of US\$5,688,000. The work plan aims for Guinea-Bissau to develop and submit a final extension request by 31 March 2024, including a detailed plan for completion of its Article 5 obligations.¹⁶

Table 1: Mined areas (at end of 2021)¹⁷

Province	Region	Sector	Community	CHA	CHA area (m ²)
North	Cacheu	São Domingos	Djequemondo	1	15,000
North	Gabú	Pitche	Buruntuma	1	116,700
North	Oio	Bissorã	Encheia	1	600,000
North	Oio	Farim	Bricama	1	90,000
North	Oio	Farim	Cuntima	1	50,000
North	Oio	Farim	Demba Dabo	1	51,000
South	Quebo	Empada	Gubia	1	2,345
South	Tombali	Quebo	Imbai-Baila	1	60,000
South	Tombali	Quebo	Medjo	1	108,800
Totals				9	1,093,845

The landmine contamination in Guinea-Bissau dates back to its independence war 1963–74, the 1998–99 civil war, and the four-decade-old Casamance conflict. Landmine and UXO contamination is primarily located in the north and the east of the country around the national borders with Senegal and Guinea. According to Guinea-Bissau, a faction of the Movement of Democratic Forces in Casamance (MDFC) laid both factory-made and improvised AP mines in 2006 in the northern regions bordering Senegal.¹⁸ The capital, Bissau, was declared free of landmines in March 2006, following which clearance was extended throughout the country in accordance with a national five-year clearance plan (2004–09) developed by CAAMI.¹⁹

In its initial APMBC Article 7 transparency report submitted in 2002, Guinea-Bissau reported that “an impact survey was to be initially carried out in and around Bissau to assess the anti-personnel mines contamination and respond adequately”.²⁰ The first coordinated effort to assess landmine and ERW contamination on a national level, however, only took place in 2006–08. During this period, CAAMI conducted a preliminary opinion collection (POC), followed by a landmine impact survey (LIS) conducted by a British NGO, Landmine Action. The LIS covered all but seven of the 278 areas covered by the POC and identified 12 mined areas in addition to a total impact area of nearly 2.24km².²¹

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 19 and 26.

¹⁷ Article 7 report (covering 2022); Form D. The total is reported as 1,093,840m² in the report.

¹⁸ Declaration of completion of implementation of Article 5, 12MSP, Geneva, 3–7 December 2012, p. 2.

¹⁹ Article 7 Report (covering 2010), Form C.

²⁰ Article 7 Report (covering November 2001 to April 2002), Form C.

²¹ Declaration of completion of implementation of Article 5, 12MSP, Geneva, 3–7 December 2012, pp. 2–4.

By June 2010, nine mined areas remained to be addressed, in the sectors of São Domingos, Cacheu, Bigene, Oio, Quinara, and Tombali, covering a total of 1.35km². In addition to these areas, there was a requirement to survey additional 29 areas and 16 communities that had not been visited but where contamination was reported by community members or NGOs. In December 2012, Guinea-Bissau declared that it

had fulfilled its Article 5 obligations having cleared 50 mined areas containing AP mines and covering a total of 6.52km², destroying in the process 3,973 AP mines, 207 AV mines, and 309,125 items of UXO.²² In the same document, Guinea-Bissau stated that “battle area clearance tasks remain, as well as an expected residual contamination, which will be addressed by the CAAMI”.²³

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Since its declaration of completion in 2012, Guinea-Bissau has registered a total of 13 accidents, which have claimed 73 victims. It is likely that other accidents occurred without having been recorded in the absence of a formal reporting mechanism and an information management system.²⁴ In its Article 7 report covering 2022 however, Guinea-Bissau reports having recorded 1,500 incidents caused by explosive ordnance.²⁵ The continued casualties led CAAMI to task the local NGO, HUMAID, to conduct additional survey in 2014,²⁶ the results of which are indicated above. The last reported incident involving explosive ordnance occurred in 28 January 2021 in Buruntuma, Gabú region, where two children were killed and another six injured as a result of the explosion of a hand grenade.²⁷

In its statement to the Fourth Review Conference of the APMBBC in November 2019, Guinea-Bissau reported that, as at the end of 2019, 0.56km² of ERW contamination remained to be cleared along with almost 1km² still needing to be surveyed in its northern, southern, and eastern regions.²⁸ In its Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Article 7 report covering 2019, Guinea-Bissau stated that it had cleared all its cluster munition contamination before entry into force of the CCM.²⁹

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

CAAMI was established in March 2001 in accordance with the decree of Council of Ministers (Decree 4/2001-17). In addition, the National Council for Humanitarian Demining (Concelho Nacional de Desminagem Humanitaria, CNDH) was created to serve as a steering committee appointed by the Government. Under the aegis of State Secretary of Veteran Affairs and the CNDH, CAAMI functions as the policy setting and coordination body. It plans, coordinates, and supervises all mine action activities, and mobilises resources necessary for the implementation of the national humanitarian mine action programme (PAAMI).³⁰ CAAMI's activities have been limited since 2012 due to a lack of funding.³¹ CAAMI, however, reports that it maintains a good human resources capacity.³² As at March 2023, CAAMI had 16 staff members: 11 men and 5 women,³³ some of its staff members were not receiving salaries.³⁴

In the course of 2021-22, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), The HALO Trust (HALO), and Humanity & Inclusion (HI) provided support to Guinea-Bissau, notably in the preparation of its Article 5 deadline extension request.³⁵ In 2022, MAG

and HALO also started providing training and capacity building to CAAMI.³⁶

Following the MAG-secured funding from the Netherlands and Norway in 2022, Guinea-Bissau started rebuilding its mine action capacities. On 28 February 2023, Guinea-Bissau reactivated the CNDH, which according to its statement, “is an organ that plays a determinant role in the process of humanitarian demining”, and with the support of MAG, has established the internet connection for CAAMI. This has facilitated CAAMI's capacity building efforts and engagement with its national and international partners by means of online communication. CAAMI has also advanced its outreach to communities by setting up a hotline dedicated to receiving community reports of the presence of mines and other explosive devices.³⁷

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) conducted a visit to Guinea-Bissau in October 2022 and supported CAAMI in organising a workshop on “gender and diversity in the demining sector”. CAAMI and MAG also jointly organised a workshop on classification of hazardous

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., pp. 2-4 and 5.

24 Article 7 report (covering 2022); Form H.

25 Ibid.

26 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.

27 Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form H.

28 Statement of Guinea-Bissau, Fourth APMBBC Review Conference, Oslo, 25-29 November 2019.

29 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2019).

30 APMBBC Article 7 Report (covering 2010), Form A.

31 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7.

32 Presentation of Guinea-Bissau, APMBBC Intersessional Meetings, 22-24 June 2021, slide 12.

33 Email from Nautan Mancabu, CAAMI, 28 March 2023.

34 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 12-14.

35 Presentation of CAAMI to the APMBBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20-22 June 2022.

36 Emails from Nicole Ntagabo, Regional Programmes Manager, MAG, 13 April 2023; and Yamireth D'Almeida, Global Construction Manager, HALO, 28 March 2023.

37 Statement of Guinea-Bissau to the APMBBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19-21 June 2023.

areas with participation from the GICHD. Trainings on technical survey (TS), quality control (QC), spot tasks, and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) Level I, II, and III took place in June-July 2023 with participation from CAAMI and HUMAID.³⁸

In 2022, MAG secured funding from Norway and the Netherlands for capacity development in Guinea-Bissau, including conducting a capacity and needs assessment, review of the IMSMA, training in information management, a review of the NMAS, support for the development of an accreditation process, as well as some support for NTS and EORE.³⁹

Throughout 2022, MAG supported the CAAMI in accessing the internet. It developed tools and terms of reference for capacity development, which were presented to CAAMI in February 2022. MAG was also planning to initiate discussions with the CAAMI on the basis of recommendations by the GICHD following a needs assessment it conducted in October 2022. MAG plans to provide four computers to CAAMI in 2023: one to be used in each of the areas of support services, EORE and community liaison (CL), information management (IM), and for quality management (QM).⁴⁰

HALO continued collaboration with CAAMI and provided it with capacity building and training. In 2022, HALO provided five days of medical information and communication

technology (ICT) training to CAAMI personnel, and planned to conduct the ICT refresher and casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) trainings.⁴¹

Since 2012, the government of Guinea-Bissau has provided an annual contribution of approximately US\$40,000 to support the functioning of CAAMI by providing premises, running costs, salaries of some staff members, and a few spot clearance tasks. No financial support has been provided for field operations.⁴² CAAMI said that it continued to undertake quality control activities on the punctual clearance and spot task operations by HUMAID and the cleaning of the accident and victim data without contributions from international donors or organisations. According to Guinea-Bissau's latest Article 5 deadline extension request, the lack of resources has affected CAAMI's capacity to carry out its mandate to conduct EORE, survey, and clearance. It also affected other key areas such as information management, representation, and fundraising. Over the last ten years, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) funded some of the work carried out by HUMAID.⁴³

The Implementation Support Unit (ISU) of the APMBC has supported Guinea-Bissau with its resource mobilisation, as well as in organising a national dialogue on victims and persons with disability in January 2022.⁴⁴

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Guinea-Bissau's most recent Article 7 submission states that land release operations will seek to enable an environment favourable to socio-economic development (agriculture, pasture, and infrastructures), and will seek to promote the integration of mine action issues with other development and humanitarian plans as recommend in the Oslo Action Plan.⁴⁵

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Guinea-Bissau said that its proposed action plan (2022–24) follows best practices by promoting gender and diversity inclusion at all stages of its programme.⁴⁶ Its latest extension request also mentions that "EORE activities and tools will also be tailored taking into account gender and diversity aspects, as well as the at-risk groups", and that CAAMI will seek to build its own gender and diversity policy, and "will require operators to constitute their operational teams taking into consideration matters related to gender and

diversity."⁴⁷ Guinea-Bissau's latest extension request and work plan, however, do not contain any measurable gender and diversity targets.⁴⁸ In 2022, five of the seventeen CAAMI staff (18%) were women, of whom three (18%) were in managerial positions, but none in operational ones.⁴⁹ In May 2023, CAAMI participated in a "Gender, Inclusion and Conflict Sensitivity" assessment carried out by MAG. Some of the conclusions of the assessment will be used by CAAMI in the development of its gender and diversity policy.⁵⁰

38 Ibid.; and email from Francois Fall, MAG, 30 August 2023.

39 Emails from Nautan Mancabu, CAAMI, 28 March 2023; Roxana Bobolicu, MAG, 29 September 2022; and François Fall, MAG, 30 August 2023.

40 Email from Nicole Ntagabo, MAG, 13 April 2023.

41 Email from Yamireth D'Almeida, HALO, 28 March 2023.

42 Email from Nautan Mancabu, CAAMI, 28 March 2023; and 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7.

43 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7.

44 Ibid., pp. 8 and 23.

45 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

46 Ibid.

47 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 16, 22, and 24.

48 Ibid., pp. 12–14.

49 Email from Nautan Mancabu, CAAMI, 28 March 2023.

50 Email from Francois Fall, MAG, 30 August 2023.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Guinea-Bissau considers that a functional information management system is a prerequisite to resuming its mine action activities and an essential component of its mine action strategy.⁵¹ In 2001–12, CAAMI used the IMSMA Version 5 with the support of GICHD, but since the declaration of completion in 2012, the physical server was no longer in use.⁵² In 2022, CAAMI contracted an external consultant to retrieve the data from the previous server. However, data retrieval was not successful and the old data has been lost.⁵³ In July 2023, CAAMI made a formal request to the GICHD for support to retrieve all or part of its old databases.⁵⁴

As at March 2023, MAG was discussing with the GICHD its recommendations on the suitable technology for the information management following an assessment carried out by the GICHD in October 2022. As at September 2023, CAAMI has reportedly decided to use the IMSMA Core system, but had yet to formally request it from the GICHD. Meanwhile, a temporary Excel-based system will be put in place to gather and manage the data.⁵⁵ CAAMI and MAG organised an IM workshop in August 2023, which focused on revision of forms. During the first quarter of 2023, MAG provided CAAMI with a high-specification computer dedicated to IM. By August 2023, an IM specialist was being recruited by CAAMI and was expected to assume position by October 2023.⁵⁶

Guinea-Bissau expected that the development of a fully functional system covering all components of the mine action programme could take an initial six months. Afterwards, additional components could be added and maintenance done.⁵⁷ In its planned 2022–24 budget, CAAMI has allocated US\$367,000 for the development of an information management system.⁵⁸

Guinea-Bissau's latest Article 7 report to the APMBC, submitted in 2023, was detailed.

PLANNING AND TASKING

In its 2022 extension request, Guinea-Bissau submitted a detailed two-year action plan that comprises 11 objectives over the course of 2022–24 as follows. In 2022: development of an information management system; development of IMAS-compliant national standards; preparation for NTS; preparation for TS, marking, and clearance; resumption of EORE; and mobilisation of financial resources. In 2023–24: implementation of nationwide NTS; emergency spot task clearance and marking; continuation of EORE; capacity building of CAAMI and national operators; and definition of residual risk management strategy. The action plan is costed at US\$5,688,000.⁵⁹

Guinea-Bissau has already started implementation of some of the provisions of its work plan albeit with delays. The development of NMAS, preparations for the national NTS, and the foundational work for the data management system were progressing following the funds acquired by MAG in 2022.⁶⁰ However, the financial resources given to Guinea-Bissau remain short of allowing full implementation of its work plan.⁶¹ HALO noted that operators have supported CAAMI with their planning and extension, but also noted that organisations' support remains limited in the absence of international funding.⁶² As at March 2023, HALO was still seeking funds and operational support for its mine action activities in Guinea-Bissau.⁶³

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Guinea-Bissau does not have NMAS, but considers the establishment of IMAS-compliant national standards as a prerequisite to the resumption of mine action activities, ensuring safety, quality, and efficiency.⁶⁴ Guinea-Bissau sought US\$112,000 for the development of NMAS.⁶⁵

51 Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form D; and 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 9.

52 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 10, and email from Nautan Mancabu, CAAMI, 28 March 2023.

53 Email from Nicole Ntagabo, MAG, 13 April 2023.

54 Email from François Fall, MAG, 30 August 2023.

55 Article 7 report to the APMBC (covering 2022), Annex I; and email from François Fall, MAG, 30 August 2023.

56 Emails from Nicole Ntagabo, MAG, 13 April 2023; and François Fall, MAG, 30 August 2023.

57 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 20.

58 Ibid., p. 26.

59 Ibid., p. 19.

60 Interview with Nautan Mancabu, CAAMI, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20 June 2023.

61 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 26.

62 Statement of HALO on Guinea-Bissau's presentation of its Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

63 Email from Yamireth D'Almeida, HALO, 28 March 2023.

64 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 10; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

65 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 26, and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

The 2022–24 work plan foresees the establishment of a working group to follow the development and review of NMAS by a panel of national and international actors.⁶⁶

Guinea-Bissau began elaborating its NMAS in 2022, but have not yet had them approved.⁶⁷ MAG has been supporting CAAMI in developing its NMAS and, at the end of 2022, had already submitted a set of six national standards in Portuguese for processing by CAAMI.⁶⁸ By June 2023, CAAMI reported having seven NMAS ready for approval. These are: glossary, land release, NTS, TS, accreditation, manual demining, deactivation and EOD.⁶⁹

As part of its capacity development activities, MAG will also support CAAMI to define and implement the NMAS drafting and development process. There are currently no standards on EORE or NTS. In line with the GICHD recommendations,

MAG supported CAAMI organise a workshop on the definition of land classification criteria, which has resulted in the drafting on NTS standards.⁷⁰

In the absence of standards on accreditation process, CAAMI refers to IMAS 07.30. However, there is no clear process in place, which has led to delays in the accreditation. According to MAG, the lack of well-defined accreditation process has posed a potential hurdle for the roll-out of operators' activities.⁷¹ In 2023, three operators: HALO, HUMAID, and MAG all received accreditation.⁷²

According to Guinea-Bissau's declaration of completion in 2012, all clearance work had been conducted in accordance with IMAS. Technical and non-technical surveys were only applied in 2010; prior to this, land was released solely through clearance.⁷³

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

CAAMI's activities have been largely restricted since 2012 due to a lack of funding.⁷⁴ CAAMI's capacity as at April 2022 was 17 staff members.⁷⁵ As at March 2023, one national (HUMAID) and two international mine action operators (HALO and MAG) were present in Guinea-Bissau.⁷⁶

HALO has been operating in Guinea-Bissau since November 2017. It is implementing a Weapons and Ammunition Safety Programme in support of the armed forces. HALO constructed a secure storage facility for serviceable ammunition and has been working alongside the Guinea-Bissau armed forces to carry out the cutting, burning, and demolition of obsolete weapons and ammunition. HALO has also been providing training in ammunition storekeeping, store management, and EOD in the north-east region of Gabú.⁷⁷ At the request of CAAMI, HALO organised a visit in March 2022 to assess the state of contamination in some villages.⁷⁸ HALO provided training and capacity building to CAAMI in 2022, and continues seeking funds and operational support for its programme in Guinea-Bissau.⁷⁹

HUMAID is a national demining NGO that has been active since 2000. HUMAID receives reports of incidents and victims reported by communities and, when financially possible, makes field visits to verify the information. HUMAID has also conducted some demining and spot task

operations with the support of UNOPS. As at June 2021, HUMAID's capacity consisted of more than 20 deminers formerly trained at different EOD levels and functions, who can be mobilised upon request. HUMAID has one vehicle, an ambulance, one global positioning system (GPS), 13 detectors, personal protective equipment, and destruction equipment. However, the equipment is old and requires maintenance or replacement.⁸⁰ In 2014, HUMAID conducted the assessment survey of the newly discovered AP mine and ERW contamination.⁸¹ A national operator, Lutamos Todos Contra As Minas (LUTCAM), which was present prior to the declaration of completion in 2012, is no longer active in Guinea-Bissau, but CAAMI considers to either reactivate it or integrate former LUTCAM staff into HUMAID as means to increase national capacities.⁸²

HI has been working in Guinea-Bissau since 2000, but suspended its operations from 2008–14, due to the political unrest and security risks, then resumed working in 2015.⁸³ As present, HI is not directly engaged in mine action activities.

Since 2021, MAG has supported CAAMI in identifying challenges, opportunities, and resources needed for the resumption of mine action activities, as well as in a preliminary diagnostic in terms of information management. For this purpose, MAG has been coordinating with the GICHD,

66 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 20; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

67 Email from Nautan Mancabu, CAAMI, 28 March 2023.

68 Email from Nicole Ntagabo, MAG, 13 April 2023.

69 Statement of Guinea-Bissau to the APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

70 Email from Nicole Ntagabo, MAG, 13 April 2023.

71 Ibid.

72 Email from François Fall, MAG, 30 August 2023.

73 Declaration of completion of implementation of Article 5, 12MSP, Geneva, 3–7 December 2012, p. 4.

74 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7.

75 22 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 12–14.

76 Email from Nautan Mancabu, CAAMI, 28 March 2023.

77 Email from James Scott, HALO, 9 August 2021.

78 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.

79 Email from Yamireth D'Almeida, HALO, 28 March 2023.

80 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 15.

81 Presentation of Guinea-Bissau to the APMBC Intersessional Meetings, online, 22–24 June 2021, slide 9; and 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.

82 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 16.

83 HI website, accessed on 7 August 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3vLIJ3k>.

which has supported CAAMI in the use of IMSMA in 2001–12.⁸⁴ MAG supported the capacity development of CAAMI in 2022, including support in the organisational accreditation, drafting of NMAS, recruitment of key staff, and establishing connectivity and internet capacity. MAG started the identification of national partners: one partner for community liaison, NTS, and EORE, and a second partner for EOD. MAG expected to continue capacity development support and to initiate survey in 2023. As at August 2023, partner community liaison teams were undergoing training and were expected to be tasked by CAAMI in September–October 2023.⁸⁵

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) was present in Guinea-Bissau until 2012 conducting survey and clearance.⁸⁶ NPA also

conducted a national survey of mine and UXO contamination, working in partnership with LUTCAM, which was active at the time.⁸⁷ During the first quarter of 2012, NPA conducted mainly EOD spot tasks and, despite concerns of possible residual contamination, it eventually closed the programme in 2012 due to the lack of evidence of other AP mined area.⁸⁸

Prior to Guinea-Bissau's declaration of fulfilment of Article 5 obligations in 2012, all mine clearance had been conducted manually with deminers equipped with metal detectors and excavation tools.⁸⁹ Several organisations conducted clearance in conjunction with the national operators HUMAID and LUTCAM, including, HI,⁹⁰ Landmine Action,⁹¹ NPA,⁹² and a British NGO: Clear Ground Demining.⁹³

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

No mined area was reported to have been released in Guinea-Bissau in 2022.

SURVEY IN 2022

There were no reports of any survey of mined areas in Guinea-Bissau in 2022.

CLEARANCE IN 2022

There was no clearance of mined areas in Guinea-Bissau in 2022.

In 2021, HALO destroyed five PRB M409 AP mines from a military ammunition storage area and reported that other stockpiled mines were left at locations around Guinea-Bissau as at February 2021.⁹⁴ Guinea-Bissau's deadline for stockpile destruction expired on 1 November 2005.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



84 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.
85 Emails from Nicole Ntagabo, MAG, 13 April 2023; and François Fall, MAG, 30 August 2023.
86 Email from Hans Risser, NPA, 10 August 2021.
87 Declaration of completion of implementation of Article 5, Geneva, 3–7 December 2012, pp. 3–4.
88 Email from Hans Risser, NPA, 10 August 2021.
89 Declaration of completion of implementation of Article 5, 12MSP, Geneva, 3–7 December 2012, p. 4.
90 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 16.
91 Email from James Scott, HALO, 9 August 2021.
92 Email from Hans Risser, NPA, 10 August 2021.
93 Article 7 Report (covering November 2001 to April 2002), Form C.
94 Ibid.

Under Article 5 of the APMBC, Guinea-Bissau is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2024. Guinea-Bissau will not meet this deadline and intends to submit a fourth extension request by 31 March 2024.

Guinea-Bissau's original Article 5 deadline of 1 November 2011 was previously extended for two months. Guinea-Bissau had declared fulfilment of its Article 5 obligations at the 12MSP in December 2012, but in June 2021, reported at the Intersessional Meetings the discovery of 1.09km² of CHA and 43 SHA of an unknown size containing AP mines and ERW. Guinea-Bissau did not specify what proportion of contamination was believed to contain AP mines as opposed to other types of explosive ordnance.

In June 2021, Guinea-Bissau submitted an interim extension request through to 31 December 2022, which was granted at the 19MSP in November 2021. Guinea-Bissau said it would use the interim period to further investigate the contamination and mobilise the necessary resources in order

to be in a better position to submit a follow-up extension request by 31 March 2022.⁹⁵ Due to the lack of resources, however, little progress has been achieved during the interim period, and Guinea-Bissau submitted a third interim Article 5 deadline extension request in June 2022, through to 31 December 2024, which was granted by the 20MSP.

The latest interim extension request featured a detailed work plan that aims to complete a national NTS to better understand the contamination, develop NMAS and information management system; resume EORE activities; prepare resources for spot tasks, technical survey, and the clearance; and lay out a strategy of management of residual risk, with a view of submitting a final extension request by 31 March 2024, with a detailed plan for completion of its Article 5 obligations.⁹⁶ Guinea-Bissau has started delivering on the objectives it had set out to achieve in 2022, albeit with delayed timelines due to the insufficient funds. Guinea-Bissau has to step up its resource mobilisation resources in order to be able to follow its proposed plan.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

In its declaration of completion of Article 5 obligations under the APMBC in 2012, Guinea-Bissau stated that "battle area clearance tasks remain, as well as an expected residual contamination, which will be addressed by the CAAMI".⁹⁷ Guinea-Bissau also stated that, in the event of discovery of new previously unknown mined areas, it would report in accordance with its obligations under Article 7 of the Convention, ensure the effective exclusion of civilians, and destroy or ensure the destruction of all AP mines as a matter of urgent priority, making its need for assistance known to other States Parties as appropriate.⁹⁸

In its extension request submitted in June 2022, Guinea-Bissau stated that it "will work on defining a national strategy for the residual risk management and on strengthening national capacities for its conduct". Guinea-Bissau also said that "the results of the national survey and subsequent clearance will be critical to further ensure the establishment of an appropriate sustainable demining capacity to address any contamination identified following completion".⁹⁹ In its latest Article 7 report covering 2022, Guinea-Bissau stated that the development of a residual risk management strategy would require the organisation of workshops with national and international stakeholders, based on the outputs of which, an action plan could be further developed.¹⁰⁰

MAG endorsed the importance for Guinea-Bissau to establish sustainable national capacities to address mined areas discovered after completion, and to manage remaining contamination from other explosive ordnance. In June 2022, MAG also stated in the Intersessional Meetings that it was working with Guinea-Bissau and national implementing partners to ensure a more sustainable approach to completion.¹⁰¹ As part of its planning for residual risk, Guinea-Bissau must plan how and where it will maintain a sustainable national mine action information database. This is especially important in light of its inability to access some historical mine action data.

⁹⁵ Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 22 June 2021, paras. 10–11.

⁹⁶ 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 19.

⁹⁷ Declaration of completion of implementation of Article 5, 12MSP, Geneva, 3–7 December 2012, p. 5.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.

⁹⁹ 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 25.

¹⁰⁰ Article 7 report to the APMBC (covering 2022), Annex I.

¹⁰¹ Statement of MAG to the APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 FEBRUARY 2028
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: MASSIVE
PRECISE EXTENT UNCLEAR**

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

17.43_{KM²}

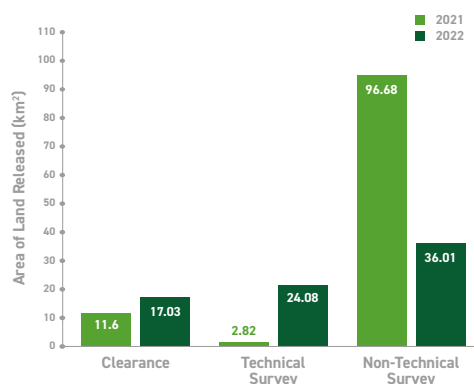
(MINE ACTION REVIEW ANALYSIS
OF NATIONAL AUTHORITY AND
NGO DATA)

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

20,921

(INCLUDING 276 DESTROYED
IN SPOT TASKS) (MINE ACTION
REVIEW ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL
AUTHORITY AND NGO DATA)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Iraq reported increased clearance of mined area again in 2022 but overall land release declined as a result of a sharp drop in cancellation of areas affected by improvised mines compared with the previous year. The Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) and the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA) prepared a five-year national mine strategy, the first drawn up jointly by the two authorities, which was formally launched in 2023. IKMAA received funding from Slovenia through the ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF) enabling a significant increase in clearance in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The DMA appointed a new director general in February 2023, the 17th in the last 20 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The Iraqi government should provide the DMA with the legal authority, funding, equipment, and training for staff to strengthen its effectiveness as the national mine action authority.
- The Iraqi government and mine action authorities should provide clarity on national funding available for mine action and how the funds are allocated.
- The DMA should seek urgently to strengthen information management in the national programme by enhancing human capacity, modernising data entry processes, updating the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database, and ensuring operators have access to information required for planning.
- The DMA should provide comprehensive data on the active capacity conducting survey and clearance and data on land release disaggregated by all operators, including state organisations, commercial companies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).
- The DMA should streamline issuance of task orders to eliminate cumbersome procedures and lengthy delays obstructing efficient survey and clearance.
- The Ministry of Environment should engage with the Department of Non-Government Organisations to avoid the restrictions on access that have resulted in lengthy delays to survey and clearance.

- Iraq should explicitly recognise anti-personnel (AP) mines of an improvised nature as part of its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) treaty obligation and national mine action authorities in Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) should amend reporting forms to enable disaggregation of improvised mines from improvised explosive devices (IEDs) which are not victim activated.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	7	7	Iraq has a broad understanding of the location of legacy mined areas. Federal Iraq is confident initial estimates of minefields in the south were inflated and that non-technical survey (NTS) will substantially reduce the area requiring clearance. The KRI also has detailed knowledge of mined areas although insecurity prevented survey along the northern border. Improvised mine contamination in areas liberated from Islamic State and concentrated in Federal Iraq have been extensively surveyed, but in 2022 operators continued to identify previously unrecorded hazardous areas almost on a daily basis.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	6	5	The DMA and IKMAA cooperated for the first time in preparation of a new national mine action strategy for 2023–28 which aims to increase national ownership by strengthening both authorities. Facing a downturn in international donor funding, Federal Iraq allocated funding for the mine action sector from its national budget which was endorsed by parliament in 2023. Federal Iraq has not provided the DMA, a department of the Ministry of Environment, with the legal mandate and institutional authority to effectively manage or coordinate mine action activities by more politically powerful ministries such as defence, interior, and oil.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	6	6	Iraq's mine action strategy for 2023–28 acknowledges the importance of gender and diversity to the sector. Conservative social attitudes to women's employment hamper recruitment in what has been a male-dominated sector but demining organisations are slowly increasing the number of women they employ, including in supervisory positions and in survey, community liaison, and clearance. Opportunities to hire women for field work vary according to region and are particularly limited in the affected governorates in the south.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	5	5	The DMA is upgrading its IMSMA database from New Generation to Core, a process the DMA said it hoped to complete by the end of 2023. Cumbersome information management procedures and manual data entry continued to slow entry of operator survey and clearance results. Iraq has submitted regular Article 7 transparency reports but still falls short in reporting land release results disaggregated by operator.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	5	6	Long delays in issuance of task orders by the DMA reversed improvements over the last two years and, together with frequent restrictions on access imposed by the NGO department, again proved an obstacle to operational planning and implementation. Iraq prepared a national strategy originally intended for 2022–28 but which after review was launched a year later and covered 2023–28.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	6	6	The DMA has been conducting a comprehensive review of standards with support from the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), which continued in 2022. It said in April 2022 that it had updated 20 standards although they had not yet been translated into English. International partners in the meantime continue to work from their own standard operating procedures (SOPs).
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	7	7	Federal Iraq and the KRI increased the amount of land cleared in 2022 but the total area completed dropped as a result of a sharp fall in the amount of cancellation through NTS in Federal Iraq. The KRI received international donor funding that enabled it to hire vehicles to transport demining teams to their task sites, resulting in increased clearance.
Average Score	6.2	6.2	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

Federal Iraq:

- Ministry of Environment
- Directorate for Mine Action (DMA)

Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI):

- Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

State:

- Ministry of Defence
- Ministry of Interior: Civil Defence, EOD Directorate
- IKMAA

NGO:

- Health and Social Care Organisation in Iraq (IHSCO)
- Shareteah Humanitarian Organisation (SHO)

Commercial:

- Ain Al Saker Demining Company
- Akad International Co. for Mines
- Baghdad for Clearance Organisation
- Al Basrah Demining Organisation
- Al Bayrac Demining Company
- Al Danube
- Al Fahad Co. for Demining
- Al Fayha
- Al Khebra Al Fania Demining Co.
- Al Safsafa

- Alsiraj Almudhia for Mine Removal
- Arabian Gulf Mine Action Co.
- Al Waha
- Al Watania Company for Demining
- AZSC
- Eagle Eye
- Insanyon Organisation for Demining
- Iraq Tadamon Company for Mine Clearance
- Kanary Mine Action Company
- Nabaa Al-Hurya Company
- Ta'az Demining
- Wtorplast Demining

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- DanChurchAid (DCA)
- Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
- FSD
- Global Clearance Solutions
- HAMAP Humanitaire
- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Humanity & Inclusion (HI)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Tetra Tech

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- iMMAP
- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Iraq reported contamination by mines and improvised mines totalling 1,716km² at the end of 2022,¹ making it among the most heavily affected countries in the world. The total recorded contamination comprised almost 1,503km² in Federal Iraq and 213km² in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) (see Tables 1 and 4, respectively), marking a 10% drop from estimated contamination at the end of 2021.

FEDERAL IRAQ

Legacy minefields, heavily concentrated in southern governorates, make up almost two thirds of Federal Iraq's mine problem. This amounted to 976km² at the end of 2022, only 2% smaller than a year earlier. The minefields were laid during the 1980–88 war with Iran, the 1991 Gulf War, and the 2003 invasion by the United States (US)-led coalition (see Tables 1 and 2). Basrah governorate, comprising the Shatt al-Arab and Fao districts, which were fiercely contested during the war with Iran, makes up 85% of the total (see Table 2).

Table 1: Mined area in Federal Iraq (at end 2022)²

Contamination type	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
AP mines	353	958,986,173	36	17,287,352	976,273,525
Improvised mines	1,348	390,390,130	373	136,246,715	526,636,846
Totals	1,701	1,349,376,303	409	153,534,068	1,502,910,371

CHAs = Confirmed hazardous areas
SHAs = Suspected hazardous areas

1 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), pp. 18–19; and email from Ahmed Aljasem, Director of Information Management, DMA, 6 June 2023.
2 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), pp. 18–19.

Table 2: Legacy AP mined area by governorate in Federal Iraq (at end 2022)³

Governorate	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
Anbar	1	6,329	0	0	6,329
Basrah	69	825,452,236	1	962,731	826,414,967
Diyala	1	0	28	15,791,646	15,791,646
Kirkuk	1	5,584	0	0	5,584
Missan	231	54,618,594	3	400,183	55,018,777
Muthanna	4	38,978,577	0	0	38,978,577
Najaf	1	1,754,329	0	0	1,754,329
Ninewa	1	390,540	4	132,792	523,332
Salah al-Din	5	126,544	0	0	126,544
Wassit	39	37,653,440	0	0	37,653,440
Totals	353	958,986,173	36	17,287,352	976,273,525

Federal Iraq also contends with extensive contamination by improvised mines laid during Islamic State's 2014–17 occupation of large swathes of northern and central Iraq and estimated at 526km² at the end of 2022 (see Table 3). The total is marginally higher than the 524km² recorded a year earlier.⁴

Since 2018, Federal Iraq's mine action resources have been heavily concentrated on clearing improvised mines to free critical infrastructure and facilitate resettlement of people displaced by the conflict. However, despite the concentration of clearance assets in Anbar and Ninewa in the past two years, operators recorded almost daily discoveries of previously unrecorded hazardous areas, resulting in a net increase in the estimated level of contamination in these governorates in 2022.

Table 3: IED/Improvised mine contamination in Federal Iraq (end 2022)⁵

Province	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
Anbar	804	113,527,379	209	61,209,112	174,736,491
Diyala	29	206,544,876	12	47,617,198	254,162,074
Kirkuk	53	26,925,890	19	1,650,964	26,576,854
Ninewa	361	33,324,123	121	25,216,457	58,540,580
Salah al-Din	101	10,067,862	12	552,984	10,620,846
Totals	1,348	390,390,130	373	136,246,715	526,636,845

KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ (KRI)

Mine contamination in the KRI is much smaller than in Federal Iraq but it still ranks among the world's most heavily mined areas. IKMAA estimated its contamination at 217km² at the end of 2022 (see Table 4),⁶ slightly higher than a year earlier.⁷ In the five years to November 2022, the KRI has identified previously unrecorded hazardous areas totalling nearly 55km².⁸

The KRI's contamination consists predominantly of legacy mines, some dating back to the 1960s and conflicts between Kurdish Peshmerga forces and the army of the previous Iraqi government. In addition, IKMAA says an area of around

20km² still remains to be surveyed where access has been prevented by insecurity, including persistent Turkish air strikes targeting the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).⁹ This included about 10km² in Slemani province, mainly close to the border with Iran, and about 5km² in each of Erbil and Dohuk provinces.¹⁰ The KRI, however, increased its estimate of improvised mine contamination by 42% to 4.2km² in the past year, almost all of it located in Dohuk governorate. The new estimate included hazardous areas identified in survey conducted by the DMA on areas liberated from Islamic State, details of which were later provided to IKMAA.¹¹

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 22.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 22–23.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 20–21.

⁷ Interview with Jabbar Mustafa, Head of IKMAA, Erbil, 18 May 2023.

⁸ Presentation of Iraq, APMBC Twentieth Meeting of States Parties (20MSP), Geneva, November 2022.

⁹ See, e.g., "Turkey confirms deadly airstrikes in Syria and Iraq, targeting Kurdish groups", *The Guardian*, 20 November 2022; "Turkish drone strikes hit PKK targets in northern Iraq, kill two", *Reuters*, 6 August 2023.

¹⁰ Email from Niyazi Khalid Qusaim, Deputy Head, IKMAA, 6 April 2022.

¹¹ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), p. 23; and email from Khatib Omer Ahmad, Planning Manager, Directorate General of Technical Affairs, IKMAA, 23 May 2023.

Table 4: Legacy AP mined area by governorate in the KRI (at end 2022)¹²

Province	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
Legacy mines					
Dohuk	433	20,636,155	0	0	20,636,155
Erbil	371	48,750,410	0	0	48,750,410
Halabja	261	12,409,099	5	1,265,000	13,674,099
Slemani	2,131	101,023,696	121	28,729,766	129,753,462
Subtotals	3,196	182,819,360	126	29,994,766	212,814,126
Improvised mines					
Duhok	30	1,058,157	48	3,069,929	4,128,086
Erbil	1	26,747	0	0	26,747
Slemani	6	8,105	0	0	8,105
Subtotals	37	1,093,009	48	3,069,929	4,162,938
Grand totals	3,233	183,912,369	174	33,064,695	216,977,064

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The mine action programme in Iraq is managed along regional lines. The DMA has represented Iraq internationally and oversees mine action for humanitarian purposes in Federal Iraq, covering 15 of the country's 19 governorates. Mine action in the KRI's four governorates is overseen by IKMAA, which acts as both regulator and operator. The two organisations have functioned largely autonomously though contacts appear to have improved since 2021 after years in which relations were overshadowed by tensions over funding and territorial demarcation issues.

The DMA and IKMAA collaborated in drawing up Iraq's draft National Mine Action Strategy 2023–28, the first produced jointly by the two authorities.¹³ The strategy sets increasing national ownership as a key objective and says this will be achieved by strengthening both authorities and "ensuring these national entities are empowered, appropriately structured and sufficiently equipped and resourced to allow them to fulfil their responsibilities."¹⁴

FEDERAL IRAQ

The inter-ministerial Higher Committee of Mine Action,¹⁵ which reports to the Prime Minister, oversees and approves

mine action strategy, policies, and plans. The committee is chaired by the Prime Minister and includes representatives of the ministries of defence, interior, oil and environment as well as the National Security Council and IKMAA. A meeting of the committee in March 2023 decided it would in future be chaired by the Minister of Environment and other ministries would be represented at the level of deputy minister, not minister. The DMA "plans, coordinates, supervises, monitors and follows up all the activities of mine action". It draws up the national strategy and is responsible for setting national standards, accrediting, and approving the standing operating procedures (SOPs) of demining organisations and certifying completion of clearance tasks.¹⁶

The DMA oversees three Regional Mine Action Centres (RMACs):

1. North: covering the governorates of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Nineveh, and Salah ad-Din.
2. Middle Euphrates (MEU): Babylon, Baghdad, Karbala, Najaf, Qadisiya, and Wassit.
3. South: Basrah, Missan, Muthanna, and Thi-Qar.

¹² Article 7 Report (covering 2022), pp. 20–21.

¹³ Interview with Ahmed Aljasim, Director of Information Management, DMA, in Baghdad, 11 May 2023.

¹⁴ Draft National Mine Action Strategy 2002–2028, p. 36.

¹⁵ The Council, which is led by the Prime Minister, includes representatives of the ministries of defence, interior, oil, and environment, as well as the National Security Adviser and the head of IKMAA.

¹⁶ "Document of roles and responsibilities", undated but 2019, received by email from the DMA, 13 May 2019.

RMAC South, located in Basra City, is the focal point for Federal Iraq's response to CMR contamination. Alone among the RMACs, it collects and uploads results of survey and clearance to Federal Iraq's IMSMA database and is responsible for tasking operators in its area of operations. RMAC North and MEU are located in Baghdad but RMAC North also opened a satellite office in Mosul in August 2019.¹⁷

DMA coordination of mine action remains a challenge in a sector in which its formal status as a department of the relatively low-ranking Ministry of Environment gives it less authority than the powerful ministries of defence, interior, and oil, which are also major actors in the sector. Long-running discussions on a proposed demining law have raised the possibility of placing the DMA directly under the Office of the Prime Minister but as of the middle of 2023 there was no indication the government planned to take up the idea. A rapid turnover of the DMA's directors has also adversely affected management and policy continuity.

The DMA has had 17 directors general in the 20 years since 2003, all but one of whom was appointed on an acting basis, which also limited their authority. Dr Sabah Hasan al-Hussaini, who took up the position in February 2023, was already the head of another directorate and appeared likely to return full time to that position. The DMA awaited the appointment of a new long-term director general in 2023.¹⁸

Iraq elaborated a new national strategic plan for 2023–28, which acknowledges the institutional issues, citing “widespread belief” that the DMA should be strengthened to give it the authority commensurate with its mandate. The plan calls for an external assessment of the DMA's mandate and position that will result in recommendations to the Higher Council for Mine Action but does not indicate any timeline for this review.¹⁹ The strategic plan received official approval in June 2023 and was due to be launched in August.²⁰

The strategic plan for 2023–28 calls for strengthened national ownership and more national funding, recognising the dependence on external donor support as a key risk to sustainability of its mine action programme.²¹ To boost the capacity available for mine action, the DMA says Iraq's Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) “have accepted to be involved” in mine action. The DMA reported the PMF had their own EOD [explosive ordnance disposal] Directorate and a significant workforce in many governorates but lacked details.²² PMF capacity includes mine detection dogs (MDDs) and machines and an EOD training school near Baghdad.²³

Government funding for mine action has totalled about \$81 million in the decade to 2022 and averaged close to \$4 million a year in 2020–22.²⁴ The government's 2023 budget approved by parliament in June 2023 provides for increased national spending on mine action, including payment of ID20 billion (US\$17 million) over three years towards implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and allocation to demining of part of a \$20 million loan that may be guaranteed by UK Export Finance.²⁵ However, mine action stakeholders say there is a lack of transparency on how funds are allocated and who are eligible recipients.²⁶

KRI

IKMAA functions as both the regulator and an operator in the KRI. It reports directly to the Kurdistan Regional Government's Council of Ministers and is led by a head who has ministerial rank and a deputy head with deputy ministerial rank. It coordinates four directorates in Dohuk, Erbil, Garmian, and Sulaymaniyah (Sleman). IKMAA had a total of staff of more than 900 personnel, including 432 in operations, at the end of 2022, largely unchanged from the previous year, but a budgetary crisis in the KRI in recent years imposed severe constraints on the mine action sector.²⁷

IKMAA received no international donor funding in 2021²⁸ but in 2022 was supported by Slovenian Aid, which provided a grant of €168,000 through the ITF. The funds paid for vehicle rental, enabling IKMAA to deploy 15 demining teams and contributing to a rise in release of mined areas in 2022.²⁹

OTHER ACTORS

The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) established a presence in Iraq in 2015 to assess the explosive ordnance hazard threat in liberated areas and set three priorities: explosive hazard management to support stabilisation and recovery, including the return of people displaced by conflict; delivery of risk education; and technical support to build capacity of government entities to manage, regulate, and coordinate Iraq's response to explosive ordnance contamination. In 2021, UNMAS shifted its focus from explosive hazard management to providing technical support to national mine action authorities and implementing partners. The UNMAS mission in Iraq employed 100 people with 43 international staff in 2019 but the number dropped to 86 staff in 2021 and by 2023 numbered 51 of whom 7 were internationals.³⁰

17 Interview with Gus Guthrie, NPA, in Geneva, 12 February 2020.

18 Interview with Bakr Sahib Ahmed, Deputy Director General, DMA, in Baghdad, 11 May 2023.

19 Iraq National Mine Action Strategy 2022–2028, pp. 37–38.

20 Interview with Bakr Sahib Ahmed, DMA, in Baghdad, 11 May 2023.

21 Iraq National Mine Action Strategy 2022–2028, pp. 17 and 22.

22 Interview with Bakr Sahib Ahmed, DMA, in Baghdad, 11 May 2023.

23 Interview with Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS, Geneva, 23 June 2023.

24 CCM Article 4 Extension Request, 11 April 2023, p. 40.

25 Interviews with Nibras Fakhir Matrood, Director, RMAC-S, in Basra City, 8 May 2023; and Bakr Sahib Ahmed, DMA, in Baghdad, 11 May 2023.

26 Interviews with operators in Iraq, May 6–20, 2023.

27 Emails from Khatib Omer Ahmad, IKMAA, 3 May 2023; and Niyazi Khalid Qusaim, Deputy Head, IKMAA, 19 September 2023.

28 Email from Niyazi Khalid Qusaim, IKMAA, 22 April 2022.

29 Interview with Jabbar Mustafa, Head of IKMAA, Erbil, 18 May 2023; and email from Khatib Omer Ahmad, IKMAA, 3 May 2023.

30 Emails from Shinobu Mashima, Programme Officer, UNMAS, 4 May 2019, 6 April 2020, and 11 May 2023; and Hayder Ghanimi, Programme Officer, UNMAS, 28 April and 31 August 2022.

UNMAS, in keeping with changing donor priorities and the focus on nationalisation, is shrinking its role in Iraq and by 2023 was preparing to exit from explosive hazard management. Donor funding for demining operations channelled through UNMAS has declined from its high point of US\$77 million in 2019 (some of it for activities in 2019–20) to approximately US\$12 million in 2022, when UNMAS funded operations for eight organisations in three governorates:

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Iraq does not have a policy on environmental management in mine action. In 2022, the DMA and IKMAA were in the process of preparing a national standard but they have not reported its release. In the meantime, humanitarian demining organisations said they applied their global SOPs for managing the environment.

Iraq's 2023 CCM Article 4 deadline extension request noted that the DMA is part of the Ministry of Environment and provides technical support to land conservation efforts and planning as part of the wider Ministry.³⁵ The extension request also mentioned that previous and ongoing wars have affected the environmental situation, and resulted in air, water, and soil pollution;³⁶ and that "climate changes, natural, and geographical factors which lead to the spreading and expansion of the contaminated areas as a result of the migration of mines, cluster munitions and unexploded ordnance due to erosion factors such as rain and floods, which resulted in an increase in the size of contaminated areas."³⁷ However, it contained no information on how environmental considerations will be addressed during planning and tasking in order to minimise potential harm from land release activities or how climate change may impact planned operations or Iraq's prioritisation for clearance. The CCM extension request did, however, ask for international funding to investigate the use of non-explosive methods of disposal that are as cost effective as explosive/thermite destruction techniques but lessen the impact on the environment.³⁸

Some international demining organisations are exploring how their capacity can help address severe pressure on water supply and irrigation systems to facilitate productive use of cleared land. The HALO Trust (HALO) is looking into possibilities of partnerships with local organisations to follow

Anbar, Basrah, and Ninewa.³¹ It expected funding to remain at this level in 2023 but faced the possibility of a further significant drop in 2024.³² The number of donors funding operations in Iraq through UNMAS has dropped from a peak of 21 to six in 2023.³³ UNMAS planned to shift to providing capacity building support for the DMA, IKMAA, the Ministry of Interior, and national operators.³⁴

up clearance with assistance to rehabilitate soil and irrigation systems to address acute problems of water quality and supply.³⁹

NPA has an environmental SOP followed during the planning and implementation of tasks. Teams avoid disturbing soil unless specifically required for technical survey (TS) or clearance operations, and seek to ensure that the soil is in a state suitable for its intended use after completion of a task.⁴⁰ In 2022, NPA appointed a global environmental adviser and piloted collection of environmental data in the course of non-technical survey (NTS). NPA also is developing support for local communities in rehabilitating irrigation canals and use of irrigation pipelines that help conserve water.⁴¹

FSD conducts an environmental impact assessment (EIA) prior to demining to identify potential environmental risks and operational impacts, including the risk of soil erosion, deforestation, and the disturbance of wildlife habitats. FSD then develops a plan to mitigate the risks through measures such as erosion controls, reforestation, and establishing buffer zones around sensitive habitats. It prioritises use of environmentally friendly demining techniques, where possible using manual clearance instead of heavy machinery and non-toxic or biodegradable alternatives to chemical agents. It also engages with local communities to address their concerns and ensure activities do not negatively affect their livelihoods.⁴²

National NGO Shareteah Humanitarian Organisation (SHO), partnered by FSD and HAMAP, similarly conducted pre-clearance environmental assessments, adhered to strict protocols on waste disposal and safe disposal of ordnance to avoid soil and water contamination, and trained staff in environmental best practice.⁴³

31 Email from Shinobu Mashima, UNMAS, 11 May 2023. The eight organisations were AKAF, DCA, FSD, Global Clearance Solutions, HALO, HI, IHSCO, and NPA.

32 Email from Shinobu Mashima, UNMAS, 11 May 2023; and interview with Shinobu Mashima and Johannes Smith, UNMAS, in Baghdad, 14 May 2023.

33 Interview with Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS, Geneva, 23 June 2023.

34 Ibid.

35 CCM Article 4 Extension Request, 11 April 2023, p. 34.

36 Ibid., p. 38.

37 Ibid., p. 28.

38 Ibid., p. 16.

39 Email from Hein Bekker, Programme Manager, HALO, 4 May 2023; and interview in Baghdad, 10 May 2023.

40 Email from Chimwemwe Tembo, Deputy Programme Manager, NPA, 12 April 2023.

41 Email from Chimwemwe Tembo, NPA, 12 April 2023; and interview with Chris Tierney, Programme Manager, NPA, in Baghdad, 13 May 2023.

42 Email from Peter Smethers, FSD, 12 April 2023.

43 Email from Ismat Selevany, Director, SHO, 17 May 2023.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The Iraq National Strategic Mine Action Plan for 2017–2021 referred to gender equality and gender mainstreaming within mine action activities as objectives of an effective programmatic response.⁴⁴ Iraq's 2023–2028 strategic plan recognises the different impact of contamination shaped by gender, age, and ethnic or religious affiliations and requires specific activities targeting those needs, for which disaggregated data is a prerequisite.⁴⁵

The DMA's gender unit, which was created in 2017 and adopted its first Gender Unit Action Plan in early 2021, reported a range of activities in 2022, conducting quality assurance (QA) field visits to Civil Defence and NGO demining teams and also visiting women deployed in operational teams to assess their activities and address issues encountered by female operators. The DMA organised workshops on gender mainstreaming in mine action in 2022 in cooperation with NPA, and together with IKMAA participated in a four-day leadership training course conducted by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and a one-day course on gender balance and diversity.⁴⁶ According to Iraq's 2023 Article 4 deadline extension request, the DMA, in partnership with NPA, established and trained two mixed-gender teams (for TS and clearance).⁴⁷

IKMAA reported offering equal employment opportunities to women and said that women held 10 of its 15 managerial posts, but, overall, women were little more than 12% of IKMAA's total staff at the end of 2022, most of them in administration, information management, and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE). The 623 operations staff employed by IKMAA as of May 2023 included only nine women. IKMAA said it would like to set up female clearance and EOD teams in the KRI's four governorates and has called for donors to support this initiative.⁴⁸

Women's participation in mine action, a traditionally male-dominated sector, still faces resistance from socially conservative attitudes, particularly in rural areas. Efforts to recruit women can encounter attitudes questioning the point of female employment when there are not enough jobs for men.⁴⁹ It can be problematic to deploy women outside the areas they live and some candidates have dropped out of training that required overseas travel.⁵⁰ Three of the six NGOs working in Federal Iraq had more than 20% female staff with a lower percentage employed in operational positions (see Table 5).

Table 5: Gender composition of mine action operators in 2022⁵¹

Operator	Total staff	Total women	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Total women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total operations staff	Total women in operations
FSD	105	12	25	1	80	10
HALO	96	18	6	3	53	9
HI	151	42	15	2	136	40
MAG	810	131	94	10	714	103
NPA	491	96	83	20	392	66
SHO	135	51	13	2	62	19

The participation of women in mine action and their level of qualification continued to rise. Graduates of an EOD Level 3 course at the Ministry of Interior's training centre in 2022 included the first female Civil Defence staff member. Fifteen women participated in EOD Levels 1 and 2 courses conducted by UNMAS. Additionally, nine female Civil Defence officers completed an explosive hazard first-responder training course and a DMA female staff member passed a course on drone-supported NTS conducted by UNMAS Iraq's technical support unit.⁵²

Conservative social norms among tribes in the south make recruitment of females more challenging than in northern governorates but Danish Refugee Council (DRC) recruited six female deminers from Basra and surrounding villages without previous experience who underwent training in early 2022 and deployed on their first task in April 2022. It had announced

⁴⁴ Iraq National Mine Action Strategy 2023–2028, pp. 12, 18, 20, and 30.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 15.

⁴⁶ CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2022), pp. 30–36.

⁴⁷ CCM Article 4 deadline Extension Request, 11 April 2023, p. 26.

⁴⁸ Email from Khatib Omer Ahmad, IKMAA, 3 May 2023.

⁴⁹ Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022.

⁵⁰ Email from Tim Marsella, Programme Officer, HALO, 17 March 2022.

⁵¹ Emails from Peter Smether, FSD, 22 May 2023; Hein Bekker, HALO, 4 May 2023; Chris Fuller, Chief of EOD Operations, Iraq, 13 April 2023; Katie Shaw, Programme Manager, MAG, 14 May 2023; Chimwemwe Tembo, NPA, 12 April 2023; and Ismat Selevany, SHO, 17 May 2023.

⁵² Email from Shinobu Mashima, UNMAS Iraq, 11 May 2023.

vacancies for eight staff and received around 35 applicants.⁵³ If tests conducted as part of its recruitment process do not produce a female in the top three candidates, the top scoring female is interviewed to ensure there is no bias. Its steps to attract women staff included offering 18 weeks of paid maternity leave and five days of paid leave to deal with child sickness in line with global DRC Minimum Standards for employment of national staff.⁵⁴ NPA experienced some interference with recruitment notices put up in Basrah encouraging female applicants but it perceives that the slowly increasing participation of women in the sector is finding widening community acceptance of their role and its 61 operations staff included 7 women, working mainly in NTS.⁵⁵

NPA has a dedicated Gender and Diversity Programme Coordinator responsible for gender mainstreaming and implemented specific projects to support the inclusion of women in mine action and by the end of 2022, female staff was at 21% and female operational staff increased by 43%.⁵⁶ In addition to women employed in administrative roles in NPA's Basra-based CMR programme, three of NPA's 10 operational teams each employ two women. Despite some community resistance, employment of women in all aspects of mine action appears to be gaining acceptance.⁵⁷

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Iraq's National Mine Action Strategy 2023–2028 underscores the importance of comprehensive information management processes to effective planning, tasking, implementation, and reporting. It also says Iraq will seek to increase understanding of its remaining mine and CMR contamination through continuous updating of its baseline data by means of a database clean-up, desktop analysis, and contact with communities.⁵⁸

The DMA and IKMAA have operated databases using IMSMA NG with technical support from iMMAP, an international not-for-profit organisation based in Erbil and funded by and working under contract to the US Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA). Federal Iraq's mine action database is located at the DMA's Baghdad headquarters.

Federal Iraq's mine action information management continues to suffer from severe delays in uploading operating results which ensures the database is not up to date and annual results do not accurately reflect the activities conducted. The DMA attributes delays to the need to correct reporting errors and apply quality control (QC).⁵⁹ Implementing partners point to cumbersome procedures which require them to submit operational data in hard copy and on CD-ROMs to be uploaded manually into the database.⁶⁰ Data verification and correction can add additional significant delays.⁶¹ The process has ensured the database and the data available to operators on an online dashboard are not

up to date, limiting its utility for planning or preparing task proposals. The DMA introduced an Online Task Management System in 2019 to facilitate tasking but took it offline in October 2021, reportedly over sensitivities about the data available.

The small number, high turnover, and limited working hours of the DMA's data processing staff has further contributed to the DMA's information management challenges. The DMA appealed to implementing partners in 2022 and early 2023 to provide seconded staff to boost its data processing capacity. However, an additional challenge for the DMA's information management is that the staff available reportedly devote significant time to processing official correspondence and documents, reducing the time available for data processing. iMMAP previously had two staff embedded in the DMA but ended their deployment in December 2022 in line with moves to reduce the scope of its engagement with the DMA's data management operations and shifting to more training.⁶²

The DMA is in the process of upgrading its database to IMSMA Core with support from the GICHD and iMMAP. The DMA's IMSMA Core server was installed in December 2022 and field testing of reporting forms started in 2023. The DMA was due to launch the system by December 2023.⁶³ The DMA expects electronic uploading to start with EORE and victim assistance data before extending to include survey and clearance results.⁶⁴

53 Email from Katrien Denys, Head of Programme, DRC, 18 April 2023; and field visit with Mustafa Nadhim Hameed, DRC, 8 May 2023.

54 Emails from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022; and Lasse Marinus Joergensen, Operations Manager, DRC, 21 April 2022.

55 Interview with Chris Ramsden, NPA, in Basrah, 7 May 2023.

56 Email from Chimwemwe Tembo, NPA, 12 April 2023.

57 Interview with Chris Ramsden, South Iraq, NPA, in Basrah, 7 May 2023.

58 Iraq National Mine Action Strategy 2022–2028, pp. 20–21.

59 Interview with Nibras Fakhir Matrood, RMAC South, DMA, in Basrah, 8 May 2023.

60 Interviews with mine action operators in Iraq, 7–20 May 2023.

61 NPA reported receiving a request in 2022 to verify data relating to a task completed in 2019.

62 Interview with Clare Pritchard, Country Representative, iMMAP, in Erbil, 15 May 2023.

63 Statement of Iraq, Intersessionals Meeting, Geneva, 19 June 2023.

64 Interview with Ahmad Aljasim, DMA, in Baghdad, 11 May 2023.

IKMAA is planning to replace its IMSMA NG database with one based on open-source technology and licencing. iMMAP started designing a customised server in March 2021 and six months later launched a base version which is in the process of being developed and due for completion in August 2024.⁶⁵

IKMAA said in April 2022 that work had started working with iMMAP and expected to complete installation in two years.⁶⁶ IKMAA continues to operate IMSMA NG but is trialling the new system in Erbil and Slemani governorates.⁶⁷

PLANNING AND TASKING

Iraq's National Mine Action Strategy 2023–2028, officially approved in June 2023, sets broad goals for both the DMA and IKMAA, the first time the two authorities have cooperated in drawing up a national plan.⁶⁸ These include as a strategic priority the development of “a prioritisation system based on clear and transparent criteria” to inform all planning and tasking decisions.

Tasking, a major source of friction between the DMA and operators in 2018–2019, returned as a headache for implementing partners in Federal Iraq in 2022. The DMA issues tasks requested by operators after consultation with DMA operations and RMAC staff and taking account of requests from government, local authorities, development plans and prioritisation criteria.⁶⁹ In 2021, UNMAS reported improved liaison and coordination with the DMA⁷⁰ and the DMA cited its high level of cooperation with UNMAS among factors contributing to the sector's increased productivity in that year.⁷¹

Implementing partners (IPs) also said most task orders were issued in a timely manner in 2021. In 2022, however, IPs said getting approval for tasks became more difficult. The DMA required a separate request for each task and each task order needed the signature of the director general or, in his absence, the Minister of Environment, resulting in lengthy delays. Operators additionally encountered increased delays and obstacles to receiving access authorisation and travel permits from the Department of NGOs, causing further, sometimes long, interruptions in team deployments and reduced clearance results.⁷²

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Federal Iraq started working with UNMAS in 2021 on updating national mine action standards for mine and battle area clearance (BAC), NTS, and TS. The standards were written in 2004–05 and existed in Arabic only. Updated standards that have been officially released cover NTS and TS, BAC, manual mine clearance, mechanical demining, post-clearance documentation, accreditation, EOD, IED disposal, land release, safety in the workplace, house clearance, monitoring, sampling procedures, personal protective equipment (PPE), quality management, and marking.⁷³ The DMA released seven national standards that were translated into English with support from NPA in November 2022 and ten standards translated by UNMAS in 2023.⁷⁴

A standard on environmental management in mine action was still under review in the Ministry of Environment as were draft standards for the following: Investigation and reporting of accidents and incidents, Risk management in mine action; Medical support; Testing and evaluation of mine action equipment; Guide for the application of NMAS; and Guide for establishment of a Mine Action programme. These are all pending review internally by DMA prior to official release.⁷⁵

UNMAS said another two standards and three International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) technical notes would be reviewed in 2023. These included Contracting in Mine Action (IMAS 07:20), Management of human remains (IMAS 07:50), and technical notes on Clearance of Depleted Uranium Hazards (TN 09.30/02), All Reasonable Effort (TN 07.11/03), and Estimation of Explosion Danger Areas (10.20/01).⁷⁶

65 Interview with Clare Pritchard, iMMAP, in Erbil, 15 May 2023.

66 Emails from Niyazi Khalid Qusaim, IKMAA, 22 April 2022; and Khatab Omer Ahmad, IKMAA, 3 May 2023.

67 Interview with Clare Pritchard, iMMAP, in Erbil, 15 May 2023.

68 Email from Ahmed Aljasim, DMA, 15 April 2022.

69 Emails from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022; Peter Smethers, FSD, 22 February 2022; Tim Marsella, HALO, 17 March 2022; and Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022.

70 Email from Hayder Ghanimi, UNMAS, 28 April 2022.

71 Email from Ahmed Aljasim, DMA, 7 August 2022.

72 Interviews with implementing partners, Iraq, 7 May to 19 May 2023.

73 Email from Hayder Ghanimi, UNMAS, 28 April 2022.

74 Email from Shinobu Mashima, UNMAS Iraq, 11 May 2023.

75 Emails from Hayder Ghanimi, UNMAS, 28 April 2022; and Shinobu Mashima, UNMAS Iraq, 11 May 2023.

76 Email from Shinobu Mashima, UNMAS Iraq, 11 May 2023.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

The survey and clearance capacity active in Federal Iraq in 2022–23 is unclear. The DMA reported 55 Iraqi and international organisations accredited for mine action apart from government organisations but it did not identify which were active in 2022 and included organisations focused on other activities such as information management and victim assistance.⁷⁷

The Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Interior's Civil Defence and Directorate for Explosives Control constitute the biggest organisations in Federal Iraq's mine action sector but few details are available about the extent of their capacity or activities. The Ministry of Defence reported in 2019 that it had twelve 600-strong engineer battalions conducting EOD and clearance of mines of an improvised nature in which approximately half the personnel (equating to several thousand men) were operators. Army engineers worked on tasks identified as priorities by local government authorities.⁷⁸ The Army also remains the only organisation authorised to conduct demolitions.⁷⁹ The Ministry of Interior's Civil Defence units employed 494 personnel divided into teams deployed in every governorate tackling unexploded ordnance and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) but did not conduct area clearance of improvised mines.⁸⁰ The DMA said the PMF have extensive mine clearance and EOD capacity and would become active partners in the national demining programme but lacked details of the PMF resources or how they would participate.⁸¹

In the KRI, IKMAA reported employing a total of 432 people in operations in 2022 out of a total staff of over 800, including 36 manual demining teams, 5 non-technical survey teams (down by 3 on 2021), 4 EOD/BAC teams, 6 mechanical units, 7 EORE teams, and 36 QA/QC teams.⁸² IKMAA has faced financial constraints in recent years severely limiting its teams' field deployments but in 2022 it received €168,000 in financial support from Slovenia boosting clearance operations.⁸³ The only international operator active in survey and clearance in the KRI in 2022 was Mines Advisory Group (MAG) (see below). IKMAA accredited FSD in 2022⁸⁴ but it did not conduct any operations that year.

The downturn in donor funding has prompted more attention in Federal Iraq to the need for "localisation" and developing local survey and clearance capacity. FSD provided capacity building support for SHO, which received its accreditation for clearance in 2021. In 2022, with French government

funding, it added two teams to operate operating in Ninewa governorate with five BAC/IEDD (IED disposal) teams as well as a mechanical team with two front-end loaders, two NTS and a community liaison team.⁸⁵ SHO received technical support from HAMAP Humanitaire, a French NGO focused on developing sustainable national capacity, which worked with SHO developing tasks in Ninewa's Sinjar district.⁸⁶

DCA, based in Erbil, has focused since 2019 on developing the Health and Social Care Organisation in Iraq (IHSCO) and has UNMAS support for a three-year partnership agreement. IHSCO received accreditation for manual clearance and TS in 2021 and in 2022 had four multi-task teams qualified for TS, EOD, BAC, and clearing improvised mines and two EORE teams.⁸⁷ DCA operations in 2022 faced a series of bureaucratic procedural issues over accreditation and movement restrictions issued by the Department of Non-Government Organisations that stalled its activities in 2022. After a delay of seven months, DCA received accreditation for one team in early May 2023.⁸⁸ DRC retrained a BAC team based in Mosul as a multi-task team capable of manual clearance of conventional and improvised mines as well as EOD and BAC but it did not report any land release for 2022. DRC also set up a team of women deminers in Basrah which became operational in 2022 and completed its first task at the beginning of 2023.⁸⁹

FSD operated in 2022 with a total staff of 102 including 9 manual clearance teams with 63 deminers working in Erbil and Ninewa governorates. External QA was undertaken by iMMAP on behalf of PM/WRA.⁹⁰ HI, operating from a main office in Erbil, had three clearance teams working in Kirkuk governorate in 2022 supported by funding from the German Federal Foreign Office. It ended operations in Kirkuk in mid 2023 and moved teams to more heavily contaminated areas in Salah al-Din. It hoped to add a mechanical asset for clearance operations and drones to support task assessment in 2023.⁹¹

For much of 2022, HALO operated with 10 multi-task teams (6 persons each), 5 mechanical teams (8 persons each) and 1 manual clearance team (6 persons) as well as 5 EORE teams and a community liaison team. Operations focused on Anbar, dealing predominantly with improvised devices, and Salah al-Din governorate, where teams have encountered both conventional and improvised mines. A two-year grant from UNMAS for NTS and clearance in Anbar combined with capacity building of a national NGO, the Al-Ghad League,

77 Email from Ahmed Aljasim, DMA, 6 June 2023.

78 Interview with Brigadier-General Hassan, Ministry of Defence, Baghdad, 3 May 2019.

79 "Document of roles and responsibilities", undated but 2019, received by email from the DMA, 13 May 2019.

80 Interview with General Salah, Ministry of Interior, at the DMA, Baghdad, 3 May 2019.

81 Interview with Bakr Sahib Ahmed, DMA, in Baghdad, 11 May 2023.

82 Email from Khatab Omer Ahmad, IKMAA, 3 May 2023.

83 Interview with Jabbar Mustafa, IKMAA, Erbil, 18 May 2023.

84 Email from Khatab Omer Ahmad, IKMAA, 3 May 2023.

85 Email from Ismat Selevany, SHO, 17 May 2023.

86 Interview with Zakaria Abbioui, Coordinator for Iraq, HAMAP, and Kenneth Dean Jones, Operations Management Advisor, HAMAP, in Erbil, 18 May 2023.

87 Emails from Khalid Ahmed, Project Manager, IHSCO, 10 and 15 August 2023.

88 Interview with Albert Schevey, Operations Manager, DCA, Erbil, 16 May 2023; interview with Khalid Ahmed, IHSCO, Erbil, 18 May 2023; and email, 10 August 2023.

89 Emails from Katrien Denys, Head of Programme, DRC HDP, 18 April and 5 September 2023.

90 Email from Peter Smethers, FSD, 12 April 2023; and interview with Steven Munro, International Operations Manager, FSD, and Markus Schindler, Project Manager, FSD, Erbil, 16 May 2023.

91 Email from Chris Fuller, HI, 13 April 2023; and interview in Erbil, 18 May 2023.

expired in November 2022 leading to a downsizing and the return of two mechanical assets made available for the task. Operations in Anbar continued with a mechanical team, a manual clearance team, and an NTS team until the funding from Luxembourg ended in March 2023 when HALO ended operations in Anbar. In 2023, HALO also started a one-year research project with IHSCO. HALO, meantime, continued to trial Wirehound VR1 ground penetrating radar detectors and started use of drones for task evaluation before deploying assets.⁹²

MAG, the biggest of the international demining organisations with a head office in Erbil and a total staff of 810 also continued to be the only one operating in the KRI as well as in Federal Iraq. MAG deployed a total of 45 manual clearance teams employing 423 staff, including 274 deminers, and supported by mine detection dogs and a range of mechanical assets. MAG operated 15 manual teams in the KRI conducting

clearance of legacy mines, mainly in Sulaymaniya (Sleman). MAG operated 30 manual teams in Federal Iraq working mainly in Ninewa governorate's Telafar, Telkeif and Sinjar districts but also conducting clearance in Baaj, Bartalah, and Hamdaniya districts. In March 2022, MAG opened a new operating base in Telkeif, north-east of Mosul, which it said substantially cut the travel time for teams operating in the north-east area of Ninewa.⁹³

NPA continued to expand operational capacity in 2022, adding two more technical survey/clearance teams that raised the number of teams to 27 with 162 deminers, supported by nine mechanical teams and a small number of mine detection dogs, used mainly in technical survey. NPA has five dogs active in 2023 and expected to increase the number to 12. Since mid-2022, NPA has routinely used drones to assess NTS tasks coordinating closely with local authorities on the location and time when they are operated.⁹⁴

Table 6: Operational clearance capacities deployed in Iraq in 2022

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers	Dogs and handlers	Machines*	Comments
Army	12	est. 3,000			
IKMAA	35	360		6 teams/34 personnel	Clearance teams conduct TS; also deploys 4 EOD/BAC teams with 12 personnel.
DRC	2	15			1 manual mine clearance team in Basrah (from May 2022) 1 multi-task team Mosul (also available for TS, BAC, and EOD).
FSD	9	63		1 teams/9 personnel	
HALO	**1	4		4 teams/32 personnel	**End-2022. Also 6 multi-task teams conducting NTS, EORE, and BAC/EOD in Salah al-Din and 1 NTS team in Anbar.
HI	3	21			
IHSCO	4	40			Conduct TS/BAC/EOD and clearing improvised mines.
MAG (Federal Iraq)	30	192	2 teams/6 dogs	4 teams/24 personnel	Manual Teams include 13 mine action teams (169 personnel) and 21 multi-task and mech support teams (110 personnel). Mech teams vary but minimum of 4 armoured machines per team.

⁹² Email from Hein Bekker, Programme Manager, HALO, 4 May 2023 and interview, Baghdad, 10 May 2023.

⁹³ Email from Katie Shaw, MAG, 14 May 2023.

⁹⁴ Email from Chimwemwe Tembo, Deputy Programme Manager, NPA, 12 April 2023; and interview with Chris Tierney, Programme Manager, NPA, in Baghdad, 13 May 2023.

Table 6 Continued

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers	Dogs and handlers	Machines*	Comments
MAG (KRI)	15	88	3 teams/6 dogs	2 teams/6 personnel	Manual Teams include 7 mine action teams (91 personnel) and 3 multi-task and mech support teams (15 personnel).
NPA	27	162		9 teams/13 personnel	Added 2 clearance teams, which all conduct TS.
Shareteah	5	25		1 team/5 personnel	
Tetra Tech***	10	88		8 teams/10 personnel	*** 2021 data. Manual teams included 2 multi-task teams with 24 personnel and 8 search and clearance teams with 64 personnel.
Totals	153	4,058	5 teams/12 dogs	35 teams/133 personnel	

* Excluding vegetation cutters and sifters

DEMINER SAFETY

A MAG team leader died and three deminers were injured as a result of the detonation of a white phosphorous shell as they conducted a range sweep following a demolition in the KRI's Slemani governorate. The three deminers were treated and released the same day. The team leader sustained third degree burns and died after medical evacuation to hospital in Jordan. IKMAA conducted a board of inquiry into the incident.⁹⁵

Two AKAF deminers were killed and an UNMAS operations and QA officer was injured in an accident at a clearance task site in Basrah governorate's Shatt al-Arab district in October 2022. Operations at the site were suspended until late November while UNMAS and the DMA investigated the incident and the DMA's RMAC South conducted remedial training for AKAF deminers.⁹⁶

An improvised mine activated by a crush wire switch detonated under a minibus carrying a GCS demining team of seven female and three male staff. The detonation occurred as the minibus approached the administrative area of an active GCS clearance task in Ninewa governorate's Telkeif district. The passengers were taken to hospital but released the same day, the minibus sustained severe damage.⁹⁷

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

After a big rise in land release in 2021 helped by recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, official data shows that Federal Iraq and the KRI released a total of 72km² in 2022, 35% less than the previous year. This included 71km² released by Federal Iraq and a little over 1km² in the KRI.⁹⁸ However, discrepancies between Federal Iraq's official data and results reported by NGO operators make it likely that more area was released than official data reflects.

FEDERAL IRAQ

The priority for mine action in Federal Iraq since 2018 has been clearance of massive amounts of improvised mines in areas liberated from Islamic State as part of a broader stabilisation drive involving clearance of critical infrastructure and areas for resettlement of people displaced by conflict. As a result, little funding or capacity was allocated for tackling the even greater amounts of legacy minefields concentrated in southern governorates. Iraq, however, is pursuing a range of big road, port, and power projects in the south, and in 2022, while donor funding continued to focus on liberated areas, DMA data indicate it released nearly 40km² in southern governorates contaminated with legacy mines, more than five times the legacy mined area released in the previous year and more than the amount of improvised mine contamination released in liberated areas (see Table 7). The 31km² of improvised mine-affected areas released in 2022 was less than one third of the previous year's result.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Email from Katie Shaw, MAG, 10 July 2023.

⁹⁶ Email from Shinobu Mashima, UNMAS, 11 May 2023.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), pp 24–28.

⁹⁹ Article 7 Report (covering 2021), p. 22; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), p. 28.

Table 7: Federal Iraq land release results for 2022 (official data)¹⁰⁰

Device type	Area cancelled (m ²)	Area reduced (m ²)	Area cleared (m ²)	Total area released (m ²)
Legacy AP mines	12,731,465	23,839,843	3,010,780	39,582,088
Improvised mines	23,283,557	47,863	8,062,191	31,393,611
Totals	36,015,022	23,887,706	11,072,971	70,975,699

SURVEY IN 2022

The rise in land release in Federal Iraq in 2021 was largely due to a jump in the area of improvised mined area cancelled through NTS, which the DMA reported as amounting to 94km² and accounted for 90% of the improvised mine area released. The sharp drop in the area cancelled to 23km² in 2022 (see Table 8) largely accounts for the overall downturn in Iraq's land release results as well as the shifting balance between release of conventional and improvised mined areas.

International and local NGOs conduct demining almost exclusively in areas of improvised mine contamination and recorded cancellation and reduction of a total of 34km² in 2022 (see Table 8). Their reported result was 50% more than the DMA reported, underscoring persistent problems with timely uploading of operator results into the database.

Table 8: Release of mined area through survey in 2022 (NGO data)¹⁰¹

Operator	Governorate	Area cancelled (m ²)	Area reduced (m ²)
HALO	Anbar, Salah al-Din	10,700,649	588,817
HI	Kirkuk	2,207,020	272,239
MAG	Ninewa	2,178,740	2,019,051
NPA	Anbar	1,847,783	9,855,626
Shareteah	Ninewa	4,377,178	35,091
Totals		21,311,370	12,770,824

CLEARANCE IN 2022

Mine Action Review has calculated that a total of 17.03km² were cleared in Iraq in 2022, with the destruction of 20,083 AP mines (see Table 12). Federal Iraq reported releasing a total of 11.07km² through clearance in 2022 (see Table 9), marginally more than the clearance reported by the DMA in 2021 but involving clearance of 13,731 conventional and improvised mines, up from 11,819 reported the previous year.¹⁰²

Clearance included 3km² in two southern governorates, Basrah and Missan, affected by conventional mines, triple the clearance in southern areas recorded for 2021.¹⁰³ Approximately one third of this clearance was by Iraqi contractor AKAF in Basrah governorate, funded by the European Union through UNMAS, but it was unclear if the funding would continue beyond the end of 2023.¹⁰⁴ Most of the clearance is believed to have been conducted by commercial companies under contract to the Ministry of Oil or by Iraqi army engineers.

Iraq plans increased mine and cluster munitions clearance in the south to support major road, rail, port and power generation projects in the south as well as agricultural development but international donors have largely shunned funding for clearance of legacy mined areas to focus support on clearing areas liberated from Islamic State. Iraq is engaging with regional neighbours to mobilise additional resources¹⁰⁵ but future clearance in the south looks likely to be largely dependent on Iraqi government funding.

¹⁰⁰ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), p. 24.

¹⁰¹ Emails from Hein Bekker, HALO, 4 May 2023; Chris Fuller, HI, 13 April 2023; Katie Shaw, MAG, 14 May 2023; Chimwemwe Tembo, NPA, 12 April 2023; and Ismat Selevany, SHO, 17 May 2023.

¹⁰² Article 7 Report (covering 2022), pp. 24, 28; see also Mine Action Review, Clearing the Mines 2022, p. 186.

¹⁰³ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), p. 24.

¹⁰⁴ Email from Shinobu Mashima, UNMAS, 11 May 2023.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Bakr Sahib Ahmed, DMA, in Baghdad, 11 May 2023.

Table 9: Mine clearance in Federal Iraq in 2022 (official data)¹⁰⁶

Improvised mine clearance	Area (m ²)	Improvised mines destroyed
Anbar	1,878,144	3,468
Kirkuk	244,603	90
Ninewa	5,443,280	6,957
Salah al-Din	496,164	62
Subtotals	8,062,191	10,577
Legacy mine clearance	Area (m ²)	AP mines destroyed
Basrah	1,785,369	1,706
Missan	1,199,820	1,448
Ninewa	11,442	0
Salah al-Din	14,149	0
Subtotals	3,010,780	3,154
Grand totals	11,072,971	13,731

Clearance results for Federal Iraq also showed major discrepancies between DMA and data from operators who recorded clearing 13.3km² of areas affected by improvised mines in 2022 (see Table 10), 63% more than the improvised mine clearance reported by the DMA in 2022. The result, however, was 25% lower than the area clearance reported by operators in 2021, although the number of mines cleared at 14,287 was relatively closer to the 15,166 cleared in 2021.

NPA, which increased the number of clearance teams working in 2022 reported more than doubling the area it cleared¹⁰⁷ but cuts in donor funding meant several operators worked with less capacity in 2022. MAG, which recorded a significant drop in area cleared noted that in 2021 it had completed clearance of larger areas in Sinjar and Telkeif where it was able to use scarifiers, contributing to high rates of clearance. In 2022, MAG said it worked on a lot of smaller tasks in 2022, including taking on more building clearance in Sinjar, resulting in clearance of fewer square metres.¹⁰⁸

Table 10: Mine clearance in Federal Iraq in 2022 (NGO data)¹⁰⁹

Operator	Governorate	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed (including improvised mines)	UXO destroyed
FSD	Ninewa	3,941,558	1,248	625
HALO	Anbar, Salah al-Din	1,661,168	512	1,378
HI	Kirkuk	60,650	92	0
IHSCO	Ninewa	83,198	182	19
MAG	Ninewa	3,758,172	4,606	14,150
NPA	Anbar	3,005,201	6,772	425
Shareteah	Ninewa	779,134	875	83
Totals		13,289,081	14,287	16,680

KRI

The KRI reported a significant rise in AP mine clearance for a second successive year in 2022, when IKMAA recorded clearance of 1.13km², a 79% increase on the 2021 result, and an even bigger percentage rise in the number of AP mines destroyed to 3,204 compared with 1,436 the previous year (see Table 11).¹¹⁰ A further 276 AP mines were destroyed in the course of spot task EOD.¹¹¹ The increase was made possible by a grant of €168,000 provided by Slovenia through ITF Enhancing Human Security.

¹⁰⁶ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), pp. 24, 28.

¹⁰⁷ Emails from Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022 and Chimwemwe Tembo, NPA, 12 April 2023.

¹⁰⁸ Email from Katie Shaw, MAG, 10 July 2023.

¹⁰⁹ Emails from Peter Smether, FSD, 22 May 2023; Hein Bekker, HALO, 4 May 2023; Chris Fuller, HI, 13 April 2023; Khalid Ahmed, IHSCO, 10 August 2023; Katie Shaw, MAG, 14 May 2023; Chimwemwe Tembo, NPA, 12 April 2023; and Ismat Selevany, SHO, 17 May 2023.

¹¹⁰ Email from Niyazi Khalid Qusaim, IKMAA, 19 September 2023.

¹¹¹ Email from Khatab Omer Ahmad, IKMAA, 3 May 2023.

IKMAA had been able to deploy only 40% of its manual and mechanical capacity because of financial constraints and a lack of transport. Receipt of the grant in the second half of 2022 had made it possible to hire vehicles, enabling teams to work in the field and achieve a sharp rise in productivity.¹¹²

Table 11: Mine clearance in KRI in 2022*¹¹³

Operator	Governorate	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed
Dohuk MAC	Dohuk	221,947	84
Erbil MAC	Erbil	211,611	973
Garman MAC	Garman	104,005	91
MAG	Dohuk, Slemani	399,957	1,279
Slemani MAC	Slemani	194,700	777
Totals		1,132,220	3,204

* Includes area reduced through technical survey

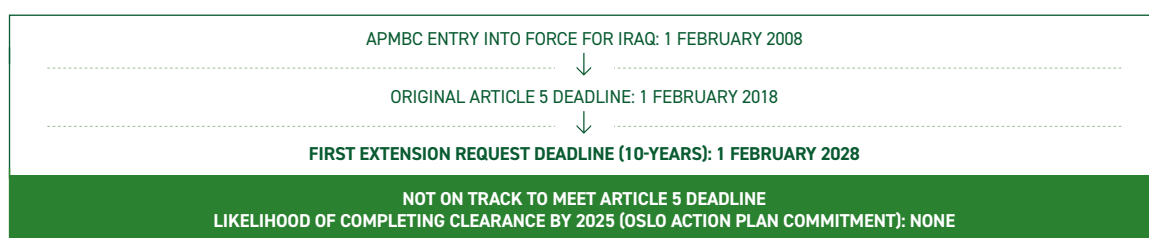
CONSOLIDATED MINE CLEARANCE DATA

Based on its data verification and analysis, Mine Action Review believes that a total of 17.03km² of AP mined area were cleared across Iraq in 2022 with the destruction of 20,083 AP mines: almost 16.22km² in Federal Iraq, with the destruction of 17,259 AP mines and almost 0.82km² in the KRI with the destruction of 2,824 AP mines. The results of the analysis are summarised in Table 12.

Table 12: Consolidated mine clearance in Iraq in 2022 (Mine Action Review analysis)

Region	Contamination type	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	Comments on data sources
Federal Iraq	Legacy mined area	3,010,780	3,154	National authority data
Federal Iraq	Improvised mined area	13,289,081	14,287	NGO data used due to data entry problems in the national database
KRI	All mined area	1,132,220	3,204	National authority data
KRI	Spot tasks	N/A	276	National authority data
Totals		17,432,081	20,921	

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



¹¹² Interview with Jabbar Mustafa, IKMAA, Erbil, 18 May 2023.

¹¹³ Email from Niyazi Khalid Qusaim, IKMAA, 19 September 2023.

Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the ten-year extension granted by States Parties in 2017), Iraq is required to destroy all AP mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 February 2028. Iraq will not meet the deadline given the scale of remaining contamination and the resources available to mine action.

Prospects for accelerating or maintaining clearance rates are overshadowed by reduced funding from international donors responding to competing demands, including from Ukraine, and observing Iraq's record \$115 billion oil revenues in 2022. The Iraqi government responded in 2023 by allocating substantial funds to the mine action sector. It is also proposing to mobilise additional resources by engaging the Popular Mobilisation Forces for mine clearance and EOD. While international funding remains largely focused on clearance of liberated areas, government funding may provide impetus to tackling legacy AP minefields concentrated in the south.

Greater national ownership of mine action, however, also underscores the need for adherence to the 2023–28 mine action strategy's key principles of accountability, continual improvement, transparency, and humanitarian principles.¹¹⁴ Stakeholders reported little clarity on how national funding will be allocated to mine action or plans for expanding local capacity. Iraq's financial system reportedly does not make any provision for government funding of NGOs, only state organisations or commercial entities. Few details are available on resources deployed by key actors such as the

Ministries of Defence, Interior, and Oil, and the capacity to be added by the PMF.

The 2023–28 strategy affirms solid information management and coordination will ensure adherence to key principles. However, weaknesses in Federal Iraq's mine action data, including lengthy delays in data entry and major discrepancies between official and operator results, prevent a clear determination of progress in any given year. Available data does not provide comprehensive results disaggregated by operator. Meanwhile, operators observe data available on contamination and the results of survey and clearance is often out of date and incomplete, particularly in relation to areas where military engineers have been active, raising questions about the degree to which state security actors adhere to national mine action standards.

Table 13: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	*17.4
2021	11.6
2020	7.7
2019	*15.7
2018	8.4
Total	60.8

* Mine Action Review estimate

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Iraq's 2023–28 national strategy commits to "develop a strategy on the management of residual contamination, specifying appropriate processes, roles and responsibilities, in line with Oslo Action Plan's Action 26" but says it will be developed by 2025, for tackling residual risk by 2025.¹¹⁵ Iraqi Security Forces and the Ministry of Interior's Civil Defence are well placed to provide a long-term demining and EOD capacity but no further action on developing the strategy was reported in 2022.

114 Iraq National Mine Action Strategy 2023–2028, pp. 17–18.

115 Iraq National Mine Action Strategy 2023–2028, pp. 23, 26.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2009

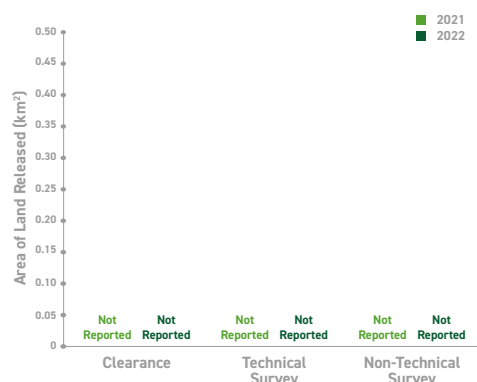
NEW EXTENDED DEADLINE NEEDED TO RETURN TO COMPLIANCE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION:
NOT REPORTED**

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022**NOT REPORTED**AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022**NOT REPORTED**

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT

CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Mali should seek a new Article 5 deadline in order to return to compliance with the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC).
- Mali should submit an Article 7 transparency report and provide other States Parties with an updated assessment of anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination (including mines of an improvised nature) and action to address it.
- Mali should set up a national mine action centre (NMAC) to coordinate a systematic humanitarian response to explosive hazards. In October 2023, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) claimed that progress was being made towards the establishment of an NMAC.
- When circumstances allow, Mali should develop a civilian mine clearance capacity in addition to the military counter-improvised explosive device (IED) operations.
- Mali's mine action sector should apply the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) relating to survey and distinguish between non-technical survey (NTS) and community visits.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- No functioning national mine action authority or mine action centre

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Army, police

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)
- Operation Barkhane

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- DanChurchAid (DCA)
- Danish Refugee Council (DRC)

- Association Malienne pour La Survie au Sahel (AMSS)
 - TASSAGHT
 - Association pour l'Appui aux Populations Rurales (AAPPOR)
- Association de Soutien au Développement des Activités des Populations (ASDAP)
 - Association Jeunesse et Développement du Mali (AJDM)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

A decade of conflict between multiple armed actors and deepening political turmoil marked by a coup in May 2021 have left Mali facing a rising threat from explosive devices, particularly mines of an improvised nature. The upsurge in conflict since 2012 resulted in use of anti-vehicle (AV) mines by armed groups and later in targeted use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including many that are victim activated and qualify as AP mines under the APMBC.

There is no estimate of mined area. Contamination is believed to be scattered and sparse, consisting of conventional and improvised mines and other IEDs. NTS and community liaison activities, although limited in scale, have not identified any minefields.¹ UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) military engineers, who conduct clearance and technical assessment of explosive devices, have provided basic details of device types.

The explosive threat is concentrated in the central region of Mopti and the south-central region of Segou, which saw a doubling of improvised mine incidents from 2021 to 2022. Taken together these two regions account for more than half

the improvised mine incidents recorded by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in 2022 (see Table 1). In 2022, UNMAS recorded the first mine/improvised mine incident in the southern Sikasso region. The violence of armed groups against security forces is increasing and militants target rural areas to capitalise on local conflicts and the absence of the State to secure safe havens and new recruits.²

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) database indicated that in 2022 to date in 2023 the vast majority of devices were improvised AV mines planted by the Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims – JNIM) targeting MINUSMA peacekeepers, the Malian armed forces and civilians causing both injuries and fatalities.³ Since 2013, the number of attacks on peacekeepers in Mali has increased significantly, from two IED-related incidents in October 2013 to 12 in 2022 (with 19 incidents in 2014 and 15 in 2021). In total, 162 peacekeepers have been killed due to landmine explosions and other targeted attacks.⁴

Table 1: Incidents involving AP mines, including improvised mines (2017–22)⁵

Region	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Gao (includes Menaka)	19	19	10	11	32	6
Kidal	33	32	27	29	51	16
Timbuktu	10	4	6	9	15	7
Mopti	17	38	72	33	33	35
Segou	1	8	6	2	12	21
Koulikouro	0	0	1	1	11	7
Kayes	0	0	0	0	1	0
Sikasso	0	0	0	0	0	2
Totals	80	101	122	85	155	94

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Mali does not have a national mine action authority or programme. The Secrétariat Permanent de la Commission Nationale de Lutte Contre la Prolifération des Armes Légères et de Petits Calibres (SP-CNLP) has a mandate to act as a focal point for mine action. However, the full mandate of the Secretariat is still evolving in the context of a transition government.⁶ Mine action

1 Email from Benoit Poirier, Country Director, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), 30 July 2021.

2 "Mali", International Crisis Group, at: <https://bit.ly/30Y70xi>.

3 ACLED, "Filters: 01/01/2022-12/08/2023, Remote explosive/landmine/IED, Mali", accessed 12 August 2023, at: www.acleddata.com.

4 MINUSMA, "Action for peacekeeping: An all-women police unit from Egypt breaks new ground in mine action in central Mali", 16 January 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/44a0JTt>.

5 Email from Nora Achkar, Project Manager – POCMA, UNMAS, 10 August 2023.

6 Ibid.

observers have questioned whether the Permanent Secretariat has sufficient seniority within the government to provide an effective platform. They also note that the authority views its role as falling within the context of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons.⁷

Mali has no programme of systematic mine survey and clearance. UNMAS has commented that "strategic planning will be linked to the establishment of a national authority".⁸

UNMAS first deployed to Mali in January 2013 to conduct an emergency assessment of explosive threats. Since April 2013, UNMAS has been referred to in UN Security Council resolutions that define the mandate for MINUSMA,⁹ acting as the focal point for mine action pending the creation of a national authority. On 30 June 2023, the UN Security Council, following the Transitional Government of Mali's request for the immediate withdrawal of MINUSMA, decided to terminate MINUSMA's mandate. MINUSMA, as of 1 July 2023, was winding down its operations, preparing the transfer of its tasks, and withdrawing personnel, with the aim of completing the disengagement process by the end of 2023.¹⁰ At the time of writing, UNMAS was in discussion for its potential continued presence in Mali following the withdrawal of MINUSMA.¹¹

UNMAS co-chairs the Humanitarian Mine Action Working Group (Groupe de travail sur la lutte antimines humanitaire – GT-LAMH) with another organisation elected by members for a term of one year. Attendance included 14 members and 8 observers in 2022–23, among them a representative of the Permanent Secretariat. A total of 23 meetings were held in 2022 in Bamako, Gao, Mopti, and Timbuktu.¹²

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in Mali in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) reports that there is a global environmental policy in place that recognises the impact of its activities on the environment, and the need to constantly examine ways of saving energy and minimising waste.¹³

DanChurchAid (DCA) reports that an environmental policy applies to all programme countries including Mali but that at the programme level the environmental plans and standard operating procedures (SOPs) related to mine action are not applicable because the programme does not deal directly with explosives, stockpiling, or clearance.¹⁴

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Mali, lacking a mine action programme, has not taken up gender in the context of mine action.

The MINUSMA Egyptian Formed Police Unit, deployed in Douentza since 2017, has set up three Search and Detect teams trained to identify explosive ordnance which are then removed by an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team. One of these teams is composed of female police officers and is the first all-women Search and Detect team deployed in a UN peace operation.¹⁵

Table 2: Gender composition of mine action operators in 2022¹⁶

Operator	Total staff	Women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Women in operational positions
UNMAS	8	5	1	1	1	1
MAG	20	6	8	4	12	5
DCA	35	9	12	3	23	6

⁷ Emails from UNMAS Mali Programme, 12 May 2021 and 27 April 2022.

⁸ Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 12 May 2021.

⁹ UN Security Council Resolution 2100, 25 April 2013

¹⁰ UN Security Council Resolution 2690, 30 June 2023.

¹¹ Email from Nora Achkar, UNMAS, 10 August 2023.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Emails from Milena Vara Ruiz, MAG, 9 August and 1 September 2023.

¹⁴ Email from Tristan Pasco, Country Director, DCA, 7 August 2023.

¹⁵ MINUSMA, "Action for peacekeeping: An all-women police unit from Egypt breaks new ground in mine action in central Mali", 16 January 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/44a0JTt>.

¹⁶ Email from Tristan Pasco, DCA, 7 August 2023.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

UNMAS operates an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database for Mali which was upgraded to IMSMA Core in 2022 with new workflows added.¹⁷ Since July 2013, UNMAS has recorded all known explosions and verified mine or IED incidents, providing data for maps that detail the explosive hazard threat and facilitate planning in affected areas. UNMAS does not provide operators access to the database but said it shares technical data with all mine partners engaged in explosive threat mitigation.¹⁸ Other stakeholders say the range of information shared is extremely limited. The Mine Action Working Group agreed in early 2020 that it would classify and report victim-activated devices as landmines.¹⁹

MAG reported improvements in data sharing among stakeholders, and that data collection forms are consistent. However, the shift to IMSMA Core was hindered in 2022 due to connectivity problems in the north of the country. This was addressed by UNMAS, following discussions with operators, who used Google Sheets to facilitate the collection and sharing of data.²⁰ DCA noted that while IMSMA Core is thorough, it can be challenging to use, particularly with login credentials and that triangulating the information also remains difficult.²¹

As at August 2023, Mali had yet to submit an APMBC Article 7 transparency report covering the previous calendar year or for previous years. Its last Article 7 report was submitted in 2005. The failure to submit annual Article 7 reports is a violation of the Convention.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

UNMAS reported that the National Technical Standards and Guidelines (NTSGs) for Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE), victim assistance, quality management (QM), and NTS were reviewed and endorsed by the members of the GT-LAMH in May 2023. Following MINUSMA's withdrawal, it is expected that some aspects including the accreditation process and the casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) protocols will have to be reviewed in the context of a post-MINUSMA mine action presence.²²

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Malian and international security forces serving with MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane, led by French forces, were the only organisations clearing mines and IEDs. In February 2022, a decision was taken by France to withdraw all 2,400 Operation Barkhane troops from Mali with the last of the soldiers leaving the country in August 2022.²³ Two international mine action NGOs, MAG and DCA, conduct NTS, with DCA working in partnership with national NGO, Association de Soutien au Développement des Activités des Populations (ASDAP). UNMAS has been working with MAG and DCA to build the mine action capacity of national NGOs. In 2022, two national NGOs, Tassaght and Association Malienne pour la survie au Sahel (AMSS), received accreditation to conduct mine action activities in Mali.²⁴

In 2022, UNMAS operated with eight staff, including three internationals, who were engaged in humanitarian mine action. Their activities included advocating for and advising on the development of the national mine action framework;

co-chairing the Humanitarian Mine Action Working Group; provision of EORE and victim assistance; and provision of mine action training and mentoring for civil society organisations.²⁵

MAG operated with 30 staff in 2022, 18 of whom were employed by partner organisations with MAG providing technical support and mentoring. MAG direct hires included 12 community liaison personnel, six support staff, and a project officer and regional program manager. Community liaison teams carried out activities including EORE, non-technical survey and the identification and referral of victims. MAG received funding through UNMAS as part of its national capacity building and has been working since 2018 to strengthen the organisational and technical capacities of two national organisations, Tassaght and AMSS, in Community Liaison, EORE, NTS and the identification and referral of victims.²⁶ In 2023, MAG was planning to focus on securing funding to strengthen partnerships in the north and expand

¹⁷ Email from Nora Achkar, UNMAS, 10 August 2023.

¹⁸ Emails from Tristan Pasco, DCA, 7 August 2023; Milena Vara Ruiz, MAG, 1 September 2023; and Marta Farres Rodriguez, UNMAS, 6 September 2023.

¹⁹ Email from Benoit Poirier, MAG, 11 March 2020.

²⁰ Email from Milena Vara Ruiz, MAG, 1 September 2023.

²¹ Email from Tristan Pasco, DCA, 7 August 2023.

²² Email from Nora Achkar, UNMAS, 10 August 2023.

²³ Reuters, "Ahead of Mali withdraw, France prepares future Sahel strategy", 13 July 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/447inqS>; Associated Press, "French military: Last group of soldiers has left Mali", 15 August 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/45u701Z>.

²⁴ Email from Milena Vara Ruiz, MAG, 9 August 2023.

²⁵ Email from Nora Achkar, UNMAS, 10 August 2023.

²⁶ Email from Milena Vara Ruiz, MAG, 9 August 2023.

activities implemented by partners; implement “digital” risk education and conduct risk education sessions for humanitarian workers; and carry out NTS provided funding can be secured following the announcement of MINUSMA’s departure from Mali.²⁷

In 2022, DCA had 35 staff, including 5 internationals. DCA provided technical and institutional training to

national partners ASDAP and Association pour l’Appui aux Populations Rurales (AAPPOR). ASDAP conducted NTS in Mopti and Segou regions in 2022, while AAPPOR planned to start NTS in Mopti in 2023. DCA’s 2023 focus included risk education, NTS, and victim assistance, but funding was in question as UNOPS/UNMAS cancelled contracts following the announcement of MINUSMA’s departure from Mali.²⁸

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

MAG conducts NTS, sending out teams in response to information on possible threats provided by communities and taking GPS coordinates to mark the location of any explosive items.²⁹ In 2022, MAG visited 148 villages to conduct NTS operations.³⁰ In 2022, DCA and its partner ASDAP conducted 97 NTS “operations” through 10 ASDAP Community Liaison Officers.³¹

Clearance is limited to counter-IED operations and largely restricted to areas where Malian and international security forces serving with MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane, led by French forces, have security.³² Operators do not employ any mechanical assets or mine detection dogs.³³

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC, Mali was required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control not later than 1 March 2009. In its last Article 7 transparency report, submitted in June 2005, Mali said it had no mined areas containing AP mines.³⁴ Since the expiry of its Article 5 deadline Mali has encountered new AP mine contamination, in particular of an improvised nature, laid by non-State armed groups. Under the Convention’s agreed framework, in the event mined areas are discovered after the expiry of a State Party’s Article 5 clearance deadline, it should immediately inform all other States Parties of this discovery and undertake to destroy or ensure the destruction of all AP mines as soon as possible.

Mali should request a new extended Article 5 deadline, which should be no more than two years, affording it the opportunity to conduct any necessary survey and provide an assessment of the extent of AP mine contamination. It must also fulfil its reporting obligations under the APMBC, including by reporting as soon as possible on the location of all suspected or confirmed mined areas under its jurisdiction or control and on the status of programmes for the destruction of all AP mines therein.³⁵

UNMAS, under the mandate of MINUSMA, has been acting as the focal point for mine action in Mali in the absence of a national authority. Following the announcement of MINUSMA’s withdrawal and with UNMAS’s future position in the country uncertain, there is an opportunity for the Malian authorities to assume greater ownership over the mine action activities.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Mali does not have plans in place to address residual contamination once its Article 5 obligations have been fulfilled.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Email from Tristan Pasco, DCA, 7 August 2023.

²⁹ Email from Benoit Poirier, MAG, 3 June 2020.

³⁰ Email from Milena Vara Ruiz, MAG, 9 August 2023.

³¹ Email from Tristan Pasco, DCA, 7 August 2023.

³² Skype interview with Sebastian Kasack, Senior Community Liaison Adviser, MAG, Bamako, 27 May 2020.

³³ Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 26 May 2020.

³⁴ Article 7 Report (covering 1 May 2004 to 1 May 2005), Form C.

³⁵ Final Report of the APMBC Twelfth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 21 January 2013, p. 10.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2026
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION:

NATIONAL ESTIMATE

11.52_{KM²}

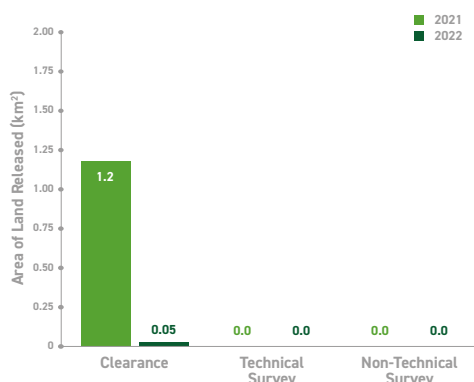
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

0.05_{KM²}

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

UNKNOWN

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2022, the Programme National de Déminage Humanitaire pour le Développement (PNDHD) released two small mined areas, one containing anti-personnel (AP) mines, the other containing anti-vehicle (AV) mines. Reporting did not detail how many mines were discovered and destroyed. Based on current clearance output, Mauritania is not on track to fulfil its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 clearance obligations by its deadline of end of 2026. In 2022, Mines Advisory Group (MAG) secured Norwegian government funding to conduct capacity and needs assessments and to create a capacity development plan with the PNDHD.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Mauritania should continue its efforts to mobilise the necessary international funds and operational support to enable it to fulfil its Article 5 obligations.
- Mauritania should report on its AP mine contamination accurately, consistently, and in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), including through timely submission of Article 7 reports. It should disaggregate AP mined area and mixed AP and AV mined area from areas only containing AV mines. It should also report on the number of mines (disaggregated by type) discovered and destroyed during land release operations.
- The PNDHD should update its national mine action standards (NMAS) to ensure they are in accordance with the latest IMAS.
- Mauritania should conduct technical survey (TS) to establish a more accurate baseline of AP mine contamination and better determine the size of the identified confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs).
- Mauritania should establish a sustainable national capacity to address any residual AP mine contamination discovered following the fulfilment of Article 5 obligations.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	7	7	In 2021, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), in collaboration with the PNDHD, conducted the first baseline survey assessment to determine the extent of AP mine contamination since Mauritania's discovery of new contaminated areas in 2019. Mauritania does not report mined areas as suspected hazardous areas (SHA) or CHAs, in line with IMAS and international best practice. It also does not sufficiently disaggregate areas containing AP mines or mixed AP and AV mines, from those areas only containing AV mines. Further TS is required to accurately determine the size and extent of the actual contamination.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	5	5	Mauritania contributes national resources to support its mine action programme but the PNDHD needs greater operational, financial, and technical capacities to fulfil that role and is seeking international funding to fulfil its Article 5 obligations. Mauritania is also seeking to establish a Country Coalition and has discussed the possibility of forming a coalition with France.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	4	4	Mauritania does not appear to have a gender and diversity policy for mine action, and neither issue is referenced in the Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in June 2021 or in Mauritania's latest Article 7 report, submitted in October 2022. Mauritania did, however, state in response to questions from the Committee on Article 5 Implementation that it intends to deploy diverse and gender-balanced teams to the extent possible, and that it includes consultation of women, girls, and boys in the planning of its mine action programme.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	4	4	Mauritania uses Version 6 of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) software. Mauritania's reporting under the APMBC is often late and lacks detail, accuracy and consistency, and the data it provides often vary across different reports. Data reported by Mauritania lacks sufficient disaggregation, with respect to the type of hazardous area and the type of mine contamination. As at July 2023, Mauritania had yet to submit an Article 7 report covering all of 2022.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	3	3	Mauritania's last mine action strategic plan and work plan expired in 2020. Mauritania estimates that AP mine clearance can be concluded in five years, accounting for the time required to mobilise resources, deploy teams to the field, and finalise reporting. As at July 2023, however, Mauritania had yet to secure the international funding it requires to clear the remaining mined areas by its extended Article 5 deadline.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	6	6	Mauritania's NMAS were adopted in 2007 and revised in 2020 with support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and NPA. It is unclear to what extent the NMAS have been subsequently updated in line with IMAS updates and best practice.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	5	5	In November 2021, Mauritania was granted an almost five-year extension to its Article 5 clearance deadline. In 2022, the PNDHD continued to clear contamination within its limited national resources, but has appealed for further support from the international community which it needs to upscale clearance significantly.
Average Score	5.2	5.2	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- National Humanitarian Demining Programme for Development (Programme National de Déminage Humanitaire pour le Développement, PNDHD)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Army Engineer Corps

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre of Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- HAMAP Humanitaire (HAMAP)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

There is no clear estimate of AP mined area under the jurisdiction or control of Mauritania as figures differ and reporting by Mauritania is incomplete and inconsistent. Mine Action Review has used the total AP mined area of nearly 11.52km² as the national baseline. This is the figure reported in Mauritania's latest Article 7 report submitted in October 2022 (see Table 1), although further survey is likely to reduce the total figure significantly. Mine Action Review has separated out areas that seemingly only contain AV mines (4.48km²), based on the type of mines specified by Mauritania.

On 23 June 2020, after having declared fulfilment of its Article 5 obligations on 29 November 2018 at the Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC (17MSP), Mauritania reported the discovery of previously unknown mined areas.¹ A joint assessment with NPA to survey the newly discovered contamination took place in February 2021.² NPA identified almost 15.47km² of mined areas across 10 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) in Nouadhibou (west) and Tiris Zemmour (north) regions. Of the total, 10.90km² across eight SHAs were thought to contain AP mines. The other two SHAs, covering an estimated 4.56km², were contaminated only with AV mines.³ Mauritania estimated that the size of areas requiring clearance will be reduced by an average of 37%

once further survey is conducted (though without elaborating the methodology it used to reach this conclusion).⁴

According to NPA, further survey is needed to determine the size and extent of the hazardous areas more accurately, and NPA thought that, once this has been done, the areas requiring full clearance will be further reduced. NPA also highlighted the high likelihood of discovering residual contamination after completion, since mines are in remote and sparsely populated areas.⁵ Indeed, Mauritania continued to receive reports from local authorities indicating previously unknown mine contamination following NPA's initial assessment.⁶

In its extension request of June 2021, Mauritania estimated total mined area at 16.18km² across 20 hazardous areas (including areas which appear to contain only AV mines).⁷ Based on the type of mines specified, its Article 7 report of October 2022 indicated that 16 mined areas totalling nearly 11.52km² contain AP mines while 2 mined areas, totalling 4.48m² contain only AV mines (see Table 1). At the APMBC intersessional meetings in June 2023, Mauritania said it had 15.5km² of mined area remaining, but this presumably also includes areas containing only AV mines, which do not fall under Mauritania's Article 5 obligations.⁸

Table 1: Mined area by region (reported at October 2022)⁹

Region ¹⁰	Location ID	CHAs	CHA with AP mines (m ²)	CHA with AV mines (m ²)	Mines identified	Contamination type ¹¹
Adrar	Mayaateg	1	538,549		PT Mi-K and APID51	AP/AV mines*
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Bouchon24	1	839,424		APID51 and ACID51	AP/AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Bouchon55	1	9,147,780		PT Mi-K, APID51, and TM57	AP/AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Guergara	1		1,203,880	PT Mi-K	AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Lewej 2	1	329,829		APID51 and VS50	AP mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Pk 126	1	132,585		APID51	AP mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Pk 173 Partie II	1		3,280,805	Type 72	AV mines

1 Third APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2020, pp. 1 and 3. In November 2020, Mauritania was granted a thirteen-month extension to 31 January 2022.

2 NPA, Mauritania Assessment Report, 12 April 2021, p. 2.

3 Third Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2020, p. 3; Article 7 Report (covering 2019), p. 6; and email from Melissa Andersson, Country Director, NPA, 26 April 2021.

4 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 10.

5 NPA, Mauritania Assessment Report, 12 April 2021, pp. 2–3.

6 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 6.

7 Ibid., p. 5.

8 Statement of Mauritania, APMBC Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

9 Article 7 report (covering most of 2022), submitted in October 2022, pp. 3–4.

10 The Article 7 report did not specify the region. These data are provided by Mine Action Review from earlier information.

11 The Article 7 report did not specify the contamination type. These data are provided by Mine Action Review from reported mine types.

Table 1 Continued

Region	Location ID	CHAs	CHA with AP mines (m ²)	CHA with AV mines (m ²)	Mines identified	Contamination type
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Rbeit l'echar1	1	62,819		PT Mi-K and APID51	AP/AV mines*
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Wettatlechyakh	1	126,578		APID51	AP mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 1	1	28,794		VS50 and TM57	AP/AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 2	1	16,257		VS50 and TM57	AP and AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 3	1	23,638		VS50 and TM57	AP and AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 4	1	14,696		VS50 and TM57	AP and AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 5	1	75,375		VS50 and TM57	AP and AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 6	1	25,565		VS50 and TM57	AP and AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 7	1	26,654		VS50 and TM57	AP and AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 8	1	66,987		VS50 and TM57	AP and AV mines
Tiris Zemmour	Boukhzame	1	63,796		VS50	AP mines
Totals		18	11,519,326	4,484,685		

* Previously reported as containing an AV mine type only in Mauritania's 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request.

In Nouadhibou, at least 11.53km² of the contamination was known to Mauritania prior to its declaration of compliance in November 2018, but was considered politically inaccessible until 2019. A further 3.82km² has been newly discovered since 2018. In Tiris Zemmour, Mauritania had not been aware of the mined areas before their discovery in 2019.¹² In Adrar, it is not clear whether the discovered mined areas were known to Mauritania before its compliance declaration. In the 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request, it is stated that: "Mauritania submitted a request in June 2020 to extend its Article 5 deadline by one year having recently found two additional minefields in the Northern areas of Mauritania, and then redefining which mined areas are considered to be under its jurisdiction or control in the Nouadhibou peninsula".¹³

In November 2018, prior to reporting new discoveries of mined area, Mauritania had declared completion of its Article 5 obligations at the Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties.¹⁴ At the end of 2015, Mauritania reported release of all known AP mined areas (40 areas totalling an estimated 67km²),¹⁵ but said that other contaminated areas existed close to Western Sahara. Depending on the demarcation of the border, these areas could be inside Mauritanian territory and thus within its jurisdiction.¹⁶ In its 2015 request for a second extension to its Article 5 clearance deadline, Mauritania said it "suspects that the security system along the border with Western Sahara, which comprises fortifications and minefields, crosses Mauritanian territory, especially since there is no natural border between the two". It also said that border markers from the colonial period were unclear, non-existent, and/or found at intervals of between 115km and 175km.¹⁷

12 NPA, Mauritania Assessment Report, 12 April 2021, p. 2.

13 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 4.

14 Statement of Mauritania, APMBC Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties (17MSP), 29 November 2018; and Third Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2020, p. 2.

15 Analysis of Mauritania's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request submitted by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation to the Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties, 17 November 2015, p. 2.

16 Analysis of Mauritania's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request submitted by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation to the Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties, 17 November 2015, p. 2.

17 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 2 April 2015, p. 4. In the original French: "nous suspectons que le dispositif de sécurité le long de la frontière avec le Sahara occidental, composé de fortification et champs de mines, interfère en territoire Mauritanien surtout qu'il n'existe aucune frontière naturelle".

In 2021, Mauritania informed Mine Action Review that all identified contamination in Nouadhibou and Tiris Zemmour regions lie clearly within its jurisdiction and control,¹⁸ bringing the duty to clear unequivocally within Mauritania's international legal obligations under the APMBC. The maps provided by Mauritania in its Article 5 deadline extension request, however, show minefields clearly extending beyond its borders and into the territory of Western Sahara, although these may contain only contain AV mines.¹⁹ Moreover, as most of the minefields are located along the borders with Western Sahara, it is possible that AP mine contamination extends beyond Mauritanian territory. Such contamination extending beyond the border, if it is found to exist, is outside Mauritania's jurisdiction and therefore any clearance would need to be agreed upon with the Western Sahara. For the Adrar minefields, it is not clear if the newly reported contamination lies within Mauritania's jurisdiction or control.

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Mauritania also reported having discovered previously unknown cluster munition remnants (CMR) contamination.²⁴ Please see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Mauritania for more information.

Mauritania stated in its latest extension request, submitted in June 2021, that the PNDHD will "Coordinate with relevant authorities to the extent possible on areas that lie outside of Mauritanian jurisdiction but under Mauritanian de facto control".²⁰

Mauritania's mine contamination is a legacy of the conflict over Western Sahara in 1976–78.²¹ A 2006 Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) found a total of 65 SHAs covering 76km² and affecting 60 communities. This proved to be a significant overestimate of the actual mined area. In 2010, Morocco provided detailed maps of minefields laid during the Western Sahara conflict. The minefields had been partially cleared using military procedures prior to the entry into force of the APMBC.²² In its 2020 extension request, Mauritania said that the large-scale use of mines in Mauritania was typically haphazard and without the use of plans or maps.²³

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The PNDHD, which was created in 2000, coordinates mine action operations in Mauritania.²⁵ Since 2007, the programme has been the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior and Decentralisation with oversight from an interministerial steering committee.²⁶ The PNDHD has its headquarters in the capital, Nouakchott, with a regional mine action centre (RMAC) located at Nouadhibou. As at April 2021, PNDHD had one operational manager and six staff responsible for quality control (QC) and quality assurance (QA).²⁷ More recent data have not been made available.

Mauritania estimated in its latest extension request, submitted in June 2021, that it requires a total five-year budget of US\$9.65 million of international funding to address the newly reported mine contamination.²⁸ This is four times the amount Mauritania had initially intended to mobilise from international donors in its previous extension request, submitted in June 2020, which totalled US\$2.5 million.²⁹ Mauritania's contribution to the demining project will include human resources, office space, and the coordination of operations, including liaison with national and local

governmental and military officials.³⁰ Mauritania allocated a budget of €91,000 to its mine action programme in 2021.³¹ As at the time of writing, the amount allocated in 2022 had yet to be reported.

In its most recent Article 7 report of October 2022, Mauritania reported needing international financial assistance for a wide range of activities, including strengthening the capacities of the PNDHD both in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, and possibly also the sub-branch of Tires Zemmour. The PNDHD also requires international support for marking, TS, and clearance of the mined areas, and the quality management (QM) of operations; and supporting risk education campaigns. Mauritania also needs "logistical" support (replacement of equipment; provision of vehicles; development of the regional offices in Nouadhibou, and opening of a regional office in the Tires Zemmour region; and strengthening of PNDHD capacities through training of personnel); support for the elaboration of a new national strategy and revision of national standards and standing operating procedures (SOPs).³²

18 Email from Lt-Colonel Moustaphaould Cheikhna, Head of Operations, PNDHD, 15 March 2022.

19 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, map 2, p. 6.

20 Ibid., p. 13.

21 Ibid., p. 2.

22 Revised Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 6 September 2010, p. 3; and email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 17 September 2015.

23 Third Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2020, p. 2.

24 Ibid., Annex 1, p. 14.

25 Decree No. 1960/MDAT/MDN establishing the PNDHD, 14 August 2007; Third Article 5 deadline Extension Request, received June 2020, p. 2; and Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 3.

26 Decree No. 001358/MDAT establishing the Steering Committee of the PNDHD, 3 September 2007; Third Article 5 deadline Extension Request, received June 2020, p. 2; and Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 3.

27 Mauritania Assessment Report, NPA, 12 April 2021, p. 10.

28 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, pp. 11–12.

29 Third Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2020, p. 10.

30 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, pp. 11–12; and email from Lt-Colonel Moustaphaould Cheikhna, PNDHD, 15 March 2022.

31 Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F.

32 Article 7 report (covering most of 2022), submitted October 2022, p. 8–9.

In late 2022, MAG secured Norwegian government funding for Mauritania to conduct capacity and needs assessments and create a capacity development plan with PNDHD, review the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) (quality control of existing/historical data and updating/upgrading of the database), provide equipment and training for information management, support the review of the NMAS, and conduct a contamination baseline assessment, non-technical survey (NTS), and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE).³³

Mauritania would like to form a Country Coalition with a willing donor government and an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) to support its clearance completion initiative.³⁴ France has explored the possibility of establishing a Country Coalition with Mauritania.³⁵ However, as at July 2023, no concrete steps were known to have been taken to establish a coalition.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Mauritania is not thought to have environmental standards or a policy on environmental management in place. It is not known if Mauritania takes environmental considerations into account during survey and clearance activities.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

It is believed that the PNDHD does not have a specific policy on gender and diversity, and the topic is not referenced in Mauritania's Article 7 report of October 2022 or its 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request, except for some disaggregation of data by sex and age.

In 2021, Mauritania told the Committee on Article 5 Implementation it considered gender and diversity to be important for its mine action programme and pledged to ensure that all groups are consulted when designing and implementing activities. It also stated it will seek to achieve gender-balanced and diverse survey and clearance teams "to the extent this might be possible", while acknowledging "some limitations to achieving gender balance from the staff that would be seconded by the Corps of Engineers".³⁶

Mauritania stated that it involves civil society organisations and "target groups" in the areas of mine risk education and ensures women's participation in both administration and operational levels. According to its 2020 statement, two women were employed in financial management and in victim assistance.³⁷

In its June 2023 statement at the APMBC Intersessionals meeting, Mauritania said its national strategic plan will take into consideration the role of women in different aspects of demining, such as logistics and administration, and that women are encouraged to take part in all aspects of demining. According to the statement, Mauritania's national demining programme currently has women in 45% of mine action positions.³⁸ The accuracy of this figure is open to question, especially if it concerns operational positions.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

PNDHD hosts and manages the national mine action database (an old version of IMSMA).³⁹ Mauritania did not disaggregate AP mined areas into CHAs and SHAs, in line with international best practice and IMAS in its Article 7 report of October 2022 or its 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request. Mauritania often provides inconsistent and inaccurate contamination and clearance figures in its reports, as well as insufficient information on the number of mines destroyed during land release operations. As at July 2023, Mauritania had yet to submit a report covering all of 2022 as Article 7 requires.

33 Email from Roxana Bobolicu, International Policy Manager, MAG, 19 July 2022.

34 CCM Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 13.

35 CCM Implementation Support Unit (ISU), Quarterly Newsletter on the CCM, Q4 2022, 9 January 2023.

36 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, additional information, 10 September 2021, p. 4.

37 Third Article 5 deadline Extension Request, additional information, 16 September 2020, response 5.

38 Statement of Mauritania, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

39 APMBC Article 7 Report (covering 2017), Form D.

In 2021–22, the PNDHD created an interactive platform that provides updated contamination data, including the locations of identified mined and cluster munition-contaminated areas, surface area, photos documenting the found items, in addition to a record of all TS, NTS, clearance, and victim data.⁴⁰

In March 2022, two participants from the PNDHD participated in the Arab Regional Cooperation Programme (ARCP) IMSMA Core workshop organised by the Geneva International Centre of Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).⁴¹

PLANNING AND TASKING

Mauritania's mine action strategy expired in 2020. Part of the international cooperation and assistance sought by Mauritania is to support its efforts to draft a new mine action strategy, to replace the former strategy.⁴² Mauritania's 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request envisages five years to technically survey and clear the AP mined areas identified. This includes six months to mobilise the necessary resources (funding, staffing, and equipment) as well as for team deployment.⁴³ Mauritania has issued an action plan for its proposed extension period.⁴⁴ The plan, however, lacks detail.

In its 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request, Mauritania said it would prioritise survey and clearance of the newly reported contaminated areas based on humanitarian impact, taking into account gender and diverse needs of the mine-affected communities.⁴⁵

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Survey and clearance operations are conducted in accordance with the Mauritanian NMAS (Les normes Mauritaniennes de l'action antimines, NMAM), which are said to reflect the IMAS, but which are adapted to Mauritanian realities in terms of geography and equipment.⁴⁶ The NMAS, which include standards on NTS, TS, mine clearance, and QC, were adopted in 2007. They were revised in 2010 and translated into Arabic.⁴⁷ According to Mauritania, the NMAS are updated regularly based on experiences in the field,⁴⁸ but it is unclear to what extent they have been updated in recent years.

In 2021, Mauritania recognised that an update to its NMAS was due and committed to "carry out an analysis of its NMAS to ensure that they are up to date and fit for purpose to address the remaining challenge".⁴⁹ In 2022, the PNDHD informed Mine Action Review it had revised and adapted the NMAS to the "new ways of working",⁵⁰ but it is unclear what this means in practice. As noted above, MAG, with the support of the GICHD, has offered to support Mauritania to review its NMAS as part of its capacity-development plan.⁵¹

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

At the end of 2021, the PNDHD had four demining teams, five cars, and one ambulance, all of which were equipped with demining equipment. The total number of personnel was not reported.⁵² The current capacity of the PNDHD had not been reported as at the time of writing.

According to its 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request, Mauritania requires eight clearance teams, each of ten deminers, for about five years to technically survey and clear all the mined areas remaining. The teams are expected to work for 250 days a year, and each team is expected to clear an average of 250m² a day.⁵³ Mauritania also said it will consider using mine detection dogs (MDDs) in Nouadhibou where there may be conventionally undetectable or deeply buried mines.⁵⁴

40 Statement of Mauritania, APMBC Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

41 Email from Lubna Allam, Programme Officer, GICHD, 10 June 2022.

42 Article 7 report (covering most of 2022), submitted October 2022, p. 8–9.

43 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, pp. 9–10.

44 Ibid., pp. 14–15.

45 Ibid., p. 12.

46 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 8.

47 Email from Aliouneould Menane, PNDHD, 17 April 2011; and Third APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, received June 2020, pp. 5 and 8.

48 CCM Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 8.

49 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 9; and Mauritania's answers to the CCM Analysis Group, 29 July 2021, p. 2.

50 Email from Lt-Colonel Moustaphaould Cheikhna, PNDHD, 15 March 2022.

51 Emails from Roxana Bobolicu, MAG, 19 July 2022; and François Fall, HMA advisory – West Africa, MAG, 28 June 2023.

52 Email from Lt-Colonel Moustaphaould Cheikhna, PNDHD, 15 March 2022.

53 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 10; NPA, Mauritania Assessment Report, 12 April 2021, p. 11; and email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 26 April 2021.

54 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 13.

MAG has been working in Mauritania since November 2017, supporting the safe storage of State-held arms and ammunition depots, and providing training to local security and defence force personnel on the same topic.⁵⁵ As mentioned, in 2022 MAG secured funding for capacity development support to the PNDHD and to conduct a contamination baseline assessment as well as NTS and risk education.⁵⁶

HAMAP, an international NGO, has been present in Mauritania since October 2022 becoming operational and receiving its first clearance task order in April 2023. HAMAP is focused on addressing AP mines in Mauritania, but it also conducts risk education and capacity building of the PNDHD. HAMAP proposed renewed SOPs to the PNDHD, trained four demining teams, and provided support to buy equipment. In addition, HAMAP worked with the PNDHD on project management and is preparing geographic information system (GIS) and mapping support. HAMAP hopes to include NTS in the next steps of its programme in Mauritania.⁵⁷

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

Mauritania reported clearance of 50,769m² of mined area containing AP mines in 2022, and clearance of a further 81,559m² containing AV mines.⁵⁸ The number of AP and AV mines destroyed was not reported by Mauritania and as at July 2023, it had yet to submit its Article 7 report covering all of 2022.

SURVEY IN 2022

It is not known whether Mauritania conducted either NTS or TS in 2022 or if it identified any previously unrecorded mined area during the year.

CLEARANCE IN 2022

In 2022, Mauritania cleared the "Guergoum" minefield in the Tiris Zemmour region, which totalled 50,769m² of mined area containing APID51 AP mines (see Table 2). The number of AP mines destroyed, if any, had not been reported by Mauritania at the time of writing.⁵⁹

A further 81,559m² of AV mined area containing Type 72 mines was cleared at the "PK 173 Partie I" minefield in the Dakhlet Nouadhibou region in 2022.⁶⁰ The number of AV mines destroyed, if any, is unknown and had not yet been reported by Mauritania.⁶¹

AP mine clearance output in 2022 was down on 2021, when the PNDHD cleared 1.2km² of AP mined area in the region of Dakhlet Nouadhibou.⁶²

Table 2: Mine clearance in 2022⁶³

Region	Minefield name	AP mined area (m ²)	AV mined area (m ²)
Tiris Zemmour	Guergoum	50,769	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	PK 173 Partie I		81,559
Totals		50,769	81,559

⁵⁵ MAG website, accessed 8 August 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3NFVEKD>.

⁵⁶ Email from Roxana Bobolicu, MAG, 19 July 2022.

⁵⁷ Email from François Ropars, Mine Action Project Manager, HAMAP, 3 July 2023; and HAMAP Humanitaire, "Mauritania", accessed 14 April 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3oedfC9>.

⁵⁸ Article 7 report (covering most of 2022), submitted October 2022, p. 4.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

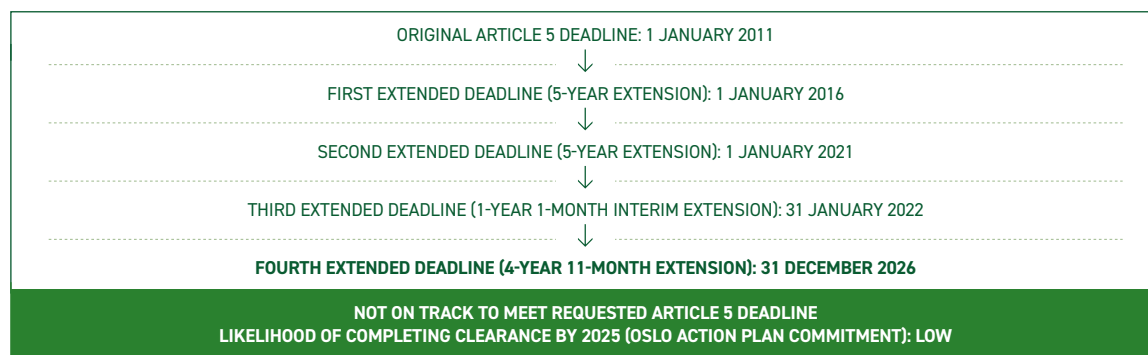
⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Email from Lt-Colonel Moustaphaould Cheikhna, PNDHD, 15 March 2022.

⁶³ Article 7 report (covering most of 2022), submitted October 2022, p. 4.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the latest extension granted by States Parties in 2021), Mauritania is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than its extended deadline of 31 December 2026. Based on current clearance output Mauritania is not on track to meet this deadline. Despite this, in June 2023 it was “optimistic” it could address the 15.5km² of mined area by its end-2026 deadline.⁶⁴

Mauritania previously declared fulfilment of its Article 5 obligations at the 17MSP in November 2018, but in June 2020, submitted an interim extension request, reporting that it had discovered mined areas in the regions of Dakhlet Nouadhibou, Tiris Zemmour, and Adrar.⁶⁵ Mauritania received a one-year interim extension to end-January 2022 in order to better understand the extent of contamination and be in a better position to submit its “final” request for extension. In June 2021, Mauritania submitted its fourth extension request seeking a new deadline of 31 December 2026, which was granted at the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties (19MSP) in November 2021. Mauritania is working on the bold assumption that no, or only limited, contamination will be discovered in the course of the coming four years.⁶⁶

The five-year extension period is based on an operational capacity of eight demining teams working for 250 days a year and each team clearing 250m² per day, equating to clearance of half a square kilometre a year. The period also estimates a final reduction of CHAs by an average 37%.⁶⁷ Further, the almost five-year estimated period includes all mined area,

including some areas which seemingly contain only AV mines which does not fall under the APMBC. On the other hand, Mauritania’s extension request does not consider the time needed to bring in and register international operators, or the time needed to set up the groundwork before commencing clearance.⁶⁸ Mauritania factored in the first six months of 2022 to complete its resource mobilisation,⁶⁹ but as at July 2023, no international funds had yet been secured for mine clearance.

Mauritania has requested US\$9.65 million of financial support, including an initial investment of US\$650,000 to purchase vehicles, detectors, personal protective equipment (PPE), and other field equipment. In addition, an annual budget of US\$1.8 million for five years was requested to cover running costs.⁷⁰ The Government of Mauritania will contribute staff, provide office space, and coordinate clearance.⁷¹

Mauritania participated in an individualised approach initiative meeting with the support of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance on 17 June 2021. Mauritania also appealed for international support during the APMBC Intersessional Meetings in June 2022, as well as the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Intersessional Meetings and CCM Tenth Meeting of States Parties in 2022. As previously mentioned, Mauritania is seeking to form a Country Coalition,⁷² potentially with France.⁷³

⁶⁴ Statement of Mauritania, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

⁶⁵ Third Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2020, p. 2; Article 7 Report (covering 2019), p. 3; and online presentation by Mauritania, Intersessional Meetings, 2 July 2020, available at: <http://bit.ly/3iBV1Dd>.

⁶⁶ Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 3.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 10; NPA, Mauritania Assessment Report, 12 April 2021, p. 11; and email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 26 April 2021.

⁶⁸ Interview with Hans Risser and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 19 April 2021.

⁶⁹ Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 9.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 11.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 12.

⁷² Ibid., p. 13.

⁷³ CCM ISU, Quarterly Newsletter on the CCM, Q4 2022, 9 January 2023.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

The PNDHD, despite its limited capacity, continued to survey and clear contamination in 2021 and 2022. Previously, it had reported that one of the main aims of Mauritania's work plan for 2017–20 was to establish a strategy for residual contamination.⁷⁴ No new strategy has been elaborated yet, but PNDHD has confirmed its commitment to building national capacity to address any residual contamination.⁷⁵

In its 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request, Mauritania reported that it will “continue to strengthen and maintain a capacity in-country that is equipped to deal with residual risk”, and that in the event of discovering new contamination after the newly proposed deadline, Mauritania will “as soon as possible take action to accurately identify the extent of the contaminated areas identified and destroy all mines found in accordance with international and national standards”.⁷⁶ Indeed, in the same extension request, Mauritania acknowledged it may discover additional contamination in the course of the five-year clearance period and beyond. According to its statement: “In an area as large as the deserts of Mauritania, with both vast areas and very limited population numbers, it has always been known that in the future additional previously unknown contamination could be identified. Even when the previously known and newly identified areas are cleared this time, it is still possible that new currently unknown areas of mine contamination may be identified in the future”.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Email from Alioune ould Menane, PNDHD, 23 July 2018.

⁷⁵ Email from Lt-Colonel Moustapha ould Cheikhna, PNDHD, 15 March 2022.

⁷⁶ Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 11.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2024
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: LIGHT**
PRECISE EXTENT UNCLEAR

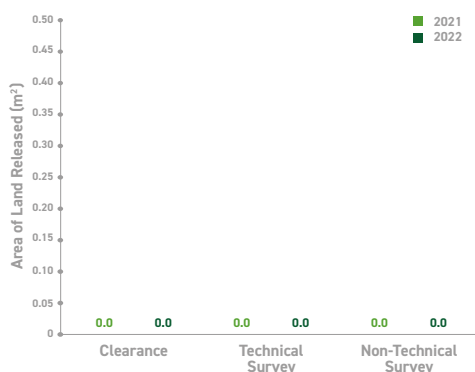
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

0 km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

0

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Niger did not conduct any clearance in 2021 or 2022, and Niger has informed Mine Action Review that it will be submitting a new request to extend its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline beyond the end of 2024. In 2022, Niger updated national mine action standards (NMAS) on non-technical survey (NTS) as well as on risk education and community liaison and drafted new NMAS on tasking procedures and the accreditation of mine action organisations. Niger has said that it plans to restart clearance activities in 2024. The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) left Niger in 2022 and the military coup of July 2023 has cast doubt on limited prospects for progress in mine clearance.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Niger should submit a new Article 5 deadline extension request that includes realistic, costed targets for land release for both the anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination in Madama and the victim-activated improvised mines in the regions of Diffa, Tahoua, and Tillabery.
- Niger should put in place monitoring capacity and a database to support systematic collection of data and reporting on explosive ordnance incidents and casualties.
- Niger should submit comprehensive, annual Article 7 reports and include details regarding AP mines of an improvised nature.
- Niger should provide details of its resource mobilisation strategy and what engagement it has had or proposes with international donors and international organisations.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	6	6	Niger has identified a small amount of AP mined area in the Agadez region but there is also an unknown amount of contamination from improvised mines being regularly laid by non-State armed groups active in the Diffa, Tahoua, and Tillabery regions.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	5	5	Niger's mine action programme is managed by the National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons (CNCCAI) and in 2022, with the support of UNMAS, it began holding coordination meetings with civil society actors. None of these organisations, however, are currently active in land release and the meetings have been halted since UNMAS's departure at the end of 2022.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	2	2	Niger's limited statements and Article 7 reporting on mine action make no reference to gender or diversity.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	4	4	Niger does not have a national information management system in place. Niger submitted an Article 7 report covering 2022 but it only contained limited information on mine contamination, survey, and clearance.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	3	3	Niger lacks a strategic plan for mine action as well as detailed work plans. Its Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in 2020 left out key details, including proposed timelines for clearance and available demining capacity. Niger drafted a provisional action plan for 2022 to 2026 but it did not include specific targets for land release although Niger claimed in August 2023 that it had submitted a new work plan to the APMBC.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	5	4	In 2022, Niger updated its NMAS on NTS and also drafted new NMAS on tasking procedures and accreditation of mine action organisations.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	2	2	No survey or clearance activities took place in 2022. Niger has reported to Mine Action Review that it plans to restart clearance in 2024 and that it will not meet its Article 5 deadline. Niger therefore plans to submit a new extension request.
Average Score	4.0	3.8	Overall Programme Performance: POOR

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Commission Nationale pour la Collecte et le Contrôle des Armes Illicites (CNCCAI)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- CNCCAI
- Army Engineers

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- UNMAS (departed end of 2022)
- Humanity and Inclusion (HI)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Niger is believed to have only a small amount of mine contamination but its varying statements about contamination and clearance in recent years have left uncertainty about the precise extent. In its latest Article 7 report, submitted in August 2023, Niger reported that remaining contamination amounted to 177,760m², a figure consistent with the level of contamination identified in its Article 5 statement during the June 2023 intersessional meetings and its 2020 request for an extension of its Article 5 deadline.¹

¹ Article 7 report (covering 2022), p. 7; Statement of Niger, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18 June 2023; and 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.

Contamination appears to consist of a suspected hazardous area (SHA) near Madama, a military base in the north-eastern Agadez region of the country. In 2018, Niger reported that it had two mined areas totalling 235,557m² near Madama, including a confirmed hazardous area (CHA) of 39,304m² and an SHA of 196,253m² containing both AP and anti-vehicle (AV) mines.² Its Article 7 report (covering 2019–21) said the entire CHA and 18,483m² of the SHA had been cleared.³ Based on earlier information contained in Niger's last Article 5 deadline extension request in 2020, the CHA had been cleared previously, and clearance of the 18,483m² of SHA had taken place between July 2019 and March 2020.⁴ No clearance has been conducted since then.

With the spread of the conflicts in the Liptako-Gourma and Lake Chad regions, armed attacks in the eastern and western regions of Niger have intensified, with an increased use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The Liptako-Gourma area, spanning the borderlands of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, encompasses several regions: Sahel, Est, Nord, and Boucle du Mouhoun in Burkina Faso; Goa, Menaka, and Mopti, in Mali; and Tillabery in Niger. In the Liptako-Gourma area, Jamaa Nusra al-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) is the most active group which uses IEDs extensively, some of which are victim activated by a person and therefore constitute mines of an improvised nature covered by the APMBC. In contrast, use of mines by Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), the second most active actor, is rare.⁵ Niger has reported a predominant emergence of improvised mines in Tillabery and Tahoua since 2019 that primarily target military vehicles. Inevitably, however, there have also been civilian casualties.⁶

In Diffa, the expanding Boko Haram insurgency from Nigeria has led to the use of remotely controlled IEDs and victim-activated improvised mines since 2015. While the data shows sporadic rather than widespread use, these devices have mainly targeted defence and security forces, and have been particularly used to ambush military convoys.⁷ Again, civilians have also suffered casualties. For example, on 6

July 2022, two civilians died and two others were injured by an improvised mine between N'Guigmi in Diffa and the Chad border.⁸ Similarly, on 16 October 2022, an improvised mine near Bosso, also in Diffa, killed two women and seriously injured a child.⁹

On 26 July 2023, following the detention of President Mohamed Bazoum, Niger's presidential guard established a new military junta.¹⁰ There was a suspension of military operations against extremist groups and reports that the groups were seeking to exploit the coup-induced turmoil.¹¹ However, at the end of August, Niger reported to Mine Action Review that military operations have now resumed.¹²

According to UNMAS data, there were 55 explosive ordnance incidents in Niger in 2022, all of which were road-emplaced IEDs. The incidents were concentrated in the Tillabery region, in the south-west of the country, and, to a lesser extent, the Diffa region in the south-east bordering Chad and Nigeria. Twelve of the devices were victim activated.¹³ According to data from the National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons (Commission Nationale pour la Collecte et le Contrôle des Armes Illicites, CNCCAI) from 2016 to the end of 2022 183 explosive ordnance incidents killed 203 people and injured 204 others. The incidents occurred in six of the eight regions in the country with 80% of the incidents occurring in Tillabery and Diffa.¹⁴

Niger had previously identified five additional SHAs in the Agadez region (in Achouloulouma, Blaka, Enneri, Orida, and Zouzoudinga) but said NTS and technical survey (TS) in 2014 had determined they were not contaminated by AP mines but that communities in the area had reported accidents only involving AV mines.¹⁵ A PRB M3 anti-vehicle mine was also discovered in March 2019 near the town of Intikane, also in the Agadez region.¹⁶ The areas are all located in a remote desert area, 450km from the town of Dirkou in Bilma department and are reported to contain mines that date back to the French colonial era.¹⁷

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The national mine action programme is managed by CNCCAI. The CNCCAI is an interministerial body, reporting to the Civil Cabinet of the President of the Republic, and is composed of 21 focal points representing ministries concerned with defence

2 Article 7 Report (covering 2013 to April 2018), Annex I, p. 19.

3 Article 7 Report (covering 2019, 2020 and 2021), p. 9.

4 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.

5 Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) Project, "Actor Profile: The Islamic State Sahel Province", 13 January 2023.

6 Provisional action plan 2022–2026 for the implementation of the components: risk education - victim assistance - humanitarian demining of mine action, p. 10.

7 Ibid.

8 ACLED, "Filters: 01/01/2022-31/12/2022, Remote explosive/landmine/IED, Niger", accessed 12 August 2023 at: www.acleddata.com.

9 Fenix Insight database, at: <https://fenix-insight.online/>.

10 Niger soldiers declare coup on national TV, BBC, 27 July 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3KHwgoH>; and "Niger general Tchiani named head of transitional government after coup", *Al Jazeera*, at: <https://bit.ly/3DXmbjW>.

11 "Niger's coup leaders say they will prosecute deposed President Mohamed Bazoum for 'high treason'", AP, 15 August 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3QFKx9k>.

12 Email from Salha Mahamane Manirou, CNCCAI, 28 August 2023.

13 Email from Philippe Renard, UNMAS, 10 August 2023.

14 Email from Salha Mahamane Manirou, CNCCAI, 9 August 2023.

15 2016 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 6–8.

16 ACLED, "Explosive developments: The growing threat of IEDs in Western Niger", 19 June 2019, p. 3.

17 Executive Summary of Niger's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 27 November 2015; and Statement of Niger, Third APMBC Review Conference, Maputo, 24 June 2014.

and security, the customary chieftainship, and civil society actors (non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other entities working on peace and development).

The CNCCAI's primary role is to aid the President of the Republic in formulating and executing strategies to counter the trafficking and proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons, chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, landmines, and cluster munitions, aligned with ratified treaties. The CNCCAI has a Permanent Secretariat under the authority of the Commission President.¹⁸

UNMAS established a presence in the country in September 2021, following a needs and threat assessment that showed an increased use of IEDs in Niger. In 2022, four staff were working on mine action in Niger. From September 2021 to its departure at the end of 2022, UNMAS was developing a consolidated IED incident database; working with the CNCCAI to enhance its mine action capabilities and develop a sustainable national capacity; providing technical support and assistance in updating national mine action standards; and delivering risk education and IED threat mitigation training.¹⁹

Humanity & Inclusion (HI) are mainly providing risk education to affected populations in Niger but are also providing some capacity development support to CNCCAI, particularly since the departure of UNMAS.²⁰

CNCCAI reported that they co-chaired several coordination meetings with UNMAS and civil society actors during 2022. Following UNMAS's departure at the end of the year, the meetings were suspended and at the time of writing, the CNCCAI was planning to relaunch the meetings in collaboration with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).²¹

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) conducted evaluation missions to Niger in May 2015 and December 2017 to assess the possibility of assisting Niger to meet its Article 5 deadline. Contacts continued in 2019, exploring the possibility of NPA setting up a programme to support CNCCAI clearance operations, but in the end the authorities did not proceed.²²

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Niger does not have a national mine action standard for the environment or a policy on mitigating the environmental impact of mine action. The CNCCAI seeks collaboration with partners to support the establishment and implementation of an environmental management system.²³

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Niger's last two Article 5 deadline extension requests, submitted in 2016 and 2020, made no reference to gender or diversity. Niger reported that women made up eight of the forty deminers deployed in June 2019 in the resumption of clearance operations.²⁴

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Niger does not have a national information management system in place. In 2022, UNMAS was providing support with information management and in 2023, HI reported that, in partnership with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), it will support the CNCCAI on information management.²⁵ Training on the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) will be part of this support, though specific dates for this assistance to begin were not finalised.²⁶

18 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), p. 3.

19 UNMAS, Niger, data as of October 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/45zm9ue/>.

20 Email from Julie Bouvier, Specialist in Armed Violence Reduction, HI, 13 July 2023.

21 Email from Satha Mahamane Manirou, CNCCAI, 9 August 2023.

22 Emails from Jean-Denis Larsen, DRC Country Director, NPA, 19 July 2017, 3 October 2018, and 15 August 2019.

23 Email from Satha Mahamane Manirou, CNCCAI, 9 August 2023.

24 Statement of Niger, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, 27 November 2019.

25 Emails from Philippe Renard, UNMAS, 10 August 2023; and from Julie Bouvier, HI, 13 July 2023.

26 Email from Julie Bouvier, HI, 13 July 2023.

Niger submitted an Article 7 report in August 2023, but only limited information was provided on the extent of contamination, and on the historic survey and clearance of AP mines. Niger delivered a statement to the APMBC Intersessional Meetings in June 2023.

The APMBC Committee on Article 5 Implementation noted that Niger's Article 7 reports were not compliant with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and lacked detail on a range of issues including an updated work plan with adjusted milestones, financial commitments to implementation of Article 5 extension request, and its information management system.²⁷

PLANNING AND TASKING

Niger does not have a strategic plan for mine action. Its Article 7 Report for 2013–18 set out a rudimentary operational timeline providing for clearance of 196,253m² by 2020: 56,000m² in 2018, 100,253m² in 2019, and 40,000m² in 2020.²⁸ It did not meet any of these targets.

Niger's fourth Article 5 deadline extension request, submitted in May 2020, called for four additional years to complete clearance of 177,760m², but did not provide annual clearance targets or a detailed work plan or identify what operating capacity was available for survey and clearance. It projected the cost of completion at US\$1.14 million, of which US\$400,000 is to come from national sources.²⁹

The Committee on Article 5 implementation called on Niger to submit a detailed work plan with annual clearance targets and to submit annual reports detailing adjustments to milestones, criteria for clearance priorities, and the extent to which security was affecting access, survey, and clearance. It also requested information on how implementation efforts take into consideration the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities.³⁰ A provisional action plan for 2022 to 2026 was drafted in October 2021 with the support of UNMAS but it did not include specific objectives for land release beyond a more general goal that demining would occur by December 2026.³¹

In May 2022, Niger said it could not fulfil its obligations in the time available and it would submit a new plan for 2022–24.³² In August 2023, the CNCCAI informed Mine Action Review that Niger had submitted a new work plan to the Implementation Support Unit of the APMBC following their submission of this year's Article 7 report but that clearance activities will not begin until 2024.³³

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

With the support of UNMAS and HI, Niger has updated its NMAS on risk education, community liaison, and NTS and has also drafted new NMAS on tasking procedures and the accreditation of mine action organisations.³⁴

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

CNCCAI reports it has created a humanitarian demining cell supported by Niger's security forces and civilians in the sector.³⁵ The CNCCAI reported they were not deployed in 2022 as no demining operations took place due to lack of resources, even though 60 trained deminers, including a number of women, are available.³⁶ No international operators are active in survey and clearance in Niger.

Niger's army engineers are the only capacity conducting clearance in Madama to date. An NPA visit to Madama in December 2017 noted that manual clearance was the main tool of demining by Niger's army engineers but highlighted the operational challenges. The M-51 mines mostly found in the area contained no metal components and were largely undetectable by

27 Preliminary Observations, Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Intersessional Meetings, 20–22 June 2022.

28 Article 7 Report (covering 2013 to April 2018), Annex 1, p. 23.

29 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 12–14.

30 Statement to the Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties by the Chair of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation on the Analysis of the Request for Extension submitted by Niger, 16–20 November 2020.

31 Niger Provisional action plan 2022–2026, p. 21.

32 Article 7 Report (covering 2019, 2020, and 2021), p. 9.

33 Email from Salha Mahamane Manirou, CNCCAI, 9 August 2023.

34 Emails from Philippe Renard, UNMAS, 10 August 2023; and Salha Mahamane Manirou, CNCCAI, 9 August 2023.

35 Article 7 report (covering 2022), p.3

36 Email from Salha Mahamane Manirou, CNCCAI, 9 August 2023.

conventional detectors and sufficiently small as to make detection by ground penetrating radar (GPR)-based detectors unreliable. This means that full manual excavation may be the only effective methodology. The process is slow and the sandy environment, prone to subsidence and back-filling, makes it difficult to maintain consistent excavation depths.

Mechanical excavation using sifting and screening equipment would dramatically improve the speed of technical survey and clearance but faces severe logistical challenges because of the long distances, absence of roads, limited provisions for maintenance and cost. Mine detection dogs have also been deemed unsuitable because of the extreme climate and the potential for deeply buried mines.³⁷

Explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) of IEDs is carried out by units of the Army Engineers.³⁸ In 2022, a total of 88 members of the Nigerien Defence and Security Forces were trained in IED Threat Mitigation with the support of UNMAS and HI.³⁹

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

CLEARANCE IN 2022

In its Article 7 report covering 2019–21 Niger reported having cleared 18,483m², but did not provide additional details.⁴⁰ Based on previous information contained in its Article 5 deadline extension request, this clearance took place between July 2019 and March 2020.⁴¹ Niger reported that no clearance took place in 2022 due to lack of resources and international donor support.⁴²

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the four-year extension request granted by States Parties in 2020), Niger is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2024. Niger will not meet this deadline.

In its statement at the June 2023 APMBC intersessional meeting, Niger said it had made no progress since its fourth Article 5 deadline extension request was submitted due to a lack of national resources and the absence of external donor support. Niger said it cannot guarantee clearance of its mine contamination by the end of 2024.⁴³

Niger has cleared less than 0.02km² of mined area in the last five years (see Table 1), with clearance only occurring between July 2019 and March 2020. This puts into serious doubt its compliance with Article 5. Niger has, though, reported to Mine Action Review that it plans to restart demining operations in 2024 and will submit a new Article 5 deadline extension request.⁴⁴

37 NPA, "End of Mission Report: CTA-HMA Inputs", undated but 2018.

38 Email from Salha Mahamane Manirou, CNCCAI, 28 August 2023.

39 Emails from Philippe Renard, UNMAS, 10 August 2023; and Salha Mahamane Manirou, CNCCAI, 9 August 2023.

40 Article 7 Report (covering 2019, 2020, and 2021), p. 9.

41 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 28 May 2020, p. 8.

42 Statement of Niger, Intersessional Meetings (Committee on Article 5 Implementation), Geneva, 18 June 2023.

43 Ibid.

44 Email from Salha Mahamane Manirou, CNCCAI, 9 August 2023.

Table 1: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	0
2021	0
2020	*0.01
2019	*0.01
2018	0
Total	0.02

* 9,081m² was cleared in July–November 2019 and 9,403m² in December 2019–February 2020.⁴⁵

Niger also cited a range of other factors hampering progress of the mined areas near Madama: sandstorms, intense heat and cold, and a lack of security necessitating a military escort for the 2,000km-long journey from the capital Niamey to Madama.⁴⁶

Niger also has an unknown amount of contamination from improvised mines in the Diffa, Tahoua, and Tillabery and has not reported on whether any survey or clearance have taken place in these areas.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Niger does not have plans in place to address residual contamination once its Article 5 obligations have been fulfilled.

⁴⁵ Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 28 May 2020, pp. 22–24.

⁴⁶ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), p. 8; and Article 7 Report (covering 2019, 2020, and 2021), p. 9.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2025
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION:
EXTENT UNKNOWN**

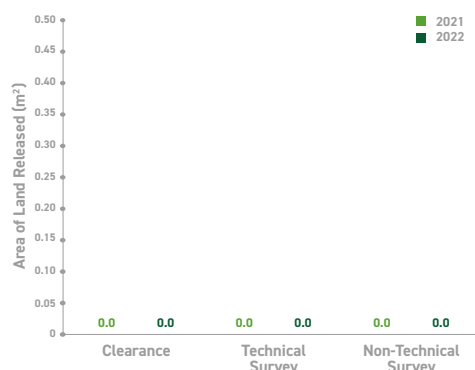
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

0M²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

0

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2022, the National Humanitarian Mine Action Committee (NHMAC) was established alongside the previously established Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Committee (APMBC) Inter-Ministerial Committee. With both seemingly established as the mine action authority, it raises concerns about how the programme will be managed. In a positive step, Nigeria submitted its first Article 7 report since 2012. However, the extent of anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination in the country is not known and Nigeria will need to build capacity across all areas of its mine action programme. Currently only the Nigerian security forces conduct clearance but their outputs have not been reported.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Nigeria should establish a federal national mine action centre to coordinate land release activities.
- Nigeria should develop a national mine action strategy that includes realistic goals for land release, agreed and specified criteria for the prioritisation of tasks, and uses land release terminology in a manner consistent with international standards.
- Nigeria should establish a central mine action database providing humanitarian agencies timely access to data on the location, type, and extent of mined areas.
- Nigeria should, as a matter of urgent priority, build mine clearance capacities.
- Nigeria's should expedite the preparation and official adoption of national mine action legislation.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	3	3	Significant areas of contamination are suspected in Nigeria with Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states considered the worst affected but insecurity has severely restricted access and the ability to conduct survey. The scale of the mine threat is currently measured in number of explosive incidents rather than size of suspected or confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs/SHAs).
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	5	4	In 2022, Nigeria created the National Humanitarian Mine Action Committee (NHMAC) as a civilian organisation that will sit alongside the already established APMBC Inter-Ministerial Committee under the Ministry of Defence. Nigeria stated in its Article 7 report for 2022 that it is in the process of drafting mine action legislation.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	4	3	Nigeria does not yet have a gender policy and implementation plan in place but the NHMAC has recruited a gender officer and several of its staff have undergone training on gender and mine action.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	4	3	The NHMAC reported that it now has a rudimentary information management system but does not yet have the capacity and infrastructure in place to establish a comprehensive mine action database. The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) operates an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core database collating and inputting data on explosive incidents provided mainly by Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), and community reports of contamination. Nigeria submitted an annual Article 7 report (covering 2022) for the first time since 2012.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	4	4	Nigeria submitted an early draft of its National Humanitarian Mine Action Strategy 2023–28 alongside its Article 7 report and has committed to submitting a final draft at the 21st Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC in November 2023. Nigeria's mine action sector lacks any coordinated tasking process or criteria for prioritising survey.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	3	2	Nigeria declared in its Article 7 report that it is reviewing national mine action standards (NMAS) for risk education and victim assistance that were drafted by UNMAS. In January 2023, Nigeria published its first NMAS on non-technical survey (NTS).
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	2	1	Nigeria has not reported on any survey and clearance activities conducted in 2022. Operators reported that they conducted NTS and "remote contamination baseline assessments". All clearance is conducted by Nigerian security forces and paramilitary groups. Nigeria is unlikely to meet its end-2025 Article 5 deadline and still faces significant security challenges which restrict access to the most affected states in the north-east. Nigeria's mine action strategy would suggest that it is working towards a completion deadline for only high-impact mined areas of 2028 at the earliest.
Average Score	3.3	2.6	Overall Programme Performance: VERY POOR

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- National Humanitarian Mine Action Committee (NHMAC)
- APMBC Inter-Ministerial Committee

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Army
- Police
- Royal Heritage Foundation

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Danish Refugee Council Humanitarian and Disarmament and Peacebuilding Sector (DRC)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)
- The HALO Trust (HALO)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Heavy casualties have been sustained from improvised explosive devices (IEDs), particularly mines of an improvised nature. These have been widely used by Boko Haram and other jihadist groups in the north-eastern states of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe. The extent of contamination is not known.¹

Deteriorating security continues to prevent systematic survey of contamination and the nature of the armed conflicts

has not yet allowed clearly delineated mined areas to be identified. Instead, the scale of the threat is measured in the number of explosive incidents rather than the size of suspected or confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs/SHAs) (see Table 1). However, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) has reported that "it is suspected that significant contamination exists".²

Table 1: Explosive ordnance incidents in north-east Nigeria (2017–22)³

Year	Road-emplaced IEDs	Body-borne IEDs	Vehicle-borne IEDs	Other IED	ERW	Total incidents
2017	165	211	4	1	0	381
2018	149	99	10	0	9	267
2019	117	32	4	4	32	189
2020	186	23	5	2	31	247
2021	255	6	10	23	17	311
2022	159	0	9	6	51	225

ERW = explosive remnants of war

Nigeria reported in 2021 that improvised mines and other explosive devices affected a total of 34 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in three states: 18 of 27 LGAs in Borno (the worst affected state); 5 of 21 LGAs in Adamawa, and 11 of 17 LGAs in Yobe.⁴ In its Article 7 report for 2022, Nigeria reported that the newly established National Humanitarian Mine Action Committee (NHMAC) has started collecting data on mine victims from these three states in the north-east, as well as states in the south-east of the country although it does not specify which ones.⁵ In the "zero draft" of its National Humanitarian Mine Action Strategy for 2023–28, it states that the national development plan has identified 38 LGAs across the Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states as being directly affected by the use of explosive ordnance with the most affected LGAs, which have been classified as high impact areas, Bama, Damboa, Dikwa, Gwoza, Jere,

Konduga, Maiduguri, Monguno, and Ngala in Borno; Geidam and Gujba in Yobe; and Madagali, Mubi North, and Mubi South in Adamawa.⁶ The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) database indicated that during 2022 there were also incidents involving improvised anti-vehicle mines in Kaduna, Katsina, and Niger states in the north and centre of the country.⁷

The main explosive threat is from improvised mines placed on roads with UNMAS recording 159 such incidents in 2022. UNMAS determined that 60 of the total number of items reported in 2022 were categorised as victim-activated, including by pressure plates.⁸ The few pressure-plate devices that have been inspected were capable of being detonated by the weight of a person, meaning that they are covered by the APMBC.⁹

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Nigeria set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee on the APMBC in 2019 under the Ministry of Defence to lead the process of setting up a national mine action authority.¹⁰ In August 2022, in order to have a civilian-led agency coordinating mine action, President Muhammadu Buhari directed the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development to create a committee that would address explosive ordnance threats in Nigeria. In October 2022, the National Humanitarian Mine Action Committee (NHMAC) was inaugurated with responsibility for coordinating mine action and advising the Federal

1 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request, p. 4; and Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form D.

2 Email from Harshi Gunawardana, Programme and Communications Officer, UNMAS, 7 May 2021.

3 Emails from Edwin Faigmane, Chief Mine Action Programme, UNMAS, 8 August 2023; Harshi Gunawardana, UNMAS, 7 May 2021; and Gilles Delecourt, UNMAS, 22 May 2022; and 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request, p. 11.

4 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request, p. 24.

5 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form H.

6 "National Humanitarian Mine Action Strategy (2023–28)", p. 36.

7 ACLED, "Filters: 01/01/2022-31/12/2022, Remote explosive/landmine/IED, Nigeria", accessed 9 August 2023, at: www.acleddata.com.

8 Email from Edwin Faigmane, UNMAS, 8 August 2023.

9 Emails from Lionel Pechera, Programme Coordinator, UNMAS, Nigeria, 11 March and 20 July 2020.

10 Statement of Nigeria, Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties, 15 November 2021.

Government on the humanitarian and military aspects of mine action and aligning activities with the development of the north-east.¹¹ However, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the APMBC and the NHMAC are each acting as the national mine action authority and both claim to have a mandate to establish the National Mine Action Centre.¹² As of writing, there was a noticeable absence of coordination between the two committees and a lack of clarity regarding their respective areas of responsibility.

The National Mine Action Centre, which at the time of writing had not yet been established but which has been approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC), will gradually take over responsibility for the coordination of mine action.¹³

Nigeria reported in its Article 7 report covering 2022 that the NHMAC is working with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to draft national legislation that will encompass Nigeria's commitments both to the APMBC and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and that work has begun to identify sites for the national mine action centre and field offices.¹⁴

In 2022, UNMAS organised Mine Action Sub-Working Group meetings in Maiduguri every two months or so.¹⁵ Separate monthly meetings are held for all implementing partners within each LGA to address requirements and provide updates on progress. In February 2023, the NHMAC held its first national stakeholders meeting with national organisations and some international operators in attendance.¹⁶

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Nigeria does not have a national mine action standard or a policy on environmental management. It is therefore not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of AP mines in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) has a global environmental policy in place which provides guidelines for programmes to implement tailored to their specific context. A key pillar of MAG's global strategy is reducing its environmental footprint.¹⁷ Danish Refugee Council (DRC) has an environmental standard operating procedure (SOP) in place for its mine action arm, which has been implemented by the management team in Nigeria.¹⁸ The HALO Trust (HALO) has a global environmental and quality policy which will guide its operations in Nigeria.¹⁹

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Nigeria does not yet have a gender policy and implementation plan in place, but NHMAC reported they have a dedicated Gender Officer and that it is also actively working with women's organisations, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, and the National Commission for Persons With Disabilities. The NHMAC has claimed that half of its workforce are women.²⁰ UNMAS has reported that the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has a gender policy in place while the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) was in the process of finalising its gender policy.²¹

In 2021, UNMAS had commissioned a gender baseline assessment for the NPF and the NSCDC in north-east Nigeria to identify ways of strengthening the role of women and explosive ordnance disposal [EOD] capabilities in these bodies.²² The assessment, which was conducted between August 2020 and February 2021, found the security services had not embraced gender mainstreaming. It called for the inclusion of more women officers, changes to obsolete recruitment practices and repeal of discriminatory regulations, and said that UNMAS should engage with both organisations on the need for gender parity.²³ The importance of integrating a gender perspective during training for the EOD unit of the NPF was also highlighted in the assessment.

11 Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form A.

12 Email from UNMAS Headquarters, 29 September 2023.

13 "National Humanitarian Mine Action Strategy (2023–2028)", p. 22.

14 Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form B.

15 Email from Edwin Faigmane, UNMAS, 8 August 2023.

16 Email from Francesca Batault, MAG, 27 July 2023.

17 Ibid.

18 Email from Goran Knezevic, DRC, 17 July 2023.

19 Email from Kim Feldewerth, HALO, 27 September 2023.

20 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form E.

21 Email from Edwin Faigmane, UNMAS, 8 August 2023.

22 Email from Gilles Delecourt, UNMAS, 22 May 2022.

23 UNMAS, "Summary of Gender Baseline Assessment", May 2021.

Table 2: Gender composition of mine action operators in 2022²⁴

Operator	Total staff	Women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Women in operational positions
UNMAS	6	3	1	0	5	2
MAG	34	14	12	7	17	9
DRC	17	5	5	1	12	4

In 2022, MAG developed a Gender Action Plan (GAP) and was working to mainstream gender and diversity inclusion in its work. The GAP has four key strategic objectives: 1) promoting gender-responsive operations in both mine action and Weapons and Ammunition Management (WAM) programmes; 2) empowering women in mine action and WAM roles; 3) ensuring consistent gender and diversity inclusion mainstreaming; and 4) monitoring and reporting progress on gender and diversity inclusion. At operational level, MAG teams collect data disaggregated by age and gender.²⁵

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

The NHMAC currently has a rudimentary information management system in place with two of its staff having undergone basic training in information management. The NHMAC said it is in talks with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and operators on building its information management capacity.²⁶ UNMAS manages an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core database that collects data from mine action stakeholders and humanitarian organisations on explosive incidents, the results of surveys, and risk education beneficiary data.²⁷

In 2022, as part of its efforts to improve the data quality in the mine action database, UNMAS trained six Information Management Officers from the Borno State Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, and Resettlement (MRRR), the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the NPF, the NSCDC, and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs.²⁸ MAG has underscored the need for improved collaboration on data collection and sharing.²⁹ Since July 2022, the Area of Responsibility (AoR) LGA coordination body that is led by DRC promotes data sharing among all operators within an LGA to provide updates on activities and prevent duplication within a specific region.³⁰

In May 2023, Nigeria submitted an Article 7 report covering 2022, its first for more than 10 years. It did not contain data on the extent of contamination or on survey and clearance activities.

PLANNING AND TASKING

The NHMAC submitted a zero draft of a National Humanitarian Mine Action Strategy 2023–2028 with its latest Article 7 report covering 2022.³¹ The NHMAC reported that the draft will be shared with all mine action stakeholders for input and will include evidence-based, detailed, costed multiyear work plans once the final draft is submitted to the APMBC 21st Meeting of States Parties in November 2023.³² MAG and UNMAS reported providing technical input to NHMAC in support of the strategy's development.³³

Nigeria's mine action sector lacks any coordinated tasking process or criteria for prioritising survey. MAG reported that its teams carry out focus group discussions with communities whose members have travelled through areas suspected to be contaminated with explosive ordnance.³⁴ DRC said it conducted non-technical survey (NTS) through internal desk assessments, information from UNMAS, and reports of possible explosive ordnance locations by other agencies.³⁵

²⁴ Emails from Edwin Faigmane, UNMAS, 8 August 2023; Francesca Batault, MAG, 27 July 2023; and Goran Knezevic, DRC, 17 July 2023.

²⁵ Email from Francesca Batault, MAG, 27 July 2023.

²⁶ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

²⁷ Emails from Harshi Gunawardana, UNMAS, 7 May 2021; and John Sorbo, DRC, 3 July 2021.

²⁸ Email from Edwin Faigmane, UNMAS, 8 August 2023.

²⁹ Email from Francesca Batault, MAG, 27 July 2023.

³⁰ Email from Goran Knezevic, DRC, 17 July 2023.

³¹ Draft National Humanitarian Mine Action Strategy (2023–2028), in Article 7 report (covering 2022), pp. 19–53.

³² Updated Work Plan, presented by Nigeria at the Intersessional Meetings of the APMBC, 19 June 2023.

³³ Emails from Francesca Batault, MAG, 27 July 2023; and UNMAS Headquarters, 29 September 2023.

³⁴ Email from Pierluigi Candier, MAG, 2 June 2022.

³⁵ Email from Goran Knezevic, DRC, 23 September 2022.

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Nigeria identified development of national mine action standards (NMAS) as one of its programme objectives in its 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request.³⁶ In 2022, UNMAS drafted national standards for NTS,³⁷ which were reportedly published in January 2023.³⁸

Nigeria's extension request said it would release land through non-technical and technical survey, by clearance and by cancellation, referring to a process that apparently would be applied before survey. The process draws attention to a concern that communities may exaggerate the extent of contamination and their reports will be subjected to "an integrity test". If they fail the test, the area would be

cancelled for purposes of survey. More controversially, the request says such areas would also be declared safe.³⁹ The comment underscores the challenge Nigeria faces building up credible baseline contamination data at a time when access by trained survey teams is severely curtailed by insecurity.

There is no mention of integrity tests in the zero draft strategy but there is a lack of clarity in the explanation of the land release process with the use of terms such as Suspected Mine Area (SMA), technical survey II (T2) and technical survey III which is not consistent with IMAS. There are also references to conducting a Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) which is no longer considered best practice.⁴⁰

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

All clearance of explosive ordnance is conducted by the Nigerian army and police primarily for military purposes and with support from paramilitary groups.⁴¹ The EOD and improvised explosive device disposal (IEDD) capacity of the Nigerian security forces is not known. After conducting a needs assessment with police commanders in Borno and Adamawa states in 2020, UNMAS organised IEDD training for the NPF's EOD units and for security forces in Maiduguri.⁴² In 2022, UNMAS conducted IEDD training to NPF EOD personnel of whom seven qualified as IEDD instructors.⁴³ In 2022, UNMAS Nigeria Programme had a total of 10 personnel.⁴⁴

MAG started working in Nigeria in 2016, focusing initially on arms management and destruction, but has been engaged in mine action in the country since 2017. In 2022, its capacity was 17 staff deployed in six community liaison teams with three team leaders. The teams worked in Borno state across seven LGAs. MAG worked with one implementing partner, the Royal Heritage Health Foundation, to deliver risk education. In 2023, MAG was helping the NHMAC to advocate for mine action funding with donors. MAG will also prioritise risk education to both internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities in the north-east, and the mapping of contamination using remote contamination baseline assessments methodology.⁴⁵

In 2022, DRC's mine action programme employed 17 staff and a project manager. There were five NTS/community liaison teams consisting of one team leader and two officers per team working in Borno and Adamawa states. DRC conducted training of community focal points in 2022 building community awareness of explosive threats and seeking to increase community reporting on explosive incidents and contamination. In 2023, DRC was prioritising risk education and NTS, seeking to build links between mine action and development focusing on children, women, and farmers, training of community focal points, and capacity building of national non-governmental organisations (NGOs).⁴⁶

In 2022, HALO was registered in Nigeria and has two permanent members of staff based in their office in Abuja. The Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management through the NHMAC have asked HALO to support the NHMAC with capacity building of its staff and data verification. To date, HALO has provided IT equipment and technical guidance to the NHMAC to support the drafting of the mine action bill.⁴⁷

36 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 33.

37 Emails from Gilles Delecourt, UNMAS, 22 May 2022; and Pierluigi Candier, MAG, 2 June 2022.

38 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from Francesca Batault, MAG, 27 July 2023.

39 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 25.

40 Draft National Humanitarian Mine Action Strategy (2023–2028), pp. 43 and 47.

41 Emails from Lionel Pechera, UNMAS, 11 March 2020; and Gilles Delecourt, UNMAS, 22 May 2022.

42 Emails from Harshi Gunawardana, UNMAS, 7 May 2021; and Gilles Delecourt, UNMAS, 22 May 2022.

43 Email from Edwin Faigmane, UNMAS, 8 August 2023.

44 Ibid.

45 Email from Francesca Batault, MAG, 27 July 2023.

46 Email from Goran Knezevic, DRC, 17 July 2023.

47 Email from Kim Feldewerth, HALO, 4 October 2023.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

SURVEY IN 2022

Survey in Nigeria is severely restricted by the continuing conflict, which limits NTS to community assessments of the location of explosive ordnance. Operators work on an ad hoc basis responding to community reports of the presence of explosive items when security makes it possible to visit the area.⁴⁸ DRC conducted 27 non-technical community surveys in 2022 in Borno state (across nine LGAs) and Adamawa state (across two LGAs) and identified 38 items of explosive ordnance which it communicated to Nigerian security forces for action.⁴⁹

In 2022, due to ongoing insecurity in the north-east, MAG was unable to carry out NTS and instead conducted 176 remote contamination baseline assessments, revealing significant contamination in Borno state across the LGAs of Bama, Damboa, Gwoza, Jere, Monguno, and Ngala. For these assessments, MAG organised focus group discussions with key informants, gathering data on the location of contamination, the history of conflict, types of contamination, injuries, and fatalities. Participants also drew maps to indicate areas affected.⁵⁰

CLEARANCE IN 2022

Clearance is conducted exclusively by Nigerian security forces. All explosive ordnance items identified in the course of surveys and community assessments are reported to national authorities for removal but there is no record of items cleared in the course of EOD and IEDD operations.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the four-year extension granted by States Parties in 2021), Nigeria is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2025. It is very unlikely to meet this deadline.

In November 2011, at the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties, Nigeria had declared it had cleared all known AP mined areas from its territory three months in advance of its original Article 5 deadline of 1 March 2012.⁵¹

In November 2020, prompted by the growth of jihadist insurgencies making extensive use of improvised mines in northern states, Nigeria requested and received a one-year extension until 31 December 2021 in which to prepare a detailed assessment of contamination and propose steps to mitigate it. UNMAS, in consultation with MAG, DRC, and Youths Awaken Foundation, a national NGO, prepared an initial draft which was first reviewed by the APMBC Implementation Support Unit and then forwarded to the Ministry of Defence to provide government input.⁵² In May 2021, it submitted a request for a four-year extension until 31 December 2025, which was granted at the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties.

⁴⁸ Email from Pierluigi Candier, MAG, 2 June 2022.

⁴⁹ Email from Goran Knezevic, DRC, 17 July 2023.

⁵⁰ Email from Francesca Batault, MAG, 27 July 2023.

⁵¹ Statement of Nigeria, Eleventh Meeting of States Parties, Phnom Penh, 29 November 2011.

⁵² Email from Harshi Gunawardana, UNMAS, 7 May 2021.

Nigeria has expressed optimism that the security challenges being faced in the north-east would abate enabling the start of humanitarian demining. However, it said it would apply for another extension if the insecurity persisted.⁵³ Indeed, the extension request acknowledged that insecurity had prevented comprehensive survey or a determination of the extent of contamination. An important first step would be to collate all known information on contamination and clearance from humanitarian organisations and Nigeria's police and security forces and input it into a national mine action database.

Nigeria's ownership of its national mine action programme is still in its foundational stage. The establishment of the NHMAC as the national mine action authority is significant, but there is a need to enhance national capacity across all aspects of the mine action programme and to formulate a strategy that leverages the expertise of international and national mine action stakeholders alike. Nigeria's early draft National Humanitarian Mine Action Strategy 2023–2028 indicates it is working towards a deadline to release "all high-impact contaminated areas, SHAs, and CHAs" by the end of 2028.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Nigeria does not have plans in place to address residual contamination once its Article 5 obligations have been fulfilled.

53 Statement of Nigeria, Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties, 15 November 2021.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 FEBRUARY 2025
ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION:

NATIONAL ESTIMATE

0.5_{KM}²

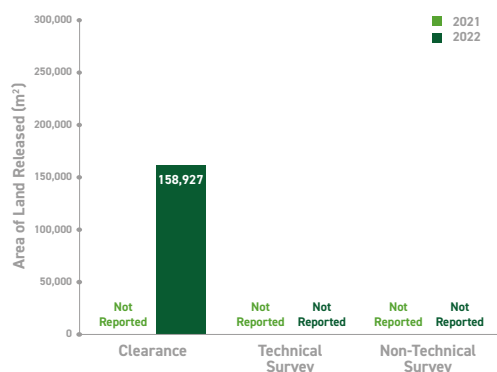
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

158,927_M²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

NOT REPORTED

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **HIGH**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Oman still plans to complete release of all areas ahead of its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline of 1 February 2025. Oman reported having cleared 158,927m² of anti-personnel (AP) mined area in 2022 but it is not known whether any AP mines were found in the process.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Oman should ensure it submits and makes publicly available its Article 7 reports covering 2021 and 2022.
- Oman should ensure it conducts land release operations according to international standards, applying non-technical survey (NTS) and technical survey (TS) to confirm contamination prior to clearance whenever possible.
- Oman should integrate a gender and diversity plan in its mine action programme.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	7	7	Oman does not have any confirmed mined areas, but does have suspected contamination resulting from mine use during the 1960s and 1970s. Oman has reported earlier clearance of most of the mined areas but is now “re-clearing” certain areas to make sure they are free of AP mines.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	8	8	All clearance is conducted by the Executive Operational Unit of the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Oman does not have a mine action centre but its mine action programme is fully nationally owned.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	2	2	Oman’s statements on mine action make no reference to the issue of gender and diversity. In 2022, women were not represented in Oman’s mine action programme.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	5	6	Oman does not have an integrated database for mine action data but relies instead on monthly reports shared by the demining army engineers. This data is then mapped and recorded digitally and on paper by the Executive Operational Unit. As at September 2023, no APMBC Article 7 report covering 2021 or 2022 had yet been published on the UNODA website for the report.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	6	6	In its most recent Article 7 transparency report submitted in 2021 (covering 2020), Oman included a work plan to release all remaining suspected mined areas before its 2025 Article 5 deadline. According to the plan, clearance is expected to conclude by April 2024, leaving a buffer of nine months to accommodate delays due to adverse weather or unexpected events.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	4	4	The standards to which Oman conducts its land release are not known, nor is their compliance to the international mine action standards (IMAS). It is also not known if Oman conducts evidence-based TS and/or NTS prior to clearance to target its clearance effectively.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	7	7	As at the end of 2020, Oman had completed 68% of the total area identified for re-clearance and was on track to complete re-clearance by its February 2025 Article 5 deadline. In 2022, Oman released 80% of its 2022 target as set by the work plan that Oman featured in its Article 7 report (covering 2020).
Average Score	5.7	5.8	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- No national mine action authority or mine action centre

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Royal Army of Oman (RAO)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Oman is suspected to be contaminated by anti-personnel (AP) mines, though the precise location and extent of any residual threat is not known. In its initial Article 7 report, submitted in 2015, Oman declared that no areas in the Sultanate were confirmed as mined, but reported “many” suspected mined areas in the south, particularly in the Dhofar region.¹ In a statement to the APMBC Intersessional Meetings in Geneva in June 2018, and in its Article 7 reports submitted in 2020 and 2021, Oman repeated that there were no confirmed mined areas and no record of any mine casualties for more than 20 years, but referenced the previously mentioned suspected mined areas requiring “re-search”/re-clearance in order to confirm they were free of AP mines.²

1 Initial Article 7 Report, 2015, pp. 4–5.

2 Statement of Oman, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 7–8 June 2018; and Article 7 Reports (covering 2018 and 2019, respectively).

According to Oman's 2015 report, during the mid 1960s to mid 1970s, the presence of rebel movements in Dhofar led to "vast" areas being affected by AP and anti-vehicle (AV) mines. There was small-scale use of mines by militants without maps or records of where mines were laid. Government forces reported clearing an area of contamination they had laid immediately following the end of military actions in 1976 and the Armed Sultan's Engineering Unit Forces initiated clearance of the areas suspected to have been mined by the militants.³

Oman has acknowledged that it is impossible to be certain that the areas were fully cleared and therefore re-clearing certain areas is required to ensure no AP mines remain.⁴ This is for three reasons: the size of the region (about 99,000km²); the lack of maps or marking; and the terrain (which includes mountains and valleys), with many mined areas located

on steep slopes. In addition, rain over the years may have scattered any residual mines.⁵ In 2001, it had been reported that the Royal Army of Oman had mapped seven zones of suspected mined areas based on historical records of battlefield areas, unit positions, and mine incident reports.⁶

As at the end of 2020, Oman reported a total area of 0.5km² across seven suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) as potentially contaminated with AP mines and had set out on a plan to re-clear them between February 2021 and April 2024.⁷ As at September 2022, the amount of mined area as at the end of 2022 was not publicly reported by Oman. It is not clear whether areas Oman describes as "potentially contaminated" can be technically considered as SHAs as per the definition understood by the mine action sector.

Table 1: AP mined area by area (at end 2020)⁸

Area	SHAs	Area (m ²)
East of Doukah valley	1	52,800
Line of Demafend	1	145,200
Tadhoul Wadi Bouthaina	1	52,800
Sarfeit, Seik valley	1	105,600
Ain Gharnout, Afeit, Aswad valley	1	52,800
Tawi Atir	1	52,800
Thent valley	1	52,800
Totals	7	514,800

Oman is contaminated with AP and AV mines, and unexploded ordnance (UXO) as a result of the 1964–75 conflict in Dhofar region between the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf (PFLOG) and the Royal army of Oman (RAO). The RAO, with its allies Jordan, Iran, and the United Kingdom (UK) used landmines during the conflict.⁹

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Oman's mine action programme is fully nationally owned.¹⁰ Clearance is performed by the Executive Operational Unit of the national Army engineers.¹¹ Oman reports its national clearance plan was elaborated in consultation with the administrative regional units.¹²

Oman stated in June 2018 that it began implementing a national programme in 2017 and was planning to set up a national mine action centre and would then appeal for supply of equipment but it did not specify when this would occur.¹³ As at 2023, however, Oman had no plans to establish a mine action centre, stating that its existing national capacities could meet the demand and maintain the ongoing clearance operations without need for a coordinating body.¹⁴

3 Initial Article 7 Report, submitted in 2015.

4 Article 7 Reports submitted in 2015, in 2020 (covering 2019), and in 2021 (covering 2020).

5 Initial Article 7 Report, 2015, pp. 4–5.

6 "Humanitarian Demining", *Journal of Mine Action*, 2001, p. 49.

7 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), p. 14.

8 Ibid.

9 "Humanitarian Demining", *Journal of Mine Action*, 2001, p. 49. See also: Arabian Gulf Digital Archives, "Military Operations in Dhofar State in Oman", 1 January 1973, pp. 92–100, at: <https://bit.ly/47yRwH9>.

10 Email from Oman Ministry of Defence (MoD), 23 June 2021.

11 Article 7 Report (covering 2018).

12 Article 7 Report (covering 2017), p. 2.

13 Statement of Oman, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 7–8 June 2018.

14 Email from Oman MoD, 23 June 2021.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Oman is not thought to have an environmental management plan specific to mine action, but the Ministry of Defence (MoD) reported in April 2022 that its clearance operations follow certain environmental standards that aim to preserve the ecosystems, including open pastures, and protect water sources and wildlife.¹⁵

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Oman reports that its national programmes, including that of mine action, follow clear guidelines that consider the needs of diverse groups, including those of different genders.¹⁶ Women, however, did not occupy supervisory, administrative, or operational positions in Oman's mine action programme in 2022.¹⁷ Women have, though, been permitted to serve in the Oman Army for a decade.¹⁸

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Oman does not have a national information management database, but the Executive Operational Unit generates monthly operational reports. Maps of the cleared areas are then produced and retained both digitally and on paper.¹⁹

Oman's most recent publicly available Article 7 report was submitted in 2021 (covering 2020), and contained disaggregated data on contamination and clearance, and an updated work plan. As at September 2023, no Article 7 report covering in 2021 or 2022 were publicly available on the UNODA website.

PLANNING AND TASKING

In its Article 7 report submitted in February 2021, Oman provided a work plan that foresees the release of all remaining suspected mined area before its Article 5 deadline in 2025.²⁰ According to the compilation of data provided in the annual Article 7 reports for 2018–20, Oman has implemented 68% of its planned mine re-clearance and expected to complete land release by April 2024, leaving a buffer of nine months ahead of its February 2025 deadline.²¹

Table 2: Land release work plan (2021–25)²²

Year	Regions	Area (m ²)
2021	Wadi Douka, Rakhyout state	52,800
2022	Rakhyout state, Wadi Bouthaina, Sarfit	198,000
2023	Sarfit (Wadi Siq), Ain Gharnout, Tawa Atir	211,200
2024	South of Wadi Thent + buffer time	52,800
2025		0
Total		514,800

15 Email from Oman MoD, 3 April 2022.

16 Email from Oman MoD, 23 June 2021.

17 Email from Oman MoD, 12 April 2023.

18 "Women officers set to join army in Oman", *Khaleej Times*, 21 December 2011, at: <http://bit.ly/3dYcDaH>.

19 Emails from Oman MoD, 23 June 2021 and 3 April 2022.

20 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), p. 14.

21 Article 7 Report (covering 2020).

22 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Annex 3, p. 1.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Oman reports the following standards are applied during clearance: pre-clearance field survey based on maps and available records; determination and provision of administrative and medical requirements; implementation of operational safety measures; and preservation of wildlife and the environment.²³ It is not clear whether these standards are documented and acted upon as national mine action standards (NMAS), as the term is generally understood in mine action, or to which extent they accord with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). Oman reported that mined areas were earlier cleared "in accordance with the resources available".²⁴

In 2020, as in the previous three years, no AP mines were discovered during re-clearance. Oman said the absence of AP mines "confirms the areas had previously been cleared".²⁵ It is not known whether the land release conducted in 2021–22 resulted in the discovery and destruction of any AP mines. Oman says its current operational procedures are efficient, follow the established work plan, and that they are reviewed and updated regularly.²⁶

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

The Executive Operational Unit of Oman's army engineers is solely responsible for mine/explosive remnants of war (ERW) clearance.²⁷ At the end of 2022, the Unit comprised 85 personnel of various ranks and specialities.²⁸ This is a slight increase on the previous year where the Unit comprised 83 personnel.²⁹

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

In 2022, Oman released a total of 158,927m² of AP mined area, according to information provided to Mine Action Review. The area released constitutes 80% of the 198,000m² that Oman aimed to "re-clear" in 2022 (145,200m² in Rakhout and 52,800m² in Wadi Bouthaina).³⁰ It is not known if the land release has resulted in the discovery of any AP mines, or whether Oman's work plan has been updated since its release in 2021.

Clearance output in 2022 was a significant decrease compared to area cleared two years before (2020), when Oman re-cleared 225,100m² of AP mined area in the south-western Dhofar region.³¹ Land release outputs for 2021 were not reported to Mine Action Review.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE

APMBC ENTRY INTO FORCE FOR OMAN: 1 FEBRUARY 2015



ORIGINAL ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 FEBRUARY 2025

ON TRACK TO MEET ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE
LIKELIHOOD OF COMPLETING CLEARANCE BY 2025 (OSLO ACTION PLAN COMMITMENT): HIGH

²³ Email from Oman MoD, 23 June 2021.

²⁴ Article 7 Report (covering 2018).

²⁵ Article 7 Report (covering 2019).

²⁶ Email from Oman MoD, 23 June 2021.

²⁷ Email from Oman MoD, 23 June 2021.

²⁸ Email from Oman MoD, 12 April 2023.

²⁹ Email from Oman MoD, 3 April 2022.

³⁰ Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Annex 3, p. 1.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 8–13.

Under Article 5 of the APMBC, Oman is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 February 2025. It is thought to be on track to do so.

In its Article 7 report submitted in 2021 (covering 2020), Oman presented a plan to complete clearance of remaining suspected mined areas by its Article 5 deadline.³² According to the compilation of data provided in the regular Article 7 reports covering 2018–20, Oman expected to complete release of all mined areas by April 2024.³³

Oman has cited the challenges it faces in locating and clearing mines in large and remote areas of desert in addition to the tropical cyclones that hit the south of the country in 2018.³⁴

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Oman's mine action programme is fully nationally owned and the Executive Operational Unit has the capacity to address any previously unknown mined areas discovered following completion (i.e. residual contamination).³⁵

³² Ibid., p. 14.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Statement of Oman, Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 29 November 2018.

³⁵ Email from Oman MoD, 23 June 2021.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JUNE 2028
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM**

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

PROBABLY LESS THAN

5km²

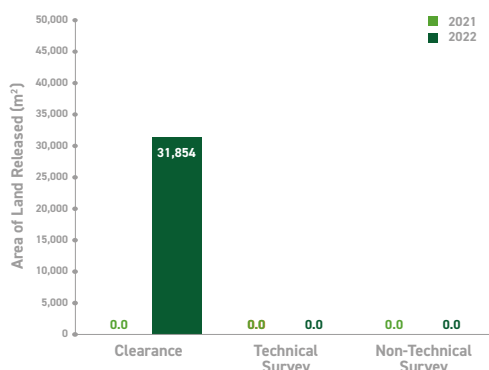
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

31,854m²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

37

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

All mined areas in Palestine are located in territory under Israeli control. To date, Israel has not authorised the Palestinian Mine Action Centre (PMAC) to conduct demining. The HALO Trust (HALO) restarted clearance in the West Bank in June 2022, after operations were suspended at the end of 2020, primarily due to a lack of funding. HALO had planned to clear three high-priority minefields in the West Bank by the end of 2023, and cleared all of them by early June 2023. HALO also obtained approval in 2022 to clear two minefields in the Jordan Valley, and clearance started in July 2023.

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

- Israel should allow survey and clearance of all mined areas on Palestinian territory to proceed as a matter of urgency.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Higher Committee for Mine Action
- Palestine Mine Action Centre (PMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust (HALO)

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

In its initial Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 7 transparency report, submitted in November 2018, Palestine reported 69 areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mines (AP mines) on the border with Jordan, covering a total area of 18.51km². All of the mined areas were said to be under Israeli control.¹ Palestine said it was not in a position to know whether further mined areas are located in East Jerusalem or in other areas of Palestine under Israeli control, including in the region of Israeli settlements or closed military zones.²

The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) informed HALO in 2012 about the presence of 90 minefields in the West Bank, 13 of which were laid by the Jordanian military in 1948–67, while the remaining 77 were laid by the Israeli military along the Jordan River after the 1967 war. The minefields are located east of the security fence, inside a military buffer zone, and do not carry immediate threat to civilians. All the minefields, including those laid by the Jordanian military, are under Israeli military control.³ There are no known mined areas in the Gaza strip.⁴

HALO conducts clearance operations in Palestine and works under the auspices of both the Israeli National Mine Action Authority (INMAA) and PMAC. Clearance must be coordinated with the Israeli authorities and PMAC, and, under Israeli law, must be quality assured by an Israeli company.⁵

In 2019, HALO was made aware of four other mined areas in the Jordan Valley, namely at Shadomot Mehola (65,000m²), a minefield containing a mix of AP mines and anti-vehicle (AV) mines; at Sokot (one AP minefield of approximately 228,000m² and one AV minefield whose area is still to be estimated), and an AV minefield at Taysir (5,500m²). The two Sokot minefields were laid by Israel while the other two minefields were laid by Jordanian forces.⁶ In 2020, HALO discussed the possibility of surveying these minefields with both Palestinian and Israeli authorities but given the political sensitivity over the

Jordan Valley at the time, the minefields had to be put on hold and it was expected that INMAA or the IDF would clear the areas themselves at some future point.⁷

On 23 August 2022, however, PMAC gave approval for HALO to clear three of the minefields: the Taysir AV minefield, and the Sokot AP and AV minefields; INMAA approval was also given. Operations at the Taysir AV minefield (estimated area 7,373m²) started on 2 July 2023.⁸ The Sokot AP minefield consists of 31 polygons, with a total estimated area of 227,300m². The area to be cleared at the Sokot AV minefield will be estimated following survey,⁹ and the proposed polygons have yet to be agreed by INMAA.¹⁰ The IDF had previously cleared about 300,000m² of the AV minefield at Sokot, but had not released the area.¹¹

In 2022, HALO's operations and mandatory quality assurance (QA) were funded by The Netherlands and the US Department of State, and HALO resumed clearance at the three remaining high priority minefields in the West Bank.¹² HALO completed clearance at the Nur a-Shams site in Tulkarem in 2022, and cleared the remaining two sites in Qabatiya and Yabad in Jenin by early June 2023.¹³ This marks the completion of Phase 1 of HALO's operations in the West Bank, comprising nine high priority Jordanian-laid minefields.¹⁴ These operations were not funded by either the Palestinian or the Israeli governments and HALO faced significant challenges raising funds for their clearance from donor countries.¹⁵ The US Department of State has expressed no objection to its recent funding being used for clearance in the Jordan Valley while the funding from the Netherlands was part of HALO's global funding and covered a specific time period.¹⁶

As at end of 2022, there was 0.24km² of confirmed mined area (excluding the Jordan Valley) across two minefields in Palestine and two minefields in no-man's-land between the West Bank and Israel (see Table 1).¹⁷ All four minefields had been laid by the Jordanian army.

1 Palestine Initial Article 7 Report, dated 26 November 2018, Form D and Annex 2.

2 Ibid., Form D.

3 Emails from Tom Meredith, Desk Officer, HALO, 24 June and 23 October 2015; and Sonia Pezier, Junior Programme Officer, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), 14 April 2015; and Ronen Shimoni, Programme Manager, HALO, 13 June 2021.

4 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 13 June 2021.

5 Email from Soula Kreitem, Programme Support Officer, UNMAS, 30 June 2021.

6 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 21 September 2019, 20 April 2020, 17 May 2022, and 27 July and 2 August 2023.

7 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 23 April 2021.

8 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 27 July 2023.

9 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 2 August 2023.

10 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 27 July 2023.

11 Interview with Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 2 August 2023.

12 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

13 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March and 27 July 2023.

14 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 2 August 2023.

15 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 23 April 2021.

16 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

17 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 23 April 2021, 17 May 2022, and 26 March 2023.

Table 1: Mined area (excluding the Jordan Valley) (at end 2022)¹⁸

Governorate	Minefield Task	Contamination	CHAs	Area (m ²)
Jenin	Qabatiya*	AV and AP mines	1	3,012
	Yabad**	AV and AP mines	1	48,050
Ramallah	No Man's Land Yalo	AV and AP mines	1	104,226
	No Man's Land - Canada Park	AV and AP mines	1	85,708
Totals			4	240,996

CHAs = Confirmed hazardous areas. * Clearance of the Qabatiya task was completed on 7 June 2023.¹⁹

** Clearance of the Yabad task was completed on 28 February 2023.²⁰ Parts of the Yabad polygon were already inhabited and cultivated. HALO focused on areas not in use and cleared 12,397m² over four phases from 22 January 2018, enabling the release of 48,050m² on 28 February 2023.²¹ NB: Contamination at Yabad was previously reported as 40,032m²,²² but the area finally released was reported to be 48,050m².

Mine action is subject to the 1995 Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, commonly known as the Oslo II accord, under which the West Bank is divided into three areas: Area A is under full Palestinian civil and security control; Area B is under full Palestinian civil control and joint Israeli-Palestinian security control; and Area C refers to areas where Israel has full civil and security control.²³ Most mined areas are located in Area C of the West Bank, along the border with Jordan. Area C covers approximately 60% of the West Bank.²⁴

EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR

Palestine is also contaminated with explosive remnants of war (ERW). According to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), PMAC has identified 46 ERW-contaminated areas in the West Bank. These areas are predominantly Israeli military training sites. In 2020, UNMAS also conducted an ERW impact survey in some locations close to these areas to better understand the impact of the contamination on the residents.²⁵

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

PMAC was established in accordance with Palestinian Minister of Interior decision in 2012,²⁶ which appointed a director and created a Higher Committee for Mine Action as an interministerial body. The Higher Committee for Mine Action, which serves as the national mine action authority, is tasked with developing mine action legislation and allocating resources for the sector.²⁷

PMAC, which is located in the Ministry of Interior in Ramallah, is mandated to coordinate all aspects of mine action in the West Bank. It receives technical advice from UNMAS.²⁸ PMAC has established a number of subcommittees to deal with technical issues, risk education, legal affairs, foreign affairs, and health and safety.²⁹

18 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March and 4 September 2023.

19 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 27 July 2023.

20 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

21 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 4 September 2023.

22 Emails from Maj. Wala Jarrar, External and Internal Relations Officer, PMAC, 13 May 2020 and 15 June 2022; and Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 23 April 2021 and 17 May 2022.

23 Email from Celine Francois, Programme Officer, UNMAS Jerusalem, 5 July 2012.

24 Email from Celine Francois, UNMAS Jerusalem, 5 July 2012; and "UNMAS 2013 Annual Report".

25 Email from Soula Kreitem, UNMAS, 30 June 2021.

26 Minister of Interior Decision No. 69, 25 March 2012.

27 Emails from Celine Francois, UNMAS Jerusalem, 19 July 2012; and Imad Mohareb, Planning Department, PMAC, 31 March 2013.

28 Emails from Celine Francois, UNMAS Jerusalem, 5 and 19 July 2012; and UN, "2012 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects", New York, 2013.

29 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 9 May 2016.

In 2016, Palestine announced it was seeking to enact a mine action law. Palestine was hopeful of completing the legal procedures within a year and then presenting the draft law to the legislative council for endorsement, followed by signature by the President.³⁰ Palestine confirmed on 20 April 2022 that it was working to issue a mine action law in accordance with the APMBC, and that preparations were underway³¹ and in March 2023, PMAC reported that the legislation was in its final stages prior to adoption.³² In November 2017, Palestine's constitutional court had ruled that, in an event of any contradiction, obligations in international conventions, including the APMBC, override national legislation.³³

PMAC, which has 14 employees,³⁴ is staffed with personnel from the Palestinian National Security Forces, Civil Police, and Civil Defence. In 2013, 36 PMAC personnel were trained by UNMAS for demining but were not subsequently authorised by Israel to conduct clearance.³⁵ The Civil Police have an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) unit with 42 personnel in Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, Nablus, Qalqilya, Ramallah, and Tulkarem, who conduct rapid response to locate and remove items of unexploded ordnance (UXO). The EOD unit is only permitted to work in Area A of the West Bank.³⁶ All West Bank Police EOD Units are poorly

equipped and lack EOD training. Due to poor IT systems none of the EOD teams shares information with PMAC, although this is changing.³⁷ In 2022, UNMAS and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) conducted preparatory work to support PMAC to upgrade to the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core.³⁸

PMAC does not have its own budget, and the Palestinian authority only provides funding for the salaries of PMAC employees and the costs of the PMAC office.³⁹ As at March 2023, Israel had not granted the Palestinian authorities authorisation to conduct area mine clearance in the West Bank.

As indicated above, HALO's land release operations of the priority minefields in the West Bank are funded by international donors. Both the INMAA and PMAC support HALO's activities and provide the necessary coordination and involvement.⁴⁰

UNMAS began delivering explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) in the West Bank in 2022, as requested by the UN and humanitarian partners.⁴¹

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

In the West Bank, HALO follows its global policy and standard operating procedure (SOP) on the environmental impact of clearance operations and mitigation⁴² and all clearance operations are planned and conducted to minimise any environmental impact. Where impact cannot be avoided, plans are made to mitigate this and to make good any damage caused, for example replacing soil, replanting vegetation, and conducting full remediation following mechanical clearance. Landowners and communities are included in the development of clearance plans, and mitigation and remedial measures.⁴³

HALO's operations are accredited to ISO 14001 on environmental management and comply with the environmental standards set by the authorities in the West Bank. These are monitored by an external QA company and the Israeli Standards Institute.⁴⁴

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

PMAC has said it has a gender policy and implementation plan in place, that it disaggregates data by sex and age,⁴⁵ and that qualified women and men have equal access to employment.⁴⁶ As a result of a one-year grant from UNMAS for the mainstreaming of gender in its risk education activities, in 2021 the number of women working and volunteering at PMAC increased. But the proportion of women employed by PMAC fell in 2022 when only four of fourteen staff were women (29%, down from 40% in 2021), of which two of four supervisory positions were held by women (50%, down from 100% in 2021), and three of seven operational positions were held by women (43%, down from 50% of operational positions in 2021).⁴⁷

30 Statement of Palestine, APMBC Fifteenth Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 29 November 2016.

31 Preliminary Observations Committee on Cooperative Compliance, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022, p. 6.

32 Email from Maj. Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 23 March 2023.

33 Initial APMBC Article 7 Report, 26 November 2018, Form A.

34 Email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 23 March 2023.

35 Initial Article 7 Report, 26 November 2018, Form D.

36 Email from staff member in the Planning Department, PMAC, 26 June 2018.

37 Emails from Patrick McCabe, Chief of Operations, UNMAS Palestine, 22 August 2022; and from Tess Bresnan, Head of Project Unit/Senior Programme Officer, UNMAS Palestine, 25 April 2023.

38 Email from Tess Bresnan, UNMAS Palestine, 25 April 2023.

39 Interview with Brig. Osama Abu Hananeh, PMAC, Geneva, 7 February 2019; and email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 23 March 2023.

40 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 24 July 2022.

41 Email from Tess Bresnan, UNMAS Palestine, 25 April 2023.

42 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 17 May 2022 and 26 March 2023.

43 Ibid.

44 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

45 Email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 24 May 2020.

46 Email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 12 May 2021.

47 Emails from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 15 June 2022 and 23 March 2023.

HALO has a global policy on gender and diversity. When conducting operations, HALO's Palestine programme deploys all-male deminers from Georgia due to "cultural considerations". HALO's Palestinian employees include mechanical operators, and medical and support teams. The representation of female employees varies according to the operation. For managerial positions within HALO's West Bank office team there is said to be equal access to employment for qualified women and men.⁴⁸ In March 2023, HALO reported that just one of its twenty-eight staff in the West Bank was a woman, and that she was employed in one of four managerial/supervisory positions within the organisation.⁴⁹

UNMAS has a female liaison officer in Ramallah who works with PMAC on a daily basis.⁵⁰

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

PMAC uses an old version of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA).⁵¹ The Police EOD systems are also old and EOD teams have not been inputting information into IMSMA.⁵² In 2022, as planned, UNMAS and the GICHD supported PMAC in preparations to install IMSMA Core. In 2023, this was to be taken forward with in-person facilitation and training in the West Bank.⁵³

HALO is in the process of rolling out its global database, the Global Operations Information Management System (GO-IMS), which will be introduced in the West Bank in 2023.⁵⁴ HALO follows the INMAA's national standards and, when undertaking operations in the West Bank, provides daily and weekly reports as well as completion reports for every task. The information is shared with PMAC weekly, along with completion reports and geographic information system (GIS) data for every completed task.⁵⁵ As a result, all three entities are in possession of HALO survey and clearance data relating to demining in the West Bank.

Palestine submitted an initial Article 7 report in November 2018, as required by the APMBC.⁵⁶ No Article 7 reports were submitted for 2020 or 2021. Palestine did, however, submit an Article 7 report covering 2022 in June 2023, although much of the information it contained pre-dated 2022.⁵⁷

PLANNING AND TASKING

PMAC had a Strategic Plan for 2017–20,⁵⁸ in which the primary objectives were the clearance of the Nur a-Shams, Qabatiya, and Yabad minefields.⁵⁹ Clearance of the Nur a-Shams minefield was completed in 2022 and clearance of the Qabatiya and Yabad minefields was completed in 2023. As of March 2023, a new strategic plan was again reported to be still in the pipeline but had not been finalised.⁶⁰ According to PMAC, there were no annual work plans in place between 2020 and 2023.⁶¹

HALO's survey and clearance schedule in the West Bank is set in agreement with PMAC, INMAA, and its international donors,⁶² and clearance is conducted in an order agreed by both PMAC and INMAA.⁶³

In 2022, HALO planned to complete clearance operations in Nur a-Shams (in Tulkarem) between June and July, and to clear 20% of the minefield in Qabatiya (in Jenin) between August and December 2022, clearing the remainder of the contaminated land in Qabatiya and Yabad (in Jenin) by the end of 2023.⁶⁴ HALO met its 2022 clearance targets, exceeding its target at the Qabatiya minefield where it cleared 67% (5,524m²) of the site between mid-July and mid-September 2022, clearing the remainder of the site by 7 June 2023.⁶⁵ HALO also cleared the Yabad site between 20 November 2022 and 28 February 2023,⁶⁶

48 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 23 April and 13 June 2021 and 17 May 2022.

49 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

50 Emails from Patrick McCabe, UNMAS Palestine, 17 August 2022; and Tess Bresnan, UNMAS Palestine, 25 April 2023.

51 Emails from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 15 June 2022, and 23 March 2023.

52 Email from Patrick McCabe, UNMAS Palestine, 17 August 2022.

53 Email from Tess Bresnan, UNMAS Palestine, 25 April 2023.

54 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

55 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 3 Sept 2018, 18 June 2020, and 26 March 2023.

56 Initial Article 7 Report, 26 November 2018, Form D.

57 Article 7 Report (covering 2022).

58 Palestine's Article 7 report covering 2017 indicated that the strategic plan covers 2017–22. It is not clear whether Palestine's strategic plan expired in 2020 or is valid until 2022.

59 PMAC, "Strategic Plan 2017–2020", undated.

60 Emails from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 15 June 2022 and 23 March 2023.

61 Emails from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 24 May 2020, 12 May 2021, and 15 June 2022.

62 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 18 June 2020 and 26 March 2023.

63 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

64 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 17 May 2022; and online interview on 28 July 2022.

65 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 27 July 2023.

66 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

thereby completing clearance of the Jenin sites well before the year end. Due to the security situation, INMAA did not have access to the tasks and did not conduct any quality management (QM) in 2022.⁶⁷

In the Jordan Valley, HALO also plans to clear the Taysir minefield (7,373m², AV mines only) and the two Sokot minefields (227,300m² of AP mine contamination, with the area to be cleared at the AV minefield to be agreed following survey), beginning with a survey of the tasks in 2023 ahead of clearance.⁶⁸ As indicated above, clearance of the Taysir AV mined area began on 2 July 2023.⁶⁹

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

HALO's SOPs, which are based on its international standards and comply with national standards, are approved by the INMAA. HALO usually submits its SOPs annually, including any necessary amendments, to INMAA for approval.⁷⁰ They were last submitted and approved in June 2020. They have not been amended since,⁷¹ and the INMAA did not request HALO's SOPs be submitted for approval in 2022.⁷² HALO reported that no updates were made to any of the national mine action standards (NMAS) relating to the survey and clearance of AP mines in the West Bank in 2022.⁷³

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

As indicated, Israel does not authorise PMAC to conduct demining operations in the West Bank. In September 2013, however, the INMAA gave HALO formal authorisation to clear the two minefields in the West Bank deemed high priority by PMAC (in Tulkarem and Jenin governorates). Following INMAA authorisation, HALO began clearance in April 2014, and has continued demining in the West Bank since then, though operations paused in 2021 due to lack of funding.⁷⁴

HALO works under the auspices of both INMAA and PMAC. Since June 2022, HALO has employed 28 staff in the West Bank,⁷⁵ in contrast to 2021 when it maintained only essential staff at its office in the West Bank given the lack of funding for survey or clearance.⁷⁶ In 2022, it deployed one non-technical survey (NTS) team to complete the task at Nur a-Shams, plus another team of nine deminers with seven mechanical assets. No major changes to the number of survey or clearance personnel were expected for 2023.⁷⁷ There were no demining accidents or attacks on personnel in 2022.⁷⁸

HALOs work in the West Bank complies with the Israeli Institute for Standards, and in particular with ISO 9001, ISO 14001, and ISO 18001.

HALO carries out its own internal quality control (QC), which is conducted by senior programme staff, and which complies with the ISO standards and HALO's own SOPs. In addition, the INMAA requires external INMAA-certified companies to undertake QA/QC of HALO's clearance operations in line with Israeli law National Mine Action Standards.

HALO performs survey as part of its clearance operations of the Jordanian-laid minefields in Area C of the West Bank. It is part of pre-clearance task preparation and is of CHAs already recorded in PMAC's database and on maps.⁷⁹ HALO conducts both manual and mechanical clearance. It also uses a drone for survey and mapping, and the maps generated are shared with all parties involved for planning and follow-up.⁸⁰

67 Ibid.

68 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March, 27 July, and 2 August 2023.

69 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 27 July 2023.

70 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 14 May 2018.

71 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 17 May 2022.

72 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

73 Ibid.

74 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 17 May 2022.

75 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

76 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 17 May 2022.

77 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

78 Ibid.

79 Emails from staff member in the Planning Department, PMAC, 9 May 2016; and Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 14 June 2020.

80 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 10 April 2019.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

In 2022, 31,854m² of CHA was released in the West Bank, all through clearance.⁸¹ A total of 37 AP mines and 4 AV mines were destroyed during clearance operations.⁸²

SURVEY IN 2022

For the second consecutive year, no land was released through NTS or technical survey (TS) in the West Bank in 2022.⁸³

CLEARANCE IN 2022

In 2022, HALO cleared 31,854m² of CHA in the West Bank,⁸⁴ an increase from 2021 when no clearance took place due to a lack of funding.⁸⁵

Table 2: AP mine clearance by HALO in 2022⁸⁶

Operator	Governorate	Task Name	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed
HALO	Tulkarem	Nur a-Shams	24,100	13	0
HALO	Jenin	Qabatiya*	5,524	22	4
HALO	Jenin	Yabad**	2,230	2	0
Totals			31,854	37	4

* Clearance of the Qabatiya task was completed on 7 June 2023.⁸⁷ ** Clearance of the Yabad task was completed on 28 February 2023.⁸⁸ Parts of the Yabad polygon were already inhabited and cultivated. HALO focused on the areas not in use and cleared 12,397m² in four phases since 22 January 2018, enabling the release of 48,050m² on 28 February 2023.⁸⁹

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE

APMBC ENTRY INTO FORCE FOR PALESTINE: 1 JUNE 2018

↓

ORIGINAL ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JUNE 2028

NOT ON TRACK TO MEET ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE. COMPLETION IS CONTINGENT ON POLITICAL FACTORS, AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS, AND DEMINING PROGRESS MADE BY ISRAEL AND HALO, AS PALESTINE DOES NOT HAVE CONTROL OF MINED AREAS UNDER ITS JURISDICTION. LIKELIHOOD OF COMPLETING CLEARANCE BY 2025 (OSLO ACTION PLAN COMMITMENT): NONE

81 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.
82 Ibid.
83 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 17 May 2022, and 26 March 2023.
84 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
87 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 27 July 2023.
88 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.
89 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 2 September 2023.

Under Article 5 of the APMBC, Palestine is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 June 2028. It is unlikely to meet this deadline.

Clearance in the West Bank is constrained by available funding,⁹⁰ and is impacted by political factors, including the lack of authorisation granted by Israel for Palestine to conduct mine clearance.⁹¹ PMAC has reported that concluding clearance and meeting the 2025 deadline is highly dependent on the facilitation of the Israeli authorities and the availability of funds.⁹² In its most recent Article 7 report, Palestine lists other challenges it faces in meeting its Article 5 obligations, including a lack of human resources to conduct survey and clearance, and its lack of control over mined area.⁹³

HALO, which began mine clearance operations in April 2014, had cleared seven minefields in Area C of the West Bank by the end of 2022.⁹⁴ With funding secured in 2021, HALO completed clearance of the AP mined area at Nur a-Shams site in Tulkarem governorate in 2022, and had completed clearance of two other priority sites at Qabatiya and Yabad in Jenin governorate in the first six months of 2023. Having received approvals to clear minefields at Sokot and Taysir in the Jordan Valley, where one third of mines are Israeli-laid,⁹⁵ HALO planned to survey the Jordan Valley sites in 2023 prior to clearance,⁹⁶ and started clearance of the Taysir AV mined area in July 2023.⁹⁷

In 2019, INMAA had hoped that clearance of mined areas in the West Bank would be finished in two years. According to INMAA, the Yalo and Canada Park minefields would both be cleared, but according to humanitarian prioritisation, noting that the minefields are fenced and marked, and claiming that they have little humanitarian impact.⁹⁸ As at July 2023, the INMAA website did not indicate any progress with clearing the two sites.⁹⁹

INMAA began survey of the Jordan Valley minefields in the West Bank in 2017, using Israeli national budget and operating with Israeli companies. INMAA sees significant potential for cancellation and reduction of land in the Jordan Valley, and is using various technologies and scientific tools to assess the likelihood of mine drift.¹⁰⁰

Table 3: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2022	31,854
2021	0
2020	18,269
2019	13,976
2018	5,221
Total	69,320

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Palestine does not have plans in place to address residual contamination once its Article 5 obligations have been fulfilled.

90 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 17 May 2022.
91 Initial Article 7 Report, 26 November 2018, Form D; and interview with Brig. Osama Abu Hananeh, PMAC, in Geneva, 7 February 2019.
92 Email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 12 May 2021.
93 Article 7 report (covering 2022), p. 51.
94 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 20 April 2020, and 23 March 2023; and Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 12 May 2021.
95 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 22 April 2017, 14 May 2018, and 18 June 2020; and telephone interview, 3 August 2017.
96 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.
97 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 27 July 2023.
98 Interview with Marcel Aviv, INMAA, in Geneva, 7 February 2019.
99 Israel INMAA website (Hebrew text), accessed on 24 July 2023 at <https://bit.ly/3Y65IID>.
100 Interview with Michael Heiman, INMAA, in Geneva, 15 February 2018; and emails, 23 July and 10 August 2017; and, after leaving INMAA, 26 May 2018.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2024
JUST ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: LIGHT

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

0.1 km²

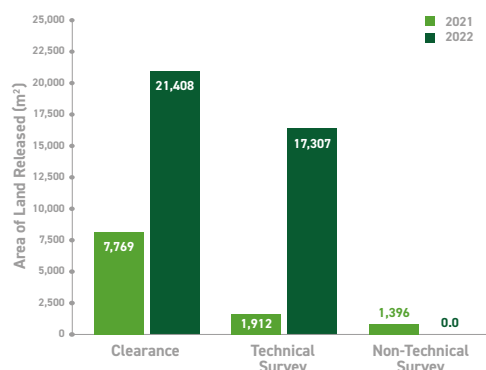
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

21,408 m²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

529

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **MEDIUM**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Peru cleared just over 21,000m² of mined area in 2022, almost three times the output of the previous year. Tiwinza is reported to be mine free as of the end of 2022. Peru should be able to meet its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 clearance deadline provided it can secure the necessary funding to increase its land release output to earlier levels and secure a better understanding of remaining anti-personnel (AP) mined area.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Peru should survey remaining mined areas to produce a more accurate baseline of contamination.
- Peru should develop and implement new policies for land release to ensure that clearance is part of a comprehensive land release methodology.
- Peru should provide an updated work plan through to completion of Article 5.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	4	4	There was a reduction in the estimate of AP mined area at the end of 2022 but remaining contamination continues to be recorded as suspected hazardous area (SHAs) with the size and extent of the 87 mined areas varying widely.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	7	6	Peru has in place the legislation and management structure it needs to oversee demining operations. Peru allocated over \$800,000 to demining operations in 2022 but is also seeking international funding to fulfil its clearance obligations.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	5	5	Peru does not have a gender and diversity policy and implementation plan for mine action. While women and children participate in risk education activities it is not known if this extends to survey. The proportion of Peruvian Mine Action Centre (CONTRAMINAS) staff who were women in 2022 is not known.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	5	5	Peru submitted a timely Article 7 report covering 2022, which also provides detail on its implementation of the Oslo Action Plan.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	5	5	Peru exceeded its land release target for 2022 but the plan for 2023 and 2024 lacks detail and is based on numbers of mined areas rather than the extent of contamination.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	7	7	Peru introduced mine detection dogs (MDDs) in 2019 but are still only using them for quality control. Peru did not provide details of how many personnel were deployed for clearance.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	6	5	Thanks to increased clearance in 2022, Peru should be able to meet its extended Article 5 deadline, but this is contingent on a significant increase in land release output to levels achieved in earlier years. This is partly dependent on availability of funding and capacity.
Average Score	5.6	5.3	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Peruvian Mine Action Centre (CONTRAMINAS)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Peruvian Army's Directorate General for Humanitarian Demining (DIGEDEHUME)
- Peruvian National Police, Security Division CONTRAMINAS (DIVSECOM)
- Joint Ecuador-Peru Binational Humanitarian Demining Unit (Not operational since end of 2018)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Organization of American States – Integral Action Against Landmines Program (OAS-AICMA)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

At the end of 2022, Peru estimated that AP mine contamination covered a total of 340,829m² across 87 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) within three “sectors” (see Table 1).¹ Peru has not identified any confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs).² According to Peruvian Authorities, the information on landmines laid between 1995 and 1998 does not include detailed maps of minefields with GPS coordinates or satellite information, and as such, they are treated as SHAs until survey and clearance take place.³ Tiwinza is reported to be mine free as of the end of 2022.⁴

Table 1: AP mined area by sector (at end 2022)⁵

Sector	SHAs	Area (m ²)
Santiago	42	70,690
Cenepa	27	89,174
Achuime	18	180,965
Totals	87	340,829

The size and extent of the 87 suspected mined areas varies widely, with one area only 5m² in size, while the largest, by far, is estimated to extend over 160,000m².⁶ In fact, most of this large, mined area should be released through survey, without the need for recourse to full clearance. The true amount of contaminated land is probably no more than 100,000m² as Peru does not use polygons to delineate hazardous areas, despite having detailed mine maps of almost all the affected areas. According to CONTRAMINAS, the use of polygons is not very feasible as the geography of the mountainous areas makes it very difficult to locate points

or coordinates that are registered in the sketch maps of the mined areas.⁷

In its 2016 Article 5 extension request and “Updated National Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2018–2024” Peru pledged to conduct survey in order to determine more accurately the size and location of mined areas.⁸ As at end 2022, however, all outstanding mine contamination continued to be recorded in SHAs. Peru reported at the Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties that since October 2020 it has been working with Ecuador to clarify the location of an estimated 10,182m² of mined area (PV Gutiérrez) containing approximately 2,000 AP mines.⁹

The mine threat in Peru results from a 1995 border conflict with Ecuador. The mined section of the border was predominantly in the Condor mountain range which was at the centre of the dispute. In October 2023, Peru and Ecuador were commemorating 25 years of signing the “Acta de Brasilia”, the agreement that ended the armed conflict between the two countries.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The national mine action programme is managed by the Peruvian Mine Action Centre (Centro Peruano de Acción contra las Minas Antipersonal, CONTRAMINAS). CONTRAMINAS is responsible for setting strategy and priorities and for overall coordination of mine action. It consists of an Interministerial Executive Council, chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a Technical Secretariat, which oversees the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Directorate of Security and Defence.¹⁰

CONTRAMINAS was created in December 2002 after the issuance of a “Supreme Decree”, and an additional “Supreme Decree” issued in July 2005 provides additional regulation.¹¹ Directive 001 governs demining by the Peruvian

Army's Directorate General for Humanitarian Demining (DIGEDEM) while Directive 006, issued by the Head of the Joint Command of the Armed Forces in 2001, regulates compliance under the APMB.¹²

In its revised second Article 5 deadline extension request, submitted in August 2016, Peru estimated that US\$38 million would be needed to finish the job, all of which was to be funded by the Peruvian government.¹³ This estimate was also included in its Updated National Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2018–2024.¹⁴ Since 2010, Peru has reported contributing about \$1.4 million annually for AP mine survey and clearance which is less than the annual amount Peru believes is needed to complete clearance by 2024.

1 Email from Mario Espinoza Llanos, Alternate Technical Secretary, Peruvian Mine Action Centre (CONTRAMINAS), 6 September 2023.

2 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

3 Email from Guillermo Portillo, Advisor Multilateral Affairs, Foreign Affairs General Directorate, Ministry of Defence, 9 September 2023.

4 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

5 Email from Mario Espinoza Llanos, CONTRAMINAS, 6 September 2023; Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Forms C and I. Initially, CONTRAMINAS had reported 90,707m² in the CENEPA sector.

6 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form I.

7 Email from Mario Espinoza Llanos, CONTRAMINAS, 6 September 2023.

8 Revised 2016 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, July 2016, pp. 20–21; and Updated National Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2018–2024, May 2018, p. 15.

9 Statement of Peru, APMB Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties, 16–20 November 2020.

10 Updated National Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2018–2024, May 2018, p. 3.

11 Supreme Decree No. 113-2002-RE; and Supreme Decree No. 051-2005-RE.

12 Directive No. 001/2009/DIGEDEM-SINGE; and Directive No. 006.

13 Revised 2016 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, July 2016, p. 18.

14 Updated National Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2018–2024, May 2018, p. 10.

Peru allocated 3.05 million soles to demining in 2022, equivalent to approximately USD\$819,000.¹⁵

No resource mobilisation strategy is mentioned in Article 7 Report covering 2022. However, the report mentions that Peru through bilateral negotiations with Italy, obtained "cooperation" for demining.¹⁶ Demining and EOD experts from Peru received training in the Spanish Military Academy of Engineers in Hoyo de Manzanares, which was funded by the Inter-American Defense Board and the Organisation of American States (OAS). Peruvian deminers are also trained at the Italian Centre for Explosive Ordnance Disposal of the Italian Army in Rome, which is funded by the Italo-Latin American Institute (IILA).¹⁷

In February 2023, the Peruvian Ministry of Defence and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) signed a five-year memorandum of understanding (MoU), which includes humanitarian demining, destruction of cluster munition stockpiles, stockpile management, development of technical and logistical skills, and specialist training. Furthermore, on 7 February 2023, the Peruvian Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs, and NPA, hosted a workshop in Lima, with diplomatic representatives in-country. The workshop included information on the remaining AP mine contamination and cluster munition stockpile challenges in Peru, to increase knowledge and political commitment across sectors and stakeholders.¹⁸

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known whether Peru has a national mine action standard on environmental management and/or a policy on environmental management. It is also not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during or following mine clearance.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

CONTRAMINAS does not have a gender and diversity policy but reports that it does comply with gender equality legislation set in a 2019 decree.¹⁹ It is not known if gender and diversity are mainstreamed through the national mine action standards (NMAS) but neither issue featured in Peru's 2016 Article 5 deadline extension request, its updated national demining plan for 2018–24, or its latest Article 7 report. In 2019, 20% of operational roles were staffed by women and 50% of management and supervisory positions.²⁰ Peru did not provide data on this issue for 2020, 2021, or 2022.

Victim data are disaggregated by sex and age, but it is not known if other relevant mine action data are disaggregated. In the past, CONTRAMINAS reported that it consults the National Service for Protected Natural Areas (SERNANP) about the needs of ethnic and minority groups when planning demining activities.²¹

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

CONTRAMINAS uses the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database.²² In 2019, Peru linked IMSMA with ArcGIS software to improve its capabilities to map AP mine contamination.²³ No updates had been provided on mine action information management as at August 2023.

Peru submits its Article 7 reports on a timely basis and reports on its progress in Article 5 implementation at intersessional meetings and meetings of States Parties.

PLANNING AND TASKING

The Updated National Plan for Demining for 2018–24 projected that some 0.49km² spread across 127 SHAs would be released by 31 December 2024. Peru expected to clear 8,089 mines from these areas (see Table 2).²⁴

15 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), p. 39. Exchange rate is US\$1 = Soles 3.7.

16 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), p. 30.

17 Email from Guillermo Portillo, Ministry of Defence, 9 September 2023.

18 "Protecting civilians from explosive weapons in Peru – the importance of stockpile destruction". News and updates from NPA Mine Action and Disarmament, 11 April 2023. at: <https://bit.ly/4624lCQ>.

19 Supreme Decree No. 008-2019-MIMP.

20 Email from Mario Espinoza Llanos, CONTRAMINAS, 26 May 2020.

21 Ibid.

22 Updated National Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2018–2024, May 2018, p. 8.

23 Email from Mario Espinoza Llanos, CONTRAMINAS, 26 May 2020.

24 Decisions on the request submitted by Peru for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention, 1 December 2016, para. (g).

Table 2: Planned mine clearance in 2018–24²⁵

Year	Sector	Mined areas	Area (m ²)	AP mines
2018	Tiwinza	16	119,415	2,697
2019	Cenepa	13	92,850	627
2020	Achuime	20	9,458	746
2021	Cenepa	16	12,301	653
2022	Cenepa–Santiago	18	180,965	392
2023	Santiago	16	28,225	838
2024	Santiago	28	48,065	2,136
Totals		127	491,279	8,089

In its Article 7 report covering 2022, Peru included an updated plan to release all 87 mined areas by the end of 2024, although this does not detail the amount of area it plans to release each year (see Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3: Planned mine clearance in 2023–24²⁶

Sector	Mined areas	Mined Areas (m ²)
Santiago	42	70,690
Cenepa	27	89,174
Achuime	18	180,965
Totals	87	340,829

Table 4: Planned release of mined areas by sector in 2023–24²⁷

Year	Sector	Mined areas
2023	Achuime	18
2023	Santiago	28
2024	Cenepa	27
2024	Santiago	14
Total		87

Peru's criteria for prioritising survey and clearance operations are unclear. In its decision on Peru's 2016 extension request, the Article 5 Committee called on Peru to prioritise operations based on the socio-economic impact of mined areas.²⁸ One of the activities listed for CONTRAMINAS' policy work was to set priorities for clearance, in coordination with DIGEDEM and CONTRAMINAS' Security Division DIVSECOM.²⁹ Peru reportedly prioritises clearance by sector.³⁰

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Peru has stated in previous years that it has 16 national NMAS which form part of the Humanitarian Demining Procedures Manual, and which are based on the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).³¹ According to CONTRAMINAS, the NMAS and associated standard operating procedures (SOPs) are reviewed annually.³²

One of CONTRAMINAS's four objectives in Peru's 2016 extension request was to develop new policies for land release, with the aim of finalising these policies within six months of the plan's approval. The same objective was included in its Updated National Plan for Demining for 2018–24.³³ According to CONTRAMINAS, new land release policies are formulated annually as mine clearance progresses and these are then reflected in the operation orders.³⁴ As noted by the Fifteenth Meeting of States Parties, Peru should conduct evidence-based survey to define its SHAs and also seek to identify CHAs.³⁵ However,

25 Updated National Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2018–2024, May 2018, p. 11.

26 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Action 18.

27 Ibid., Action 19.

28 Decisions on the request submitted by Peru for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention, 1 December 2016, para. 15.

29 Updated National Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2018–2024, p. 15.

30 Email from Mario Espinoza Llanos, CONTRAMINAS, 26 May 2020.

31 Email from Mario Espinoza Llanos, CONTRAMINAS, 16 June 2020.

32 Email from Mario Espinoza Llanos, CONTRAMINAS, 26 May 2020.

33 Revised Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, July 2016, p. 36; and Updated National Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2018–2024, p. 14.

34 Email from Mario Espinoza Llanos, CONTRAMINAS, 16 June 2020.

35 Decisions on the request submitted by Peru for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention, 1 December 2016, para. (d).

no information had been provided as at August 2023 on updates to existing NMAS or the development of new NMAS.³⁶ In September 2023, CONTRAMINAS informed Mine Action Review that the NMAS and the corresponding Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are annually updated.³⁷

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

For 2022, Peru reported using 60 deminers for land release but without providing details. In previous years, DIGEDEM, which is responsible for demining on the border with Ecuador, had reported using two teams each comprising 60 personnel.³⁸ DIVSECOM, which is responsible for supporting DIGEDEM with demining operations, had 40 police officers trained in demining.³⁹

In its 2016 extension request, Peru committed to strengthen the capacity of CONTRAMINAS' Humanitarian Demining School, with the aim of increasing its capacity by one-fifth in the second semester of 2017. This was deferred to the second semester of 2018 in Peru's Updated National Plan for Demining for 2018–24.⁴⁰ Peru expected to increase the number of non-technical survey (NTS) personnel in 2020 and focus on further training through the Humanitarian Demining School.⁴¹ As at August 2023, Peru had not reported on whether this had happened.

The joint Ecuador-Peru Binational Humanitarian Demining Unit has been deployed to areas that were at the centre of the conflict between the two nations, but it did not carry out any demining operations in 2021 or 2022.

In its revised second Article 5 deadline extension request, Peru announced it would be using both machines and mine detection dogs (MDDs) for demining.⁴² In its updated multi-year plan submitted in May 2018, one of Peru's strategic objectives for 2018–24 included the development, design, and implementation of new humanitarian demining techniques, such as with machines or dogs.⁴³ In 2019, the United States donated four MDDs to Peru with two dogs used to conduct TS during the year. According to CONTRAMINAS, the plan is to also use dogs to identify mined areas and for use during clearance.⁴⁴ But in its Article 7 report covering 2022, Peru stated that MDDs were being used for quality control (QC) of demined areas.⁴⁵

In 2020, discussions began between CONTRAMINAS and the Peruvian Army's Directorate of Research and Development on the possibility of employing drones with hyperthermal cameras that conduct aerial analysis of the decomposition of explosives.⁴⁶ As at August 2023, Peru had not reported on whether it plans to deploy drones. However, it did report on the use of equipment with updated software.⁴⁷

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

In 2022, Peru released a total of 38,713m² of mined area: 17,305m² reduced through TS and 21,408m² through manual clearance destroying in the process 529 AP mines. Clearance operations started in May.⁴⁸ A previously unrecorded mined area designated CG_BS-10A was identified and cleared during the demining activities. The area, which measured 812.60m², contained 45 AP mines which were destroyed during the clearance process. The mined area was located in Tiwinza sector.⁴⁹

SURVEY IN 2022

Figures for NTS and technical survey (TS) have not been provided by Peru, although it declared in its Article 7 report for 2022 that operations follow IMAS 08.20 on Land Release.⁵⁰ Peru has reported addressing 16 hazardous areas through NTS and TS.⁵¹ In September 2023, Peru reported to Mine Action Review that 17,305m² had been reduced through TS in 2022.⁵²

³⁶ Article 7 Report (covering 2022) Action 27, p. 30.

³⁷ Email from Mario Espinoza Llanos, CONTRAMINAS, 6 September 2023.

³⁸ Updated National Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2018–2024, pp. 10 and 12.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 16.

⁴¹ Email from Mario Espinoza Llanos, CONTRAMINAS, 26 May 2020.

⁴² Revised Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, July 2016, pp. 5–6.

⁴³ Updated National Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2018–2024, pp. 15–16.

⁴⁴ Emails from Mario Espinoza Llanos, CONTRAMINAS, 26 May 2020 and 16 June 2020.

⁴⁵ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Action 27, p. 30.

⁴⁶ Email from Mario Espinoza Llanos, CONTRAMINAS, 26 May 2020.

⁴⁷ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Action 27, p. 30.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Form C, p. 5; and Form F, p. 10; and Presentation by Peru, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 21 June 2023.

⁴⁹ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F, p. 11.

⁵⁰ Ibid., Form F, p. 13.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 28.

⁵² Email from Mario Espinoza Llanos, CONTRAMINAS, 6 September 2023.

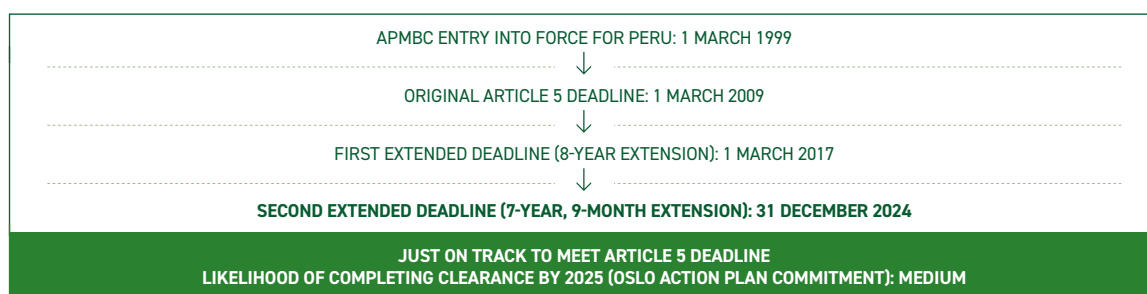
Survey of an area called "PV Gutierrez", which measures 10km² and is believed to contain approximately 2,000 AP mines, has required additional exchange of information with Ecuador. Peruvian and Ecuadorian technical teams from the Geographic Institutes of Peru and Ecuador are working together on this challenge.⁵³ In addition, the Army Engineers (Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejercito del Ecuador, CEE) and DIGEDEHUME agreed in July 2022, to work on a solution by the Permanent Mix Borders Commission Ecuador – Peru (COMPEFEP).⁵⁴ At the time of writing, no further information on the outcome of this meeting had been reported.⁵⁵

CLEARANCE IN 2022

In 2022, Peru cleared a total of 21,408m²,⁵⁶ destroying in the process 529 AP mines. Clearance output was almost three times that of 2021 (7,769m²).

In the Tiwinza sector, 19,386m² were cleared and 335 mines destroyed. This completed clearance of the sector.⁵⁷ In Cenepa sector, 2,022m² were cleared with the destruction of 194 mines.⁵⁸

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the 7-year, 9-month extension granted by States Parties in 2016), Peru is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2024.

Peru would need to release an average of 170,000m² per year in 2023 and 2024 in order to meet its Article 5 deadline. This should be achievable, particularly as the current estimate of contamination is likely to be greatly inflated. Peru outlined three scenarios for the completion of clearance by the 2024 deadline in its Updated National Plan for Demining for 2018–24. This was said to be contingent on an increase in budget, personnel, and international support.⁵⁹

Table 5: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2022	21,408
2021	7,769
2020	0
2019	81,948
2018	15,576
Total	126,701

53 Statement of Peru, 20MSP, 21–25 November 2022, pp. 1–2.

54 Binational Act No. 27 between the Director General of the CEE and the DIGEDEHUME, 26 July 2022 "Acta de Entendimiento No. 27, para la Realización de Desminado Humanitario en la Frontera Terrestre Común Ecuador - Perú", Third Agreement, 26 July 2022, §2.3.a, p. 12.

55 Perú y Ecuador realizan reunión para tratar desminado humanitario en la frontera", Andina – Agencia Peruana de Noticias, 9 May 2023.

56 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F2, p. 10; and Form G, p. 15.

57 Ibid., Form F, p. 11.

58 Ibid., Form F, p. 12.

59 Updated National Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2018–2024, p. 13.

In order to complete clearance by its Article 5 deadline, Peru has requested international assistance to cover some of the costs, although the precise amount sought is not specified. Peru should concentrate its limited resources on establishing a more accurate baseline of contamination because it is likely that a large proportion of the total can be released through survey without having to resort to full clearance.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

CONTRAMINAS reported that, after Article 5 completion, and in coordination with its Ecuadorian counterpart, CENDESMI, it will be responsible for managing any residual contamination that is encountered.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Email from Mario Espinoza Llanos, CONTRAMINAS, 16 June 2020.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2026

NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE WITH ARTICLE 5 IN DOUBT

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: LIGHT**

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

0.5_{km²}

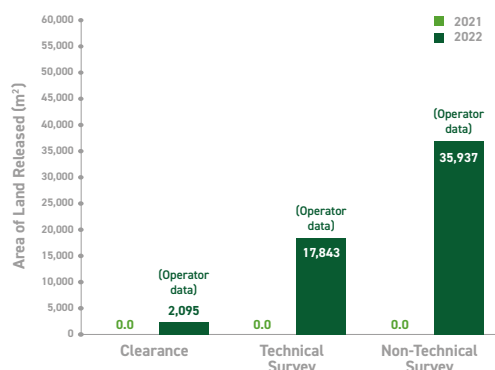
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

2,095_{m²}

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

1

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Humanity & Inclusion (HI) started survey and clearance operations in Senegal with funding from the European Union, the first clearance in Senegal for five years. Mines Advisory Group (MAG) received organisational accreditation. Agreement between the government and MDFC separatists on surrendering weapons contributed to improved security and opened access for deminers. A workshop organised by MAG in December 2022 led to agreement on strengthening information management and revising and updating the land release process, including non-technical survey (NTS) standards and procedures.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Senegal should state definitively whether mines remain around the Djirak or other military bases and provide detailed plans for clearing any remaining mined areas around military bases.
- Senegal should expedite adoption of evidence-based NTS to establish an accurate baseline estimate of the extent and location of anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination.
- The Government of Senegal should demonstrate commitment to its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) obligations by making national funding and resources available for demining.
- The Senegalese National Mine Action Centre (CNAMS) should report results of survey and clearance of AP mined area separately from battle area.
- Senegal should provide details of the arrangements and capacity available for tackling current and residual contamination identified after completion.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	4	4	Senegal remains unclear about the extent of its mine contamination 21 years after adhering to the APMBC. It reported 21 confirmed hazardous areas affecting close to 0.21km ² at the end of 2022, a sharp reduction from the previous estimate but also has suspected hazardous areas of unknown size and believes the total area of contamination may be 1.7km ² . Survey came to standstill in 2020 and 2021 but resumed in 2022 and was expected to accelerate in 2023.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	3	3	Senegal relies on donor funding to cover the costs of mine clearance. The government reportedly provided funding in 2015 but it is unclear if it has made any subsequent financial allocations to the mine action sector. Senegal's apparent failure to demine mined areas around military installations calls into serious question its compliance with the APMBC and even the prohibition on use of landmines.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	5	5	CNAMS reports employing women in senior positions and appointing staff on the basis of qualifications and without regard for gender. In 2022, it said it had five female employees including the staff member heading information management. HI included two women in its team of 10 deminers and consulted all groups in the course of community liaison activities, including women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	5	5	CNAMS maintains an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database but has cited shortages of funds as an obstacle to upgrading it. MAG conducted an initial assessment of data in 2022 identifying inconsistencies and a number of steps to strengthen data quality. A workshop in December 2022 resolved to update reporting forms and undertake a clean-up of data. Senegal has submitted Article 7 transparency reports annually.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	5	4	With funding available from the European Union and the Netherlands Senegal updated its 2020 Article 5 extension request work plan to provide for NTS to better define the extent of contamination and clearance to facilitate the return of villagers displaced by conflict.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	5	5	CNAMS introduced national mine action standards in 2009 and updated them in 2013 but started another revision in 2021 (supported by MAG in 2022), focusing on new standards for evidence-based NTS as well as updating standards for technical survey, clearance, accreditation, risk education, and marking.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	4	2	Senegal reported clearance in 2022 for the first time in five years. Sole operator HI started demining in the middle of the year and by the end of 2022 reported release of a total of 55,875m ² of mined area of which 2,054m ² was through clearance. Senegal, however, reported release of a total of 316,822m ² in 2022 but this appears to have included battle area clearance.
Average Score	4.4	3.9	Overall Programme Performance: POOR

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- National Commission for the Implementation of the Ottawa Convention
- Senegalese National Mine Action Centre (CNAMS)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Humanity & Inclusion (HI)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

OTHER ACTORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Senegal still does not have a clear estimate of its AP mine contamination. It reported 21 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) covering 0.21km² in four of its forty-five departments at the end of 2022 (see Table 1),¹ a sharp reduction from the 37 CHAs covering 0.5km² reported a year earlier, but the estimate represents only part of Senegal's mine threat. At the end of 2022, Senegal said it believed total contamination was likely to be around 1.7km² taking into account areas still requiring survey,² and by mid 2023 it had cut the estimate to 1.5km².³

Senegal has identified 12 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) whose size has not been determined and another 116 areas of possible mine contamination in Bignona (101 areas), Oussouye (4), and Ziguinchor (11) which have yet to be visited to establish the presence of mines. However, efforts to determine the full extent of AP mine contamination have been hampered by inability to access some areas as a result of conflict and by weaknesses in NTS, which recorded some SHAs as points not polygons.⁴ Senegal has observed that the return of large numbers of civilians to villages, made possible by the progress of peace talks between the government and armed resistance groups, could result in discovery of more HAs.⁵

Table 1: AP mined area (at end 2022)⁶

Province	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)
Bignona	10	111,575	8	N/R
Goudomp	1	17,776	3	N/R
Oussoye	9	77,240	0	0
Ziguinchor	1	1,500	0	0
Totals	21	208,091	11	

N/R = Not reported

Mine contamination in Senegal is the result of more than 40 years of fighting between the armed forces and a non-state armed group, the MFDC (Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance). Much of the contamination in the Casamance region is reported to be widely dispersed, low-density "nuisance" mines. HI has reported the presence of a mixture of AP mine types, including Belgian PRBM 35, Portuguese M969 and M441, Russian POMZ and PMN, and Chinese Type 59 mines.⁷

However, Senegalese armed forces reportedly laid hundreds, possibly thousands of mines around military outposts in Casamance. Lack of accurate and consistent reporting on whether Senegal has demined military bases, including the

base at Djirak on the border with Guinea-Bissau, has raised concerns about whether it is compliant with the APMBC. The commander of Senegal's army engineers has asserted the bases are not mined⁸ but the government has not provided a definitive official statement on the status of these areas.

Sporadic fighting with some factions of the MFDC has continued despite a ceasefire in place since 2004 which has blocked access to mined areas, and Senegal continued to suffer civilian casualties from mines and other explosive ordnance in 2021.⁹ Senegal says the contamination hinders the socio-economic recovery of a region where thousands of people have been displaced, and access to pastures, forests, water sources, and government services have been limited.¹⁰

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The National Commission for the Implementation of the Ottawa Convention, created in 2005, serves as the national mine action authority for Senegal charged with developing a mine action strategy, promoting economic rehabilitation of mine-affected areas, and overseeing the work of a national mine action centre. The commission, which is chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, includes representatives of the presidency of Senegal and government ministries. Senegal has said the Commission's effectiveness had suffered from high turnover of ministerial representatives, resulting in delays in decision-making and even from a lack of rules on decision-making.¹¹

1 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

2 Statement of Senegal, APMBC Twentieth Meeting of States Parties (20MSP), Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

3 Statement of Senegal, Intersessionals Meetings, Geneva, 21–23 June 2023.

4 Email from Melanie Broquet, Regional Programme Manager, Sahel & West Africa, MAG, 24 April 2023.

5 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

6 Ibid.

7 Email from Emmanuel Sauvage, Programme Director, HI, 24 April 2023.

8 Email from Emmanuel Sauvage, HI, 24 April 2023.

9 See, e.g., "Mine antipersonnel à Kandiahiou: il s'agirait d'une pose récente (témoin)", *Pulse News*, 24 October 2021.

10 CNAMS request for funding, undated but June 2020.

11 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 15 June 2020, pp. 9, 75.

Demining operations in Casamance are coordinated by the Centre Nationale d'Action Antimine au Sénégal (CNAMS), which was set up by decree in August 2006. CNAMS has three departments: Operations and information management; Risk education; and Administration, finance, and logistics.¹² Regional mine action coordination committees have been established in Kolda, Sédhiou, and Ziguinchor departments. CNAMS is responsible for promoting the national mine action programme, mobilising resources, coordinating survey and conducting demining, designing and implementing a victim assistance programme, accrediting demining organisations, and monitoring and evaluating activities.¹³

Senegal said in 2022 the government had allocated CFA1.5 billion (approximately US\$2.5 million) for mine action and had set a five-year budget of 3.6 billion CFA (approximately US\$6 million) without specifying the time period. It also reported receiving €1.5 million from the European Union to support operations by HI and "ongoing support" from the United States.¹⁴ Senegal reported that Algeria has also agreed to provide assistance to its mine action programme.¹⁵

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Senegal passed a law on management and protection of the environment in January 2001. To ensure that areas targeted for demining operations are not degraded, it is reported to have developed a national mine action standard, 05.30, providing guidelines on minimum environmental protection measures. HI said it had introduced a standard operating procedure (SOP) on environmental management which is taken into account when planning operations.¹⁶

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

CNAMS asserts there is no gender discrimination in Senegal's mine action programme and staff are recruited on the basis of competence.¹⁷ CNAMS reported in 2022 that it employed five women, including its information management manager, and has not reported any change since.¹⁸ Senegal has not provided any indication of whether survey that produced existing estimates of contamination took account of the perspectives of women and girls as well as men and boys and in 2023 the Committee on Article 5 Implementation requested information on this point.¹⁹

HI, the only international organisation conducting survey and clearance in 2022, employed women across its demining programme, including in management, survey, and community liaison (one of two staff) and demining (two of six).²⁰

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

CNAMS is in the process of upgrading its information management with support from MAG. In 2021, CNAMS' information management consisted of two staff with a single desktop computer that had been provided more than five years earlier by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and operated an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) New Generation database. In 2022, MAG provided the CNAMS IM department with a laptop to support geographic information system (GIS) and a permanent ArcGIS desktop licence. MAG provided a second "high-performance" laptop in 2023.²¹

In 2022, CNAMS gave MAG access to the IMSMA database to assess data quality leading to a project on steps CNAMS can take to improve the consistency between reporting forms, paper documentation, and IMSMA records. MAG added a regional information management expert to its team in Senegal in 2023 enabling it to provide more sustained support to CNAMS.²²

PLANNING AND TASKING

Senegal's Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in 2020 set out a work plan for 2021–26 but was unable to implement it due to the lack of access to mined areas as a result of continuing conflict, lack of financial resources, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. CNAMS said in 2022 that it planned to conduct NTS in 15 locations not previously visited to determine the extent of contamination and to conduct technical survey (TS) or clearance in an unspecified number of CHAs.²³

12 Ibid., p. 10.

13 Presentation by CNAMS, "National Stakeholder Dialogue: Towards a Mine-Free Senegal" workshop, Dakar, 29–30 October 2018.

14 Statement of Senegal, 20MSP, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

15 Statement of Senegal, Side event, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 21 June 2023.

16 Email from HI, 24 April 2023.

17 Email from Ibrahima Seck, CNAMS, 21 May 2020.

18 Email from Ibrahima Seck, CNAMS, 23 May 2022.

19 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Preliminary Observations on Senegal, Intersessional Meetings, 21–23 June 2023.

20 Email from HI, 24 April 2023.

21 Emails from Melanie Broquet, MAG, 25 August 2022; and François Fall, Humanitarian Mine Action Adviser, MAG, 31 August 2023.

22 Email from Melanie Broquet, MAG, 24 April 2023.

23 Email from Ibrahima Seck, CNAMS, 23 May 2022.

A work plan for 2023–25 said CNAMS had sent HI task files for NTS in 2023 of seven locations in Ziguinchor that had been abandoned by the local population but who were now returning. In 2024, it planned for action on 20 hazardous areas in two departments of Ziguinchor (Bignona and Oussouye) covering a total of 208,931m². In 2025, the plan provided for intervention on 11 hazardous areas in Bignona department and Sédhiou province's Goudomp department.²⁴

Senegal's statement to the intersessional meetings in Geneva in June 2023 restated general goals to conduct NTS with a view to determining the extent of contamination in 116 locations and 21 areas covering 208,000m².²⁵ CNAMS has said it gives priority to areas where security permits access, where there is pressure from the population to return to the land, and where socio-economic projects are planned or delivering benefits to the population.²⁶

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Senegal's national mine action standards were developed in 2009 and partially revised in 2013²⁷ when amendments were made to standards for accreditation, technical investigation, the minimum depth for mine clearance, and the use of machines and mine detection dogs (MDDs) in demining.²⁸ CNAMS started another revision in December 2021, focusing on standards for NTS and TS, clearance, accreditation, explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), and marking.²⁹ The progress or outcome of that process is not known.

CNAMS decided in December 2022 to review and update land release standards in line with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). The process is expected to deliver:

- a definition and criteria for preliminary survey;
- revised national standards for evidence-based NTS, addressing finalisation of direct evidence, indirect evidence, land cancellation criteria, and quality management methods and criteria;
- development of a procedure to formalize the results of the NTS;

- updated data collection formats related to NTS; and
- a review of technical survey and clearance practices.

The review was agreed at a workshop organised by MAG in close collaboration with CNAMS in December 2022 which also considered compliance of Senegal's national standards with the IMAS; and the concepts of "all reasonable efforts", management of residual risk, and liability for missed mines/subsequent incidents. Participants included CNAMS, the National Agency for the Revival of Economic and Social Activities in Casamance (ANRAC), HI, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Geneva-based Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, and a range of civil society organisations including the Senegalese Association of Mine Victims (ASVM), Senegalese Humanitarian Association against Mines (ASACM), Association for Solidarity and Development (ASD). The panel conducting the workshop included MAG, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), and two members of the Lebanon Mine Action Centre.³⁰

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

CNAMS has not provided details of capacity available in 2022. In 2020, it said it had a total of fourteen operations staff.³¹

HI remained the only international demining operator conducting survey and clearance in Senegal in 2022. HI was present in Senegal from 2014 until October 2017 when it suspended operations because of lack of funding.³² With new funding from the United States, operations resumed in 2019 and in October 2021 it signed a partnership agreement with the EU for a €1.5 million project in the Casamance area of southern Senegal. The project included earmarked funding of €1 million for NTS, TS, and clearance as well as for delivery of EORE with a partner organisation, ASVM. The remaining €0.5 million is earmarked for support to conflict-affected communities and the return of the displaced.³³

HI's 13-person demining programme, with a main office in Dakar and an operating base in Ziguinchor, started operations in June 2022 with a six-person multi-task team, two community liaison/survey staff who can also conduct demining, and a two-person mechanical team operating a digger. The machine supported deminers on tasks dealing with minimum-metal PRBM 35 and Spanish C3A/B anti-vehicle mines that are difficult to locate with detectors – the digger is used to clear ground to a depth of 20cm. With additional funding from the Netherlands, HI planned to collaborate with the international demining

²⁴ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

²⁵ Statement of Senegal, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

²⁶ Email from Ibrahima Seck, CNAMS, 23 May 2022.

²⁷ Email from Ibrahima Seck, CNAMS, 21 May 2020.

²⁸ Presentation by CNAMS, "National Stakeholder Dialogue: Towards a Mine-Free Senegal" workshop, Dakar, 29–30 October 2018.

²⁹ Emails from Ibrahima Seck, CNAMS, 23 May 2022; and Roxana Bobolicu, MAG, 29 September 2022.

³⁰ Email from Melanie Broquet, MAG, 24 April 2023; and MAG brochure: "Humanitarian Mine Action in Senegal, Updating the Land Release Process", December 2022.

³¹ Email from Ibrahima Seck, CNAMS, 21 May 2020.

³² Email from Julien Kempeneers, HI, 26 September 2016.

³³ Emails from Catherine Gillet, HI, 10 May 2021; and Emmanuel Sauvage, Programme Director, HI, 13 April and 6 September 2022.

organisation APOPO in 2023 deploying a team of three dog handlers and four MDDs as part of an 18-month project proposing to clear approximately 600,000m² of mined area, as well as providing EORE, capacity building support to CNAMS and local NGOs, and referral services for victims. HI also planned to employ drones to support its survey and clearance operations in 2023.³⁴

MAG has conducted a weapons and ammunition management programme in Senegal since 2020 and in 2021 took steps to set up a demining project. MAG received organisational accreditation in Senegal in 2022 and in 2023 awaited accreditation for NTS and EORE. MAG had a regional manager for mine action and five other staff based in Dakar supporting activities in Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania as well as Senegal. MAG added an information management specialist to support the regional programme in 2023 as well as four community liaison staff based in MAG's Ziguinchor office who were undergoing training in preparation for receipt of operational accreditation. In 2023, it expected to deploy its NTS team for new and re-survey of hazardous areas and to organise a series of information management workshops to follow up on recommendations of the December 2022 workshop.³⁵

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

HI reported release of a total of 55,875m² of mined area in two departments (see Tables 2 and 3).³⁶ Senegal reported release of 316,822m² in 2022 (238,028m² by survey and 78,794m² by clearance) but these totals include battle area tasks.³⁷ HI reported it cleared 60,714m² of battle area in Ziguinchor in 2022, destroying 19 explosive remnants of war (ERW).³⁸

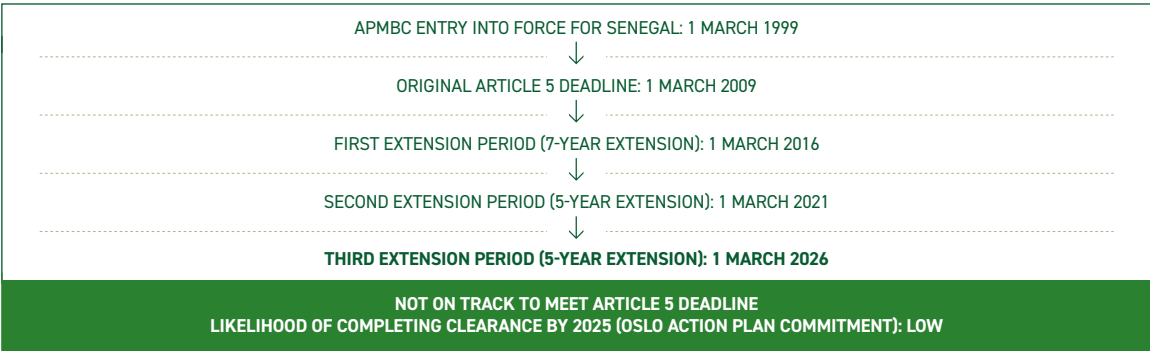
Table 2: Release of mined area through survey in 2022 (HI data)

Department	Area cancelled (m ²)	Area reduced (m ²)
Sédhiou	18,760	15,985
Ziguinchor	17,177	1,858
Totals	35,937	17,843

Table 3: Mine clearance in 2022 (HI data)

Department	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	ERW destroyed
Ziguinchor	1	2,095	1	1	2
Totals	1	2,095	1	1	2

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



34 Email from Emmanuel Sauvage, HI, 24 April 2023.

35 Emails from Melanie Broquet, MAG, 25 August 2022 and 24 April 2023.

36 Email from Emmanuel Sauvage, HI, 24 April 2023.

37 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

38 Email from Emmanuel Sauvage, HI, 24 April 2023.

Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the five-year extension granted by States Parties in 2020), Senegal is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 March 2026.

The outlook for Senegal's mine action programme has improved significantly since 2021 after prolonged inactivity due to insecurity and lack of funds. Progress in negotiations to end Africa's oldest armed insurgency has enabled access to mined areas previously closed off by conflict.³⁹ Financial support from the European Union in 2022 (€1.5 million) and additionally from the Netherlands (€0.8 million) in 2023 has galvanised partnerships between CNAMS, HI, and MAG starting up survey and clearance and prompted a much-needed review of land release methods. Mine action outputs were modest in 2022 but results in 2023 and 2024 will provide a better basis for assessing performance and should show significant improvement.

Meanwhile, Senegal's prospects for achieving completion within the remaining two and a half years of its current Article 5 deadline remains vulnerable to longstanding challenges:⁴⁰

- Senegal believes its AP mined area totals considerably less than 2km² but has yet to determine the precise extent and location of contamination. This includes mined areas around military bases which are not accessible to humanitarian demining organisations and do not feature in any publicly available clearance plan.

- In June 2020, Senegal appealed for \$1.6 million for clearance of 299,871m² and conduct NTS of 118 locations in Sédhiou and Ziguinchor.⁴¹ It received that amount in 2022–23 but in June 2023 estimated it needed 11.2 billion CFA (approximately US\$18.5 million) as well as FCFA 372 million (US\$0.6 million) for EORE and FCFA550 million (US\$0.9 million) for victim assistance.
- Prospects for accelerating survey and clearance remains constrained by the meagre capacity available from internationally funded demining organisations.

In addition, in the absence of a final peace agreement with all MDFC factions, some mined areas may remain inaccessible to demining organisations. A conflict analysis study commissioned by MAG and conducted between October 2022 and January 2023 found the overall context favourable for mine action but noted continuing disagreement between MFDC factions and observed that root causes of the conflict needed to be addressed.⁴²

Table 4: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022*	0.02
2021	0
2020	0
2019	0
2018	0
Total	0.02

* Includes technical survey

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Senegal has responded to questions from the Committee on Article 5 Implementation about plans for addressing contamination identified after completion by stating any residual mine threats would be dealt with by Senegal's military engineers. It did not provide details of military engineers' capacity.⁴³

39 Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, "Senegal government and MFDC separatists advance peace process with roadmap for disarmament", 5 August 2022.

40 Statement of Senegal, Side event, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 21 June 2023.

41 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Request for Financing, 2020.

42 MAG, "Restitution of the peace and conflict analysis in Casamance, Senegal", undated but 2023.

43 "Clarifications du Sénégal aux questions du comité d'examen de la 3ème demande d'extension", 22 September 2020.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2024
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE (INTERIM DEADLINE)

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: LIGHT

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

AROUND

1 km²

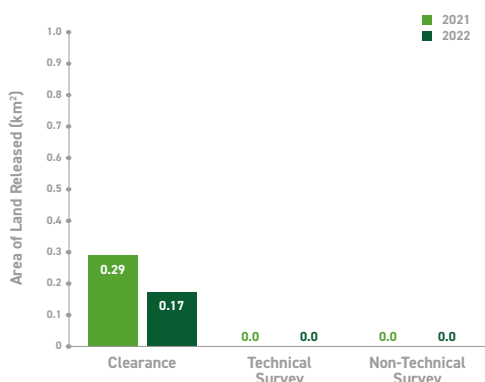
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

0.17 km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

0

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2022, Serbia cleared two of the three remaining known mined areas, although no mines were discovered during clearance and only four items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) were found and destroyed. The Serbian Mine Action Centre (SMAC) has still to survey the previously unrecorded mine contamination discovered in October 2019 and August 2021 following forest fires, but planned to commence non-technical survey (NTS) in 2023 to determine the amount of remaining mined area. Serbia intends to submit a new extension request by the end of March 2024, which will include a detailed work plan for fulfilment of its obligations under Article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Serbia should consider using its armed forces for mine clearance or inviting demining non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to help meet its treaty obligations by fulfilling its Article 5 obligations as soon as possible.
- Serbia should conduct as a matter of priority the planned survey of the suspected contamination identified in October 2019 and August 2021 in order to determine the size of the mined area and plan for its release.
- SMAC should conduct NTS and technical survey (TS), rather than full clearance, in instances where survey represents the most efficient means to release part or all of mined areas.
- SMAC should seek to develop national mine action standards (NMAS) as soon as a new mine action decree is adopted.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	5	5	Serbia had 390,300m ² of existing mined area remaining at the end of 2022, located in Bujanovac municipality, but had still to conduct NTS to determine the size of previously unrecorded mined area identified as a result of fires in 2019 and 2021.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	7	7	Serbia has strong national ownership of its mine action programme and SMAC is nationally funded. Planned national funding of €260,000 for survey and clearance operations was maintained in 2022 and funds were matched with donor funds through ITF Enhancing Human Security.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	4	4	SMAC does not have a gender policy in place and does not disaggregate relevant mine action data by sex and age. However, it does ensure that women and children, as well as ethnic or minority groups, are consulted during survey and community liaison activities and that there is equal access to employment for qualified women and men for survey and clearance positions.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	7	7	Serbia submits accurate and comprehensive annual Article 7 reports on Article 5 progress, which are consistent between reporting periods, and provides regular updates on progress at APMB meetings. SMAC plans to install the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA), with the support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). Work on designing the IMSMA Core system began in March 2023 and the system was being built from July.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	7	7	Serbia produces revised annual work plans based on actual progress. In 2022, Serbia cleared two of the three known mined areas, but was unable to clear the remaining known area as planned, due to lack of funding. It planned to instead release this area in 2023. Serbia expected to survey the previously unknown mined area discovered through forest fires in 2023–24. Serbia is due to submit a final extension request and work plan in March 2024 that will be based on the results of the NTS and a clearer understanding of the extent and location of remaining mined area.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	5	5	Serbia does not currently have NMAS in place. While SMAC continues to express a preference for full clearance of suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) and only conducted clearance tasks in the last three years, it has said it is willing to conduct TS where appropriate. The clearance of two mined areas in 2022, without discovery of any mines, highlights the importance of TS. Clearance capacity deployed is typically manual teams, as the terrain and climate tend not to be suitable for mine detection dogs or machines.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	6	6	Clearance output in 2022 was a slight decrease on the previous year. Serbia cleared two of the three remaining known mined area in 2022, and planned to clear the third one in 2023. Serbia states that it remains committed to the aim set by States Parties of completing clearance by the end of 2025. Meeting the deadline is largely contingent on securing sufficient funding and on how much mined area is identified during the NTS.
Average Score	5.7	5.7	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Sector for Emergency Management, under the Ministry of Interior (acts as the national mine action authority)
- Serbian Mine Action Centre (SMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- PMC Engineering

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- In 2022, 11 companies/organisations were accredited for demining, but only two NGOs conducted clearance of anti-personnel mines:
 - In Demining
 - Stop Mines

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

As at April 2023, one area in Bujanovac municipality, covering 0.39km², was suspected to contain anti-personnel (AP) mines (see Table 1). However, this excludes previously unrecorded AP mine contamination that was revealed as a result of fires in Bujanovac municipality in October 2019 and in August 2021, the size of which is not yet known.¹ The contamination as at April 2023 was a reduction on the 0.56km² of mined area as at March 2022,² due to mine clearance in 2022.

Table 1: AP mined area by village (at April 2023)³

Municipality	Village	SHAs	Area (m ²)
Bujanovac	Ravno Bučje	1	390,300
Totals		1	*390,300

* Excludes the newly discovered suspected mined areas

On 2–3 October 2019, in response to a request from local authorities, SMAC visited the villages of Đorđevac, Končulj, Lučane, Ravno Bučje, and Veliki Trnovac where fires had recently occurred and members of the local community had reported hearing explosions in several places, indicating the presence of mines. Mined areas identified as a result were marked with signs in both Serbian and Albanian, as the population in this area is multiethnic.⁴ Fires also occurred in August 2021, in a different area of the municipality of Bujanovac, during which there were also reports of explosions.⁵ The newly discovered contamination is not included in Table 1 above and has not been subject to detailed NTS.

In April 2023, Serbia had transferred national funds to be matched through ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF) with funding from the US State Department Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM/WRA) and the Republic of Korea, and ITF was about to launch the tender process for the contractor.⁶ The Serbian demining operator PMC Engineering was subsequently selected as the contractor for the NTS protect. Implementation was expected to begin from the end of August, in coordination with SMAC.⁷ In response to questions from the APMBC Committee on Article 5 implementation, and in its revised 2022 deadline extension request, Serbia said that the planned NTS of the previously unknown mined areas would involve survey and risk education of nearly 4.37km² (divided into five projects/areas, all located in the municipality of Bujanovac). The whole of the

municipality is 461km² in size and has 38,300 inhabitants, 59 villages, and 30 local communities. Of the 4.37km² expected to be surveyed, SMAC expected that nearly 2.37km² will be cancelled, 1.5km² reduced, and 0.5km² cleared.⁸

Bujanovac is the only municipality in Serbia still affected by mines. According to SMAC, the contamination is from mines of an unknown origin and type which have not been emplaced to follow a pattern, and for which no minefield records exist.⁹ According to the national authorities, previous surveys found insufficient evidence for mined areas to be classified as confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs), so they remain as SHAs.¹⁰ The fact that contamination is suspected makes it all the more important that SMAC conducts TS to confirm the presence of AP mines, before conducting full clearance. According to SMAC, the baseline of AP mine contamination has been established through inclusive consultation with women, girls, boys, and men, including, where relevant, from minority groups.¹¹ SMAC does not possess data on explosive ordnance contamination of military areas in Serbia.¹²

Historically, mine contamination in Serbia can be divided into two phases. The first exists as a legacy of the armed conflicts associated with the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. The second concerned use of mines in 2000–01 in the municipalities of Bujanovac and Preševo by a non-State armed group, the Liberation Army of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja (OVPBM). The contamination remaining in Serbia is a result of this later phase.¹³ Contamination also exists within

1 2022 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 6; Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C; and email from Slađana Košutić, Senior Advisor for Planning, International Cooperation and European Integrations, SMAC, 25 April 2023.

2 2022 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 6; Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 13 April 2022.

3 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 April 2023.

4 Statements of Serbia on Clearance, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 27 November 2019; and APMBC Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties (virtual meeting), 16–20 November 2020; 2022 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 26 and 30; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

5 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 14 September 2022.

6 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 24 April 2023.

7 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 31 August 2023.

8 Serbia, "Replies to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation on Questions Concerning the Requisition Submitted by Serbia", 3 August 2022; and 2022 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 40.

9 2022 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 6 and 34; Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020.

10 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D.

11 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020; and Article 7 Report (covering 2020 and 2021), Form D.

12 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 April 2023.

13 2013 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 5; and Article 7 Report (covering 2014), Form C.

Kosovo (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Kosovo for further information). SMAC requests that it be noted that all references to Kosovo should be understood

to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).¹⁴

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Serbia is also contaminated with cluster munition remnants (CMR) and other explosive remnants of war (ERW), which are the result of the 1999 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bombing campaign, or remain from previous conflicts, or are the result of explosions or fire at military depots¹⁵ (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Serbia for further information).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

According to a 2013 Government Decree on Protection against Unexploded Ordnance, the Sector for Emergency Management, under the Ministry of Interior, acts as the national mine action authority (NMAA).¹⁶ The NMAA is responsible for developing standard operating procedures (SOPs), accrediting demining operators, and supervising the work of SMAC.¹⁷

SMAC was established in 2002, with a 2004 law making it responsible for coordinating survey and clearance; collecting and managing mine action information (including casualty data); and surveying SHAs. It also has a mandate to plan demining projects, conduct quality control (QC) and monitor operations, ensure implementation of international standards, and conduct risk education.¹⁸ As from 1 January 2014, according to the 2013 Government Decree, the Sector for Emergency Management, under the Ministry of Interior, was made responsible for accrediting demining operators. Previously, SMAC was responsible for doing so.¹⁹

The current director of SMAC was appointed by the Serbian government in July 2019.²⁰ As at April 2023, thirteen people were employed at SMAC: the director, two assistant directors, and ten other employees.²¹ SMAC is fully funded by Serbia, including salaries and running costs, as well as for survey activities, development of project tasks for demining and clearance of contaminated areas, follow-up on implementation of project tasks, and quality assurance (QA) and QC of demining. In 2022, Serbia reported that around

€320,000 per annum was allocated from the national state budget for the work of SMAC,²² the same amount as in 2021.²³ In addition, the UXO disposal work of the Sector for Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Interior is also State funded.²⁴

National funding for survey and clearance remained at €260,000 for 2022²⁵—the same as the previous year—and was expected to be maintained at this level through to 2025, matched with available donor funds through ITF.²⁶ In addition to the €1,040,000 of total national funding pledged for 2022–25, Serbia estimated it will also need to secure an additional €2 million from international donors.²⁷

In 2020, SMAC and the Serbian Ministry of Defence (MoD) signed an Agreement on Cooperation in the field of demining and UXO/ERW removal. The Agreement is reported to envisage, among others, the joint participation in training of personnel to conduct demining and ERW demolition operations, training certification, joint participation in survey, collection of data on ERW-suspected and contaminated areas, as well as implementation of ERW removal projects, with monitoring and implementation of international mine action standards (IMAS) and regulations in the field of demining. The initial focus will reportedly be on the training of personnel in UXO/ERW demolition operations,²⁸ and not on clearance of mined areas.²⁹ In November 2022, SMAC organised training for MoD personnel on magnetometry. SMAC also organised this training for the personnel of the MoD's Technical Test

¹⁴ Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 May 2021.

¹⁵ 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7.

¹⁶ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 70/13.

¹⁷ Emails from Darvin Lisica, Regional Programme Manager, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), 6 May and 12 June 2016.

¹⁸ Law of Alterations and Supplementations of the Law of Ministries, Official Gazette, 84/04, August 2004; interview with Petar Mihajlović and Slađana Košutić, SMAC, Belgrade, 26 April 2010; and APMBC 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 19.

¹⁹ APMBC 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 20.

²⁰ Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020.

²¹ Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

²² Ibid.

²³ Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 March 2022.

²⁴ SMAC, "Mine situation", accessed 21 April 2023, at: <http://bit.ly/1Nom1V7>.

²⁵ Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

²⁶ Statement of Serbia on Clearance, APMBC Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties (virtual meeting), 15–19 November 2021; and 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 8 and 34.

²⁷ Statement of Serbia on Clearance, APMBC (virtual meeting), 15–19 November 2021; and 2022 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 9 and 37.

²⁸ Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form H.

²⁹ Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.

Centre, and in February 2023, SMAC concluded a contract on cooperation in mine action with the Technical Test Centre, relating to use of their demolition site.³⁰ A training centre within SMAC became operational in 2020. Together with experts from the Ministry of Interior, SMAC provides different training modules, including on ERW recognition, IMAS, medical aspects, and risk reduction.³¹

SMAC reports having a resource mobilisation strategy for Article 5 implementation.³² No formal in-country national

platform for dialogue exists, but SMAC said that it cooperates closely with the Bujanovac national authorities and other relevant stakeholders, in particular the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and MoD, as well as embassies of donor nations.³³

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) is supporting SMAC to install the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core.³⁴

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

SMAC says it has been committed to taking environmental aspects into account and minimising potential harm from demining activities ever since its foundation. It reported that for each survey or clearance project task there is an obligation on the contractor (the demining operator) to include in its execution plan an environmental protection and a fire protection plan, together with a plan for health and safety at work. Illustrative examples related to environment being taken into consideration during CMR clearance operations include contaminated areas cleared in Kopaonik National Park. For these tasks, a special regime was required for the protection of native trees and other plant species. The chopping down of trees, and the cutting of tree branches and blueberry and juniper bushes, as well as the removal of plants could only be conducted in justified cases and after obtaining the consent of relevant authorities.³⁵

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

In 2014, following the initiative of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and the Minister of Construction, Transportation and Infrastructure, a Coordination Body for Gender Equality was formed as a national coordinating mechanism for gender equality in Serbia. The coordination body recognises the importance of improving the position of women, focusing in particular on increasing the number of female entrepreneurs, as well as their equal participation in management bodies in education, science, culture, information, sports, agriculture, and rural development, among others.³⁶

SMAC does not have a gender policy in place and does not disaggregate relevant mine action data by sex and age. However, it does ensure women and children are consulted during survey and community liaison activities. SMAC also reports that it ensures ethnic or minority groups are consulted.³⁷

Serbia reports there is equal access to employment for qualified women and men in survey and clearance operations.³⁸

At SMAC, five of the thirteen employees (38%) are women, with women holding two of the three managerial/supervisory level positions (67%) and three of the ten operations positions (30%).³⁹

With respect to the new mined area identified as a result of fires in October 2019 and August 2021, SMAC planned to conduct a survey which will include representatives of both ethnic Serbian and ethnic Albanian personnel.⁴⁰

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

SMAC currently uses its own information management system. In early 2020, following initial discussions several years previously, SMAC informally discussed with the GICHD the possibility of installing IMSMA.⁴¹ In August 2022, SMAC signed an agreement with the GICHD to enable it to support SMAC to implement IMSMA Core over a project period of one year. In

30 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

31 Emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020 and 26 March 2021.

32 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020.

33 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C; and emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 13 April 2022 and 25 April 2023.

34 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023; and SMAC, "GICHD Workshop on IMSMA Core for Mine Action Actors in the Republic of Serbia", 27 March 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/42PgTC7>.

35 Emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 March 2022 and 11 April 2022.

36 Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2022), p. 20.

37 Emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020, 26 March 2021, and 11 April 2023.

38 Emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020 and 11 April 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

39 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

40 Statement of Serbia, APMBC Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties (virtual meeting), 16–20 November 2020; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

41 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020.

March 2023, the GICHD visited SMAC to hold a workshop with relevant stakeholders to better understand the context and the requirements of SMAC with the aim of defining and planning the next steps of their IMSMA Core Implementation.⁴² Staff from SMAC attended the IMSMA Core training run by the GICHD in June 2023, and the work on building the IMSMA Core system commenced in July 2023.⁴³

PLANNING AND TASKING

The Government of Serbia adopts SMAC's annual work plans.⁴⁴

In both its 2022 revised Article 5 deadline extension request, and in its 2022 annual work plan, Serbia reported that it planned to release all known mined area (covering 561,800m²) in 2022.⁴⁵ While Serbia did clear two of the three remaining known mined areas in 2022, due to lack of funding it was unable to release the final known mined area totalling 390,300m². SMAC expected to implement this task in 2023.⁴⁶

SMAC planned to conduct NTS of the previously unknown mined areas in 2023, in order to determine the location and extent of remaining contamination and plan for completion. SMAC has developed the NTS project and provided national funding, in order for ITF to match these funds with available donor funds. As at August 2023, the Serbian demining operator, PMC Engineering, had been selected as the contractor and the NTS project was expected to begin from the end of the month, in coordination with SMAC.⁴⁷ ITF was about to launch the tender procedure for the selection of a contractor. SMAC expects that the NTS project will take up to one year and will focus on the areas where explosions were heard during forest fires in 2019 and 2021. It will also include all other areas in Bujanovac municipality where

"the existence of other mine indicators might be reported". During this period, TS projects will be developed, as well as land release projects for the assessed areas, and mine risk education (MRE) activities will be conducted in all 59 villages of Bujanovac municipality.⁴⁸

Upon completion of NTS, SMAC expected to have a better picture of the remaining contamination with which to then inform a follow-on deadline extension request to be submitted in March 2024 and considered by the Fifth Review Conference in 2024. The request will include a detailed work plan for fulfilment of Serbia's Article 5 obligations.⁴⁹

Serbia prioritises the demining of areas which directly affect the local population, such as those close to settlements where local people have abandoned their houses and stopped cultivating land due to fear of landmines. Prioritisation of hazardous areas takes place between Serbia, SMAC, and donors according to agreed criteria. SMAC also noted that donors themselves sometimes also influence the choice of the areas which will be demined first, depending on availability and amount of their funds.⁵⁰ Serbia has stated that if it cannot secure international support for demining, clearance will be delayed.⁵¹

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

According to SMAC, survey and clearance operations in Serbia are conducted in accordance with the IMAS.⁵²

Serbia is planning to issue a new decree on protection against ERW. The draft decree, developed by SMAC and the Ministry of Interior, will introduce the concept of land release, which was not defined in the former decree, and foresees the development of NMAS. As at August 2023, the decree was still to be adopted by the government.⁵³

42 Emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023; and GICHD, 26 May 2023.

43 Email from the GICHD, 28 August 2023.

44 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 7–8, 18, and 21; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 13 April 2022.

45 2022 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 7–8; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 13 April 2022.

46 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 April 2023.

47 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 31 August 2023.

48 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C; Statement of Serbia on Clearance, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–23 June 2023; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 April 2023.

49 2022 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 7–8, and 35; Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form C; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 April 2025.

50 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 12 April 2018 and 25 March 2022; Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D; and 2022 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 26 and 41.

51 Emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020 and 26 March 2021; Statements on Clearance, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 27 November 2019 and Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties (virtual meeting), 16–20 November 2020; and Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D.

52 SMAC, "Mine Situation", accessed 21 April 2023, at: <http://bit.ly/1Nom1V7>; and Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Section 4.

53 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 31 August 2023.

Under new directorship in late 2015, SMAC reassessed its land release methodology in order to prioritise full clearance over TS of hazardous areas.⁵⁴ This does not correspond to international best practice and is an inefficient use of scarce clearance assets. In February 2016, the then new director of SMAC reported to Mine Action Review that while SMAC supports the use of high quality NTS to identify suspected mined areas, it will fully clear these areas, rather than using TS to identify the boundaries of contamination more accurately.⁵⁵ As at April 2023, SMAC's position on its preferred land release methodology remained the same under the current director, but there was a continued willingness to conduct TS in a form "adjusted to the context of Serbia", in response to the stated preference of international donors for TS above clearance, where appropriate.⁵⁶

SMAC's reluctance to apply TS to delineate confirmed mined area is due to its lack of confidence that such survey can effectively identify groups of unrecorded mines, not planted in specific patterns.⁵⁷ According to SMAC, incidents involving people or animals have occurred in most of these suspected areas or else mines have been accidentally detected.⁵⁸ In its Article 7 report (covering 2022) and in response to questions asked by the Committee on Article 5 implementation, Serbia said that "the size of the area to be cleared is determined on the basis of processed data which have been collected by a non-technical survey",⁵⁹ suggesting that TS is not typically deployed to reduce mined areas.

SMAC has reported that the results of the initial survey data are analysed and then further NTS is conducted to assess conditions in the field, and to gather statements by the local population, hunters, foresters, representatives of Civil Protection, and the police, among others. Data on mine incidents is another significant indicator.⁶⁰ Also, in the context of Serbia, there is reportedly limited potential to obtain additional information on the location of mined areas from those who laid the mines during the conflict.⁶¹ TS is employed "to additionally collect information by technical methods on a suspected area and in case when the data collected by a non-technical survey are not sufficient for suspected areas to be declared hazardous or safe".⁶²

Clearance is reported to be conducted in accordance with the IMAS and to a depth of 20cm.⁶³

As part of Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)'s project on enhancing quality management systems of national mine action authorities and centres in the Western Balkans, a consultant was hired to conduct a detailed capacity assessment of SMAC in 2023, to identify gaps and discuss required improvements, action points, and priorities, and to develop NMAS chapters as prioritised by SMAC.⁶⁴ Development of an NMAS chapter on "Quality Management, Quality Policies and Objectives" was in progress as at August 2023, having been identified as the prime concern during the assessment. Other NMAS chapters, as prioritised by SMAC, were planned, depending on the availability of funding.⁶⁵

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

SMAC does not itself conduct clearance or employ clearance personnel but does conduct survey of areas suspected to contain mines, CMR, or other ERW. Clearance is conducted by commercial companies and NGOs, which are selected through public tender procedures executed by ITF, supported by international funding.⁶⁶

Serbia said clearance productivity per deminer, depending on the mine situation, terrain configuration, land characteristics and vegetation, was up to 150m² per deminer per day.⁶⁷ This is a remarkably high rate.

The Ministry of Interior issues accreditation to mine action operators that is valid for one year. In 2022, 11 companies/organisations, were accredited for demining,⁶⁸ but only two NGOs (both registered in Bosnia and Herzegovina) conducted clearance of mined areas (see Table 2).⁶⁹

54 Interview with Jovica Simonović, SMAC, in Geneva, 18 February 2016.

55 Ibid.

56 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 30; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

57 Interview with Jovica Simonović, SMAC, Belgrade, 16 May 2017; and 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Additional Information received 28 June 2018.

58 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D; and Statement on Clearance, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 27 November 2019.

59 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C; and Serbia, "Replies to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation on Questions Concerning the Requisition Submitted by Serbia", 3 August 2022.

60 Interview with Jovica Simonović, SMAC, Belgrade, 16 May 2017; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

61 Interview with Jovica Simonović, SMAC, Belgrade, 16 May 2017.

62 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

63 Ibid.

64 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

65 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 31 August 2023.

66 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), p. 18.

67 Serbia, "Replies to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation on Questions Concerning the Requisition Submitted by Serbia", 3 August 2022.

68 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

69 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 April 2023.

Table 2: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2022⁷⁰

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers*	Dogs and handlers	Machines**
In Demining	1	10	0	0
Stop Mines	3	36	2 dogs and 2 handlers	0
Totals	4	46	2 dogs and 2 handlers	0

* Excluding team leaders, medics, and drivers. ** Excluding vegetation cutters and sifters.

Clearance capacity in 2022 was a decrease on the previous year. No survey personnel were deployed in Serbia in 2022 or 2021.

In 2022, SMAC and Academy of Technical and Educational Vocational Studies Niš, conducted initial testing of drones for use in survey activities, at the SMAC Training Centre in Grock. In February 2023, SMAC and Academy of Technical and Educational Vocational Studies Niš signed a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of mine action. SMAC expects that this will lead, among other things, to more concrete steps regarding the use of drones in survey operations.⁷¹ SMAC has secured donor funds to start the NTS project of the previously unknown mined areas, which will require recruitment and training of two mixed survey teams (one Serbian and one Albanian team of two surveyors each). SMAC will supervise and monitor the NTS in cooperation with the local authorities.⁷²

The Serbian Armed Forces maintain a capability to survey, detect, clear, and destroy landmines. This capability includes many types of detection equipment, mechanical clearance assets, disposal expertise, and specialist search and clearance teams.⁷³ An explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) department within the Sector for Emergency Management, in the Ministry of Interior, responds to call-outs for individual items of ERW, and is also responsible for demolition of items found by SMAC survey teams and by contractors/operators during clearance.⁷⁴

TS and clearance in Serbia are primarily conducted manually. Mine detection dogs (MDDs) were used in TS and clearance operations in 2018 to release land,⁷⁵ but according to the

authorities most of the mines are in mountainous areas with challenging terrain and thick vegetation and are not appropriate for the use of MDDs or machinery.⁷⁶ The fact that these areas have not been accessed since the end of the conflict (2001), owing to the suspected presence of mines, means that the land is unmanaged, making it even less accessible.⁷⁷ Serbian armed forces use their machines and vehicles (e.g. excavators, trucks, etc.) to improve the quality of access roads, ahead of clearance by contracted companies.⁷⁸

SMAC uses data obtained by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to develop and monitor clearance and TS projects.⁷⁹

In September 2022, representatives of SMAC, the Ministry of Interior, and Serbian demining operator PMC Engineering, attended the regional course on quality management in mine action, in Rome. The course was organised by the GICHD in cooperation with the Italian counter-improvised explosive device (C-IED) Centre of Excellence and held for representatives of the Balkan countries.⁸⁰

In November 2022, SMAC attended the 86th Partnership for Peace (PfP) training course on IMAS and conformance in Spiez, organised by the GICHD and Switzerland.⁸¹ In December 2022, representatives from SMAC, the Ministry of Internal Affairs – Police Directorate, Sector for Emergency Management, and the Gendarmerie, participated in a regional workshop in Sarajevo for NPA's project on enhancing quality management systems of national mine action authorities and centres in the Western Balkans.⁸²

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 April 2023.

⁷² Statement of Serbia on Clearance, APMBIC Inter-Sessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–23 June 2023; Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 April 2023.

⁷³ Article 7 Report (covering 2018), Form B.

⁷⁴ Interview with Jovica Simonović, SMAC, Belgrade, 16 May 2017; APMBIC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), p. 18; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 3 June 2022.

⁷⁵ Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2019.

⁷⁶ Interview with Jovica Simonović, SMAC, Belgrade, 16 May 2017; 2022 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 23; and Serbia, "Replies to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation on Questions Concerning the Requisition Submitted by Serbia", 3 August 2022.

⁷⁷ Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2019; and Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Section 4.

⁷⁸ Serbia, "Replies to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation on Questions Concerning the Requisition Submitted by Serbia", 3 August 2022; and 2022 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 37.

⁷⁹ Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2019.

⁸⁰ Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

⁸¹ Ibid.; and SMAC, "SMAC Participation in IMAS and Conformance Training Course in Spiez, Switzerland", 8 November 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/41PVI1F>.

⁸² Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023; and SMAC, "Participation of SMAC at Regional Workshop 'Assessment of Needs and Planning of Improvement of Quality Management Capacities of National/State Mine Action Authorities' in Sarajevo", 15 December 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3AiXOet>.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

A total of 0.17km² of mined area was released through clearance in 2022, during which no AP mines were discovered but only four items of UXO. No mined area was reduced through TS or cancelled through NTS in 2022.⁸³

SURVEY IN 2022

No mined area was reduced through TS or cancelled through NTS in 2022⁸⁴ or in 2021.

CLEARANCE IN 2022

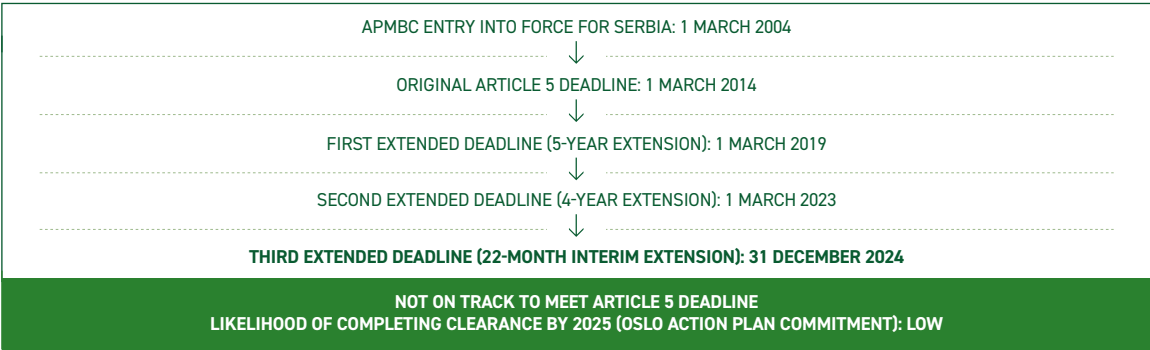
In 2022, a total of 171,500m² of mined area was cleared, destroying four items of UXO, but no AP mines (see Table 3).⁸⁵ Clearance in 2022 was funded by the Serbian government, matched through ITF with available funds from PM/WRA and the Republic of Korea.⁸⁶ Clearance output in 2022 was a slight decrease compared to 2021, when 294,230m² of mined area was cleared, destroying nine AP mines along with four items of UXO.⁸⁷

Table 3: Mine clearance in 2022⁸⁸

Municipality	Village	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Bujanovac	Dobrosin	In Demining	28,000	0	0
Bujanovac	Končulj	NGO Stop Mines	143,500	0	4
Totals			171,500	0	4

SMAC did not have available data on the number of mines destroyed by the EOD department within the Sector for Emergency Management during clearance or spot tasks in 2022.⁸⁹

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the third interim extension (for 22 months) granted by States Parties in 2022), Serbia is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2024.

Serbia submitted the revised extension request requesting an interim deadline of 31 December 2024 instead of 1 March 2025 in response to feedback from the Committee on Article 5 Implementation. In doing so, Serbia is requesting only the period of time necessary to complete NTS of Bujanovac municipality and gather necessary information to design a

83 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 April 2023.

84 Ibid.

85 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C and Annex III; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 April 2023.

86 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 April 2023.

87 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D and Annex III; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 13 April 2022.

88 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C and Annex III; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 April 2023.

89 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 April 2023.

work plan for completion as part of a subsequent request to be submitted in March 2024. Serbia's aim is to project with greater certainty the number and size of remaining mined areas and the amount of time and funds required to release the areas and fulfil its Article 5 obligations.⁹⁰

The planned NTS of mined areas where forest fires occurred in 2019 and 2021 should enable a clear picture of the remaining contamination to be drawn.⁹¹ Serbia has stated that the global 2025 completion goal remains its objective.⁹²

According to SMAC, the following circumstances impeded it from meeting its extended 1 March 2023 deadline: unregistered mine contamination, emplaced in groups and not patterns; discovery of previously unknown mine suspected areas in 2019 and 2021; climatic conditions preventing access to contaminated areas for some of the year (the temperature must be above 5°C for demining operations to take place); and reduction in national funding for demining operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. SMAC is also faced with explosive ordnance contamination other than mines, including clearance operations triggered by infrastructure development projects.⁹³ In its extension request, Serbia further highlighted the challenge of the lack and unpredictability of secure financial resources.⁹⁴

Furthermore, Serbia's claim to continued jurisdiction over Kosovo entails legal responsibility for remaining mined areas under Article 5 of the APMBC.⁹⁵ However, Serbia did not include such areas in either its first or second extension

request estimates of remaining contamination or plans for the extension periods. In its 2022 APMBC Article 5 deadline extension request, however, Serbia stated that: "In the territory of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, there are mined areas, as well as areas contaminated with cluster bombs remaining after the armed conflicts. Pursuant to Resolution 1244 of the United Nations Security Council (Annex II, item 6), it is envisaged that after the withdrawal, an agreed number of the Republic of Serbia personnel will be allowed to return to perform certain functions, including marking and clearing minefields. As this provision of Annex II has not been implemented, this issue is still within the competence of UNMIK in accordance with Resolution 1244."⁹⁶

In the last five years Serbia has cleared a total of 1.63km² of mined area (see Table 4).

Table 4: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	0.17
2021	0.29
2020	0.27
2019	0.61
2018	0.29
Total	1.63

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

SMAC expects to need both national and international capacity to deal with any residual contamination that may be discovered following completion of planned mine clearance.⁹⁷ SMAC has reported that it has been cooperating with the Ministry of Interior and the MoD to plan for sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas post fulfilment of its Article 5 clearance obligations.⁹⁸

⁹⁰ 2022 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 April 2023.

⁹¹ Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 April 2023.

⁹² 2022 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 7 and 35; and emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 13 April 2022 and 25 April 2023.

⁹³ 2022 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 34; Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C; email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 13 April 2022; and Serbia, "Replies to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation on Questions Concerning the Requisition Submitted by Serbia", 3 August 2022.

⁹⁴ 2022 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7.

⁹⁵ See also in this regard UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

⁹⁶ 2022 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 10.

⁹⁷ Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020.

⁹⁸ Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 OCTOBER 2027
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

7 km²

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

2.05 km²

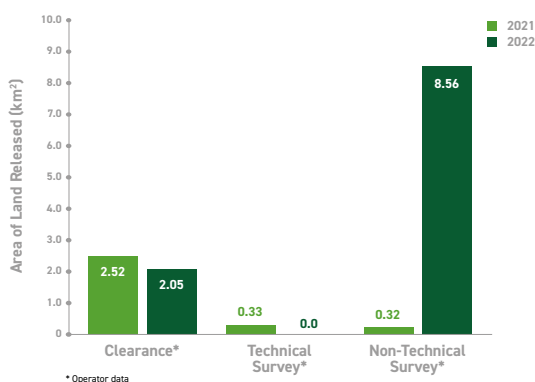
(OPERATOR DATA)

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

109

(INCLUDING 40 DESTROYED
DURING SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

On 2 June 2023, Somalia acted upon the decision of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties (19MSP) by submitting an updated work plan for the implementation of Article 5. The focus of this plan is nationwide non-technical survey (NTS) to establish an accurate baseline of contamination. Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) completed survey of Puntland state by early 2023 but then withdrew from Somalia. Land release through clearance and NTS dropped compared to 2021, and the number of anti-personnel (AP) mines found and destroyed remained extremely low. Somalia completed a comprehensive data consolidation process in September 2022 and remained on track to transition to Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core by the end of 2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Somalia should ensure that robust land release standards, policies, and methodologies are in place that are in line with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), reserving full mine clearance for areas confirmed to be mined.
- Somalia should elaborate a new National Mine Action Strategic Plan.
- Somalia should submit comprehensive, annual Article 7 transparency reports and include details regarding AP mines of an improvised nature.
- Having been recognised as a government institution by presidential decree in 2013, the status of the Somali Explosive Management Authority (SEMA) should be recognised in law and national resources budgeted annually for its operating costs.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	5	5	There is no accurate baseline of AP mine contamination in Somalia, though the authorities provided an updated estimate of AP and anti-vehicle (AV) mine contamination in June 2023; the first updated estimate since the end of 2019. According to Somalia's updated work plan for 2022–27, submitted in June 2023, nationwide NTS is now Somalia's priority, following the completion of NTS in Puntland state by NPA in April 2023. The HALO Trust (HALO) conducted NTS in parts of the Southwest state, Hirshabelle state, and Galmudug state in 2021 and continued in Galmudug in 2022.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	4	4	SEMA was recognised as a government institution by presidential decree in 2013, but legislation and budget approval remained pending and the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) still does not fund its operations. SEMA continued to receive external capacity development and financial support for salaries from international operators in 2022, as it had done in 2021.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	5	5	Somalia's National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2018–2020 includes provisions on gender and diversity. SEMA has been positive towards action on gender and diversity, particularly within survey and community liaison teams. However, cultural challenges exist to achieving gender mainstreaming in Somalia. Clan affiliation is also an important consideration when considering diversity. SEMA has not reported on any additional progress on this issue in 2022. The need to improve integration of gender and diversity concerns and further develop plans for this is recognised in Somalia's updated work plan for 2022–27.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	5	4	SEMA has assumed full ownership and responsibility for the national mine action database. Somalia received extensive information management capacity development support in 2022 and completed a data consolidation process. It aims to complete transition of the national database to Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core by the end of 2023. As at September 2023, Somalia had still to submit Article 7 reports covering 2021 and 2022. Somalia did act upon the decision of the Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties by submitting an updated work plan for Article 5 implementation on 2 June 2023.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	5	5	Somalia's National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2018–2020 was approved in 2020 and extended for one year to allow SEMA sufficient time to develop a new strategy. As at July 2023, SEMA had not reported on whether a new strategy has been developed. Somalia submitted a costed, detailed work plan for 2022–27 in June 2023, which is "based on Somalia's national strategy, approved by the Minister of Internal Security (MoIS)".
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	5	5	A process to revise Somalia's National Technical Standards and Guidelines was due to be completed in 2019 but was still awaiting approval as June 2023. Current standards are not deemed fit for purpose. Somalia stated in June 2023 that revised National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) were ready and due to be endorsed by the MoIS before implementation of the updated work plan, but no anticipated date of approval was given.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	4	4	Somalia is not on track to meet its Article 5 deadline even though overall land release increased in 2022, compared to the previous year. The successful implementation of nationwide NTS and the understanding of contamination that it yields will determine whether Somalia can get back on track to meeting its 2027 deadline.
Average Score	4.7	4.6	Overall Programme Performance: POOR

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Somali Explosive Management Authority (SEMA)
- Mine Action Department within the Somaliland Ministry of Defence (MoD)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Ukroboronservice

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Somalia lacks an accurate baseline of contamination. In its updated plan for 2022–27 of June 2023, Somalia stated that, following improvements in data consolidation and recent NTS, it had identified a total of 1,114 hazardous areas for all explosive ordnance, covering a total of just over 169.7km².¹

Of this total, which excludes Somaliland, only four areas measuring just 559,537m² are known or suspected to contain only AP mines. This comprises three confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) measuring 558,102m², and one suspected hazardous area (SHA) covering 1,435m² (see Table 1).² This is a significant reduction from the estimate given at the end of 2019, when Somalia reported that 29 CHAs contained only AP mines, covering a total area of 6.1km², along with one SHA of an unknown size in Puntland.³

Table 1: AP mined areas (at June 2023), excluding Somaliland⁴

Type of hazardous area	Federal Member State	District	Mined areas	Size (m ²)
CHA	Galmudug	Abudwaq	1	305,435
	Hirshabelle	Beletweyne	1	240,835
	Puntland	Galkayo	1	11,832
Subtotals			3	558,102
SHA	Puntland	Galkayo	1	1,435
Subtotals			1	1,435
Totals			4	559,537

AP mine contamination in Somalia is thus believed to be light.⁵ Data gathered through historical surveys indicate that most recorded minefields were contaminated with AV mines or had very minimal information about the type of contamination.⁶ That said, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reports that all reported mined areas are believed to have mixture of AP and AV mines, and unexploded ordnance (UXO).⁷ The HALO Trust (HALO) expects that the number of mixed AP and AV mined areas and AP mined areas will remain small, relative to the number of AV-only mined areas, which significantly affect the border regions.⁸ NPA emphasises that, following their experience with comprehensive NTS in Puntland, there is a high probability that the remaining suspected contamination in other states can be significantly reduced through systematic, evidence-driven NTS.⁹

Somalia's hazardous areas cover all six regions of Somalia, including Somaliland, a self-proclaimed, though generally unrecognised, State in the north-west of the country, which continues to be excluded from the national authority's estimate of contamination. Mine contamination is

concentrated along Somalia's border with Ethiopia.¹⁰ Somalia restated in June 2023 that most mine contamination along the border is from AV mines, which continue to significantly affect the civilian population.¹¹

There is an ongoing NTS project which aims to produce an accurate estimate of total contamination and disaggregate Somalia's contamination by weapon type. This project is the primary focus of Somalia's work plan for 2022–27.¹² This follows Somalia's 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request, which indicated that nationwide NTS would be carried out between October 2022 and October 2027.¹³ Somalia expects to cancel a sizable portion of existing mined areas, but also acknowledges that new areas of contamination will likely be recorded.¹⁴

However, lack of safe access has been and continues to be a major obstacle to the completion of survey. HALO Somalia explains that vast areas of the country are still inaccessible due to insecurity and/or control by the militant group, Al-Shabaab.¹⁵ In June 2023, SEMA reiterated that the impact of inter-clan conflict limits the deployment of teams across several regions and a number of districts remain inaccessible

1 Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, 30 April 2023, p. 11.
2 Ibid., p. 16.
3 Email from Dahir Abdirahman Abdulle, Director General, Somali Explosive Management Authority (SEMA), 11 May 2020.
4 Somalia Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, 30 April 2023', p. 17.
5 Emails from Mustafa Bawar, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), 17 March 2020; and Lawrie Clapton, Country Director, HALO, 14 June 2020.
6 Emails from Mustafa Bawar, UNMAS, 17 March 2020; and Claus Nielsen, Country Director, NPA, 23 July 2020.
7 Email from Clemence Nyamandi, Monitoring and Evaluation Manager, Programme Strategy and Planning Section, UNMAS, 21 August 2022.
8 Email from Rob Syfret, Head of Region, Horn of Africa, HALO, 7 July 2023.
9 Email from Robert Iga Afedra, Country Director, Angola (formerly Country Director, Somalia), NPA, 7 August 2023.
10 "The Federal Republic of Somalia Summary of updated Article 5 Work Plan", APMBIC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.
11 Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, p. 16.
12 Ibid., pp. 27–28.
13 Revised Article 5 deadline extension request, September 2021, p. 58.
14 'Somalia Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, 30 April 2023', p. 16.
15 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 7 July 2023.

due to recurring conflict and security issues. Added to this, road transportation even between settlements that are without conflict is unusable in many cases.¹⁶

Despite these ongoing challenges, some survey to build an understanding of contamination has been possible. Survey activity in 2008 in Bakol, Bay, and Hiraan regions revealed that, of a total of 718 communities, around one in ten was contaminated by mines and/or explosive remnants of war (ERW).¹⁷ Other contaminated areas lie along the border with Ethiopia, in Galguduud and Gedo regions, as well as in Hiraan. NTS initiated in 2015 identified more than 6km² of mined area.¹⁸ In 2021, HALO conducted NTS across Southwest state, Hirshabelle state, and Galmudug state, recording 1,427,664m² of mined area across 31 CHAs. Of these area, four newly surveyed minefields have a confirmed or suspected AP mine threat, totalling 213,767m².¹⁹

In Somaliland, HALO reported that, as at June 2022, 5.46km² remained to be cleared. This includes 18 mixed minefields with a total size of 3.9km² as well as 65 roads with a mine threat over 1.4km².²⁰ This compares to the almost 5.8km² that remained at July 2020.²¹ HALO has been working in Somaliland for over 20 years and the general extent of contamination has been well-established by comprehensive

survey. However, HALO continues to deploy village-to-village survey teams, and a combination of low-density minelaying and lack of first-hand survey information means that new contaminated areas are still being found.²² HALO Somaliland expected completion of this village-by village project by the end of 2023. However, as at May 2023, over 300 villages were inaccessible to HALO teams due to conflict and security concerns, impeding progress. HALO says that although survey of contamination is still required in Somaliland, the largest burden will be completing a Mine Impact Free Survey in the region.²³

Following NTS by NPA, an accurate baseline of AP mine contamination has now been established in Puntland state (see Table 2). SEMA is now encouraging all other mine action stakeholders and states in Somalia to follow this example.²⁴ UNMAS concurs that the village-to-village survey conducted by NPA in Puntland provides a more defined understanding of contamination that will support effective planning and prioritisation. UNMAS has started similar projects with NTS components in Galmudug state anticipates work on resource mobilise for NTS across the remaining states of Somalia.²⁵

Table 2: Mined area in Puntland state (at February 2023)²⁶

District	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
Burtinle	2	990,423	73	2,525,540	3,515,963
Galdogob	6	1,219,005	56	1,742,630	2,961,635
Galkayo	3	103,238	44	548,934	652,172
Jariiban	1	3,900	3	15,948	19,848
Eyl	0	0	0	0	0
Qardho	0	0	0	0	0
Bossaso	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	12	2,316,566	176	4,833,052	7,149,618

Somalia's mine and ERW contamination is a result of the Ethiopian-Somali wars in 1964 and 1977–78 (also known as the Ogaden war), and more than 20 years of internal conflict. According to the UN, mines were laid as recently as 2012 in the disputed regions of Sool and Sanaag.²⁷

According to SEMA, Somalia has seen an increase in the use of mines of an improvised nature in recent years. However, the extent of the threat is not well known. SEMA was planning to begin recording this information in 2020²⁸ but, as yet, has not clarified if AP mines of an improvised nature are included in the baseline of mine contamination and Somalia has not been in a position, due to a lack of comprehensive survey, to comprehensively disaggregate its contamination by weapon type.

¹⁶ "The Federal Republic of Somalia Summary of updated Article 5 Work Plan", Intersessional Meetings, 19–21 June 2023.

¹⁷ UNMAS, "Annual Report 2011", New York, August 2012, p. 68.

¹⁸ Email from Tom Griffiths, Regional Director North Africa, HALO, 25 May 2016.

¹⁹ Email from Daniel Redelinghuys, Country Director, HALO, 29 May 2022.

²⁰ Email from Tobias Hewitt, Programme Manager – Somaliland, HALO, 20 June 2022.

²¹ Email from Lawrie Clapton, HALO, 10 July 2020.

²² Emails from Lawrie Clapton, HALO, 14 June 2020; and Rob Syfret, HALO, 16 May 2023.

²³ Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 16 May 2023.

²⁴ Email from Liberty T. Hombe, Operations Manager, Puntland, Somalia, NPA, 24 March 2023.

²⁵ Email from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 30 May 2023.

²⁶ Email from Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023.

²⁷ UNMAS, "Annual Report 2012", New York, 2013, p. 21. Sovereignty over these territories is claimed both by the self-declared independent Republic of Somaliland and by Puntland.

²⁸ Emails from Claus Nielsen, NPA, 14 April 2020; and Lawrie Clapton, HALO, 14 June 2020.

Somalia recognises that victim-operated improvised explosive devices (VOIEDs) are considered mines of an improvised nature under the definition in the APMBC.²⁹ NPA has reported that non-State actors have used mines of an improvised nature in areas of northern Puntland, and this has been confirmed by the Puntland Ministry of Security. Operators did not find any such devices in Somalia in 2022.³⁰ HALO may consider working with IEDs as and when Somalia's security situation improves.³¹

NPA recorded 95 new areas of previously unrecorded AP contamination in Puntland with a total size area of 2,987,861m².³² HALO Somalia recorded two such AP mined areas in 2022, both in Galmudug state, covering a total of 252,822m².³³

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Somalia is contaminated with ERW, other than mines, primarily as a result of conflict between 1990 and 2012. In June 2023, Somalia stated that ERW are prevalent across all regions and states of the country³⁴ and that, following improvements in data consolidation and recent NTS, it had identified a total of 1,114 hazardous areas for all explosive ordnance, measuring a total of just over 169.7km².³⁵ Somalia also has limited contamination from cluster munition remnants (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Somalia for further information).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Mine action management in Somalia is the responsibility of SEMA. There is a separate regional office in Somaliland, the Mine Action Department within the Somaliland Ministry of Defence (formerly, the Mine Clearance Information and Coordination Authority (MCICA), and before that the Somaliland Mine Action Centre, SMAC) in Somaliland.³⁶ SEMA maintains a presence across Somalia through its five Federal Member States: the Galmudug State Office, Hirshabelle State Office, Jubaland State Office, Puntland State Office, and South West State Office.³⁷

SEMA serves as the de facto mine action authority for Somalia. However, full implementation of mine action legislation in Somalia and formal recognition of SEMA as the national mine action authority remains unfulfilled. SEMA reported in 2022 that it was awaiting final approval from the Somalia Federal Parliament.³⁸ However, in June 2023, this was still the case.³⁹ Due to the ongoing lack of parliamentary approval, SEMA has not received funding from the Federal Government of Somalia since the expiry of its grant in 2015.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the Government does not provide any national funding for survey or clearance.⁴¹

In the absence of national funding mine action stakeholders have provided support for SEMA's operational costs. Salaries at SEMA were covered by NPA from 2015 to March 2021 and NPA provided support for salaries again from August to December 2022.⁴² Having supported SEMA state offices with financial contributions throughout 2021⁴³ and in early 2022,⁴⁴ UNMAS confirmed a Partnership Cooperation Agreement (PCA), with SEMA for February 2023 to January 2024. This will support running costs for SEMA headquarters and its five regional offices and enable SEMA to organise coordination meetings and attend international mine action conferences.⁴⁵ HALO also provided some financial contributions to SEMA in 2022.⁴⁶

Operators report that they are involved in key decision-making processes by the national authorities. They also describe an enabling environment for mine action in Somalia, with no challenges related to matters such as visas, importing equipment, and establishing Memorandums of Understanding.⁴⁷

29 Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, p. 45.

30 Emails from Rob Syfret, HALO, 16 May and 7 July 2023; Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023; and Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 30 May 2023.

31 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 16 May 2023.

32 Email from Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023.

33 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 7 July 2023.

34 Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, p. 16.

35 Ibid., p. 11.

36 Email from Mohamed Abdulkadir Ahmed, SEMA, 14 October 2016; and telephone interview with Dahir Abdirahman Abdulle, SEMA, 19 August 2020.

37 Email from Mohamed Abdulkadir Ahmed, SEMA, 14 October 2016.

38 Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Article 7 report (covering 2020 and 2021), Form A.

39 Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, p. 42.

40 Emails from Terje Eldøen, Programme Manager, NPA, 22 October 2016; and Mohamed Abdulkadir Ahmed, SEMA, 14 October 2016.

41 Email from Daniel Redelinghuys, Country Director, HALO, 29 May 2022.

42 Emails from Claus Nielsen, NPA, 26 May 2021 and Liberty T Hombe, Puntland, NPA, 24 March 2023.

43 Emails from Mustafa Bawar, UNMAS, 3 August 2020 and 4 July 2021.

44 Email from Helen Olafsdottir, Technical Specialist, UNDP, 7 June 2022.

45 Email from Clemence Nyamandi, (then) Monitoring and Evaluation Manager, Programme Strategy and Planning Section, UNMAS, 30 May 2023.

46 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 1 June 2023.

47 Emails from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 30 May 2023; and Rob Syfret, HALO, 1 June 2023.

SEMA began conducting quarterly meetings with all mine action implementing partners in 2018, with a focus on monitoring of operations.⁴⁸ UNMAS states that SEMA now regularly organises humanitarian mine action coordination meetings to discuss the implementation of the Article 5, the Oslo Action Plan and the challenges and lessons learned from the field. Additionally, the UN has launched a Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR) in Somalia, for which related developments are discussed during the quarterly coordination meetings.⁴⁹ Operators confirmed that regular meetings of mine action stakeholders continued in 2022.⁵⁰

SEMA has received capacity development and technical support in recent years from various mine action stakeholders. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched a capacity development project in January 2022 with funding allocated to NPA to conduct NTS in Puntland state and provide information management (IM) capacity building to SEMA; to HALO to for capacity development support to SEMA on technical survey (TS) and land release; and for IT equipment.⁵¹ In 2021 and early 2022, HALO supported SEMA on information management, geographic information systems (GIS), and quality management (QM).⁵² NPA provided support to the Puntland State Office on IM until 2023,⁵³ including the establishment and running of a state-level IMSMA database and training of personnel. In 2022, NPA also supported the state office with quality control (QC) and efforts to establish residual management capacity for Puntland state, by integrating police personnel into NTS and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) activities of NPA's programme.⁵⁴

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) provided capacity development and training in information management to SEMA and HALO IM officers from the middle of 2022, which remained ongoing at the time of writing.⁵⁵ UNMAS has provided training in IM and quality assurance (QA) and in 2023, UNMAS signed a grant agreement with HALO to provide both operational and management related capacity building to SEMA, including regional offices, to further enhance SEMA's capacity to coordinate, regulate, and maintain oversight of mine action across the country.⁵⁶

A draft capacity development framework was also jointly developed by NPA, UNMAS, and HALO, and submitted to SEMA for approval in 2022.⁵⁷ Somalia reported in June 2023 that this framework is still awaiting formal approval. It has two main objectives: first, improved administrative capacity for SEMA and, second, an effective information management system with improved QA capacity for SEMA,⁵⁸ with work on the latter advancing while approval of the framework remains pending.⁵⁹

In March 2023, with support of the APMBC Implementation Support Unit (ISU), SEMA held a two-day workshop in Mogadishu, to develop a concrete Article 5 work plan. Mine action stakeholders provided input to the work plan, which was finalised at the meeting.⁶⁰ Key next steps include developing a capacity development framework, agreeing on a prioritisation plan, resource mobilisation and developing a gender work plan.⁶¹ Following the workshop, a comprehensive and costed work plan was submitted to the States Parties on 2 June 2023.⁶² The plan focuses on nationwide NTS, but also encompasses other land release activities and risk education. The plan also details the size of remaining hazardous areas and annual milestones for addressing them.⁶³ However, these milestones will be subject to review following extensive NTS.

The lack of parliamentary approval of SEMA is seen as a major obstacle to mine action in Somalia as this hampers SEMA's ability to become an integrated part of the annual State budget and hinders their capacity for long-term planning for staff. This results in high staff turnover within SEMA outside senior management.⁶⁴ Somalia is wholly reliant on international funding for its mine action programme. In its 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request, Somalia estimated the annual cost of implementing the operational work plan through to 2027 at US\$6.4 million per year.⁶⁵ However, there was no information on where this funding would come from and how much will be contributed by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS). In its updated work plan covering 2022–27, Somalia restated that there remained no FGS budget for mine action. The government has provided land for SEMA's offices and covers the utility bills of SEMA's national office in Mogadishu and some of its regional offices.⁶⁶

48 Emails from Chris Pym, HALO, 9 May 2019; and Claus Nielsen, NPA, 13 April 2019.

49 Email from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 30 May 2023.

50 Emails from Rob Syfret, HALO, 1 June and 7 July 2023; and Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023.

51 Email from Helen Olafsdottir, UNDP, 7 June 2022.

52 Email from Daniel Redelinghuys, HALO, 29 May 2022.

53 Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 12 March 2022.

54 Email from Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023.

55 Email from Noor Zangana, Advisor, Information Management Capacity Development, GICHD, 8 August 2023.

56 Email from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 30 May 2023.

57 Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 20 August 2022.

58 Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, p. 10.

59 Email from Noor Zangana, GICHD, 8 August 2023.

60 ISU newsletter, "Mine Ban Convention: April 4 mine action updates", 4 April 2023.

61 Email from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 30 May 2023.

62 APBMC, 'Somalia', accessed 22 July 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/3rHSaBO>.

63 Somalia Summary of updated Article 5 Work Plan, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023; and Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, p. 7.

64 Email from Claus Nielsen, NPA, 6 April 2021.

65 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 47.

66 Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, pp. 39–40.

Somalia estimates the cost of implementing the activities under the updated work plan and meeting the key milestones set for the end of 2027 at US \$23 million, of which only US \$6.2 million has been secured. Somalia states that, beyond 2024, funding is uncertain.⁶⁷ There is still no resource mobilisation strategy in place for Article 5 implementation and, in its updated 2022–27 work plan, Somalia recognises that there is “a strong need” for Somalia to develop one.⁶⁸

PUNTLAND

The SEMA Puntland State Office, formerly known as PMAC, was established in Garowe with UNDP support in 1999. Since then, on behalf of the regional government and SEMA, the Puntland State Office has coordinated mine action with local and international partners, NPA and the Puntland Risk Solution Consortium.⁶⁹ In 2021, SEMA reported that the Puntland State Office coordinated mine action under SEMA, working with its international partner, NPA.⁷⁰ NPA completed NTS of mined areas in Puntland in February 2023 and closed its operations in Somalia in April 2023.⁷¹

SOMALILAND

As part of a larger process of government reform in early 2018, SMAC, which had been responsible for coordinating and managing demining in Somaliland since 1997, was

restructured and renamed the MCICA. The Agency underwent a change of line ministry from the Office of the Vice President to the Ministry of Defence.⁷² It was renamed the Mine Action Department in January 2019.⁷³

HALO describes the environment in Somaliland as “one of the best in the world for enabling the conduct of humanitarian mine action”, with the state-level ministries of Defence and Planning facilitating the duty-free importing of demining equipment and HALO working closely with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and other decision-makers to inform and guide policy whenever possible. HALO Somaliland provided capacity development support to the Somaliland Mine Action Authority in 2022, including comprehensive GIS training for the IM officer and NTS training for one Mine Action Department staff member. HALO Somaliland also hosted a Middle East and North Africa (MENA) international operations management course in 2022 as well as International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) Level 3 EOD training.⁷⁴

In 2022, it was reported that the MoD in Somaliland provided a financial allocation to two manual clearance teams totalling 18 personnel.⁷⁵

The Somaliland government is working on an Explosive Hazard Management National Action Plan covering 2023–27. At the time of writing, this plan had not yet been finalised.⁷⁶

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Somalia has made halting progress towards finalising the national mine action standard (NMAS) and a policy on environmental management. It has been reported that a section on environmental management is contained within Somalia's NMAS, but remained pending approval in 2022.⁷⁷ Similarly, in March 2023, NPA reported that Somalia's policy on environmental management was “still under development and pending approval”.⁷⁸ HALO hoped to work on this issue with SEMA during 2023 as part of its support for capacity development.⁷⁹

UNMAS, NPA, and HALO all report having an environmental policy in place.⁸⁰

In 2021, UNMAS and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) adopted the Health, Safety, Social and Environment (HSSE) standards for mine action sites, which is a social and environmental management plan for mine action operational sites. This, along with UNMAS's health and safety plan for mine action sites, make up the two plans needed for operational compliance with their HSSE obligations. The HSSE standards cover waste management, site-specific social/environmental risk assessment, and social and environmental QA.⁸¹ All UNMAS tasks are preceded by a comprehensive situational analysis report on the environmental factors surrounding the specific task site. These are reviewed by the UNMAS project team for mitigation or an alternative task site selection where necessary.⁸²

67 Somalia Summary of updated Article5 Work Plan', Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19-21 June 2023; and 'Somalia Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, 30 April 2023', p. 7.

68 Somalia Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, p. 40.

69 UNMAS, “UN-suggested Explosive Hazard Management Strategic Framework 2015–2019”, p. 9; and emails from Claus Nielsen, NPA, 23 July 2020 and 26 May 2021. SEMA has claimed that this NGO is no longer functioning but this information has not been confirmed by operators in the field.

70 Email from Dahir Abdirahman Abdulle, SEMA, 22 June 2022.

71 Email from Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023.

72 Email from Chris Pym, HALO, 9 May 2019.

73 Email from Chris Pym, HALO, 2 June 2019.

74 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 16 May 2023.

75 Email from Tobias Hewitt, HALO, 21 May 2022.

76 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 16 May 2023.

77 Email from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 17 March 2022.

78 Email from Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023.

79 Emails from Rob Syfret, HALO, 1 June 2023; and Daniel Redelinghuys, HALO, 29 May 2022.

80 Emails from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 17 March 2022; Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 12 March 2022; and Daniel Redelinghuys, HALO, 29 May 2022.

81 Email from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 17 March 2022.

82 Ibid.

NPA reports that their environmental management system is a work in progress with a global standard operating procedure (SOP) on environment being established. NPA's environmental efforts in Somalia, prior to closing operations in early 2023, focused on minimising the cutting down of trees, ensuring responsible waste disposal in the field and at camp sites, avoidance of wildfires during demolitions, and implementing fire safety drills and precautions in camps.⁸³

HALO Somalia explains that its close attention to environmental considerations has been welcomed by local communities in Somalia's fragile environmental situation. For example, the community has prohibited the cutting of vegetation, unless completely necessary. While this slows down operations, HALO has been able to operate on most minefields with minimal disturbance to vegetation.⁸⁴

HALO Somalia also explains how there are a number of minefields within its area of operations (AoO), which are situated along the 50km Ethiopian border in the El Barde region, where wild frankincense trees are found; many of which grow on sloped ground, where soil has been washing away, exposing roots. Although populations had moved away from the area due to the presence of mines, the return of local communities has placed the land at greater risk from human activity. HALO has been experimenting with creating bunds (soil or stone structures, which can be stabilised with vegetation, to help reduce water run-off and soil erosion), around some of the trees most at risk from desertification and drought. This has, so far, helped prevent soil erosion and allowed some trees to regenerate. HALO Somalia plans to

conduct a full survey of these trees in 2023, made possible by an environmental grant. This will allow environmental partner organisations to track the number and health of certain trees across Somalia.⁸⁵

Furthermore, HALO Somalia digs down to 20cm in every signal investigation. This has been found to help the ground absorb more water during the rainy season. On some minefield tasks, hundreds of excavations are made and anecdotal evidence suggests that these areas produce more grass and other vegetation for grazing animals.⁸⁶

In its separate operations in Somaliland, HALO does not currently have an environmental management system. However, environmental measures are incorporated into SOPs and operational procedures, for example, avoiding cutting down of trees and managing camps and training to minimise any negative environmental impact. HALO Somaliland is also working with partner organisations to consider how the environmental impact of clearance can be mitigated and has carried out six small-scale environmental projects across Somaliland in areas that have already been cleared of mines. The most recent projects involved the rehabilitation of berkshads (water storage areas) and the use of protective fencing of land to allow for regeneration without interference from livestock grazing or direct human impact. A tree nursery was established at Sayla Bari, as well as a number of apiaries, in order to develop small environmentally-friendly businesses in the community. However, these have achieved limited success due to the ongoing drought affecting the entire Horn of Africa region.⁸⁷

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Somalia's National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2018–2020 recognises gender and diversity as cross-cutting issues for the national mine action programme, in line with Somalia's National Development Plan objectives to "implement gender equality in education and mainstream gender in all of its programmes with a focus on adolescent girls". Despite this recognition of the importance of gender and diversity in the National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2018–2020, SEMA informed Mine Action Review in May 2019 that it did not have an internal gender or diversity policy or implementation plan.⁸⁸ In Somalia's revised Article 5 deadline extension

request, a gender policy for mine action was due to be developed by October 2022.⁸⁹ This did not happen and one of the key next steps identified during the mine action workshop in March 2023 was the development of a gender work plan.⁹⁰

All operators in Somalia have reported to some extent on their efforts to integrate gender and diversity considerations into mine action. In 2022, UNMAS reported that, when contracting an implementing partner, UNMAS provides targets on the proportion of women and young people that should make up the operator's team, including aiming for a minimum of 50% women and 35% young people.

83 Email from Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023.

84 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 7 July 2023.

85 Ibid.

86 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 7 July 2023.

87 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 16 May 2023.

88 Email from Abdulkadir Ibrahim Mohamed Hoshaw, SEMA, 9 May 2019.

89 Revised Article 5 deadline extension request, September 2021, p. 50.

90 Email from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 30 May 2023.

In 2022, women made up 9% of the combined staff of the UNMAS Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) project team and that of implementing partners, with women occupying 25% of managerial/supervisory positions and 8% of operational positions. Across UNMAS Somalia as a whole, women made up 46% of all personnel, with 8% of managerial/supervisory positions and 38% of operational and support positions occupied by women.⁹¹ This represents a slight increase in female staff overall compared to 2021, when 42% of all UNMAS Somalia personnel were women. The proportion of managerial/supervisory positions held by women, however, has decreased significantly compared to 20% in 2021.

UNMAS reports that non-technical and impact assessment surveys take into consideration gender, age, and clan affiliations in affected communities and that UNMAS requests the participation of women at all stages of mine action projects, pre- and post-clearance. UNMAS has also introduced some gender and diversity provisions into project proposals, including on the recruitment of women, youth and, where relevant, clan-affiliated personnel, into field and community liaison teams.⁹²

NPA has a Gender and Diversity policy and continues to disaggregate relevant mine action data by gender and age. In 2022, 27% of NPA's staff were female with 33% of management/supervisory roles occupied by women and 13% of operational roles occupied by woman.⁹³ This is a notable increase on the proportion of managerial/supervisory positions held by women in 2021, when 39% of NPA's total workforce were women with 4% of managerial/supervisory roles held by women and 12% of operational roles.⁹⁴ NPA reports that establishment of its NTS teams was guided by NPA's gender Policy, which mandates a fair representation of men and women in its operations. NPA involves local authorities and local leaders in gathering information and decision making before, during and after all survey and clearance activities using impact assessment tools, to facilitate access and participation by all groups.⁹⁵

In 2022 in HALO Somalia (i.e. excluding HALO's separate operations in Somaliland), 23% of all employees were women and women filled 18% of operations positions; the same proportions as in 2021. However, the proportion of managerial/supervisory positions filled by women increased significantly from 14% in 2021 to 44% in 2022.⁹⁶ HALO Somalia reports that it complies with HALO's global gender and diversity policies and endeavours to provide its female staff with career development opportunities through selection into and training on a variety of programme roles that are

currently only held by men, including positions QA, training and minefield supervision.⁹⁷

HALO Somalia also ensures that survey and community liaison teams are mixed gender; an important prerequisite in a largely traditional Muslim society where it is not permissible for men to approach women alone in rural areas. HALO also recruits teams from the areas in which they will be working to ensure participation from the affected groups. Particular care is taken to ensure that, if an area has more marginalised clans, they are recruited into teams.⁹⁸ HALO understands that, in many communities, the voices of women and girls can be marginalised and uses household surveys to provide them with an opportunity to share their insights.⁹⁹

HALO Somaliland has a gender and diversity policy and implementation plan¹⁰⁰ and, since 2020, has been making an active effort to recruit women to its demining teams. In support of these efforts it has worked with local communities to increase acceptance of women spending time away from their communities and families to work as deminers. Additionally, to promote retention of female recruits, HALO Somaliland has implemented 20-week-long maternity leave, a childcare stipend for mothers of children up to two years old, yearly medical check-ups, and hygiene kits made available in camps. Overall, 10% of HALO Somaliland staff are female with four women in managerial/supervisory positions and forty women in operations positions.¹⁰¹

In May 2023, HALO Somaliland reported that the implementation of these measures has been successful. However, while is equal access to employment and promotion in the organisation, the number of promotional opportunities available has been very limited as the structure of the programme has remained fairly static.¹⁰² HALO Somaliland reports that, while its community liaison teams are gender balanced; its survey teams are exclusively male. The programme aims to work towards addressing this imbalance during 2023; something it explains will require sensitivity to local, gendered, social norms.¹⁰³ HALO Somaliland's operations often take place near marginalised, rural communities. HALO maintains complete operational independence to prioritise task based on humanitarian need, regardless of any pressure that majority communities may try to exert in order to have clearance conducted for other reasons.¹⁰⁴

All operators confirmed that clan affiliation is also an important consideration when recruiting and deploying operational staff. It is important that the hiring process

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

93 Email from Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023.

94 Email from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 12 March 2022.

95 Email from Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023.

96 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 1 June 2023.

97 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 7 July 2023.

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid.

100 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 16 May 2023.

101 Email from Tobias Hewitt, HALO, 21 May 2022.

102 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 16 May 2023.

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid.

includes people from across the different clan and ethnic groups to ensure diversity and that there is sensitivity to this when teams are deployed.¹⁰⁵ Employing more women typically enables operators to access all strata of Somali society to gain information and consider the views of all relevant groups.¹⁰⁶ In Somaliland, 35% of the population

are nomadic pastoralists, with many transiting between Somaliland and Ethiopia. HALO in Somaliland ensures that it employs survey staff from both a rural and urban background, and from various regions in Somaliland, to ensure there is a strong understanding of all sections of Somaliland society.¹⁰⁷

Table 3: Gender composition of mine action organisations in 2022¹⁰⁸

Organisation*	Total staff	Total women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Total women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Total women in operational positions
SEMA	*24	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K
HALO Somalia	300	68	52	23	256	45
HALO Somaliland	506	58	48	6	372	42
NPA	30	8	6	2	15	2
**UNMAS	168	15	8	2	158	13

* This figure was stated in June 2023 in the Somalia Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022 – October 2027 and includes 14 personnel in the main office in Mogadishu and two personnel in each of the five regional offices.

** Figures for UNMAS include the UNMAS Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) team and implementing partners

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

SEMA decided to upgrade its database to IMSMA Core starting in 2022. However, the GICHD has cautioned that data are of poor quality, which leads to issues with reporting.¹⁰⁹ As such, the GICHD has been assisting SEMA with data clean-up prior to final migration to IMSMA Core, including through consolidation of data with operators' own databases.¹¹⁰ A fully functioning IMSMA Core system was expected by the end of 2023,¹¹¹ with plans to add a tasking tool in 2024. SEMA also planned to coordinate an IM working group, with participants to include the GICHD, HALO, and UNMAS, and the first meeting was scheduled for August 2023.¹¹²

In 2022, HALO Somalia began using a dashboard system called PowerBI, which enables the programme to better track task productivity and makes analysis of progress easier. HALO Somalia is also in the process of migrating many of its paper forms to Survey123 to improve the accessibility of data.¹¹³

The regional mine action centres in Puntland and Somaliland maintain IMSMA databases separate to the national database. NPA reports that information management in Puntland

"improved significantly" in 2022 as NPA identified and marked all areas contaminated landmines and other items of UXO within the state.¹¹⁴

In Somaliland, HALO creates its own data collection forms, which it says are reviewed regularly and ensure accurate collection of data by its survey teams.¹¹⁵ HALO Somaliland regularly updates the Somaliland Mine Action Department on its activities of HALO and believes that the database is up-to-date, accurate and sustainable.¹¹⁶

As at September 2023, Somalia had still to submit Article 7 reports covering 2021 and 2022. In April 2021, SEMA submitted Somalia's Article 5 deadline extension request seeking an extension through to 2027, but it was poorly formulated and requires significant revisions as it lacks sufficient detail and clarity. Somalia acted upon the decisions of the Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties by submitting a detailed and costed, updated work plan for the implementation of Article 5 of the Convention on 2 June 2023.¹¹⁷

105 Emails from Mustafa Bawar, UNMAS, 17 March 2020; Claus Nielsen, NPA, 14 April 2020; and Lawrie Clapton, HALO, 14 June 2020.

106 Email from Lawrie Clapton, HALO, 14 June 2020.

107 Ibid.

108 Emails from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 30 May 2023; Rob Syfret, HALO, 1 June and 16 May 2023; and Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023; and Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, p. 25.

109 Email from Noor Zangana, GICHD, 6 May 2022.

110 Email from Noor Zangana, GICHD, 8 August 2023.

111 'The Federal Republic of Somalia Summary of updated Article 5 Work Plan', Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19-21 June 2023.

112 Email from Noor Zangana, GICHD, 8 August 2023.

113 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 7 July 2023.

114 Email from Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023.

115 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 16 May 2023.

116 Ibid.

117 APMBC Implementation Support Unit, "Somalia", accessed 22 July 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/3rHSaB0>.

PLANNING AND TASKING

According to the conditions of the granting of Somalia's extension request until the end of 2027, Somalia's updated work plan was to include the following key components: a detailed, costed work plan for implementation of non-technical survey; a list of all accessible areas known or suspected to contain AP mines; annual milestones of which areas and how much area is to be addressed annually and how priorities have been established for the remaining period covered by the request; a revised detailed updated budget; and a detailed, costed and multi-year plan for risk education in affected communities; as well as provisions for a sustainable national capacity to deliver risk education in case that previously unknown mined areas are discovered.¹¹⁸

The updated work plan submitted in June 2023 addresses all of the above matters to some extent. The main focus of the plan is comprehensive NTS, to more accurately map the extent and nature of explosive threat contamination across the country. Somalia expects to complete this survey within one year,¹¹⁹ though the precise timing of the survey is not clear. Somalia does, however, state that the AP mined area survey will be conducted simultaneously with survey of other contamination. In fact, NPA has already carried out the NTS in Puntland while HALO has begun NTS in Galmudug state. Somalia's plan is to expand NTS to the remaining states of Southwest and Jubaland. In parallel, operators will continue to clear CHAs, prioritising areas where AP mine contamination has been confirmed.¹²⁰ SEMA's five regional offices will contribute through prioritisation, co-ordination,

and monitoring of the implementation of the plan in their respective states. SEMA acknowledges that sustained capacity development will be required for SEMA and its regional offices to undertake these roles and has appealed for increased international funding and support to this end.¹²¹

In the work plan, Somalia explains that annual land release targets for the period covered by the work plan will depend upon the results of the NTS. However, Somalia estimates that, given the available combined capacity of all operators, working at an average manual mine clearance rate of 35.5m² per deminer per day, it can potentially clear just over 1.51km² per year, or almost 7.57km² over the five-year period. This assumes a total capacity of 22 manual mine clearance teams, with a total of 148 deminers.¹²² The work plan includes a comprehensive breakdown by operator and by year of operational capacity and equipment available and required for survey, clearance and EOD spot tasks. It also clearly outlines the annual funding secured and yet to be secured for each area of activity and by operator.¹²³

HALO reported an improvement in tasking in Somalia since the most recent Director of SEMA was appointed, with the Authority becoming much more responsive to requests.¹²⁴ It was reported again in August 2023 that operators were receiving a prompt response from SEMA upon sending task requests. A clear tasking system and tool was expected for 2024 following full migration of Somalia's national database to IMSMA Core.¹²⁵

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

UNMAS initially developed National Technical Standards and Guidelines (NTSGs) for Somalia in 2012–13.¹²⁶ The first edition of Somalia's NMAS was subsequently published in 2018. The NMAS are split into four parts covering Land Release, Information Management (IMSMA), Mine Risk Education (MRE), and QA.¹²⁷

In June 2023, Somalia reported that progress on the review of the NMAS had been delayed due to a lack of funding to conduct stakeholder meetings to discuss and agree the

standards; the level of political unrest in Somalia; and a lack of international technical experts to assist in reviewing the standards.¹²⁸ UNMAS notes that the draft of the revised NMAS are sufficient to serve as a guide for the SOPs of implementing partners to deal with legacy contamination, subject to any amends that may be made during government review and approval.¹²⁹ HALO, however, notes that the NMAS need to be adapted to support implementation in the context of local threat levels.¹³⁰ UNMAS also suggests that, considering the significance of the IED-related threats

118 Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, p. 7.

119 Ibid., p. 35.

120 Summary of Updated Article 5 Work Plan, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

121 Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, p. 25.

122 Ibid., p. 33 and Annex III, p. 49.

123 Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, pp. 34–39.

124 Email from Abdullah Alkhasawneh, HALO, 16 May 2021.

125 Email from Noor Zangana, GICHD, 8 August 2023.

126 Email from Terje Eldøen, NPA, 5 June 2016; and response to questionnaire by Mohamed Abdulkadir Ahmed, SEMA, 19 June 2015.

127 Revised APMBBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, September 2021, p. 38.

128 'Somalia Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, 30 April 2023', p. 10.

129 Email from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 30 May 2023.

130 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 1 June 2023.

affecting the civilian population, the NMAS should consider procedures to deal with remnants of mines of improvised in nature (VOIEDs).¹³¹ In its updated work plan for 2022–27, Somalia pledges to consider the development of national standards only on risk education for IEDs.¹³²

NPA developed a specific NTS SOP aligned with IMAS and the Somalia context. The SOP was developed to primarily focus on evidence-based survey approaches, which ensure accurate mapping of potential hazards and cancellation of previous inadequately marked hazards. In support of the NTS SOP and processes NPA also developed an information

management SOP to ensure the accuracy and quality of data collection, analysis and reporting.¹³³ HALO reports that it uses its own SOPs when conducting clearance, which meet or exceed the NMAS, and have been updated to reflect changing operational circumstances.¹³⁴

The number of AP and AV mines found and destroyed in Somalia continues to be relatively low relative to the size of areas cleared (see Table 7). As such, it is possible that, in some cases, more areas could be released through NTS or TS rather than full clearance, indicating the need for stricter application of robust land release methodology.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2022 HALO conducted clearance and NTS operations in Somalia, with separate clearance operations in Somaliland. NPA conducted NTS in 2022 and closed operations in Somalia in April 2023. UNMAS-contracted commercial clearance company, Ukroboronservice, deployed teams for clearance of landmines and other explosive threats¹³⁵ and was expected to remain operational under UNMAS contracts until 2024.¹³⁶ UNMAS also deployed two EOD teams.¹³⁷

Table 4: Operational mine clearance capacities deployed in 2022¹³⁸

Operator	Manual teams	Mechanical teams	Total deminers*	Dogs and handlers	Machines**	Comments
Ukroboronservice (UNMAS)	4	0	48	0	0	Conduct clearance and TS. Decrease on 6 teams of 120 deminers in 2021. Also deployed 2 Quick Response EOD teams of 18 personnel in 2022.
HALO Somalia	18	0	144	0	0	Conduct clearance and TS. Decrease on 20 teams totalling 190 deminers deployed in 2021.
HALO Somaliland	32	3	283	0	3	Conduct clearance and TS. 283 deminers includes 24 mechanical teams personnel. Similar capacity to 35 teams of 289 personnel in 2021.
Totals	54	3	475	0	3	

* Excluding team leaders, medics, and drivers. ** Excluding vegetation cutters and sifters.

131 Email from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 30 May 2023.

132 Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, p. 45.

133 Email from Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023.

134 Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 7 July 2023.

135 Email from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 17 May 2023.

136 Revised APMBC Article 5 Extension Request, September 2021, p. 13.

137 Email from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 30 May 2023.

138 Emails from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 17 March 2022, and 30 May and 8 June 2023; Daniel Redelinghuys, HALO, 29 May 2022; and Rob Syfret, HALO, 16 May and 1 June 2023; and telephone interview with Rob Syfret, 10 July 2023.

Table 5: Operational NTS and TS capacities deployed in 2022¹³⁹

Operator	NTS/TS teams	Total NTS/TS personnel*	Comments
Ukroboronservice (UNMAS)	4	16	Decrease on 6 teams of 18 personnel conducting NTS and TS in 2021. Clearance teams also conduct TS.
HALO Somalia	4	16	NTS teams also conduct community liaison. Same NTS capacity as deployed in 2021. Increased to 6 teams totalling 24 personnel from November 2022. Clearance teams conduct TS.
HALO Somaliland	2	4	Decrease on 2 NTS teams of 8 personnel in 2021. Clearance teams conduct TS.
NPA	5	10	Deployed for NTS only.
Totals	15	46	

* Excluding team leaders, medics, and drivers.

In 2022, HALO Somalia focused entirely on release of mined areas, reducing the already limited capacity previously deployed for battle area clearance (BAC) to zero. This shift begun in 2021, when improved security conditions enabled access for manual mine clearance along the Ethiopian border. Having increased survey and clearance personnel in 2021 compared to 2020, HALO Somalia expected capacity to increase again in 2022, but in fact experienced a decrease of two combined technical survey and clearance teams during 2022.¹⁴⁰ HALO Somalia was not expecting any changes to its capacity in 2023.¹⁴¹ NPA were not able to increase their survey capacity in 2022, due to limited funding. NPA's programme in Somalia closed in April 2023.¹⁴²

HALO Somaliland did not have any significant change in capacity in 2022, compared to 2021 and did not expect any significant changes in 2023.¹⁴³ UNMAS also did not see any significant change in capacity in 2022 compared to 2021 and expected to introduce four new NTS teams in 2023. UNMAS said that the additional capacity will be deployed for survey of cluster munition-contaminated areas.¹⁴⁴

Somalia did not report the introduction of any specific tools for AP mine survey or clearance in 2022.

DEMINER SAFETY

There were no accidents during AP mine survey or clearance in Somalia in 2022.¹⁴⁵

HALO Somalia experienced two security incidents involving its staff in 2022. On 30 July 2022, a HALO demining camp was attacked in Dhabaad, Galmudug State. One security guard was killed and a deminer was injured, as well as a member of the community who came to assist. A full investigation was conducted, concluding that the attack was not specifically directed at HALO; the attack had been the result of a feud between clan militia, in which some HALO staff had been involved. Immediately after the attack, all demining teams in Somalia were stood down while security was reviewed. HALO decided to collapse the demining camps and move to staff quarters into the communities, and began a phased return to work.¹⁴⁶

Operations at a HALO Somalia task in Galdogob district in Puntland state were suspended for one day when shots were fired in the vicinity. Although no HALO staff were targeted, it transpired that young members of the village, who were unemployed and frustrated by other's access to work, fired the shots in protest. This was subsequently resolved in a meeting between local elders and the regional Operations Officer. It was explained that HALO could not continue operations if incidents such as this reoccurred, out of concern for staff welfare. It was agreed at the meeting that such incidents would not be tolerated in the community. At the time of writing, no further incidents had followed.¹⁴⁷

¹³⁹ Emails from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 17 March 2022 and 30 May 2023; Tobias Hewitt, HALO, 21 May 2022; Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023; and Rob Syfret, HALO, 16 May 2023; and telephone interview with Rob Syfret, HALO, 10 July 2023.

¹⁴⁰ Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 7 July 2023.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Email from Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023.

¹⁴³ Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 16 May 2023.

¹⁴⁴ Emails from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 17 March and 20 June 2022.

¹⁴⁵ Emails from Rob Syfret, HALO, 7 July 2023; Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 30 May 2023; and Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023.

¹⁴⁶ Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 7 July 2023.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

A total of just under 16.8km² of mined area was released in 2022 across Somalia, including Somaliland, of which a combined total of just over 8.24km² of AP and AV mined area was cleared (of which only 2.05km² of clearance was of AP mined area) and 8.56km² was cancelled through non-technical survey. No areas were reduced through technical survey. A total of 109 AP mines were found and destroyed, of which 40 were destroyed during EOD spot tasks. A total of 33 AV mines were also destroyed, including 19 during clearance of AP mined area, six during EOD spot tasks, and eight during clearance of AV mined areas specifically by UNMAS (see Table 7). Overall, land released in 2022 represents over a fivefold increase on the 3.17km² released 2021.¹⁴⁸

In 2022, NPA recorded 95 new areas of previously unrecorded AP mined area in Puntland state, with a total size area of almost 2.99km².¹⁴⁹ HALO Somalia recorded two new AP mine tasks in 2022, both in Galmudug State, measuring a total of just over 0.25km².¹⁵⁰

SURVEY IN 2022

In 2022, a total of just over 8.56km² was released through NTS (see Table 6). No areas were released through technical survey (TS). This is a significant increase on land released through survey in 2021 when just 0.32km² was cancelled through NTS and 0.33km² was reduced through TS.¹⁵¹ This significant increase in release through NTS can mainly be attributed to NPA's completion of its extensive NTS project in Puntland state.

Operators did not report any reduction through TS in 2022. However, Somalia states that HALO deployed one team of eight personnel to conduct TS of 8,494m² of mined area in Puntland state between 1 February and 30 April 2022.¹⁵²

Table 6: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022¹⁵³

State/Region/District	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Puntland/Mudug/Galdogob	NPA	8,261,366
Puntland/Mudug/Galkayo	NPA	295,508
Galmudug/Galguduud/Abudwaq/Dhabad (MF-0140)	HALO Somalia	6,474
Total		8,563,348

CLEARANCE IN 2022

In 2022, a combined total of just over 8.24km² of AP and AV mined area was cleared (see Table 7) with the destruction of 69 AP mines, 27 AV mines, and 184 items of UXO. Of this, only 2.05km² of clearance was of AP mined area, a reduction on the 2.52km² of mined area cleared in 2021.¹⁵⁴ A further 40 AP mines were destroyed during EOD spot tasks in 2022: 21 by NPA, 8 by HALO Somalia, and 11 by HALO Somaliland.¹⁵⁵ HALO notes that the majority of their tasks in Somalia concern areas containing only AV mines.¹⁵⁶ Clearance by UNMAS in Galmudug state accounts for over 70% of all mined area cleared in 2022 but only destroyed 8 AV mines (and no AP mines), raising serious questions about the quality of its survey (see Table 7).

A total of 19 AV mines were destroyed during clearance and TS of AP mined area by UNMAS and HALO, and eight during clearance of AV mined area by UNMAS.¹⁵⁷ A further six AV mines were destroyed during EOD spot tasks by NPA: two by NPA¹⁵⁸ and four by HALO Somalia.¹⁵⁹

HALO Somalia reported that land cleared by its teams dropped between 2021 and 2022, due to a slight reduction in capacity and the need for a two-week, programme-wide stand-down following the security incident at one of HALO's demining camps described above.¹⁶⁰

¹⁴⁸ Emails from Daniel Redelinghuys, HALO, 29 May 2022; and Aislinn Redbond, Programme Officer, HALO, 27 August 2022.

¹⁴⁹ Email from Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023.

¹⁵⁰ Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 7 July 2023.

¹⁵¹ Emails from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 12 March 2022; and Daniel Redelinghuys, HALO, 29 May 2022.

¹⁵² Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, p. 14.

¹⁵³ Emails from Rob Syfret, HALO, 7 July 2023; and Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023.

¹⁵⁴ Emails from Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 12 March 2022; Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 17 March 2022; Tobias Hewitt, HALO, 21 May 2022; Daniel Redelinghuys, HALO, 29 May 2022; and Jasmine Dann, Operations Officer, HALO, 18 July 2022.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Email from Jasmine Dann, HALO, 18 July 2022.

¹⁵⁷ Emails from Rob Syfret, HALO, 7 July 2023; and Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 30 May 2023.

¹⁵⁸ Email from Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023.

¹⁵⁹ Email from Daniel Redelinghuys, HALO, 29 May 2022.

¹⁶⁰ Email from Rob Syfret, HALO, 7 July 2023.

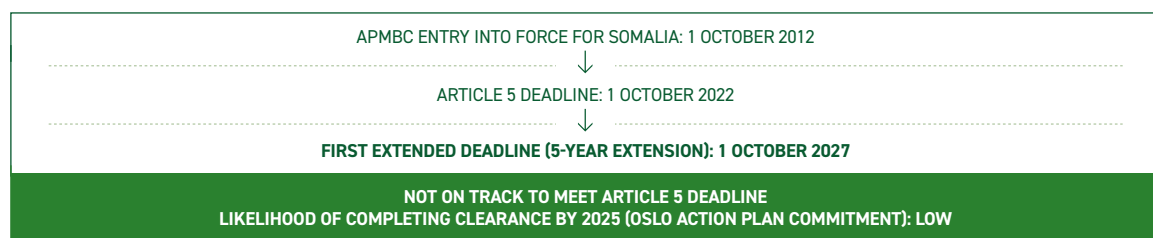
Table 7: AV and AP mine clearance in 2022¹⁶¹

Location	Operator	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Galmudug state	UNMAS	4	5,859,684	0	2	131
Hirshabelle state	UNMAS	4	148,433	0	2	19
South-West state	UNMAS	1	189,297	0	4	12
Subtotal of AV mined area			6,197,414			
Jubaland state	UNMAS	2	423,370	3	2	5
Galmudug/Galguduud/ Abudwaq/Dhabad (MF-0140)	HALO Somalia	1	145,901	11	9	0
Galmudug/Galguduud/ Abudwaq/Dhabad (MF-0171)	HALO Somalia	1	39,183	11	0	0
Awdal	HALO Somaliland	*0	39,416	0	0	0
Maroodi Jeex	HALO Somaliland	*0	308,111	20	0	9
Togdheer	HALO Somaliland	*0	1,092,221	24	8	8
Subtotal of AP mined area			2,048,202			
Totals			8,245,616	69	27	184

* Clearance of hazardous areas incomplete as at the end of 2022.

Operations were not affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2022.¹⁶²

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC, Somalia is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 October 2027. It is unlikely that it will meet this deadline.

Based on stakeholder engagement during preparation of the 2021 Article 5 Extension Request, Somalia identified the following six major challenges which impeded its ability to complete clearance by its Article 5 deadline:

- Insufficient information about the extent of contamination.
- Insufficient information about the impact of contamination.
- Limited access to contaminated areas, due to security concerns.
- Limited access to supervise teams in contaminated areas, due to security concerns.
- Other types of contamination (such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs)) having taken priority.
- Lack of training, lack of resources and lack of effective coordination and prioritisation.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Emails from Rob Syfret, HALO, 16 May, 7 July and September 15 2023; and Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 30 May and 8 August 2023. Information on the number of CHAs cleared in each location by HALO was requested by Mine Action Review but not made available.

¹⁶² Emails from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 30 May 2022; Rob Syfret, HALO, 16 May and 7 July 2023; and Liberty T. Hombe, NPA, 24 March 2023.

¹⁶³ Statement of Somalia, 19MSP (virtual meeting), 15–19 November 2021.

A further impediment is that SEMA's legislative framework has yet to be approved by the FGS. This has hindered effective coordination by SEMA and negatively impacted staff turn-over and is likely to continue to do so until SEMA is incorporated into the state budget. This issue has been ongoing since 2016 and has meant that salaries and other costs at SEMA have been covered by external funding. It is unclear when SEMA will be granted parliamentary approval.

Table 8: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	2.05
2021	2.52
2020	2.32
2019	1.82
2018	1.60
Total	10.31

In both 2021 and 2022, insecurity in Somalia continued to impede both access to some contaminated areas, and the progress of ongoing clearance operations. In some areas, inter-clan clashes broke out, forcing clearance teams to temporarily retreat to safe locations.¹⁶⁴ In 2021, UNMAS, NPA, and HALO reported instances of demining equipment being confiscated by clan militia, a vehicle being hijacked and used as a battle wagon, and a member of staff being taken hostage along with demining equipment, respectively.¹⁶⁵ In other locations, teams could not access task sites due to disagreements among the affected community regarding the benefits that could be derived from the clearance operations. Some areas are under the control of armed opposition groups, which means that where teams do have access an escort is required.¹⁶⁶ Somalia cautions that the security situation across the country remains fluid and that moving personnel between areas of deployment continues to pose a challenge to implementation. Somalia will continue to update the States Parties on changes to the security situation and accessibility.¹⁶⁷

Somalia has made the decision to not include Somaliland in its plans within the extension request or within its updated 2022–2027 work plan, submitted in June 2023, despite the fact that Somaliland remains part of Somalia *de jure* and is therefore under the jurisdiction of the FGS. This is, however, legally incorrect as Article 5 extends over *either* jurisdiction *or* control of mined areas.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

SEMA has stated that Somalia is planning to introduce state-level consortia of local NGOs who will be tasked with dealing with residual contamination.¹⁶⁸ But there is no reference to this in Somalia's 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request or the updated 2022–2027 work plan.

¹⁶⁴ Email from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 17 March 2022.

¹⁶⁵ Emails from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 17 March 2022; Robert Iga Afedra, NPA, 12 March 2022; and Daniel Redelinghuys, HALO, 29 May 2022.

¹⁶⁶ Email from Clemence Nyamandi, UNMAS, 17 March 2022.

¹⁶⁷ Action Plan for Article 5 Implementation, October 2022–October 2027, p. 16.

¹⁶⁸ Email from Dahir Abdirahman Abdulle, SEMA, 11 May 2020.

SOUTH SUDAN

MINE
ACTION
REVIEW

CLEARING THE MINES 2023

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 9 JULY 2026
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM

NATIONAL ESTIMATE

5.42km²

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

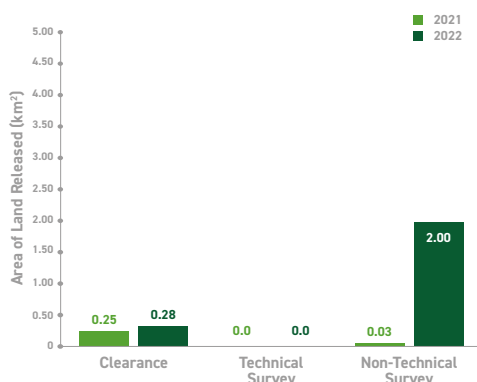
0.28km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

136

(INCLUDING 12 DESTROYED
DURING SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2022, clearance of cluster munition remnants (CMR) and other unexploded ordnance (UXO) continued to be prioritised over mine clearance due to the far higher number of victims from UXO. However, release of anti-personnel (AP) mined area increased in 2022 to 2.28km² from just over 0.28km² in 2021, primarily due to the cancellation of an old, large polygon measuring 1.98km². While acknowledging the challenges, South Sudan maintains it is on track to clear all AP mined areas by its Article 5 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) deadline of 26 July 2026. It is, however, increasingly unlikely that South Sudan will meet this deadline. On 12 June 2023, the South Sudanese parliament passed the National Mine Action Authority Bill.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- South Sudan should develop a new mine action strategy to replace its 2018–2022 Strategy.
- South Sudan should increase its financial support for mine action operations as well as to the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA).
- South Sudan should strengthen the coordination of mine action and develop a resource mobilisation strategy to attract new and former donors.
- South Sudan should clarify the steps it is taking to mainstream gender across its mine action programme to ensure that diverse needs are duly considered.
- South Sudan should ensure that the information management system is nationally owned and can be sustainably managed post-completion.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	8	8	Targeted re-survey to better define the estimated size of suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) continues although access to some SHAs is dependent on improvements in the security situation and is restricted by seasonal rains and flooding.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	4	4	The NMAA continued to face serious financial and technical limitations, preventing it from managing mine action operations effectively in 2022, with the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) still assuming that function. The government does not fund mine survey or clearance. About 70% of all mine action activities are funded by the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) through UNMAS.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	6	6	South Sudan's second national mine action strategy for 2018–22 and the National Technical Standards and Guidelines (NTSGs) cover gender issues. There is a focus on ensuring gender-balanced survey teams and gender- and age-sensitive data collection and community outreach. Ethnic identity is taken into account within survey and clearance teams to ensure safe access and acceptance by local communities. Commercial firms and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have taken action to improve gender balance among their personnel but redressing the gender imbalance remains a long-term challenge.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	7	7	A comprehensive review of all data in South Sudan's Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database was undertaken in 2018, and re-survey of recorded suspected and confirmed hazardous areas has resulted in significant gains in the understanding of mine contamination. In 2022, a major transition of IMSMA information to Survey123 was completed. South Sudan's APMBC Article 7 report for 2022, dated 30 April 2023, included no mine contamination or land release data.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	6	6	South Sudan had a National Mine Action Strategy for 2018–22, which was reviewed in 2020. In 2022, South Sudan developed an updated and detailed work plan providing annual targets for land release for mines and other explosive ordnance to 2026. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) is to support the NMAA to develop a new multiyear strategy.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	8	8	A number of revisions were made to South Sudan's NTSGs during 2022, including increasing the frequency of internal quality assurance (QA) visits. The number of teams with 15-lane capacity increased to 12 (8 mine action and 4 emergency response teams) and UNMAS introduced manual linear-section-based methodology for three clearance teams which it believes improves efficiency.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	6	6	South Sudan's land release output of AP mined area increased in 2022 after a dramatic fall in 2021, due to the cancellation of a large polygon. However, mines are not prioritised for clearance over other explosive ordnance that pose a greater threat to life. It is increasingly unlikely that South Sudan will meet its Article 5 deadline of July 2026.
Average Score	6.7	6.7	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- National Mine Action Authority (NMAA)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- DanChurchAid (DCA)
- Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
- G4S Ordnance Management (G4S)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- The Development Initiative (TDI)
- SafeLane Global (SLG)

OTHER ACTORS

- UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

As at the end of 2022, South Sudan had a total of 112 AP mined areas, of which 65 were confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and 47 were suspected hazardous areas (SHAs), covering a total area of just under 5.42km² (see Table 1).¹ This is a decrease in the estimated extent of contamination since 2022,² largely due to the cancellation of an old, large polygon in Jonglei state measuring 1.98km². Since a comprehensive database review of all contamination data in 2018 and targeted re-survey, South Sudan has released significant AP mined area.³

Table 1: AP mined area by state (at end 2022)⁴

State	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total SHA/CHA	Total area (m ²)
Central Equatoria	37	1,379,557	28	224,819	65	1,604,376
Eastern Equatoria	17	804,064	5	41,836	22	845,900
Jonglei	3	208,802	8	1,656,580	11	1,865,382
North Bahr El Ghazal	2	88,540	0	0	2	88,540
Upper Nile	4	270,479	0	0	4	270,479
Warrap	0	0	1	40,000	1	40,000
West Bahr El Ghazal	1	201,738	0	0	1	201,738
Western Equatoria	1	99,398	5	399,824	6	499,222
Totals	65	3,052,578	47	2,363,059	112	5,415,637

According to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), at the end of 2022 South Sudan, also had 74 suspected and confirmed anti-vehicle (AV) mined areas, covering just over 4.6km² (see Table 2),⁵ up from 72 hazardous areas covering just under 4.2km² at the end of 2021.⁶

Table 2: Mined area (at end 2022)⁷

Type of contamination	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)
AP mines	65	3,052,578	47	2,363,059
AV mines	49	2,174,401	25	2,475,161
Totals	114	5,226,979	72	4,838,220

South Sudan is contaminated by AP and AV mines as well as explosive remnants of war (ERW), including cluster munition remnants (CMR).⁸ The weapons were used during nearly 50 years of Sudanese civil war in 1955–72 and 1983–2005. The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in January 2005 led to the secession and independence of South Sudan in July 2011. Following two years of independence and relative peace in South Sudan, heavy fighting erupted in the capital, Juba, in December 2013, initiating new armed conflict across the country. The situation deteriorated in July 2016, leading to widespread displacement, distress, and destitution.

1 Email from Matt Williams, Senior Programme Officer, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) South Sudan, 23 March 2023.
2 Ibid.
3 Revised 2020 Article 5 extension request, p. 11.
4 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.
5 Ibid.
6 Email from Fran O’Grady, then UNMISS, 9 March 2022.
7 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.
8 On 4 August 2023, South Sudan acceded to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and will become a State Party on 1 February 2024. South Sudan’s Article 4 deadline to clear and destroy CMR will be 1 February 2034.

With the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) in September 2018, the security situation across the country improved, and access was possible to many areas that security issues previously rendered inaccessible.⁹ However, the security situation remains fluid, and in 2021 widespread intercommunal violence, banditry and politically motivated violence affected survey and clearance operations.¹⁰ Security improved in 2022 and there were fewer security-related access issues, while restrictions continued in response to ongoing localised security issues. Seasonal rains also continue to hinder access, with flooding expected between June and November in many areas.¹¹

The only comprehensive, countrywide mine survey to be conducted in South Sudan was a Landmine Impact Survey between 2003 and 2006.¹² In 2017, UNMAS initiated a review of the national Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database, which concluded that the extent of much of the AP mine contamination had been over-estimated. UNMAS consequently initiated a process of targeted re-survey aimed at better defining the size of SHAs and re-survey is an ongoing process.¹³ In 2022, 119,133m² of previously unrecorded AP contamination was identified and added to the database.¹⁴ In 2023, UNMAS began a small pilot baseline survey in Unity state.¹⁵

According to UNMAS, current contamination data are considered “accurate and evidence based, but not complete”. While more hazardous area is likely to be identified in remote areas, this is unlikely to dramatically increase the overall size of contamination. A countrywide baseline survey would still be advisable in the future, subject to funding and access.¹⁶

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The South Sudan National Mine Action Authority (NMAA), established by presidential decree in 2006 as the South Sudan Demining Authority (SSDA), is the national agency for planning, coordination, and monitoring of mine action in South Sudan.¹⁷ On 12 June 2023, the National Mine Action Authority Bill was passed by parliament.¹⁸ The legislation guides the implementation of demining activities across the country and provides for oversight of the activities of the mine authority, international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and contracted companies.¹⁹

In 2011, UN Security Council Resolution 1996 tasked UNMAS with supporting South Sudan in demining and strengthening the capacity of the NMAA, and UNMAS derives its current responsibilities from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) mandate.²⁰ Together, UNMAS and the NMAA oversee mine action across the country. The NMAA and UNMAS both have offices in Juba, UNMAS has sub-offices in Bentiu, Bor, Malakal, and Wau, while the NMAA also has offices in Wau and Yei.²¹ UNMAS and the NMAA accredit, task, monitor, and evaluate mine action organisations; conduct route verification and clearance; provide escorts for convoys on high-threat routes to enable the delivery of humanitarian

assistance; and collect data and map hazardous areas.²²

The NMAA continues to expand its responsibilities gradually. However, it still faces serious financial and technical limitations preventing it from managing mine action operations effectively and UNMAS and international NGOs continue to support the authority.²³ The NMAA does, though, play a significant role in facilitating mine action operations.²⁴ Monthly coordination meetings, co-chaired by the NMAA and UNMAS, bringing together all operators (commercial and international NGOs), resumed in 2023 having been largely dormant in recent years.²⁵ There is, however, no national platform involving all stakeholders, including donors, for regular in-country dialogue on progress, challenges and support for mine action.

There is generally an enabling environment for mine action operations in South Sudan and the authorities support the necessary administrative processes for granting visas to international staff and importing equipment, and approve memoranda of understanding.²⁶ The Ministry of Labour sometimes rejects work permit applications for international mine action staff if they deem there to be national workers

9 Revised 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 52.

10 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), p. 4; and email from Goran Tomasevic, UNMAS Deputy Chief of Operations (UNMISS), 10 July 2022.

11 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

12 Ibid.

13 Email from Fran O'Grady, UNMISS, 9 March 2022.

14 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

15 Remarks by Goran Tomasevic, Deputy Chief of Operations, UNMAS, at a meeting with UNMAS, Juba, 30 May 2023.

16 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

17 “South Sudan De-Mining Authority”, undated, at: <http://bit.ly/2Y5Eb4o>.

18 South Sudan Parliament passes Mine Authority Act”, *No. 1 Citizen Daily Newspaper*, 13 June 2023, at <https://bit.ly/45u4NPM>.

19 Ibid.

20 Remarks by Fran O'Grady, Chief of Mine Action, UNMAS, at a meeting with UNMAS, Juba, 30 May 2023.

21 Ibid.

22 UNMAS, “Mine Action Portfolio 2019”.

23 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

24 Remarks by Fran O'Grady, UNMAS at a meeting with UNMAS, Juba, 30 May 2023.

25 Remarks by Jurkuch Barach, Chairperson, NMAA, at Monthly Mine Action Coordination Meeting, Juba, 30 May 2023.

26 Email from Lisa Müller-Dormann, Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding Programme Manager, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), 27 March 2023.

with the required skills.²⁷ Delays are often encountered when importing demining equipment as multiple approvals are required from different government offices. If equipment is no longer needed after the end of a programme, it is usually handed over to the government or an identified partner in South Sudan; equipment cannot be re-exported.²⁸

In 2022, UNMAS provided training to NMAA staff in operational management, quality management (QM), and monitoring and evaluation.²⁹ A pilot project between August 2021 and March 2022 resulted in the development of an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) mobile team within the national authority that was trained and accredited to conduct not only spot tasks, but also survey and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE). They received a total of 10 EOD spot task requests during the programme and disposed of an unexploded submunition and another 17 items of UXO.³⁰

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) provided capacity-building support to the NMAA whereby NMAA staff are seconded to MAG teams as deminers for an average of three years. The programme aims to equip staff with the skills necessary to lead potential future technical teams within the NMAA. Secondees develop on-the-job experience as deminers, attend technical training courses such as EOD Level 2, and develop leadership and management skills. In 2022, one secondee was promoted to the role of Site Supervisor, the first NMAA staff member to reach this leadership level;³¹ others have become team leaders.³² In March 2023, three NMAA staff were on secondment with MAG.³³ In addition, following an institutional capacity assessment of the NMAA by MAG in 2021, MAG recruited a capacity development advisor to work with the NMAA for nine months from September 2022 to strengthen its human resources, procurement, financial management, and logistics.³⁴

DanChurchAid (DCA) has employed NMAA staff and one staff member is training to become a technical advisor. In addition, DCA is providing capacity-building support on EORE to a national NGO, Support for Peace and Education

Development Programme (SPEDP).³⁵ Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is training the national NGO, Community In Need Aid (CINA), on clearance and EORE procedures and nine CINA staff are seconded to DRC teams.³⁶ DRC and DCA highlight the peacebuilding and development slant they bring to mine action.³⁷ The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), in partnership with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), has undertaken a study on the impact of mine action on the Sustainable Development Goals, which was published in July 2023.³⁸ The study highlights the value of mine action in South Sudan as an enabler of broader humanitarian, peace, and development efforts.³⁹ In 2022, UNMAS and DRC were the co-coordinators of the mine action sub-cluster.⁴⁰ There has been a lack of engagement with the subcluster in recent years and it has not been very active.⁴¹

The Government of South Sudan has previously reported funding NMAA staff salaries and its sub-offices in Wau and Yei, although as at March 2023, the Yei office was still not operational, having closed in 2021 for security reasons.⁴² It was not clear what funding, if any, the Government of South Sudan provided to the NMAA in 2022.

In South Sudan's Updated Work Plan for January 2022 – June 2026, completing all clearance by July 2026 was estimated to require more than US\$143 million.⁴³ In 2021, funding for mine action from external sources, including through UNMAS, was in the region of US\$35.5 million,⁴⁴ while in 2022 it was about US\$42 million.⁴⁵ In 2022, UNMISS provided about 70% (a total of \$29 million) of the funding for mine action in South Sudan, all of which was managed by UNMAS.⁴⁶ UNMAS contracted 24 commercial demining teams to undertake a range of clearance, survey, disposal work and risk education activities for a range explosive ordnance. The operational contracts were worth almost \$22.5 million.⁴⁷

The international NGOs do not currently have any of the UNMAS operational contracts. They indicated that the requirements of UNMAS contracts make it difficult for them to tender,⁴⁸ and they largely rely on bilateral donor support.

27 Email from Eric Okoth, Country Director, MAG, 20 March 2023.

28 Ibid.

29 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Email from Eric Okoth, MAG, 20 March 2023.

33 Ibid.

34 Emails from Eric Okoth, MAG, 12 and 20 June 2023.

35 Email from Clement Suwali, Operations Manager, DRC, 2 May 2023.

36 Email from Lisa Müller-Dormann, DRC, 27 March 2023.

37 Interview with Lisa Müller-Dormann, DRC, 21 May 2023; and email from Hajrudin Osmanovic, DCA, 13 June 2023.

38 "The Sustainable Development Outcomes of Mine Action in South Sudan", GICHD, 10 July 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3R2h6hP>.

39 Email from Sasha Logie, GICHD, 12 June 2023.

40 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

41 Interview with Lisa Müller-Dormann, DRC, 21 May 2023; and remarks by Matt Williams, UNMAS, at a meeting with UNMAS, Juba, 30 May 2023.

42 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

43 Updated Work Plan for January 2022 to June 2026, submitted to the APMBC Article 5 Committee, dated 31 April 2022, p. 35.

44 Emails from Fran O'Grady, UNMISS, 9 March 2022; and Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 19 June 2023.

45 Updated Work Plan for the period from January 2022 to June 2026, submitted to the APMBC Article 5 Committee, dated 31 April 2022, p. 34.

46 Zoom interview with Fran O'Grady, UNMISS, 7 March 2023; and email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 3 May 2023.

47 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 3 May 2023.

48 Interviews with Andrew Steele, Logistics Manager, MAG, 20 May 2023; Lisa Müller-Dormann, DRC, 21 May 2023; and Janardhan Rao, Country Director, DCA, 26 May 2023.

In recent years, the South Sudan Humanitarian Fund, run by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), has not allocated any funding to mine action survey or clearance operations.⁴⁹ By May 2023, both DCA and DRC were facing funding shortfalls.⁵⁰

South Sudan does not have a mine action resource mobilisation strategy. The authorities have indicated that they will be advocating for much needed donor support for the mine action sector.⁵¹ The GICHD will support the NMAA

in developing a new Mine Action Strategy to replace the 2018–22 strategy,⁵² which is expected to include a resource mobilisation strategy.⁵³ The UNMAS Chief of Mine Action did, however, conduct a range of advocacy activities in support of funding for international and national NGOs in 2022. These included presenting to key Juba-based donors and to UN Member State representatives at UN headquarters in New York, as well as advocating to UNMISS leadership.⁵⁴

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

UNMAS has incorporated environmental considerations into mine action operations, in collaboration with the NMAA, providing guidance in the National Technical Standard and Guidelines (NTSGs).⁵⁵ South Sudan has an NTSG on Health and Safety, Social and Environment (HSSE), which was introduced in 2018, in line with IMAS 07.13 on Environmental Management in Mine Action.⁵⁶ This is updated annually to incorporate lessons learned; in 2022, amendments were made to the NTSG on conducting environmentally compliant disposal and the treatment of "Free From Explosives" metal scrap.⁵⁷

Implementing partners in South Sudan establish their own standard operating procedures (SOPs) and policies based on the NTSG to safeguard the environment. When survey and clearance are completed, an area should be restored in accordance with the wishes of the local community. At a minimum, restoration should include the removal of large items of scrap metal, the filling in of any pits or craters due to EOD, and the fencing off of any areas where there may be residual non-explosives hazardous materials left in the ground.⁵⁸ To minimise the impact of mine action activities on the environment, UNMAS continued to sensitise mine action operators in South Sudan on environmental considerations in planning demolitions and in post-demolition

procedures, in mechanical operations, and in conducting vegetation clearance.⁵⁹

On MAG's worksites and temporary accommodation facilities, the NTSGs are reported to be strictly followed with robust sanitary and waste management systems and environmental considerations integrated into daily operations and programming. MAG employs a comprehensive post-demolition site remediation in which teams leave the ground as close to its original state as possible. Mechanical assets and road transport are only used when necessary. MAG's community liaison teams maintain contact with community leaders to inform them of operations and provide an opportunity for feedback, including about possible environmental damage.⁶⁰ DRC's SOP limits the felling of trees above a certain height and supports the restoration of soil following demolitions, while its bases in Magwi use solar power.⁶¹ In 2023, DCA initiated an organisation-wide environmental assessment in South Sudan,⁶² which includes an assessment of the environmental impact of clearance, and the development of a self-assessment tool to minimise environmental degradation.⁶³

49 Remarks by Matt Williams, UNMAS, at a meeting with UNMAS, Juba, 30 May 2023.

50 Interviews with Lisa Müller-Dormann, DRC, 21 May 2023; and Janardhan Rao, DCA, 26 May 2023.

51 Presentation by South Sudan, APMBC Twentieth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

52 Remarks by Fran O'Grady, UNMAS, at a meeting with UNMAS, Juba, 30 May 2023.

53 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Voluntary Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form I.

57 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

58 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form B.

59 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

60 Email from Eric Okoth, MAG, 20 March 2023.

61 Email from Lisa Müller-Dormann, DRC, 27 March 2023.

62 Interview with Janardhan Rao, DCA, 26 May 2023.

63 Email from Hajrudin Osmanovic, DCA, 13 June 2023.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

South Sudan's second national mine action strategy for 2018–22 included a section on gender, focusing on how different gender and age groups are affected by mines and ERW and have specific and varying needs and priorities. Guidelines on mainstreaming gender considerations in mine action planning and operations in South Sudan are also incorporated in the strategy, including on the collection of data disaggregated by sex and age.⁶⁴ UNMAS reported that the programme was also implementing the UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action, monitored by a gender focal point, who also encourages the implementing partners to provide equal employment opportunities and consider the role and the behaviour of male and female beneficiaries when planning, implementing, and managing projects.⁶⁵ UNMAS has said that, in theory, employment opportunities for qualified men and women in survey and clearance teams across the organisations operating in South Sudan are equal. However, redressing the gender balance is a long-term challenge and a work in progress.⁶⁶

South Sudan's NTSGs require all community liaison teams to tailor activities on the basis of the gendered needs of beneficiaries, and to address the specific risks faced by women and girls.⁶⁷ All teams are reportedly gender balanced in composition and trained to be inclusive, for example by ensuring outreach through NTS and risk education is done separately for different age and gender groups, and taking into consideration local cultural practices.⁶⁸ Ethnic identity is taken into account within survey and clearance teams to ensure safe access and acceptance by local communities.⁶⁹

But UNMAS has indicated that ethnic identity continues to limit the participation of different ethnic minority groups in survey and clearance operations across the country.⁷⁰ Community liaison staff capture the needs of different groups including vulnerable and minority groups such as internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, which feeds into operational priorities.⁷¹ UNMAS has reported, though, that task prioritisation is predominantly dependent on security and that resources are concentrated on tasks within limited geographical areas.⁷²

All UNMAS operational teams are mixed gender.⁷³ Workshops for the NMAA and mine action partners on gender equality, gender-based violence (GBV), and gender mainstreaming programming in mine action, delayed by COVID-19, are yet to take place.⁷⁴

Among UNMAS-contracted implementing partners, through an increased focus on gender and diversity in procurement processes, female participation in technical and managerial functions is increasing,⁷⁵ though the overall proportion of female staff remains low. SafeLane Global (SLG) maintains an overall staffing ratio of 24% women in various positions, including operational staff; 16% of The Development Initiative (TDI)'s employees are women; while G4S has an overall 14% female representation in its staffing, including in operational and managerial positions.⁷⁶ There is a female Programme Manager for one G4S contract, the first time that a woman has held such a senior position within an UNMAS-contracted operator in South Sudan.

Table 3: Gender composition of mine action operators (at March 2023)⁷⁷

	Total staff employed	Number of women employed	Staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Women in operational positions
UNMAS	46	13	3	1	16	3
G4S*	548	75	110	13	413	62
SLG*	174	41	15	1	155	37
TDI*	69	11	16	2	42	9
MAG	141	48	35	5	109	41
DRC**	47	16	7	1	45	16

⁶⁴ Emails from Tim Lardner, UNMAS, 27 February and 1 March 2018.

⁶⁵ Emails from Ayaka Amano, UNMAS, 2 May 2019; and Fran O'Grady, UNMISS, 9 March 2022.

⁶⁶ Email from Ayaka Amano, UNMAS, 2 May 2019.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Email from Richard Boulter, UNMAS, 8 July 2020.

⁷⁰ Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Email from Ayaka Amano, UNMAS, 2 May 2019.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

⁷⁵ Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 3 May 2023.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Emails from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023 and 2 June 2023; Eric Okoth, MAG, 20 March 2023; Lisa Müller-Dormann, DRC, 12 June 2023; and Hajrudin Osmanovic, DCA, 22 March and 13 June 2023.

Table 3 Continued

	Total staff employed	Number of women employed	Staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Women in operational positions
DCA**	42	8	6	0	6	0
Total	1,067	212	192	23	786	168

* The figures for G4S, SLG, and TDI were provided as at May 2023. ** DRC and DCA did not conduct any AP mine survey or clearance in 2022.

As regards international NGO operators, the proportion of female staff is slightly higher. As at March 2023, MAG reported that gender balance within its teams significantly improved following two female deminer-only training courses in 2022. In 2021, the first woman was awarded an EOD Level 2 qualification and received UNMAS accreditation.⁷⁸ While representation of women in managerial and supervisory positions is improving, it remains low, and women have been allocated half of the spaces on the next specialist training cycle, which will provide the skills needed for leadership and management positions.⁷⁹ MAG holds women-only focus groups to ensure that women's views are taken into consideration. It aims to recruit team members from the 60 plus ethnic groups within South Sudan and tries to ensure

that at least one team member speaks the local language in areas of operation.⁸⁰

At DRC, four in every ten members of survey and community liaison teams are female. As co-coordinator of Mine Action Sub-Cluster, DRC has been advocating for female deminers to be integrated into security sector training programmes run by UN Women.⁸¹ Clearance teams are composed of different ethnic groups and are roving unless there are security concerns for certain ethnicities.⁸² DCA's survey team is gender balanced and runs separate sessions for children and women as well as mixed groups.⁸³ DCA is working to include different ethnicities among team members to facilitate engagement with different communities.⁸⁴

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

A comprehensive review of all data in South Sudan's IMSMA database began in 2018, along with re-survey of recorded SHAs and CHAs whose size was thought to be exaggerated or location misrecorded. The database review found that past efforts to upgrade the IMSMA software package had led to serious data loss, which inhibited efforts to present an accurate record of the history of mine action in South Sudan. The review resulted in significant gains in the understanding of mine and ERW contamination.

In 2021, South Sudan was supported by the GICHD to upgrade its IMSMA database to IMSMA Core,⁸⁵ and in 2022 the major transition of IMSMA information to Survey123 was completed.⁸⁶

South Sudan has submitted an Article 7 report every year since 2012. Its most recent report, dated 30 April 2023, only addressed the "Progress and Challenges of Victim Assistance", and did not contain any data on AP mine contamination or release of mined area.⁸⁷

PLANNING AND TASKING

The GICHD will support the NMAA to develop a new mine action strategy in 2023.⁸⁸ South Sudan's most recent National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2022, developed with support from the GICHD and using funding from Japan, had three strategic goals:⁸⁹

⁷⁸ Email from Lisa Müller-Dormann, then MAG, 22 March 2022.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Email from Lisa Müller-Dormann, DRC, 27 March 2023.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Email from Hajrudin Osmanovic, DCA, 14 March 2023.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Emails from Fran O'Grady, UNMISS, 9 March 2022; and Sasha Logie, GICHD, 21 April 2022.

⁸⁶ Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

⁸⁷ Article 7 Report (covering 2022).

⁸⁸ Remarks by Fran O'Grady, UNMAS, at a meeting with UNMAS, Juba, 30 May 2023.

⁸⁹ Emails from Tim Lardner, UNMAS, 27 February and 1 March 2018; and Richard Boulter, UNMAS, 6 June 2018.

- Advocacy and communication of South Sudan's mine/ERW problem continues through national and international awareness-raising and adoption and implementation of international conventions to facilitate a mine- and ERW-free South Sudan.
- The size of the mine/ERW contamination area is clarified and confirmed and the problem is addressed through appropriate survey and clearance methods, ensuring safe land is handed back to affected communities for use.
- Safe behaviour is promoted among women, girls, boys, and men to reduce mine/ERW accidents and promote safe livelihood activities.

The operational focus for 2021–22 was on securing safe access and creating a more secure environment for affected communities and returnees by conducting survey, mechanical and manual area clearance, and road clearance.⁹⁰

In its revised 2020 extension request, South Sudan presented a work plan through to 2026, which was updated in 2022.⁹¹

The updated work plan acknowledged that to meet the July 2026 Article 5 deadline, South Sudan would need further support to reconfigure and expand its existing clearance capacity, and to adapt methodologies to the changing security and environmental landscape.⁹² It also included the following assumptions: access would not be hampered by insecurity or flooding; sufficient funding would be available; few additional minefields would be discovered; and clearance rates would be sustained.⁹³

The updated work plan from April 2022, indicated the need for detailed resurvey of a high number of overestimated hazards. Of the 114 recorded hazardous areas then remaining (65 CHA and 49 SHA) covering 7.4km², 38 (covering almost 4.12km²) were to be re-surveyed; 33 (covering 0.87km²) required manual clearance, and 43 (covering 2.36km²) required mechanical clearance.⁹⁴ In 2022, South Sudan estimated it would clear 2.73km² of AP mined area.⁹⁵ However only 0.28km² was cleared, although another 2km² of AP mined area was cancelled through NTS.⁹⁶

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

South Sudan's NTSGs, which outline the technical requirements expected of all demining operators working in South Sudan, are adapted from the IMAS. The NTSGs are annually reviewed and revised by UNMAS and the implementing partners and then approved by the NMAA,⁹⁷ taking into account any lessons learned during the year and addressing any changes in IMAS.⁹⁸ The standards and guidelines are said to be fully adapted to the local context for survey and clearance.⁹⁹

In 2022, standards for a new clearance method—broadly termed manual linear-section-based methodology by UNMAS—were developed and added.¹⁰⁰ This approach involves clearance being conducted sideways along a baseline rather than, as in conventional clearance, away from the baseline.¹⁰¹ UNMAS states that it has employed this model for reasons of efficiency on the basis that dedicated detector-search deminers can conduct uninterrupted

detector search in a linear fashion throughout the work day, while support deminers conduct other preparatory and follow-up activities, such as vegetation cutting and removal, search lane set-up, and signal investigation. Additional advantages relate to quality management, command and control, and a comfortable working position for deminers. UNMAS will assess the effectiveness of this approach in the coming months to ensure the efficiency gains are as expected.¹⁰²

UNMAS noted that the NTSGs require all mine action teams to conduct regular internal quality assurance (QA), along with QC sampling of 10% of each area cleared.¹⁰³ The minimum frequency for the organisational senior management internal quality assurance visits to each team was set at one per month in 2021, and a standardised scoring matrix introduced for the EOD written examination.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁰ Email from Fran O'Grady, UNMISS, 9 March 2022.

⁹¹ Updated Work Plan for January 2022 to June 2026, dated 31 April 2022.

⁹² Ibid., p. 4.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 34.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 12–13.

⁹⁶ Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

⁹⁷ Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form 4.

⁹⁸ Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 25 July 2023.

¹⁰² Emails from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 14 and 16 August 2023.

¹⁰³ Email from Ayaka Amano, UNMAS, 2 May 2019.

¹⁰⁴ Email from Fran O'Grady, UNMISS, 9 March 2022.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Clearance teams in South Sudan are normally accredited for and deployed to a variety of tasks, including CMR, AP mine and AV mine clearance, EOD, and EORE. None is exclusively allocated to AP mine activities. All teams, except four NTS teams (see Table 4), are accredited to conduct multiple mine action activities, including clearance.¹⁰⁵ Among international NGOs, only MAG conducted any release of AP mined area in 2022, clearing mines for the first three months of the year before focusing on battle area clearance, due to the fact that CMR poses a greater threat to local populations.¹⁰⁶

Table 4: Operational NTS capacities deployed in 2022¹⁰⁷

Operator	Teams	Total personnel	Comments
MAG	2	5	NTS/EOD spot capability
DRC*	1	8	
DCA*	1	12	
Totals	4	25	

* DRC and DCA did not conduct any NTS or TS over AP mined area in 2022.

UNMAS reported that 36 teams from three commercial companies (G4S, The Development Initiative (TDI), and SLG) and three international NGOs (DCA, DRC, and MAG) conducted survey and clearance tasks in 2022,¹⁰⁸ although teams were not exclusively allocated to AP mine clearance, and DCA and DRC did not conduct any mine clearance in 2022. Overall, this is an increase from 22 teams in 2021 while the number of operators stayed constant.¹⁰⁹ The number of operational personnel able to conduct technical survey (TS) and clearance during 2022 was 447 (see Table 5), up from 22/23 teams and 290 personnel in 2021.¹¹⁰ No major changes in the

number of survey or clearance personnel was expected in 2023.¹¹¹ MAG expected to deploy an additional team focused on NTS and other assessments to support its operations in 2023,¹¹² while in January 2023, the number of DCA teams decreased from two to one.¹¹³ By May 2023, however, DRC and DCA were both facing funding shortfalls and the prospect of cutting staff and operations.¹¹⁴ The only increase in mechanical capacity in 2022 was DCA's deployment of a MW240 from August 2022; another slight increase was expected in 2023 (one MW240 and one GCS100 are to be used by integrated clearance capacity teams).¹¹⁵

Table 5: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2022¹¹⁶

Operator	Manual teams	Total personnel	Dogs and dog handlers	Mechanical assets
G4S	12	180	3/3	2 x TRAXX RC562
SLG	8	120	0	0
TDI	4	50	6/6	2 (1 x MW240, 1 x MW330)
MAG*	4	60	0	3 (1 x PT300, 2 x Bozena 4)
DRC**	2	20	0	0
DCA**	2	17	0	1 MW240 from August 2022
Totals	32	447	9/9	8

* MAG had six teams at the start of 2022 with 78 personnel, which decreased to four full clearance teams with 60 staff from September 2022.¹¹⁷ However these teams spent only 6 weeks on minefield clearance in 2022, and were deployed on cluster munition clearance tasks for the remainder of the year.¹¹⁸

** DRC and DCA did not conduct any AP mine clearance in 2022.

105 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

106 Email from Eric Okoth, Country Director, MAG, 20 March 2023.

107 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

108 Ibid.

109 Email from Fran O'Grady, UNMISS, 9 March 2022.

110 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

111 Ibid.

112 Email from Eric Okoth, MAG, 20 March 2023.

113 Email from Hajruddin Osmanovic, DCA, 22 March 2023.

114 Interviews with Lisa Müller-Dormann, DRC, 21 May 2023; and Janardhan Rao, DCA, 26 May 2023.

115 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 3 May 2023.

116 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

117 Email from Leah Grace, Program Officer, MAG, 25 April 2023.

118 Email from Greg Crowther, MAG, 4 October 2023.

South Sudan's revised extension request provided a detailed breakdown of the capacity needed to complete mine clearance. The NMAA indicated that it planned to deploy the full demining toolbox to address remaining contamination, including light and heavy machines, mine detection dogs (MDDs), and manual deminers equipped with appropriate detectors. In its updated work plan, the NMAA estimated that daily manual mine clearance would remain at 300m² per team per day with mechanical clearance estimated at 2,500m² per team per day.¹¹⁹ Overall, it was predicted that 4,104,000m² would be manually cleared over five years and another 3,150,000m² cleared mechanically by 2026.¹²⁰

UNMAS continued to enhance the overall survey and clearance capacity of their contracted teams in 2022 with the introduction of "manual linear-section-based methodology" for AP mine clearance, as indicated above. Three teams trained in the methodology have separate responsibilities so that a number of "support" deminers focus exclusively on preparatory work (vegetation cutting, marking, and signal investigation), while "mapping" deminers perform uninterrupted detector search throughout working hours.

The three teams accredited to use this method were familiarising themselves with the approach in 2022 and positive results are expected in 2023. This built on initiatives in 2021 when UNMAS contracted an additional eight 15-lane demining teams, bringing the total to sixteen, exceeding its target in the revised Article 5 extension request.¹²¹ UNMAS planned for up to 25 teams with 15-lane capacity in 2022,¹²² and achieved 12 teams (8 mine action teams to June 2022, and 4 emergency response teams throughout 2022).¹²³ In addition, UNMAS deployed two remotely controlled TRAXX RB-56 vegetation cutters through an implementing partner, while DCA deployed a MineWolf 240 asset in 2022¹²⁴ as mentioned above.

There were two incidents in 2022 where UNMAS implementing partner demining teams were robbed at gunpoint. One resulted in the minor loss of equipment and some personal belongings and the other involved the loss of demining supplies, including 13 lithium rechargeable detector batteries and medical equipment. No personnel were injured in either incident.¹²⁵

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

According to UNMAS, a total of just under 2.28km of AP mined area was released through survey and clearance in 2022. Of this, just under 2km² was cancelled through NTS and just under 0.28km² was cleared, with a total of 136 AP mines found and destroyed (including 12 during spot tasks). No area was reduced through TS.

SURVEY IN 2022

In 2022, 2km² of hazardous area was cancelled though non-technical survey (NTS), a significant increase on the 0.03km² cancelled in 2021 (see Table 6). As in 2021, no area was reduced through TS in 2022.¹²⁶ The large increase in mined area cancelled in 2022 was largely due to resurvey of an old hazardous area of 1,978,079m² which only became accessible in 2022. This was the last old, large polygon in the database.¹²⁷ As South Sudan moves towards a more accurate estimate of mine contamination, cancellation rates will slow.¹²⁸ A total of 119,133m² of previously unrecorded AP mine contamination was identified and added to the database.¹²⁹

Table 6: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022¹³⁰

State	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Central Equatoria	G4S	20,699
Central Equatoria	MAG	35
Jonglei	SLG	1,978,079
Total		1,998,813

119 Updated Work Plan for 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2026, p. 12.

120 Ibid., p. 34.

121 Email from Goran Tomasevic, UNMISS, 10 July 2022.

122 Email from Fran O'Grady, UNMISS, 9 March 2022.

123 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 25 July 2023.

124 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

125 Ibid.

126 Emails from Fran O'Grady, UNMISS, 9 March 2022; and Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

127 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

128 Presentation by Richard Boulter, UNMAS, "South Sudan – Achieving Article Five compliance, and Delivering a Long-Term Solution", NDM-UN23, 12 February 2020.

129 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

130 Ibid.

CLEARANCE IN 2022

A total of just under 0.28km² of mined area was cleared in 2022 with 136 AP mines destroyed (including 12 during spot tasks) (see Table 7).¹³¹ This is a slight increase on the 0.25km² of hazardous area cleared in 2021 when just 31 AP mines were destroyed during clearance and 22 during EOD spot tasks.¹³²

Table 7: Mine clearance in 2022¹³³

State	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Central Equatoria	MAG	7,835	1	0	0
Central Equatoria	SLG	66,114	39	0	2
Jonglei	TDI	17,487	22	0	0
Northern Bahr El Ghazal	SLG	23,417	0	0	2
Upper Nile	TDI	164,234	62	0	4
Spot tasks			12	21	
Totals		279,087	136	21	8

In 2022, UNMAS reported that four hazardous areas covering 23,417m² were cleared which contained no AP mines.

There was minimal disruption to mine action activities in 2022 due to COVID-19, as most restrictions had been removed, including those relating to EORE group sessions.¹³⁴

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC, and in accordance with the five-year extension granted by States Parties in 2020, South Sudan is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 9 July 2026. It is extremely unlikely that South Sudan will meet this deadline.

For a second consecutive year, clearance of AP mines remained relatively low as land release of other explosive ordnance which posed a greater risk was prioritised (between 2018 and 2022, of the 243 explosive ordnance victims recorded in South Sudan, only three related to AP

mines).¹³⁵ In line with the extension to its Article 5 deadline granted at the Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties in 2020, South Sudan produced its first periodic updated detailed work plan in 2022. The plan sets out disaggregated contamination figures, the methodology for clearing AP mines, along with the assumptions on which the plan is based and attendant risks. Although it maintains it can meet the new Article 5 deadline of 26 July 2026, South Sudan is clear about the challenges it faces, including insecurity; extreme weather conditions; a reduction in funding; and economic shocks and inflationary pressures.¹³⁶

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Email from Fran O'Grady, UNMISS, 9 March 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), p. 9.

¹³³ Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Updated Work Plan for January 2022 to June 2026, pp. 35–36.

South Sudan reported in its extension request that insecurity has been the greatest impediment to fulfilling its clearance obligations. The situation remains unpredictable and sporadic fighting continues. This violence, as well as intercommunal conflict, and banditry has persistently inhibited the deployment of mine clearance teams and has been an obstacle to a countrywide survey.¹³⁷ The effects of climate change are another major obstacle. In 2021, South Sudan had its worst ever recorded flooding, after three years of record rainfall, making a number of minefields inaccessible to the demining teams,¹³⁸ and some contaminated areas remain underwater.¹³⁹ Moreover, the funding outlook over coming years is not promising, with funding from UNMISS and other donors very likely to decline. While there have been some positive developments in line with the commitments in the

extension request, given the overall context, it is improbable that South Sudan will meet its Article 5 deadline of July 2026.

Table 8: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	0.28
2021	0.25
2020	0.71
2019	1.00
2018	2.08
Total	4.32

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

There has been no progress with developing an independent national capacity for clearing residual contamination. However, as indicated above, an EOD mobile team within the national authority was trained and accredited during an eight-month project that concluded in March 2022.¹⁴⁰ UNMAS fielded 24 commercial demining teams, employing national deminers, with four teams led by national team leaders. The three international NGOs (DCA, DRC, and MAG) fielded another 12 national demining teams.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, South Sudan has indicated that it would seek funding to enable an independent entity – hopefully an international NGO – to train and equip the NMAA in taking the lead in coordinating the response to new reports of hazardous items.¹⁴²

137 Revised 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 16; and email from Goran Tomasevic, UNMISS, 10 July 2022.
138 Email from Fran O’Grady, UNMISS, 9 March 2022; and UN News, “Dire impact from floods in South Sudan as new wet season looms”, at: <https://bit.ly/3NSH7M8>.
139 Updated Work Plan for January 2022 to June 2026, p. 8; and email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 25 July 2023.
140 Email from Matt Williams, UNMAS South Sudan, 23 March 2023.
141 Ibid.
142 Updated Work Plan for January 2022 to June 2026, p. 12.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JUNE 2028
ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM**

NATIONAL AUTHORITY ESTIMATE

> 17 km²

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

5.27 km²

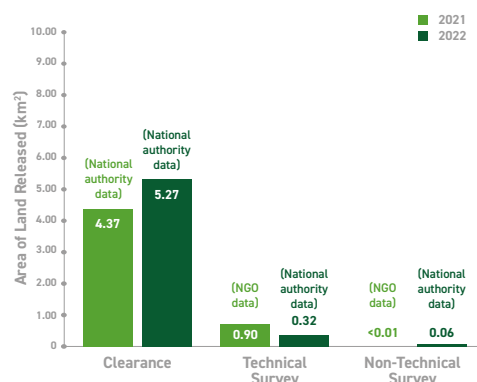
(NATIONAL AUTHORITY DATA)

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

27,177

(NATIONAL AUTHORITY DATA)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Despite the financial and political crisis that gripped the country in 2022, Sri Lanka managed to increase its clearance output from the previous year and, in 2023, launch its "National Mine Action Completion Strategy for 2023–2027", which provides a roadmap to the fulfilment of Sri Lanka's Article 5 obligations by the end of 2027. Sri Lanka is one of the few States Parties with large-scale contamination that is on course to complete clearance by the initial deadline set down in the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- In accordance with its National Mine Action Completion Strategy for 2023–2027, Sri Lanka should implement the "completion process" without delay, which includes ongoing non-technical survey (NTS) to identify previously unknown contamination, survey and clearance of registered hazardous areas, and the completion survey that will allow the government to declare released administrative areas as complete.
- Sri Lanka should update and adopt its national mine action standards (NMAS) without further delay.
- Greater efforts should be made to ensure that the national database is up to date and accurate.
- NMAC should establish an in-country forum/platform to bring together all relevant national and international stakeholders regularly to discuss progress and challenges in Article 5 implementation and help strengthen coordination.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	7	7	Sri Lanka's NTS across all conflict-affected districts has added more than 8.8km ² of anti-personnel (AP) mined area to the database since its initiation in 2021. Due to be completed at the end of 2023, it should mean that Sri Lanka will have its most accurate assessment of remaining contamination to date, estimated at 15.4km ² as at the end of 2022.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	7	7	Sri Lanka's national mine action programme is nationally owned, with committed funding from the national government, which although reduced, was still provided in 2022 despite the financial and political crisis in the country. Sri Lanka plans to develop a resource mobilisation strategy in 2023 to increase national and international funding. While no in-country platform exists, regular meetings are held with operators and donors to foster collaboration and consult on sector issues.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	7	7	Sri Lanka's "National Mine Action Completion Strategy for 2023–2027" includes gender and diversity as a cross-cutting issue across all mine action. There was a significant decrease in the number of women employed in the NMAC in 2022 from 2021. However, the Army's Humanitarian Demining Units (HDUs) trained and deployed two female demining teams for the first time.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	5	5	Sri Lanka will begin to use the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core and IMSMA New Generation in parallel from this year rather than conducting a full-scale migration. While a data clean-up took place in 2022, reporting between operators and NMAC continued to reflect disparities and inconsistencies. In its latest Article 7 report covering 2022, Sri Lanka only reported the cumulative multi-year land release totals for 2002–22 rather than disaggregated annual land release outputs.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	8	7	Sri Lanka launched its new national mine action strategy in March 2023. The strategy outlines Sri Lanka's plans for land release to 2027, including annual targets and elaboration of a "completion process", as the framework for the Sri Lankan Government to document and demonstrate compliance with Article 5.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	7	7	Sri Lanka has still not adopted the revised NMAS but has instead decided to update the NMAS on technical survey, land release, and quality management by the end of 2023. Sri Lanka's demining capacity remained largely the same from 2021 to 2022.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	8	8	NMAC reported clearance of nearly 5.27km ² of mined area in 2022, an increase from the previous year despite the financial and political crisis which caused operations to be suspended for a total of 74 days across the four NGOs. Sri Lanka is confident of its ability to meet its Article 5 deadline and has set out a roadmap for completion. This should be achievable provided no substantial discoveries of previously unknown mined area occur and that operational capacity can be maintained.
Average Score	7.1	7.0	Overall Programme Performance: GOOD

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Ministry of Urban Development and Housing
- National Mine Action Centre (NMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Delvon Assistance for Social Harmony (DASH)
- Skavita Humanitarian Assistance and Relief Project (SHARP)
- Sri Lankan Army (SLA) Humanitarian Demining Units (HDUs)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

As at end of 2022, NMAC reported that the total mined area in Sri Lanka stood just over 15.4km² across 621 mined areas: this comprised more than 13.5km² across 534 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and almost 2km² across 87 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) (see Table 1).¹ The total for 2022 is an increase from the almost 11.9km² across 360 mined areas reported as at the end of 2021.² This is due to the addition of mined area identified during the ongoing NTS, which has added more than 8.8km² (almost 7.1km² in 193 CHAs and more than 1.7km² in 64 SHAs) to the database.³ Anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination affects eight of twenty-five administrative districts. Mullaitivu remains the most heavily contaminated of these districts, followed by Kilinochchi, Vavuniya and Mannar.

Table 1: Mined area (at end 2022)⁴

Province	District	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total SHAs and CHAs	Total area (m ²)
Northern	Jaffna	21	955,414	1	24,871	22	980,285
	Kilinochchi	73	1,657,989	2	233,245	75	1,891,234
	Mannar	124	1,333,030	29	169,505	153	1,502,535
	Mullaitivu	233	8,300,152	11	494,109	244	8,794,261
	Vavuniya	41	580,294	16	833,826	57	1,414,120
North Central	Anuradhapura	1	37,399	0	0	1	37,399
	Polonnaruwa	3	19,278	2	33,230	5	52,508
Eastern	Batticaloa	18	314,167	5	45,223	23	359,390
	Trincomalee	20	323,632	21	83,529	41	407,161
Totals		534	13,521,355	87	1,917,538	621	15,438,893

NMAC has added 1.6km² to the baseline as a “buffer” to allow for some polygons being larger than what is currently recorded in Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA).⁵

Sri Lanka has long been extensively contaminated by mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). After a major clearance operation, most remaining contamination is located in Sri Lanka’s five northern districts, the focus of almost three decades of armed conflict between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which ended in May 2009. Both sides made extensive use of mines, including belts of P4 Mk I and Mk II AP blast mines laid by the Sri Lankan Army (SLA), and long defensive lines with a mixture of mines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including AP mines of an improvised nature, laid by the LTTE.⁶ Indian peacekeeping forces also used mines during their presence from July 1987 to January 1990.⁷ Much progress in land release has been achieved over the course of the last decade.

The SLA used both AP and anti-vehicle (AV) mines, with all minelaying said to have been recorded⁸ and made available to the national mine action programme.⁹ In Jaffna, where the minefields were laid by the SLA, the extent of contamination is well understood.¹⁰ The HALO Trust (HALO), in coordination with NMAC and its Regional Mine Action Office (RMAO), has now cleared most of the accessible SLA-laid minefields in Jaffna district. The bulk of the remaining contamination is located in the Jaffna High Security Zone, which is currently only accessible to the SLA. In February 2023, the Sri Lankan government announced they would make 0.65km² of the contamination accessible for clearance and, as of writing, HALO had completed NTS and started clearance of this area.¹¹

Minefield maps and information on mine-laying strategy are not readily available for the LTTE-laid minefields, which pose more of a challenge to clear.¹² Typically, LTTE minelaying was less predictable and more sporadic, and many of the minefields are in jungle areas with limited human activity.¹³

1 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

2 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form C; and email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, Assistant Director/Senior IMSMA Officer, NMAC, 2 August 2022. At the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties to the APMB in November 2021, Sri Lanka reported remaining mined area stood as 12.55km².

3 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 2 August 2022.

4 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C; and email from Jayalath Rohana, IMSMA Officer, NMAC, 6 July 2023.

5 Sri Lanka National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, pp. 20 and 23.

6 Interviews with demining operators, Colombo, 29 March–2 April 2010; and with Maj. Pradeep Gamage, Officer-in-Charge, North Jaffna Humanitarian Demining Unit (HDU), Jaffna, 3 April 2007.

7 Ministry of Prison Reforms, Rehabilitation, Resettlement, and Hindu Religious Affairs, Sri Lanka National Mine Action Strategy 2016–2020, May 2016, p. 6; and Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form 1.

8 Ibid.; and interview with Rob Syfret, Operations Manager, HALO, in Kilinochchi, 12 September 2016.

9 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form 1.

10 Email from Belinda Vause, HALO, 3 April 2020.

11 Email from Nadine Lainer, Deputy Program Manager, HALO, 13 April 2023.

12 Email from Belinda Vause, HALO, 3 April 2020; and Statement of Sri Lanka, Fourth APMB Review Conference, Oslo, 29 November 2020.

13 Email from Belinda Vause, HALO, 3 April 2020.

Operators have encountered a wide range of LTTE devices, including AP mines with anti-tilt and anti-lift mechanisms. Tripwire-activated Claymore-type mines and, to a lesser extent, AV mines have been found, along with a number of forms of improvised devices to act as fragmentation mines, bar mines, electrical and magnetically initiated explosive devices, and mines connected to detonating cord to mortar and artillery shells.¹⁴ The LTTE manufactured almost all the mines their forces used.¹⁵

Estimates of total contamination have fallen sharply: down from 506km² at the end of 2010. A district-by-district re-survey in 2015–17 of all registered SHAs in the national database resulted in cancellation of more than 42km² of mined area and helped provide greater clarity on the extent of remaining contamination.¹⁶ In September 2021, NMAC initiated a comprehensive NTS across all conflict-affected districts to identify previously unknown mined and ERW-contaminated areas.¹⁷ This survey has led to the discovery of significant amounts of mined areas not previously detected. Past NTS had gaps in coverage, and recent efforts tended to be reactive, particularly in

areas with limited human interaction such as the Mullaitivu jungle.¹⁸ The newly found mined areas are often situated in forests, where communities have only recently returned. Additionally, some previously registered CHAs were found to be larger than expected.¹⁹ The survey's findings have contributed to the development of Sri Lanka's new national mine action strategy.²⁰

The NTS is being conducted jointly by the SLA HDU and four clearance non-governmental organisations (NGOs): international NGOs (INGOs) HALO and Mines Advisory Group (MAG), and national NGOs Delvon Assistance for Social Harmony (DASH) and Skavita Humanitarian Assistance and Relief Project (SHARP).²¹ As at July 2023, the NTS was ongoing in the Eastern Province and was expected to be completed before the end of the year.²² NMAC said the current baseline of AP mine contamination has been established through inclusive consultation with women, girls, boys, and men, including, where relevant, from minority groups.²³ According to Sri Lanka, all areas known or suspected to contain AP mines have been marked and warning signs in Sinhala, Tamil, and English prominently displayed.²⁴

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Aside from mines, Sri Lanka remains contaminated with a wide range of ERW, including unexploded air-dropped bombs (although these are very rarely discovered), artillery shells and missiles, mortar bombs, hand-held anti-tank projectiles, and rifle and hand grenades. Large caches of abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO) also exist, particularly in the north.²⁵ These are being dealt with at the same time as the remaining mined areas.²⁶

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

NMAC has responsibility for priority setting, information management, quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC), coordination with demining organisations and cooperation partners, and establishing policy and standards.²⁷ NMAC suffers from frequent leadership and institutional changes, including under which ministry within the Sri Lankan government the Centre sits, while the Director of NMAC is a political appointee and is the Secretary of the ministry in question. Lack of consistent leadership can impede management of the mine action centre and reduce its effectiveness. NMAC now sits within the Ministry of Urban

Development and Housing, after a re-shuffle in August 2022.²⁸ Prior to this the NMAC had undergone near yearly changes to its ministry affiliation.

Clearance operations are coordinated, tasked, and quality managed by a RMAO in Kilinochchi, working in consultation with District Steering Committees for Mine Action. The Committees are chaired by government agents heading district authorities.²⁹ The RMAO also suffer from the impact of a high turnover of staff, following national elections, and also as military personnel are seconded and generally rotate fairly quickly.³⁰

14 Email from Valon Kumnova, HALO, 11 April 2014; and Sri Lanka National Mine Action Strategy 2016–2020, May 2016, p. 6.

15 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form 1.

16 Emails from Belinda Vause, HALO, 3 April 2020; Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 6 April 2020; and GICHD, 13 May 2020.

17 Statement of Sri Lanka on clearance, 19MSP (virtual meeting), 15–19 November 2021; emails from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 2 August 2022; and GICHD, 13 April 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form C.

18 Email from Stephen Hall, Programme Manager, HALO, 5 September 2022.

19 Email from Asa Massleberg GICHD, 30 August 2022.

20 Statement of Sri Lanka on clearance, 19MSP (virtual meeting), 15–19 November 2021; emails from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 2 August 2022; and GICHD, 13 April 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form C.

21 Emails from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 2 August 2022; and Cristy McLennan, MAG, 29 April 2022.

22 Email from Jayalath Rohana, NMAC, 6 July 2023.

23 Email from V. Premachanthiran, NMAC, 25 August 2020.

24 Statement of Sri Lanka on clearance, 19MSP (virtual meeting), 15–19 November 2021.

25 Sri Lanka National Mine Action Strategy 2016–2020, p. 6; and Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form 1.

26 Email from Matthew Hovell, Regional Director, HALO, 30 September 2018.

27 Article 7 Report, submitted in 2019, p. 12.

28 Emails from Asa Massleberg, GICHD, 30 August 2022; and Stephen Hall, HALO, 5 September 2022.

29 Sri Lanka National Mine Action Strategy 2016–2020, p. 9.

30 Email from the GICHD, 13 May 2020.

In November 2021, Sri Lanka announced that in line with the decision taken by the Cabinet of Ministers on 30 May 2021, approval was granted to publish the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines Bill in the Government Gazette and for it to be tabled in Parliament for approval. The Bill (Act No 3 of 2022), which focuses on the prohibitions in Article 1 of the APMBC rather than on regulation of the mine action programme, was certified on 17 February 2022.³¹

The Sri Lankan Government provided 20 million Sri Lankan rupees (approx. US\$61,000, based on exchange rates as at the time of writing) to cover the cost of NMAC in 2022, and 8 million Sri Lankan rupees (approx. US\$24,000) to cover the cost of mine action activities by the SLA HDU.³² This is a dramatic reduction from the 200 million Sri Lankan rupees in total provided in 2021, which is due to the financial and political crisis that Sri Lanka suffered in 2022 that resulted in widespread hardship across Sri Lanka.³³ Sri Lanka seeks to increase national funding for its mine action programme, expand its international donor base and explore other sources of funding. NMAC will develop a resource mobilisation strategy in line with the Oslo Action Plan Action Point 43, providing clear funding targets until the end of 2027. The strategy is expected to be developed and approved by the middle of 2023.³⁴

DASH, HALO, and MAG all reported that importation of demining equipment remained a slow and laborious process due to significant restrictions compounded by the dire economic situation.³⁵ HALO reported a positive working relationship with the NGO Secretariat and experienced a smooth visa application process for international staff with approval granted for the first time to host courses for international staff.³⁶ MAG reported a prompt approval process for international staffing visas, Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), and accreditations.³⁷

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) has worked very closely with NMAC since early 2015. In 2022, the GICHD assessed the implementation of Sri Lanka's previous mine action strategy (2016–20) which guided the development of a new inclusive strategy (for 2023–27), with GICHD support, including the development

of the completion process. The GICHD and the Sri Lankan government facilitated two stakeholder workshops to provide the basis for the new strategy.³⁸

HALO continued to provide capacity development support to NMAC in 2022 focused on supporting the GICHD-led national strategy process as well as the development of the Completion Survey standard operating procedures (SOPs), and related completion declaration forms.³⁹ In 2022, MAG sponsored travel for NMAC and RMAO staff to attend the APMBC meetings in Geneva.⁴⁰

While no regular formal in-country platform exists for coordination of all stakeholders, regular meetings with national and international operators and NMAC/RMAO were held in 2022 to address topics such as outstanding NTS, task reallocation, civilian interference in minefields, and challenges with working on protected land. Due to economic conditions, monthly operational meetings were changed to bi-monthly or quarterly during the year.⁴¹ In addition, mid-year workshops were organised to foster collaboration between all operators and the Forest Department Sri Lanka. These workshops focused on setting standards, discussing novel approaches, and addressing environmental impact concerns while operating in forested areas. NMAC and the GICHD also held several multi-stakeholder workshops to formulate Sri Lanka's National Mine Action Completion Strategy and the completion process. A closing ceremony was organised to which all international donors were invited, providing them with an opportunity to share feedback on the Theory of Change.⁴² Operators reported being fully engaged in the process of developing the strategy and are regularly consulted by the national authorities on sector issues.⁴³

In its new National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, NMAC commits to ensuring regular and structured coordination and transparent information sharing with Sri Lanka government representatives, international donors, operators, and other partners, and will, in close collaboration with partners, organise bi-annual donor coordination meetings and quarterly operations meetings.⁴⁴

31 Statement of Sri Lanka on cooperative compliance, 19MSP (virtual meeting), 15–19 November 2021; Associated Press, "Sri Lanka approves law implementing anti-land mine treaty", *AP News*, 10 February 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form A.

32 Email from Jayalath Rohana, NMAC, 6 July 2023.

33 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 2 August 2022; and Sri Lanka National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, p. 13.

34 Sri Lanka National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, p. 25.

35 Emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, Director/Programme Manager, DASH, 11 April 2023; Cristy McLennan, Country Director, MAG, 12 April 2023; and Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023.

36 Email from Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023.

37 Email from Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023.

38 Email from the GICHD, 2 May 2023.

39 Email from Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023.

40 Email from Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023.

41 Emails from Jayalath Rohana, NMAC, 6 July 2023; and GICHD, 2 May 2023.

42 Ibid.

43 Emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023; Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023; Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023; and Sarath Jayawardhana, Director/Programme Manager, SHARP, 30 April 2023.

44 Sri Lanka National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, p. 25.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Sri Lanka does not have a separate national standard or policy on environmental management. Operators reported that when working in contaminated forest, permissions must be obtained from the National Forestry & Wildlife Commissions, and Archaeology Department who conduct routine visits to help ensure no harm is done to wildlife, forests, and land of archaeological value.⁴⁵ In 2022, HALO organised, on behalf of the NMAC and other operators, a Wildlife & Forestry Commission Technical Working Group. The purpose of which was to agree a more collaborative approach to the clearance of jungle/forested tasks in the most efficient and environmentally sensitive way, including with the use of small, mechanised assets. HALO and MAG have now received ad-hoc authorisation to use mechanised assets in certain forested tasks.⁴⁶

Sri Lanka is vulnerable to climate change-induced hazards, including tropical cyclones and flooding, which will impact the mine action programme and operational planning. Despite facing moderate disaster risk levels, climate change projections predict long-term alterations to the monsoon pattern and ecological regions. In response, Sri Lanka has a comprehensive normative framework, including national policies, strategies, and action plans on climate change and sustainable development, aligned with its obligations as a State Party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and signatory to the Paris Agreement.⁴⁷

DASH does not have an environmental policy or SOP in place but said that preserving the environment is considered a top priority in its clearance operations. DASH keeps vegetation removal to the bare minimum. Where possible, fauna, flora, and soil layers are protected, as they are essential elements of the jungle, agriculture, and other livelihood activities post-clearance.⁴⁸

HALO has a global environmental policy (Version 2 was published in August 2022) but no SOP. Prior to demining, HALO conducts an environmental screening checklist for each minefield to mitigate impact. HALO works in areas where the environment, in particular wetlands, have been damaged by years of armed conflict, subsequent mine clearance operations, and saltwater intrusion. In some areas, mangrove swamps and other flora have grown over extensive mine lines and have had to be cleared. In addition, HALO Sri Lanka recently started the implementation of a wetland conservation and restoration project in collaboration with a national NGO on land cleared by HALO.⁴⁹

MAG has an environmental management SOP, based on international standards. MAG shared the SOP with NMAC to support the development of environmental standards and policies for mine action, in particular to inform discussions with the Forestry and Wildlife Commissions on working responsibly in those areas.⁵⁰ SHARP does not have a policy or SOP on the environment but said that it conducts its operations with great care to prevent any damage to the environment.⁵¹

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The National Mine Action Completion Strategy for 2023–2027 contains a specific section on gender and diversity which recognises that mine action activities need to reflect the distinct needs of age and gender as they are affected differently by explosive ordnance contamination due to their roles and responsibilities. Sri Lanka commits to ensuring that all mine action activities are sensitive to gender and diversity issues and to continue efforts to mainstream these issues across mine action. It recognises that mine action should be tied to the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on Gender Equality. It notes the benefits and importance of offering employment opportunities in mine action to women

and includes the findings from a 2020 GICHD study which revealed that half of all female deminers were the sole income earners in their households, and more than one third of women employed as deminers had no prior income, in contrast to one in twenty men.

As Sri Lanka nears completion, integrating gender and diversity considerations during the staff transition process will be crucial for sustainable and successful outcomes, as outlined in strategic objective 4.⁵² When recruiting for survey and community liaison teams, NMAC recruits personnel to represent ethnic or minority groups in each area.⁵³ Relevant mine action data are disaggregated by sex and age.⁵⁴

45 Emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023; Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023; Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023; and Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 30 April 2023.

46 Emails from Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023; and Cristy McLennan, MAG, 16 August 2023.

47 Sri Lanka National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, p. 16.

48 Email from Brig. (ret.) Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 28 April 2022.

49 Email from Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023.

50 Emails from Cristy McLennan, MAG, 3 and 16 August 2023.

51 Email from Lt.-Col. (ret.) Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 5 August 2022.

52 Sri Lanka National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, pp. 16–17.

53 Statement of Sri Lanka on Victim Assistance, 19MSP (virtual meeting), 15–19 November 2021.

54 Email from the GICHD, 13 April 2022.

Table 2: Gender composition of mine action operators in 2022⁵⁵

Operator	Total staff	Women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Women in operational positions
NMAC	21	1	2	0	17	0
SHARP	181	28	15	5	166	23
DASH	454	100	89	17	337	78
HALO*	1,270	441	101	21	1,079	415
MAG	1,007	234	25	5	938	207

* As of March 2023.

NMAC reported that only 5% of its total employees in 2022 were female, with no women in managerial or operational positions, a dramatic decrease from the previous year. In 2022, for the first time, the SLA HDU trained and deployed two female demining teams.⁵⁶

DASH and fellow national operator, SHARP, have both sought to progressively increase the number of women employed, including in operational positions, recognising the positive impact employment has on women and their families' well-being.⁵⁷ DASH considers gender equality and employment of women important to its programme. In 2022, 22% of DASH's total employees were female, with women holding 23% of operational positions, and 19% of managerial/supervisory level positions.⁵⁸ DASH survey and community liaison teams are in close consultation with beneficiaries and are comprised of people of the affected minority community in the Northern province.⁵⁹

In 2022, 15% of SHARP's total employees were female, with women holding 13% of operational positions, and 33% of managerial/supervisory level positions. SHARP is committed to maximizing female representation, particularly focusing on those impacted by the war, such as war widows, families of casualties, and single mothers. In 2023, SHARP aimed to increase the number of female deminers by one more unit.⁶⁰

International operators HALO and MAG confirmed that they have gender policies in place, with a focus on achieving equal access to employment, gender-balanced survey and clearance teams, gender-focused community liaison outreach, disaggregated data collection, and a gender focus to be employed during pre- and post-clearance assessments.⁶¹

HALO reported that as at March 2023, 35% of its total staff in Sri Lanka were women. This included 38% of all operations staff and 21% of managerial/supervisory level positions.⁶² In 2022, HALO collaborated with other demining operators to conduct a staff survey, which will inform the sector's Staff Livelihood Transition strategy, with a specific focus on supporting groups like female heads of households in their transition to sustainable livelihoods post-2027/28. In line with HALO Sri Lanka's programme strategy for 2023–27, gender-related priorities include providing equitable access to training and advancement opportunities for female staff, and ensuring the well-being of female employees through safeguarding mechanisms, access to childcare, and support for women's health and for pregnant/lactating mothers.

HALO acknowledges the prevalence of social issues within the Northern Sri Lankan community, including widespread domestic violence, which can impact workplace dynamics and performance. In 2022, HALO partnered with a local mental health service provider to conduct mandatory wellbeing workshops for all staff, with options for individual counselling sessions. Addressing issues like domestic violence is a priority, and HALO aims to offer follow-up sessions on specific topics.⁶³

MAG reported that in 2022, 23% of its total staff in Sri Lanka were female, including 22% of operational staff. MAG implements various initiatives to promote women's participation in mine action, including encouraging female applications for vacancies, offering equal opportunities for career advancement, providing separate sanitation facilities, accommodating pregnant women with non-demining tasks, and maintaining zero tolerance for gender-based violence.

55 Emails from Jayalath Rohana, NMAC, 6 July and 29 August 2023; Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023; Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 and 17 April 2023; Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023; and Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 30 April 2023.

56 Email from Jayalath Rohana, NMAC, 6 July 2023.

57 Sri Lanka National Mine Action Strategy 2016–2020, Reviewed version, September 2018, p. 6; and Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form 5.

58 Email from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023.

59 Email from Brig. (ret.) Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 28 April 2022.

60 Email from Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 30 April 2023.

61 Emails from Belinda Vause, HALO, 9 August 2019 and 3 April 2020; Beth Lomas, MAG, 26 July 2019; and Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 6 April 2020.

62 Email from Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023.

63 Ibid.

The Staff Transition Team conducted internal surveys on sexual and gender-based violence, followed by gender sensitisation training. Additionally, gender and market surveys identified in-demand occupations for women

deminers in the North and East, and a mobility support initiative was organised, initially only for women, but later opened also to men. All survey data are used to inform future staff transition initiatives and overall MAG activities.⁶⁴

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

With support from the GICHD, a full migration of Sri Lanka's IMSMA database to IMSMA Core had been scheduled to take place in 2023. But it was decided that, rather than a full migration, IMSMA NG and IMSMA Core will be used in parallel, with Survey123 being used for Sri Lanka's completion survey. This is in recognition of Sri Lanka's limited resources and the time and effort a full migration would require.⁶⁵

A significant database clean-up took place in 2022 and this was continuing into 2023. As at May 2023, the GICHD, with funding from the US Department of State, is recruiting an information management (IM) advisor who will be based in Sri Lanka and provide IM support to NMAC and RMAO.⁶⁶ It is expected that the data clean-up and IM advisor will improve data quality and reduce the disparities between operator and national authority data.

Sri Lanka has long suffered with poor quality data demonstrated by the significant differences in the reported land release between operators and NMAC. Challenges to information management and the establishment of a sustainable national IM capacity stem in part from a lack of resources and also the high level of staff turnover at NMAC and RMAO, as military personnel are seconded and generally rotate fairly quickly.⁶⁷

NMAC officers have received IM training from the GICHD and training in geographic information system (GIS) and mapping from the GICHD and HALO.⁶⁸ In 2023, two NMAC officers attended training on IMSMA Core organised by the GICHD in Switzerland.⁶⁹

In its latest Article 7 transparency report covering 2022, Sri Lanka reported the cumulative amount of mined area cancelled, reduced, and cleared in 2002–22, but not annual survey and clearance output for 2022, which the Convention requires it to report.⁷⁰

PLANNING AND TASKING

In March 2023, Sri Lanka launched its National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, developed with the support of the GICHD. It outlines the mine action programme's strategic orientation to 2027, building on past achievements and incorporating lessons from previous strategies. The strategy reinforces Sri Lanka's commitment to fulfil its APMBBC obligations in alignment with the SDGs.⁷¹

The strategy sets four main goals:

1. Land release and EORE
[explosive ordnance risk education]
2. Coordination and national ownership
3. Management of residual contamination
4. Staff transition.⁷²

As part of the land release and risk education strategic objective, the NMAC, with the support of the GICHD and

in collaboration with the operators, has developed a "completion process", as the framework for the Sri Lankan government to document and demonstrate compliance with Article 5. This involves NTS to identify previously unknown contamination, ongoing survey and clearance of registered hazardous areas, and the completion survey. The completion survey will allow the government to declare administrative areas as "complete", confirming its confidence that all reasonable effort has been applied to identify and clear all mined areas and that there is no further evidence of mines in the administrative area, at the time of signing the completion documents. Each village officer in a district will have to confirm that they are not aware of any explosive ordnance contamination. When all villages within a district are complete, the district authority will sign it off as "mine free". All stakeholders will implement completion surveys in line with the completion survey SOP, developed in 2022.⁷³

64 Email from Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023.

65 Email from the GICHD, 2 May 2023.

66 Ibid.

67 Email from the GICHD, 13 May 2020.

68 Emails from Belinda Vause, HALO, 3 April 2020; and Asa Massleberg, GICHD, 29 August 2023.

69 Email from Asa Massleberg, GICHD, 29 August 2023.

70 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

71 Sri Lanka National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, pp. 1 and 5.

72 Ibid., p. 18.

73 Ibid., p. 20.

Sri Lanka plans to release 17km² of mined area from 2023 to 2027. As at the end of 2022, 15.4km² of confirmed and suspected hazardous area remained and the NMAC has added 1.6km² to the baseline as a “buffer” to allow for some polygons being larger than what is currently recorded in IMSMA. As at the end of 2022, 11 explosive ordnance-affected districts remained and the completion process will allow Sri Lanka to declare a certain number complete every year (see Table 3).⁷⁴

Table 3: Planned land release 2023–27⁷⁵

Year	Land release target (km ²)	EO-affected districts declared completed
2023	4.5	4
2024	4.5	2
2025	4	2
2026	3.5	1
2027	0.5	2

Sri Lanka's mine action programme has a well-developed prioritisation system, outlined in NMAC's National Mine Action Strategy 2016–20. The primary priority is clearance of land for resettlement, particularly the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Further to this, contaminated land planned for livelihood activities (mostly agricultural land), access to public services, and large-scale infrastructure, are also prioritised in accordance with NMAC's national mine action strategy.⁷⁶ According to NMAC, despite marking of contaminated areas and sustained risk education, returnees are likely to enter contaminated areas, especially agricultural areas, to meet their basic livelihood needs. As such, socio-economic pressures and livelihood activities are vital considerations in the prioritisation process in relation to resettlement plans.⁷⁷ As Sri Lanka is approaching completion, all remaining tasks have now been allocated to operators.⁷⁸

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

A review of Sri Lanka's National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), taking into account the local context, was carried out in 2017 with the input of all operators and support from the GICHD. The revised version of the NMAS was never approved and adopted. An NMAC Board of Inquiry (BoI) investigation, following a fatal incident in Trincomalee at the end of 2021 on land that had been released, made recommendations that included the updating of SLNMAS 04.10: Non-Technical Survey, SLNMAS 04: Land Release, and SLNMAS 08: Quality Management.⁷⁹ Updating and approving these standards by the end of 2023 is one of the targets of the National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027. The GICHD was

planning to support this effort from 2023. Alongside this, all operator SOPs are to be reviewed in line with the updated NMAS by the end of 2023.⁸⁰

In 2022 and 2023, the GICHD and HALO supported the development of a completion survey SOP and completion survey forms, allowing for consistent implementation of the completion process until the end of 2027.⁸¹ The GICHD also provided IM support to ensure that completion survey data can be collected, stored, and analysed effectively. The GICHD supported NMAC in organising related training for all operators in March and June 2023.⁸²

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2022, demining operations continued to be conducted by the SLA HDU; national NGOs, DASH and SHARP; and INGOs, HALO and MAG. The NGOs and INGOs are entirely funded by international donors.

With respect to survey capacity in 2022, the SLA HDU deployed 8 NTS teams totalling 15 personnel and 6 technical survey (TS) teams totalling 18 personnel.⁸³ DASH had 4 teams conducting NTS and quality assurance (QA) totalling 17 personnel and 1 team of 3 personnel conducting QA and EORE.⁸⁴ SHARP has 1 NTS team of 3, 2 clearance teams deployed in technical

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 20 and 23.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Email from Belinda Vause, HALO, 3 April 2020.

⁷⁷ Article 7 Report, submitted in 2019, p. 3.

⁷⁸ Email from Asa Massleberg, GICHD, 29 August 2023.

⁷⁹ Email from Stephen Hall, HALO, 16 May 2022.

⁸⁰ Sri Lanka National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, p. 22.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Email from Asa Massleberg, GICHD, 29 August 2023.

⁸³ Email from Jayalath Rohana, NMAC, 6 July 2023.

⁸⁴ Email from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023.

survey totalling 44 staff, and 2 QA teams totalling 5 persons.⁸⁵ MAG deployed 9 NTS teams, for a total of 18 personnel.⁸⁶ HALO deployed between three and five NTS teams per month with each team consisting of four personnel.⁸⁷ TS capacity for DASH, HALO, and MAG is included in Table 4 below, as clearance teams also TS as required.⁸⁸

Table 4: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2022⁸⁹

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers*	Dogs and handlers	Machines**	Comments
DASH	13	257	0	0	
HALO	86	712	0	30	Monthly average across 2022 includes deminers who are also paramedic trained. Machines include front loaders, excavators, backhoes, tillers, and tractors with numbers deployed varying each month.
MAG	50	650	0	24	
SHARP	6	120	0	0	
SLA HDU	6	208	8 dogs; 20 handlers	5	Machines include Bozena and MV 4
Totals	161	1,947	8 dogs; 20 handlers	59	

* Excluding team leaders, medics, and drivers. ** Excluding vegetation cutters and sifters.

DASH reported an increase by one team in its NTS capacity from 2021 to 2022 while SHARP increased its clearance capacity by two teams.⁹⁰ MAG and HALO's capacity remained largely the same.⁹¹ All operators expect to operate with the same capacity in 2023.⁹²

The National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027 stresses the importance of QA and quality control (QC) and while the RMAO has several QA officers responsible for conducting QA visits to all operations insufficient funding and resources hamper their ability to fulfil this responsibility effectively and efficiently.⁹³

DEMINER SAFETY

On 30 May 2022, an accident involving a P4 test mine occurred in the Maritimapatou/Mullaitivu forest area, resulting in injuries to two HALO employees. One employee sustained injuries to the right hand, which resulted in the amputation of the tip of a finger following a secondary infection, and to the left arm and the right side of his face. The other employee sustained temporary hearing loss. The investigation concluded that the explosion was due to the failure of the glue barrier, intended to stop the mechanism from firing, and shear wire. Sri Lanka's NMAC prescribe the use of test mines containing a live detonator to ensure that metal detectors are able to detect certain types of

minimum-metal mines at the required clearance depth of 15cm. The live detonator is left in with its firing mechanism blocked in order to test detection of these mines with their original metal content.

With approval from NMAC, HALO Sri Lanka no longer uses test mines and they have been replaced with test pieces (for detection depth tests) and explosives-free test mines (for HSTAMIDS clearance). The results of the investigation were shared widely among the humanitarian mine action sector and donor base in Sri Lanka.⁹⁴

⁸⁵ Email from Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 30 April 2023.

⁸⁶ Email from Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023.

⁸⁷ Email from Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023.

⁸⁸ Emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023; Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023; and Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023.

⁸⁹ Emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023; Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023; Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023; Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 30 April 2023; and Jayalath Rohana, NMAC, 6 July 2023.

⁹⁰ Email from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023; and Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 30 April 2023.

⁹¹ Email from Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023; and Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023.

⁹² Emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023; Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023; Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023; and Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 30 April 2023.

⁹³ Sri Lanka National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, p. 14.

⁹⁴ Emails from Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April and 17 August 2023.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

According to NMAC data, a total of more than 5.64km² of mined area was released in 2022, of which 5.27km² was cleared, 0.57km² was reduced, and 0.32km² was cancelled. A total of 27,177 AP mines, 69 AV mines, and 4,224 items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) were destroyed during the year.⁹⁵ Survey and clearance data from NGOs differs from NMAC data. All data provided are included below.

SURVEY IN 2022

According to NMAC data, 316,111m² was cancelled through NTS in 2022 (see Table 5) and 56,742m² reduced through TS (see Table 7). The data reported by NMAC varied from the NGOs' own survey data, in some instances significantly. DASH, HALO, and MAG reported to Mine Action Review cancellation of a combined total of 193,485m² through NTS (see Table 6) and reduction through TS of 507,236m² (see Table 8).⁹⁶

The reason for the discrepancies between NMAC and operator survey data is not known, but is likely due to data held/not held in the national IMSMA database, including a back-log of entries outstanding (including a one-week information gap between operator and NMAC data, as RMAO updates IMSMA based on the weekly progress reports of operators; and the fact that cancellation and reduction data are added by NMAC to IMSMA only upon completion of the land release process) or errors in entering or extracting the data.

Table 5: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022 (NMAC data)⁹⁷

District	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Colombo	Sri Lanka Army	52,730
Jaffna	HALO	163,686
Kilinochchi	SHARP	76,683
Mullaitivu	MAG	14,078
Vavuniya	MAG	8,934
Total		316,111

Table 6: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022 (operator data)⁹⁸

District	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Kilinochchi	SHARP	76,483
Mullaitivu	DASH	82,019
Jaffna	HALO	1,434
Kilinochchi	HALO	0
Mullaitivu	HALO	2,172
Mannar	MAG	8,365
Vavuniya	MAG	23,012
Total		193,485

Table 7: Release of mined area through TS in 2022 (NMAC data)⁹⁹

District	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
Kilinochchi	HALO	7,886
Mannar	MAG	4,700
Mullaitivu	DASH	12,493
	HALO	10,415
	MAG	9,257
Vavuniya	MAG	11,991
Total		56,742

Table 8: Release of mined area through TS in 2022 (operator data)¹⁰⁰

District	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
Kilinochchi	HALO	10,041
Mannar	MAG	58,776
	SHARP	9,306
Mullaitivu	DASH	43,332
	HALO	181,713
	MAG	90,277
Vavuniya	MAG	113,791
Total		507,236

⁹⁵ Email from Jayalath Rohana, NMAC, 6 July 2023.

⁹⁶ Emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023; Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023; Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023; and Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 30 April 2023.

⁹⁷ Email from Jayalath Rohana, NMAC, 6 July 2023.

⁹⁸ Emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023; Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023; Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023; and Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 30 April 2023.

⁹⁹ Email from Jayalath Rohana, NMAC, 6 July 2023.

¹⁰⁰ Emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023; Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023; Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023; and Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 30 April 2023.

CLEARANCE IN 2022

According to NMAC, a total of almost 5.27km² of mined area was cleared in 2022, with the destruction of 27,177 AP mines, 69 AV mines, and 4,224 items of UXO (see Table 9).¹⁰¹ This was an increase on the nearly 4.37km² of mined area cleared in 2021, when 23,266 AP mines, 60 AV mines, and 3,513 items of UXO were destroyed during the year.¹⁰² Clearance output in 2021 was limited by restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic and increased in 2022 once the restrictions had been lifted.¹⁰³

Clearance data for 2022 reported by NMAC varied from that reported by the NGOs directly (see Table 10). NMAC believed the main reason for the differences was due to the fact

that its data is updated based on completion reports, while clearance operators use daily progress reports. NMAC also noted that sometimes operators do not consider district borders or take into account their area of responsibility in their reporting.¹⁰⁴

All AP mines are destroyed by the SLA – Engineers Brigade. As per national standards, humanitarian demining operators are not authorised to conduct explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) in Sri Lanka.¹⁰⁵

Table 9: Mine clearance in 2022 (NMAC data)¹⁰⁶

District	Operator	Clearance (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Anuradhapura	SLA HDU	1,248	39	0	0
Jaffna	HALO	36,392	152	0	114
	MAG	5,895	37	0	6
	SLA HDU	93,555	17	0	0
Kilinochchi	DASH	375,924	5,407	26	1,022
	HALO	968,573	7,507	5	1,266
	MAG	38,850	343	1	113
	SHARP	360,250	790	26	297
	SLA HDU	16,605	169	4	31
Mannar	MAG	561,033	1,479	1	26
Mullaitivu	DASH	110,786	2,780	0	41
	HALO	1,477,561	4,794	0	263
	MAG	677,658	2,146	4	515
	SHARP	146,293	159	0	273
	SLA HDU	29,644	34	0	2
Trincomalee	MAG	7,131	53	0	1
	SLA HDU	21,735	1	0	0
Vavuniya	DASH	5,247	515	0	38
	MAG	334,130	755	2	216
Totals		5,268,510	27,177	69	4,224

101 Email from Jayalath Rohana, NMAC, 6 July 2023.

102 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 13 September 2022.

103 Email from Jayalath Rohana, NMAC, 6 July 2023.

104 Email from Mahinda Bandara Wickramasingha, NMAC, 13 September 2022.

105 Email from Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 6 April 2020.

106 Email from Jayalath Rohana, NMAC, 6 July 2023.

Table 10: Mine clearance in 2022 (operator data)¹⁰⁷

District	Operator	Mine clearance (m ²)	AP mines destroyed*	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Jaffna	HALO	36,392	151	0	441
Kilinochchi	SHARP	135,961	790	26	199
	DASH	375,906	3,810	14	739
	HALO	949,908	7,494	5	6,927
	MAG	36,719	350	1	109
Mannar	MAG	570,043	1,403	1	109
Mullaitivu	SHARP	139,065	116	0	156
	DASH	116,033	2,782	14	73
	HALO	1,475,917	4,706	0	2,668
	MAG	668,962	2,133	4	493
Trincomalee	MAG	17,479	53	0	1
Vavuniya	MAG	344,260	741	2	215
Totals		4,866,645	24,529	67	12,130

In addition, HALO destroyed 115 AP mines during spot tasks.¹⁰⁸ The NMAC reported that of the 27,177 AP mines found and destroyed during clearance in 2022, 1,504 were of an improvised nature.¹⁰⁹

SHARP cleared two tasks totalling 9,306m² which proved to contain no AP mines, one of which is ongoing and other was suspended.¹¹⁰ DASH cleared two tasks which proved to contain no AP mines.¹¹¹ HALO cleared one task totally 21,054m² with no AP mines although items of UXO were found and destroyed and reduced 5,057m².¹¹² MAG cleared four tasks which proved to contain no AP mines totalling 16,578m².¹¹³

SHARP increased the amount of mined area cleared in 2022 from 2021 due to greater capacity.¹¹⁴ DASH's overall land release output remained roughly the same although clearance and TS output dropped while NTS output grew as teams were deployed to the ongoing nationwide NTS project.¹¹⁵ HALO reported an overall increase in land release output in 2022 with more area cleared, cancelled, and reduced due to a drop in the loss of working days due to COVID-19 compared to 2021.¹¹⁶ Operational days were lost in 2022 due to nationwide curfews imposed at the peak of Sri Lanka's political and economic crisis as well as from fuel shortages.¹¹⁷

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE

APMBC ENTRY INTO FORCE FOR SRI LANKA: 1 JUNE 2018
↓
ORIGINAL ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JUNE 2028
ON TRACK TO MEET ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE LIKELIHOOD OF COMPLETING CLEARANCE BY 2025 (OSLO ACTION PLAN COMMITMENT): LOW

Under Article 5 of the APMBC, Sri Lanka is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 June 2028. Sri Lanka should still complete clearance by this deadline if it can maintain clearance capacity.

¹⁰⁷ Emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023; Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023; Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023; and Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 30 April 2023.

¹⁰⁸ Email from Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023.

¹⁰⁹ Email from Jayalath Rohana, NMAC, 6 July 2023.

¹¹⁰ Email from Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 30 April 2023.

¹¹¹ Email from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023.

¹¹² Email from Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023.

¹¹³ Email from Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023.

¹¹⁴ Email from Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 30 April 2023.

¹¹⁵ Email from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023.

¹¹⁶ Email from Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023.

¹¹⁷ Emails from Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023; Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023; and Nadine Lainer, HALO, 13 April 2023.

Sri Lanka's original target to complete mine clearance by the end of 2020 was overly ambitious and contingent on significantly increasing funding and capacity. The hoped-for increase in capacity of the SLA HDUs did not materialise,¹¹⁸ with expansion hindered by the army's focus on responding to the Easter Sunday terrorist attacks in April 2019 and by the subsequent COVID-19 pandemic. Progress towards the 2020 target was also hampered by the continued discovery of previously unknown mined area, adding substantially to the contamination baseline.

Table 11: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	5.27
2021	4.37
2020	4.59
2019	*2.94
2018	3.46
Total	20.63

*Mine Action Review calculation

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

The new National Strategy includes managing residual contamination as a strategic objective, with transition to a response to reported contamination by the end of 2027. The SLA HDU, supported by the Police Task Force for EOD call-outs, will manage residual contamination. The government has committed to ensuring the SLA HDU is appropriately equipped, staffed, and resourced to fulfil its responsibilities. A staged transfer of the national mine action database to SLA HDU, along with IMSMA Core training for relevant staff, should facilitate a smooth transition. Sri Lanka recognises the importance of accessible mine action data, including on previously surveyed and cleared areas and the location of explosive ordnance incidents, and the capacity to collect and store future data.¹²¹

The National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027 also includes staff transition as one of its objectives. The National Strategy follows the model developed by MAGs in its “Skills Acquisition and Post-demining Livelihood Transition Strategy”, which supports staff in transitioning to alternative economic activities after redundancy, incorporating a staged transition process into high-demand occupations.

In accordance with the National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, Sri Lanka is confident that it will be able to identify and clear all AP mined area by the end of 2027.¹¹⁹ Whether this is realistic depends in part on how much more mined area is discovered and added to the database during completion of NTS in 2023 and during the “completion surveys”. However, the land release targets set out in the strategy, which are based on a contamination estimate of 17km², should be achievable if current capacity is maintained.

In 2022, despite facing a severe financial and political crisis that inflicted widespread hardships across the country, Sri Lanka was able increase its clearance output from the previous year. However, the crisis had detrimental effects on the mine action programme, leading to fuel shortages that caused the suspension of mine action operations for a total of 74 days across the four NGO operators.¹²⁰ The National Mine Action Completion Strategy for 2023–2027 highlights financial sustainability as a major risk to the programme's success, affecting the achievement of strategic targets and completion by 2027. Both the NMAC and the RMAO are under-resourced and suffer from high staff turnover.

The National Strategy also aims to integrate gender dimensions effectively for non-discriminatory and sustainable outcomes. With funding support through MAG, the government plans to establish an inter-governmental Staff Transition Coordination Platform by mid 2023 and, with the private sector, by the end of 2023. A pilot redundancy programme is scheduled for 2024 as part of the staged transition process. Alongside this, demining staff will be encouraged to participate in tailored training to gain new skills, including training that is gender responsive.¹²²

MAG has supported SHARP and DASH with their staff transition programmes with 120 DASH employees being trained in financial literacy in 2022.¹²³ MAG's Staff Transition Unit, with support from external service providers, is developing fast-track vocation training courses that recognise the prior learning of their demining staff, in order for them to move into the construction sector at an accelerated pace once the sector begins to demobilise. The construction courses under development so far include tiling, building, painting, and heavy vehicle operation.¹²⁴

118 Email from Belinda Vause, HALO, 9 August 2019.
119 Sri Lanka National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, p. 19.
120 Email from Jayalath Rohana, NMAC, 6 July 2023.
121 Sri Lanka National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023–2027, pp. 28–29.
122 Ibid., pp. 30–33.
123 Email from Sarath Jayawardhana, SHARP, 30 April 2023; and Ananda Chandrasiri, DASH, 11 April 2023.
124 Email from Cristy McLennan, MAG, 12 April 2023.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 APRIL 2027
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM**

NATIONAL AUTHORITY ESTIMATE

13.33 km²

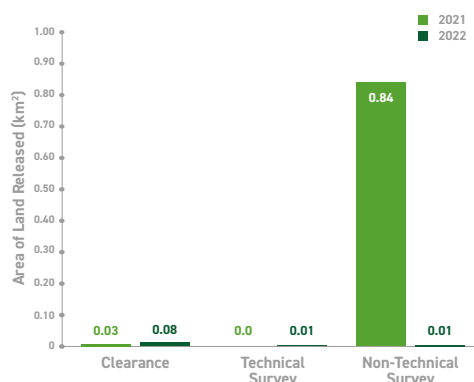
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

0.08 km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

63

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In November 2022, Sudan's request for a four-year extension to its Article 5 deadline was granted with the new deadline set at 1 April 2027. Sudan was asked to submit annual updates on progress and a detailed updated work plan by 30 April 2025 covering the remaining period of the extension. On 15 April 2023, however, fighting broke out in Khartoum between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), an autonomous paramilitary force. Sudan has alleged that the RSF has laid mines during the hostilities, although as at July 2023, this had not been independently verified. The functioning of the National Mine Action Centre (NMAC) and the work of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) were disrupted by the fighting. While Sudan has provided its Article 7 report under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) covering 2022 to Mine Action Review, as at September 2023 it had yet to be formally submitted and published online by the United Nations. Limited other information about mine action was available for the year.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- As soon as circumstances permit, Sudan should finalise and issue a new strategic plan, taking into account the impact of the conflict that started in 2023.
- Sudan should ensure it only clears land where there is firm evidence of the presence of mines and should continue to improve its land release practices ensuring more targeted and efficient land release.
- Sudan should develop a resource mobilisation strategy increasing its international advocacy to attract new and former donors.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	7	7	Sudan initiated non-technical survey (NTS) towards the end of 2019 to establish a national baseline of anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination. Although completion was planned by the end of 2021, insecurity and lack of access have proved major impediments with most of the affected communities in areas that remained inaccessible. It is unclear whether the survey continued in 2022.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	8	8	Sudan's national mine action programme is entirely nationally owned. It benefits from experienced national mine action centre (NMAC) staff and national mine action operators. The NMAC coordinates and receives input on Article 5 implementation with operators and other stakeholders through sub-cluster meetings and a Country Coordination Forum, though the conflict of 2023 has interrupted normal activities. The government has provided funding for mine action at US\$2 million annually for several years although this dropped to US\$500,000 in 2021 following the devaluation of the local currency. Sudan projects that \$32.6 million is required for land release from 2022 to 2027.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	7	7	A new gender and diversity policy was developed and endorsed in 2021 and gender is said to be mainstreamed in the national mine action strategic plan for 2019–23 (which was awaiting approval and, as of April 2022, was under review) and in the national mine action standards. An emphasis is placed on gender-balanced survey teams and the employment of women in the mine action programme. Sudan does acknowledge difficulties in employing women in operational roles due to local customs and traditions. In 2021, 30% of managerial staff in the NMAC were women, but the corresponding figure for operational roles was only 20%. Data for 2022 were not available.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	7	7	The process of upgrading Sudan's Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) was ongoing, with data migration to IMSMA Core having begun in 2022. Sudan had until 2022 submitted timely Article 7 reports, and provides regular updates on progress in Article 5 implementation at the annual meetings of States Parties. In April 2022, Sudan submitted a detailed Article 5 deadline extension request through to 1 April 2027, which was revised in August 2022 and granted in November 2022. As at September 2023, Sudan had yet to officially submit its Article 7 transparency report, but had provided a draft copy to Mine Action Review.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	7	7	A new national mine action strategic plan for 2019–23 has been finalised but, as at May 2022, was awaiting approval. As at writing, it was not known whether the strategy was approved. Sudan provided a two-phase work plan in its 2022 Article 5 deadline extension request, with disaggregated annual targets for release of mined area. In the remaining period of the last extension request to 1 April 2023, Sudan aimed to complete its Article 5 commitments in West Kordofan state, in one locality in Blue Nile State, and in one locality in South Kordofan State; it is not known whether these aims were achieved, but land release data for 2022 indicates that this is highly unlikely.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	7	7	Sudan revised national mine action standards (NMA) in 2021 and in 2022 reported that it had 26 national mine action standards (NMA). In 2021, the Sudanese Regional Training Center was established to deliver mine action training to the Sudan programme. A further decrease in operational capacity, continuing from 2021, was expected in 2022 due to loss of funding. Mechanical road clearance due to begin in 2021 was delayed as a change in the political situation meant it was not possible to import machines.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	6	6	There was a decrease in overall land release in 2022, though clearance outputs increased slightly compared to the previous year. Completion of clearance by the new Article 5 deadline of 1 April 2027 is mainly dependent on securing access to all known and suspected mined areas and on funding. The outbreak of hostilities in April 2023 has, however, exacerbated existing challenges to meeting the deadline.
Average Score	6.9	6.9	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Sudanese National Mine Action Authority (NMAA)
- Sudan National Mine Action Centre (NMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- National Units for Mine Action and Development (NUMAD)
- JASMAR for Human Security
- Global Aid Hand

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- SafeLane Global (SLG)
- Danish Refugee (DRC), which achieved organisational accreditation in 2021 and operational accreditation in 2023.

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)
- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

At the end of 2022, Sudan reported a total of 108 areas suspected or confirmed to contain anti-personnel (AP) mines, covering a total area of 13.33km². Of the 108 hazardous areas, 66 were confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) covering 3.4km², while a further 42 mined areas covering almost 10km² were suspected hazardous areas (SHAs).¹ This is a slight increase from a total of almost 13.28km² of AP mined area reported for the end of 2021 comprising 61 CHAs covering 3.3km² and 41 SHAs covering almost 10km².² According to the national authorities, an additional 77,912m² of mined area was identified in 2022 as part of ongoing survey and clearance and added to the national database.³ The security situation rapidly deteriorated in April 2023 with the onset of hostilities between SAF and the RSF, exacerbating the challenges that Sudan faces in meeting its extended Article 5 deadline of March 2027.

Table 1: AP mined area by state (at end 2022)⁴

State	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total SHAs/CHAs	Total area (m ²)
Blue Nile	10	1,006,217	9	118,432	19	1,124,649
South Kordofan	56	2,362,947	30	9,822,666	86	12,185,613
West Kordofan	0	0	3	21,991	3	21,991
Totals	66	3,369,164	42	9,963,089	108	13,332,253

In addition to AP mined area, Sudan is also contaminated with anti-vehicle (AV) mines. At the end of 2021, 13.54km² of AV mined area across 29 SHAs covered 11.61km² along with 22 CHAs covering 1.93km².⁵ The extent of AV mine contamination at the end of 2022 is not known.

Table 2: AV mined area (at end 2021)⁶

CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total SHA/CHA	Total area (m ²)
22	1,933,503	29	11,606,334	51	13,539,837

* No updated AV mine contamination data was available for 2022.

In the disputed area of Abyei and the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ) between Sudan and South Sudan, the extent of mine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination is unknown as a result of security and political issues.⁷ In Abyei, however, which straddles the border between Sudan and South Sudan, survey and clearance of SHA in 2022 released a total of 15,624m² through manual mine clearance.⁸ Another 252,399m² of SHA was released through battle area clearance (BAC).⁹

1 Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C, received by email from Badreldin Elguafri, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Sudan to the United Nations in Geneva, 22 June 2023, but as at September 2023 it had not been published on the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) website.

2 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, Technical Advisor, NMAC, 31 March 2022; and Article 7 Report (for 2021), Form C.

3 Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form C.

4 Ibid.

5 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, Technical Adviser, NMAC, 31 March 2022.

6 Ibid.

7 UNMAS, "2019 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects, Sudan".

8 Email from Johan Maree, Chief of Operations, UNMAS, United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNIFSA), 27 July 2023.

9 Ibid.

Sudan's mine and ERW contamination results from decades-long conflict since the country's independence in 1956. Twenty years of civil war, during which mines and other munitions were widely used by all parties to the conflicts, resulted in widespread contamination that has claimed thousands of victims.¹⁰ In January 2005, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) ostensibly ended the civil war. A Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) was conducted in 2007–09 covering Blue Nile, Gadaref, Kassala, Red Sea, and South Kordofan states, before armed conflict erupted again in 2011, which continued until 2016. More contaminated areas were expected to be found following the conflict, including AP mines.

There have been “ad hoc” reports of additional mined and ERW-contaminated areas being registered as “dangerous areas” in the national database. This has caused the LIS baseline of 221 hazards to expand significantly, including by encompassing areas not originally surveyed.¹¹ Sudan claimed in August 2022 that mines were still being laid by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA),¹² although this has not been independently reported or verified. Sudan has also asserted that the RSF has laid mines since the conflict broke out in April 2023,¹³ but this had not been independently verified as at July 2023.

NMAC has reported that significant survey is required to more accurately determine the actual extent of AP mine contamination in Sudan.¹⁴ NMAC initiated non-technical

survey (NTS) in November 2019, across Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and West Kordofan states, and the five federal Darfur states to establish evidence-based, accurate baselines of contamination for all explosive ordnance.¹⁵ UNMAS has reported that all affected communities were being consulted during NTS. A total of 27 hazardous areas containing AP mines, covering 3,117,930m², was added to Sudan's database through survey from April 2019 to December 2021 following improvements in the security situation in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states.¹⁶

NMAC had planned to complete all necessary survey by the end of 2021, but insecurity and lack of access impeded this, with most known affected communities in Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and Jebel Marra in Darfur still inaccessible.¹⁷ It was expected that when further survey became possible, additional contaminated areas would be identified, while some areas previously identified as contaminated by the LIS will be cancelled.¹⁸ In 2022, access to South Kordofan and Blue Nile states did improve, and many roads were reported as verified or cleared and opened for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and allowing access for local communities.¹⁹ But Sudan also reported that insecurity had prevented the survey from covering all localities and villages.²⁰ The hostilities that broke out in April 2023 will undoubtedly affect progress in mine and BAC operations across affected states.

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Sudan also has a significant problem with ERW, including limited contamination from cluster munition remnants (CMR), primarily as a result of the long civil war that led to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005 and South Sudan's independence in July 2011 (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Sudan for further information). Contamination from ERW was estimated to total nearly 6.11km² across 99 CHAs and 98 SHAs in 2022.²¹ This contributed to the total contaminated area to be cleared, which in 2022 was estimated at 32.91km² across 182 CHAs and 169 SHAs.²²

While no mines have been found in Darfur, ERW there include unexploded air-dropped bombs, rockets, artillery and mortar shells, and grenades.²³ Of the 63 localities (administrative units) in the five states of Darfur, 44 had been assessed and released by the United Nations – African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) Ordnance Disposal Office by July 2022, leaving 19 to be assessed.²⁴ However, recent intercommunal conflict, reported in 2022, was said to have led to new ERW contamination in some localities.²⁵ At the end of February 2022, following a deterioration in security after UNAMID's withdrawal, survey and clearance operations were suspended.²⁶

10 Email from Ahmed Elser Ahmed Ali, Chief of Operations, NMAC, 9 May 2016.

11 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Executive Summary, 25 November 2013, pp. 2–3.

12 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2022, p. 71.

13 Statement of Sudan on Cooperative Compliance, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

14 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 9 April 2020.

15 Ibid.; and Sudan Multiyear Operational Plan 2020 to 2023, p. 17.

16 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2022, p. 3.

17 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 19 May 2021.

18 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2022, p. 7.

19 Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form F.

20 Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), p. 41.

21 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2022, p. 42.

22 Ibid., p. 7.

23 UNMAS, “2018 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects, Sudan”, at: <http://bit.ly/2GjD3nm>.

24 Email from Aimal Safi, Senior Operations and QM Advisor, UNMAS, 7 July 2022.

25 Ibid.

26 Emails from Aimal Safi, UNMAS, 27 March and 7 July 2022.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Sudanese National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) and NMAC manage Sudan's mine action programme. Following the independence of South Sudan, NMAC assumed full ownership of national mine action in Sudan, with responsibility for coordinating and supervising the implementation of all mine action activities, including quality assurance (QA), accreditation, and certification of clearance operators. The 2010 Mine Action Act, which comprises 29 articles across four chapters, is Sudan's national mine action legislation. Chapter four covers Sudan's APMBC obligations, such as clearance of mined areas and reporting, with penalties for those who work in mine action without first obtaining a licence from NMAC.²⁷

Having first started an emergency programme in 2002, UNMAS re-established advisory and support activities in Sudan in 2015, following an invitation from the Government, with a view to further enhancing national mine action capacity and supporting the fulfilment of Sudan's APMBC obligations.²⁸ Since January 2021, UNMAS has supported the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) established in June 2020, providing mine action services as part of the mission's mandate. Mine action falls under strategic objective (iii): "Assist peacebuilding, civilian protection and rule of law, in particular in Darfur and the Two Areas". UNMAS works with the NMAC to mobilise funds, manage land release, conduct risk education and victim assistance; and ensure mine action activities are coordinated to support humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding needs. With the closure of UNAMID in 2020, UNMAS took over responsibility for the ERW response in Darfur from UNAMID's Ordnance Disposal Office (ODO).²⁹

In May 2023, Mine Action Review was informed that the conflict had scattered NMAC staff and its Khartoum offices had been looted. UNMAS international staff had been withdrawn from Sudan and had no access to the mine action database.³⁰ In response to the conflict in 2023, UNMAS has provided risk education messages on social media and in hard copy, and plans to do the same on television and radio. It has also delivered ordnance safety briefings to UN agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and other civil society organisations (see the *Planning and Tasking* section below for further details of UNMAS's planned response to the recent conflict).³¹

Building reliable and sustainable local capacity is a key focus for NMAC,³² and in 2021, Sudan set up the Regional Training Center in Khartoum.³³ Sudan has highlighted its plans for developing national capacity using an evidence-driven process to strengthen the abilities of national individuals and systems to perform core functions sustainably, and to continue to improve and develop over time.³⁴

As part of its mandate, UNMAS provides organisational and individual capacity development to NMAC.³⁵ In 2022, UNMAS planned to deliver training on land release, online data collection, and quality management (QM), among other issues.³⁶ It is not known whether this was achieved. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) has also supported NMAC, and has provided remote support for the implementation of Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core since 2021. The GICHD lost contact with NMAC after the conflict broke out in April 2023, and IMSMA Core implementation has been on standby since then.³⁷ In the first five months of 2022, Sudan participated in two Arab Regional Cooperation Programme (ARCP) training workshops run by the GICHD in support of IMSMA Core implementation and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), and two participants attended an additional IMSMA Core training event in Lebanon in June 2022.³⁸

In recent years, the government of Sudan has maintained a consistent level of national funding for mine action in local currency, but due to the devaluation of the local currency against the US dollar, this had fallen from \$2 million worth of funding in 2019 and 2020 to only \$500,000 in 2021 and 2022. Sudan had expected national funding to be maintained and potentially to increase as the political and economic situation across the country improved,³⁹ but the 2023 conflict throws this into doubt.

Sudan had calculated that it required \$32.6 million between 2022 and 2027 for land release activities (for all ordnance, not just AP mines). This works out at \$6,975,000 per year for 2022 to 2025, \$3,555,000 for 2026, and \$1,150,000 for 2027. As at 2022, international donors had been funding the mine action programme through UNMAS and the amount that had been confirmed for 2022 and 2023, \$2,902,000 and \$1,852,000 respectively, falls far short of what Sudan has projected it needs, although some additional funds were

27 GICHD, "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Sudan", March 2012; and Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A.

28 UNMAS, "Sudan (excluding Darfur)", Updated March 2019, at: <http://bit.ly/2Y3IDUg>.

29 UNMAS Sudan webpages, accessed 9 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/43Shldk>.

30 Emails from Robert Thompson, Head of Project Unit (HPU)/Chief of Operations (COO), UNMAS, UNITAMS, 5 and 18 May 2023.

31 UNMAS Sudan webpages, accessed 10 July 2023.

32 Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), p. 41.

33 Emails from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 31 March 2022.

34 Statement of Sudan, APMBC Twentieth Meeting of States Parties (20MSP), Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

35 Email from Aimal Safi, UNMAS, 31 May 2020.

36 Email from Aimal Safi, UNMAS, 27 March 2022.

37 Email from Henrik Rydberg, Country Focal Point, GICHD, 8 August 2023.

38 Emails from Henrik Rydberg, GICHD, 13 April, 3 June, and 10 August 2022, and 8 August 2023.

39 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2022, p. 4.

pledged for 2022. In 2022, the Sudan Mine Action Programme received a total of \$1,942,634 for land release activities from various donors through UNMAS.⁴⁰ Sudan and UNMAS had been working on resource mobilisation and had managed to expand the donor pool,⁴¹ and Sudan encourages international organisations and companies that wish to work in the field of mine action.⁴² Given the conflict that broke out in April 2023, all plans and costings will have to be revisited when it is possible to do so.

In Sudan, not including Jebel Marra, and the disputed territory of Abyei (where UNMAS within the United Nations Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) supports humanitarian mine action as outlined below), UNMAS and NMAC lead mine action sub-cluster meetings to coordinate progress, tackle challenges, and support the implementation of Article 5 of the APMBC in Sudan. All relevant implementing partners, NGOs, UN agencies, and government authorities participate. During these meetings mine action projects for the annual

Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) are usually developed and prioritised through a consultative process.⁴³ In addition, NMAC ordinarily holds a Country Coordination Forum with all stakeholders twice a year, though only one took place in 2021 due to the political and security situation,⁴⁴ and none was held in 2022.⁴⁵

UNISFA does not have a mandate to conduct mine clearance, but UNMAS has continued its UN Security Council-mandated role in Abyei, which includes identification and clearance of mines and route assessment in the Safe Demilitarized Buffer Zone (SDBZ) between Sudan and South Sudan and Abyei. It operates through implementing partners, and acts in support of peacekeeping operations, the delivery of humanitarian aid, the safe return of internally displaced persons (IDPs), and the nomadic migration of animals. UNMAS received funding of \$10.54 million for its activities in Abyei from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.⁴⁶

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Sudan reports having a policy on environmental management in place, which includes information on how mine action operators should minimise potential harm from demining activities.⁴⁷ A dedicated national mine action standard (NMAS) on environmental management and an environmental impact assessment had been introduced, which were due to be implemented in 2022,⁴⁸ although at the time of writing it was not known whether they had taken effect.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

A new gender and diversity policy was developed and endorsed in 2021. Gender is mainstreamed in the national mine action strategic plan for 2019–23 (which was under review as of August 2022)⁴⁹ and in the NMAS for risk education, survey, clearance, and victim assistance.⁵⁰ NMAC stated that, in line with the policy and the strategic plan, all survey and community liaison teams were to be gender balanced, and women and children must be consulted during survey and community liaison activities. Gender is also said to be considered in the prioritisation, planning, and tasking of survey and clearance, as per the NMAS and the new standard IMSMA forms.⁵¹

NMAC has previously reported that mine action data are disaggregated by sex and age.⁵² In 2020, UNMAS reported working with NMAC to improve this aspect of mine action

reporting and information management because sex- and age-disaggregated data of land release beneficiaries were not being captured in IMSMA.⁵³ New reporting tools were added to the system and new reporting formats were developed for NGOs to include this information.⁵⁴

NMAC reported that ethnic minority groups in affected communities are consulted during survey and considered during the planning of mine action activities. Survey teams are also structured to address all affected groups within a community, including ethnic minorities.⁵⁵ As part of the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and peacebuilding efforts, 21 ex-fighters from one of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) factions, Malik Agar, located in the Bau/Ulu locality and Ingasana mountains, completed training in IMAS EOD [explosive

40 Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form F.

41 Revised 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2022, pp. 8 and 30.

42 Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form F; and Statement of Sudan on Cooperative Compliance, Interseasonal Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

43 UNMAS, "2019 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects, Sudan" at: <http://bit.ly/3d0FtVH>; and email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 9 April 2020.

44 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 31 March 2022.

45 Statement of Sudan on Cooperation and Assistance, 20MSP, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

46 UNMAS, "Where we work: Abyei", accessed 30 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3waA8Fr>.

47 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 31 March 2022.

48 Email from Aimal Safi, UNMAS, 27 March 2022.

49 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2022, p. 20.

50 Email from Aimal Safi, UNMAS, 27 March 2022.

51 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 19 May 2021.

52 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 9 April 2020.

53 Email from Aimal Safi, UNMAS, 31 May 2020.

54 Email from Aimal Safi, UNMAS, 22 July 2020.

55 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 19 May 2021.

ordnance disposal] Level 1 during 2021. The former soldiers were integrated into mine action operations to conduct land release in the Ulu and Ingasana areas, which are heavily contaminated with mines and ERW including CMR.⁵⁶ Sudan has reported that land release did take place in the area in 2022,⁵⁷ but it is not known whether the former fighters were involved in these operations.

NMAC says it always encourages women to apply for employment in the national programme, whether at the office level or in the field. In 2021, 30% of NMAC staff employed at the managerial or supervisory levels were women, as were 20% of staff in operational positions.⁵⁸ Data for 2022 were not available. The first female deminer was employed in late

2019.⁵⁹ In 2021, a group of 28 women from different states and ethnic groups completed basic demining training. They were due to begin working within the different mine action operators by April 2023,⁶⁰ but it is not known whether this went ahead as planned.

UNMAS reported that, as at March 2022, around half of the NTS team members were women. UNMAS Sudan had 16 staff members, of whom four programme officers are women along with one of the support service staff. In addition, within the national operators contracted by UNMAS there were women working in managerial positions and the medics and community liaison officers in most of the field teams were female.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

In 2018, NMAC began upgrading the IMSMA software to a more recent New Generation (NG) version, with assistance from the GICHD. Significant efforts were made to correct errors in the database.⁶¹ In 2021, an IMSMA Officer deployed from the Swiss government was embedded within the NMAC to support the information management department and an agreement was signed to grant Sudan a licence for the geographic information system (Arc GIS) software.⁶² In 2022, Sudan began the migration to IMSMA Core.⁶³

NMAC receives monthly reports on the disputed region of Abyei from UNMAS UNISFA that include information about hazardous areas identified.⁶⁴ In 2022, UNMAS UNISFA assessed information in the NMAC database and sent corrections to the NMAC. In addition, UNMAS UNISFA provides monthly achievement reports to NMAC and to UNMAS Sudan. NMAC does not enter this information into the IMSMA database, so the database continues to contain out-of-date information on Abyei.

UNMAS UNISFA had previously co-located an IMSMA officer within the NMAC office in Khartoum to help share historical data and to provide monthly reports to NMAC on activities in Abyei. The officer was relocated in 2019 due to security concerns but continues to assist the NMAC remotely when needed. The complete UNMAS UNISFA database cannot be shared with the NMAC due to compatibility issues.⁶⁵

Sudan usually submits timely Article 7 transparency reports and gives regular statements on progress at meetings of States Parties to the APMBC. In April 2022, Sudan submitted an Article 5 deadline extension request to 1 April 2027, which it revised in August 2022, adding information. The extension request was comprehensive and of a good quality despite the ongoing challenges faced by the mine action programme. As at September 2023, Sudan had yet to submit its Article 7 transparency report covering 2022, but had provided a draft copy to Mine Action Review.

PLANNING AND TASKING

In March 2022, NMAC reported that the new national mine action strategic plan for 2019–23 had been finalised but, as indicated above, was still awaiting approval.⁶⁶ In its revised 2022 Article 5 deadline extension request, Sudan reported that the strategy was being reviewed and aligned with the extension period, and that deadlines and strategic objectives were to be amended in consultation with mine action stakeholders, with the updated mine action strategy to be issued in February 2023.⁶⁷ It is not known whether this occurred.

56 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2022, p. 23.

57 Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), Annex II.

58 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 31 March 2022.

59 Email from Aimal Safi, UNMAS, 12 April 2021.

60 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2022, p. 22.

61 Emails from Ahmed Elser Ahmed Ali, NMAC, 9 May and 8 June 2016; and Article 5 deadline Extension Request, March 2018, pp. 37–38.

62 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 31 March 2022.

63 Email from Henrik Rydberg, GICHD, 3 June 2022; and Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form F.

64 Email from Johan Maree, UNMAS UNISFA, 27 July 2023.

65 Ibid.

66 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 31 March 2022.

67 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2022, p. 20.

Sudan specified that by 1 April 2023 (the deadline for its previous Article 5 extension request) it aimed to complete its Article 5 commitments in one state—West Kordofan (covering the localities of Abyei and Lagawa)—as well as in one of three contaminated localities in Blue Nile State (Giessan) and in one of five contaminated localities in South Kordofan State (Abu Jubeeha).⁶⁸ It is not known whether this was achieved, but release data for 2022 suggest this is highly unlikely (see *Land Release Outputs and Article 5 Compliance* section below for further information).⁶⁹ For 2021, Sudan provided various inconsistent land release targets, ranging from 1,171,461m² to 9,243,370m².⁷⁰ None was disaggregated by type of ordnance: a total of 1,955,407m² of contaminated area was reported as released in 2021.⁷¹ In April 2023, just before the outbreak of hostilities, Sudan indicated that it planned to undertake survey and assessment mainly in Blue Nile, South Kordofan and Darfur states during the operational year 2023–24,⁷² but the conflict will have disrupted this and other plans.

In its 2022 revised Article 5 deadline extension request, Sudan outlined a two-phase work plan, providing disaggregated annual land release targets to 2027.⁷³ Phase 1, from 2023 to 2025, includes the release of all accessible hazardous areas, including new areas identified through survey. This would involve completing its Article 5 commitments in the remaining two localities in Blue Nile (Bau and Kurmuk) and one of four remaining localities in South Kordofan (Rashad).⁷⁴ In Phase 2, from 2025 to 2027, inaccessible contamination listed in the database is to be released,⁷⁵ with survey and clearance of the three remaining localities in South Kordofan.⁷⁶

NMAC has maintained a commitment to address the impact of all types of contamination on affected populations although the main focus is AP mines, and its revised Article 5 extension request reflects this. NMAC has highlighted how the return of refugees and IDPs to residential areas, agricultural land, and pasture since the start of the Juba Peace Talks and Peace Agreement have been obstructed by ordnance, including on roads and routes, blocking livelihoods and the provision of humanitarian assistance. Sudan's three- to five-month rainy season exacerbates the situation, isolating affected communities while roads that could be used during the rainy season are not usable due to AV mines.⁷⁷

To meet its new 2027 Article 5 deadline, Sudan indicated that it aims to improve its land release process and

methodology. This involves releasing more area through survey; enhancing the capacity of mine action operators in survey, clearance, and information management; increasing mechanically assisted demining; using new multitask teams (MTTs with eight or more deminers) and quick-response teams (QRTs); and introducing advanced detection equipment and tools.⁷⁸ In addition, Sudan hoped that the international community would provide the financial resources needed, and that access to informants would enhance land release decision-making. In addition, NMAC was to work with UNMAS and other stakeholders to enhance its resource mobilisation strategy.⁷⁹

Sudan has highlighted that its plan under the extension request is based on the assumptions that there will be an improvement in the security situation in all the regions contaminated by mines and ERW and required funds will be secured to implement programme activities.⁸⁰ It will provide annual updates in its Article 7 reports regarding a) changes in security and access to mined areas; b) progress in survey implementation and c) updated annual milestones for land release. It undertook to provide annual work plans and an updated work plan for Phase 2 (2025–27). As the situation changes Sudan indicated that it may need to request additional time and resources;⁸¹ the hostilities in 2023 will be a case in point.

UNMAS has indicated its planned response to the recent conflict, it will: assess new contamination; continue to provide emergency risk education; set up a hotline to receive reports of items of explosive ordnance and accidents; and develop a database using reported information to share with the humanitarian community. In addition, when security permits, UNMAS will deploy EOD and survey teams to release high-priority areas in order to protect civilians and enable humanitarian interventions. UNMAS also plans, in collaboration with NMAC, to coordinate the mine action response in Sudan, working closely with the Protection Cluster.⁸²

Sudan has a system for the prioritisation of tasks. There are agreed impact criteria at the national level while in the field, the sequence of addressing priority hazardous areas are decided in consultation with local stakeholders and communities, taking into account gender and diversity, and engaging the humanitarian and development sectors and local authorities.⁸³ In 2021, a systematic prioritisation

68 Ibid., p. 49.

69 Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form F.

70 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Detailed Narrative, 17 August 2018, Table 14, p. 18; and Multiyear Operational Plan 2020–23, p. 21.

71 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F.

72 Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form F.

73 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2022, pp. 50–58.

74 Ibid., p. 50.

75 Ibid., pp. 46–50.

76 Ibid., p. 50.

77 Ibid., pp. 7 and 44.

78 Ibid., pp. 44–45.

79 Ibid., p. 45.

80 Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form F.

81 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2022, p. 66.

82 UNMAS Sudan webpages, accessed 10 July 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/43Shldk>.

83 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2022, pp. 34 and 36.

system was introduced as part of the new NMAS and linked with IMSMA with each SHA and CHA classified as high, medium, or low impact and prioritised accordingly.⁸⁴ UNMAS has reported that, when operations are underway, all task

dossiers relating to survey and clearance are issued in accordance with agreed criteria and prioritisation. NMAC and UNMAS work together on planning and tasking to meet the need for further development.⁸⁵

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

In May 2021, NMAC reported that a review of Sudan's NMAS had been completed and the revised standards had been endorsed.⁸⁶ The NMAS were reviewed by a technical committee comprised of representatives from NMAC, UNMAS, and national operators with the support of an international expertise from UNAMID. UNMAS is working with the NMAC and national operators to develop their standard operating procedures (SOPs) to ensure they are compliant with the new NMAS.⁸⁷

In 2021, the Sudanese Regional Training Centre was established to deliver mine action training to the Sudan programme. The Centre was also to support mine action programmes in neighbouring countries.⁸⁸ Planned training to build national capacity includes: specialist training courses to enhance release operations; institutional and individual capacity building; regular reviews of NMAS to ensure compliance with IMAS; enhancing the efficiency of information management; specialist training courses including EOD for institutions that will be responsible for managing residual risk.⁸⁹

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

National operators active in mine action in Sudan in 2022 were JASMAR for Human Security (JASMAR), the National Units for Mine Action and Development (NUMAD), and Global Aid Hand (GAH).⁹⁰ According to NMAC, NUMAD is developing its capacity in survey and clearance, whereas GAH and JASMAR are focusing on survey and clearance operations plus risk education and victim assistance.⁹¹

There are two international operators, SafeLane Global, which became operational in December 2020, and Danish Refugee Council (DRC), which was granted organisational accreditation in 2021.⁹² In 2022, DRC trained an NTS team consisting of a team leader (male) and two operators (one female and one male) along with a driver.⁹³ The training was completed on 10 January 2023 and was followed by two-day operational assessment conducted by NMAC when DRC achieved operational accreditation.⁹⁴ At the end of February 2023, the team was deployed in the Kadugli locality in a government-controlled area of South Kordofan State.⁹⁵

By mid-June 2023, however, DRC's humanitarian mine action teams (two risk education teams, including one from its partner GAH, and the NTS team), which had continued to operate in Kadugli with the approval of the local Humanitarian Aid Commission (the governmental body that manages and organises humanitarian work in Sudan) and NMAC offices, had been instructed by the Kadugli NMAC office to suspend its operations due to insecurity.⁹⁶ At the beginning of July 2023, with NMAC and HAC approval, EORE and NTS in Kadugli resumed, depending on force deployments locally⁹⁷ and with a HAC representative present during operations.⁹⁸

84 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 31 March 2022.

85 Email from Aimal Safi, UNMAS, 31 May 2020.

86 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 19 May 2021.

87 Email from Aimal Safi, UNMAS, 12 April 2021.

88 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 31 March 2022.

89 Informal presentation by Sudan on its Article 5 extension request, 20MSP, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

90 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 19 May 2021.

91 Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form F.

92 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2022, p. 47.

93 Emails from Johannes de Jager, Operations Manager, Humanitarian Mine Action, DRC, 28 February and 12 June 2023.

94 Ibid.

95 Email from Johannes de Jager, DRC, 28 February 2023.

96 Emails from Johannes de Jager, DRC, 12 June and 26 June 2023.

97 Email from Johannes de Jager, DRC, 23 July 2023.

98 Email from Johannes de Jager, DRC, 6 August 2023.

Table 3: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2021⁹⁹

Operator	Manual clearance teams (MCTs) or Multitask teams (MTTs)	Total deminers	Dogs and handlers	Machines
NUMAD	0	0	2 dogs & 2 handlers	RVCT mainly for road clearance
JASMAR	1 MCT 9 MTTs	8 32	0	0
SLG	2 MTTs	10	0	0
Global Aid Hand	1 MTT	4	0	0
Totals	13	54	2 dogs & 2 handlers	0

Table 4: Operational survey capacities deployed in 2021^{100*}

Operator	NTS teams	Total NTS personnel	TS teams	Total TS personnel
JASMAR	3	12	10	44
NUMAD	0	0	1	8
Global Aid Hand	5	20	3	12
Totals	8	32	14	64

TS = technical survey. *No updated data were available for 2022.

The multi-task teams MTTs and manual clearance team MCT were deployed for the clearance of all priority hazardous areas, with a focus on AP mined areas. Due to a drop in funding, operational capacity was expected to decrease for the operational year 2022–23.¹⁰¹

During the period of the extension request Sudan plans to deploy two mechanical teams (for road/route clearance); six multitask teams of eight deminers, each which will be supported by the mechanical teams and mine detection dogs (MDDs) as required; and twelve quick-response teams of four deminers, each of which could become additional multitask teams.¹⁰²

Demining in Sudan has been carried out primarily using manual clearance, though MDD teams are also used for TS, route/road clearance, and QA. No machines had been employed in demining by the first quarter of 2022. In 2020, NMAC worked with UNMAS to develop a mechanical capacity for Sudan for road/route clearance. It was planned that this capacity would become operational by the middle of 2021 but due to changes in the political situation it was not possible to bring the machines into the country. Instead, UNMAS planned to procure Dual Sensor Detectors (VMR3G “Minehound”) to be used for the detection of minimum metallic mines, especially those laid on the roads and routes. UNMAS also planned to run technical workshops during 2022 aimed at improving the efficiency of land release.¹⁰³ It is not known whether these took place.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

In 2022, a total of just over 0.09km² of AP mined area was released in Sudan; 0.08km² through clearance, while 0.01km² was reduced through technical survey (TS), and less than 0.01km² was cancelled through NTS.¹⁰⁴ A total of 63 AP mines were found and destroyed during clearance, including those cleared in uncompleted tasks.¹⁰⁵ As indicated above, in the disputed territory of Abyei, 15,624m² of SHA was cleared manually.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ Emails from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 31 March 2022; and Aimal Safi, UNMAS, 27 March 2022.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2022, pp. 8–9.

¹⁰³ Emails from Aimal Safi, UNMAS, 12 April 2021 and 27 March 2022; and Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 19 May and 5 August 2021.

¹⁰⁴ Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form F; and email from Robert Thompson, Head of Project Unit (HPU)/Chief of Operations (COO), UNMAS, UNITAMS, 10 July 2023.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Email from Johan Maree, UNMAS UNISFA, 27 July 2023.

This compares with 2021 when a total of 0.87m² of AP mined area was released, of which 0.03km² was cleared and 0.84km² was cancelled through NTS, with a total of 17 AP mines destroyed (a further five AP mines were destroyed in EOD spot tasks). No area was reduced through TS in 2021.¹⁰⁷

SURVEY IN 2022

JASMAR cancelled 6,283m² of hazardous area through NTS in Blue Nile state in 2022, and reduced another 12,226m² through TS.¹⁰⁸ This is a significant decrease in the area cancelled from 2021, when 838,298m² was released through NTS in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states,¹⁰⁹ but an increase in the area reduced with no area reduced by TS in 2021.

Table 5: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022¹¹⁰

State	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Blue Nile	JASMAR	6,283
Total		6,283

Table 6: Release of mined area through TS in 2022¹¹¹

State	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Blue Nile	JASMAR	12,226
Total		12,226

CLEARANCE IN 2022

In 2022, JASMAR cleared 32,062m² of hazardous area in Blue Nile state and another 43,144m² in South Kordofan, and found and destroyed 32 AP mines and 14 AV mines. Another 31 AP mines were destroyed in uncompleted tasks.¹¹² This is a slight increase on the area cleared in 2021 when 30,155m² was cleared by NUMAD, JASMAR, SLG, and Global Aid Hand in Blue Nile and South Kordofan with the destruction of 17 AP mines during clearance and 5 during spot tasks.¹¹³

Table 7: Mine clearance in 2022¹¹⁴

State	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Blue Nile	JASMAR	32,062	21	9	1,280
South Kordofan	JASMAR	43,144	11	5	520
Spot tasks			0	0	N/K
Totals		75,206	*32	14	1,800

* Another 31 AP mines were destroyed but not included in Table 7 as the tasks have not yet been completed.¹¹⁵

No AP or AV mines were reported as destroyed in spot tasks in 2022,¹¹⁶ whereas in 2021 five AP mines were destroyed by JASMAR and four AV mines were destroyed by SLG during spot tasks.¹¹⁷ Two hazardous areas along roads, surveyed during the LIS in 2007 were released in 2021 covering 935,398m²; neither was found to contain AP mines.¹¹⁸

107 Emails from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 31 March 2022; and Aimal Safi, UNMAS, 27 March 2022; and Article 7 Report (for 2021), Form F.

108 Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form F; and email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, UNITAMS, 10 July 2023.

109 Emails from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 31 March 2022; and Aimal Safi, UNMAS, 27 March 2022; and Article 7 Report (for 2021), Form F.

110 Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form F; and email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, UNITAMS, 10 July 2023.

111 Ibid.

112 Ibid.

113 Emails from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 31 March 2022; and Aimal Safi, UNMAS, 27 March 2022.

114 Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form F; and email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, UNITAMS, 10 July 2023.

115 Draft Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form F.

116 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, UNITAMS, 10 July 2023.

117 Emails from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 31 March 2022; and Aimal Safi, UNMAS, 27 March 2022.

118 Ibid.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the four-year extension granted by States Parties in 2022), Sudan is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 April 2027. It is unlikely to meet this new extended deadline.

This is Sudan's third Article 5 deadline extension since becoming a State Party to the APMBC in 2004. It continues to be hampered by poor security. In 2022 full access to most of the known affected communities in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states was still not possible. While there have been some improvements in the past few years, which allowed for access to conflict-affected communities in these areas, completion of clearance by the new deadline is reliant on achieving access to all known and suspected contaminated areas.

Before the eruption of fighting in April 2023, positive developments included a preliminary peace deal signed by Sudan's transitional government and the head of one of the two factions of the SPLM-N rebel group in 2020, after which NMAC in cooperation with UNMAS, began to deploy teams to clear roads and other routes to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Blue Nile state.¹¹⁹ Sudan also reported in 2020 a joint initiative with Chad to clear the border areas between the two countries. This was on hold due to the political and security situation in 2022 though Sudan was committed to proceeding when this became possible.¹²⁰ In June 2021, the UN reported that humanitarian agencies had been able to access conflict-affected

communities in the five areas controlled by the SPLM-N El Hilu in South Kordofan and Blue Niles states for the first time in ten years.¹²¹ However, the outbreak of hostilities in April 2023, disrupting mine action activities, adds a significant challenge for Sudan in meeting its new Article 5 deadline.

Table 8: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km²)
2022	0.08
2021	0.03
2020	0.35
2019	0.87
2018	0.98
Total	2.31

Sudan has reported that other obstacles to completion include inadequate funding and lack of sufficient demining equipment, rising inflation, newly discovered contamination being added to the database, and climatic factors and geographical conditions, including the impact of climate change on extended rainy seasons.¹²² It is likely that these challenges will continue into the new extension period, and together with the new hostilities of 2023, are likely to prevent Sudan from reaching completion by the deadline of 1 April 2027.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Sudan has a plan to deal with residual risk and liability post-completion.¹²³ As at March 2022, NMAC has continued to deal with any residual contamination in the Eastern states through deploying teams with government funding. However, it is planned that, in the long term, Sudan will establish a sustainable national capacity within the military or police.¹²⁴ Sudan is to provide annual updates on organisational and institutional capacities to respond to residual contamination¹²⁵ and specialist training for the institution assigned responsibility for managing residual risk.¹²⁶

119 Statement of Sudan on Article 5, Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties, 16–20 November 2020; and Statement by Sudan on Cooperation and Assistance, 20MSP, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

120 Statement of Sudan on Cooperation and Assistance, Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties, 16–20 November 2020; and email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 31 March 2022.

121 Joint UN Press Release, "UN agencies in Sudan reach conflict-affected communities in non-government-controlled areas for first time in a decade", 13 June 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3j7wMiP>.

122 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 19 May 2021; and Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, August 2022, pp. 4–5.

123 Email from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 9 April 2020.

124 Emails from Hatim Khamis Rahama, NMAC, 19 May 2021 and 31 March 2022.

125 Statement by the Chair of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation on the Analysis of the Request for extension by Sudan, August 2022, 20MSP, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

126 Informal presentation by Sudan on its Article 5 deadline extension request, 20MSP, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2025
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM**

NATIONAL AUTHORITY ESTIMATE

11.45 km²

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

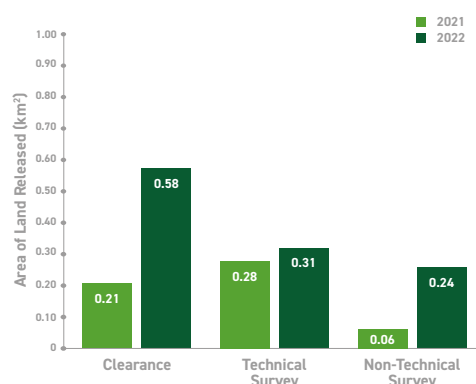
0.58 km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

1,221

(INCLUDING 24 DESTROYED
IN SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Tajikistan released just over 1.13 km² through survey and clearance in 2022,¹ a notable increase on the 0.55 km² released in 2021.² This increase was predominantly due to refocusing efforts on clearing anti-personnel (AP) mined areas.³ Having been moved away from heavily mined areas in Khatlon region due to insecurity along the border with Afghanistan and redeployed elsewhere to focus on battle area clearance (BAC) from August to November 2021,⁴ demining teams were able to return to Khatlon in the spring of 2022 to conduct mine clearance.⁵ In June 2023, Tajikistan stated that, given the lack of additional resources secured and the continuing discovery of previously unrecorded minefields each year, it expects to submit a further extension request beyond its 2025 deadline.⁶

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Tajikistan should explore all possible ways to increase national capacity to the levels needed to fulfil its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 commitments, including training and deploying further Border Guard forces on the Afghan border as deminers.
- The Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre (TNMAC) should expedite planning and prioritisation of accelerated survey to reach a clear national baseline estimate of contamination, as outlined in the information supporting Tajikistan's last Article 5 deadline extension request.

¹ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, Director, Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre (TNMAC), 11 April 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

² Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

³ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

⁴ Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022; Melissa Anderson, Country Director, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), 1 July 2022; and Saodat Asadova, National Programme Officer, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), 3 June 2022.

⁵ Emails from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 3 June 2022; and Melissa Anderson, NPA, 1 July 2022.

⁶ Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5 Implementation, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

- Tajikistan should work with key stakeholders to address a projected shortfall in funding in order to try to meet its 2025 Article 5 deadline.
- TNMAC should continue to develop plans for establishing sustainable demining capacity to tackle residual contamination identified after completion.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	5	5	Tajikistan lacks a clear baseline estimate of contamination, with 78 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) yet to be surveyed, in addition to some re-survey planned to define the extent of other mined areas more accurately. Lack of access has also prevented an accurate determination of contamination on the disputed Tajik-Uzbek border. Tajikistan planned to complete all survey and resurvey required by the end of 2023.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	7	7	Tajikistan has strong national ownership of mine action, which is led by TNMAC and implemented primarily by Ministry of Defence (MoD) clearance teams. It has political will and provides an enabling environment for Article 5 implementation but is heavily reliant on increased funding from international donors. Tajikistan has said it faces significant shortfalls in the funding required to meet its extension request targets.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	7	7	Tajikistan's mine action programme has a gender strategy drawn up with support from the Geneva Mine Action Programme (GMAP, now a programme of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)), but few women are employed in mine action. TNMAC says the government is committed to increasing involvement of women in mine action but there is little evidence that the number of female staff is rising. Mine action data are disaggregated by sex and age, and women and children are said to be consulted during community liaison.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	6	6	TNMAC upgraded its information management by installing the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core database in 2019 and has continued efforts to streamline and improve the accuracy of data by modifying reporting forms. In 2020, TNMAC recruited an information management specialist to maintain and develop the database, filling a gap left by the closure of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) support programme in 2019. Tajikistan receives ongoing support with information management from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). Tajikistan submits Article 7 reports of good quality (though not always on time), providing its report covering 2022 only in August 2023.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	6	6	Tajikistan's Article 5 deadline extension request sets out a framework for mine action, including annual targets, but these far exceed past results and require a doubling of capacity. This is dependent on availability of increased donor funding, which, so far, has not been forthcoming. TNMAC is advancing plans for clearance of residual contamination found after completion, and recruited an adviser for residual risk management, who took up post in March 2022.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	6	6	Tajikistan has national mine action standards that were revised in 2017 and are compliant with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and regularly updated. The National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) are available in Russian and English. TNMAC reports it has also issued guidelines on land release, including a manual on testing and evaluating mechanical assets. In 2022 Tajikistan did not make any updates to the NMAS but did update several procedural documents intended to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	7	7	Land released in 2022 increased notably compared to 2021, mainly due to improved security along the Tajik-Afghan border. Tajikistan increased overall demining capacity slightly in 2022, as it had done in 2021. However, to meet its 2025 deadline, Tajikistan estimates it will need to increase capacity by a further two survey teams and an additional six manual demining teams and has expressed concern at not yet having secured the additional funding needed to do so. Tajikistan stated in June 2023 that it expects to submit a further extension request.
Average Score	6.2	6.2	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Commission for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law (CIIHL)
- Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre (TNMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- TNMAC
- Ministry of Defence (MoD), Humanitarian Demining Company (HDC)
- Union of Sappers Tajikistan (UST)
- Border Guard Forces of Tajikistan

- Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence (CoES)
- National Guard

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- FSD

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Tajikistan had an estimated 11.45km² of AP mined area at the end of 2022 according to national authority figures. This consisted of 130 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) measuring 6.95km² and 78 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) measuring 4.51km² (see Table 1).⁷ Tajikistan reported releasing 1.13km² of mined area in 2022 but also added almost 0.62km² of contamination to the database.⁸ As a result, the total is only slightly lower than that of a year earlier, when Tajikistan recorded contamination of almost 11.82km².⁹ Contamination data is disaggregated by weapon type in the national database.¹⁰

Contamination affects all of Tajikistan's four administrative regions, also referred to as provinces. Most contaminated areas are located in the highly mountainous regions of Khatlon and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous region (also known as VKMB or GBAO).¹¹ A significant amount of SHA remains in Sughd province, which borders Uzbekistan.

Tajikistan still lacks a clear baseline estimate of its mined areas. In addition, almost 70% of Tajikistan's SHAs (78 SHAs totalling 5.51km²) are on the border with Uzbekistan, parts of which have still to be demarcated and have still to be surveyed for contamination.¹² Tajikistan believes these areas to be contaminated with PMN blast mines, POMZ-2M fragmentation mines, and OZM-72 and bounding mines.¹³ In March 2023, Tajikistan restated that, in accordance with its extension request, all required survey and re-survey of hazardous areas, should be completed by the end of 2023.¹⁴

Table 1: AP mined area by district (at end 2022)¹⁵

Province	District	CHA		SHA		Total area (m ²)
		No.	Area (m ²)	No.	Area (m ²)	
Region of Republican Subordination	Rasht	1	161,963	0	0	161,963
	Sangvor	2	150,000	0	0	150,000
Subtotals	2	3	311,963	0	0	311,963
VMKB (GBAO)	Darvoz (central)	8	633,919	2	700,000	1,333,919
	Darvoz (Tajik-Afghan border)	4	418,800	0	0	418,800
	Vanj	6	908,119	0	0	908,119
	Shughnon	3	56,000	0	0	56,000
	Ishkoshim	1	250,000	0	0	250,000
	Subtotals	5	2,266,838	2	700,000	2,966,838

⁷ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

⁸ Ibid.; and email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

⁹ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D. There is a slight discrepancy in national authority data, in that the sum total of contamination stated by Tajikistan as at the end of 2021 (approx. 11.82km²), minus the land release reported in 2022 (approx. 1.13km²), plus the areas of new contamination recorded in 2022 (approx. 0.62km²) is 11.31km²; slightly lower than the 11.45km² stated by Tajikistan as total contamination as at the end of 2022

¹⁰ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 16 June 2023.

¹¹ Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5 Implementation, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

¹² Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 April and 12 August 2021; Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

¹³ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

¹⁴ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

¹⁵ Ibid; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

Table 1 Continued

Province	District	CHA		SHA		Total area (m ²)
		No.	Area (m ²)	No.	Area (m ²)	
Khatlon	Farkhor	6	96,800	1	8,000	104,800
	Hamadoni	3	80,772	6	177,000	257,772
	Panj	20	1,220,850	3	23,000	1,243,850
	Jayhun	8	135,636	11	307,000	442,636
	Sh. Shohin	66	2,798,615	1	40,000	2,838,615
	Qabodiyon	1	5184	0	0	5184
	Shahritus	1	30,000	0	0	30,000
Subtotals	7	105	4,367,857	22	555,000	4,922,857
Sughd	Asht	0	0	11	610,000	610,000
	Ayni	0	0	5	535,000	535,000
	Isfara	0	0	20	1,105,000	1,105,000
	Kanibadam	0	0	3	165,000	165,000
	Panjakent	0	0	13	715,000	715,000
	Shakhristan	0	0	2	120,000	120,000
Subtotals	6	0	0	54	3,250,000	3,250,000
Totals	20	130	6,946,658	78	4,505,000	11,451,658

In 2022, a total of 617,971m² of previously unrecorded AP mined area was added to Tajikistan's information management database.¹⁶ This is a similar amount to the 693,542m² of previously unrecorded contamination added in 2021.¹⁷

Mine contamination in Tajikistan dates from conflicts in the 1990s. Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan was mined by Russian forces in 1992–98; the border with Uzbekistan was mined by Uzbek forces in 1999–2001; and the Central Region was contaminated during the 1992–97 civil war.¹⁸

Tajikistan has faced significant challenges in establishing a clear baseline of AP mine contamination. A national survey in 2003–05 by FSD estimated that mine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination extended over 50km².¹⁹ Tajikistan later concluded the results were unreliable as a result of lack of experience among the initial survey teams as well as the absence of minefield records and poor equipment. As a result, the size of SHAs were miscalculated and their descriptions not clearly recorded.²⁰ Tajikistan said its minefield maps/records were mostly of good quality but did not accurately capture the location of some mined areas, for example in

locations where mines were scattered from helicopters, and as a result needed to be verified and validated through new survey and data analysis.²¹

As Tajikistan's national non-governmental organisation (NGO) demining operator, the Union of Sappers Tajikistan (UST), recalls, some AP mines were used without being recorded, particularly during the civil war. As such, non-technical survey (NTS) teams are trying to find former military personnel and other informants who were involved in the civil war and can help survey teams build a picture of likely contamination.²² Tajikistan's terrain can also present a challenge to determining an accurate baseline of contamination in a given area. Mudslides, landslides, avalanches, and rockfalls can cause mines to move or become more deeply buried.²³

In Khatlon region, which borders Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, mines were laid in and around military positions on hilltops overlooking the Panj river valley, mostly delivered remotely by helicopter or laid by troops who were moved in and out by helicopter. There are no established roads or tracks to access the minefields for survey or clearance.²⁴

¹⁶ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

¹⁷ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

¹⁸ Tajikistan Mine Action Centre (TMAC), "Scope of the Problem", accessed 29 July 2019 at: <http://bit.ly/2ZhiFpN>.

¹⁹ R. Roberts, "Evaluation of United Nations Development Programme Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme", January 2012, at: <http://bit.ly/20qRe0B>, p. 11.

²⁰ 2009 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 1.

²¹ Ibid, p. 34.

²² Email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, Union of Sappers Tajikistan (UST), 14 April 2023.

²³ Presentation by Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 22 June 2022; and email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

²⁴ Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda and Murtazo Gurezov, TNMAC, Dushanbe, 25 May 2018; and Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC Sixteenth Meeting of States Parties (16MSP), Vienna, 20 December 2017.

Information about mined areas on the Tajik-Uzbek border is limited and based on the later NTS conducted in 2011–15 by FSD and a needs assessment survey by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 2013–15. However, the FSD survey only covered one part of the border, Sughd province, and although survey teams recorded 82 accidents they did not have access to the border and relied mainly on incident forms. As a result, records lack detail on the exact location where mine incidents occurred.²⁵

Tajikistan and Uzbekistan settled most of their 1,283km-long border dispute following the collapse of the Soviet Union but certain areas have not yet been delineated and the exact location of mined areas is still not known. Most mined areas are thought to be in disputed sections of the Tajik-Uzbek border which have not been accessible and assessed.²⁶ Although most of the mines are believed to be on Uzbek territory,²⁷ there is a possibility that some mines may have been displaced downhill into Tajikistan due to landslides or flooding.²⁸ The 3.25km² of SHA on the border with Uzbekistan is a rough estimate and the actual extent of any AP mined area on Tajik territory along this border will only be more accurately established once both countries permit survey and have delimited the border. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan agreed in 2018 to set up a joint commission to investigate mined areas along the border.²⁹ As at July 2023, Tajikistan had yet to report on any follow-up action regarding this proposed joint commission.

There are also mined areas on two islands in the Panj river on the Tajik-Afghan border, one of which is 538,500m² in size and the other 30,000m², which remained “non-executable” during 2022.³⁰ The islands were created by a change in the flow of the river, and it is possible that the river may again change its path and re-connect the islands with the Tajik riverbank in the future.³¹

Tajikistan acknowledges the urgency and importance of establishing a clear baseline of AP mined area as soon as possible. In 2019, TNMAC announced that a survey working group would be established with expert representatives from all key stakeholders and implementing partners to help plan and prioritise survey tasks.³² In June 2022, however, TNMAC reported that matters had progressed and there was no longer a need for the group. According to TNMAC, survey teams have competent specialists carrying out internal control and quality assurance (QA) and specialists from TNMAC's Operations Department are supporting them with QA of all results and reports from operations. Any discrepancies are discussed at technical meetings and measures are taken to reduce any inconsistency.³³ Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) concurs that “informal coordination between all stakeholders is working well, since the group and number of actors is limited”. NPA welcomes the monthly coordination meetings, hosted by TNMAC and attended by all stakeholders and implementing partners.³⁴ These meetings continued throughout 2022.³⁵

TNMAC has reported that Tajikistan has a Land Release Operations Plan and expects that, in accordance with Tajikistan's extension request, all required survey and re-survey of hazardous areas will be completed by the end of 2023.³⁶ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Tajikistan Mine Action Programme (TMAP) planned to conduct survey on the remaining 24 SHAs with a total estimated area of 1.26km² and conduct a resurvey of 26 CHAs with an area of 1.59km². These surveys will include the SHAs without minefield records that have been identified in Darvoz (VMKB/GBAO province), and Shamsiddin Shohin (Khatlon province). By the end of 2023, Tajikistan plans to complete registration of all possible SHA and CHAs.³⁷

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Tajikistan is also believed to have cluster munition remnants (CMR) remaining on its territory (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Tajikistan for further information).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Commission for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law (CIIHL), chaired by the first deputy of the Prime Minister, and containing key representatives from relevant line ministries and TNMAC, oversees the humanitarian sector and acts as Tajikistan's national mine action authority, responsible for mainstreaming mine action in the government's socio-economic development policies.³⁸

25 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda and Murtazo Gurezov, TNMAC, Dushanbe, 25 May 2018; Statement of Tajikistan, 16MSP, Vienna, 20 December 2017; and 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 33.

26 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018.

27 Statement of Tajikistan, 16MSP, Vienna, 20 December 2017.

28 “National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on Humanitarian Mine Action for 2017–2020”, 25 February 2017.

29 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 16.

30 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

31 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda and Murtazo Gurezov, TNMAC, Dushanbe, 25 May 2018.

32 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Additional Information received 3 August 2019.

33 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

34 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 1 July 2022.

35 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

36 Ibid.

37 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022 and 11 April 2023.

38 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 20; and 2009 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 1.

TNMAC is the executive arm of CIIHL and the body coordinating mine action, responsible for issuing task orders, information management and QA/quality control (QC).³⁹ It was set up by government decree in January 2014, replacing the Tajikistan Mine Action Centre and taking over the process of managing transition to a fully nationally-owned programme.⁴⁰ In 2016, Tajikistan's Parliament adopted a Law on Humanitarian Mine Action.⁴¹

TNMAC has elaborated a mine action strategy for 2021 to 2030 and an action plan for its implementation, both of which have been approved by the government.⁴² Tajikistan has an updated work plan for 2021–25⁴³ and, in 2022, made some updates to its General Land Release Operational Plan for 2023–2025. An annual work plan was in place for 2022 and prepared for 2023.⁴⁴

The Government of Tajikistan and TNMAC are reported as enabling of mine action activities in the country. This includes the granting of visas, concluding memoranda of understanding with operators, facilitating imports, and involving operators in decisions as and when needed.⁴⁵ However, visa extensions and permits to travel to mine-affected locations in the border areas can sometimes be delayed.⁴⁶

In 2022, the Tajik government provided modest funding for mine action, including US\$480,000 in "technical and non-technical assistance" (the same level of funding it provided in 2021) to facilitate the implementation of the Tajikistan's obligations under the APMBC. A further US\$56,400 (a slight increase compared to 2021), was allocated to support operational mine action.⁴⁷ The Ministry of Defence (MoD) plays a major role in Tajikistan's mine action sector, in particular by providing personnel for Tajikistan's main demining capacity,⁴⁸ the Humanitarian Demining Company (HDC), whose operations are funded by the United States.⁴⁹ TNMAC did not clarify if Tajikistan has a resource mobilisation strategy in place for Article 5 implementation.

Tajikistan conducts regular in-country dialogue among all mine action stakeholders. To date, however, it has not

established an in-country national platform for dialogue (as per Action Point 44 of the Oslo Action Plan), in order to discuss challenges and support for Article 5 implementation collectively. TNMAC confirms that Tajikistan will consider establishing such a platform in future, but no time frame for this has been given.⁵⁰

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, a multi-stakeholder mine action forum for Tajikistan met on a regular basis. These meetings ceased with the onset of the pandemic although NPA has suggested that they be revived.⁵¹ Monthly technical co-ordination meetings were held in 2022 involving participants from TNMAC, the demining operators, senior staff from the central offices of the MoD engineering units, Border Troops, the Committee for Emergency Situations and Civil Defence, and the National Guard.⁵² Operators report that they continue to be involved in decision-making by the national authorities.⁵³

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Programme Office in Dushanbe (OSCE POiD), has previously supported the MoD to update its multi-year plan, entitled "Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Tajikistan Co-operation Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2018–2023".⁵⁴ In 2022, the OSCE continued to support mine action, providing €278,000 to TNMAC (a similar level of funding to 2021), as well as two vehicles (a pick-up truck and an ambulance), for use by MoD demining teams.⁵⁵ The OSCE has also supported the recruitment and appointment of an adviser for residual risk management, who took up post in March 2022, and is tasked with identifying improvements to the risk management of explosive hazards and to develop residual risk management guidelines to complement the NMAS.⁵⁶

Tajikistan received capacity development support from various organisation in 2022. TNMAC receives support for information management from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) through regular online consultations.⁵⁷ NPA does not have a formal capacity development agreement with TNMAC but assists informally with capacity development activities as and when

39 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 20–21.

40 2009 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 1; and TMAC, "About TMAC", 2012, accessed 10 March 2014 at: <http://bit.ly/2LvPub1>.

41 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 18 October 2016; and 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 20–21.

42 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 April 2021 and 7 July 2022 and Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on Tajikistan", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

43 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on Tajikistan", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

44 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023 and Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form A.

45 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022 and 29 April 2023; Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 30 March 2023; Nickhwah Din Mohammed, Country Director, FSD, 24 March 2023; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

46 Email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 21 April 2023.

47 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022 and 31 March 2023.

48 MoD, "Strategic Plan on Humanitarian Demining 2013–2016", Dushanbe, 17 July 2013; and response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by Luka Buhin, Mine Action Office, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, 8 April 2014.

49 2019 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 23.

50 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

51 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022 and 29 April 2023.

52 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023; and Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023.

53 Emails from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023; Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 April 2023; and Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023.

54 Emails from Luka Buhin, OSCE Tajikistan, 9 October 2017; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 7 July 2022.

55 Email from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 30 March 2023.

56 Emails from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 3 June 2022; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

57 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

requested.⁵⁸ To date, in 2023, NPA has provided quality management as well as International Mine Action Standards (IMAS)-compliant medical training for staff from NPA and other demining organisations in Tajikistan.⁵⁹

Tajikistan provided international support to mine action in 2022, which included assistance to the Ministry of Defence of Kazakhstan regarding an explosion at an ammunition storage area.⁶⁰ The Commonwealth of Independent States

(CIS) has reported that, on 24 June 2022, following a meeting of the Council of Defence Ministers of the CIS countries, Russia's Minister of Defence, Sergei Shoigu, said that a joint unit of humanitarian demining will be created in the CIS. No timeline for this was given.⁶¹ Tajikistan have not shared any information on this with Mine Action Review and it is not known if Tajikistan have been involved in these discussions.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

TNMAC states that environmental issues are taken into consideration during survey and clearance to ensure that operations are conducted without negative environmental impact and that hazardous areas released and handed over to communities in a state suitable for intended use.⁶²

Clearance activities are undertaken according to Tajikistan's national mine action standards (NMAS), which contain a chapter on the environment, health, and safety. This chapter covers issues such as safeguarding of the environment during the establishment and removal of worksites and accommodation, waste disposal, air quality, water supply, as well as the recording and reporting of environmental "incidents".⁶³ As part of compliance with this chapter, demining organisations have developed a pro forma book for recording environmental incidents in minefields and battle areas. There were no updates to the environmental chapter of the NMAS in 2022.⁶⁴

Tajikistan does not have an environmental management policy for mine action but a 2011 law on environmental protection and other regulatory documents define the legal basis for all State policy on the environment.⁶⁵

FSD has an environmental policy and SOP at headquarter level and was due to begin the ISO 14001 accreditation process in 2023. Refresher training on the standard operating procedure (SOP) and FSD's organisational level commitments to sound environmental practices takes place each year with all management and operational staff, following the winter stand-down period.⁶⁶

NPA has its own environmental management system in place, which includes a policy adapted to the local context from NPA's Head Office guidelines. NPA also has an environmental SOP and an annual action plan linked to the environmental policy. NPA seeks to limit the environmental impacts of all survey and clearance activities. This includes waste management as well as the proper storage and disposal of fuel and lubricants.⁶⁷

UST has an SOP on environmental protection based on Tajikistan's NMAS, which has been approved by TNMAC.⁶⁸

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

TNMAC adopted a gender programme in 2018 that was prepared by the Geneva Mine Action Programme (GMAP, now a programme of the GICHD), and is committed to improving the situation of women in the mine action sector.⁶⁹ With the

58 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022 and 29 March 2023.

59 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023.

60 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form J.

61 "Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said that a joint unit of humanitarian demining will be created in the CIS", *Commonwealth of Independent States*, 27 June 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3b1ulgn>.

62 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

63 Emails from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 3 and 9 June 2022; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022; and National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), Chapter 20: "Environment, Health and Safety".

64 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

65 Ibid.

66 Email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023.

67 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022 and 29 April 2023.

68 Email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

69 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 14 June 2019.

assistance of the GICHD, gender and diversity issues were integrated into Tajikistan's national mine action strategy, updated to cover the period 2021 to 2030, with annual plans also addressing the issues.⁷⁰

Tajikistan reports that gender is mainstreamed in all aspects of its mine action programme based upon international and national guidelines and resolutions, covering management, risk education, victim assistance, and land release.⁷¹

TNMAC asserts that both men and women with relevant work experience and qualifications in demining have equal access to employment in the sector in Tajikistan.⁷² However, TNMAC also acknowledges that it is challenging to achieve gender balance in view of the predominance of men in the military, where service is compulsory for men and voluntary for women. TNMAC states that where it can identify key positions that can be filled by female candidates, such as paramedics and/or QA/QC officers, this will be prioritised. In addition, TNMAC seeks to increase female civilian capacity in mine action in coordination with other implementing partners.⁷³

In 2022, 28% of TNMAC's staff were women and 38% of managerial/supervisory positions were occupied by women (an increase on the 30% with respect to the latter in 2021). However, no women were employed in operational positions in TNMAC.⁷⁴ No women were employed by MoD's HDC in either operational or managerial/supervisory positions in 2021 or 2022.⁷⁵

Table 2: Gender composition of mine action operators in 2022⁷⁶

Organisation	Total staff	Total women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Total women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Total women in operational positions
TNMAC	25	7	8	3	4	0
NPA	81	16	14	4	60	12
FSD	12	3	3	1	9	2
MoD HDC	117	0	15	0	84	0

TNMAC confirms that survey teams collect information on hazardous areas on an annual basis as well as conducting risk education sessions, with both of these activities including inclusive consultation with women, girls, boys, and men.⁷⁷ Tajikistan also reports that monthly briefings take place with local communities on demining operations, with records of the briefing kept as part of documentation.⁷⁸ The Ministry of Defence's HDC multi-task teams reportedly consult with all groups, including women and children, during survey and community liaison.⁷⁹ In 2022, TNMAC developed a new briefing form for use by operators, to help ensure inclusive consultation in community meetings and survey activities. Relevant mine action data continue to be disaggregated by sex and age.⁸⁰

FSD employs a diverse workforce in Tajikistan in line with the organisation's Gender, Diversity and Inclusion policy. In 2022, 25% of FSD's staff in Tajikistan were female with one third

of managerial/supervisory positions and 22% of operational positions occupied by women. FSD disaggregates all relevant mine action data by sex and age.⁸¹

NPA has integrated a gender and diversity policy into its Tajikistan operations and employs staff from every region.⁸² In 2022, 20% of NPA's staff in Tajikistan were women and 29% of managerial/supervisory positions were occupied by women (the same proportions as in 2021). 20% of operational positions were occupied by women in 2022 (compared to 14% in 2021).⁸³ Despite continuing cultural constraints that inhibit women's employment in mine action, particularly in field positions, NPA has found that greater knowledge about the activities of its female deminers has made it easier to recruit female staff.⁸⁴ There is a special focus on staff capacity development around gender and diversity and a specific budget set aside. No significant changes were made to NPA's Gender and Diversity Policy or implementation plan in 2022.⁸⁵

70 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

71 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on Tajikistan", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

72 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

73 2019 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Additional Information received 3 August 2019.

74 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022 and 31 March 2023.

75 Emails from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 3 June 2022 and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 16 June 2023.

76 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March and 16 June 2023; Nickwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March and 23 April 2023; and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March and 4 and 23 May 2023.

77 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

78 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on Tajikistan", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

79 Email from Johan Dahl, Acting Head, Political-Military Department, OSCE Programme Office, with information from Khurram Maksudzoda, Head of the MoD HDC, 27 August 2019.

80 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

81 Emails from Nickwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March and 23 April 2023.

82 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 April 2020.

83 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 23 June 2022, and 29 March and 4 and 23 May 2023.

84 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 April and 4 July 2021.

85 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023.

NPA ensures women and children in communities affected by mines are consulted during community liaison activities, including impact assessment, which is conducted by both male and female staff. NPA highlights that consulting with women and children is more challenging in the border regions, where the military/border guard forces are mainly, if not exclusively, male. NPA also highlights that most incidents in Tajikistan involve young men or boys working as shepherds. However, the needs of all affected residents are taken into account, in particular through the prioritisation of locations closest to populated areas. NPA highlights that, while ethnic divisions are not as strong in Tajikistan as they are in some other contexts, to the extent that this is relevant, community liaison teams take this into consideration when conducting their work.⁸⁶

The OSCE seeks to promote gender awareness by collecting comprehensive relevant information during its work.⁸⁷ The OSCE also insists that a module on gender and human rights be included in all pre-season basic training of demining teams, in accordance with IMAS.

The OSCE confirmed that these measures continued throughout 2022 and that it will continue to emphasise the importance of gender mainstreaming and balance throughout project implementation.⁸⁸

UST supports equal access to employment for qualified women and men in UST survey and clearance teams in Tajikistan, including for managerial/supervisory positions, but does not yet employ any women among its 54 staff. Although survey teams are not yet mixed gender, UST does consult all groups during survey and community liaison activities, including women and children and representatives from ethnic or minority groups. UST does not yet have a Gender and Diversity policy or implementation plan. Survey data are said to be disaggregated by sex and age.

NPA and TNMAC revived meetings of a gender working group in early 2020. Its meetings were interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic but the group then met twice annually in 2021 and 2022.⁸⁹ NPA hopes that this group can become more active in the future.⁹⁰

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

TNMAC uses the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core to maintain its national database.⁹¹ There were no significant measures taken to improve the database in 2022, mainly because the reporting system has matured and stakeholders are satisfied with the data. Additionally, TNMAC had a reduction in information management capacity in 2022 and hence needed to focus on maintaining the database rather than any improvement initiatives. However, TNMAC regularly receives support on information management through online consultations with the GICHD.⁹²

NPA maintains an accurate and up-to-date picture of activities through daily reporting into the IMSMA Core Portal, using the data collection forms introduced and the updated by TNMAC in 2020–21. The portal also contains completion reports and details of outstanding contaminated areas that are scheduled for further survey and clearance work.⁹³

Operators have confirmed that data collection forms enable the collection of necessary data.⁹⁴

Previously, Tajikistan has submitted comprehensive Article 7 reports of good quality. It submitted an Article 7 report covering 2022 in August 2023. Tajikistan has submitted an updated work plan for 2021–25 as required under the conditions of its second extension request⁹⁵ and has indicated its intention to submit a further updated work plan to the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties to the APMBC in November 2023.⁹⁶

86 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022 and 29 April 2023.

87 Email from Johan Dahl, OSCE Programme Office, Dushanbe, 13 May 2020.

88 Emails from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 9 June 2022 and 30 March 2023; and interview with Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 24 June 2022.

89 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 April and 4 July 2021, 21 May 2022, and 29 March 2023; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022 and 31 March 2023.

90 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023.

91 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 28 May 2020; and Committee on the Implementation of Article 5, "Preliminary Observations on Tajikistan", Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

92 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

93 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022 and 29 March 2023.

94 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 April 2023; and Saynuriddin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

95 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on Tajikistan", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

96 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on Tajikistan", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

PLANNING AND TASKING

TNMAC has submitted an evidence-based, costed, and time-bound mine action strategy for 2021 to 2030 and an action plan for its implementation, both of which have been approved by the government.⁹⁷ Tajikistan has an updated work plan for 2021–25⁹⁸ and, in 2022, made some updates to its General Land Release Operational Plan for 2023–25. An annual work plan was in place for 2022 and prepared for 2023.⁹⁹

Tajikistan's Article 5 deadline extension request, submitted in 2019, which sought a new deadline for mine clearance of the end of 2025, forms the basis of its operational planning. The extension request said land release efforts would focus mainly on the Central region and the border with Afghanistan, especially the Shamsiddin Shohin district as the area most contaminated with AP mines. It aimed to complete work on the Central region and complete survey of the Tajik-Afghan border by 2023.¹⁰⁰ However, ongoing security challenges along this border have impeded access to some of Tajikistan's most heavily mined districts in recent years and made this impossible.¹⁰¹

A General Land Release Operational Plan for 2021–25 details areas targeted for clearance each year and the required funding.¹⁰² Tajikistan has revised its annual land release targets a number of times in recent years, including in the "General Land Release Operation Plan 2021–2025" issued in January 2021, which provided for release a total of 8.55km²,¹⁰³ and in June 2022, when Tajikistan shared revised annual land release targets for 2022–2025 totalling 8.57km².¹⁰⁴ Further adjustments to these targets were stated in June 2023, almost doubling the amount to be released during 2023–25 from 6.56km² to 12.82km² (see Table 3).

Table 3: Annual land release targets¹⁰⁶

Year	No. of areas	Total (m ²)
2023	62	4,237,337
2024	69	4,339,381
2025	43	4,242,636
Totals	174	12,819,354

Land release on the Tajik-Uzbek border, including completion of survey by Tajikistan's stated aim of the end of 2023, will partly depend on effective cooperation between each States' authorities. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan agreed in 2018 to set up a joint commission to arrange survey and clearance of border areas. In 2019 Tajikistan said it would keep States Parties to the APMBC informed of developments.¹⁰⁷ In June 2022, TNMAC reiterated that Tajikistan "will continue to provide updates on the development of cooperation with regard to land release along the Tajik-Uzbek border in Article 7 reports and to the Meetings of the States Parties".¹⁰⁸ As at July 2023, Tajikistan had yet to report on follow-up action.

TNMAC tasks operators according to a set of priorities agreed with government that include humanitarian impact, the proximity of hazards to settlements, national development priorities and the seasonal constraints on access to mined areas in mountainous terrain. Input from local communities and local government is also taken into account.¹⁰⁹ While these priorities stand, tasking decisions are also influenced by the ongoing security situation on the Tajik-Afghan border, where access is regulated by the Border Guard Forces of Tajikistan.¹¹⁰

Operators report that dossiers are issued in a timely matter by TNMAC.¹¹¹

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Tajikistan's revised National Mine Action Standards were approved in April 2017. The revised standards have been

translated into Russian and English.¹¹² While no updates were made to Tajikistan's NMAS or SOPs in 2022,¹¹³ TNMAC states

97 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 April 2021 and 7 July 2022.
98 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on Tajikistan", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.
99 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.
100 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 34 and 42.
101 Presentation by Tajikistan on Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Geneva, 23 May 2019; and email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.
102 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 April 2021.
103 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 12 August 2021.
104 Presentation by Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 22 June 2022.
105 Ibid.
106 Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5 Implementation, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.
107 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 44.
108 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.
109 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018 and 22 April 2021; and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 5 April 2018, 1 July 2022, and 29 April 2023.
110 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 1 July 2022 and 29 April 2023.
111 Emails from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023; and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 April 2023.
112 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; and Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2019, p. 21.
113 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023.

that when any updates to the NMAS or SOPs are made, this is undertaken in consultation with clearance operators.¹¹⁴ In general, demining operators update their SOPs once every three years during the accreditation process.¹¹⁵

Operators report that Tajikistan's NMAS are appropriately adapted to the local threat and enable effective, efficient, and safe survey and clearance work.¹¹⁶ FSD suggest a minor improvement would be to increase provision for Casualty Evacuation (CASEVAC), and Medical Evacuation (MEDIVAC), when teams are working at high altitude in remote areas.¹¹⁷

In 2021, TNMAC launched a progress monitoring tool, intended to improve the efficiency of land release.¹¹⁸ TNMAC reports that this tool made a significant contribution to effective planning and implementation of operations in 2022, allowing for external, remote monitoring of operational

progress, for example, detecting if a technical survey or manual demining team extends work beyond the perimeter of the main polygon.¹¹⁹

During 2022, TNMAC developed new procedural documents to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of community briefings and meetings, daily detector testing, recording of environmental incidents and risk assessment during survey, demining and storage of explosive materials and ammunition.¹²⁰

One clearance task measuring 71,820m² was found to contain no AP mines in 2022.¹²¹ Quality Management (QM) is coordinated and monitored by TNMAC, with processes and requirements agreed with TMAP. TMAP has external and internal QM team members who participate in the QM process.¹²²

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2022, HDC MoD, NPA, and UST deployed combined technical survey (TS) and clearance teams. Only UST has non-technical survey (NTS) teams, which also undertake TS and clearance. There are no dedicated TS teams in Tajikistan.

Table 4: Operational NTS and TS capacities deployed in Tajikistan in 2022¹²³

Operator	NTS/TS teams	Total NTS/TS personnel*	Comments
UST	4	36	Slight increase on 4 teams totalling 32 personnel in 2021. These NTS teams also conduct TS and clearance (see Table 5).
Totals	4	36	

* Excluding team leaders, medics, drivers etc.

Table 5: Operational clearance capacities deployed in Tajikistan in 2022¹²⁴

Operator	Manual clearance teams	Total deminers*	Mechanical assets/machines**	Comments
FSD	0	6	0	Same capacity as deployed in 2021. Deployed for explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) spot tasks, stockpile destruction, and to destroy AP mines found during clearance by UST.
UST	4	36	0	These teams also conduct NTS (see Table 4) and TS.
NPA	5	43	MoD has 1 Mini-MineWolf machine, also available for use by NPA.	Slight decrease on 5 teams totalling 50 personnel in 2021. These teams also conduct TS.
HDC MoD	6	84	MoD has 1 Mini-MineWolf machine, also available for use by NPA.	Slight increase on 6 teams of 72 personnel in 2021. These teams also conduct TS.
Totals	15	169	1	

* Excluding team leaders, medics, and drivers. ** Excluding vegetation cutters and sifters.

114 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022; and Committee on the Implementation of Article 5, Preliminary Observations on Tajikistan, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

115 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

116 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023; and Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023.

117 Email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 21 April 2023.

118 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

119 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

120 Ibid; and Article 7 report (covering 2022) Form A.

121 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

122 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 49–50.

123 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

124 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June and 25 August 2022, and 31 March 2023; Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023; Melissa Andersson, NPA, 1 July 2022, and 29 March and 23 May 2023; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023; and Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5, Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties (19MSP), 17 November 2021; and FSD, "Tajikistan", accessed 7 September 2022 at: <https://bit.ly/30zn7hh>.

Tajikistan's 2019 Article 5 deadline extension request set an ambitious target of doubling the number of deminers from 90 to 180¹²⁵ and in 2020 it took initial steps in that direction. Overall, Tajikistan maintained approximately the same number of deminers in 2021 as in 2020.¹²⁶ However, Tajikistan slightly increased mine action capacity in 2022 to 169 personnel across the combined survey and clearance teams of all operators (see Tables 4 and 5), compared to 150 personnel in 2021.¹²⁷ This overall increase was made possible by US Department of State funding.¹²⁸ The MoD's HDC increased personnel from 72 deminers in 2021,¹²⁹ to 84 in 2022.¹³⁰

NPA remains the only international operator undertaking mine clearance in Tajikistan, with multi-task teams capable of conducting both mine and battle area clearance (BAC).¹³¹ NPA decreased the number of manual clearance teams from six in 2021 to five in 2022, due to a drop in funding.¹³² NPA continues to cooperate with Tajikistan's Border Guard Forces, annually seconding a number of personnel into NPA's multi-task teams. Twelve officers were seconded in 2022, forming part of NPA's five multi-task teams of 43 deminers. NPA expects to maintain the same clearance capacity in 2023 as it did in 2022.¹³³

UST, a national not-for-profit organisation received accreditation for manual demining and BAC in 2020¹³⁴ and started to conduct survey in the same year, working initially on a joint task with one of NPA's teams for three months to build UST's capacity.¹³⁵ UST conducted mine clearance in 2022. However, UST is in the process of obtaining a license for the use of explosive materials and devices from the relevant authorities.¹³⁶ As such, currently all mines discovered by UST are destroyed by FSD. UST reports no change in the number of personnel between 2021 and 2022.¹³⁷ UST teams report directly to TNMAC, which funds UST's survey and clearance operations.¹³⁸ Tajikistan has acknowledged advantages in using civilian deminers, since they require less time overall in training and building up

experience compared with military conscripts who rotate annually, necessitating training for each new intake.¹³⁹ UST had no change to capacity between 2021 and 2022 and expected to maintain the same capacity in 2023.¹⁴⁰

FSD's Weapons and Ammunition Disposal (WAD) team in Tajikistan have previously responded to explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) spot tasks, maintaining the same capacity in 2022 as the previous year. However, at the time of writing, FSD was expected to transition from WAD to demining in Tajikistan, commencing in August 2023. These teams were expected to conduct NTS, TS, clearance and, most likely, EOD spot tasks located close to their demining tasks.¹⁴¹ At the time of writing it was uncertain how many personnel this team would have but it is planned that it will work in various areas of Tajikistan including along the borders with Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, as well as in other areas away from the borders.¹⁴²

One mechanical asset, a Mini-MineWolf owned by HDC MoD, was available for use by both HDC MoD and NPA in Tajikistan in 2022.¹⁴³ However, there were some technical issues and NPA deployed the machine only for clearance for a limited amount of time only.¹⁴⁴

Despite some disruption to operations during earlier stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, TNMAC and operators reported that it caused no disruption to the effective deployment of teams or operational capacity in 2022.¹⁴⁵

In April 2023, TNMAC re-stated that, in order to clear the remaining contamination in line with its extension request, Tajikistan will need to increase capacity to 18 manual demining teams of up to 180 deminers.¹⁴⁶ While Tajikistan was able to increase clearance to 169 deminers in 2022, it did not expect any major changes to the number of mine survey or clearance personnel in 2023.¹⁴⁷

125 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.

126 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 and 24 June and 25 August 2022; and Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5, 19MSP, 17 November 2021.

127 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 and 24 June 2022.

128 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

129 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022; and Andrej Hegedis, Countering Security Threats Officer, OSCE, 28 July 2022.

130 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

131 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May and 23 June 2022; and interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 24 June 2022.

132 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023.

133 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 23 May 2023.

134 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 16 June 2023.

135 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 April and 27 August 2020.

136 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

137 Email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

138 Email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 16 May 2023.

139 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 36.

140 Email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

141 Email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023.

142 Email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 28 August 2023.

143 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 23 May 2023.

144 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 23 May and 22 June 2023.

145 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023, Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

146 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

147 Ibid.

DEMINER SAFETY

There were no accidents during survey or clearance of AP mines in Tajikistan in 2022.¹⁴⁸

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

TNMAC reported land release through survey and clearance totalling 1,126,731m² in 2022, of which 236,279m² was cancelled through NTS, 310,480m² was reduced through TS, and 579,972m² was cleared. A total of 1,197 AP mines and 826 items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) were destroyed during clearance and technical survey.¹⁴⁹ A further 24 AP mines and 12 anti-vehicle (AV) mines were destroyed during EOD spot tasks in 2022.¹⁵⁰

Tajikistan added 617,971m² of previously unrecorded CHAs to the national database in 2022.¹⁵¹

SURVEY IN 2022

A total of 546,759m² was released through survey in 2022, of which 236,279m² was cancelled through NTS and 310,480m² was reduced through TS (see Tables 6 and 7).¹⁵² This represents a notable increase on the 59,427m² cancelled through NTS in 2021 and a slight increase on the 283,780m² reduced through TS in 2021.¹⁵³

TNMAC has attributed this increase in cancellation through NTS to a concentration of land release efforts in AP mined areas, as opposed to BAC,¹⁵⁴ unlike in 2021, when demining operations were suspended for some months of the year along the heavily mined Tajik-Afghan border, due to security concerns.¹⁵⁵ Similarly, NPA reported increase in the amount of contaminated areas cancelled, reduced, and cleared in 2022 compared to 2021, due to the fact that tasks suspended in 2021 could be completed in 2022.¹⁵⁶

Tajikistan added 617,971m² of previously unrecorded CHAs to the national database in 2022.¹⁵⁷

Table 6: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022¹⁵⁸

Region	District	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Khatlon	Panj	NPA	151,214
	Shamsiddin Shohin	NPA (removed from the TNMAC database)	10,065
Badakhshan (VMKB)	Ishkoshim	UST	25,000
	Darvoz	UST	50,000
Total			236,279

148 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023; Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 April 2023; Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023; and Saynuriddin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

149 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

150 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023; and Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023.

151 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

152 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

153 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022; and Melissa Anderson, NPA, 1 July 2022.

154 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

155 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

156 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 April 2023.

157 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023 and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

158 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 April 2023; and Saynuriddin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

Table 7: Release of mined area through TS in 2022¹⁵⁹

Region	District	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
DRS	Rasht*	N/K	17,500
Badakhshan (VMKB/GBAO)	Darvoz	NPA	50,960
Khatlon	Panj	NPA	59,563
	Shamsiddin Shohin**	HDC MoD & NPA	182,457
Total			310,480

* Information on reduction through TS in Rasht comes from the Article 7 report for 2022, but no operator details were provided.

** The figures provided separately to Mine Action Review for reduction through TS in Shamsiddin Shohin total slightly lower at 174,587m² (77,600m² reduced by HDC MoD and 96,987m² by NPA). However, the more recent figure provided in Tajikistan's Article 7 report has been used here.

CLEARANCE IN 2022

Tajikistan cleared 579,922m² in 2022,¹⁶⁰ an increase on the 206,068m² cleared in 2021.¹⁶¹ TNMAC reported clearance operations resulted in destruction of 1,197 AP mines and 826 items of UXO.¹⁶² A further 24 AP mines were destroyed in EOD spot tasks: 19 by FSD and 5 by NPA. FSD also destroyed 12 AV mines during EOD spot tasks.¹⁶³

As previously noted, the increase in clearance output in 2022 compared to 2021 was predominantly due to an increased focus on land release efforts in AP mined areas.¹⁶⁴ Having been moved away from the Shamsiddin Shohin district of the Khatlon region due to insecurity along the border with Afghanistan, and redeployed to the Central region from August to November 2021 to focus on BAC,¹⁶⁵ demining teams were able to return to working in the Khatlon region from April 2022.¹⁶⁶ NPA resumed clearance operations at the border with Afghanistan in May 2022.¹⁶⁷

Table 8: AP mine clearance in 2022¹⁶⁸

Region	District	CHAs cleared	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
DRS	Rasht	1	HDC MoD	171,050	84	0
GBAO	Darvoz	2	NPA	67,723	113	776
Khatlon	Sh.Shokhin	7	HDC MoD & NPA	246,087	883	46
Khatlon	Panj	2	HDC MoD & NPA	95,112	117	4
Totals		12		579,972	1,197	826

¹⁵⁹ Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 April 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

¹⁶⁰ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

¹⁶¹ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

¹⁶² Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

¹⁶³ Ibid.; and email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023.

¹⁶⁴ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

¹⁶⁵ Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022; Melissa Anderson, NPA, 1 July 2022; and Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 3 June 2022.

¹⁶⁶ Email from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 3 June 2022.

¹⁶⁷ Email from Melissa Anderson, NPA, 1 July 2022.

¹⁶⁸ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F; and emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; Melissa Andersson, then Country Director, Tajikistan, NPA, 29 April 2023; and Faiz Mohammad Paktian, (newly appointed) Country Director, Tajikistan, NPA, 10 August 2023. Figures in Table 8 are sources from Tajikistan's Article 7 report (covering 2022), submitted in August 2023. Information supplied earlier in March-April 2023 by TNMAC and NPA, showing clearance by operator and location, amounted to lower clearance overall at 348,841m², with 1,183 AP mines and 377 items of UXO destroyed.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the latest extension granted by States Parties in 2019), Tajikistan is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2025. It will not meet this deadline.

In June 2023, Tajikistan restated its commitment to meet its obligations and ensure the safety of its people. However, taking into account the current lack of additional funding, and the continuation of Tajikistan discovering new, previously unrecorded minefields each year, Tajikistan expects to submit a further extension request. It anticipated having a clearer understanding of the additional time required following land release progress by the end of 2023.¹⁶⁹

An immediate challenge to achieving Tajikistan's current extension request targets is the need to further increase capacity, though it has made steady progress on this since its extension request called for the mine action programme to double the number of deminers from 90 in 2019 to 180. TNMAC has expanded the role of the Border Guard Forces, which used to support demining teams by providing security to operators working on the Tajik-Afghan border, and since 2019 it has involved them in survey and clearance. It also mobilised one demining team from the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence (CoES).¹⁷⁰ In 2021, UST's scope extended from survey to include clearance, following accreditation; a further step towards expanding national capacity. In April 2023, TNMAC said that, based on existing capacity, it would expect to reach completion by the end of 2030.¹⁷¹

In 2019, Tajikistan said it needed \$3 million a year to maintain the capacity it had at the start of the extension period but estimated it needed US\$33 million for costs of manual clearance alone to meet its extended Article 5 deadline.¹⁷² TNMAC has received support from Norway and the OSCE¹⁷³ but overall funding has been heavily dependent on the US Department of State and TNMAC has acknowledged it needs to attract other donors.¹⁷⁴ As at June 2023, Tajikistan estimated that up to an additional US\$14 million of funding was required between 2023 and 2025, over and above resources currently available, to be able to meet the completion date,¹⁷⁵ a figure which remains almost unchanged from the US\$13.9 million Tajikistan stated it required a year earlier.¹⁷⁶ Tajikistan has stated that increased funds are "highly required" to increase capacity.¹⁷⁷ TNMAC did not clarify if Tajikistan has a resource mobilisation strategy in place for Article 5 implementation.

Tajikistan also does not yet know the full extent of the contamination it needs to address, though it has stated that, in accordance with its extension request, it aims to complete all required survey and re-survey of hazardous areas by the end of 2023.¹⁷⁸ While insecurity along the Tajik-Afghan border severely impeded survey in the second half of 2021, teams were able to return to previously suspended tasks in 2022 and output by survey did increase notably in 2022 compared to 2021. TNMAC has highlighted, however, that ongoing security challenges along the Tajik-Afghan border are a significant challenge to mine action, which have impeded access to some of Tajikistan's most heavily mined districts and add a further element of uncertainty to the outlook for implementation.¹⁷⁹

¹⁶⁹ Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5 Implementation, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

¹⁷⁰ 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 22; and emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 April and 12 August 2021.

¹⁷¹ Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 11 April 2023.

¹⁷² 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 52; Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D.

¹⁷³ In addition to funding provided to TNMAC to support three MoD HDC teams, the OSCE expected to provide €300,000 a year in bilateral funds for training until 2023. Email from Johan Dahl, OSCE Programme Office, Dushanbe, 9 April 2021.

¹⁷⁴ Additional information provided for Tajikistan's Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 3 August 2019, p. 7; and Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5 Implementation, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

¹⁷⁵ Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5 Implementation, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

¹⁷⁶ Presentation by Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 22 June 2022. TNMAC specified that an additional US\$13.9 million was required. However, a figure of US\$10.06 million was contained in Tajikistan's Statement on Article 5 Implementation to the 19MSP on 17 November 2021.

¹⁷⁷ Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5 Implementation, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

¹⁷⁸ Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022 and 11 April 2023.

¹⁷⁹ Presentation by Tajikistan on Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Geneva, 23 May 2019; and Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5 Implementation, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

Access to areas bordering Uzbekistan also continue to prove a challenge to implementation. The existing estimate of SHAs along the Tajik-Uzbek border, covering 3.25km², is based on only partial access. Further survey and clearance are subject to agreement with Uzbekistan.¹⁸⁰ Online sources from 2021 indicated that a "joint Tajik-Uzbek commission for delimitation and demarcation of the mutual border" was active and that working groups met in August 2021 in Dushanbe and in the Uzbek city of Namangan in November 2021,¹⁸¹ following discussions in May of the same year.¹⁸² However, Mine Action Review has not been able to source further information about any progress made since by the joint commission.

Some of the minefields due to be surveyed by 2023 are located in remote, mountainous areas where conditions only permit 40 operational days a year.¹⁸³ Tajikistan's Article 5 deadline extension request noted that the progress of survey was slowing because survey teams had already tackled areas that are most accessible to the local population and were increasingly left with hazardous areas in remote and rugged terrain.¹⁸⁴ In June 2023 Tajikistan reiterated that difficult terrain, harsh weather conditions, natural disasters such as rockfalls, avalanches and landslides, as well as dense vegetation proved ongoing challenges to mine action across the country. Tajikistan identifies a need for increased equipment, including cross-country vehicles metal detectors, deminer and EOD toolkits, personal protective equipment (PPE), spare parts for mechanical demining machines, and medical supplies.¹⁸⁵

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Tajikistan is taking measures to prepare for the management of residual risk upon completion. In March 2022, with the support of the OSCE, an adviser for residual risk management took up post, tasked with identifying improvements to the risk management of explosive hazards and to develop residual risk management guidelines to complement the NMAS.¹⁸⁷ Since the introduction of this post a technical manual on residual risk management has been produced, which TNMAC highlights as a legal prerequisite before any further work can progress. With this step completed, TNMAC asserts that the issue of residual risk management will receive higher prioritisation in 2023.¹⁸⁸

TNMAC also highlights that issues related to residual risk management are discussed during monthly technical meetings with implementing partners, and that residual risk reduction recommendations are reflected in the annual General Land Release Operations Plans.¹⁸⁹

Despite having a well-co-ordinated programme with strong national ownership, the challenges outlined above, the lack of additional funding and the continuing discovery of previously unrecorded minefields have severely impeded its capacity to fulfil Tajikistan's commitments under its APMBC Article 5 deadline extension by 2025. The clearer understanding of remaining contamination that Tajikistan hopes to achieve by the end of 2023, following extensive survey and re-survey, will form the basis of future planning and the country's estimation of any additional time required.¹⁸⁶

Table 9: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	0.58
2021	0.21
2020	0.67
2019	0.54
2018	0.59
Total	2.59

180 Presentation by Tajikistan on Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Geneva, 23 May 2019; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021).
181 "Tajik-Uzbek border delimitation and demarcation commission meets in Uzbekistan", *Asia Plus*, 30 November 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3zDDNzJ>.
182 "Uzbekistan and Tajikistan discuss demarcation of state border", *KUN.UZ News*, 22 May 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3iSbky7>.
183 Presentation by Tajikistan on Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Geneva, 23 May 2019; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021).
184 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 47.
185 Presentation by Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 22 June 2022; and Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5 Implementation, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.
186 Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5 Implementation, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.
187 Emails from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 3 June 2022; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022; and Statement of Tajikistan on Article 5 Article 5 Implementation, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.
188 Email from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 30 March 2023.
189 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2026
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: HEAVY**

OVER
20_{KM²}

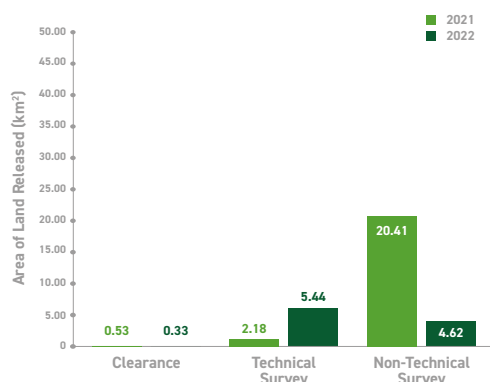
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

0.33_{KM²}

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

11,421

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Thailand sought and obtained a further extension to its Article 5 deadline in 2022 until the end of 2026 to complete clearance of anti-personnel (AP) mined areas. It declared Phitsanulok province free of mines in 2022 but released a total of only 10km² through survey and clearance across the country, less than half the previous year's result, underscoring the slowing progress ahead as deminers

deal with more remote tasks in difficult terrain. Thai and Cambodian leaders and mine action authorities met and endorsed cooperation over clearance of mines located in disputed border areas but Thailand said its proposal of 10 sites for clearance received no answer and Cambodian border forces intervened on 10 occasions in 2022 to halt Thai clearance operations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Thailand should actively seek agreement with Cambodia to clear mined areas on their joint border.
- The Thai Mine Action Centre (TMAC) should complete its review of mine action standards and expedite their operational implementation.
- Thailand should develop and disclose plans for the management of residual contamination.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	8	8	Thailand has successfully slashed its estimate of contamination from 360km ² at the end of 2018 to 40km ² at the end of 2022, allowing it to concentrate on technical survey (TS) and clearance of (mostly) confirmed hazardous areas along the border with Cambodia
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	8	8	Thailand has strong national ownership of its mine action programme which, since it started, has been largely funded from the budget of the armed forces. TMAC's military personnel conduct survey and clearance, supported by, and in good collaboration with, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on TS and non-technical survey (NTS). Regular meetings are convened between TMAC, relevant ministries, the Humanitarian Mine Action Units (HMAUs), and NGO operators to discuss progress, challenges, and planning.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	5	5	TMAC has no policy on gender and although women make up about 30% of its headquarters staff there were no women in the HMAU demining teams. Only Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) employed women in field operations in 2022. Thailand's baseline survey, completed at the end of 2020 with the exception of some areas on the border with Cambodia, was based on inclusive community interviews in all areas where the survey was conducted. In areas where minority groups reside, they were also consulted.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	8	8	TMAC used the Arc Geographic Information System (GIS) to manage data which allows demining units to submit information online, enabling TMAC to verify data and make corrections. NPA and the Thai Civilian Deminer Association (TDA) deem data in Thailand to be accurate and reliable and the national information management system is accessible to clearance organisations. Thailand submits timely, detailed, and accurate Article 7 reports and has regularly updated States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) on its progress.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	8	8	Thailand's five-year strategic mine action plan ran to the end of October 2023 but the Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in March 2022 sets out detailed, if ambitious, land release targets and priorities until the end of 2026. TMAC's ability to achieve them will depend on reaching agreement with Cambodia on access to disputed areas of their common border.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	8	8	TMAC is applying an efficient land release methodology. After cancelling a significant amount of the inflated suspected hazardous area (SHA) in its database through NTS it is focusing on TS to identify actual contamination and then on clearance. Since 2020, TMAC has been revising its national mine action standards to bring them up to date and in line with the international standards but plans for completing the review have continued to slip and, as at August 2023, still required further discussion.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	8	8	Thailand's land release in 2022 fell well short of the previous year. This was expected as it progressed from rapid cancellation of SHAs under Phase 1 of its five-year strategic plan to TS and clearance under Phase 2. However, the 10km ² released was also only 60% of the target for the year. This appears to be mainly because of interventions by Cambodia to stop clearance of tasks in areas of the Thai-Cambodia border that have yet to be demarcated. Although Thailand is keen to reach agreement that allow clearance to proceed, the interventions highlight one of the main risks to meeting the clearance targets set out in the Article 5 extension request.
Average Score	7.7	7.7	Overall Programme Performance: GOOD

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- National Committee for Humanitarian Mine Action (NMAC)
- Thailand Mine Action Centre (TMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Humanitarian Mine Action Units (HMAU 1–4) and HMAU TMAC
- Thai Civilian Deminer Association (TDA)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

OTHER ACTORS

- Golden West Humanitarian Foundation (Golden West)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Thailand recorded another sharp reduction in its estimate of mined area, which stood at just under 30km² at the end of 2022, down 26% from 40km² a year earlier (see Table 1)¹ and 63km² at the end of 2020. Thailand declared one province, Phitsanulok, mine free in 2022 leaving contamination that affects 17 districts in 6 provinces.²

Table 1: AP mined area by province (at end 2022)³

Region	Province	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total CHAs/SHAs	Total area (m ²)
North-east	Ubon Ratchathani	20	4,577,815	1	331,104	21	4,908,919
	Si Sa Ket	51	4,090,448	4	2,297,434	55	6,387,882
	Surin	18	3,362,349	5	1,072,000	23	4,434,349
	Buri Ram	1	267,275	4	0	5	267,275
	Sa Kaeo	0	343,382	10	5,534,862	10	5,878,244
East	Trat	20	5,102,398	7	2,719,448	27	7,821,846
Totals		110	17,743,667	31	11,954,848	141	29,698,515

The contamination remaining at the end of 2022 underscored the success of the strategy Thailand pursued in its 2018–23 Humanitarian Mine Action Plan. The first phase in 2018–20 focused on cancelling suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) through non-technical survey (NTS), allowing TMAC to focus the second phase of the plan (2021–23) on technical survey (TS) and clearance of better defined hazardous areas. Phitsanulok province was declared mine free in 2022 largely as a result of cancellation by NTS and without entailing any clearance.⁴

In the past four years, Thailand has cancelled 280km² and SHAs represented 40% of remaining contamination at the

end of 2022 compared with 63% two years earlier. As further evidence of progress, TMAC is finding progressively less previously unrecorded hazardous areas. In 2022, it added only 63,998m² to the database compared with 187,573m² in 2021 and 1.8km² two years earlier.⁵

The challenge for Thailand is that almost 20.5km² (69%) of the remaining contamination is located in areas for demarcation on the border where access requires agreement between the governments of Thailand and Cambodia. The contamination also lies in challenging terrain where access is more difficult and clearance is complicated by dense vegetation.⁶

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Thailand created the National Committee for Humanitarian Mine Action (NMAC) in 2000, chaired by the prime minister and with responsibility for overseeing the national mine action programme. The NMAC was reconstituted in May 2017, again with the prime minister as chairman, but had not been convened since 2017.⁷ The engagement of national leadership in the Committee was seen as important in facilitating policy direction and progress on issues affecting national security, notably regarding cooperation with neighbouring countries on clearing border areas.⁸ NMAC is tasked with developing policy guidance and mobilising resources from all sectors to

support mine action to be able to complete clearance in the allotted timeframe.⁹ In reality, however, the Committee has no operational or strategic power and is purely procedural.¹⁰

TMAC was established in 1999 under the Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters to coordinate, monitor, and conduct mine/ERW survey and clearance, risk education, and victim assistance coordination throughout Thailand.¹¹ TMAC's roles and responsibilities within the sector are clear and coherent but it has had to contend with limited funding and, as a military organisation, with regular rotation of personnel at all levels.¹² A new Director General of TMAC, General Supathat

1 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form 4, Table 4-2.

2 Email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, Interpreter (on behalf of the Director General), TMAC, 11 July 2023.

3 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form 4, Table 4-2.

4 Email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 11 July 2023.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 18 August 2021.

8 Interview with Lt.-Gen. Prasopchai Kongburan, Director General, TMAC, in Geneva, 8 June 2017.

9 Five-Year Humanitarian Mine Action Plan, 1 November 2018–31 October 2023, p. 49.

10 Interview with Shushira Chonhenchob, NPA, Bangkok, 9 April 2019.

11 2017 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 1.

12 Interview with Col. Terdsak Trirattanaoool, Assistant Director General, TMAC, Bangkok, 15 May 2017.

Narindarabhakdi, took office in 2022, the 13th director in the 24 years since TMAC was established but reportedly the most highly ranked general to be assigned the position.

TMAC has faced some challenges with the command structure of the Humanitarian Mine Action Units (HMAUs). With the exception of one of the HMAUs—"HMAU-TMAC"—personnel come from the Division-Level Force of the Royal Thai Army and the Royal Thai Navy, which means they must report both to TMAC and to their respective divisional command.¹³ TMAC has worked to inform the HMAUs, high-ranking generals, and the Chief of Defence Forces about the importance of mine action.¹⁴

TMAC aims to have a 60:40 ratio of old personnel to new for the purposes of continuity and to retain knowledge.¹⁵ Training courses delivered by US Marine Corps Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC) under the United States (US) Department of Defense's Humanitarian Mine Action Program have evolved to meet TMAC's operational requirements and currently include EOD [explosive ordnance disposal] Levels 1 to 3, TS, and mentorship to operational personnel provided by the US company, Golden West.¹⁶ At the request of TMAC's Director General, MARFORPAC developed a course for HMAU team leaders in 2022 delivering it for the first time in January

2023. Other support from MARFORPAC in 2022 included the procurement of two mechanical remote-controlled vegetation cutters developed by the US Department of Defense Humanitarian Demining Research and Development (HDR&D) program.¹⁷ HDR&D also provide a Mini MineWolf remote-controlled tiller/flail currently being used by NPA. HDR&D has trained TMAC's HMAUs and NPA in its use.¹⁸

The cost of Thailand's mine action programme (including TMAC personnel, equipment, HMAU operations, meetings, workshops, and training) is largely covered by the Thai government through the Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters.¹⁹ In 2022, the government allocated TMAC more than THB253 million (approximately US\$7.37 million), a slight reduction on the previous year's budget (approximately \$7.73 million).²⁰ The 2022 budget also included an additional sum of THB2.1 million (approximately US\$61,000), which included close to \$50,000 to cover the costs of the Rueng Phueng Demining Operation, a special operation carried out in early 2022 in difficult terrain and requiring deminers to be airlifted to the task site.²¹ Thailand would welcome other international assistance for equipment as well as additional survey teams.²²

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Thailand does not have a national mine action standard (NMAS) on the environment and does not plan to introduce a chapter on environmental management in the revised national standards under preparation and tentatively due for final approval before the end of 2023.²³

An annual Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)-TMAC-HMAU meeting in December 2021 included sessions dedicated to environmental issues and had a workshop on the subject of working on Environmental Assessment and Management (EMA) and environment training. Environment is not taken into consideration in planning and tasking unless tasks are in protected areas, in which case there are specific rules to be followed in terms of what can be cut and what can not.

NPA introduced an environmental policy and management system in its Thailand operation in 2022 and organised a workshop for staff in South East Asia to exchange knowledge and experience of addressing environmental issues.²⁴ This includes logging ongoing environmental concerns and a range of general measures for staff to reduce air pollution. It bans use of single-use plastic and other disposable items and calls for reduced air travel and driving, combined staff trips, car-pooling, and reduced fuel consumption, and for office waste to be stored in a location that is secure, weatherproof, and leak-proof.²⁵ The Thai Civilian Deminer Association (TDA) includes environmental protection in its operating practices, minimising damage to trees, plants, and wildlife.²⁶

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

TMAC does not have a policy or guidelines on gender and diversity. It attempts to diversify gender where applicable but

13 Email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 15 August 2019.

14 Interviews with Shushira Chonhenchob, NPA; and with Lt.-Gen. Sittipol Nimnuan, TMAC, in Bangkok, 9 April 2019.

15 Email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich (on behalf of the Director General), TMAC, 15 August 2019.

16 Emails from John Kelsch, Thailand Country Director/Technical Advisor, Golden West, 1 June 2020 and 15 September 2022.

17 Email from John Kelsch, Golden West, 8 May 2023.

18 Email from Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 31 August 2023.

19 Email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 27 February 2020.

20 Email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 27 May 2022.

21 Email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 11 July 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form 4.

22 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form 8.

23 Emails from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 11 July 2023; and John Kelsch, Golden West, 8 May 2023.

24 Emails from Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 25 April 2022 and 16 May 2023.

25 Email from Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 16 May 2023.

26 Email from Amornchai Sirisai, Director, TDA, 19 April 2022.

faces challenges as a male-dominated military organisation. In 2022, TMAC reported women made up approximately 30% of its headquarters staff,²⁷ down from 40% in the preceding two years.²⁸ Women held three of TMAC's twelve headquarters managerial/supervisory level positions, with three female colonels serving as, respectively, chief of the director general's office, chief of Administration and Support, and chief of Public Relations.²⁹ In 2021, three of the nine TMAC staff in managerial positions were women, including a Rear Admiral serving as an advisor.³⁰ However, there continued to be no women working within the HMAUs, as personnel are allocated from local forces/garrisons, which are considered a combat force. The Thai military does not allow women combatants in such units.³¹

Thailand's 2018–20 baseline survey of mine contamination was based on inclusive community interviews consulting women, girls, boys and men in all areas where the survey was conducted and minority groups in the areas where they reside.³²

NPA follows an organisational gender and diversity policy. Its survey teams are gender balanced and during NTS or community liaison activities they invite participation by all local people, including children. Of NPA's 22 employees in Thailand, nine (41%) are women, with women holding four of the six managerial and supervisory positions; and four of fourteen operations positions. NPA encourages TMAC and the HMAUs to become more gender balanced.³³

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

TMAC established a data centre to process land release, risk education, and quality management data which became fully operational in 2019 using Excel and Arc Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping.³⁴ ArcGIS Online is being used as part of a support package provided by the Department of Survey of the Royal Thai Armed Forces. ArcGIS assists TMAC and the HMAUs in data collection and dissemination, and mapping of SHAs and confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and supports TMAC senior management in decision-making and operational planning.³⁵ HMAUs submit information to TMAC via the online system every 15 days, which allows for verification of progress and rectification of errors.³⁶

PLANNING AND TASKING

The first phase of Thailand's 2018–23 Five-Year Plan focused on NTS and cancellation of outstanding SHAs, mostly in the north-east of the country. In this phase, four provinces were declared mine free: Chanthaburi, Chiang Mai, Chumphon, and Mae Hong Son.³⁷ In the second phase, covering 2021–23, focus switched to TS and clearance with TMAC expecting to release a total of more than 90km² of SHA/CHA.³⁸

In March 2022, Thailand submitted a request to extend its Article 5 deadline from the end of October 2023 to the end of 2026, setting ambitious annual land release targets for the extension period. It proposed to complete release of all CHAs and SHAs except the areas earmarked for demarcation within before the new extension period kicked in. This included releasing 17.39km² through TS and clearance in 2022 and a further 8.6km² between 1 January and 31 October 2023. It hoped to tackle the remaining 14.31km² of areas for demarcation in the course of the requested 38-month extension. Annual targets included almost 5.33km² of the most accessible areas in the first year, just under 5.15km² in the second, and more than 3.56km² of the more "complicated" areas in the remaining 14 months.³⁹

Thailand's extension request assumes it will be able to reach an accommodation with Cambodia on clearance of areas for demarcation that has so far proved elusive. TMAC and the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) conducted a pilot project on the border in March–April 2020. Thailand reported that in August 2021 it submitted a proposal for a new project to which CMAC had responded favourably, and that it had subsequently proposed 10 areas for operations but Cambodia has not yet agreed.⁴⁰ As a result, TMAC's priority for 2023 was to release more than 9.23km², representing all the remaining hazardous areas in undisputed territory so that after 2023 it could concentrate on the areas for demarcation.⁴¹

27 Emails from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 1 July 2021 and 27 May 2022.

28 Email from Shushira Chonhenchob, NPA (on behalf of the TMAC Director General), 8 April 2019.

29 Email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 11 July 2023.

30 Email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 27 May 2022.

31 Email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 18 August 2021.

32 Emails from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich (on behalf of the Director General), TMAC, 27 February 2020; and Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 30 March 2020.

33 Emails from Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 31 March and 4 July 2021 and 16 May 2023.

34 Emails from Shushira Chonhenchob, NPA (on behalf of Lt.-Gen. Sittipol Nimnuan, TMAC), 8 April 2019; and Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich (on behalf of the Director General), TMAC, 27 February 2020.

35 Email from Shushira Chonhenchob, NPA (on behalf of Lt.-Gen. Sittipol Nimnuan, TMAC), 8 April 2019.

36 Ibid.; and email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich (on behalf of the Director General), TMAC, 27 February 2020.

37 Statement of Thailand, APMBC Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties, virtual meeting, 16–20 November 2020; and Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form 4.

38 Five-Year Humanitarian Mine Action Plan, 1 November 2018–31 October 2023, p. 13.

39 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 43.

40 Ibid., p. 9.

41 Email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 11 July 2023.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

TMAC drafted its first NMAS with NPA's support in 2010, formally adopting the 32 chapters in June 2012, the year Thailand initiated a land release process.⁴² Since then, the NMAS underwent modest revisions in 2015 and 2018 in support of Thailand's shift towards using the full toolbox of land release methodologies rather than solely relying on TS and full clearance.⁴³ The main change in 2018 was the release of a new standard on the "Cancellation of SHAs by Evidence Based Survey", which has made it easier to cancel previously inflated, largely uncontaminated SHAs.⁴⁴

In 2020, TMAC, with the assistance of Golden West, began to revise both the NMAS and standard operating procedures

(SOPs) in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). In accordance with the Director General's wishes, the revision was intended to replace 32 NMAS chapters with more concise standards in 12 chapters and to transfer operational requirements to national SOPs.⁴⁵

SOP revisions were adopted in 2022 with the intention to review and revise them biannually but final preparation of the NMAS have encountered delays and taken longer than expected. After a number of postponements, a review of the revised standards starting in May was planned to conclude in the last quarter of 2023.⁴⁶

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

All clearance in Thailand is conducted by the military due to national regulations on who can handle explosives and operate demining equipment. There are five HMAUs, supervised by TMAC with personnel from the Royal Thai Army and Royal Thai Navy, which carry out survey and clearance operations. In addition, there is one national operator, TDA, and an international operator, NPA, which carry out survey in support of the HMAUs.⁴⁷

TMAC reconfigured the composition and roles of the HMAUs in 2022 in response to its changing operational focus. HMAUs 1 and 4 have been taken off land release and assigned to focus on risk education and victim assistance. All personnel are trained for survey and clearance and the members of these units can provide additional clearance capacity if required. HMAUs 2 and 3 and HTMAC are to conduct land release and restructured with four NTS/TS teams of five or six personnel, four TS/clearance teams each with ten personnel, four mine detection dog (MDD) teams with one dog and one handler per team, two risk education teams (six people each) and five EOD personnel.⁴⁸

NPA has supported TMAC operations since 2011, conducting land release through NTS and TS. In 2021, NPA had operated with three NTS teams (totalling six personnel) and three

TS teams (totalling nine personnel), working jointly with personnel attached from HMAUs 2 and 3.⁴⁹ The personnel attached from HMAUs are trained to EOD Level 3 and so able to dispose of any mines encountered during survey on the spot.⁵⁰ In 2022, all teams focused on TS/clearance teams to align with the changing focus in the second phase of TMAC's 2018–23 plan. NPA started 2022 with 10 operations staff working in a single team but from June 2022 split them into two, five-person teams working in Surin province's Phanom Dongrak and Kabchoeng districts. From June 2022, NPA also had two MDDs deployed mainly for TS but able to conduct clearance if needed. NPA provides technical advice as requested by TMAC and co-organised training on the Mini MineWolf with the HDR&D.⁵¹

TDA has supported TMAC operations since 2014 and at the beginning of 2021 had two 10 person teams available for NTS, TS, clearance and EOD spot tasks but their operations ended in February 2021 when donor support expired. TDA's teams remained on stand-by in 2022 but were hopeful of attracting new donor funding that would allow them to resume work in 2023.⁵²

42 Thai National Mine Action Standards, 1 April 2015.

43 Email from Shushira Chonhenchob, NPA (on behalf of Lt.-Gen. Sittipol Nimnuan, TMAC), 8 April 2019.

44 Emails from Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 28 March 2019; and Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich (on behalf of the Director General), TMAC, 15 August 2019.

45 Emails from John Kelsch, Golden West, 17 August and 15 September 2022.

46 Emails from John Kelsch, Golden West, 17 August and 15 September 2022 and 8 May 2023.

47 Five-Year Mine Action Plan, p. 11; and email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich (on behalf of Lt.-Gen. Sittipol Nimnuan), TMAC, 27 February 2020.

48 Email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 11 July 2023.

49 Email from Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 25 April 2022.

50 Interview with Aksel Steen Nilsen, NPA, Bangkok, 13 December 2022.

51 Email from Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 16 May 2023.

52 Emails from Amornchai Sirisai, TDA, 19 April 2022 and 12 May 2023.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

Thailand released a total of 10.39km² in 2022, less than half the area released in 2021 largely because of a sharp downturn in the area cancelled through NTS.⁵³ The drop was expected as TMAC embarked on the second phase of its 2018–23 plan in which operations shifted from NTS to focus on TS and clearance but also underscored the slower progress ahead as deminers take on minefields with denser contamination in remote and difficult terrain.

SURVEY IN 2022

Total area released through survey in 2022 amounted to 10.06km² (see Table 2) compared with 22.59km² in 2021. After rapid NTS and high rates of cancellation in the past four years Thailand is left with the task of clearing predominantly CHAs. In 2022, the second year of TMAC's 2018–23 plan, it cancelled 4.62km² compared with 20.4km² the previous year. Close to 90% of the area cancelled was in Phitsanulok province, where TMAC cancelled 8.5km² in 2021 and another 4.1km² in 2022 and which, after small amounts of TS/clearance, authorities declared mine free in 2022.⁵⁴

TS operations in 2022 reduced 5.44km², more than double the area reduced in 2021. TMAC had cancelled 8.5km² in Trat province in 2021 and reduced only 0.6km². In 2022, the position reversed as TMAC released 2.8km² through TS and cancelled 0.4km².⁵⁵ NPA reported it reduced 324,665m² through TS on three sites in Surin province.⁵⁶

Table 2: Land release of mined area through NTS and TS in 2022⁵⁷

Operator	Province	NTS (m ²)	TS (m ²)
TMAC	Trat	427,079	2,833,621
	Ubon Ratchathani	81,289	1,550,606
	Phitsanulok	4,105,887	95,568
	Surin	2,700	740,366
	Buriram	0	65,431
NPA	Surin	0	158,490
Totals		4,616,955	5,444,082

CLEARANCE IN 2022

TMAC cleared 0.33km² in four provinces in 2022 (see Table 3). Despite the focus on clearance in its operations this represented a 37% drop from the area cleared in 2021 and only 60% of the year's target. The number of mines cleared also fell: to 11,421 compared with 19,002 the previous year.⁵⁸

Thailand attributed the shortfall partly to the challenges experienced in a one-month special operation, the Rueng Phueng Demining Operation, carried out in January–February 2022 which aimed to clear nine CHAs covering 708,532m². The remote and difficult terrain of the task site required deminers to be lifted in by air force helicopters. The operation released 452,515m², including reduction through TS of 401,786m² (89%) and clearance of 50,729m² (11%) and removed 1,064 AP mines. But Thailand reported it was prevented from completing the task by an intervention from Cambodian border units which requested them to halt the operation, leaving 256,017m² still to be cleared.⁵⁹

53 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form 4; email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 11 July 2023.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Email from Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 16 May 2023.

57 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form 4; email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 11 July 2023.

58 Ibid.

59 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form 4.

Table 3: Mine clearance in 2022⁶⁰

Province	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed*	ERW destroyed*
Phitsanulok	0	1	11
Buri Ram	16,258	2,155	0
Surin	156,365	2,230	636
Trat	10,097	434	255
Ubon Ratchathani	148,146	6,601	585
Totals	330,866	11,421	1,487

* Includes items destroyed during TS and in spot tasks

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the third extension granted by States Parties in 2022), Thailand is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2026.

Thailand set ambitious targets of clearing 14.3km² in its 38-month extended deadline beginning on 1 November 2023 but that target has already been overtaken by events. The 10km² that TMAC released in 2022 represented 60% of the amount of land it had planned to release in the year. The result added 7km² to the contamination Thailand had planned to tackle between 2023 and the end of 2026 and, depending on the results in 2023, could mean a 50% increase in the area to be tackled in the Article 5 extension period.

Thailand is seeking to push ahead with tackling contamination in border areas, including areas for demarcation. NPA reported in 2023 it had been assigned three TS tasks in areas for demarcation on the borders of Surin and Si Sa Ket province.⁶¹ Thailand's experience with the Rueng Phueng Demining Operation in 2022 exemplified the challenges it

faces meeting the new deadline. Much of the remaining border contamination is in hard-to-access locations where deminers contend with difficult terrain and dense forest. The main immediate obstacle to progress, however, is reaching agreement with Cambodia on clearance. Thailand reported that by March 2022 Cambodian interventions had halted operations in 34 locations covering mined area totalling 14.3km².⁶² In 2022 alone, TMAC reports Cambodia intervened to stop TMAC operations on six occasions in Surin, Si Saket, and Ubon Ratchathani provinces, and in the first five months of 2023 it intervened on three occasions in Si Sa Ket province.⁶³

TMAC and CMAC first agreed to conduct a pilot project for border mine clearance in September 2018.⁶⁴ Since then, they have carried out one project in March–April 2020 that resulted in release of 95,000m² by Thailand and destruction of two items of UXO but no mines. Further progress was not possible during the COVID-19 pandemic but tricky relations between the two governments remain the key impediment to progress.

60 Ibid.; and email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 11 July 2023.

61 Email from Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 16 May 2023.

62 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension request, p. 36.

63 Email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 11 July 2023.

64 Article 7 Report (covering 2018), Section 8.

After a meeting of the two nations' prime ministers on 10 November 2022, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen declared he had agreed that mine clearance should take precedence over border demarcation.⁶⁵ A meeting of the two deputy prime ministers in a Thai-Cambodia General Border Committee (GBC) in Bangkok later in November 2022 reaffirmed support for cooperation in border demining. The directors general of TMAC and CMAC also met in 2022 and 2023 to discuss cooperation in border clearance and identify potential sites for joint operations.⁶⁶ TMAC has proposed 10 areas on the border for clearance but as of June 2023 had received no response from Cambodia.⁶⁷

Table 4: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2022	330,866
2021	525,847
2020	917,924
2019	95,278
2018	528,902
Total	2,398,817

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Revised Thai Mine Action Standards under preparation by TMAC with support from Golden West standards, officially renamed as Thai Mine Action Standards (TMAS), are due to add a chapter on residual risk management but a draft standard has not yet been prepared as TMAC is still considering the issue. TMAC began a pilot programme with HMAU 4 in 2023 focused on residual risk, victim advocacy, and risk education.⁶⁸

TMAC's mandate covers only formal SHAs and CHAs. Any explosive ordnance (including landmines) found outside an SHA/CHA comes under the responsibility of the police. Once Thailand fulfils its Article 5 obligations, TMAC will act as the information and knowledge centre for mines and unexploded ordnance. If previously unknown mines (i.e. residual contamination) are discovered after completion, the local risk education network will inform the local authorities, community leaders, and relevant government agencies. If the area in question is under the jurisdiction of the military, combat engineers will address the contamination. If located in other areas, police EOD teams will take the lead.⁶⁹

65 "Cambodia, Thailand agree to clear all mines in border areas", *Phnom Penh Post*, 23 November 2022.

66 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form 8.

67 Email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich, TMAC, 11 July 2023.

68 Email from John Kelsch, Golden West, 8 May 2023.

69 Email from Flt. Lt. Chotiboon Anukulvanich (on behalf of the Director General), TMAC, 27 February 2020.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2025

NOT ON TRACK TO COMPLETE CLEARANCE (INTERIM DEADLINE)

KEY DATA

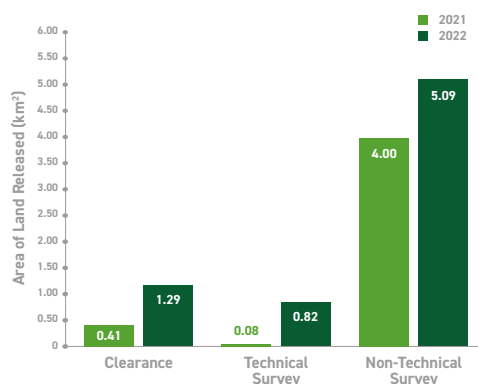
ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: HEAVY

NATIONAL AUTHORITY ESTIMATE

133.4 km²AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 20221.29 km²AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

58,078

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): NONE

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Türkiye (formerly known as Turkey) published a strategic plan for 2020–25 setting out five broad goals, including clearance of all mined areas, but this was superseded in February 2021 by its request for a three-year and nine-month extension of its Article 5 deadline until the end of 2025. This interim extension, which was granted at the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties (19MSP) to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APBMC) in 2021, is for non-technical survey (NTS) of all mined areas. Türkiye expects this survey to result in cancellation of up to a quarter of estimated contamination as well as provide the basis for a final extension request in order to fulfil Türkiye's Article 5 obligations.

In 2022, Türkiye was able to increase land release considerably compared to 2021. This was mainly due to progress under the Phase III of Türkiye's Eastern Borders Mine Clearance Project (EBMCP), which began in June 2021, as well as improved security at the border with Syria. Release of areas along Türkiye's border with Armenia was completed.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Alongside extensive planned NTS and expectations of substantial cancellation of hazardous areas, Türkiye should accelerate clearance, which is unacceptably low.
- Türkiye should provide details of plans to address the small amount of contamination reported in non-border areas.
- Türkiye's obligations under the APBMC require it to implement and report on mine clearance in territory it controls in northern Cyprus and northern Syria. This is because Article 5 of the Convention obligates every State Party to survey and clear all areas under its jurisdiction "or control".
- Türkiye should set out plans to promote gender and inclusion in mine action.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	7	7	Türkiye has good knowledge of the extent of its mine contamination and has, in theory, confirmed all hazardous areas but now plans to refine that understanding by NTS of all mined areas by the end of 2023. It expects that this will reduce the area that needs full clearance by up to 40%.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	6	6	Türkiye's institutional framework for mine action is under the control of the military. Since 2018, there been a significant expansion of operational capacity, although management has suffered from high staff turnover.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	4	4	Türkiye makes no reference to gender and diversity in its 2020–25 strategic plan or the Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in early 2021. Military regulations prevent employment of women in military demining teams but the Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC) says women are included in survey and community liaison teams and in non-operational roles. It claims that it takes gender into account in all aspects of mine action.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	7	7	TURMAC operates an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database. Türkiye submits comprehensive and timely Article 7 reports and it met its requirement to submit an updated, detailed work plan by 30 April 2023.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	7	7	Türkiye's strategic plan for 2020–25 set out five main goals, including becoming mine free by 2025. It will not meet this target. Türkiye has stated it will produce a further updated strategic plan once NTS is complete at the end of 2023.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	7	7	Türkiye published 44 chapters of national mine action standards (NMAS) in 2019. It updated six areas of its NMAS in 2022 including chapters on animal detection systems and occupational health & safety.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	5	4	Türkiye's slow pace of land release saw a significant increase in 2022. The majority of land release in Türkiye was through survey in 2022, as it had also been in 2021, though clearance in 2022 was more than three times that of the previous year.
Average Score	6.2	6.0	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Ministry of National Defence (MoND)
- Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Turkish Armed Forces including: Land Forces Military Demining Units (ÖMAT), Gendarmerie Forces Military Demining Units (JÖMAT) and Military Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (IED)/Mine teams.

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- TDI Altay (a joint venture between The Development Initiative and national operator, Altay Software Defence and Industrial Inc)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Türkiye reported it had 3,701 mined areas on its territory covering more than 133km² at the end of 2022.¹ All contamination is recorded in confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) (see Table 1). The total for end 2022 is a reduction on the 3,804 mined areas covering more than 140km² reported a year earlier.² Most contamination (86%) is along Türkiye's 909km-long border with Syria where land release accounted for 61% of the reduction in contamination in 2022.³ Estimated mined area on Türkiye's borders with Iraq and Iran as well as in non-border areas decreased somewhat compared to a year earlier.⁴ Türkiye's border with Armenia is now believed to be free of anti-personnel (AP) mines as a result of survey and clearance during 2022.⁵

Table 1: Mined area by region (at end 2022)⁶

Region	CHAs	Area (m ²)	AP mines	AV mines
Syrian border	1,517	114,597,746	409,815	193,156
Iraqi border	874	2,805,155	78,886	0
Iranian border	392	13,447,055	66,714	0
Armenian border	0	0	0	0
Non-border areas	918	2,540,802	33,765	0
Totals	3,701	133,390,758	589,180	193,156

AV = Anti-vehicle

Commercial contractor TDI Altay, which is a joint venture between The Development Initiative (TDI) and Altay under Türkiye's Eastern Borders Mine Clearance Project (EBMCP) has identified areas of previously unrecorded contamination⁷ but the details were not made public at the time of writing as they had not yet been approved and finalised by TURMAC. TURMAC has stated it will reflect all the outputs and results of ongoing projects in its Article 7 report, but not until 2024.⁸

Türkiye does not report any suspected hazardous areas (SHAs).⁹ In June 2022, the Committee on Article 5 Implementation stated that it would welcome further information from Türkiye on the remaining challenges, disaggregating by SHA and CHA and their relative size, as well as by type of contamination.¹⁰ As Türkiye noted in its most recent Article 5 deadline extension request in 2021, over the course of the last 70 years, some markings and fences along its borders have been replaced and extended to create a wider buffer to military zones. This has led to an

overestimation of the size of the mined areas in the national mine action database, particularly in border regions.¹¹ Türkiye reported in June 2022 that it planned to conduct NTS of all known remaining minefields across fourteen provinces during the new extension until the end of 2025.¹²

Türkiye reports mines were first laid along the Syrian border in the 1950s to prevent smuggling and later in south-eastern regions for military security.¹³ Mines inside the country were laid around military installations during the 1984–99 conflict with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, PKK) in the south-east of the country.¹⁴ These are mostly in the provinces of Ardahan, Batman, Bingöl, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Mardin, Şırnak, Siirt, and Tunceli.¹⁵ According to Türkiye, these mines, which were marked and fenced, have been progressively cleared since 1998.¹⁶ The mines on Türkiye's other borders were mostly laid in 1955–59 and on some sections of the border with Armenia, Iran, and Iraq in 1992–95.¹⁷ Türkiye reports that its western borders

1 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from the Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC), 18 April 2023.
2 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.
3 Ibid.; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.
4 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.
5 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.
6 Ibid.; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.
7 Email from TDI, 15 May 2023.
8 Email from TURMAC, 17 August 2023.
9 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.
10 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on the implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye", APMBC Intersessional Meetings, 19–21 June 2023.
11 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Analysis of Türkiye's Article 5 deadline extension request, Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties, The Hague, 15–19 November 2021, p. 2.
12 Presentation by TURMAC, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 22 June 2022.
13 Ministry of National Defence Mine Action Centre, Strategic Plan 2020–2025, undated but 2020, p. 1.
14 The PKK is designated as a terrorist organization by Türkiye and by a number of other States.
15 Email from TURMAC, 24 June 2020.
16 Email from TURMAC, 11 July 2019.
17 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D; 2013 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. A-1 and A-5.

with Bulgaria and Greece, as well as the border with Georgia, are mine-free.¹⁸ Clearance along Türkiye's border with Armenia was completed in 2022.¹⁹

The number of mined areas along the Iraqi border, as well as part of the Iranian border, is an estimate, as, reporting in 2015, Türkiye noted that precise calculation had been hampered by the activities of armed groups and the suspected presence of mined areas. In addition, Türkiye stated that fewer mines are expected along the Syrian border than indicated because of detonations by smugglers and as a result of wildfires.²⁰

In its most recent Article 5 deadline extension request of 2021, Türkiye reported that, prior to the establishment of the Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC) in 2015, some demining activities conducted solely by military demining units were cleared with a 90% to 95% mine detection/destroy rate and there was no quality assurance (QA)/quality control (QC) process in place before handover of the cleared area.²¹ TURMAC must ensure that re-clearance/QC is conducted, to ensure that any AP mines missed previously are discovered and destroyed.

In addition to mines laid by its security forces, Türkiye also reports the presence of mines of an improvised nature that it says were emplaced by non-State armed groups, rendering clearance more challenging.²² Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are mostly remote controlled (which are not landmines) or victim-activated pressure plate (in which case they do fall within the definition of an AP mine under the APMBC). Explosive charges are mostly ammonium nitrate supported with plastic explosives.²³ Türkiye again acknowledged the presence of mines of an improvised nature in its most Article 7 Report covering 2022: of 32 mine/IED victims in 2022, 28 were caused by improvised AP mines.²⁴ TURMAC did not clarify if any of the AP mines destroyed by Türkiye's military demining units in 2022 were of an improvised nature.

NORTHERN CYPRUS

Türkiye's original Article 5 clearance deadline was 1 March 2014. In 2013, States Parties granted Türkiye an eight-year extension until 1 March 2022, for clearance of mines in Türkiye, and in 2021, States Parties granted a further extension of Türkiye's Article 5 deadline until 31 December 2025. Türkiye has not requested additional time for clearance of the areas it controls in northern Cyprus²⁵ and neither extension request made reference to northern Cyprus²⁶ (see the report on Cyprus for further information). This puts into serious question Türkiye's compliance with Article 5 of the APMBC. TURMAC does not appear to have any plans in place to meet its Article 5 obligations in areas under its control in northern Cyprus, claiming that "the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is a sovereign country recognized by the Republic of Türkiye" and that responsibility for mined areas does not sit with Türkiye.²⁷

NORTHERN SYRIA

Türkiye has an obligation under Article 5 of the APMBC to clear AP mines in areas currently under its control in northern Syria. The precise extent to which it is implementing this obligation is not clear. In its Article 7 report covering 2022, Türkiye stated that it found/neutralised 121 mines, 1,837 IEDs, and 26,770 other munitions in Syria, Iraq, and Libya,²⁸ but without specific reference to locations in northern Syria. TURMAC also states that Türkiye conducts counterterrorism military operations to ensure the security of its borders and that the Turkish Armed Forces have neutralised "thousands of mines and hand-made explosives" as part of cross-border military operations.²⁹ However, Türkiye refers only to the location of the "Syrian border" when providing land release data in its Article 7 reports³⁰, so it is not clear whether it is clearing AP mines on the Syrian side of the border in territory it controls. TURMAC asserts that as Syria is a sovereign country, "and Türkiye has no obligation to clear AP mines on another country's territory", responsibility for releasing mined areas does not sit with Türkiye.³¹ Mine Action Review believes this is an incorrect interpretation and application of Türkiye's obligations under Articles 1 and 5 of the APMBC.

18 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7.

19 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

20 Article 7 Report (covering 2015), Form C.

21 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 11.

22 2013 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. A-5.

23 Email from TURMAC, 24 June 2020.

24 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form H.

25 See the reference to Türkiye's jurisdiction in northern Cyprus under the European Convention on Human Rights in European Court of Human Rights, *Güzelyurtlu and others v. Cyprus and Turkey*, Judgment (Grand Chamber), 29 January 2019, para. 193.

26 2013 and 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Requests.

27 Email from TURMAC, 17 August 2023.

28 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

29 Email from TURMAC, 17 August 2023.

30 See, e.g., Article 7 Reports (covering 2022), Form D; and (covering 2021), Form D.

31 Email from TURMAC, 17 August 2023.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Türkiye adopted Law No. 6586 establishing a national mine action centre under the Ministry of National Defence (MoND) in February 2015.³² Its director reports directly to the Undersecretary of the MoND.³³ The law gave the centre, now known as TURMAC, responsibility for the clearance to humanitarian standards of mines and/or unexploded ordnance (UXO).³⁴ TURMAC's activities are regulated by two presidential decrees.³⁵ TURMAC is responsible for elaborating policies for clearance; planning and steering related activities and monitoring their implementation; and coordination and cooperation with domestic and foreign institutions.³⁶

Türkiye claims that the formation of TURMAC has led to significantly increased mine clearance,³⁷ but a high turnover of senior staff, including the director, has certainly had a negative effect on the national mine action programme.³⁸ Brigadier-General Mehmet Zeki Eren³⁹ was appointed director of TURMAC on 24 August 2021; he is the first TURMAC Director to hold the rank of General.⁴⁰

Mine action in Türkiye is mostly financed by the state. TURMAC and the Turkish Armed Forces demining units are financed entirely by the government.⁴¹ In 2022, Türkiye contributed TRY30 million (approx. €1 million) to capacity development of military demining units. It has pledged to also allocate €2.12 million to fund the fourth component of the Eastern Borders Mine Clearance Project, while the European Union (EU) is expected to contribute €18.5 million.⁴² In its latest Article 7 Report, covering 2022, Türkiye stated that the EU had contributed to the EBMCP, but did not state how much it had contributed.⁴³

In the past, a number of operators have told Mine Action Review that customs processes to import goods have been slow and bureaucratic and that the administration of immigration and tax has been somewhat challenging.⁴⁴

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Türkiye has an NMAS on environmental management, which was issued in 2019. TURMAC did not clarify whether there is also a related policy document. TDI Altay, though, does have a policy on environmental management and an environmental management system. It states that the environment is always taken into account during operations, particularly if there is a need to burn vegetation. All clearance by TDI Altay in 2022 was manual, with no use of mechanical assets. Manual clearance and cutting of vegetation were conducted only where necessary to access and clear mine rows.⁴⁵

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Türkiye did not address gender and diversity in its 2021–25 strategy or in the Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in February 2021. In 2022, the APMBC Committee on Article 5 Implementation observed that Türkiye had not reported updated information on any such efforts.⁴⁶ In 2023, the Committee noted that Türkiye had reported on having established their baseline through “inclusive consultations, including information on the percentage of women as a total of TURMAC’s personnel (29%), the employment of a gender focal point and female deminers.”⁴⁷

32 Article 7 Report (covering 2014), “Workplan for mine clearance activities”, Annex 1; and Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report, Form A, 2015.

33 Presidency Decree No. 1 of 10 July 2018; Article 7 Report (for 2018), Form A; and Statement of Turkey on Clearance, Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 29 November 2018.

34 Article 7 Report (covering 2014), “Workplan for mine clearance activities”, Annex 1; and CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report, Form A, 2015.

35 Presidential Decree dated 18 April 2019; and Presidential Decree No. 32, amending the Presidential Decree on General Staff and Procedure. MoND, “Turkish Mine Action Center”, accessed 7 March 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/44hgNDN>.

36 Article 7 Report (covering 2014), “Workplan for mine clearance activities”, Annex 1; and CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report, Form A, 2015.

37 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form A.

38 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Analysis of Türkiye’s Article 5 deadline extension request, 19MSP, The Hague, 15–19 November 2021, p. 2.

39 “Demining improves security along Turkey’s eastern border”, *ReliefWeb*, 2 October 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3S3FY6W>.

40 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

41 Email from TURMAC, 21 June 2017.

42 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

43 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form I.

44 Email from TDI, 15 May 2023.

45 Ibid.

46 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Preliminary Observations on the Implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

47 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, “Preliminary Observations on the Implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye”, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

Table 2: Gender composition of mine action operators in 2022⁴⁸

Organisation	Total staff	Total women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Total women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Total women in operational positions
TURMAC	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K
Military demining units	N/K	0	N/K	0	N/K	0
TDI Altay	328	14	25	1	250	10

N/K = Not Known

Türkiye claims that gender and diversity are taken into consideration in all mine action activities.⁴⁹ TURMAC states that, as at the end of 2022, 29% of its own personnel were female. This included a head of department and two branch chiefs.⁵⁰ This is a decrease compared to 2021, when 45% of TURMAC's personnel were women.⁵¹ Although Turkish military demining units do not employ any women, civilian contractors are advised to hire female personnel.⁵²

In 2022, 14 personnel under the demining contractor TDI Altay, contracted for Phase III of the EBMCP, were female. This included ten medical personnel, four office-based staff, and two NTS personnel; one of whom was employed as a gender focal point.⁵³ TDI Altay says that it offers equal access to employment for qualified women and men in TDI Altay's survey and clearance teams in Türkiye, including for managerial /supervisory positions. The company has a gender and diversity policy and implementation plan.⁵⁴

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

TURMAC installed the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) with support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) in 2017, and personnel from TURMAC and the armed forces have been trained in its use.⁵⁵ TDI Altay uses differential GPS (D-GPS) to collect data.⁵⁶

Türkiye has submitted Article 7 transparency reports annually on time and which provide a detailed review of plans and activities. As required under the granting of its latest extension request in 2021, Türkiye submitted an updated work plan by 30 April 2023.⁵⁷

PLANNING AND TASKING

In 2020, TURMAC issued a strategic mine action plan through to the end of 2025 setting out a vision of Türkiye completing mine clearance by 2025. It estimated the cost at about US\$332 million, to be financed by the national budget and international sources. The plan identified five goals: to clear all emplaced AP mines in Türkiye; to strengthen national capacity and ensure its sustainability; to reduce the number of mines held in depots for training; to provide risk education and support mine victims; and to develop co-operation with national and international organisations related to mine action.⁵⁸

⁴⁸ Emails from TURMAC, 18 April 2023; and TDI, 15 May 2023.

⁴⁹ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form I; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

⁵⁰ Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form I.

⁵¹ Statement of Türkiye, Intersessional Meetings, 22–24 June 2021.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form I; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

⁵⁴ Email from TDI, 15 May 2023.

⁵⁵ Statements of Türkiye, Standing Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Geneva, 22 May 2019; and on Clearance, Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 29 November 2018; email from TURMAC, 11 July 2019; and Article 7 Report (covering 2018), Form A.

⁵⁶ Email from TDI, 15 May 2023.

⁵⁷ Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on the Implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

⁵⁸ Ministry of National Defence Mine Action Centre, Strategic Plan 2020–2025, undated but 2020, pp. 7–8, 10.

In February 2021, however, Türkiye requested an interim extension of its Article 5 deadline for three years and nine months until the end of 2025, by when it no longer expected to complete clearance. The request foresaw three main projects in 2021–23: demining; NTS covering 3,834 mined areas with a view to producing baseline data from which to prepare plans for completion; and a clearance project to address 27 mined areas measuring approximately 1km² in Mardin province.⁵⁹ Türkiye expected NTS during the extension period to result in cancellation of around 40km² of mined area.⁶⁰ The Mardin project has so far been stymied by security challenges along the Syrian border.⁶¹

By 30 April 2023, Türkiye was expected to produce an updated detailed work plan for the remaining period covered by its extension.⁶² It duly submitted an updated work plan which provides for release of mined areas covering 13km² in Iğdır and Ağrı provinces by the end of 2023 and NTS on 448 areas. In 2024–25, Türkiye plans to address mined areas covering 22.3km².⁶³

TURMAC has prioritised its mine clearance activities according to four levels as follows:

- Level 1: Lands with minefields along the southern and eastern borders of Türkiye, which prevent the establishment of new border surveillance technology and infrastructure (e.g. watchtowers, patrol roads).
- Level 2: Interior lands with minefields, posing a danger to inhabitants.
- Level 3: Lands requested to be cleared by governmental organisations.
- Level 4: Disputed lands along the borders and interior parts of Türkiye, belonging to private owners.⁶⁴

TDI Altay declares that task dossiers are issued by the national authority in a timely and effective manner.⁶⁵ TDI Altay has been tasked with releasing 94 minefields in various regions of Türkiye.⁶⁶

EASTERN BORDERS

Türkiye's EBMCP, which started on the Armenian border, is continuing southwards to the borders with Azerbaijan, Iran, and Iraq.⁶⁷ The project is supervised by Turkish authorities and implemented in a joint project with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),⁶⁸ which is managing and quality assuring the demining.⁶⁹ Denel MECHEM (MECHEM) was initially awarded a contract to conduct demining as part of a consortium in which national operators would be subcontracted by the company.⁷⁰

Phase 2, which was completed in December 2019,⁷¹ resulted in release of close to 1.7km² of land, bringing the total area released in the first two phases to 4.8km².⁷² Türkiye issued contracts for the third phase of the project in December 2020 and started work in June 2021. Clearance and NTS are being conducted by a joint venture between TDI and national operator Altay. Türkiye's extension request stipulates that manual clearance is followed by two levels of verification, including an extended search for missing mines and sampling checks conducted using mine detection dogs (MDDs).⁷³

Phase III, to take place in 2021–23, has four components: clearing 4.24km² in the provinces of Ağrı, Ardahan, Kars, and Iğdır;⁷⁴ building TURMAC's capacities, mine risk education to build public awareness, and NTS of 3,502 minefields. The first three components have been funded by the EU and the Turkish government.⁷⁵ Türkiye has allocated €2.12 million to fund the fourth component, which involves NTS;⁷⁶ and has requested additional funding from the EU.⁷⁷ Phase III extends from Ardahan province to Doğubayazıt in Ağrı province, along the borders with Armenia and Iran, covering almost 170km in length. It comprises 96 separate minefields believed to contain more than 80,000 landmines. The operating conditions are challenging. Many of the minefields are at high altitude, sometimes 3,000m or more above sea level. Clearance activities are often impeded by wind, rain, and snow.⁷⁸

59 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Analysis of Türkiye's Article 5 deadline extension request, 19MSP, The Hague, 15–19 November 2021, p. 4.

60 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 19; and email from Mark Frankish, UNDP, 24 May 2021.

61 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

62 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on the Implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

63 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on the Implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

64 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

65 Email from TDI, 15 May 2023.

66 Ibid.

67 2013 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. A-14.

68 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", p. 6.

69 Email from Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, 3 October 2016.

70 Interview with TURMAC, in Geneva, 18 February 2016.

71 Statement of Türkiye on clearance, Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 29 November 2018; Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A.

72 Email from TURMAC, 24 June 2020.

73 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 20; email from Mark Frankish, UNDP, 24 May 2021.

74 MoND, "Turkish Mine Action Center", accessed 7 March 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/44hgNDN>.

75 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form I.

76 Email from TURMAC, 4 May 2021.

77 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

78 TDI, "Clearing the Eastern Border of Türkiye", accessed 8 March 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/3D35mnh>.

In June 2023, Türkiye stated that, so far, field visits had taken place at 3,430 mined areas and that approximately 500 NTS reports had been made, along with internal and external quality management (QM), in coordination between TDI Altay, TURMAC, and UNDP.⁷⁹ As at November 2022, 3,054 NTS reports had been approved and transferred to TURMAC's database. TURMAC also reports that, as at April 2023, an area of 2.3km² has been addressed across the provinces of Ağrı, Ardahan, Iğdır and Kars. A total of 49,040 mines have been found and destroyed, across 72 of the 94 minefields within the project's scope.⁸⁰ Within the scope of Phase III, field visits, reporting, and QM at a further 448 areas in the provinces of Batman, Diyarbakır, and Şırnak will be completed.⁸¹ All survey will be undertaken by commercial contractors under the management and coordination of UNDP, with TURMAC's NTS teams providing QC and advisory support.⁸²

Having begun in 2016, the EBMCP is now in its seventh year. In 2018 the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) stated: "most partners understand that this project will potentially run for 10-12 years, although this must be determined by non-technical survey options which will verify the correct planning period."⁸³ At the end of Phase III the project, due to be completed by the end of 2023, Türkiye aims to have a reliable estimate of SHAs and CHAs, allowing for effective planning of mine clearance activities for upcoming years.⁸⁴ TURMAC has prepared a project document for EBMCP Phase IV to be financed by the EU, in order to carry out demining in Van province, on the Iranian border. Through this project, Türkiye plans to clear an area of approximately 3.5km² between 2024 and 2025.⁸⁵

BORDERS WITH IRAQ AND SYRIA

Türkiye's 2013 Article 5 deadline extension request had projected completing clearance of the Syrian border by the end of 2019.⁸⁶ Turkish officials have described the Syria border as Türkiye's easiest clearance task because the terrain is flat and has experienced minimal mine displacement due to environmental factors. Furthermore,

the minefields are mostly marked and fenced and well-known to local populations. Türkiye was, however, held back by the Syria conflict⁸⁷ and so far, has made little progress clearing the border.

Clearance operations underway since 2018 have focused on Hatay and Kilis provinces.⁸⁸ The Strategic Plan for 2020–25 said Turkish demining assets would clear a total of around 3.4km² in Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Mardin, Şanlıurfa, and Şırnak provinces on the Syrian border at a cost of TRY55 million (US\$8 million) funded from the national budget.⁸⁹ In Mardin province, the MoND planned to clear 27 areas covering nearly 1.06km² between 2021 and 2023.⁹⁰

The Mardin project was the first mine clearance project to be tendered by the Turkish Government since the establishment of TURMAC in 2015. It encompasses 45 minefields containing 27,614 mines across 1.7km² along the Syrian border.⁹¹ Türkiye had planned that it would be managed by TURMAC and implemented by a private contractor⁹² and, in 2020, the MoND pledged an additional TRY25 million for 2022 to 2023 to conduct mine clearance in Mardin province.⁹³ However, in its most recent Article 7 Report covering 2022, Türkiye explained that the Mardin Project has not been able to proceed due to instability and consequent security risks posed to demining personnel.⁹⁴

NON-BORDER AREAS

Türkiye had planned to clear all 873 identified mined areas inside the country by 2021, involving release of 3.1km² and destruction of 34,410 mines. However, little progress has been made in recent years, with clearance of only 0.3km² at a former military range in 2018,⁹⁵ a further 9,584m² cleared in 2021,⁹⁶ and only 2,727m² cleared in 2022. Türkiye estimated at the end of 2022 that 2.5km² remained.⁹⁷ The mined areas are scattered and TURMAC has previously stated that it considers it practical for clearance to be conducted by military units even though their capacity to do so has so far been limited.⁹⁸

79 Statement of Türkiye on Article 5, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19 June 2023.

80 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

81 Ibid.

82 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

83 "Final Evaluation for Clearance of Landmines in the Eastern Border Regions of Turkey (Demining Project - Phase I)", UNDP Independent Evaluation Office, accessed 9 July 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/3XMiZ3M>, p. 24.

84 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

85 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

86 2013 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. A-2, A-13, and A-14.

87 Article 7 Report (covering 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", pp. 3 and 8; and Statement of Turkey, Fifteenth Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 29 November 2016.

88 Email from TURMAC, 11 July 2019; Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A.

89 MoND Mine Action Centre, Strategic Plan 2020–2025, undated but 2020, p. 8.

90 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 6.

91 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

92 Presentation by TURMAC, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 22 June 2022.

93 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form A.

94 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

95 Email from TURMAC, 21 June 2017; Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A; Article 7 Report (for 2018), Form D; Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A.

96 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

97 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

98 Email from TURMAC, 24 June 2020.

Türkiye's Article 5 deadline extension request does not set out a timeline for tackling non-border areas. TURMAC reported that in 2021 a Gendarmerie demining company would be assigned to clearance of non-border tasks in the south-eastern provinces of Diyarbakir and Siirt and the north-eastern province of Ardahan.⁹⁹ As noted above, some limited clearance in unspecified non-border areas in both 2021 and 2022 was reported. However, TURMAC did not clarify any further plans to clear mined areas in non-border areas.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Türkiye issued 44 national mine action standards, including on land release, in February 2019. The standards were prepared with support from UNDP and the GICHD.¹⁰⁰ A separate set of standards specific to the EBMCP were also reviewed in 2019, including regulations and medical standards for private companies.¹⁰¹

In 2022 Türkiye published NMAS 07.30 Accreditation of Mine Action Organisations and NMAS 12.10 Explosive Ordnance Risk Organization (EORE)¹⁰², following updates made to these in 2021.¹⁰³ This was done according to the latest published IMAS. In 2022, Türkiye also updated the following NMAS: Animal Detection Systems, Principles, Requirements and Guidelines; Accreditation and Operational Test of Animal Detection Systems and Users; Occupational Health and Safety – General Requirements; Occupational Health and Safety – Demining Worksite Safety; Occupational Health and Safety – Personal Protective Equipment; and Occupational Health and Safety – Medical Support to Demining Operations.¹⁰⁴ A meeting to review the NMAS was held in March 2023. While no changes have yet been made, some amendments are expected.¹⁰⁵

Accreditation and QM of the Turkish Land Forces and the Gendarmerie units is carried out by TURMAC.¹⁰⁶

Prior to 2022, the rate of progress towards completion in Türkiye has been unacceptably slow, indicating a lack of effective national capacity. However, clearance more than tripled between 2021 and 2022 (see Table 8 below) and Türkiye has reported on its efforts in 2022 to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance, including by promoting the research, application, and sharing of innovative technological means to this effect, including a new mine clearance equipment certification process; the deployment of demining machines; and use of MDDs.¹⁰⁷ Once all NTS due to take place by the end of 2023 is complete, Türkiye will be in a better position to plan for its capacity and land release system requirements for the years ahead.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Türkiye's main demining capacity is provided by the military and has been steadily increasing in recent years. By 2020, after two years of rapid expansion, total military capacity amounted to 32 teams: 26 Land Forces demining teams with 420 personnel and 6 Gendarmerie teams with 120 personnel. In 2022, the number of Gendarmerie demining teams increased from 6 to 18.¹⁰⁸ In Türkiye's latest Article 7 report, covering 2022, it states that the number of Gendarmerie demining teams were increased by ten in 2022, bringing capacity to a total of 42 teams: 24 Land Forces teams and 18 Gendarmerie teams. Türkiye did not specify the total number of personnel across these teams.¹⁰⁹ Türkiye planned to increase the number of military demining teams to 50 during 2023.¹¹⁰

Türkiye's defence industries developed the Mechanical Mine Clearing Equipment (MEMATT), a light-medium, unmanned demining machine with a tiller attachment, particularly suitable for demining on the flat terrain along the Syrian border. The MoND had planned to take delivery of two machines in 2020 and four in 2021, but cautioned that plans could be set back by the COVID-19 pandemic and later reported that it aimed to deploy all six machines in 2021.¹¹¹ However, in 2021, Türkiye sent six demining machines (MEMATT-I), to Azerbaijan to support mine clearance¹¹² and reported that it planned to complete the

99 Email from TURMAC, 4 May 2021.

100 Email from Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, 3 October 2016; and Article 7 Report (covering 2015), Form F; Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A.

101 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A; email from TURMAC, 24 June 2020.

102 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

103 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

104 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023 and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

105 Email from TDI, 15 May 2023.

106 CCW Protocol II 10 Report (covering 2021), Form B.

107 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on the Implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye", Intersessional Meetings, 19–21 June 2023.

108 Email from TURMAC, 5 September 2022.

109 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2022.

110 Statement of Türkiye on Article 5, APMB 20MSP, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

111 MoND Mine Action Centre, Strategic Plan 2020–2025, undated but 2020, p. 7; Article 7 Reports (covering 2019 and 2020), Form A.

112 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form I; and "Azerbaijan receives new MEMATT mine clearing robots from Turkey", *Global Defense and Security News*, 8 February 2021.

deployment of 20 MEMATT-II machines to Turkish military demining units “in the upcoming years”.¹¹³ In 2022, Türkiye's military demining units were finally augmented with six MEMATT-II demining machines. These were domestically manufactured for the first time, funded by national resources, and accredited and certificated by TURMAC, according to international standards (CWA 15044 – Test and Evaluation of Demining Machines). In total, Türkiye now has eight demining machines operational within its national capacity. A further 20 mechanical demining machines (MEMATT-I and MEMATT-II), again manufactured in Türkiye, were sent to Azerbaijan to support mine clearance activities.¹¹⁴

Following MDD training and accreditation in 2020,¹¹⁵ Turkish Land Forces planned to deploy MDDs for verification following clearance and technical survey (TS) with mechanical assets.¹¹⁶ In 2021, three MDDs were introduced into Gendarmerie demining units and used for verification, with plans to introduce more MDDs in 2022.¹¹⁷ In 2022, Türkiye had ten mine detection dogs operational within its national capacity,¹¹⁸ with plans to add a further four dogs in 2023.¹¹⁹

In 2022, Türkiye deployed its military demining units for clearance (see Table 4) and TURMAC's NTS teams provided QC and advisory support to the EBMCP.¹²⁰ TURMAC did not clarify if military demining units also undertook any NTS or TS. TDI Altay deployed teams for NTS, TS, and clearance¹²¹ (see Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3: Operational survey capacities deployed in 2022¹²²

Operator	Survey teams	Total personnel	Mechanical assets	Comments
TDI Altay	*10	20	0	Deployed for NTS. No TS teams deployed. Increase from 6 teams of 12 personnel in 2021.
Totals	10	20	0	

* This represents TDI Altay's peak NTS capacity in November–December 2022. In January–July 2022, the joint venture deployed 6 NTS teams totalling 12 personnel. In July–November 2022, it deployed 9 NTS teams totalling 18 personnel.

Table 4: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2022¹²³

Operator	Manual clearance teams	Total deminers	MDD teams	Mechanical assets	Comments
Gendarmerie	24	N/K	10 dogs across all military units. Number of teams N/K.	8 machines across all military units, including six MEMATT-II demining machines.	Deployed 18 manual clearance teams of 120 deminers in 2021.** 3 MDDs used by Gendarmerie for verification in 2021. Increase on zero mechanical assets deployed in 2021.
Land Forces	18	N/K			Deployed 26 manual clearance teams of 420 deminers in 2021. No MDD teams in 2021. Increase on zero mechanical assets deployed in 2021.
TDI Altay	20	192	8 teams/16 dogs/ 8 handlers	0	Includes 2 technical survey teams totalling 12 deminers who conducted mainly clearance and support for completion of tasks. Assisted by MDD teams as needed.
Totals	62	N/K	18 MDDs (no. of MDD teams N/K)	*8	

* TURMAC reported that Türkiye deployed eight mechanical assets across its military demining units in 2022, including six MEMATT-II demining machines, but did not specify how many were deployed by the Gendarmerie and Land Forces.

** In 2022, TURMAC confirmed that the number of Gendarmerie manual clearance teams increased from 6 to 18 in 2021 but did not update the number of deminers. That number is, though, believed to be higher than the 120 stated here, which is the number reported for 2020.

113 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

114 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

115 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form C.

116 Email from TURMAC, 4 May 2021.

117 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D; and CCW Protocol II 10 Report (covering 2021), Form G.

118 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

119 Statement of Türkiye on Article 5, 20MSP, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

120 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

121 Email from TDI, 15 May 2023.

122 Ibid.

123 Emails from TURMAC, 4 May 2021, 5 September 2022, and 18 April 2023; and TURMAC; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

A joint venture between TDI and national organisation Altay (TDI Altay) won the contract for Phase III of the EBMCP, including NTS and clearance in the provinces of Ağrı, Ardahan, Iğdır, and Kars. RPS Energy, also part of the UK-based RPS Group, won the contract for QM.¹²⁴ A need to increase NTS capacity was recognised during operations so TDI Altay increased the number of NTS teams from six to ten during the course of 2022.

DEMINER SAFETY

TURMAC did not clarify if any accidents involving military demining personnel took place during survey or clearance of AP mines in 2022. In its most recent Article 7 Report covering 2022, however, Türkiye notes that, of 32 mine/IED mine victims identified in 2022, 9 were military personnel.¹²⁵ However, it is not clear if any of these accidents occurred during survey or clearance or during other military activities.

TDI Altay reports that three deminers were injured in three separate accidents involving M-14 and DM-11 AP mines during clearance in 2022. An investigation was conducted in line with the NMAS, with full involvement from the EBMCP's QA provider and UNDP. Lessons were said to have been identified and training was provided to all staff following the accidents.¹²⁶

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

Türkiye released 103 hazardous areas covering almost 7.2km² in 2022,¹²⁷ 2.7km² more than the previous year.¹²⁸ During clearance, Türkiye destroyed 58,078 AP mines as well as 30 AV mines and 4 items of UXO.¹²⁹ As in previous years, the overwhelming majority of the area released (82% in 2022), was through survey. Of the 7.2km² released, 1.29km² was released through clearance, 0.82km² was reduced through TS, and almost 5.1km² was cancelled through NTS.¹³⁰ Clearance along Türkiye's border with Armenia was completed, following demining in 2022.¹³¹

Türkiye did not report any previously unrecorded AP mined areas as added to Türkiye's information management database in 2022. Türkiye noted in its most recent Article 7 Report covering 2022, that, as the QM process for all minefields had not yet been completed and not all data had been uploaded to the IMSMA database at the time of reporting, not all progress made within the scope of the EBMCP had been included in the land release figures for 2022. TURMAC has said it will reflect the outputs and results of ongoing projects in its Article 7 report covering 2023, to be submitted in 2024.¹³² Türkiye did not report on land release in 2022 in areas under its control in northern Cyprus or northern Syria, referring only to clearance at the "Syrian border".¹³³

SURVEY IN 2022

Türkiye released a total of just over 5.9km² through survey in 2022,¹³⁴ an increase on the almost 4.08km² released through survey in 2021.¹³⁵ Of this, almost 5.09km² was cancelled through NTS and 816,042m² was reduced through TS.¹³⁶ As in 2021, the majority of land released through survey (74%), was along the borders with Syria. Survey took place in all areas of operation across Türkiye in 2022;¹³⁷ in 2021, it took place on the Syrian and Iranian borders only.¹³⁸ The significant increase in the amount of mined area cancelled and reduced in 2022, compared to 2021, can mainly be attributed to the implementation of Phase III of the EBMCP, which includes NTS of many mined areas.

¹²⁴ Email from Mark Frankish, UNDP, 2 July 2021.

¹²⁵ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form H.

¹²⁶ Emails from TDI, 15 May and 8 August 2023.

¹²⁷ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

¹²⁸ Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

¹²⁹ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

¹³² Email from TURMAC, 17 August 2023.

¹³³ Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

¹³⁴ Emails from TDI, 15 May and 8 August 2023; and TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

¹³⁵ Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

¹³⁶ Ibid.; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

¹³⁷ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

Table 5: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022¹³⁹

Operator	Region	Area cancelled (m ²)
N/R	Syrian border	4,379,693
N/R	Iranian border	353,038
N/R	Armenian border	356,653
Total		5,089,384

N/R = Not Reported

Türkiye reported that 816,042m² was reduced through technical survey in 2022, distributed across all areas of operation and including 365,049m² at Türkiye's border with Armenia¹⁴⁰ (see Table 6).

Table 6: Release of mined area through TS in 2022¹⁴¹

Operator	Region	Area reduced through TS (m ²)
N/R	Syrian border	3,124
N/R	Iraqi border	125
N/R	Iranian border	446,362
N/R	Armenian border	365,049
N/R	Non-border areas	1,382
Total		816,042

CLEARANCE IN 2022

In 2022, Türkiye reported clearance of 1.29km² with 103 CHAs cleared and 58,078 AP mines destroyed (see Table 7).¹⁴² This is a considerable increase on the 413,851m² cleared and the 14,176 AP mines destroyed in 2021.¹⁴³

Türkiye has stated that clearance on its southern borders was able to increase during 2022 due to an improved security situation on the Syrian side of the border and the reduced presence of the militant group known as the People's Defence Units or People's Protection Units (the YPG).¹⁴⁴

TURMAC did not clarify which operators were responsible for each of the areas cleared. However, Türkiye gives some specific details of operations by its military demining units in its latest Article 7 Report covering 2022, in which it states that eight Gendarmerie teams addressed 182,665m² of land across 28 areas in Van (a province at the Iranian border) and Şırnak (a province spanning the Iraqi and Syrian borders) in 2022, destroying 8,938 mines. It also states that 20 Land Forces teams conducted demining operations in Hatay (a province along the Syrian border); Kilis (a province also along the Syrian border); Şırnak; and Hakkari (a province spanning the Iraq and Iran borders). During these operations, 262,414m² of land across 19 areas was addressed, with 130 mines destroyed.¹⁴⁵

TURMAC did not clarify how many of the total number of AP mines destroyed in 2022 (as per Table 7), were of an improvised nature. TURMAC stated that no mines or UXO were destroyed in 2022 as a result of spot tasks.¹⁴⁶

Table 7: Mine clearance in 2022¹⁴⁷

Region	Operator	CHAs cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Syrian border	N/K	2	221,510	69	30	1
Iraqi border	N/K	0	37,655	31	0	1
Iranian border	N/K	57	653,438	37,556	0	0
Armenian border	N/K	43	375,375	20,389	0	1
Non-border areas	N/K	1	2,727	33	0	1
Totals		103	1,290,705	58,078	30	4

139 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from Ömer Burga Gönen, TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

140 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

141 Ibid.; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

142 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

143 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 8 August 2022.

144 Statement of Türkiye on Article 5, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19 June 2023. Türkiye considers the YPG to be a terrorist organisation and offspring of the PKK, which it also considers a terrorist organisation.

145 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

146 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

147 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the eight-year extension granted by states parties in 2013), Türkiye was required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than its extended deadline of 1 March 2022. Türkiye did not meet this deadline and in 2021 it was granted an interim extension until the end of 2025.

In its latest Article 7 report covering 2022, Türkiye, notes that, since its first extension request, approximately 39km² of mined area has been addressed and almost 193,000 AP mines destroyed, with the total mined area remaining reduced from 172km² to 133km² between 2014 and 2022.¹⁴⁸ As at the end of 2022, mine clearance in the provinces of Kars and Ardahan had been completed and there are no areas remaining to be addressed at Türkiye's border with Armenia.¹⁴⁹ Over half of this 39km² addressed since 2014 has been released since the launch of Phase III of the EBMCP, for which the demining contract was signed on 23 March 2021. Türkiye expects full completion of Phase III of the EBMCP by the end of 2023.¹⁵⁰

Türkiye plans to clear 10km² by the new deadline of 31 December 2025 but the main focus of the extension request is on completing NTS of all 3,843 mined areas. Türkiye expects that this extensive survey will result in cancellation of up to 40km², or more than a quarter of Türkiye's estimate of AP mined area. Türkiye plans to use the resulting estimate of contamination as the basis for another extension request setting out plans to complete clearance.¹⁵¹ Türkiye noted that the security situation on the Syrian side of Türkiye's border with Syria improved in 2022, allowing for increased clearance activity.¹⁵²

Türkiye's 2022 extension request had a number of gaps. It did not address Türkiye's Article 5 obligations in areas under its control in northern Cyprus and northern Syria. In 2021, TURMAC said Turkish Armed Forces units conducting

cross-border operations in Syria had not encountered any minefields but were clearing IEDs, some of which were AP mines. In August 2023, TURMAC stated that Turkish Armed Forces have neutralised "thousands of mines and hand-made explosives as part of cross-border military operations", including along the Syrian border. However, TURMAC also stated that it believes responsibility for clearing mined areas in northern Cyprus and northern Syria does not sit with Türkiye.¹⁵³ This failure to implement Articles 1 and 5 of the Convention engages Türkiye's responsibility as a State for a violation of international law.

The request also provided no details of plans for clearance of the 90 identified mined areas remaining in non-border areas. TURMAC said it gives higher priority to clearing border minefields and installing border management facilities such as watch towers and patrol roads¹⁵⁴ with the aim of providing "a more secure and technologically advanced humanitarian border management system."¹⁵⁵ Türkiye made little progress on land release in non-border areas in 2022 and, as at April 2023, TURMAC had not provided further clarity on plans to accelerate clearance in non-border areas.

Türkiye's total land release of 7.2km² in 2022 is 2.7km² more than the previous year, and the completion of clearance on Türkiye's border with Armenia, while a relatively small proportion of total contamination, is a milestone towards eventual completion. Survey and clearance activities under Phase III of the EBMCP, due to be completed by the end of 2023, appeared to be on track at the time of writing. Once completed, the outcomes of Phase III will be the basis upon which Türkiye's mine action programme can move forward with a further updated plan.

¹⁴⁸ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

¹⁴⁹ Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Preliminary Observations on the Implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023, p. 1.

¹⁵⁰ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

¹⁵¹ 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 5 and 19.

¹⁵² Statement of Türkiye on Article 5, 20MSP, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

¹⁵³ Email from TURMAC, 17 August 2023.

¹⁵⁴ Email from TURMAC, 12 August 2021; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

¹⁵⁵ Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

Table 8: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	1.29
2021	0.41
2020	0.14
2019	0.67
2018	2.08
Total	4.59

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Türkiye has not disclosed whether it has a plan for dealing with residual contamination following completion of clearance.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 DECEMBER 2023
EXTENSION REQUESTED TO 1 DECEMBER 2023

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION:
UNKNOWN, BUT MASSIVE**

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

0.17 km²

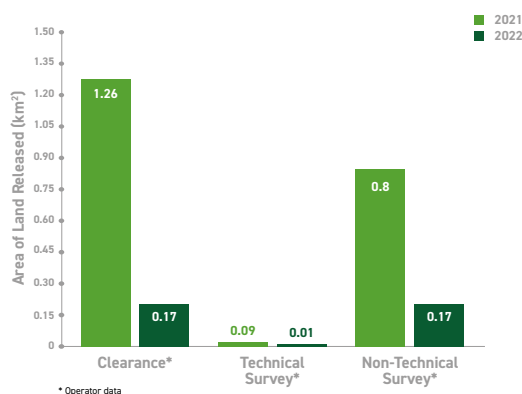
(OPERATOR DATA)

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

59

(ALL DESTROYED DURING SPOT
TASKS, OPERATOR DATA)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

From the outset of its attack against Ukraine that began in late February 2022, Russia's armed forces have extensively used anti-personnel (AP) mines on Ukrainian territory. At least 13 different types of AP mines have been used by Russia since the beginning of its attack, including a recently developed variant with a sensor fuze that is exceedingly difficult to clear safely. Russian forces have also emplaced mines of an improvised nature as they have retreated from their early positions in the war.

In serious violation of its obligations to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APBMC), Ukraine used AP mines in 2022 in the city of Izium while it was under Russian control. Ukraine did not directly refute the allegations use of AP mines. Both Russian and Ukrainian forces have also used at least 13 types of anti-vehicle mines. The Ukrainian authorities have been clearing some contamination soon after use, and by the end of 2022, had disposed of several thousand items of explosive ordnance, including landmines.

Ukraine's National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) assumed its full responsibilities in 2022. The two national mine action centres, one operating under the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and other under the Ministry of Interior (MoI), became fully operational in 2022. New international operators started operations in 2022: DanChurchAid (DCA), Humanity & Inclusion (HI), Mines Advisory Group (MAG). Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) received its accreditation in 2023.

Ukraine was not on track to meet its extended APBMC Article 5 deadline of 1 December 2023 even before the renewed use of AP mines. In June 2023, Ukraine requested a new ten-year extension to its current APBMC Article 5 deadline. The new contamination and ongoing hostilities mean that Ukraine will face many years (or potentially decades) of clearance in order to fulfil its treaty obligations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Ukraine should immediately halt the use of AP mines.
- Ukraine should investigate the use of AP mines by its armed forces and report back to the States Parties to the APBMC in all transparency.

- Ukraine should simplify its mine action coordination and management structures in order to allow an efficient and effective demining response.
- Ukraine should develop a mine action strategy in line with government and local authorities assessment and needs.
- Given the increasing number of mine action actors, organisations, and commercial companies, Ukraine should improve coordination of the work of the numerous operators.
- Ukraine should unknott its administrative processes and grant operators the permissions to use explosives in clearance and destruction operations as well as subsequent accreditation to conduct explosive ordnance disposal (EOD).
- Ukraine should continue exploring of the use of drones as means to increase the efficiency of non-technical survey (NTS), and to the extent possible, deploy them on areas suspected of contamination immediately after it regains control over its territories.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	5	4	The extent of AP mine contamination in Ukraine is not known but has certainly increased since the 2022 conflict. Ukraine estimates that approximately 174,000km ² of its territory needs to be surveyed for contamination. As at March 2023, about 50km ² of all of Ukraine's potentially contaminated territories had been identified as minefields or areas contaminated with explosive ordnance.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	6	6	Ukraine's NMAA assumed its full responsibilities in 2022. The two National Mine Action Centres under the MoD and MoI, respectively, were accredited and became fully operational in 2022. In 2023, an inter-ministerial Committee on Humanitarian Demining was established to oversee mine action. The exact roles and responsibilities of this committee are not yet fully understood, but it certainly adds to an already complex mine action structure.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	2	2	Ukraine does not have a gender policy for mine action and does not report on whether gender and diversity is mainstreamed within its programmes. No reference was made to gender or diversity in Ukraine's Article 7 report covering 2022 and only limited reference in additional information provided in its 2023 Article 5 deadline extension request.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	5	5	Ukraine uses the International Management Systems for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core database. The database was previously housed in two separate services, one owned by the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU) and the other by the MoD. In 2023, IMSMA became fully cloud-based, with access rights and permissions to different datasets granted according to the requirements of the national authorities partners. Despite extensive international support, Ukraine's reporting on contamination and land release continues to be of poor quality, lacking detail and not complying to the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). For example, Ukraine's contamination and land release data are not disaggregated by type of hazardous area or contamination, or by land release method.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	3	3	Ukraine does not have a national mine action strategy, nor are there standardised criteria at national level for task prioritisation. Ukraine's previous position, which saw the full cessation of hostilities as a prerequisite to the development of any strategy, appears to be shifting. The newly created Committee on Humanitarian Demining should prioritise the strategic direction for the mine action programme in Ukraine. It was planning to elaborate a mine action strategy by the end of 2023.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	5	5	National mine action standards (NMAS) were published in 2019 but were not fully applied in practice. NMAS revision was initiated in March 2023, with the scope to focus on land release, mechanical demining, terminology, mine detection dogs (MDDs), and quality management (QM) standards. International operators consider that the current NMAS in Ukraine require further development before they can be considered to be fit for purpose.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	5	5	Ukraine will not meet its Article 5 deadline of 1 December 2023, and in March 2023, requested a ten-year extension. It is not known how much AP mined area is being cleared across the whole country as Ukraine does not exercise effective control over all the territory. The scale of AP mine contamination and extent of areas no longer under control of the Ukrainian government have increased significantly since February 2022. Based on operator data, 59 AP mines were destroyed in spot tasks in 2022, but none as a result of the clearance of AP mines.
Average Score	4.6	4.4	Overall Programme Performance: POOR

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- National Mine Action Authority (NMAA)
- Humanitarian Demining Centre (HDC, under the State Emergency Services of Ukraine)
- Social-Humanitarian Response Centre (under the Ministry for Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories)
- Mine Action Centre (MAC, under MoD)
- Inter-agency Working Group on Humanitarian Demining
- State Special Transport Service (SSTS)
- Military Engineering School

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Armed Forces of Ukraine
- Centre for Humanitarian Demining of the Subsidiary Enterprise of the State Company Ukrspecexport
- Demining Solutions
- Department of Maritime Safety
- GK Group
- Modren Village and City Charitable Foundation
- National Police
- Nibulon LLC
- Patron Demining (registered as an NGO and a company)
- Safe Path Group
- SC "Ukroboronservice" (UOS)
- SSTS
- State Border Service

- State Emergency Services of Ukraine (SESU)
- The Association of Sappers of Ukraine
- The Demining Team of Ukraine
- Ukrainian Deminers Association (UDA)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- DanChurchAid (DCA) – seeking accreditation
- Danish Refugee Council Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding sector (DRC)
- FSD
- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Humanity & Inclusion (HI) – seeking accreditation
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG) accredited for risk education and non-technical survey (NTS) in 2023
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) accredited for risk education, NTS, technical survey, manual clearance, and battle area clearance (BAC) in 2023

OTHER ACTORS

- ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF)
- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Tetra Tech

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The extent of AP mined area in Ukraine is not known, but is certainly massive due to the widespread use of AP mines in the course of the Russian military assault on Ukraine. In April 2022, Ukraine's government said that its teams were removing thousands of explosive devices a day across the country, including from homes and businesses, and especially in the countryside.¹ Since the beginning of 2022 and as at May 2023, Ukraine reported removal of 529,367 explosive devices, including AP and anti-vehicle (AV) mines, clearing 856km² of land, and handing over 0.4km² of cleared land to the local communities.²

Humanitarian organisations and media outlets indicate that Russian forces have scattered mines in a haphazard and disorganized fashion across civilian areas.³ According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), mine contamination is particularly concerning in the agricultural regions of Kharkiv, Kherson, and Mykolaiv where dozens of mine-related accidents are being reported every month, putting farmers trying to return to their

farms and humanitarian personnel delivering assistance at particular risk.⁴

The government of Ukraine has announced plans to return over 4,700km² of productive land into use within the next four years, and all potentially contaminated areas within 10 years. Meanwhile, many ordinary Ukrainians, pressed to regain their livelihoods, have no choice but to tackle the explosive devices by themselves. An independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine has documented the removal of AP mines by civilians in Izium city.⁵ Media sources are replete with examples of farmers using improvised methods to remove the explosives, including AP and AV mines. The techniques ranged from use of privately purchased metal detectors, agricultural tractors, manual defuzing with people's bare hands, and use of ropes to trigger tripwires. These are extremely risky undertakings made far more deadly due to the lack of laying patterns, and the widespread use of boobytraps and anti-lift devices by Russian forces.⁶

1 "Ukraine's efforts to remove booby traps left behind by Russian troops", *CBC News*, 21 April 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3ckM1nS>.

2 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 1; and 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, additional information (Annex 2), 1 September 2023, p. 3.

3 "Land mines create a deadly legacy for Ukraine and possibly beyond", *The Washington Post*, 12 April 2022, at: <https://wapo.st/3e2X9WP>.

4 Email from Jens Laerke (in response to media questions to OCHA), Deputy Spokesperson, OCHA, 26 May 2023.

5 Human Rights Council, Conference room paper on the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, UN doc. A/HRC/52/CRP.4, 29 August 2023, p. 49.

6 "'We couldn't wait': Ukrainian farmers improvise to clear their land of mines", *The Guardian*, 19 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/44IX13N>; Ukraine's Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food website, 21 March 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3r0lphu>; and "Clearing land mines by hand, farmers in Ukraine risk their lives for planting season", *CNN*, 27 March 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3PURnrf>.

According to the Ministry of Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine, the number of victims of explosive devices as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine since February 2022 is 770, of whom 237 died and 533 were injured.⁷ In May 2023, The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reported that mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) have killed or injured 263 persons during the first five months of 2023. That equates to more than 50 per month on average. OHCHR believes that the actual figures are considerably higher.⁸ This statistic is considerably lower than what was reported by Ukraine's Prime Minister, Denys Shmyhal, who said that explosive objects have killed 226 people in March 2023 alone and only in territories controlled by Ukraine.⁹ Ukraine reported 311 mine-related accidents affecting 489 people since Russia's invasion, of which, 165 were killed and 324 injured. Ukraine noted that the number of victims increases by the day.¹⁰

Ukraine claimed in several statements between March and July 2023 that about 30% of its territory should be surveyed for mine contamination or other explosive ordnance. This amounts to an area of nearly 174,000km². Despite the vast extent of contamination this figure is not credible. In its recent Article 5 deadline Extension Request, and following questions by the APMBC Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Ukraine detailed that about 50km² across 349 hazardous areas of all its potentially contaminated territories have been identified as contaminated with explosive objects, of which, 20.6km² across 192 hazardous areas were identified as minefields. Non-technical survey (NTS) of regained territories continues.¹¹ In April 2023, the State Emergency Services of Ukraine (SESU) told the media that it had found more than 55,000 explosives in Kharkiv region alone.¹²

Table 1: Explosive ordnance contamination in Ukraine (data at June 2023)¹³

Region	Hazardous areas	Area (m ²)	Mined areas	Area (m ²)	Former battle areas	Area (m ²)
Chernihiv	135	18,780,520	49	4,674,440	86	14,106,080
Kharkiv	49	5,915,613	32	4,423,439	17	1,492,173
Kherson	NTS not yet carried out					
Kyiv	127	20,932,413	92	10,501,741	35	10,430,672
Mykolaiv	24	4,019,322	8	514,855	16	350,446,673
Sumy	14	567,959	11	455,227	3	11,273,266
Totals	349	50,215,827	192	20,569,704	157	387,748,864

On 6 June 2023, an explosion destroyed the Nova Kakhovka dam in Kherson oblast in Southern Ukraine. The collapse of the 30-metre-high, 2km-long dam sent water cascading downstream along the Dnipro river, flooding vast areas of territory mostly in the Russian controlled areas to the south of the dam. The HALO Trust (HALO), which has been surveying and clearing mines along the Inhulets river, a tributary of the Dnipro, since the beginning of 2023, has been forced to suspend clearance work on seven flooded minefields. On 9 June 2023, HALO issued a press release urging civilians to remain extra vigilant of landmines. According to HALO, the torrent of water that swept through the lower Dnipro was powerful enough to dislodge landmines and, in some cases, caused 10Kg anti-vehicle mines to detonate. The mines were laid at the lowest points of the river

to prevent troops from crossing in vehicles while the area was under the Russian occupation. HALO had found around 5,000 mines in the eight weeks preceding the explosion in Mykolaiv, a city by the Dnipro river to the north-west of the dam, of which 464 mines were along the riverbank. HALO added that no exact numbers of displaced landmines can be known until the waters have subsided.¹⁴

A total of some 4km² of previously unrecorded AP mined area was discovered and added to the national database in Ukraine in 2022. Of this total, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) identified 0.1km² across one suspected hazardous area (SHA) and two confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs),¹⁵ while HALO identified 3.92km² in 57 new hazardous areas. Some of the AP mines found by HALO were mines of an improvised nature, mainly F-1 and RGD-5 grenades installed on

7 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, July 2023, p. 4.

8 Email from Jens Laerke (in response to media questions to the OCHA Deputy Spokesperson), OCHA, 26 May 2023.

9 Human Rights Watch, "Landmine Use in Ukraine", Briefing Paper, 13 June 2023, p. 15, at: <https://bit.ly/44LDAaB>, citing "Statement by Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal at a Government session, Communications Department of the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, April 4, 2023".

10 Presentation of Ukraine to the APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19-21 June 2023, slide 3.

11 Statement of Ukraine to the Eight Pledging Conference for the Implementation of the APMBC, 24 March 2023; US Department of State, "Demining Ukraine: A Pre-requisite for Recovery: Michael Tirre Remarks before the U.S. Helsinki Commission", 8 December 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3KFdXzJ>; Human Rights Council, Conference room paper on the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, UN doc. A/HRC/52/CRP.4, 29 August 2023, p. 127; and 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 1 and 2.

12 "Ukraine war: The deadly landmines killing hundreds", *BBC News*, 19 April 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3AusQjE>.

13 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 2. In the additional information to the Extension Request (Annex 2) submitted on 1 September 2023, Ukraine stated that it had 140Km² (961 plots) of area suspected of contamination of mines and explosive ordnance.

14 HALO, "Kakhovka Dam: Floods Amplify Ukraine Mine Emergency", Press release, 8 June 2023 (updated on 21 June 2023), at: <https://bit.ly/3PM4Pxz>. See also: "Mines uprooted in Ukraine dam disaster could pose danger for years – Red Cross", *Reuters*, 8 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3JQz969>.

15 Email from Roxana-Cristina Boboticu, Head of Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding, DRC, 1 April 2023.

tripwire.¹⁶ All of the newly identified AP mine contamination in 2022 has occurred since the beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.¹⁷

Prior to the 2022 conflict, the heaviest mine and ERW contamination was believed to be inside the buffer zone, which then separated the government-controlled areas from these controlled by the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk Republics.¹⁸ Ukraine has indicated that nationwide NTS and technical survey (TS) is only possible once its control has been fully restored over all sovereign territory.¹⁹

Ukraine is contaminated by AP mines as a result of the conflict which broke out in 2014 with the Russian-backed self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk republics. The contamination has certainly surged since the Russian invasion of Ukraine that began in February 2022 due to the extensive and widespread use of AP mines by the Russian forces. The full nature and extent of contamination will remain unclear until an effective cessation of hostilities and a comprehensive survey has been completed. Prior to these conflicts, Ukraine was affected by residual contamination of mines and other ordnance, mostly as a result of heavy fighting between German and Soviet forces in the Second World War, but also from combat in the First World War. The MoD engineering units partially cleared affected areas in the mid-1970s, suggesting that a problem may remain, but the location and extent of any mine threat is not known.

Over the last few years, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)'s Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) in Ukraine has frequently reported on the use of both AP and AV mines.²⁰ A December 2017 report from OCHCR stated that: "The parties to the conflict continued the practice of placement of [improvised explosive devices] IEDs and AP mines in populated areas and near objects of civilian infrastructure."²¹ In 2018, the OHCHR called on all parties involved in hostilities to "cease the use of victim-activated devices".²²

At the APMBIC Intersessional Meetings in May 2019, Ukraine claimed that it had not used AP mines since it acceded to the Convention in June 2006, but accused Russia of having used AP mines in its territory since 2014. According to Ukraine, these mines have been emplaced by Russia-backed illegal armed groups in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and it said that Russia has also laid mines on the administrative

border between Crimea and the rest of Ukraine.²³ The mines allegedly used by separatist groups include PMN-1, PMN-2, PMN-4, POM-2R, OZM-72, MES type mines, and MON-50 mines with tripwire.²⁴ In the past, Ukraine has reiterated that its armed forces are authorised to use MON-series and OZM-72 mines only in command-detonated mode (through electrical initiation), which is not prohibited under the APMBIC. According to Ukraine, all mines planted in command-detonated mode are recorded and secured, and access to the area is restricted.²⁵

The World Bank estimates that the complete set of humanitarian demining works will cost US\$37.4 billion. The needs for 2023 alone amount to more than US\$ 397 million according to Ukraine.²⁶

USE OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES

As at June 2023, Human Rights Watch has documented use of at least 13 types of AP mines since the 2022 assault on Ukraine. These are: MOB, MON-50, MON-90, MON-100, MON-200, OZM-72, PFM-1/PFM1-S, PMN-2, PMN-4, POM-2/POM-2R, and POM-3. The presence of AP mines was recorded in at least 11 of Ukraine's 24 regions (oblasts): Chernihiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kyiv, Luhansk, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Sumy, and Zaporizhzhia. All manner of delivery methods have been documented: hand-emplaced, mechanically-laid, scattered by truck-mounted projectors, and remotely delivered by rockets.²⁷

Several new types of landmine have been used in hostilities for the first time in the ongoing armed conflict. These include the remotely delivered POM-3 AP mine, also known as the "medallion". The mine is typically aerially launched from a rocket, falling back to earth by parachute. It is equipped with a seismic proximity sensor that picks up approaching footsteps, and is said to be able to distinguish between humans and animals, making efforts to locate and destroy it far deadlier and more complicated. The POM-3 has self-destruct features that set the mine to explode after a certain period. Ukrainian deminers are using remote demining equipment to remove these mines, which is an expensive undertaking.²⁸

Amnesty International has reported that, between March and April 2022, Russian forces fired rockets to disperse PTM-1S scatterable mines on residential neighbourhoods in Kharkiv

16 Email from Denys Holovetskyi, Head of Operations, HALO, 29 May 2023.

17 Emails from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023; and Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

18 Email from Yuri Shahramanyan, Programme Manager, HALO Ukraine, 5 July 2018.

19 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Additional Information received on 27 August 2020, p. 98 (numbered page 3 in the document).

20 See: "Daily and spot reports from the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine", at: <http://bit.ly/2K4lFms>.

21 OHCHR, "Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 August to 15 September 2017", December 2017, p. 5.

22 OHCHR, "Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 February to 15 May 2018", June 2018, p. 29.

23 Statement of Ukraine, Committee on Article 5 implementation, Geneva, 22 May 2019.

24 Government of Ukraine, "Measures to ensure compliance", Geneva, 9 June 2017; Statement of Ukraine on Article 5, APMBIC Fifteenth Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 29 November 2016; and Preliminary observations of the committee on cooperative compliance, "Ukraine", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 8-9 June 2017.

25 Committee on Cooperative Compliance, Preliminary observations on Ukraine, APMBIC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 8-9 June 2017.

26 Ukraine Government Portal, "The full range of humanitarian demining activities in Ukraine is estimated at USD 37.4 billion, says Denys Shmyhal", 4 April 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/44i8Q0s>.

27 Human Rights Watch, "Landmine Use in Ukraine", Briefing Paper, 13 June 2023, pp. 2, 3, 8, and 10.

28 Human Rights Watch, "Landmine Use in Ukraine", Report, 15 June 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3P03Yss>, pp. 4, 7, and 8; "New Russian Land Mine Poses Special Risk in Ukraine", *The New York Times*, 6 April 2022, at: <https://nyti.ms/3TgF9bL>; and Presentation of Ukraine to the APMBIC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19-21 June 2023, slide 4.

killing at least three civilians. This type of attack combines the attributes of cluster munitions and AP mines. Russian forces have also emplaced numerous victim-activated booby-traps as they retreated from positions they had taken, occupied, or fortified during the 2022 invasion. The booby-traps were constructed with various types of hand-grenades equipped with tripwires, including F-1, RGD-5, and RGN-type grenades.²⁹ According to Ukraine, Russian forces have laid booby-traps in residential areas, vehicles, critical infrastructures, and even food. Ukraine added that it found booby-traps in dead bodies, including those of children.³⁰ A considerable portion of the booby-traps are considered AP mines under the APMBC.

Human Rights Watch documented repeated use of AP mines by Ukrainian forces during the summer months of 2022 when Russia controlled the city of Izium and its environs. In August 2023, an Independent International Commission Inquiry on Ukraine stated it had seen photos of weapons found in Izium city indicating that PFM AP mines had been delivered by a 220-mm Uragan rockets with a range of 10–35Km, and that both Ukrainian and Russian armed forces were stationed within striking distance of Izium, but concluded it was likely that the PMF AP mines were used by Ukrainian armed forces.³¹ Use by a State Party is a serious violation of the APMBC. Ukrainian forces fired numerous 9M27K3 mine-laying rockets carrying PFM AP blast mines into at least nine different Russian-occupied areas or near Russian

military facilities in and around Izium city. Researchers verified 11 civilian casualties from these mines. The Ukrainian Prime Minister, Oleksandr Polishchuk, responded to Human Rights Watch questions saying that Ukrainian authorities cannot comment on the types of weapons used during the armed conflict “before the end of the war and the restoration of [Ukraine’s] sovereignty and territorial integrity”.³²

In February 2023, the President of the APMBC Twentieth Meeting of States Parties issued a statement condemning the use of AP mines “anywhere, at any time, and by any actor”, and requested clarification of the allegations of AP mines use by the Ukrainian government.³³ At the subsequent intersessional meetings, Ukraine said that “it did not have information which would corroborate the veracity of allegations made by some [organisation] concerning the use of anti-personnel mines by the Ukrainian Armed forces” and that it stands ready to “conduct further inquiry into the manner and keep [the Convention] updated on the outcome”.³⁴

Both Russian and Ukrainian forces have used at least 13 types of AV mine, mostly the manually or mechanically emplaced TM-62 series since the Russian assault on Ukraine in February 2022.³⁵ Russia has also used mines in Ukrainian territorial waters. Cases of sea mines being washed up the shores of Ukraine were frequent. According to Ukraine, other States in the Black Sea region were beginning to face the same problem.

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Ukraine is also contaminated with cluster munition remnants (CMR), the extent of which is not known but is thought to be exceptionally large, as well as with considerable quantities of other ERW (see Mine Action Review’s *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Ukraine for further information).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Until the end of 2022 there were three national supervisory and management bodies in Ukraine: a national mine action centre (MAC) under the MoD; a Humanitarian Demining Centre (HDC) under SESU; and an inter-ministerial National Mine Action Authority (serviced by a secretariat). In February 2023, an inter-agency Working Group on Humanitarian Demining was established and added at the top of the hierarchy.³⁶ This complex structure will almost certainly lead to overlapping responsibilities and confusion in the mine action sector.

29 Human Rights Watch, “Landmine Use in Ukraine”, Briefing Paper, 13 June 2023, pp. 3 and 8.

30 Presentation of Ukraine to the APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023, slide 5. See also, “Russians hid an anti-tank mine in a pedestrian figurine - this is a war crime” (Ukrainian), *Canal 24*, 7 August 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/45rALvB>.

31 Human Rights Council, Conference room paper on the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, UN doc. A/HRC/52/CRP.4, 29 August 2023, p. 49.

32 Human Rights Watch, “Landmine Use in Ukraine”, Briefing Paper, 13 June 2023, pp. 2 and 15.

33 APMBC Implementation Support Unit, “Landmine treaty president to engage with Ukraine on allegations of use of prohibited weapon”, Press release, 3 February 2023.

34 Statement of Ukraine, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

35 Human Rights Watch, “Landmine Use in Ukraine”, Briefing Paper, 13 June 2023, pp. 3 and 10.

36 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, additional information (Annex 2), pp. 1 and 2. According to the mine action Law, the MAC is tasked with the planning, organisation, and coordination of mine action activities, while the authority of the HDC is for “practical implementation of humanitarian demining”. These tasks appear to overlap considerably. The NMAA and the inter-ministerial Committee on Humanitarian Demining also appear to duplicate each other’s work.

In November 2021, the Cabinet of Ministers issued a resolution to provide the framework for an NMAA.³⁷ The Law defined the NMAA as an interagency State body acting on an advisory and collegial basis and chaired by the Minister of Defence. The chair will be transferred, by decision of the Cabinet of Ministers, to "the head of the Ministry that ensures the formation and implementation of State policy in the field of civil protection" once Ukraine restores territorial integrity over its internationally recognised borders.³⁸ The NMAA coordinates the ministries, central and local state bodies, local government, and other organisations (including mine action operators). The NMAA approves and ensures national mine action policy; monitors and reports on State progress in fulfilling its obligations in mine action field taken under international treaties; and coordinates the development and execution of mine action strategy, the national mine action programme, and action plans.³⁹ While the NMAA sits at a ministerial level, it is serviced by a secretariat that also has "some" managerial functions.⁴⁰

A national mine action law was adopted by Ukraine's parliament in 2018.⁴¹ But the government did not proceed with its implementation on the grounds it was inconsistent with a number of other legal acts.⁴² Amended legislation was passed in December 2020 with final amendments based on recommendations from the mine action working group. But the new Law did not fully address two bureaucratic challenges faced by the mine action community, namely: operators' licence to conduct disposal, destruction, and transportation of explosive items for EOD procedures; and operators' permits for the importation and use of dual-use items.⁴³ Discussions around legal ways to overcome the administrative hurdles have continued in the various in-country platforms. This, however, proves complicated due to the presence of existing legislation that regulates the use of dual-purpose and explosive items, which the new Mine Action Law cannot contradict.⁴⁴

The amended law created two national Mine Action Centres (NMACs): a Mine Action Centre (MAC) in Chernihiv, which sits under the State Special Transport Services (SSTS), which is under the MoD, and a Humanitarian Demining Centre (HDC) in Merefa, which sits under SESU, which is under the purview of the MoI. The secretariat of the NMAA has the responsibility of coordinating the work of the MAC and HDC. The two Centres share the remits of information management (IM), quality assurance (QA), monitoring, planning, and certification of the

operators.⁴⁵ Both the MAC and the HDC have staff conscripted away under the terms of the martial law. As a result, both centres are reported to be overstretched and not functioning efficiently.⁴⁶

In 2022, the Ministry for Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories set up the Social-Humanitarian Response Centre, a consultative and advisory body focused on promoting the formation and implementation of state policy in mine action. This includes informing the population about the dangers of explosive items, assisting victims, promoting their rehabilitation, conducting survey for the presence of unexploded ordnance (UXO), and marking and compiling specialised maps. The Ministry has also developed a mine and explosive ordnance victims database.⁴⁷ As at June 2023, the Geneva International Centre of Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) was in the process of incorporating these data into the Information Management System of Mine Action (IMSMA) database. Ukraine is using IMSMA Core, the latest version.⁴⁸

The NMAA was reported to be fully operational and to have played a central role in planning and coordination throughout 2022.⁴⁹ During the same year, the roles and responsibilities of both the MAC and the HDC have continued to evolve. The MAC underwent accreditation from April to September at the National Accreditation Agency of Ukraine. It finally received accreditation for NTS, TS, battle area clearance (BAC), manual mine clearance, and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE). In view of the potential number of international and national mine action operators and the volume of mine action tasks in Ukraine, the MAC began preparing to expand its accreditation in 2023 for use of machines, mine detection dogs (MDDs), underwater demining, and EOD. The HDC was also accredited for NTS, TS, BAC, manual mine clearance, and EOD in 2022.⁵⁰

The Mine Action Sub-Cluster (MASC) has been chaired by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) since 2016, and serve as a platform that supports relevant national, regional, and local actors.⁵¹ Following a temporary suspension in February 2022, meetings restarted in the middle of March and mine action stakeholders continued to meet virtually twice per month. The topics discussed varied from updates on operator's progress and coordination of mine action efforts in high-priority areas, thematic presentations, and planning of upcoming events and challenges. The meetings were attended by the Ukrainian

37 Resolution No. 1207 "On Establishment of National Mine Action Authority".

38 The Law of Ukraine on Mine Action N.2642-VIII, N.2642-VIII, at: <https://bit.ly/30V007x>, Chap. II, Art. 11; DRC Special Legal Alert – "NMAA Framework 2022", Issue 73, January 2022; and email from Miljenko Vahtarić, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) PCU, 1 July 2022.

39 The Law of Ukraine on Mine Action, N.2642-VIII, Chap. III, Art. 23; and DRC Special Legal Alert – "NMAA Framework 2022", Issue 73, January 2022.

40 The Law of Ukraine on Mine Action, N.2642-VIII, Chap. III, Art. 23; and email from the GICHD, 17 June 2022.

41 OSCE, "Ukrainian parliament adopts legal framework for mine action, with OSCE advice provided", 10 December 2018, at: <http://bit.ly/2QdTa9o>; and interview with Miljenko Vahtarić, OSCE PCU, 7 February 2019; and email, 13 June 2019.

42 DRC-DDG Legal Alert Special, "Mine Action Law Amendment", Issue 56, September 2020.

43 Email from Ronan Shenhav, HALO, 20 April 2021.

44 Email from Oleksandr Lobov, Mine Action Specialist, UNDP, 14 August 2023.

45 The Law of Ukraine on Mine Action, N.2642-VIII, Chap. III, Art. 23; DRC-DDG Legal Alert Special, "Mine Action Law Amendment", Issue 56, September 2020; and interview with Miljenko Vahtarić, OSCE PCU, 13 February 2020.

46 Email from Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

47 Emails from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023, and Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

48 Email from the GICHD, 26 May 2023.

49 Emails from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023; and Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

50 Ibid.

51 Email from Oleksandr Lobov, UNDP, 14 August 2023.

authorities (MoD, SESU, and the Ministry for Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories), operators (DCA, Demining Solutions, DRC, FSD, HALO, HI, MAG, NPA), UN agencies, other mine action stakeholders (OSCE, Tetra Tech), and donors.⁵² In 2023, the mine action subclusters were transformed to a mine action area of responsibility (AoR).⁵³

In February 2023, the Cabinet of Ministers issued a regulation No. 136, which creates a new coordination body, the Inter-agency Working Group on Humanitarian Demining. Chaired by the Minister of Economy, the Inter-agency Working Group on Humanitarian Demining "contributes to ensuring the coordination of the actions of executive authorities on issues that belong to [the competences of the Ministry of Economy]", and "performs tasks related to providing assistance to the [NMAA] on issues related to the organisation of national anti-mine activities".⁵⁴ The exact responsibilities of this newly created body are not yet clear, but they seem to overlap with those of the NMAA.

There is an overall positive environment and facilitation of the operators' work by the Ukrainian government (e.g. granting of visas and collaboration on security matters).⁵⁵ But operators face difficulties in acquiring permission to transport or dispose of explosives. As a result, operators could not commence the accreditation process to conduct EOD in 2022. In September 2022, the NMAA presented the requirements for obtaining permission to use explosives, a five-step process that no non-governmental organisation (NGO) has yet completed. In March 2023, and under the martial law, the NMAA announced a simplified process for obtaining permissions within a three-month period. The national operator, Demining Solutions, will reportedly be able to conduct EOD in 2023. Both the MAC and HDC have also started the process as well.⁵⁶ Ukraine has also eased procedures for the recognition of the foreign documents of demining specialists and their compliance with the requirements under the national martial law.⁵⁷

According to MAG, preventing operators disposing of explosive items has negatively impacted the capacity and resources of SESU.⁵⁸ Operators can meanwhile only mark the explosives and report them to the SESU or MoD personnel for destruction. An administrative fix is urgently needed to ease up the operational pressure from SESU and capitalise on the capacity of the existing operators. The importation of dual-use items, which has been reported to be problematic in

previous year, eased in 2022, and none of the operators has faced difficulties in this process.

Ukraine stated that the funding of all demining activities is expended from the budget allocations of SESU under the programme: "Support Activities of Civil Protection Forces", and that no additional funding for mine action countermeasures is provided. Ukraine's MoD is working on providing its demining units with modern means for searching for explosive objects through centralised purchases and logistical assistance from donor states and international organisations. Ukraine, however, lacks critical demining equipment, particularly explosives, mine detectors, and personal protective equipment (PPE).⁵⁹

In 2022, Ukraine allocated 25,650,000 Hryvnas (almost US\$ 70,000) to a "Mine Prevention Activities" programme aimed at reducing the social, economic, and environmental impact of explosive ordnance and informing the population about their risk.⁶⁰

DCA has supported SESU with demining equipment and provided them with training on how to identify and report on explosive ordnance. DCA was also collaborating with SESU on the development of a digital platform and an online application to report on the discovery of explosives by the public.⁶¹

The DRC capacity-building programme continued in 2022 with the provision of PPE and EOD kits for 10 SESU teams as well as technical assistance to the Interregional Centre for Humanitarian Demining and Rapid Response. DRC conducted on-the-job NTS training for 16 SESU staff in Chernihiv Oblast and an additional 16 SESU staff in Kharkiv Oblast. In August 2022, one SESU clearance team was deployed in Chernihiv Oblast. With the technical support of DRC, the SESU team reported clearing 8,700m² of land and disposed of 2,627 items of explosive ordnance.⁶²

FSD has sponsored a training in Croatia for eight personnel of NMAC on the MV4 mechanical ground preparation machine in 2022–23. Between February and March 2023, FSD trained staff from both NMAC and SESU on manual demining, non-technical survey, and EORE.⁶³

The GICHD is establishing a dedicated country programme for Ukraine, which is mandated to provide capacity-development support in a broad range of areas based on request from the

52 Emails from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023; and Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

53 Email from Oleksandr Lobov, UNDP, 14 August 2023.

54 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Annex 2 and additional Information, pp. 1 and 2.

55 Emails from Almedina Musić, DRC, 7 February 2022; and Imogen Churchill, HALO, 23 March 2022.

56 Emails from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023; and Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

57 Ukraine Ministry of Defence website, 20 March 2023, accessed on 22 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3qY5Ubd>.

58 Email from Nick Guest, Humanitarian Technical Advisor, MAG, 23 March 2023.

59 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 3 and 4. A detailed list of the equipment requested by Ukraine is published online by the SESU at: <https://bit.ly/46j4Pe3>.

60 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, additional information (Annex 2), 1 September 2023, p. 9.

61 "One year in Ukraine", DCA website, accessed 24 April 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/440DDzC>; and email from the GICHD, 26 May 2023.

62 Email from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023.

63 Email from Tony Connell, Country Director, FSD, 26 June 2023.

national authorities. The GICHD delivered courses on quality management (QM) and NTS between October and November 2022. The country programme will also be able to provide capacity development in other areas, including National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), EORE, and donor coordination. The GICHD has been providing a full-time dedicated IM support for Ukraine since 2020.⁶⁴ In November 2022, the GICHD facilitated the first Ukraine Mine Action Donor Coordination Workshop in Geneva. Next steps, including clear responsibilities and timelines, were identified during the workshop with progress being monitored by the GICHD.⁶⁵

During 2022, HALO conducted several training courses on NTS and demining for personnel from the Ukrainian authorities. In October 2022, HALO ran a Level 3 EOD training course on the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) in Kosovo to increase the EOD capacity of HALO staff and national authorities. The course included HALO staff and eight external participants from the SESU and the SSTS. In November 2022, HALO handed over nine vehicles, five unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and personal protective equipment to the SESU.⁶⁶

NPA equipped 10 SESU EOD and demining teams in 2022 with technical and safety equipment such as vehicles, detectors, blasting machines, EOD kits, hook and line kits, trauma bags, and first aid kits. NPA has been working with SESU on a capacity-development project to introduce MDDs in Ukraine for use by SESU and NPA teams. The project includes building training and testing areas for MDDs, dog kennels for 14 MDDs, training of dog handlers, support in the development of SESU MDD standard operating procedures (SOPs), and establishment of national MDD mine action standards. The MDD project was continuing in 2023.⁶⁷

HI has trained 20 personnel from NMAA and other operators on the use of a small, unmanned aircraft system (UAS) in 2022.⁶⁸

On 23 February 2022, the European Union (EU) pledged €25 million to support Ukraine's demining efforts in its regained territories. The funding aims to support State mine action operators to acquire more modern equipment, build the capacities of the Ukrainian authorities to effectively manage the national mine action sector, and address large-scale mine and EO contamination.⁶⁹

Tetra Tech is implementing a US\$47.6 million project to train Ukraine's demining and EOD teams to international standards and provide them with the tools necessary to do their jobs. The project also includes the deployment of clearance and risk education teams through a Ukrainian demining association.⁷⁰ In September 2022, the Biden administration announced plans to provide \$89 million to help Kyiv clear landmines. The money was destined to fund 100 demining teams in Ukraine in 2023, identify the areas of greatest contamination, and train and equip Ukrainian deminers.⁷¹ This made Ukraine the top recipient of United States (US) aid for mine clearance.⁷²

UNDP has been supporting the Government of Ukraine in establishing a "comprehensive, coordinated, and gender-sensitive" mine action response. In collaboration with SESU pyrotechnic teams, UNDP initiated a series of projects in 2022 to ensure safe human mobility and access to essential goods and services for humanitarian support. One is focused on explosive ordnance survey and clearance to support demolition of damaged structures/ buildings and debris removal works. Within the projects, UNDP provided demining equipment and vehicles for 11 SESU pyrotechnic teams.⁷³

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

The current Ukrainian NMAS include a chapter (11.2.9) on "Environmental regulations", and a section (12.6) on "Environment, occupational health and safety".⁷⁴

DRC has an environmental management system in place, which is stipulated in its SOP (1.13) on health, safety and environmental management. The SOPs were approved by Ukraine's military unit acting in accordance with the regulations of the certification body.⁷⁵ In 2022, DRC focused on re-establishing operations following the escalation of the conflict. Consequently, there was no capacity to focus on environmental policies and action.⁷⁶ FSD has detailed SOPs on environmental management (SOP 17.0) and safe work practices (SOP 02).⁷⁷

HALO seeks to reduce the negative impact on the environment resulting from its activities and to minimise its environmental footprint to the extent possible.⁷⁸ HALO has an environmental policy and SOPs that outline the potential negative environmental impacts that could result from large-scale demining and explosive ordnance operations. The SOPs prescribe

64 Emails from the GICHD, 19 April and 26 May 2023.

65 Email from the GICHD, 19 April 2023; and GICHD, "Ukraine faces massive explosive contamination one year into conflict", 24 February 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3KNEZVU>.

66 Email from Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

67 Email from Alberto Rinaldo Serra, Programme Manager, NPA, 15 March 2023.

68 HI, Ukraine Country file, accessed on 15 July 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3DbXG22>.

69 European Union, "Ukraine: EU supports de-mining of liberated areas with additional €25 million programme", Press release, 23 February 2023.

70 Statement of Michael Tirre, Manager for Europe, US Department of State Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement Program, 8 December 2022, at <http://bit.ly/3KrEU9W>.

71 "U.S. announces \$89 million to help Ukraine clear land mines", *Politico*, 8 September 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3NQk3ip>.

72 "Ukraine Is Top Recipient of US Mine Clearing Aid", *VOA*, 9 June 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3pON31U>.

73 Email from Oleksandr Lobov, UNDP, 14 August 2023.

74 Emails from Almedina Musić, DRC, 7 February 2022; and Imogen Churchill, HALO, 23 March 2022.

75 Emails from Almedina Musić, DRC, 7 February and 13 June 2022.

76 Email from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023.

77 Email from Tony Connell, FSD, 10 June 2022.

78 Emails from Imogen Churchill, HALO, 23 March 2022; and Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

measures to eliminate the consequences of negative impacts, such as activities to ensure the regeneration of vegetation, re-planting trees, and returning cultivated soils to work sites (soil that was mechanically sieved), among others.⁷⁹ MAG has an environmental SOP in place in Ukraine.⁸⁰ NPA has a global environmental policy, which is adopted by NPA Ukraine. NPA Ukraine has environmental SOPs that cover its mine action operations. The SOPs have been revised, adopted, and translated into Ukrainian.⁸¹

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

As at September 2023, no information had been provided on whether there is a gender policy and associated implementation plan for mine action in Ukraine.⁸² In the additional information provided to its 2023 deadline Extension Request, however, Ukraine stated that female specialists were expected to constitute up to 30% of its 4,750-strong newly formed units under the MoD. Ukraine added that it consults women and persons living with disabilities during NTS and EORE activities.⁸³ In December 2021, UNDP published "Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Operations" in English and Ukrainian, with the aim of supporting in-country operators to achieve and maintain gender parity in their activities.⁸⁴

DRC has a global gender and diversity policy, and a country-specific implementation plan. Following an assessment by the GICHD of DRC's Ukraine's mission in 2021, the programme was evaluated as "very strong" in all age, gender, and diversity mainstreaming aspects. Some of the strengths assessed were integrated and inclusive community liaison and needs assessments, deployment of mixed gender humanitarian demining teams, gender-sensitive human resources practices, a positive and encouraging work culture, and an excellent awareness of the safeguarding system. All DRC's mine action data are disaggregated by age, gender, and disability. In 2022, 24% of all DRC staff members in Ukraine were women, with 25% of the operational positions and 15% of the managerial positions filled by women.⁸⁵

FSD is committed to providing an equal opportunity working environment. NTS and EORE teams consist of at least one woman. All BAC teams have female members. Senior national staff positions are filled by women. In 2022–23, FSD national staff were 30.5% female and 69.5% male. National staff in management positions were 19% female and 17.5% male, and international staff 4.75% female, 95.3% male.⁸⁶

HALO has an equality and diversity policy and globally is working on a gender and diversity implementation plan.

HALO Ukraine seeks to increase the number of women employed in operational roles and improve gender balance in these roles without discriminating against applicants during recruitment.⁸⁷ In 2021, HALO introduced a childcare support stipend covering mothers and single fathers working at HALO and has expanded the eligibility criteria several times since then. In 2022, HALO announced another stipend programme for HALO employees with children. Under the new project, female and single-parent HALO employees were able to receive monthly assistance per each of their minor children up to 17 years of age inclusive. As at June 2023, 194 of the total 736 employees—equating to 26%—were women. Of the managerial positions, 19% (22 of 118 positions) were occupied by women, and 146 of the 635 operational positions (23%) were filled by women.⁸⁸

MAG works according to its organisational gender, diversity and inclusion policy. MAG disaggregates its mine action data by gender and age and ensures an equal access for female and male candidates to all its positions. All MAG community liaison teams contain at least one female or one male member. In 2022, 52% of all MAG staff members in Ukraine were women, while 52% of operational positions and 33% of managerial positions were filled by women.⁸⁹

NPA Ukraine has a gender and diversity plan. NPA is an equal opportunity employer and disaggregates its mine action data by gender and age. The NPA non-technical survey and EORE teams are not gender balanced, but NPA is exploring new strategies to attract more women. In 2022, 30% of all NPA staff members in Ukraine were women. Of operational and managerial positions, 13% and 20% were filled by women, respectively.⁹⁰ NPA strived to increase the participation of women in its team, and by June 2023, women made 22% of NPA's operational positions.⁹¹

The UNDP Ukraine programme is guided by UNDP's 2022–25 global Gender Equality Strategy, published in 2022.⁹²

79 Ibid.

80 Email from Nick Guest, MAG, 23 March 2023.

81 Email from Alberto Rinaldo Serra, NPA, 15 March 2023.

82 Email from the GICHD, 19 April 2023.

83 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, additional information (Annex 2), 1 September 2023, pp. 3 and 11.

84 Email from Oleksandr Lobov, UNDP, 14 August 2023. See "Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Operations", UNDP, 6 December 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3E1sQcF>.

85 Emails from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023; and Almedina Musić, DRC, 7 February and 13 June 2022.

86 Email from Tony Connel, FSD, 26 June 2023.

87 Emails from Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May and 15 August 2023.

88 Ibid.

89 Email from Nick Guest, MAG, 23 March 2023.

90 Email from Alberto Rinaldo Serra, NPA, 15 March 2023.

91 Email from Amela Balic, Deputy Programme Manager, NPA, 29 June 2023.

92 Email from Oleksandr Lobov, UNDP, 14 August 2023. See also: UNDP, "Gender Equality Strategy 2022–2025", 11 October 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/47Dol5W>.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

As noted above, Ukraine uses IMSMA Core. In 2022, the database was hosted on two separate servers, one owned by SESU and the other by the MoD, but in 2023, IMSMA became cloud-based, with access rights and permissions to different datasets granted according to the requirements of the national authorities partners.⁹³ According to Ukraine, the national mine action database has a multi-level degree of data verification and validation, starting from operators who carry out field data collection, and ending with the secretariat of the NMAA, MAC, and HDC, who perform the final data validation.⁹⁴

IMSMA in Ukraine, which has been installed by the GICHD, is receiving new information daily on explosive ordnance identified, areas surveyed, and ongoing risk education activities. Data are collected from a variety of national and international sources and are then shared across key partners.⁹⁵ Survey and clearance data that have been entered are validated by the MAC. Due to the ongoing conflict, however, the situation is changing on a daily basis, and data continue to be fed into the database.⁹⁶ Some datasets of IMSMA (the locations of hazardous areas identified through NTS, the density of ERW-related incidents, and EORE activities) are made publicly available.⁹⁷

The GICHD deployed two full-time Ukrainian IM Advisors in 2022, whose work was overseen by an international expert in Geneva. The GICHD is planning to recruit further national experts in 2023 to meet the increased need. The GICHD collaborated closely with MAC and HDC in 2022 to enhance the report validation and verification processes, notably defining conformities and non-conformities' lists. The GICHD was also working with the MAC and operators to address non-conformities and ensure data accuracy.⁹⁸

According to DRC, all data collection forms both in hardcopy and online format cover the key qualitative and quantitative indicators of mine action activities and meet minimum data requirements in accordance to IMAS 05.10.⁹⁹ Following development by the IM working group and successful trials, as at April 2023, data collection forms were up using the Survey123 platform, and were being used by all accredited operators.¹⁰⁰

DRC strengthened the capacity of its IM staff through participation in several IT-related trainings in 2022. DRC's database architecture and paper form templates were updated in accordance with the minimums data collection requirements of the MAC. The global digital environment was put into use in 2022. DRC has also enacted a new policy for data storing and transferring to the cross-platform data entry tools.¹⁰¹

As at April 2023, MAG was in the process of setting up its online management information system (OMIS), which it uses across the organisation.¹⁰²

The GICHD continued to chair the IM working group, which met on a regular basis in 2022. In response to the outbreak of conflict in February 2022, the working group established an information management cell that aggregated mine action-related data from multiple sources and provided it to mine action stakeholders for planning and analysis. The group's meetings were attended by the NMAA, MAC, HDC, and mine action operators. The focus of the meetings was on coordinating activities, addressing existing IM issues, and introducing new IM data sources and newly developed IMSMA products to enhance operational efficiency.¹⁰³

Since the IMSMA database was launched in Ukraine, HALO's Geographical Information System (GIS) department has created a module that automatically transfers data from the internal database to IMSMA. HALO employees fill out reports for each task in the Survey123 application, which is then automatically transferred to HALO's internal information system: GO-IMS database.¹⁰⁴

To further improve the quality of data in its internal database, HALO took the following measures in 2022: added internal checks of submitted data during the data collection stage in Survey123 forms; conducted training and refreshers for team leaders on data entry; and created a separate dashboard that constantly monitors the data entered into the database and checks it for compliance with the location of semantic information. The dashboard also verifies the data for compliance with certain conditions, such as duplicated data, direct evidence coordinates not being outside the minefield range, or munitions detected not being outside the cleared area.¹⁰⁵

93 Emails from the GICHD, 17 June 2022 and 26 May 2023.

94 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, additional information (Annex 2), 1 September 2023, pp. 6 and 7.

95 GICHD, "Ukraine faces massive explosive contamination one year into conflict", 24 February 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3KNEZVU>.

96 Email from the GICHD, 19 April 2023.

97 Email from the GICHD, 26 May 2023. Link to the IMSMA-based publicly available interactive maps: <https://bit.ly/43LnOff>.

98 Ibid.

99 Email from Almedina Musić, DRC, 7 February 2022.

100 Email from the GICHD, 19 April 2023.

101 Email from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023.

102 Email from Nick Guest, MAG, 23 March 2023.

103 Email from the GICHD, 19 April 2023.

104 Email from Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

105 Ibid.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Ukraine does not have a national mine action strategy. In 2022, the development of any strategy was said to be contingent on a formal cessation of hostilities.¹⁰⁶ In September 2023, however, Ukraine stated that the "NMAA has defined the task of preparing the mine action strategy", without elaborating on the expected timeline for drafting such a strategy. With respect to a detailed mine action work plan, Ukraine stated that the ongoing conflict and the continuing contamination prevents it from producing a work plan with any degree of confidence.¹⁰⁷

Ukraine said that it prioritises the clearance of critical infrastructure facilities and population centres, in order to ensure safe access of the population to their homes.¹⁰⁸ In March 2023, Ukraine approved an action plan to survey and demine more than 4,700km² of agricultural land in nine regions by the end of 2024. The regions are: Cherkasy, Chernihiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kyiv, Mykolaiv, Sumy, and Zaporizhzhia. Of this agricultural land, 1,650km² were set to be released by the end of 2023, and 3,050km² by the end of 2024.¹⁰⁹ The Ukrainian Minister of Economy, Yulia Svyrydenko, told the media that the Ministry planned to "survey, clear, and return to use most of all potentially contaminated areas within 10 years".¹¹⁰

There are currently no standardised criteria at national level for task prioritisation.¹¹¹ The MoD does not issue task dossiers but approves an annual plan with the list of all known locations planned by an operator for either clearance or survey.¹¹² Local governments have been helping the MoD to prioritise tasks based on humanitarian criteria.¹¹³

Since the renewed conflict in February 2022, and as mine action operators restarted working in newly accessible areas, the annual plan for 2022, which had been previously approved by the MoD, was no longer valid.¹¹⁴ Allocation of territorial communities for operational activities was hence produced in 2022 without an annual plan. An annual plan for 2023 was approved in early January by the MoD considering the growing number of operators, the increasing need to coordinate and prioritise, and the constant change in access

to newly contaminated areas. Under direct supervision of NMAA, the MAC has developed an interactive map for NTS planning jointly with regional authorities. This interactive tool contains different layers, including agricultural polygons which should be considered as the first priority during non-technical surveys.¹¹⁵

DRC was unable to prioritise areas for survey and clearance according to its integrated mine action and development programming in 2022 as it had done pre-2022 conflict. DRC aims to resume its previous prioritisation approach in 2023.¹¹⁶ FSD prioritises areas based on the threat posed by the contamination, the number of potential beneficiaries, and the potential impact that will result. Infrastructure was prioritised for BAC clearance in Izium.¹¹⁷

HALO uses its "internal prioritisation matrix", which takes into account different humanitarian factors such as number of people who use the area of the task, proximity to settlements, proximity of schools and hospitals, number of accidents recorded, as well as threat type, balancing these considerations with security and access considerations.¹¹⁸ By the end of 2022, the matrix was adapted to the context of the HALO's programme, considering new priorities and criteria aimed at demining agricultural fields. The matrix also considered the number of beneficiaries, distances from residential areas, the type of threat identified, and the number of incidents.¹¹⁹ The adapted matrix allowed HALO to prioritise and plan its operations more effectively, ensuring that resources were used efficiently and effectively to clear the most hazardous areas first. HALO has prioritised agricultural areas for clearance.¹²⁰

MAG was not yet operational in 2022, but by March 2023 was operational with EORE, and in August 2023, was planning/ implementing its NTS work with the region, district, and local administrations to identify priority tasks and liaise with NMAC for their allocation and approval.¹²¹ NPA prioritises areas for survey and clearance on a needs-basis according to victim and accident data, and on requests and tasking from local administrations and the MAC.¹²²

¹⁰⁶ Email from the GICHD, 19 April 2023.

¹⁰⁷ 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, additional information (Annex 2), 1 September 2023, pp. 6 and 8.

¹⁰⁸ 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 3.

¹⁰⁹ Ukraine's Ministry of Economy website, 30 May 2023, accessed on 22 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3NH0SbN>; and Ukraine's Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food website, 21 March 2023, accessed on 22 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3r0lphu>.

¹¹⁰ "We couldn't wait": Ukrainian farmers improvise to clear their land of mines", *The Guardian*, 19 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/44iX13N>.

¹¹¹ Emails from Henry Leach, Danish Demining Group (DDG) Ukraine, 2 May 2019; Yuri Shahramanyan, HALO Ukraine, 16 May 2019; and Almedina Musić, DRC, 7 February 2022.

¹¹² Email from Almedina Musić, DRC, 7 February 2022.

¹¹³ Interviews with Lt.-Col. Yevhenii Zubarevskyi, Ministry of Defence, in Geneva, 20 May 2016; and Maksym Komisarov, MoD, in Geneva, 8 June 2018.

¹¹⁴ Email from the GICHD, 19 April 2023.

¹¹⁵ Email from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Email from Tony Connel, FSD, 26 June 2023.

¹¹⁸ Email from Imogen Churchill, HALO, 23 March 2022.

¹¹⁹ Email from Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Emails from Nick Guest, MAG, 23 March 2023; and Jon Cunliffe, Country Director, MAG, 15 August 2023.

¹²² Email from Alberto Rinaldo Serra, NPA, 15 March 2023.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

NMAS were finalised by the MoD in September 2018 after multi-year input and review from key stakeholders.¹²³ The GICHD considers that the existing NMAS are in line with IMAS. Concerns, however, have been raised by national authority partners that the existing NMAS do not contain sufficient detail in certain areas, and need to be further refined and detailed. For example, the criteria for direct and indirect evidence need to be tailored to the new operational context.¹²⁴

In April 2023, with the support of the GICHD, Ukraine developed a new standard on mine action management processes which outlines the principles for certification and implementation of mine action activities. According to Ukraine, the GICHD, together with the mine action operators and national stakeholders, were drafting further revisions of the NMAS based on best practices.¹²⁵

According to UNDP, the NMAS could benefit from additional technical guidance for safe demolition and debris removal by applying NTS, TS, and clearance for building and structures following a methodology different from that of the land release. This is particularly important given preliminary estimates that 120,000 homes and 20,000 multistorey buildings have already been destroyed or damaged in Ukraine.¹²⁶

In May 2020, the GICHD, OSCE, DRC, and HALO formed a working group with the objective of revising NMAS to better align the standards with the IMAS. The working group submitted its recommendations to the MoD, the acting NMAA at that time.¹²⁷ According to DRC, the Ukrainian government had set a deadline to finalise the NMAS by August 2021,¹²⁸ a target that was then postponed to April 2023 due to delays in establishing the NMAA,¹²⁹ then again to April 2024.¹³⁰ Led by the GICHD, an NMAS revision was initiated in March 2023 during a stakeholder workshop.¹³¹ An NMAA-GICHD co-led process will focus on land release, mechanical demining, and terminology, while an NMAA-NPA co-led process will focus on MDDs. The NMAA and the MAC are also reportedly working on the QM standards.¹³²

DRC, FSD, HALO, MAG, and NPA agree that the current NMAS are yet to be fully developed to meet the needs of the mine action sector in Ukraine.¹³³ For example, HALO believes that there are still some contentious issues within the current NMAS. These include marking demining sites, the definition of "all reasonable effort", and reduction and cancellation criteria, among other concerns.¹³⁴ FSD has concerns about the lack of workable NMAS on mechanical clearance.¹³⁵ NPA thinks that NMAS require significant improvement with respect to information management, land release, mechanical clearance, and the use of MDDs.¹³⁶

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

The MoD and several other ministries continue to deploy units that undertake clearance and destruction of mines and ERW. This includes the military engineering school, which has a licence to accredit operators; the National Guard of Ukraine; the Mol, which conducts clearance through SESU and also has an engineering department that conducts EOD; the Security Service; the SSTS, which is responsible for demining national infrastructure; and the State Border Service, which conducts demining in areas under its control on land and in the sea.¹³⁷

As at September 2023, there were 17 certified national and international mine action operators registered in Ukraine. Including Ukrainian national, international organisations, limited liability companies, and state enterprises. Of the international operators: DCA, DRC, FSD, HALO, MAG, and NPA are present. The national operators are: Demining Solutions, GK Group, Association of Sappers of Ukraine, Ukrspecexport, Ukroboronservic, Modern Village and City Charitable Foundation, department of Maritime Safety, Regime-Secret Work and Demining Nibulon, International Demining Group, Scientific and

123 Email from Gianluca Maspoli, GICHD, 25 September 2018; and Miljenko Vahtarić, OSCE PCU, 25 September 2018; and interview with Miljenko Vahtarić, OSCE PCU, 7 February 2019.

124 Email from the GICHD, 19 April 2023.

125 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, additional information (Annex 2), 1 September 2023, p. 7.

126 Email from Oleksandr Lobov, UNDP, 14 August 2023, and "120,000 private houses and 20,000 multi-storey buildings destroyed or damaged in Ukraine", *Forbes*, 1 July 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/47EMqZS>.

127 Emails from Almedina Musić, DRC, 20 April 2021; and Ronan Shenhav, HALO, 20 April 2021.

128 Email from Almedina Musić, DRC, 26 July 2021.

129 Email from Almedina Musić, DRC, 7 February 2022.

130 Email from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023.

131 Email from the GICHD, 19 April 2023.

132 Email from the GICHD, 26 May 2023.

133 Emails from Nick Guest, MAG, 23 March 2023; Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023; Almedina Musić, DRC, 7 February 2022; Imogen Churchill, HALO, 23 March 2022; and Tony Connell, FSD, 10 June 2022.

134 Email from Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

135 Email from Tony Connel, FSD, 26 June 2023.

136 Email from Alberto Rinaldo Serra, NPA, 21 August 2023.

137 Interview with Col. Oleksandr Shchebetiuk, Ukrainian Armed Forces, in Geneva, 26 June 2015; email from Anton Shevchenko, OSCE, 23 June 2015; "Mine Action in Ukraine", Side event presentation by Lt.-Col. Yevhenii Zubarevskyi, MoD, Geneva, 17 February 2016; Article 7 Report (covering 2018), Form F, and email from the GICHD, 17 June 2022.

Production Company, and Patron Demining. In addition, as at August 2023, one unit of the SSTS and six SESU units were undergoing mine action operator certification.¹³⁸

As at April 2023, DCA, and MAG were still undergoing accreditation. In February 2023, NPA was accredited for NTS and EORE, and in June 2023, NPA received its accreditation for manual demining, TS, and BAC.¹³⁹

As at mid 2023, Ukraine was reported to have more than 200 demining teams of more than 1,000 personnel.¹⁴⁰ Ukraine plans to expand its demining capacity significantly to reach 300 teams of 1,500 personnel of SESU.¹⁴¹ As at August 2023, the Ukrainian MoD was forming 10 battalions and 3 separate demining companies which consist of 4,750 personnel as part of the SSTS and support forces command. The units being formed will be exclusively tasked to conduct humanitarian demining.¹⁴²

As at May 2023, the SESU stated that they had more than 30 demining teams, including three underwater teams, deployed in Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Kherson, Konopelniuk, Kyiv, and Mykolaiv regions.¹⁴³ The first Deputy Minister of Defence said in an interview that the MoD, together with the company Tetra Tech, plan on creating a joint training centre that will have the capacity to train 500 specialists per year.¹⁴⁴

Table 2: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2022¹⁴⁵

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers*	Dogs and handlers	Machines**	Comments
DRC	8	54	0	0	The same capacity as at the end of 2021
HALO	44	304	0	6	1 John Deere Tractor; 1 JCB Excavator 2 Robocuts TRAXX; 1 mini Robocut S300 1 Armtrac.
FSD	8	56	0	2	1 X MV4 and 1 X MV10 awaiting accreditation.
Demining Solutions	1	7	0	0	
Totals	61	421	0	8	

* Excluding team leaders, medics, and drivers unless otherwise stated. ** Excluding vegetation cutters and sifters.

As at August 2023, the national, international, and commercial operators planned to carry out survey and clearance of a total area of 83,920km² in territory under Ukrainian control. NTS activities were planned in all of the northern, eastern, and southern oblasts of Ukraine.¹⁴⁶

DRC deployed four NTS personnel of two teams in 2022. All of DRC's TS teams are trained and equipped to conduct manual mine clearance and BAC. The number of manual clearance and NTS teams remained the same as in 2021. Thanks to secured donor funding, DRC expected to deploy six additional clearance teams and four additional NTS teams in 2023.¹⁴⁷

FSD temporarily suspended its demining operations after February 2022. Operations restarted in July 2022 as FSD relocated its operations from Kramatorsk, Mariupol, and Sloviansk in the East to Chernihiv in the North. EORE (both online and in person) and NTS operations restarted first in July followed by EOD/BAC operations in August. FSD's NTS efforts concentrated on the outer villages of Chernihiv city. Recruiting and training of seven BAC teams started in July 2022 with the first two teams becoming operational by mid August. In early November 2022, FSD was the first international organisation to have NTS, BAC, and EORE teams

138 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request; Article 7 Report (covering 2018), Form F; and 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, additional information (Annex 2), 1 September 2023, pp. 2 and 3. Note: Ukraine's additional information refers to 16 operators but does not mention MAG which is also present and undergoing accreditation.

139 Email from Amela Balic, NPA, 29 June 2023.

140 The US Department of State, "Demining Ukraine: A Pre-requisite for Recovery: Michael Tirre Remarks before the U.S. Helsinki Commission", 8 December 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3KFdXzJ>.

141 Presentation of Ukraine to the APMBIC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023, slide 7.

142 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request; Article 7 Report (covering 2018), Form F; and 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, additional information (Annex 2), 1 September 2023, pp. 2 and 3.

143 "More than 30 demining groups are working on demining de-occupied territories", *Ukrinform*, 23 May 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3NnTKzI>.

144 "Ukraine will train 500 demining specialists per year – Pavlyuk", *Ukrinform*, 5 May 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3JrH0fo>.

145 Emails from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023; and Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

146 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, additional information (Annex 2), 1 September 2023, pp. 4 and 5.

147 Email from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023.

deploy into the recently regained territories of Kharkiv oblast, conducting operations in and around Izium. The EOD/BAC teams mainly conducted spot tasks until December 2022, when the NMAA ordered FSD to halt its spot task clearance until a certification process had been completed. FSD received certification for both the MV4 and MV10 machines in April 2023 and deployed both machines in Kharkiv oblast in support of SESU infrastructure projects.

In March 2023, FSD signed a contract with the World Food Programme (WFP) to start survey and clearance of agricultural land, and intended to redeploy its MV4 and MV10 machines in support of that project.¹⁴⁸ As at April 2023, FSD had around 100 staff working in the oblasts of Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Mykolaiv.¹⁴⁹ FSD's operational capacity consisted of eight specialised BAC teams, three mechanical clearance teams, three NTS teams, and four EORE teams. FSD intended to form two rubble removal teams in July 2023 and was in the process of introducing drones for NTS and mechanical teams.¹⁵⁰ FSD has sadly lost a staff member during the conflict and lost contact with one another. Both incidents occurred while the staff were off-duty.¹⁵¹

ITF Enhancing Human Security has partnered with Safe Path Group, a Ukrainian NGO, to identify the location of EO through NTS and TS activities, marking and recording it for future disposal or removal. The project began in October 2022 and an operational base was selected in Kharkiv in December 2022. Ten selected personnel were enrolled into the SESU IMAS level II course, with the aim of establishing two NTS and TS teams in Kharkiv and Poltava regions.¹⁵²

NPA received its accreditation for NTS and EORE in February 2023, and in June 2023 was accredited for TS, BAC, and manual demining. NPA established an operational presence in Sumy oblast and recruited 20 NTS personnel across ten teams in 2022. The recruited teams were not, however, deployed in 2022 as they were only accredited in February 2023. NPA planned to increase the numbers of its NTS teams to 12 and to further recruit ten clearance teams. In addition, NPA planned to train and deploy a total of 4 MDD teams, each consisting of two MDDs, two dog-handlers, and one team leader. As at April 2023, NPA has recruited and trained two clearance teams. One team had completed training and deployed for manual clearance in June 2023. The second team was undergoing training and expected to be deployed by mid July. As at July 2023, NPA was training five additional manual teams and eight MDD handlers to be operational by August of the same year.¹⁵³

HALO, the largest international operator in the country, suspended its operation in the east of Ukraine following the Russian invasion in February 2022. It relocated to the central

part of the country and resumed operations in May 2022. At the beginning of 2022, HALO had eight NTS teams with a total of 33 members. This has expanded to 16 NTS teams, each with four members (a total of 64 personnel) by the end of the year. Each team contained a supervisor and a senior supervisor in addition to the NTS personnel. HALO operated with 10 manual clearance teams totalling 70 staff at the beginning of 2022. Throughout the year, large-scale demining trainings were conducted of over 100 trainees each. By the end of the 2022, HALO had 44 manual clearance teams each of 9 members (a total of 304 personnel, excluding drivers and team leaders), 1 mechanical clearance team of 3 personnel, and 18 personnel for mechanical clearance support across 5 teams.¹⁵⁴

HALO has undergone a significant restructuring in the central part of Ukraine, involving the recruitment of new employees, training, and the formation of new survey and clearance teams. At the start of the operational year, which began in the mid-summer of 2022, the number of employees and teams was lower than in 2021. However, with the financial support of donors, HALO not only restored its performance to 2021 levels, but even significantly increased operational capacity. HALO intended to double its 2022 operational capacity in 2023. This includes 35 NTS teams, 92 manual demining teams, 21 mechanical support teams, and 12 mechanical teams, for a total of more than 1,200 operational staff.¹⁵⁵

HALO has made considerable progress using drones to identify UXO and mines during survey and clearance. HALO Ukraine has a drone team responsible for both flights and image processing. As a result, most surface items could be identified with a high probability. This provides credibility and speeds up the clearance process, allowing teams to focus on evidence points during the clearance process, making more effective progress.¹⁵⁶

Ukraine has been exploring the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for mine detection using various technologies with promising results. The use of drones has proven both efficient and cost effective especially when deployed shortly after contamination and before the mines are covered with vegetation, allowing to quickly cover large areas and significantly speeding up survey operations.¹⁵⁷ Denmark provided Ukraine with six UAVs for the scanning of mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) in July 2023 as part of its assistance package to the Ukrainian army.¹⁵⁸ A Canadian drone-maker has supplied demining groups with a handful of UAVs decked out with a suite of sensors designed to map areas with suspected mines. The sensors include magnetometers, several different kinds of cameras, and radars. The Canadian company expected to have two

148 Emails from Tony Connell, FSD, 24 March and 26 July 2023.

149 FSD, "Demining in Ukraine: the race against time", accessed 24 April 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/41x5i9r>.

150 Swissinfo, "Demining: how the Swiss are helping to make Ukraine safer", 4 April 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/41uQTuk>, and email from Tony Connell, FSD, 26 July 2023.

151 Email from Tony Connell, FSD, 24 March 2023.

152 ITF, "Annual Report 2022", at: <https://bit.ly/3o5uIMO>, p. 94.

153 Emails from Alberto Rinaldo Serra, NPA, 15 March 2023, and Amela Balic, NPA, 29 June 2023.

154 Email from Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

155 Ibid.

156 Ibid.

157 Presentation of HI to the APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19-21 June 2023.

158 "Denmark Hands Over 6 UAVs to Ukraine for Mine Scanning", *Gwara Media*, 14 July 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/46SecBG>.

dozen mine-spotting drones by the end of 2023.¹⁵⁹ POSTUP Foundation has tested the use of a magnetometer-equipped drones to map a minefield in Kyiv region in March 2023, and was working on a second prototype of the magnetometer technology.¹⁶⁰ Since the summer of 2023, NPA NTS teams have been using UAVs for imagery in all NTS tasks and as at August of the same year, NPA was introducing the use of UAVs prior to and during clearance.¹⁶¹

MAG had operational community liaison teams in 2022, and as at August 2023, was starting NTS with the aim to be operational in TS, manual clearance, and BAC by September 2023.¹⁶²

DEMINER SAFETY

A SESU deminer told the press in January 2023 that 64 deminers had been injured and 13 killed in the line of duty.¹⁶³ Three SESU personnel were killed on 24 December 2022 as a mine exploded while they were demining in Kherson region.¹⁶⁴ In March 2023, the Kherson military administration said that four bomb disposal experts and one civilian were injured while defuzing mines in the village of Posad-Pokrovsk in Kherson region.¹⁶⁵ Another SESU team came under attack in May 2023 while demining in the Kherson region. The attack led to the killing of 18 persons, including six SESU specialists, in addition to the injury of 46 civilians and two paramedics.¹⁶⁶

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

According to data provided operators, a total of 0.36km² of mined area was released in 2022, of which, 0.17km² was cleared, 0.01km² was reduced through TS, and 0.17km² cancelled through NTS.¹⁶⁷ No AP mines were found as a result of the land release, suggesting either a lack of prior survey or inadequate survey, but HALO reported 59 AP mines separately for spot-task removal by SESU.¹⁶⁸

In addition, 4.02km² of previously unrecorded AP mine contamination was discovered by DRC and HALO.¹⁶⁹

SURVEY IN 2022

A total of 184,416m² of AP mined area was released through survey in 2022. Of this, 173,100m² was cancelled through NTS by DRC and 11,316m² was reduced through TS by HALO.¹⁷⁰

Total cancellation by DRC in 2022 was significantly less than in 2021 whereby DRC cancelled 798,207m² of mined area as it implemented only during the first two months of 2022, before the start of the Russian invasion of in February.¹⁷¹ HALO did not cancel land through NTS, but reduced 11,316m² of AP mined area through TS. Of the 11,315m² reduced, 7,893m² included anti-vehicle or mixed threat areas.¹⁷² The total area reduced by HALO in 2022 is less than that of 2021 where HALO reduced 26,207m², but these figures are not comparable due to the suspension and relocation of operation that occurred since February 2022.

A total of just above 4km² of previously unrecorded AP mined area was discovered and added to the database, all of which has occurred since February 2022. Of this, 100,910m² was discovered by DRC in one suspected hazardous area (SHA) and two confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs),¹⁷³ and 3,917,383m² in 57 SHAs and CHAs combined.¹⁷⁴

159 "Drones are sniffing out landmines in Ukraine", *AXIOS*, 29 August 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/30fJ7AM>.

160 "UAV mine detection system tested in Kyiv Oblast", *Ukrainska Pravda*, 21 March 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3Dhe1Co>. A magnetometer is a carbon stick a little over a metre long with two sensors at the ends. These sensors measure the magnetic background of the field at a frequency of 200Hz.

161 Email from Alberto Rinaldo Serra, NPA, 21 August 2023.

162 Emails from Nick Guest, MAG, 23 March 2023; and Jon Cunliffe, MAG, 15 August 2023.

163 "Ukrainians wrap up landmine clearance exercises in Cambodia", *Associated Press*, 20 January 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/41FPJge>.

164 "Three emergency services workers killed while demining Ukraine's Kherson", *Reuters*, 25 December 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3G04bdy>.

165 "Exploding mines in southern Ukraine kill one and injure five", *The New York Times*, 14 March 2023, <https://bit.ly/3DgnaLG>.

166 "The occupiers shelled the Kherson region: 6 employees of the State Emergency Service were killed", *Apostroph*, 6 May 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3pgfu8G>.

167 Emails from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023; and Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

168 Email from Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

169 Emails from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023; and Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

170 Emails from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023; and Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

171 Email from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023.

172 Email from Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

173 Email from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023.

174 Email from Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.

CLEARANCE IN 2022

According to operator data only, a total of 172,918m² of mined land was cleared in Ukraine in 2022, all by HALO. In addition to what is being cleared by international operators, substantial clearance is being undertaken by the MoD and the SESU, some of which is conducted immediately after contamination has occurred. However, as at July 2023, clearance of AP mines conducted by Ukrainian national bodies in 2022 had not yet been reported.

During its clearance of 172,918m², HALO did not find any AP mines during clearance but only two AV mines and three items of UXO, which it reported to the authorities for destruction. Separately, HALO found and reported 59 AP mines for in situ destruction over the course of 2022. Of the 59 AP mines, 54 were PFM-1, four were MON-50, and one was of an improvised nature (an F1 grenade laid with tripwire).¹⁷⁵ As noted above, operators are not authorised to conduct EOD in Ukraine which has further overstretched the already strained capacity of the national authorities.

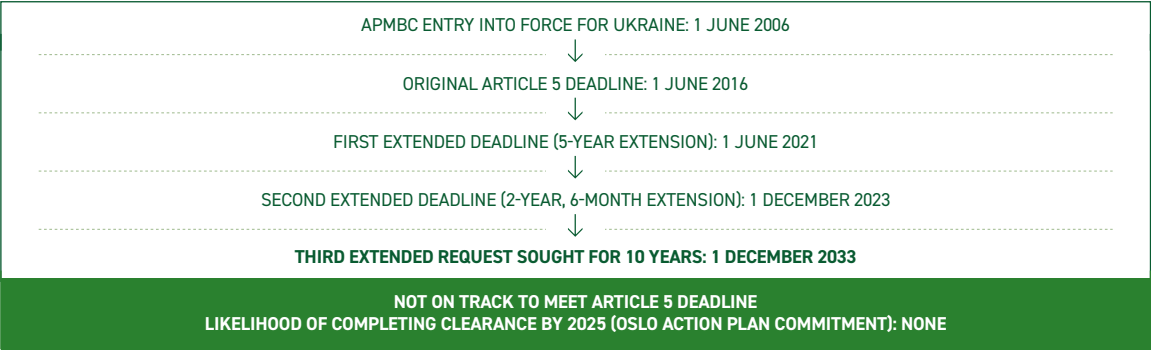
The clearance figure of 2022 constitutes a small proportion of the 1,173,773m² HALO cleared in 2021, and whereby HALO destroyed 11 AP mines, four AV mines, and 78 items of UXO.¹⁷⁶

HALO’s drop in clearance is ascribed to the suspension of operations after the winter standdown, the relocation from the east to the centre of Ukraine, and the need to recruit and build capacity of newly hired staff. Since the resumption of its operation in May 2022, HALO has worked on seven tasks of a total area of 182,577m².¹⁷⁷

DRC cleared 158,945m² of battle area in 2022 in Chernihiv and Kyiv Oblasts. DRC did not encounter any AP mines during the clearance but found in the process 64 items of UXO and 52 items of abandoned unexploded ordnance (AXO).¹⁷⁸ In 2021, DRC cleared 85,227m² of AP mined area and destroyed 12 items of UXO.¹⁷⁹ The areas cleared in 2022 were suspected to contain AV mines, UXO, and AXO. There was no clearance of areas suspected to contain AP mines. The size of the areas cleared and the number of items found increased due to the shift in operational areas.¹⁸⁰

Ukraine reported having cleared 78.18km² of land from explosive objects, neutralising in the process 315,068 items of EO. No further information was provided on the types of devices destroyed.¹⁸¹

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with its latest extension), Ukraine is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 December 2023. Ukraine would not meet this deadline and in April 2023, submitted an Article 5 deadline extension request for consideration by the Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties (21MSP) seeking a 10-year extension. Following feedback from the Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Ukraine said that it does not object to reducing the requested extension to five years, through to 1 December 2028.¹⁸² However, in September 2023, Ukraine submitted additional information to the Convention maintaining its request for a 10-year extension period. Ukraine justified the requested period of extension by the continued Russian aggression, the use of remote mining of its border territories, and the lack of understanding of the duration of hostilities.¹⁸³

175 Ibid.
176 Email from Imogen Churchill, HALO, 23 March 2022.
177 Email from Denys Holovetskyi, HALO, 29 May 2023.
178 Email from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023.
179 Email from Almedina Musić, DRC, 7 February 2022.
180 Email from Roxana-Cristina Bobolicu, DRC, 1 April 2023.
181 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 1.
182 Ibid., Additional Information, p. 1.
183 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, additional Information (Annex 1), 1 September 2023, p. 1.

In 2020, Ukraine had stated that the fulfilment of its deadline was dependent upon “completion of hostilities, restoration of the constitutional order and gaining the full control over the occupied territories, including over the state border between Ukraine and the Russian Federation”.¹⁸⁴ The 2022 conflict has resulted in huge new contamination. The time needed to clear AP mines in Ukraine can only be estimated once hostilities have ended and a national contamination survey has been completed.¹⁸⁵

Apart from the 59 AP mines reported by HALO and removed by the Ukrainian authorities, no AP mines were found during clearance in 2022, although clearance continues in 17 of the 19 tasks that were being cleared. Previously, both HALO and DRC were clearing large mined areas without finding any AP mines. Clearance data are not available from areas outside of government control, though it is believed that, at least in earlier years, pro-Russian rebels conducted some ad hoc clearance.¹⁸⁶

Table 3: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2022	172,798
2021	1,259,000
2020	830,477
2019	697,012
2018	391,819
Total	3,351,106

While Russia is not a State Party or signatory to the APMBC it also has obligations under international human rights law to clear AP mines as soon as possible in any areas of Ukraine over which it exercises effective control, by virtue of its duty to protect the right to life of every person under its jurisdiction.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Ukraine has not provided information on whether it has a plan in place for dealing with residual risk post completion, which is years away in any event.

¹⁸⁴ 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 5.

¹⁸⁵ Online presentation by Hannah Rose Holloway, DRC, CCM Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 16 May 2022.

¹⁸⁶ Side event presentation by Mark Hiznay, Human Rights Watch, in Geneva, February 2015; and interview, 18 February 2015.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2028
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: HEAVY
(NO CREDIBLE ESTIMATE)**

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

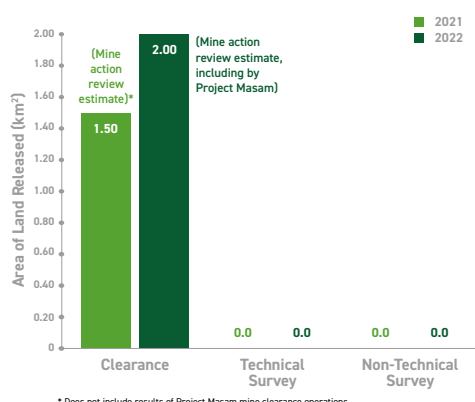
2km²

(MINE ACTION REVIEW
ESTIMATE, INCLUDING BY
PROJECT MASAM)

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

2,369

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2022, Yemen's internationally recognised government (IRG) requested and was granted a five-year extension of its Article 5 deadline until end-March 2028. A baseline survey conducted by the Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre (YEMAC) in Aden, which represents the IRG (YEMAC-IRG) identified 239 hazardous areas totalling around 52km². In the north, three international demining non-governmental organisations (NGOs) visited Sana'a in February 2023 and negotiated a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the authorities in Sana'a that would provide a basis for them to operate in areas controlled by Houthi authorities but the MoUs remained unsigned as at August 2023. After nearly a decade of donor support, funding for a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) programme of emergency support for mine action ended in June 2023 with the UN recommending that donors should instead fund implementing partners directly. Since April 2022, the UN Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA) has taken on a stronger coordination role in Yemen, especially the Hudaydah governorate, in support of the UN country team's efforts, led by UNDP.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- All parties to conflict should act to halt continuing use of mines and improvised explosive devices.
- The IRG and YEMAC should streamline procedures for the importation of demining equipment and issuance of visas and movement permits.
- YEMAC-IRG and the Yemen Mine Action Coordination Centre (YMACC) in Aden should develop a mine action work plan setting clear targets for survey and clearance of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW).
- YEMAC-IRG and YMACC should release aggregated data on contamination identified by the baseline survey by governorate and district.
- The Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre operating under the de facto authorities in Sana'a (YEMAC-DFA) should sign MoUs negotiated with international operators and with full support of all DFA authorities expedite the deployment of international NGOs (INGOs).

- YEMAC-DFA should cease its dual role of regulator and operator and create a coordination centre to take over responsibility for tasking, information management, and quality assurance (QA)/quality control (QC).
- YEMAC-DFA should conduct non-technical survey (NTS) consistent with international standards to establish a baseline estimate of contamination.
- The United Nations should act expeditiously to replace the emergency programme previously coordinated by UNDP with a framework for financial and technical support to survey, clearance, information management, and QA/QC consistent with international standards.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	4	4	Yemen remains without a credible estimate of mine contamination. YEMAC-IRG continued to implement a baseline survey to assess mine and other explosive ordnance contamination but survey capacity was limited and progress was insufficient to determine the extent of contamination in any of Yemen's 22 governorates. YEMAC-DFA reported it conducted NTS identifying suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) amounted to nearly 1,200km ² but the basis for the estimate and survey methods applied were unclear.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	4	4	Mine action in Yemen, one of the world's poorest countries, is entirely dependent on international donor funding. Conflict between Sana'a-based De Facto Authorities (DFA) and the Aden-based IRG has effectively split YEMAC, undermining its national role and leaving YEMAC DFA in Sana'a subject to Coalition sanctions. YEMAC's two components do not coordinate their activities with each other. The coordination centre opened by YEMAC-IRG in 2020 (YMACC) worked closely with international operators in the south but the DFA took no action to implement a 2021 agreement to set up a similar body in the north.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	5	5	Yemen's 2022 Article 5 deadline extension request identified inclusion of women as a priority and YEMAC-IRG has taken steps to employ women in field operations as well as office role in the south. The number of women employed in mine action remained small but international operators deployed some women in NTS and risk education roles and the extension request states "there is no objection to including more women." The extent and role of women in mine action in DFA-controlled areas is not known.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	5	4	The UN reported information management in the South made good progress since YEMAC-IRG, with support from UNDP and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) installed Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core in the YMACC in 2021. Implementing partners said data supporting task orders was reliable. YEMAC-DFA works with a much older New Generation database and the quality of information it holds is unknown. YEMAC-IRG has regularly submitted Article 7 transparency reports and YEMAC-DFA produced a parallel report for the year ending 31 March 2023. UNMHA operated a dedicated database on landmine and ERW-related incidents and casualties in Al-Hodeida governorate, one of the most impacted governorates.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	5	5	Yemen's mine action continues to provide an emergency response focused on life-saving interventions and civilian infrastructure rather than systematic or planned clearance. The 2022 Article 5 deadline extension request identified priority areas of activity, including particularly the baseline survey, but does not set out a detailed work plan. In the south, tasks are issued by YMACC but the criteria used for prioritising are unclear.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	4	4	YEMAC-IRG is revising and updating national mine action standards (NMAS) and standard operating procedures (SOPs). It reported revising 32 chapters of NMAS in 2021, including standards relating to land release, which it claimed were compliant with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and the Oslo Action Plan. But the new standards had yet to receive government as of August 2023.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	6	6	YEMAC-IRG requested a five-year extension to Yemen's Article 5 deadline in March 2022 including for the purpose of conducting a baseline survey of contamination. Meanwhile, emergency response operations continued in the IRG- and DFA-controlled areas but uncertainty over data prevented a clear determination of progress. YEMAC-IRG reported clearing a little over 1km ² and emergency clearance of 17km ² without clarifying the distinction. YEMAC-DFA reported clearance of 47.5km ² but the type of clearance was also unknown.
Average Score	4.7	4.6	Overall Programme Performance: POOR

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre – Internationally Recognised Government, Aden (YEMAC-IRG)
- Yemen Mine Action Coordination Centre – Internationally Recognised Government, Aden (YMACC-IRG) (“YEMAC South”)
- Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre – De Facto Authorities, Sana’a (YEMAC-DFA) (“YEMAC North”)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- YEMAC
- Yemen Army Engineers

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Danish Refugee Council Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding Sector (DRC)
- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA)
- Project Masam/SafeLane Global/Dynasafe

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- The Development Initiative (TDI)
- Prodigy Systems

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Yemen has heavy contamination by conventional and improvised anti-personnel (AP) mines and a wide array of other explosive ordnance but the extent is not known after nearly eight years of conflict in which all parties have extensively used landmines. UNDP reported continued contamination from active and legacy improvised explosive devices (IEDs).¹ In addition, areas previously cleared have been re-contaminated while shifting conflict lines have hindered systematic survey or clearance.

YEMAC-IRG reported that a baseline survey launched in April 2021 in areas controlled by the Aden-based government had identified 52km² of contamination in six provinces by the end of 2022 (see Table 1), less than half the 78km² recorded by the Yemen Baseline Survey (YBLS) in six months of 2021.²

Table 1: Results of Yemen-IRG baseline survey 2022³

Province/region	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area(m ²)
Abyan	32	15,804,134	7	4,397,090
Aden	26	2,590,557	16	2,227,652
Al-Dhale	12	4,795,502	10	3,463,743
Al-Hodeida	25	2,864,382	0	0
Laheg	20	3,582,838	35	7,647,761
Taiz	45	4,051,703	11	543,122
Totals	160	33,689,116	79	18,279,368

YEMAC-DFA released a parallel Article 7 report for Houthi-controlled areas which reported that NTS had identified 527 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) in seven governorates totalling 1,192km². The report, which has not been listed on the Article 7 database, said NTS conducted in 10 districts of two governorates in the year ending 31 March 2023 had identified previously unrecorded SHAs covering a total of 142km².⁴ YEMAC-DFA reportedly employs a landmine impact survey methodology⁵ which in other countries (and earlier in Yemen) has produced hugely inflated estimates of contamination.

Before the 2015 outbreak of conflict between the Saudi-backed Aden government and Ansar Allah (Houthi) forces controlling Sana’a, Yemen had AP mined area estimated to cover more than 200km². A Landmine Impact Survey in 2000 had recorded mines in 18 of Yemen’s governorates. These came from multiple conflicts, including in 1962–73 and 1970–83, mines laid along the border between the North and South before they unified, a succession of conflicts after 1994, and by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). The last eight years of war, however, have massively increased the extent and complexity of contamination.

1 UNDP, Emergency Mine Action Project – Phase II, Annual Report 2022, 15 February 2023, p. 6.
2 Email from Ameen Saleh Alaqli, Director, YEMAC-IRG, 21 May 2023; Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.
3 Email from Ameen Saleh Alaqli, YEMAC-IRG, 21 May 2023.
4 Email from Ahmed Yahiya Alawi, Executive Officer/IMSMA Officer, YEMAC-DFA, 18 April 2023; Article 7 Report (for year covering 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023), Form D.
5 Interview with Mukahhal Sulaiman, Information Management Adviser, GICHD, Geneva, 11 July 2023.

A United Nations panel reported in 2021 that the Houthis had made “widespread” use of mines in villages, schools, near water sources, on beaches, and on roads, posing a constant threat to civilians and provoking displacement.⁶ Houthi officials have acknowledged using landmines⁷ and have reportedly laid large numbers of IEDs, including mines of an improvised nature, along frequently shifting frontlines in the conflict. Analysis of some 2,400 improvised devices

since 2017 found 70% to be mines of an improvised nature.⁸ Contamination is especially high along Yemen’s west coast where mines were placed with the aim of stalling the advance of pro-government Yemeni and Saudi coalition forces towards the strategic port of Hodeida and more recently around Marib, a focus of intense fighting in 2020 and 2021. The UN also reports that improvised sea mines pose a persistent threat to Red Sea shipping and coastal areas.⁹

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Management of mine action in Yemen is geographically divided along the lines of the conflict that erupted in March 2015 between the Houthi movement controlling the capital Sana’a as well as much of the north and west of the country (termed the De Facto Authorities or DFA by the United Nations), and the IRG, operationally based in Aden and the south.

Yemen established a National Mine Action Committee (NMAC) in June 1998 by prime ministerial decree to formulate policy, allocate resources, and develop a national mine action strategy.¹⁰ The IRG reported it no longer recognised the NMAC and said in 2019 that it had been disbanded.¹¹ In 2023, YEMAC-DFA published a parallel Article 7 report in the name of the NMAC but it gave no details of its composition or role, if any.¹²

YEMAC was established in Sana’a in January 1999 as a national mine action agency and nominally maintains a national role but in practice has split into two operations, centred round Sana’a and Aden, respectively. YEMAC South informed Mine Action Review there was no coordination between the two because YEMAC North was under the control of Houthi militia.¹³ YEMAC South is believed to employ around 750 staff and YEMAC North around 500, but the number of active personnel in either entity is uncertain.¹⁴ UNDP earlier reported that, in total, YEMAC conducted clearance in 19 of Yemen’s 21 governorates.¹⁵

YEMAC South, headquartered in Aden, operated with some 500 staff reports operating through three branches serving Hadramaut, Marib, and Taiz. It identified Aden, Abyan, Dhale, Hodeida, Lahej, and Taiz as high-priority districts for mine action interventions.¹⁶ Yemen’s APMBC Article 5 deadline extension request, submitted in March 2022, said that YEMAC

was planning to open an office in Marib to support operations in Al Bayda and Al Jawf governorates, as well as the western Shabwah governorate. Operations included explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) spot tasks, non-technical survey (NTS), and risk education.¹⁷

In April 2020, YEMAC South opened YMACC in Aden with a view to strengthening programme management in its area of operation. The centre, which is intended to facilitate cooperation with international organisations, has responsibility for accrediting organisations and issuing task orders. It has departments for planning, information management, and QA/QC.¹⁸ The centre convened its first coordination meeting on 9 April 2020 and by early 2021 employed 44 people.¹⁹ It had set up technical working groups focused on NTS and risk education.²⁰ Mine action stakeholders say the creation of YMACC has improved coordination with operators but decision-making boundaries between YEMAC and YMACC are opaque.

YEMAC North (YEMAC-DFA) functions as both the coordinator of mine action in northern governorates controlled by Houthi forces and as operator involved in all aspects of mine action including survey and clearance, risk education, victim assistance, information management, and quality management, a situation seen as creating a problematic conflict of interest to the detriment of quality and safety.²¹ To address that issue, YEMAC North and the DFA’s Supreme Council for the Management and Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (SCMCHA) have agreed in principle to set up a coordination centre similar to YMACC in the IRG-controlled areas but no action was taken in 2022 to implement the proposal.²²

6 Letter from the Panel of Experts on Yemen to the President of the Security Council, UN doc. S/2021/79, 25 January 2021, pp. 3, 44.

7 J. Gambrell and M. Harb, “Landmines will be hidden killer decades after war”, *Associated Press*, 24 December 2018.

8 UNDP Yemen, “Emergency Mine Action Project – Yemen Phase Five Termination, Evaluation Brief EMA Project”, 2 August 2021.

9 UNDP, Emergency Mine Action Project – Phase II, Annual Report 2022, 15 February 2023, p. 6.

10 Article 7 Report, Form I, 31 March 2009.

11 APMBC Article 7 Report (covering 2018), Form A.

12 YEMAC-DFA, Article 7 Report (for year covering 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023).

13 Email from Ameen Saleh Alaqili, YEMAC-IRG, 26 December 2021.

14 Interview with Stephen Bryant, UNDP, in Geneva, 23 November 2022.

15 UNDP Annual Report on Mine Action in Yemen 2020, February 2021, p. 9.

16 Email from Ameen Saleh Alaqili, YEMAC-IRG, 21 May 2023.

17 Yemen APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, March 2022, pp. 26–27.

18 UNDP, “Emergency Mine Action Project, Annual Progress Report 2019”, 20 January 2020, p. 12; and email from Ameen Saleh Alaqili, YEMAC, 26 December 2021.

19 Emails from Ameen Saleh Alaqili, YEMAC-IRG, 5 May 2021; and Stephen Robinson, UNDP, 27 May 2020.

20 UNDP Annual Report on Mine Action in Yemen 2020, p. 14.

21 UNDP, “Emergency Mine Action Project – Phase II, Annual Report for 2022”, 15 February 2023, p. 21.

22 Ibid.

The DFA revoked the visa of UNDP's Senior Technical Adviser in 2021 limiting the programme's ability to support mine action in the north. Other UNDP staff were able to visit Sana'a in early 2022²³ but sporadic DFA denial of visas to UN and other international mine action operators has hampered development of capacity and operations to address explosive ordnance hazards.²⁴ UNDP purchased 300 detectors and 200 sets of personal protective equipment (PPE) in 2022 to support YEMAC North operations around Hodeida. The detectors were held in storage in Djibouti awaiting receipt of the necessary clearance for their importation from the IRG,²⁵ until August 2023 when they were handed over to YEMAC North by SCMCHA.²⁶ Three demining INGOs—Danish Refugee Council (DRC), The HALO Trust (HALO), and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)—visited Sana'a in February 2023 and negotiated an MoU with YEMAC North that would provide a basis for operating in the DFA-controlled areas. Once signed, operators would register with the DFA's SCMCHA.²⁷ International stakeholders hoped for signature before the end of the year but as of August 2023 the MoU had yet to be signed.

UNDP has provided technical and administrative support to YEMAC for two decades but in 2022 faced reduced funding and was planning to end its current project in Yemen by the end of 2023.²⁸ The UN informed YEMAC-IRG in June 2023 that funding would cease at the end of the month.²⁹ The UN had supported mine action in Yemen from 1999 to 2003 through a programme implemented by the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS). From 2003, the programme came under full national management. At the end of 2014, UNDP launched an Emergency Mine Action Project to support development of national capacity for mine action planning and programme management deploying an international adviser and from 2017 provided payment for approximately 1,000 national

personnel to conduct survey, clearance, and EOD.³⁰ The first phase of the Emergency Project ended in September 2021 and a second phase started in October 2021. The project's budget for 2022 was US\$11.7 million.³¹

In 2021, UNDP's project was conducted by six international and nine national staff working from a number of different offices. These included four project area coordinators based in Aden, Hodeida, Mokha, and Mukalla; two administrative staff in Sana'a; and three in Aden.³² As a result of funding shortfalls, UNDP's Chief Technical Adviser on Counter-IED left Yemen in June 2022 and was not replaced. An adviser provided as an in-kind contribution by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) joined in June 2022, supporting YEMAC and YMACC on countering improvised explosive devices disposal (C-IEDD).³³ UNDP's Chief Technical Adviser for mine action left the programme at the end of 2022.

UNDP reported that, after extensive consultations among partners and within the UN, it had decided to phase out the project activities by the end of 2023.³⁴ The UN informed YEMAC in June 2023 that payment for national staff would end at the end of June 2023. The UN was considering a proposal to support payment of salaries to 15 critical posts in both YEMAC-IRG and YEMAC-DFA but it recommended that donors channel future funding directly to international NGOs.³⁵

Other institutions involved in decision-making or administrative procedures significantly affecting mine action include the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC), the National Security Agency, and the Ministry of Defence, while mine action stakeholders also point to interventions by the Saudi Ministry of Defence Evacuation & Humanitarian Operations Centre (EHOC).

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Yemen does not have a national mine action standard (NMAS) on environmental management and the emergency character of the response to mines and other explosive ordnance does not take account of environmental issues in planning and tasking. International operators reportedly adhere to relevant international standards. DRC said it sought to ensure that waste produced during demolitions is picked up and disposed of properly.³⁶

23 Email from Stephen Bryant, UNDP, 7 February 2022.

24 UNDP, "Emergency Mine Action Project, Yemen Phase Five Terminal Evaluation Report", September 2021, p. 11.

25 UNDP, "Emergency Mine Action Project - Phase II, Annual Report for 2022", 15 February 2023, p. 12.

26 Email from UNMAS Headquarters, 29 September 2023.

27 Emails from Christina Hendryx, Programme Manager, Humanitarian, Disarmament and Peace Building (HDP), DRC, 15 May 2023; Faiz Mohammad Paktian, Country Director, NPA, 7 May 2023 and Matthew Smith, HALO, 11 July 2023.

28 UNDP, Emergency Mine Action Project - Phase II, Annual Report for 2022, 15 February 2023, p. 24.

29 Interviews with Patrick Fruchet, UN Adviser, in Geneva, 21 June 2023; and Aleksandar Mihajlov, Planning and Monitoring Specialist, UNDP, in Geneva, 22 June 2023.

30 UNDP, "Emergency Mine Action Project, Annual Progress Report 2019", 20 January 2020, p. 9; and interview with Stephen Robinson, UNDP, in Geneva, 20 July 2020; interview with Patrick Fruchet, Senior Mine Action Adviser to UN Resident Coordinator's Office for Yemen, in Geneva, 21 June 2023.

31 UNDP, "Emergency Mine Action Project - Phase II, Annual Report for 2022", 15 February 2023, p. 7.

32 UNDP Annual Report on Mine Action in Yemen 2020, p. 8.

33 UNDP, "Emergency Mine Action Project - Phase II, Annual Report for 2022", 15 February 2023, p. 11.

34 Ibid., p. 24.

35 Interviews with Patrick Fruchet, UN Adviser, in Geneva, 21 June 2023; and with Aleksandar Mihajlov, UNDP, in Geneva, 22 June 2023.

36 Emails from Christina Hendryx, DRC, 15 May 2023; and Matthew Smith, Head of Region, HALO, 11 July 2023.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

YEMAC-IRG said the inclusion of women in mine action was a priority in 2021 and, in Yemen's Article 5 deadline extension request submitted by the IRG in March 2022, it repeated that this was the position of both YEMAC and YMACC.³⁷ It started training female staff for EOD, NTS, and risk education in 2020.³⁸ The 2022 extension request noted that YEMAC had employed 15 women in NTS as well as another 15 women in risk education in order to ensure the different needs of women and girls as well as men and boys are taken into account. It said other women worked in information management and victim assistance. It stated "there is no objection to including more women".³⁹ However, YMACC was reportedly resistant to employing women in multitask teams.⁴⁰

YEMAC-DFA affirmed to UNDP that women made up half of their NTS staff⁴¹ but no details were available of overall staffing or the gender composition.

UNDP noted that integrating women into the mine action programme remained "challenging", but it reported that among 17 women who underwent training in 2021, three took an EOD Level 2 course, three others attended an improvised explosive device disposal (IEDD) good practice course and

engage in IED disposal operations with the Directorate of Family Protection, and 10 women were trained in NTS.⁴²

Social and cultural conventions present a significant impediment to efforts to promote inclusion in the sector. Women's traditional role as responsible for family care is seen as discouraging women from applying for jobs. Operators report cases where husbands have forbidden women applicants from attending interviews. Risk education is conducted separately for women, often by female staff, to encourage participation of women, who are considered valuable informants on account of their knowledge of local conditions acquired carrying out family chores such as collecting wood and herding livestock.⁴³

Employment of women among international operators remained at a low level. Women made up seven of DRC's 36 employees in 2022, including two of 11 staff in managerial or supervisory jobs and three of the 27 staff in field operations, with one female in each of three NTS teams.⁴⁴ HALO's 124 staff included 19 women, including 6 of the 37 in supervisory positions and 8 of 81 field operations staff who work in NTS and risk education teams.⁴⁵

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Data management in the YEMAC-IRG area of operations has improved since 2020 with the installation of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core database and the introduction of approved reporting templates.⁴⁶ A main server was installed in YMACC at the end of 2021 with support from UNDP and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to serve as a centralised data centre. UNDP reported information management developed well in 2022⁴⁷ when the information management team populated the database with data on clearance, victims, and accidents as well as receiving results of the baseline survey.⁴⁸ Furthermore, UNMHA operated a dedicated database on landmine and ERW-related incidents and casualties in Al-Hodeida governorate, one of the most impacted governorates.⁴⁹

YEMAC said that information management system operations continue to be reviewed and strengthened.⁵⁰ It reported that all electronic reporting forms were designed with participation of operators in technical working groups and that a series of workshops and training sessions were organised for operators with support from UNDP and the GICHD.⁵¹ Implementing partners previously submitted operating results to YMACC by email but in 2022 moved over to reporting via IMSMA. Project Masam, reported its operating results to YMACC but the data was held separately from other operators' results. Discussions were underway in 2023 on steps to integrate Project Masam's data with the rest of the mine action programme results.⁵²

37 Email from Ameen Saleh Al-Aqili, YEMAC, 26 December 2021; and Article 5 deadline Extension Request, March 2022, p. 21.

38 Email from Ameen Saleh Al-Aqili, YEMAC, 5 May 2021; and *UNDP Annual Report 2020*, p. 15.

39 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, March 2022, p. 21.

40 Email from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022.

41 UNDP, Emergency Mine Action Project - Phase II, Annual Report for 2022, 15 February 2023, p. 15.

42 UNDP, *Annual Report on Mine Action in Yemen 2021*, p. 15.

43 Email from Esteban Bernal, Programme Manager, Humanitarian, Disarmament and Peace Building, DRC, 23 March 2021.

44 Emails from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022; and Christina Hendryx, DRC, 15 May 2023.

45 Email from Matthew Smith, HALO, 11 July 2023.

46 UNDP, Emergency Mine Action Project - Phase II, Annual Report for 2022, 15 February 2023, p. 9.

47 Ibid.

48 Interview with Mukahhal Sulaiman, GICHD, Geneva, 11 July 2023.

49 Email from UNMAS Headquarters, 29 September 2023.

50 Email from Ameen Saleh Alaqili, YEMAC, 21 May 2023.

51 Ibid.; and interview with Stephen Robinson, UNDP, in Geneva, 23 March 2021; and *UNDP Annual Report 2021*, p. 10.

52 Interview with Mukahhal Sulaiman, GICHD, Geneva, 11 July 2023.

International operators noted the volume of data submitted to the database has increased sharply as survey and clearance operations expanded and the database will need continuing support to maintain the quality of data. UNDP support included an information management specialists contracted through MSB and GICHD.⁵³ Operators only have direct access to data relating to their own operations but are able to request maps and other data to support operations. Implementing partners say data received on tasks has proved reliable.⁵⁴

YEMAC North works with an older IMSMA New Generation system.⁵⁵ Its information management capacity in 2022 was not known.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Mine action in Yemen is conducted on an emergency basis in a context of continuing armed conflict, responding to immediate threats from all forms of explosive ordnance.⁵⁶ UNDP has observed that YEMAC needed to organise field operations to also address longer term impacts of contamination from ERW.⁵⁷ A work plan in Yemen IRG's 2022 APMBC Article 5 deadline extension request identified general areas of activity such as emergency response, survey, and risk education, but gave no details. It said it would update its plans every year or two.⁵⁸

The IRG Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in March 2022 identified the YBLS as key to understanding the extent, location, and type of all explosive ordnance hazards, and thus a priority, along with building the capacity and resources of the mine action sector for survey and clearance. The request emphasised flexibility, stating that its plans were a "living document" that would be subject to continuous review to adapt to changing circumstances.⁵⁹ Operators report YMACC has regular meetings that are well attended by YEMAC and implementing partners and frankly discuss operational issues.⁶⁰

International operators received the first task orders from YMACC in July 2020, marking a significant step forward for planning and coordination.⁶¹ UNDP has said YEMAC needed to finalise a review of its internal structure and clarify the division of responsibilities between YEMAC and YMACC in order to increase efficiency.⁶²

International operators said the process of issuing task orders had improved and in 2022 reported that it was functioning smoothly.⁶³ YMACC issues task orders in consultation with operators assigning tasks, mostly in districts where their NTS teams have previously worked. DRC said it then prioritises high-risk areas within the district.

However, operators also report that receipt of task orders does not ensure access to designated sites and local military or political groups require separate approvals or permissions. Access to the West Coast requires a specific movement permission which has to be renewed frequently. Renewals are subject to frequent delays and operators are sometimes denied access at checkpoints even when they possess the required authorisation.⁶⁴

Cumbersome and opaque bureaucracy particularly with regard to equipment imports and the issuance of visas have continued to pose an impediment to the progress of mine action. The government transferred responsibility for visas from MOPIC to the Ministry of Interior in October 2021 resulting in longer delays that continued into 2022, hampering plans for training and mentoring national staff. Movements between the South and the North also require permits which can take months to issue and applications often are denied or receive no response.⁶⁵

YEMAC has previously informed Mine Action Review that: "Yemen does not have any obstacles or delays in matters of importing equipment." It said delays experienced by some operators were due to their own administrative procedures, errors in their applications, or a lack of understanding of the required legal procedures.⁶⁶ The UN and international operators, however, document delays of a year or more in being able to bring in essential items such as detectors, PPE, and thermite which they say constitute the main challenge to expanding Yemen's capacity to address its explosive ordnance contamination. HALO took delivery of Minelab detectors in July 2022 after a wait of nearly two years.⁶⁷ Procedures for obtaining import authorisations are not consistent. Requests to import demining equipment also require multiple signatures from high-level officials and the absence of one official can result in long delays.⁶⁸

53 UNDP, Emergency Mine Action Project – Phase II, Annual Report for 2022, 15 February 2023, p. 10.

54 Emails from Christina Hendryx, DRC, 15 May 2023; and from Matthew Smith, HALO, 11 July 2023.

55 Email from the GICHD, 30 April 2020.

56 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, March 2022, p. 26.

57 UNDP, Emergency Mine Action Project – Phase II, Annual Report for 2022, 15 February 2023, p. 23.

58 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, March 2022, p. 27.

59 Ibid., p. 29.

60 Email from Christina Hendryx, DRC, 15 May 2023.

61 Emails from DRC, 25 March 2021; and Matthew Smith, Programme Manager, HALO, 17 May 2021.

62 UNDP, *Annual Report on Mine Action in Yemen 2021*, p. 20; Emergency Mine Action Project – Phase II, Annual Report for 2022, 15 February 2023, p. 9.

63 Emails from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022; and Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2022.

64 Email from Christina Hendryx, DRC, 15 May 2023.

65 Email from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022.

66 Email from Ameen Saleh Alaqili, YEMAC, 26 December 2021.

67 Emails from Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April and 15 September 2022.

68 UNDP, "Emergency Mine Action Project – Phase II, Annual Report for 2022", 15 February 2023, p. 6; emails from Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2022 and from Christina Hendryx, DRC, 15 May 2023.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Yemen is in the process of revising and updating its national mine action standards. The existing NMAS were based on the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) when they were drawn up in 2007. In 2019, YEMAC acknowledged that the standards were obsolete and said standard operating procedures (SOPs) based on the standards were not consistently applied by its clearance personnel.⁶⁹

YEMAC-IRG reported it has revised 31 chapters of NMAS, which were undergoing a final review and were expected to be approved and adopted before the end of 2023.⁷⁰ They include standards relating to land release and are said to be compliant with IMAS and the 2019 Oslo Action Plan.⁷¹ It told

the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties in November 2022 that it had started updating SOPs in March 2022, a process expected to last six to twelve months.⁷²

DRC said its local SOPs, which are based on its global SOPs but adapted for Yemen, were updated and approved in 2021. SOPs for non-technical survey were revised by the NTS manager and approved by the organisation's head office, while new clearance SOPs were introduced in January 2023.⁷³ HALO said it had developed new SOPs for NTS and had drafted SOPs for clearance that would be finalised after it had taken delivery of the new detectors.⁷⁴

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

YEMAC is nominally the biggest operator, previously employing some 400 personnel in YEMAC North and 550 personnel in YEMAC South, but both organisations lacked financing and it was unclear how many survey or clearance teams they deployed. Estimates of operational capacity in both the South and the North are further complicated by the reported presence of ghost deminers and by patchy reporting on the part of YEMAC team leaders.⁷⁵

YEMAC-IRG reported it deployed 30 manual clearance teams employing 256 personnel in 2022 and three battle area clearance (BAC)/EOD teams with an additional 29 personnel and 6 mine detection dog (MDD) teams. It also had 15 to 18 NTS teams with 72 staff, 7 technical survey (TS) teams with 45 personnel, 5 risk education teams and 3 quality management teams. YEMAC-IRG also seconded deminers to all the other implementing partners.⁷⁶ UNDP informed YEMAC-IRG in June 2023 that it would no longer fund mine action, leaving the future of YEMAC-IRG's operational capabilities in serious question.

YEMAC-DFA said it had four clearance platoons, three MDD groups working with thirty-six dogs, two NTS teams, five TS teams, and a mechanical clearance team as well as three risk education teams, a field monitoring team, and three quality management teams.⁷⁷ YEMAC-DFA did not specify the numbers of personnel involved and it was unclear how much of its capacity was active in 2022 or how operations were funded.

DRC employed a total of 36 people in 2022, including three BAC/EOD teams with nine people which were accredited in 2021 but unable to operate because of delays importing equipment but started conducting spot EOD tasks in September 2022. It also deployed five NTS teams conducting survey in Hodeida, Lahj, and Taiz. In 2023 DRC added a manual mine clearance team seconded from YEMAC-IRG.⁷⁸

HALO's total staff of 66 included two manual clearance teams, three multi-task teams, and three mechanical teams, along with four four-person NTS teams and a risk education/community liaison team. HALO added 24 operations personnel to its EOD and survey capacity in April 2022 and opened an office in Taiz from which it conducted NTS, EOD, and risk education. It started manual clearance operations in Aden in October 2022 and in Taiz in June 2023.⁷⁹

NPA employed a team of 12 in 2022, with equal numbers of international and national staff, mainly focused on supporting YEMAC-IRG plans to develop an MDD programme. YEMAC-IRG had purchased 12 dogs while NPA provided training for eight handlers and two team leaders as well as training on internal testing, accreditation reporting, and MDD quality management. From August 2022, NPA also managed four five-strong risk education teams seconded from YEMAC-IRG who conducted training in Al-Dhale, Hodeida, Marib, and Taiz governorates. NPA planned to widen operations in 2023 to include survey and clearance.⁸⁰

69 UNDP, "Emergency Mine Action Project, Annual Progress Report 2019", 20 January 2020, p. 17; and 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 16.

70 Email from Ameen Saleh Alaqili, YEMAC, 21 May 2023.

71 Email from Ameen Saleh Alaqili, YEMAC, 26 December 2021.

72 YEMAC-IRG, PowerPoint presentation, Twentieth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

73 Emails from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022; and Christina Hendryx, DRC, 15 May 2023.

74 Email from Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2022.

75 Interview with mine action stakeholders in Geneva, 23 June 2022.

76 Email from Ameen Saleh Alaqili, YEMAC, 21 May 2023.

77 Email from Ahmed Yahiya Alawi, YEMAC-DFA; and Article 7 Report (covering 1 April 2022–31 March 2023), Form L.

78 Email from Christina Hendryx, DRC, 15 May 2023.

79 Emails from Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April and 15 September 2022; and Matthew Smith, HALO, 11 July 2023.

80 Email from Faiz Mohammad Paktian, Programme Manager, NPA, 8 May 2023.

Project Masam, funded by Saudi Arabia's King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, reported in 2022 that it operated with 32 multi-task clearance teams and 320 national deminers. Project Masam did not provide updated data in 2023 but had reported deploying the same operating capacity since 2018. In addition, it had 264 staff in management, logistics, and operations. These included a total of 35 international staff, including 4 in management and logistics, 13 technical advisors/mentors, 4 medics, 8 security and communications staff, and 6 explosive detection dog (EDD) handlers.⁸¹ Project Masam said that it "trains, equips and supervises over 450 Yemeni nationals", including deminers, administration, logistics, and security support staff, supported by technical mentors. It operated with headquarters in Aden and Marib and deployed teams in Aden, Al-Jawf, Aldala'a, Hodeida, Marib, Shabwa, and Taiz.⁸² Saudi Arabia was reported in July 2021 to have extended its \$33.6 million contract with Project Masam and its implementing partner, SafeLane Global, by another year.⁸³

Table 2: Yemen-IRG operational clearance capacities deployed in 2022⁸⁴

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers	MDDs	Machines	Comments
YEMAC-IRG	30+3	256+29	12 dogs		30 manual mine clearance + 3 BAC/EOD teams; 15-18 TS teams with 72 personnel, and 7 NTS teams with 45 personnel.
DRC	3	12			BAC/EOD teams. Supported by 5 NTS/EORE teams with 15 personnel.
HALO	5	27		3 teams/16 personnel	2 manual clearance teams/12 deminers and 3 multi-task teams/15 personnel.
Project Masam	32	320	6 handlers/6 EDDs		
Totals	70+3	615+29	12 MDDs, 6 EDDs	3 Teams/16 Personnel	

DEMINER SAFETY

YEMAC-IRG reported 10 casualties, including five deaths, in the course of demining operations in 2022. It said the deminers involved were from YEMAC and Project Masam and were caused by AP mines and IEDs in Hodeida and Shabwah but did not provide further details.⁸⁵ The casualties in 2022 add to an already heavy toll in deminer deaths and injuries, particularly in Project Masam, which suffered 37 casualties between May 2018 and April 2020.⁸⁶ In 2021, Project Masam reported two more fatalities, one in a demining incident, the other attributed to a security incident resulting from operating in a war zone. Three other personnel were injured in demining incidents. Project Masam said all incidents were investigated internally and by YEMAC.⁸⁷

Insecurity poses a constraint on field deployments by all operators. A fragile ceasefire that started in April 2022 has eased the level of IRG-DFA hostilities but insecurity persists at a local level controlled by numerous political, military and tribal actors and criminal interests, limiting the space where operators are able to deploy.⁸⁸

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

Mine action in Yemen continued to focus on emergency clearance of explosive ordnance threats of all types rather than systematic area clearance or release of mined land, reflecting the challenges posed by years of war, constantly shifting frontlines, re-mining of cleared land, and scattered use of improvised devices by military as well as criminal groups. Clearance of significant quantities of explosive ordnance is reported in both DFA- and IRG-controlled areas but a lack of transparency, coupled with the absence of consistent standards and basic data, prevents a clear determination of progress.

81 Email from Ousama Algosaibi, Project Masam, 29 May 2022.

82 Project Masam website, "Where we work", at: <https://bit.ly/3LOUoQy>, accessed 27 April 2022.

83 "Saudi Arabia extends mine clearing contract in Yemen", *Arab News*, 21 July 2021.

84 Emails from Ameen Saleh Alaqili, YEMAC, 21 May 2023; Christina Hendryx, DRC, 15 May 2023; Matthew Smith, HALO, 11 July 2023; and from Ousama Algosaibi, Project Masam, 29 May 2022.

85 Email from Ameen Saleh Alaqili, YEMAC-IRG, 21 May 2023.

86 Project Masam reported 37 casualties between May 2018 and April 2020: 21 killed and 16 injured.

87 Email from Ousama Algosaibi, Project Masam, 29 May 2022.

88 Emails from Christina Hendryx, DRC, 15 May 2023; and Matthew Smith, HALO, 11 July 2023.

YEMAC-IRG reported release of 1.83km² through area reduction and clearance recorded in the IMSMA database in 2022 resulting in the destruction of 23 AP mines but it also said “emergency response” resulted in clearance of nearly 17.84km² and 2,189 AP mines among 137,502 items of explosive ordnance destroyed in 2022.⁸⁹ YEMAC-DFA said it “completed survey and clearance” of 27 SHAs in three governorates covering 47.5km² in the 12 months to 31 March 2023. In the same period, it said it destroyed 239 AP mines, 2,355 AV mines and 14,985 items of UXO.⁹⁰

Mine Action Review has conservatively estimated mine clearance of 2km² for the whole of Yemen during 2022, with the destruction of 1,678 AP mines.

SURVEY IN 2022

The focus of survey in Yemen is on determining the extent and type of contamination through the YBLS, which started in June 2021, rather than releasing land through cancellation or reduction. In 2022, YEMAC-IRG recorded 624 non-technical surveys conducted in 20 districts of 6 governorates, identifying CHAs and SHAs totalling 52km², but did not identify results by operator. International NGOs reported identifying 8.7km² of hazardous area by NTS in 2022 (see Table 3).⁹¹

Table 3: NTS results by INGOs in 2022

Operator	Survey area	Area confirmed (m ²)
DRC	Hodeida, Lahj, Taiz	5,402,049
HALO	Abyan, Lahj, Taiz	3,291,628
Total		8,693,677

YEMAC-IRG also recorded reduction by technical survey of 757,845m² in five governorates, mainly Lahj and Taiz, but did not identify which operator carried out the reduction.⁹²

CLEARANCE IN 2022

Mine Action Review has conservatively estimated mine clearance of 2km² for the whole of Yemen during 2022, with the destruction of 1,678 AP mines. Project Masam, with 32 manual clearance teams, and YEMAC-IRG, deploying up to 30 demining teams, appear to have been the only operators conducting clearance in the south in 2022 but YEMAC did not provide comprehensive data. YEMAC-IRG reported clearance of 1.1km² in 2022 entered in the database (see Table 4) but did not specify which organisation conducted it.⁹³

Table 4: AP mine clearance in Yemen-IRG in 2022⁹⁴

Administrative subdivision	Mined areas	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	Other explosive items destroyed
Abyan	5	878,426	1	159
Aden	7	67,042	0	25
Al-Dhale	8	15,731	11	2
Lahj	5	18,750	4	24
Shabwah	2	24,102	0	220
Taiz	10	70,748	7	71
Totals	37	1,074,799	23	501

In addition, YEMAC-IRG reported “emergency” clearance of 17,837,317m². It said Project Masam cleared 12,998,396m², destroying 1,652 AP mines, 32,506 AV mines, 1,404 improvised explosive devices, and 41,194 items of UXO.⁹⁵

YEMAC-DFA said it “completed survey and clearance” of 27 SHAs in three governorates covering 47.5km² in the 12 months to 31 March 2023. In the same period, it said it destroyed 239 AP mines, 2,355 AV mines and 14,985 items of UXO.⁹⁶

89 Email from Ameen Saleh Alaqili, YEMAC-IRG, 21 May 2023; Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

90 Email from Ahmed Yahiya Alawi, YEMAC-DFA, 18 April 2023; DFA Article 7 Report (covering 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023), Form J. The three governorates were Al-Baida, Hodeida, and Sana'a.

91 Emails from Christina Hendryx, DRC, 15 May 2023; and Matthew Smith, HALO, 11 July 2023.

92 Email from Ameen Saleh Alaqili, Director, YEMAC-IRG, 21 May 2023.

93 Ibid.

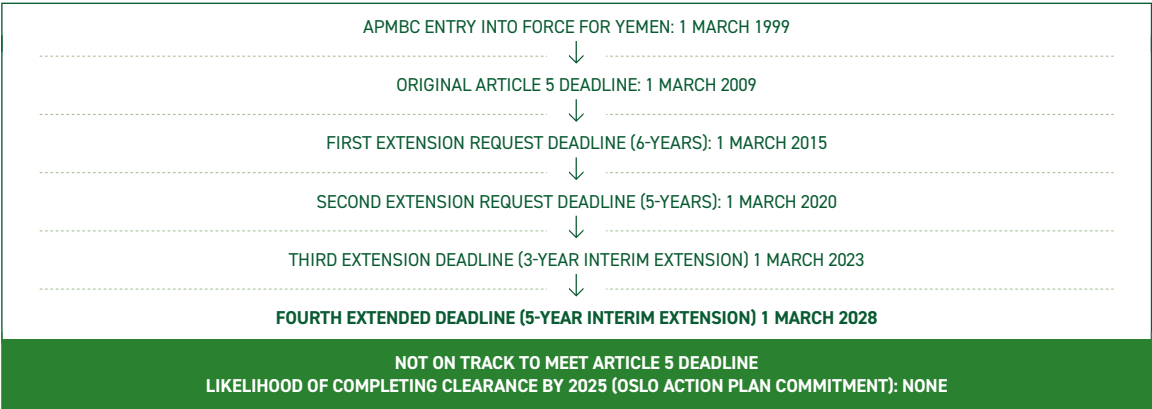
94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 Email from Ahmed Yahiya Alawi, YEMAC-DFA, 18 April 2023; DFA Article 7 Report (covering 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023), Form J. The three governorates were Al-Baida, Hodeida, and Sana'a.

Operations by international NGOs DRC and HALO have been constrained by delays importing equipment but are expanding operations beyond survey to clearance. DRC received its first manual mine clearance task in 2023 focused on school clearance and expected to work mainly in areas where it has safe access and the reports of its NTS operations. HALO expected to increase its NTS in Aden, Lahj, and Taiz in 2023 but also to deploy mechanical clearance assets in a number of locations.⁹⁷

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the fourth extension, for five years, granted by States Parties in 2022), Yemen is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 March 2023.

Prospects for significant progress in survey or clearance during the extension period are unclear. In 2020, Yemen's IRG requested a three-year Article 5 deadline extension so as to provide time for developing a baseline of mine contamination that would serve as a basis for long-term planning. The 2022 extension request stated as a "startling" fact that it is asking for five years to do what it had set out to do in the previous extension period, namely, to establish a baseline estimate of mine contamination and is, in effect, another interim request.⁹⁸ Three years on, a baseline survey is making progress but a comprehensive estimate of contamination remains elusive. A reliable estimate of the extent of contamination in the DFA-controlled north is also lacking. YEMAC-DFA reports conducting extensive survey but does not appear to be applying standards consistent with IMAS on NTS potentially burdening Yemen's mine action programme with hugely inflated estimates of contamination.

Mine action, meanwhile, remains highly vulnerable to security, political and financial risks. Hostilities between the Saudi-backed coalition and Houthi authorities have eased amid continuing talks on a permanent ceasefire but intermittent fighting has continued in Taiz, Marib, Al-Dhale, Hodeida, Shabwa, and Saada, extremist activity is reportedly on the rise in Abyan and Shabwah governorates⁹⁹ and numerous other tribal and armed groups exercise authority or control access at a local level.¹⁰⁰ Authorities in Sana'a have engaged more on mine action cooperation with international organisations and operators but as at August 2023 had not followed through to allow operations by international demining NGOs or create a mine action coordination centre.

Abrupt termination of financial support through UNDP with effect from the end of June 2023 reflected dwindling donor confidence in supporting the programme but put a brake on the activities of several hundred YEMAC deminers, a major part of available survey and clearance capacity. The UN has proposed continued funding of around 15 key positions in each of the YEMACs and donor funding provided bilaterally to demining operators but has yet to provide clarity on a future framework or mechanism for support to mine action in IRG or DFA areas.¹⁰¹

97 Emails from Christina Hendryx, DRC, 15 May 2023; and Matthew Smith, HALO, 11 July 2023.

98 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 3.

99 Statement of UN Special Envoy Hans Grunberg to the UN Security Council, New York, 16 August 2023.

100 Emails from Christina Hendryx, DRC, 15 May 2023; and Matthew Smith, HALO, 11 July 2023.

101 Interview with Patrick Fruchet, UN Adviser, Geneva, 21 June 2023.

Table 5: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance (Mine Action Review estimates)

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	2.0
2021	1.5
2020	1.0
2019	1.0
2018	0.1
Total	5.6

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Yemen's mine action programme does not have plans in place to address any previously unknown mined areas discovered following completion (i.e. residual contamination).

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2025
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM**

NATIONAL AUTHORITY ESTIMATE

18.30_{km²}

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

2.13_{km²}

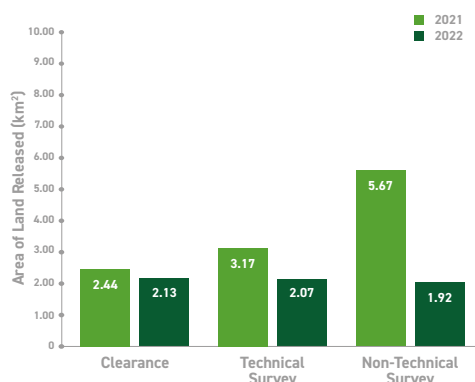
(NATIONAL AUTHORITY DATA)

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

31,178

(INCLUDING 74 DESTROYED
IN SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

All mined areas remaining in Zimbabwe are now confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs). The challenge for Zimbabwe in meeting its Article 5 deadline under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) remains securing the requisite funding from donors in a country with significant competing social and economic challenges. Zimbabwe launched its reviewed National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2018–2025 and a Communications and Resource Mobilisation Strategy in January 2023, seeking to address this challenge. In 2022, Zimbabwe made significant changes to procedures for “missed-mine drills” (executed where gaps in the pattern minefield are found), which have considerably increased efficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The Zimbabwe Mine Action Centre (ZIMAC) should continue to prioritise efforts to secure additional national and international funding to meet its 2025 clearance completion deadline.
- Zimbabwe should elaborate a gender and diversity policy and an implementation plan for the mine action programme.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	8	8	Zimbabwe has a good understanding of remaining mine contamination with only CHAs remaining. In 2021, ZIMAC estimated that only about 11km ² of land was actually contaminated with anti-personnel (AP) mines and that other mined area in the national database (more than 20km ²) could be released through survey. That said, the amount of previously unknown contamination added to the database doubled in 2022 compared to 2021, as a result of survey.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	8	8	The mine action programme is managed effectively by ZIMAC, with good consultation and collaboration with partners. There is a high degree of national ownership with the government continuing to provide US\$500,000 annually to the mine action programme despite increasing financial hardship in the country. ZIMAC's Communication and Resource Mobilisation Strategy was launched in January 2023, following delays since 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. An updated National Strategy for 2018–2025 was launched at the same time.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	6	6	ZIMAC does not have a gender and diversity policy and implementation plan and did not develop a policy by the end of 2022 as was its stated intention. However, the importance of gender is acknowledged in the National Mine Action Strategy and integrated into annual work plans. Survey and community liaison teams are reportedly inclusive and gender-balanced both in their make-up and during community consultations. Operators report varying proportions of women employed. The Zimbabwean Armed Forces' National Mine Clearance Unit (NMCU) has no women in operational roles.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	8	8	ZIMAC continued to improve its information management in 2022. Zimbabwe submits detailed Article 7 reports annually. Regular cross-checking of data with operators continues. Data collection forms are consistent and enable efficient collection of necessary data.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	8	8	Zimbabwe's National Mine Action Strategy for 2018–25 was reviewed in late 2022 with the support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). It was re-launched in January 2023 following delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, Zimbabwe fell only slightly short of its annual land release target for the year set out in its multiyear work plan, due to some capacity challenges. In its latest Article 7 report ZIMAC presented revised annual land release targets to 2025 and identified the resources, time, and funding needed to complete clearance.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	8	8	Zimbabwe maintained approximately the same overall capacity across operators in 2022 compared to 2021, with an increased number of mechanical assets. These, alongside use of mine detection dogs (MDDs), has increased efficiency in recent years. Through the trialling and accreditation of a new detector, significant improvement was made in the efficiency of missed-mine drills, when gaps in the mine pattern are found. Operators continue to destroy tens of thousands of AP mines annually, with the national programme clearing the greatest number of mines cleared per square kilometre.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	9	9	Zimbabwe released 6.12km ² of mined area in 2022, mostly from clearance, closely followed by technical survey, with the lowest proportion from non-technical survey. Zimbabwe's clearance output, at 2.13km ² , was marginally less than in 2021, due to capacity challenges. Zimbabwe will need to secure additional funding and increase capacity without delay, if it is to meet its land release targets and meet its Article 5 deadline of end 2025. This would be a considerable achievement for one of the world's most heavily mined countries in a particularly challenging political and economic context. However, based on current capacity Zimbabwe is not on track to meet its Article 5 deadline and will need to request a further extension.
Average Score	8.0	8.0	Overall Programme Performance: VERY GOOD

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- National Mine Action Authority of Zimbabwe (NMAAZ)
- Zimbabwe Mine Action Centre (ZIMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Zimbabwean Armed Forces' National Mine Clearance Unit (NMCU)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- APOPO
- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Five of Zimbabwe's ten provinces are contaminated with anti-personnel (AP) mines. As at the end of 2022, Zimbabwe reported a total of just over 18.3km² of confirmed mined area remaining (see Table 1). This is a decrease from the 23.5km² reported at the end of 2021. Six of the remaining minefields stretch along the borders with Mozambique, covering four provinces, while one is inland in Matabeleland North province.¹

According to the Zimbabwe Mine Action Centre (ZIMAC), the baseline of contamination is complete following the completion of significant re-survey in 2016.² The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) believes that Zimbabwe's understanding of remaining contamination is up to date and accurate.³ Similarly, in 2021, the Committee on Article 5 Implementation noted Zimbabwe's "high degree of clarity" on its remaining contamination.⁴

All contaminated areas remaining in Zimbabwe are confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs), albeit which are, in general, very widely drawn. That said, ZIMAC believes that the true mined area is less than half of that in its official estimate. Indeed, as ZIMAC told Mine Action Review in August 2021, of the total confirmed mined area, only some 11km² is thought to be actually contaminated, with considerable area between mine lines that can be released through survey.⁵ A total of 113 CHAs remained at the end of 2022.⁶

Table 1: AP mined area (at end 2022)⁷

Province	CHAs	Area (m ²)
Mashonaland Central	28	3,316,781
Mashonaland East	45	9,288,889
Matabeleland North	7	904,487
Masvingo	18	1,566,052
Manicaland	15	3,226,519
Totals	113	18,302,728

Zimbabwe's mine contamination, the overwhelming majority of which is of AP mines, originates from the laying of minefields in the late 1970s during a decolonisation war. At the time of its independence in 1980, Zimbabwe was left with seven major mined areas along its borders with Mozambique and Zambia, and one inland minefield laid by the Rhodesian Army.⁸ Initially, AP mines were laid in very dense belts (on average 2,500 mines per kilometre of frontage) to form a so-called "cordon sanitaire", with up to 5,500 mines per kilometre in some places.⁹ Over time, this cordon sanitaire was breached or subject to erosion. In response, in many sections, a second belt of "ploughshare" directional fragmentation mines protected by AP mines was laid behind the cordon sanitaire. Few areas contain anti-vehicle (AV) mines and it is thought that the number of such mines remaining is low.¹⁰

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The National Mine Action Authority of Zimbabwe (NAMAAZ) is a policy and regulatory body on all issues relating to mine action in Zimbabwe. ZIMAC was established in 2000 within the Ministry of Defence (MoD) as the focal point and coordination centre of all mine action in the country. ZIMAC is mandated to report to NAMAAZ.¹¹ In August 2019, ZIMAC's office relocated outside of a military cantonment allowing access to civilian operators.¹²

1 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), pp. 2-3.
2 Email from (then) Capt. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 6 April 2020.
3 Email from Åsa Massleberg, Programme Manager and Senior Advisor, GICHD, 16 May 2023.
4 Preliminary Observations, Committee on Article 5 Implementation, APBMC Intersessional Meetings, 19-21 June 2023, Geneva, p. 1.
5 Email from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 19 August 2021.
6 Email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, Operations Officer, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.
7 Ibid.; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), pp. 6-7.
8 2013 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Executive Summary, p. 1; and email from (then) Capt. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 10 October 2017.
9 "To Walk the Earth in Safety, Documenting the United States' Commitment to Conventional Weapons Destruction, Fiscal Year 2022, October 1, 2021-September 30, 2022", p. 10.
10 Email from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 19 August 2021.
11 2013 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7.
12 Email from (then) Capt. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 6 April 2020.

There is no national legislation specific to mine action in Zimbabwe. However, in its Article 7 Report covering 2020, Zimbabwe set out clear national implementation measures including; the aforementioned relocation of ZIMAC to a location outside of the military cantonment, to allow access by all mine action stakeholders; allocation of government resources to the Zimbabwean Armed Forces' National Mine Clearance Unit (NMCU); efforts to include mine action in national development priorities; and linking of mine action to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).¹³

While there is no national forum for convening relevant stakeholders on a regular basis to discuss challenges, progress, and support for Article 5 implementation, some stakeholders have commented that the existing structure and routines of coordination meetings suffice.¹⁴ ZIMAC holds quarterly coordination meetings with all stakeholders and operators also report being closely involved in decision-making processes by the national authority.¹⁵ Communication between ZIMAC and NAMAAG, operators, and other Zimbabwean government ministries is reported to be good with regular bilateral meetings.¹⁶ To date, donors have not attended quarterly coordination meetings, but ZIMAC is seeking to improve coordination with donors,¹⁷ with the launch of the updated Communications and Resource Mobilisation Strategy in January 2023 cited as a positive step towards this.¹⁸

A National Stakeholder Dialogue workshop took place in Harare in January 2023, supported by the APMBC Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and attended by government ministries, demining operators, donors, and other stakeholders. It has not, so far, resulted in any additional commitment of funding beyond that secured prior to the meeting.¹⁹ The possibility of establishing a National Mine Action Platform (NMAP) in Zimbabwe continues to be discussed but had not been agreed as at June 2023, although ZIMAC states that "progress is being made".²⁰

Operators report an enabling environment for mine action in Zimbabwe as well as co-operative and productive working relationships between operators and ZIMAC.²¹ Demining equipment can be important without significant

complications²² and administrative support in liaising with government departments from ZIMAC is generally good.²³ However, operators also identify areas for practical improvement. Some have noted that, while ZIMAC does its best to assist and provides long-term memorandums of understanding (MoUs), the approval processes for international visas for staff and visitors can be very slow.²⁴

Security Clearance is the responsibility of the NAMAAG, which seeks authority through the defence and national security departments. ZIMAC's role is to follow up on this process with NAMAAG on behalf of the operators. Steps have been taken to speed up the process. ZIMAC has requested that all operators submit a visitor's schedule to them at the beginning of the year, with all required documentation. Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) notes that ZIMAC is supporting operators with such operational and programme challenges.²⁵ However, while acknowledging some improvement in 2022, Mines Advisory Group (MAG) notes that, as 2023 is an election year in Zimbabwe, this could exacerbate delays with security clearance. At times, such delays have presented challenges to effective mine action, such as making it impractical for international instructors to conduct field training.²⁶ On another administrative matter, The HALO Trust (HALO) notes that the *de facto* process for securing import fee waivers remains unclear.²⁷

The Government of Zimbabwe continues to fund mine action in line with previous commitments. According to ZIMAC's Article 7 Report covering 2022, a total of \$39.55 million, or \$13.2 million per year during 2023–25, is required by the mine action programme to meet its extended Article 5 deadline by 2025.²⁸ In 2022, the government provided US\$250,000 to cover the cost of the national mine action centre and US\$1,000,000 for survey and/or clearance of AP mined area,²⁹ an increase on the funding it provided in 2021, when the government provided US\$100,000 to cover the cost of the national mine action centre and US\$400,000 for survey and/or clearance of AP mined area.³⁰

Securing additional funding will be critical to ensuring that Zimbabwe can reach completion by 2025. In January 2023, Zimbabwe was finally able to go ahead with the launch of its updated Communications and Resource Mobilisation

13 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), pp. 1–2.

14 Emails from Mikael Bold, Programme Manager, APOPO, Zimbabwe; and Åsa Massleberg, GICHD, 16 May 2023.

15 Emails from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023; and Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023; Nicholas Torbet, Programme Manager, Zimbabwe, HALO, 19 April 2023; Peter Avenell, Country Director, Zimbabwe, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), 24 March 2023; and Gemma Welsh, Programme Manager, Zimbabwe, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), 19 April 2023.

16 Email from Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April 2023.

17 Email from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June 2022 and interview with Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, in Geneva, 24 June 2022.

18 Email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

19 Email from Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March 2023.

20 Email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

21 Emails from Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023; Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023; Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March 2023; and Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April 2023.

22 Email from Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April 2023.

23 Email from Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

24 Emails from Samuel Fricker, HALO, 17 April 2020; and Peter Avenell, MAG, 20 May 2020.

25 Email from Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April 2023.

26 Email from Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March 2023.

27 Email from Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

28 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Annex A, Zimbabwe's Revised Mine Action Work Plan for 2022–2025, p. A-22.

29 Email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

30 Email from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), p. 12.

Strategy,³¹ previously delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.³² In October 2022, the GICHD facilitated a strategy stakeholder workshop, attended by ZIMAC, Ministry of Public Service, Labour & Social Welfare (MoPLSW), NMCU and operators, to review and update the Communications and Resource Mobilisation strategy, initially drafted to cover 2019–25, and identify the funding gaps and required resources to meet the end-2025 Article 5 deadline.³³

The GICHD also supported the mid-term review of Zimbabwe's National Mine Action Strategy through a stakeholder workshop in November 2021,³⁴ with the updated strategy launched alongside the Communications and Resource Mobilisation Strategy.³⁵ The strategy sets out clear objectives, baselines, indicators, and targets for four strategic mine action goals around survey and clearance, explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), victim assistance and advocacy and communication.³⁶

In 2022, ZIMAC continued to receive capacity development support, including strategic planning support, from the

GICHD.³⁷ The GICHD also provided some support on information management and International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) in 2022.³⁸ HALO conducted a three week operations management training workshop, attended by operations managers from ZIMAC and the NMCU.³⁹ Technical Working group meetings, which focus on technical challenges, were launched on a quarterly basis in late 2021. Participants are operations management personnel.⁴⁰

One challenge for Zimbabwe's mine action programme is to plan for the effective demobilisation of the several hundred local operational staff working in the mine action sector once Zimbabwe reaches completion.⁴¹ NGO operators have begun to seek solutions. APOPO,⁴² for example, plans to provide training to all staff towards late 2025 in areas such as English language skills, computer literacy, and syntropic farming (an innovative approach to regenerative agriculture).⁴³ All stakeholders will need to address these challenges in a country facing high unemployment and economic instability as Zimbabwe's clearance programme nears completion.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

All mine action activities in Zimbabwe are conducted in line with the Zimbabwe Environmental Agency (EMA) regulations and requirements.⁴⁴ Zimbabwe also has a national mine action standard (NMAS) on environmental management and a policy on environmental management.⁴⁵ NMAS 10.07 covers "Safety and Occupational Health and Protection of the Environment". This standard provides operational guidance on air, water, and soil pollution; reduction and disposal of waste, especially toxic and hazardous waste; obstruction of watercourses; burning of vegetation; environmental considerations at worksites and temporary accommodation facilities, as well as at fuel, oil and lubricant areas and maintenance areas. It also covers reduction of energy consumption and carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and environmental considerations related to use of land and risk to heritage.⁴⁶

Awareness of Zimbabwe's NMAS on environmental management varies among operators.⁴⁷ In terms of good

practice, ZIMAC outlines how the use of highly destructive mechanical clearance methods is not permitted in areas with very large trees. Manual clearance only is used in such areas, with back-filling of soil undertaken soon after clearance.⁴⁸

All operators take measures to reduce the environmental impact of demining operations, but vary in the degree to which they have environmental policies and management systems in place. APOPO has an environmental policy and an environmental action plan for 2021–25. APOPO's environmental management procedures are outlined in their standard operating procedure (SOP) on Safety And Occupational Health. This was approved by ZIMAC in 2021 and will be updated during 2023, in line with Zimbabwe's review of relevant NMAS chapters against updates in the IMAS.⁴⁹ During planning and tasking for survey and clearance, APOPO adheres to the following practices to minimise potential environmental harm:

31 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), p. 17 and Annex A, pp. A-21.

32 Emails from Capt. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 6 April 2020; and (as Major) 27 April 2021 and 2 June 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Annex A, Zimbabwe's Revised Mine Action Work Plan for 2022–2025, p. A-19.

33 Email from Åsa Massleberg, GICHD, 16 May 2023.

34 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Annex A, p. A1; and email from Åsa Massleberg, GICHD, 17 August 2023.

35 Ibid., Annex A, pp. A20–A21.

36 Zimbabwe, National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2018–2025, Reviewed Version, pp. 18–27.

37 Emails from Åsa Massleberg, GICHD, 8 July 2022 and 16 May 2023.

38 Email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

39 Email from Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

40 Email from Samuel Fricker, HALO, 30 May 2022.

41 MAG presentation, "Demobilisation Discussion Points", National Stakeholder Dialogue on Humanitarian Demining: For a Mine-Free Zimbabwe by 2025, Harare, 26 January 2023.

42 APOPO stands for Anti-Persoonsmijnen Ontmijnende Product Ontwikkeling, which translates into English as 'Anti-Personnel Mines Demining Product Development'. APOPO is a Belgian non-governmental organisation (NGO).

43 Email from Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023.

44 Email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

45 Email from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June 2022.

46 Zimbabwe National Mine Action Standards 10.07, First edition (February 2013), Safety and Occupational Health. Protection of the Environment.

47 Emails from Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March 2023; Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023; Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023; and Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April 2023.

48 Email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

49 Email from Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023.

- All excavation holes and detonation craters are refilled after external quality control (QC).
- Measures are in place to prevent wildfires during demolitions.
- Unnecessary cutting down of trees is avoided.
- Rubbish pits and latrines are dug to prevent environmental contamination.
- Processed soil is returned to the affected site (e.g., after soil removal in missed-mine drills).
- Temporary latrine holes are dug at every control point and filled in once the control point is no longer in use.
- Gas is used instead of firewood or charcoal at camps.⁵⁰

APOPO is also engaged in establishing “food forests” through syntropic agroforestry, including through a pilot project in Zimbabwe, with the aims of increasing food yield per acre, regenerating soil, restoring eco-systems, minimising the need for irrigation, and maximizing climate resilience for crops.⁵¹ In April 2023, APOPO began recording all known carbon footprint data in order to establish a baseline. It also plans to focus on the environment and climate change during 2023, to increase its organisational contribution to the UN SDGs.⁵²

HALO has global policies and SOPs on environmental management. The selection of manual versus mechanical teams to conduct clearance is the primary environmental consideration during planning and tasking, weighing the impact of the more environmentally intrusive mechanical clearance against the operational benefits or need. HALO also aims to situate field camps in areas that will not impact the local environment, and place camps as close to minefields as possible to minimise travel times, and thus vehicle emissions. Waste generation and disposal at camps are

closely monitored and HALO field camps have been run on solar power since 2016. In 2022, HALO began trials of electric vegetation trimmers, with the eventual aim of fully replacing the existing petrol fleet.⁵³

MAG does not have an environmental management system in place.⁵⁴ However, MAG operations follow IMAS (07.13) and take into account the need for vegetation and ground preparation, measures to avoid soil erosion and pollution, and management of deminer worksites to ensure proper disposal of waste.⁵⁵ In 2022, MAG also continued use of solar power for all field activities, including charging of batteries for detectors.⁵⁶

NPA has an environmental management system in place, including an environmental policy and environmental SOP, which it updated in 2021. These updates to regulations were intended to “prevent or mitigate all significant harmful effects of demining camps and operations to an acceptable level”, for example prohibiting the major servicing of vehicles and bulk storage of liquids at work sites. Detailed instructions on the disposal of waste fuel and lubricants are also incorporated into NPA’s environmental regulations. To protect vegetation, NPA cuts shrubby vegetation at ground level to allow the swinging of detectors, but only cuts trees if they present an obstruction to the use of the detector to confirm a hazard in the safe lane.⁵⁷ As at April 2023, NPA was in the process of rolling out an environmental management and assessment tool. Furthermore, in line with Zimbabwe’s National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025, NPA is committed to recognising and promoting linkages between the SDGs and mine action and facilitating the development of safe land in rural communities in a way that supports the fulfilment of the SDGs.⁵⁸

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

ZIMAC had pledged to seek assistance from international stakeholders to formulate a gender and diversity policy by the end of 2022,⁵⁹ although, as at June 2023, Zimbabwe did not have one in place. However, in its latest Article 7 report covering 2022, as per its previous Article 7 report, Zimbabwe stresses that it is bound by national policy, which upholds gender equality

⁵⁰ Emails from John Sorbo, APOPO, 20 June and 16 August 2022; and Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023.

⁵¹ APOPO presentation, National Stakeholder Dialogue on Humanitarian Demining: For a Mine-Free Zimbabwe by 2025, Harare, 24 January 2023.

⁵² Email from Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023.

⁵³ Emails from Samuel Fricker, HALO, 30 May and 14 August 2022; and Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

⁵⁴ Email from Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March 2023.

⁵⁵ Email from Roxana Bobolicu, MAG, 29 September 2022.

⁵⁶ Email from Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March 2023.

⁵⁷ Emails from Gemma Walsh, NPA, 2 June and 8 July 2022 and 19 April 2023.

⁵⁸ Email from Gemma Walsh, NPA, 19 April 2023.

⁵⁹ Email from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June 2022.

of opportunity and seeks to support women to take on roles which have been male-dominated. Zimbabwe asserts that no barriers exist to gender-balanced participation in mine action.⁶⁰

Table 2: Gender composition of mine action operators in 2022⁶¹

Organisation	Total staff	Total women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Total women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Total women in operational positions
ZIMAC	13	3	4	0	4	1
APOPO	90	29	23	7	73	23
HALO	379	105	69	13	290	76
MAG	65	24	11	4	54	20
NPA	114	31	7	2	99	24

Zimbabwe's National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 does refer to the importance of addressing gender and diversity considerations and existing guidelines that stakeholders should use as a reference, including the UN's Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes.⁶² Zimbabwe has also included gender considerations in the NMAS: NMAS 07 ("Management of Demining Operations") requires that "special efforts should be made to ensure gender balance and diversity of background for Community Liaison Officers".⁶³ The GICHD confirms that gender and diversity are integrated into Zimbabwe's national mine action strategy and annual work plans and are highlighted in a specific section that includes references to Zimbabwe's constitution and an explicit commitment from the government to take into consideration relevant gender and diversity issues.⁶⁴

With regard to equal access to employment specifically, ZIMAC highlights that it is a small entity and therefore has limited opportunity to fill positions with female candidates.⁶⁵ That said, in 2022, 23% of its employees were women, compared to only 15% in 2021. As per the previous year, no women were employed in managerial or supervisory positions. However, one woman was employed in an operational position, where none had been in 2021.⁶⁶ ZIMAC has also found community liaison to be effective in encouraging more women to join mine action, with all operators now employing considerable numbers of female deminers, team leaders, and supervisors.⁶⁷ This represents progress since 2020, when ZIMAC stated that the number of women employed in mine action fell short of "required" levels

and noted that Zimbabwean women were somewhat reluctant to work in mine action.⁶⁸

No women are employed in operational roles in the NMCU because staff are recruited from the corps of military engineers, where very few women are working. NMCU deminers are drawn exclusively from soldiers and are therefore all male.⁶⁹

ZIMAC reports that international operators working in Zimbabwe are encouraged to prioritise recruitment also of people from communities living adjacent to the mine-affected areas. In 2022, for example, APOPO prioritised recruitment of local youths from Ward 15 of the Chiredzi South District, close to the Gonarezhou national park and border with Mozambique, where APOPO is undertaking clearance. Hiring local youths reduced cases of poaching and illegal immigration in search of employment and has been received very positively by community leaders.⁷⁰

ZIMAC confirms that all community groups are routinely consulted in the NMCU's survey and community liaison activities, with efforts undertaken to ensure that all age and gender groups are consulted. Survey and community liaison teams are gender-balanced and diverse, with personnel recruited locally from affected areas to incorporate ethnic and minority groups who speak the language of the community. Demining and community liaison teams also include some women as leaders. Community liaison teams meet children of all age groups during visits to schools.⁷¹ All mine action data are disaggregated by sex and age.⁷²

60 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Annex A, p. A-1 and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Annex A, p. A-1.

61 Emails from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023; Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023; Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023; Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March 2023; and Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April 2023.

62 Email from Tom Dibb, HALO, 22 February 2018; and Zimbabwe National Mine Action Strategy, 2018–2025, Reviewed Version, p. 15.

63 Email from Samuel Fricker, HALO, 20 July 2019.

64 Emails from Åsa Massleberg, GICHD, 8 July 2022 and 16 May 2023.

65 Emails from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

66 Emails from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 27 April 2021 and 2 June 2022; and interview in Geneva, 24 June 2022; and email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

67 Email from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June 2022.

68 Emails from (then) Capt. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 31 July 2019 and 6 April 2020.

69 Email from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, 23 August 2022.

70 Email from John Sorbo, APOPO, 16 August 2022.

71 Emails from Capt. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 31 July 2019 and 6 April 2020, and (as Major) 2 June 2022.

72 Article 7 Report, Annex A, p. A-1; and email from Åsa Massleberg, GICHD, 8 July 2022.

ZIMAC reports that gender is taken into account during the planning and prioritisation of minefields for clearance, such as consideration of the risks taken usually by women and girls to cross minefields to fetch water and that of men and boys who often herd cattle or plough near mined areas.⁷³ However, given the nature of the minefields, which are essentially one long and continuous line, operational access constraints often dictate clearance priorities as much as other factors.⁷⁴ At the same time, according to HALO, post-clearance surveys reflect the gendered impact of clearance. Women and children are often the major beneficiaries of clearance, as they are responsible for more than 80% of water collection, with clearance providing safer and more direct access to water sources.⁷⁵ ZIMAC also highlights the particular vulnerability of women and girls and stresses that this is taken into account in the planning and prioritisation of tasks.⁷⁶

All international operators in Zimbabwe have gender policies in place for their programme staff⁷⁷ and demonstrate continued commitment to measures that encourage and support employment of women in mine action as well as the integration of gender and diversity concerns and the needs of affected communities into their operations.

HALO has an up-to-date gender and diversity policy and implementation plan and continues to disaggregate relevant mine action data by sex and age. During 2022 and 2023, HALO has recruited teachers to teach all field staff the English Language, availing both male and female staff of the opportunity to advance their education. HALO also made available a stipend to support female staff to obtain or upgrade their drivers licences.⁷⁸ These efforts build on those made in 2021 and early 2022 to maintain the availability of allowances for female staff to help cover the costs of childcare; continue the provision of a female nurse, who rotates through HALO's operations camps; and to hire both a female Safeguarding and Staff Wellness officer and female Community Liaison Manager.⁷⁹

In 2022, 28% of HALO's employees in Zimbabwe were women, an increase on the 24% of 2021. 19% of managerial/supervisory positions were occupied by women as well as 26% of operational positions; both slight increases on 2021 figures, which were 14% and 24% respectively.⁸⁰

NPA confirms that their recruitment process is guided by its gender equality policy, as well as its Code of Conduct and safeguarding policies, which aim to provide a secure

environment for both female and male staff and beneficiaries. NPA has a global target of a minimum of 25% female mine action staff, with representation in operational and management roles. Updates were made to NPA's gender and diversity policy and implementation plan in 2022 and NPA plans to conduct a Gender and Diversity Baseline Analysis and Assessment in Zimbabwe (to be updated on an annual basis), which will form the basis for annual gender implementation plans. NPA also plans to train all NPA programme staff in use of Rapid Gender Assessment tools.⁸¹

In 2022, 27% of all staff in NPA in Zimbabwe were women, representing an increase on 24% in 2021. Women filled 29% of managerial/supervisory positions, a decrease on the 40% of 2021. 24% of operational positions were filled by women, again a decrease on the 31% of 2021.⁸² NPA states that it works to ensure its survey and community liaison teams are inclusive and gender balanced, and to facilitate access and participation by all groups. Such efforts include gender-sensitive contextual analysis in each context relevant to the programme.⁸³

MAG has a global gender and diversity policy and implementation plan, which it adheres to in its Zimbabwe operations. MAG also disaggregates relevant mine action data by sex and age.⁸⁴ The organisation reports equal access to employment for qualified women and men in its survey and clearance teams in Zimbabwe, including for managerial level/supervisory positions.

37% of MAG's staff were women in 2022, with 36% of managerial/supervisory positions occupied by women and 37% of operational positions; all increases on the previously year, when one quarter of MAG's staff were women with 22% of managerial/supervisory positions occupied by women and 30% of operational positions.⁸⁵ In 2022, MAG continued its policy of offering breastfeeding mothers an additional three months of arrangements to facilitate breastfeeding after the first three months of maternity leave. It also delivered targeted training for 11 female deminers, launching an all-female team in January 2023, inclusive of team leader, deminers, medics and drivers.⁸⁶

To ensure the needs of women and children in communities affected by mined areas are taken into account in prioritisation and planning of tasks, targeted interviews and focus group discussions take place to confirm particular challenges for women and girls. However, tasks are tackled in a linear fashion given the linear nature of Zimbabwe's

73 Emails from (then) Capt. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 31 July 2019 and 6 April 2020.

74 Emails from Samuel Fricker, HALO, 20 July 2019; and Adam Komorowski, Regional Director West Africa and Latin America, MAG, 1 August 2019.

75 Email from Samuel Fricker, HALO, 20 July 2019.

76 Email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

77 Emails from (then) Capt. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 31 July 2019 and 6 April 2020; Samuel Fricker, HALO, 20 July 2019; Adam Komorowski, MAG, 1 August 2019; and Chimwemwe Tembo, NPA, 15 July 2019.

78 Email from Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

79 Emails from Samuel Fricker, HALO, 30 May 2022 and Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

80 Ibid.

81 Email from Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April 2023.

82 Emails from Gemma Walsh, NPA, 2 June and 8 July 2022 and 19 April 2023.

83 Email from Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April 2023.

84 Email from Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March 2023.

85 Emails from Peter Avenell, MAG, 17 May 2022 and 24 March 2023.

86 Email from Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March 2023.

minefields and given that MAG's area of operations are broadly similar to each other in their context, with all communities coming from the Shona tribe.⁸⁷

APOPO has a gender and diversity policy and implementation plan and, in 2022, a female Human Resources Co-ordinator came into post to follow up on implementation. The organisation reports offering equal access to employment for qualified women and men in survey and clearance teams, including for managerial level/supervisory positions.⁸⁸ In 2022, 32% of APOPO's personnel were women, with 30% of managerial/supervisory positions and 32% of operational positions occupied by women.⁸⁹ This represents a decrease in female representation compared to 2021, their first year of operating in Zimbabwe, when 31% of APOPO's employees were women, with 50% of managerial/supervisory positions

and 34% of operational positions occupied by women.⁹⁰ That said, APOPO asserts that is dedicated to ensuring that gender equality and considerations are reflected in all aspects of its work, including its partnerships and beneficiaries, as well as in assessing priority areas and populations. APOPO's Global Gender Action Plan (2020–25) is in place to ensure implementation of its gender policy.⁹¹

APOPO measures relative impacts during formal impact assessment; the organisation's SOPs include a section on gender-balance in survey and community liaison teams. Survey and community liaison are conducted by a team that originates from the communities along the minefield concerned. From time to time, beneficiary interviews are conducted to better understand how beneficiaries feel about ongoing clearance.⁹²

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

ZIMAC operates an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) New Generation (NG) database with all data disaggregated by type of munition and method of land release.⁹³ Zimbabwe confirms its information database is accurate, up to date, and sustainable.⁹⁴ The GICHD, which offers support to ZIMAC on information management when needed, concurs that information is generally accurate and that the programme can easily extract up-to-date data as required.⁹⁵ ZIMAC holds regular meetings with operators to cross-reference data, which according to operators has improved the accuracy and reliability of the database.⁹⁶ Polygon data are also reviewed when it is deemed prudent to do so, for example, whenever a resurvey takes place.⁹⁷

ZIMAC's latest Article 7 report covering 2022 is comprehensive and of generally good quality.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Zimbabwe's latest Article 7 Report includes a detailed annual work plan for 2023.⁹⁸ The mid-term review of Zimbabwe's national mine action strategy in November 2021⁹⁹ led to a launch of the updated strategy alongside the Communications and Resource Mobilisation Strategy at the National Stakeholder Dialogue in Harare in January 2023.¹⁰⁰

Zimbabwe's Article 7 Report covering 2022 included updated annual targets for the remainder of the extension period. These are 6.4km² to be addressed in 2023; 7.3km² to be addressed in 2024; and the remaining 4.6km² to be addressed in 2025, for a total of 18.3km² (see Table 3).¹⁰¹ These targets are slightly higher than those set out for in the Article 7 report covering 2021, which totalled 17.1km² over the same period.¹⁰² This is due the fact that, while Zimbabwe fell only slightly short of its target of addressing 6.3km² in 2022,¹⁰³ a further 0.9km² of previously unknown contamination was added to the database in 2022.¹⁰⁴ ZIMAC points out that Zimbabwe has been able to surpass its total land release target, having released 49.2km² as at the end of 2022 compared to the 41.1km² originally projected.¹⁰⁵

87 Ibid.

88 Emails from John Sorbo, APOPO, 20 June and 16 August 2022.

89 Email from Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023.

90 Emails from John Sorbo, APOPO, 20 June and 16 August 2022.

91 Email from Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023.

92 Emails from John Sorbo, APOPO, 20 June and 16 August 2022.

93 Email from (then) Capt. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 12 June 2018.

94 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), p. 3.

95 Emails from Åsa Massleberg, GICHD, 8 July 2022 and 16 May 2023.

96 Emails from Chimwemwe Tembo, NPA, 25 March 2020; Samuel Fricker, HALO, 17 April 2020; Peter Avenell, MAG, 20 May 2020 and 24 March 2023; Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023; Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023; Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023; and Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April 2023.

97 Email from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June 2022; and interview, in Geneva, 24 June 2022.

98 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Annex A, pp. A1–A24.

99 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Annex A, p. A1; and email from Åsa Massleberg, GICHD, 17 August 2023.

100 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Annex A, pp. A20–A21.

101 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Annex A, p. A-23.

102 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Appendix A, Table A1, p. A-21.

103 Ibid.

104 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), p. 2.

105 Ibid., Annex A, p. A-2.

Table 3: Annual land release targets 2023–25 (m²)¹⁰⁶

Minefield	2023	2024	2025	Totals	Comments
Musengezi to Mazowe, Mashonaland Central (HALO)	1,400,000	1,300,000	616,781	3,316,781	Capacity will be transferred to Mashonaland East upon completion.
Mazowe to Nyahuku, Mashonaland East (HALO)	800,000	1,000,000	389,843	2,189,843	Capacity will be transferred here from Mashonaland Central.
Mazowe to Rwenya River (MAG)	335,000	1,773,337	1,773,337	3,881,674	Capacity will be transferred here once allocated areas complete or if operators are on track to complete ahead of schedule.
Nyamapanda to Mazowe Ploughshare (NPA)	629,000	1,498,053	1,090,319	3,217,372	
Crooks Corner to Sango Border (Reinforced Ploughshare) (NMCU)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Completed.
Crooks Corner to Sango Border (Cordon Sanitaire) (NMCU)	350,000	200,000	84,900	634,900	
Crooks Corner to Sango Border (Cordon Sanitaire) (APOPO)	320,000	320,000	291,152	931,152	
Rusitu to Muzite Mission (NPA)	2,401,766	824,753	N/A	3,226,519	
Sheba Forest to Leacon Hill (NPA)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Completed. All capacity has been transferred to Chipinge District & will later be transferred to Mashonaland East.
Lusulu (NMCU)	150,000	400,500	353,987	904,487	NMCU will transfer capacity here once other tasks completed.
Totals	6,385,766	7,316,643	4,600,319	18,302,728	

Historically, clearance was prioritised by ZIMAC according to impact, with contaminated areas closest to highly populated areas to be addressed first.¹⁰⁷ However, as the majority of Zimbabwe's minefields are situated along the border with Mozambique, operations tend to proceed in a linear fashion to allow for optimal use of resources. HALO's operations, for example, proceed linearly west to east or east to west allowing concentrated logistical support and command and control, rather than opening tasks all over the frontage of the border.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., Annex A, pp. A-5–A-20 and A-23.

¹⁰⁷ Email from (then) Capt. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 6 April 2020.

¹⁰⁸ Emails from Samuel Fricker, HALO, 17 April 2020; and Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

As Zimbabwe's expected completion date of the end of 2025 approaches, it has taken steps to adjust plans and redistribute areas of operation going forward, so that operators who complete assigned tasks or gain additional capacity may deploy capacity elsewhere (see Table 3). ZIMAC has, for example, re-allocated some of MAG's tasks to NPA, which was due to start operations in Mudzi District, Mashonaland East in June 2023.¹⁰⁹ HALO has also been allocated part of MAG's minefield in Mashonaland East.¹¹⁰ MAG adds that the remaining areas that MAG cannot reach, due to limited capacity, will be regularly discussed at coordination meetings and most likely re-allocated in the coming months and years depending on the capacity of other operators.¹¹¹

Operators report that clearance and survey task dossiers are issued in a timely and effective manner¹¹² HALO also notes the good level of support provided by ZIMAC's monitoring and QC teams.¹¹³

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Zimbabwe conducts a review of its NMAS every three years in line with updates to the IMAS.¹¹⁴ SOPs are also reviewed regularly and as needed to address new challenges, ensure the employment of best practice and update in line with IMAS and Zimbabwe's NMAS.¹¹⁵ Operators confirm that the NMAS are suitably adapted to the local threat and enable efficient, evidence-based survey and clearance.¹¹⁶

ZIMAC reviewed the NMAS and updated some chapters in 2022.¹¹⁷ ZIMAC and operators confirm that they were consulted during this review, in particular with HALO providing input on the Standard for mechanical demining and NPA providing input on the Standard for animal detection systems (ADS).¹¹⁸

In April 2023, ZIMAC issued a range of NMAS chapters for final input from operators ahead of publication, with the target date for completion of the full review of the NMAS set at September 2023.¹¹⁹

An ongoing challenge for Zimbabwe's programme has been the search for technical solutions to decrease the time spent on missed-mine drills, when gaps in the mine pattern are found.¹²⁰ Operators called for the drills to be reviewed to establish a more efficient method of conducting them as they have proved time consuming and seemingly ineffective as

mines are found only very rarely.¹²¹ In 2021, operators were given autonomy to explore their own innovations, which included the use of mine detection dogs (MDDs) by NPA and use of the Minelab GPZ 7000 detector by HALO and APOPO.¹²² This detector was accredited in November 2022 for use in detection of high-metal AP mines (of the types VS50 and M969), the mine types most commonly found in Zimbabwe.¹²³ Accreditation for use with the AP mine type (R2M2), was granted in April 2023. Operators note that use of the GPZ 7000 detector has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of clearance, with the need for fewer missing-mine excavations.¹²⁴ ZIMAC asserts that the introduction of the GPZ 7000 has been instrumental in keeping Zimbabwe's land release programme on track, stating that; "without the assets and approval of the GPZ 7000 detector ... full excavation using detectors would have taken away the 2025 landmine free Zimbabwe's hope."¹²⁵

With regard to use of dogs in missed mine drills, a key consideration has been to establish the maximum depth at which dogs can detect, given that mines are being found at depths of up to 40cm. As such, in June 2022, ZIMAC stated that dogs would likely need to be used in combination with surface excavation, to ensure sufficiently deep exploration.¹²⁶ NPA submitted a draft NMAS on mine detection dogs to

109 Email from Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April 2023.

110 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), p. 7.

111 Email from Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March 2023.

112 Emails from Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023; Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March 2023; and Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

113 Email from Samuel Fricker, HALO, 30 May 2022.

114 Email from (then) Capt. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 6 April 2020.

115 Email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

116 Emails from Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023; and Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

117 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), p. 3; and email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

118 Emails from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023; Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023; Gemma Welsh, NPA, 2 June 2022 and 19 April 2023; and Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

119 Email from Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

120 Emails from Samuel Fricker, HALO, 20 July 2019; and Adam Komorowski, MAG, 1 August 2019.

121 Emails from Samuel Fricker, HALO, 5 August 2021; Peter Avenell, MAG, 20 May 2020; and John Sorbo, APOPO, 16 August 2022, and online interview, 11 August 2022. APOPO, for example, notes that in June 2022, 74 operational hours were spent on missed-mine drills.

122 Emails from Peter Avenell, MAG, 17 May 2022; Samuel Fricker, HALO, 30 May 2022; Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June 2022; Gemma Walsh, NPA, 2 June 2022; and Mikael Bold, APOPO, 8 August 2023.

123 Emails from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023; and Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

124 Emails from Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023; and Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023.

125 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Annex A, p. A-2.

126 Interview with Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, in Geneva, 24 June 2022.

ZIMAC in May 2022,¹²⁷ which was issued to operators for final input in April 2023.¹²⁸ NPA's MDD teams have to date been required to focus on targeted technical survey (TTS), hence trial use of dogs in missed-mine drills has not been possible. However, ZIMAC and NPA continue to collaborate on this issue and the first trials were due to take place during 2023.¹²⁹

ZIMAC conducts quality assurance (QA) and operators have previously confirmed that the ZIMAC QA/QC process was

rigorous, with well trained and experienced staff. HALO noted that the combination of a separate sampling team and a highly accessible monitoring team worked especially well, with the former providing thorough external oversight and the latter helping teams to work through any problems.¹³⁰ In 2023, ZIMAC noted that, in addition to having a QA Officer attached to each operator, a stand-alone, external QC team samples completed tasks in line with Zimbabwe's inspection procedures as per the NMAS.¹³¹

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

The Zimbabwean Armed Forces' NMCU and, since 2013, HALO and NPA, all conduct land release in Zimbabwe. MAG became operational in December 2017, and APOPO signed their MoU in 2016, but were not operational until December 2020 when they began training their first demining teams.¹³² APOPO began survey and clearance operations in 2021¹³³ and has been tasked to survey and clear a 7km² area on a 37km-long stretch of minefield along the border with Mozambique, in a conservation area just outside Gonarezhou national park, known as the Sengwe Wildlife Corridor.¹³⁴ The aim is to create a safe passage for both local communities and tourists, as well as reduce the human-wildlife conflict, caused by wildlife overpopulation, where the presence of landmines has prevented normal animal migration.¹³⁵

Table 4: Operational NTS and TS capacities deployed in 2022¹³⁶

Operator	NTS teams	Total NTS personnel	Dogs and handlers	Comments
APOPO	1	1	0	A risk education officer supports NTS together with operational management staff. APOPO deploys combined TS and clearance personnel (see Table 5).
HALO	1	3	0	HALO deploys combined TS and clearance personnel. (See Table 5). NTS managed by 1 Community Outreach team of 3 personnel.
MAG	2	5	0	MAG deploys combined TS and clearance personnel. (See Table 5).
NPA	2	5	3 handlers 3 dogs	2 teams of 5 includes 1 NTS team of 2 personnel. and 1 mine detection dog (MDD) team deployed for TS. Overall a slight decrease on 2021, when NPA deployed 1 NTS team of 2 personnel and 1 MDD team of 4 dogs and 2 handlers. NPA also deploys combined TS and clearance personnel (see Table 5).
NMCU	1	3		Deployed for NTS.
Totals	7	17	3	

¹²⁷ Email from Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April 2023.

¹²⁸ Emails from Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023; and Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

¹²⁹ Emails from Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April 2023; and Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

¹³⁰ Email from Samuel Fricker, HALO, 20 July 2019.

¹³¹ Email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

¹³² Article 7 Report (covering 2020), p. 15; and email from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 19 August 2021.

¹³³ Emails from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June 2022; and John Sorbo, APOPO, 20 June 2022.

¹³⁴ Emails from Ashley Fitzpatrick, APOPO Zimbabwe, 27 July 2019 and 9 August 2020.

¹³⁵ "Switzerland Boosts APOPO Zimbabwe Demining Project", 13 December 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3PbEuFA>.

¹³⁶ Emails from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023; Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April 2023; Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March 2023; and Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May and 8 August 2023.

Table 5: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2022¹³⁷

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers*	Machines**	Comments
HALO	30	233	7	Includes 2 mechanical demining teams of 10 personnel in total. Slight decrease on 30 teams of 249 deminers deployed in 2021. Increase compared to 3 machines deployed in 2021. Machines include 2 excavators, 2 micro-excavators, 1 orbit screener, 1 MMD sizer and 1 tractor. Deminers includes medic-deminers who operate as deminers, and mechanical operator deminers.
NPA	5	52	0	Slight increase on 5 teams of 50 deminers deployed in 2021. Also undertake technical survey. Four manual deminers are attached to mechanical demining team.***
APOPO	5	50	0	Increase on 4 teams of 34 deminers deployed in 2021. Also undertake technical survey.
MAG	3	27	0	Slight decrease on 3 teams of 30 deminers deployed in 2021. Up to 6 additional deminers for short periods in 2022. Also undertake TS.
NMCU	16	134	1	Slight decrease on 15 teams of 150 personnel in 2021.****
Totals	59	496	8	

*Excluding team leaders, medics, and drivers. **Excluding vegetation cutters and sifters. ***NPA mechanical team authorised to conduct clearance only of metalized areas where a detector cannot be employed, as well as for technical survey.¹³⁸ **** NMCU mechanical demining team deployed for ground preparation only in 2022.¹³⁹

Overall, Zimbabwe maintained approximately the same technical survey (TS) and clearance capacity in 2022 as it did in 2021, with the combined capacity of humanitarian operators and the NMCU totalling 59 teams of 496 deminers in 2022 (see Table 5), compared to 58 teams of 500 deminers in 2021.¹⁴⁰ Zimbabwe's programme saw an increase in mechanical assets deployed, with eight machines in 2022 (see Table 5), compared to four machines in 2021.¹⁴¹ ZIMAC projected that operators were generally expected to maintain their capacity for the 2023 demining year.¹⁴²

APOPO does not have dedicated non-technical survey (NTS) capacity, though an EORE Officer supports survey. APOPO introduced an additional combined clearance and technical survey team (see Tables 4 and 5). APOPO expected to have to reduce its clearance capacity from five teams of ten deminers each to four teams of eight deminers each in mid 2023, due to a gap in funding.¹⁴³

HALO saw only a slight decrease in NTS capacity in 2022 compared to 2021 (see Table 4). Clearance personnel decreased by 10% in 2022 due to funding reduction. However, HALO expected this to increase by 10% in 2023 due to increased funding.¹⁴⁴ ZIMAC notes that HALO requires increased funding to increase its current capacity and meet its end of 2025 land release target in Mashonaland Central, as well as the additional area re-allocated to HALO from MAG in Mashonaland East. ZIMAC foresees that, funds permitting, an additional mechanical team as well as increased manual capacity, will be key to achieving the target.¹⁴⁵

MAG maintained the same NTS capacity in 2022 as it did in 2021 and saw only a minor reduction in the number of combined technical survey and clearance personnel in 2022, compared to the previous year (see Tables 4 and 5). However, MAG was able to add a few extra deminers during the latter part of 2022. From January 2023, MAG introduced an additional, all-female team of nine deminers. MAG cautions,

¹³⁷ Emails from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023; Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April 2023; Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023; Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March 2023; and Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023.

¹³⁸ Email from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 12 August 2022.

¹³⁹ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Annex A, pp. A9-A10.

¹⁴⁰ Emails from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June 2022; Peter Avenell, MAG, 17 May 2022; Gemma Walsh, NPA, 2 June 2022; and John Sorbo, APOPO, 20 June 2022.

¹⁴¹ Emails from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June 2022; and Samuel Fricker, HALO, 30 May 2022.

¹⁴² Email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

¹⁴³ Emails from Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May and 8 August 2023.

¹⁴⁴ Email from Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

¹⁴⁵ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Annex A, p. A-7.

however, that while one of its mine action teams is funded for the next two years minimum, other funding is short-term and unconfirmed, even to the end of 2023,¹⁴⁶ so this may have capacity implications.¹⁴⁷

NPA saw only a slight decrease in NTS capacity and a slight increase in combined technical survey and clearance in 2022 compared to 2021 (see Tables 4 and 5). As per 2021, NPA used its mine detection dogs (MDDs) to conduct technical survey in 2022.¹⁴⁸ Zimbabwe notes that MDDs have been instrumental in quickening technical survey and enabling fast deployment of manual deminers to mine lanes.¹⁴⁹ NPA adds that the introduction of MDDs and TTS, for which NPA has deployed MDDs, increased productivity by 25%.¹⁵⁰

NPA's operations are funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which has guaranteed funding to 2025.¹⁵¹ NPA expects no major changes to capacity in 2023, unless additional funding is secured to increase capacity.¹⁵² If efforts to secure such additional funding are successful, this would allow additional capacity to be deployed to tackle remaining challenges, including the areas in Mashonaland East that have been re-allocated from MAG to NPA.¹⁵³

Zimbabwe's NMCU saw a slight decrease in capacity from 150 to 134 deminers between 2021 and 2022, including one mechanical team deployed for ground preparation only (see Table 5). ZIMAC envisages using some of the NMCU's capacity to support any areas assigned to operators that lag behind target as the 2025 completion date approaches. ZIMAC notes

that government funding for NMCU is guaranteed at the current level until clearance is complete.¹⁵⁴ However, in both 2021 and 2022, ZIMAC said that additional funding is required to replace old detectors, which are no longer functioning at their best, negatively impacting 2022 output.¹⁵⁵ Resources allowing, Zimbabwe hopes to form a second NMCU unit to expedite clearance and, as at January 2023, was in the process of purchasing replacement mine detectors.¹⁵⁶

Zimbabwe first introduced mechanical assets in 2016. These have been useful in tackling deeply buried mines on hard ground as well as in areas with highly mineralised soils.¹⁵⁷ In February 2022, HALO began trialling use of a micro excavator, with the goal of increasing the safety of manual mine clearance by reducing the number of manual excavations of R2M2-type AP mines. The micro excavator works in conjunction with manual deminers to complete excavations that would otherwise be done entirely by hand. Following the trial, the machine and relevant SOP were approved by HALO's Global Capability team and by ZIMAC in November 2022. During the same year, the Micro Excavator completed 1,578 excavations and excavated a total of 1,151 mines, including 1,082 R2M2-type mines. The trial demonstrated that the micro excavator is capable of reducing the number of manual excavations by 80% and can complete an excavation in under one minute. This innovation increases the safety of manual clearance and also has the potential to increase efficiency.¹⁵⁸

DEMINER SAFETY

ZIMAC reported six accidents involving deminers in 2022, all involving excavation of R2M2 AP mines (see Table 6).¹⁵⁹ One APOPO deminer suffered a fractured arm and trauma to the eyes from dust projected by a blast, though PPE protected the deminer from more serious injury. APOPO's internal investigation points to the fact that the mine was tilted, and potentially disturbed by the deminer during the excavation.¹⁶⁰ HALO reported three accidents to ZIMAC. However, while they met HALO's definition of an 'accident', i.e. an unplanned explosion or damage to property, none of the accidents resulted in injuries.¹⁶¹ One MAG deminer suffered a minor injury. The accident was investigated by MAG as per its regulations. Findings were shared with ZIMAC and donors and a summary shared with operators in-country.¹⁶²

¹⁴⁶ Email from Peter Avenell, MAG, 17 May 2022.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.; and presentation, "MAG Zimbabwe Operational Status", National Stakeholder Dialogue on Humanitarian Demining: For a Mine-Free Zimbabwe by 2025, Harare, 26 January 2023.

¹⁴⁸ Emails from Gemma Walsh, NPA, 2 June 2022 and 19 April 2023.

¹⁴⁹ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Annex A, p. A-2.

¹⁵⁰ Email from Gemma Walsh, NPA, 19 April 2023.

¹⁵¹ Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Annex A, p. A-12.

¹⁵² Email from Gemma Walsh, NPA, 19 April 2023.

¹⁵³ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Annex A, p. A-12.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., Annex A, p. A-16.

¹⁵⁵ Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Annex A, p. A-14 and; Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Annex A, p. A-16.

¹⁵⁶ Col. M. B. Ncube, Director, ZIMAC, "Overview of the Strategic Plan and the Resource Mobilisation Strategy and Progress Implementation", National Stakeholder Dialogue on Humanitarian Demining: For a Mine-Free Zimbabwe by 2025, Harare, 24 January 2023.

¹⁵⁷ Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Annex A, p. A-2.

¹⁵⁸ Email from Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

¹⁵⁹ Emails from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

¹⁶⁰ Email from Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023.

¹⁶¹ Emails from Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April and 21 June 2023.

¹⁶² Email from Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March 2023.

Table 6: Demining accidents in Zimbabwe in 2022¹⁶³

Operator	No. of accidents	Activity	Type of APM	Number of deminers injured
HALO	3	Clearance	R2M2	0
APOPO	1	Clearance	R2M2	1
NMCU	1	Clearance	R2M2	1
MAG	1	Clearance	R2M2	1

ZIMAC states that, following accidents in 2022, all investigations were made according to the national standards and lessons learned were shared and discussed during quarterly co-ordination and operations meetings.¹⁶⁴

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

A total of 6.12km² of mined area was released in 2022,¹⁶⁵ falling only slightly short of Zimbabwe's target of addressing 6.3km² in 2022.¹⁶⁶ Of the 6.12km², just over 2.13km² was cleared, almost 2.07km² was reduced through technical survey, and almost 1.92km² was cancelled through non-technical survey. A total of 31,186 AP mines and one AV mine were found and destroyed, including 82 during EOD spot tasks.¹⁶⁷ A total of 0.91km² of previously unknown contamination was added to the database in 2022 as a result of survey.¹⁶⁸

Previously, in 2021, all operators except NPA reported some level of disruption to operations that affected land release output, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁶⁹ No such disruptions or impact on output were experienced in 2022.¹⁷⁰

SURVEY IN 2022

In 2021, a total of 3.99km² was released through survey, of which almost 1.92km² was cancelled through NTS (see Table 7), and almost 2.07km² was reduced through TS (see Table 8).¹⁷¹ There was a significant decrease in NTS output compared to the 5.67km² cancelled in 2021, the latter being mainly due to APOPO's resurvey during its first year of operations. There was also a decrease in the amount land released through TS, down from 3.17km² the previous year.¹⁷²

The 1.92km² released through NTS by NMCU represents an increase on the 0.5km² released by NTS in 2021, also by NMCU.¹⁷³

Of the 2.07km² reduced through TS, 0.89km² was released by HALO and 1.17km² was released by NPA (see Table 8). NPA saw a significant decrease in the amount of area reduced in 2022 compared to the 2.03km² reduced in 2021. This was due to a decrease in the number of teams.¹⁷⁴ HALO also saw a decrease in the amount of land reduced through TS, compared to the 1.04km² of 2021.¹⁷⁵ This was expected as, in 2021, HALO noted that it was nearing completion of all ploughshare tasks and would soon be primarily focused on clearing the remaining cordon sanitaire minefields.¹⁷⁶ Cordon sanitaire minefields are tasks that normally require full clearance with no reduction possible as the polygons are usually very accurate and there is strong evidence of contamination within fence-lines and roads. HALO was therefore not expecting reduction levels to remain as high as they had previously been.¹⁷⁷

163 Emails from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023; Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March 2023; Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April and 21 June 2023; and Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023.

164 Email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

165 Ibid.

166 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Appendix A, Table A1, P. A-21.

167 Email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

168 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), p. 2.

169 Emails from Peter Avenell, MAG, 17 May and 4 July 2022; John Sorbo, APOPO, 20 June 2022; Samuel Fricker, HALO, 30 May 2022; and Gemma Walsh, NPA, 2 June 2022.

170 Emails from Gemma Walsh, NPA, 19 April 2023; Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March 2023; Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023; Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023; and Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

171 Email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), pp. 6–7.

172 Emails from (then) Capt. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June 2022.

173 Email from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), pp. 4–5.

174 Emails from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June 2022; and Gemma Walsh, NPA, 19 April and 21 June 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), pp. 4–5.

175 Email from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), pp. 4–5.

176 Email from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June 2022.

177 Emails from Samuel Fricker, HALO, 13 April 2021 and 30 May 2022.

MAG reports that it released 121,298m² through TS in 2022, though this was not reported to Mine Action Review by ZIMAC. MAG states that this discrepancy is due to the fact that there are sometimes information processing delays in the time taken for ZIMAC to update the IMSMA database.¹⁷⁸ For consistency, Mine Action Review has included only data provided by ZIMAC in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022^{179*}

Area	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Masvingo (Mwenezi to Sango Border Post, ploughshare)	NMCU	1,917,880
Total		1,917,880

* An additional area of 1,018,603m² in Masvingo was cancelled through NTS by APOPO, but was not entered into the national database as at the end of 2022, so has not been included in the total area cancelled for that year.¹⁸⁰

Table 8: Release of mined area through TS in 2022¹⁸¹

Area	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
Mashonaland Central-Musengezi to Mazowe (Mt Darwin and Rushinga districts)	HALO	892,681
Manicaland (Sheba to Leacon Hill Stretch)	NPA	783,469
Manicaland (Rusitu to Muzite Stretch)	NPA	388,998
Total		2,065,148

CLEARANCE IN 2022

In 2022, a total of 2.13km² of mined area was released through clearance with 31,178 AP mines and 1 AV mine found and destroyed (see Table 9).¹⁸² This is a slight decrease on the 2.44km² of mined area released through clearance in 2021, though a higher number of AP mines destroyed compared to the 26,457 destroyed in 2021.¹⁸³ A total of 74 AP mines were recovered and destroyed during explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) spot tasks in 2022.¹⁸⁴

ZIMAC notes that a decrease in clearance was to be expected as operators are now increasingly clearing more deeply buried mines from the cordon sanitaire minefields.¹⁸⁵ MAG saw a slight decrease in the amount of land released in 2022 compared to 2021. This was due to their clearance operations being focused on reinforced ploughshare MF 197 mines, with contaminated areas characterised by a high density of mines and converging minefield rows, allowing for less reduction. MAG also cleared an area where, unusually, mines were found very close to the road, instead of five to ten metres away as is normally the case.¹⁸⁶ NPA too saw a decrease in the amount of area cleared in 2022 compared to the 403,381m² cleared in 2021.¹⁸⁷ As with survey output, NPA attributes this to a decrease in the number of teams.¹⁸⁸ APOPO saw a slight reduction in the amount of land cleared, with 235,195m² in 2022, compared to the 387,117m² cleared in 2021.¹⁸⁹ HALO increased the amount of land cleared, releasing 1.2km² through clearance,¹⁹⁰ compared to 0.98km² in 2021.¹⁹¹

178 Email from Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March and 22 June 2023.

179 Emails from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April and 13 July 2023; and Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May and 9 July 2023.

180 Emails from Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May and 9 July 2023.

181 Emails from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April and 13 July 2023; Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April and 21 June 2023; Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April and 21 June 2023; and Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March 2023.

182 Emails from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023; Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April and 23 June 2023; Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023; Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March and 21 June 2023; and Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), pp. 6–7.

183 Emails from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June and 12 August 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), pp. 4–5.

184 Emails from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023; Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023; Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March and 21 June 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), pp. 6–7.

185 Emails from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

186 Email from Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March, 2023.

187 Email from Gemma Welsh, NPA, 2 June 2022.

188 Email from Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April 2023.

189 Emails from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June and 12 August 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), pp. 4–5.

190 Email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

191 Email from Samuel Fricker, HALO, 30 May 2022.

Table 9: Mine clearance in 2022¹⁹²

Area	Operator	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed during TS and clearance	AP mines destroyed in spot tasks	AV mines destroyed during TS and clearance	UXO destroyed
Mashonaland Central-Musengezi to Mazowe (Mt Darwin and Rushinga districts)	HALO	6	1,126,753	27,275	68	0	4
Mashonaland East (Mazowe to Rwenya)	MAG	2	155,571	864	2	0	7
Manicaland (Sheba to Leacon Hill Stretch)	NPA	3	220,169	288	0	0	0
Manicaland (Rusitu to Muzite Stretch)	NPA	2	286,249	368	0	0	0
Mwenezi to Sango Border Post (Cordon Sanitaire)	NMCU	0	30,735	302	4	0	0
Sango border to Mwenezi river (Cordon Sanitaire)	APOPO	1	235,195	2,001	0	1	1
Lusulu	NMCU	0	1,050	1	0	0	0
Mashonaland East (Mazowe to Nyahuku)	HALO	0	76,779	5	0	0	0
Totals		14	2,132,501	31,104	74	1	12

In 2022, HALO cleared nine areas measuring 465,438m² which proved to contain no mines.¹⁹³

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the eight-year extension granted in 2017), Zimbabwe is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2025. At the beginning of the extension period, land release activities were being undertaken in only four out of the seven major mined areas in the country. By 2021, all seven areas were being worked on.¹⁹⁴

Based on current capacity, Zimbabwe is not on track to meet its deadline but it could still do so provided current levels of funding increased and clearance capacity was rapidly upscaled. In its latest Article 7 Report, covering 2022, Zimbabwe notes that the main risks that could impede progress towards completion by the end of 2025 are potentially insufficient funding; the heavy rains and risk of flooding experienced in Zimbabwe from November to March

¹⁹² Emails from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April and 13 July 2023; Gemma Welsh, NPA, 19 April and 23 June 2023; Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023; Peter Avenell, MAG, 24 March and 21 June 2023; and Mikael Bold, APOPO, 12 May and 9 July 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), pp. 6–7.

¹⁹³ Email from Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

¹⁹⁴ Article 5 Update to the APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022, p. 1.

each year; and potential changes in the political or economic climate, given that national capacity is entirely dependent on government funding. Zimbabwe does note, however, that the ailing economy is showing some signs of improvement and that the government has continued to prioritise humanitarian demining in spite of economic challenges in recent years.¹⁹⁵

It is commendable that, despite the range of ongoing challenges outlined here, Zimbabwe has been able to surpass the land release target to date that was set out in its original national strategy for 2018–2025, having released a total of 49.2km² as at the end of 2022, compared to the 41.1km² originally projected.¹⁹⁶ As was the case in 2021, the amount of area reduced through technical survey going forward is likely to continue to fall as the remaining polygons are narrow.¹⁹⁷

Table 10: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	2.13
2021	2.44
2020	2.41
2019	2.76
2018	2.11
Total	11.85

Some redistribution of Areas of Operation has begun among operators to help keep the sector on track for national completion. In early 2022, ZIMAC worked with MAG, NPA, and HALO to redistribute some areas in Mudzi district from MAG to HALO and NPA, due to capacity constraints in MAG.¹⁹⁸ HALO commenced work on some of its re-assigned tasks in June 2022¹⁹⁹ and NPA is projected to do so once tasks in Manicaland province are complete.²⁰⁰ NMCU's completion in 2022 of the reinforced ploughshare mined area that stretched from Mwenezi to the Sango Border Post, also meant that all NMCU clearance capacity could be transferred to cordon sanitaire mine tasks, reallocated from APOPO.²⁰¹ NPA expects to complete the Rusitu to Muzite Mission minefield stretch based on its current capacity by mid-2024,²⁰² which would allow for re-allocation of teams to other areas.

There are many strengths of Zimbabwe's mine action programme. However, a lack of sufficient resources may seriously impede progress going forward. It is evident that a strong updated national strategy and additional resources are key to keep Zimbabwe's ambitious but, so far, robust, mine action programme on track. The launch of both the updated National Mine Action Strategy and the Communications and Resource Mobilisation Strategy at the National Stakeholder Dialogue in January 2023 demonstrates Zimbabwe's commitment to remain on track and try and secure the necessary resources. Notable milestones on the path to national completion in 2022 were the completion of the Sheba Forest to Leacon Hill stretch of minefield, in Mutare District; cleared by NPA,²⁰³ as well as the completion of the reinforced ploughshare area that stretched from Mwenezi to the Sango Border Post, cleared by NMCU.²⁰⁴

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

On the matter of contamination that might be found after completion of major clearance operations, ZIMAC has national capacity to deal with this and plans in place, as the NMCU will remain operational after international demining operators have left Zimbabwe.²⁰⁵ ZIMAC asserts that Zimbabwe's military forces began mine clearance long before international operators boosted efforts and, if well-equipped, the same army engineers are fully capable of dealing with residual contamination.²⁰⁶ It will fall to ZIMAC, the NMCU, and the army engineers, who are stationed in all provinces, to deal with any new explosive devices discovered.²⁰⁷ It is planned that, as the army will have responsibility for clearing any residual contamination, the NMCU will develop a strategy on the management of residual contamination as Zimbabwe's completion date approaches.²⁰⁸

¹⁹⁵ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Annex A, pp. A-21 to A-22.

¹⁹⁶ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Annex A, p. A-2.

¹⁹⁷ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Annex A, p. A-3.

¹⁹⁸ Email from Samuel Fricker, HALO, 30 May 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Annex A, p. A-7.

¹⁹⁹ Email from Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 19 April 2023.

²⁰⁰ Email from Samuel Fricker, HALO, 14 August 2022.

²⁰¹ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Annex A, p. A-15.

²⁰² Ibid., Annex A, p. A-13.

²⁰³ Ibid., Annex A, p. A-11.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., Annex A, pp. A-11; and pp. A14-A15.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 5; and email from Capt. Patson Mandaba, ZIMAC, 13 April 2023.

²⁰⁶ Email from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 23 August 2022.

²⁰⁷ Email from Capt. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 6 April 2020.

²⁰⁸ Emails from Maj. Cainos Tamanikwa, ZIMAC, 2 June 2022; and Åsa Massleberg, GICHD, 8 July 2022.

NON-SIGNATORIES

The background of the slide is composed of several overlapping geometric shapes in two shades of green: a medium green and a darker forest green. These shapes, including triangles and polygons, are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement. A prominent diagonal band of medium green runs from the bottom left towards the top right. Other shapes are layered above and below this band, creating a complex, abstract pattern.

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: NOT REPORTED**

3km²

ACCORDING TO A PARTIAL NATIONAL
AUTHORITY ESTIMATE IN 2021

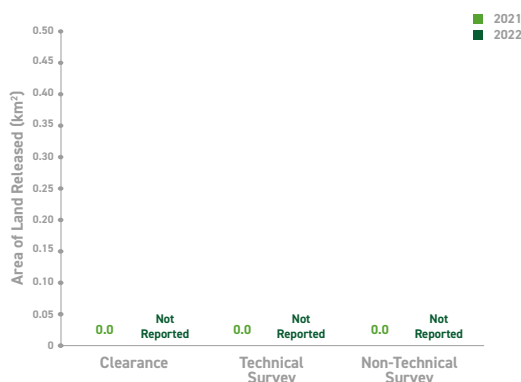
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

NOT REPORTED

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

NOT REPORTED

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2022, periodic violations of the 2020 ceasefire that ended the six-week armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh included two days of hostilities in mid-September 2022, after Azerbaijan accused Armenia of laying mines in territory under the control of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan also accused Armenia of sending thousands of landmines to Nagorno-Karabakh in 2022. Armenia denied the allegations but acknowledged that its armed forces have laid mines in its sovereign territory for the purpose of self-defence. Armenia did not disclose anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination and land release data for 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Armenia should commit to not use AP mines and should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Armenia should comply with its obligations under international human rights law to clear AP mines on territory under its jurisdiction as soon as possible.
- Armenia should clarify the extent of remaining mine contamination.
- Armenia should expedite the adoption of national mine action legislation.
- Armenia should finalise its strategic mine action plan as soon as possible.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise (CHDE)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- In addition to serving as the national mine action authority, the CHDE also conducts survey and clearance.

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust (HALO)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The 2020 armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh ended with Azerbaijan regaining most of its internationally recognised territory except for a part of Nagorno-Karabakh.¹ Even before the 2020 conflict, there was only minimal clearance of AP mined area in Armenia. There was no release of mined area in Armenia in 2020 or 2021 and reported contamination in Armenia remained constant in the two years to the end of 2021,² the most recent years for which comprehensive data were reported. In 2022, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reported that it supported the Armenia's Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise (CHDE) with non-technical survey (NTS), technical survey (TS), and land release operations for AP mines and other types of explosive ordnance.³ In 2022, The HALO Trust (HALO) conducted NTS at three previously unrecorded AP legacy minefields (dating from 1998) near Pambak village in Gegharkunik province.⁴ HALO discovered one AP mine in each area.⁵ The three mines were reported to the CHDE, but it is not known whether clearance was undertaken.⁶

At the end of 2021, Armenia estimated 9.53km² of mined area remained containing AP mines and/or anti-vehicle (AV) mines. Of this total, more than 5.69km² was in confirmed hazardous area (CHA) and a further 3.83km² was suspected hazardous area (SHA)⁷ (see Table 1). Mined area containing AP mines was estimated at 3.01km² (2.90km² of CHA and 0.1km² of SHA).⁸ Of 94 CHAs, 55 contained AP mines at the end of 2021, totalling just under 2.9km². The remaining 39 CHAs totalling 2.8km² contained AV mines only.⁹ Three of the six SHAs, totalling just over 0.1km², were thought to be contaminated by AP mines, with the remaining 3.7km² suspected to contain only AV mines.¹⁰

Table 1: Mined area (at end 2021*)¹¹

Type of contamination	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Totals
AP mines	41	2,176,085	3	105,500	2,281,585
AV mines	39	2,791,608	3	3,728,442	6,520,050
AP and AV mines	11	706,046	0	0	706,046
AP mines and UXO	2	12,769	0	0	12,769
AP and AV mines and UXO	1	4,842	0	0	4,842
Totals	94	5,691,350	6	3,833,942	9,525,292

UXO = Unexploded ordnance

*HALO surveyed 46,643m² across three previously unrecorded AP mined areas in Gegharkunik province in 2022. It is not known whether the areas were cleared,¹² and the area has not been deducted from Table 1.

A baseline NTS began in 2022 to determine the extent of cluster munition remnants (CMR) and other explosive ordnance, including new contamination arising from the 2020 conflict.¹³ It is unclear whether the baseline survey was completed by the end of 2022.

Four of Armenia's eleven administrative areas (ten provinces plus Yerevan) contained mined areas at the end of 2021. Three were contaminated with both AP and AV mines while the fourth (Vayots Dzor) was contaminated solely with AV mines, as set out in Table 2.¹⁴

- 1 T. De Waal, "Unfinished Business in the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict", Carnegie Europe, 11 February 2021, at <https://bit.ly/3PFvARz>. In September 2023, Azerbaijan regained full control of all remaining areas of Nagorno-Karabakh. "Azerbaijan halts Karabakh offensive after ceasefire deal with Armenian separatists", *BBC*, 21 September 2023, at: <https://bbc.in/3rCVK0e>.
- 2 Emails from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 25 June 2020 and 26 April 2021.
- 3 Emails from Karinée Khojayan, Project Coordinator, UNDP, 15 March and 10 July 2023.
- 4 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, Head of Region – Europe (South Caucasus), HALO, 16 March 2022.
- 5 Emails from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2022; and David Crawford, Programme Manager, Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia HALO, 14 July 2023.
- 6 Email from David Crawford, HALO, 14 July 2023.
- 7 Email from Karine Shamiryan, Head of International Affairs, CHDE, 27 May 2022.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Emails from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2022; and David Crawford, HALO, 14 July 2023.
- 13 Emails from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022; and Karine Shamiryan, CHDE, 27 May 2022.
- 14 Emails from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 26 April 2021; and Karine Shamiryan, CHDE, 27 May 2022.

Table 2: Mined area by province (at end 2021)¹⁵

Province	Type of contamination	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)
Gegharkunik*	AP mines	3	584,022	2	105,123
	AV mines	5	2,428,128	3	3,728,442
Syunik	AP mines	32	1,424,512	1	377
	AV mines	21	280,425	0	0
	AP and AV mines	8	676,617	0	0
	AP mines and UXO	2	12,769	0	0
	AP and AV mines and UXO	1	4,842	0	0
Tavush	AP mines	6	167,551	0	0
	AV mines	10	15,603	0	0
	AP and AV mines	3	29,429	0	0
Vayots Dzor	AV mines	3	67,452	0	0
Totals		94	5,691,350	6	3,833,942

*HALO surveyed 46,643m² across three previously unrecorded AP mined areas in Gegharkunik province in 2022. It is not known whether the areas were cleared,¹⁶ and the area has not been deducted from Table 2.

A Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) was conducted in Armenia in 2005, followed by partial survey of 17 sites by HALO in 2012, and then again, in 2012–13, by FSD. FSD found 17 SHAs estimated to cover 26km² and 114 CHAs that covered 21km² in four districts bordering Azerbaijan. Thirteen of these areas, totalling 1.8km², contained only UXO and not mines.¹⁷ In 2019, the CHDE conducted NTS in Syunik province but military-restricted zones continued to be off limit for survey and clearance.¹⁸

Mine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination in Armenia is primarily the consequence of armed conflict with Azerbaijan in 1988–94, in which both sides used mines. The heaviest contamination exists in areas previously occupied by Armenia but regained by Azerbaijan during the 2020 conflict. The reclaimed territory contains heavily contaminated land, including around Nagorno-Karabakh, and massive mined area along the 350km-long line of contact (LoC) that previously separated Armenian and Azerbaijani forces.¹⁹

Armenia has acknowledged that it has laid mines since the end of 2020, contending that it has “carried out minelaying exclusively within the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia for self-defence purposes only”.²⁰ Furthermore, Armenia insists that the presence of Armenian mines in three districts now under the control of Azerbaijan (Aghdam, Kalbajar, and Lachin), if established, can be explained by the fact that, at the end the 2020 conflict, a “contact line”

continued to exist in and around Nagorno-Karabakh and the Trilateral Statement (signed by Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia on 9 November 2020 and effective from 10 November 2020) did not preclude armed forces from taking steps to secure their positions.²¹ In contrast, Armenia has consistently denied Azerbaijan's contention that it has sent thousands of landmines to Nagorno-Karabakh.²² Azerbaijan's allegations that Armenia has laid new mines in Nagorno-Karabakh have not been independently verified.²³ On 19 September 2023, Azerbaijan launched a 24-hour large-scale military offensive which resulted in it regaining control of the rest of Nagorno-Karabakh.²⁴ Nagorno-Karabakh is now fully under Azerbaijan's jurisdiction and control. The leader of the de facto Nagorno-Karabakh authorities, Samvel Shahramanyan, signed a decree to dissolve all governmental institutions by 1 January 2024.²⁵

Armenia's border with Georgia has been cleared of mines whereas the border with Türkiye, also mined during the Soviet era, is still contaminated.²⁶ While NTS in 2012–13 by FSD did not find evidence of mines outside the buffer zones in Ararat province, which borders Türkiye, certain areas on that border have not yet been surveyed because they are controlled by Russian border troops.²⁷ The LIS conducted under UNDP auspices in 2005 had identified Ararat province as contaminated with AP mines, but this is not confirmed by the data provided from the CHDE.²⁸

15 Emails from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022; and Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 26 April 2021.

16 Emails from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2022, and David Crawford, HALO, 14 July 2023.

17 CHDE, “FSD non-technical mine action survey”, Yerevan, 2013, p. 12.

18 Emails from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 19 April 2019 and 25 June 2020.

19 See Mine Action Review's Clearing the Mines 2022 report on Azerbaijan for further information.

20 International Court of Justice, *Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Azerbaijan v. Armenia)*, Order, 23 February 2023, at <https://bit.ly/3NwBKEG>, para. 19.

21 Ibid., para. 20.

22 G. Gavin, “Azerbaijan demands UN action as Nagorno-Karabakh landmine row escalates”, *Eurasianet*, 12 December 2022 at: <https://bit.ly/3yYS09L>.

23 “Armenia releases map of territories ‘seized by Azerbaijan’ since 2020”, *Open Caucasus Media (OC Media)*, 1 February 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3luuqOR>.

24 “Azerbaijan halts Karabakh offensive after ceasefire deal with Armenian separatists”, *BBC*, 21 September 2023.

25 “Nagorno-Karabakh's breakaway government says it will dissolve itself”, *The Guardian*, 28 September 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/45ozvJ7>.

26 Emails from Ruben Arakelyan, Director, CHDE, 19 March 2014 and 28 April 2017, and interview in Geneva, 1 April 2014.

27 CHDE, “FSD non-technical mine action survey”, CHDE, Yerevan, 2013, p. 9; and emails from Varsine Miskaryan, Operations Officer, CHDE, 8 August 2016; and Ruben Arakelyan, CHDE, 28 April 2017.

28 “Landmine Impact Survey”, UNDP, 2005, at: <http://bit.ly/3tfQtr0>, p. 29.

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Armenia reported new CMR and other explosive ordnance contamination in Gegharkunik, Syunik, and Tavush provinces as a result of the conflict with Azerbaijan in 2020 (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Armenia for further information).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The CHDE was established by the Armenian government in 2011 as a non-commercial State body responsible for conducting survey and clearance and identifying contaminated areas. In 2014, the CHDE was made Armenia's national mine action authority.²⁹ An Advisory Board oversees the CHDE at the Deputy Ministerial level, with representation from the Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Emergency Situations; Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure; Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports; the Ministry of Justice; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³⁰ In 2013, in conformity with a government decree, the CHDE began developing national mine action legislation. But as at May 2022, the draft mine action law was reported to still be under development, with the hope it might be finalised by the end of 2022.³¹ At the time of writing, it was not known whether the law had been adopted.

Key decisions on mine action are taken centrally by the CHDE, although in December 2022, other stakeholders were invited to a strategy stakeholder workshop and to participate in future work.³² In 2021, the government allocated AMD317.6 million (approx. US\$695,000) to cover the costs of the CHDE and AMD6.3 million (approx. US\$14,000) for survey and clearance operations.³³ The level of funding provided in 2022 is not known. The national authorities do not provide direct funding to HALO, the only international clearance operator present in Armenia. HALO only conducted minimal survey of AP mined area in 2022.³⁴

Obtaining visas for Armenia is straightforward for HALO employees and HALO has not faced any significant difficulties in importing demining equipment when it has needed to do so. However, Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) undergo approval from relevant ministries and the CHDE and the process can be lengthy.

UNDP provides a range of capacity development activities to the CHDE. This includes support with NTS, TS, and other land release activities. In addition, UNDP has assisted the CHDE with renewing explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and information technology equipment; drafting operational plans; reviewing national mine action standards (NMAS), and strengthening risk education and coordination capacities.³⁵ UNDP and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) also supported the CHDE in installing Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core and training staff on its use.³⁶

In addition, UNDP and the GICHD also supported the CHDE to review and draft a new national mine action strategy.³⁷ The GICHD facilitated a strategy stakeholder workshop in Yerevan in December 2022. It also supported the CHDE in conducting a baseline assessment of the Armenia programme.³⁸ Furthermore, in its Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Russia reported that the International Mine Action Center within its armed forces trained 12 Armenian military personnel in 2022.³⁹ No other details were provided.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

The CHDE has previously reported that it deploys methods and tools to avoid damaging the environment where possible.⁴⁰ In May 2022, the CHDE reported that Armenia did not yet have a national mine action standard on environmental management, but planned to develop one.⁴¹ No update on any progress in this regard was available as at July 2023.

HALO seeks to minimise the environmental impact when it conducts survey and clearance in Armenia. It minimises fuel consumption by sharing vehicles; it does not burn vegetation during the clearance process and does not remove vegetation unnecessarily; it takes care not to contaminate water sources with fuels, lubricants, and paints; it takes rubbish away when it leaves a task; and removes any metal contamination. HALO also plans clearance operations around agricultural planting and harvesting cycles.⁴²

29 Emails from Ruben Arakelyan, CHDE, 8 June 2015; and Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 10 August 2020.

30 Emails from Stanislav Damjanovic, Country Focal Point, GICHD, 13 July 2022; and Ani Zakaryan, Head of Information Management, CHDE, 21 July 2022.

31 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022.

32 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

33 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022.

34 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2022.

35 Email from Karinée Khojayan, UNDP, 15 March 2023.

36 Emails from Karinée Khojayan, UNDP, 15 March 2023; and Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May 2023.

37 Ibid.

38 Email from Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May 2023.

39 Russia CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Forms F.

40 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022.

41 Ibid.

42 Emails from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 18 May 2022 and 16 March 2023.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

In May 2022, the CHDE reported that it did not have a gender policy or associated implementation plan but that gender had been mainstreamed in Armenia's draft national mine action strategy. No update was available as of July 2023. The CHDE reported in 2022 that during survey and community liaison activities, all groups affected by contamination were consulted, including women and children, and ethnic or minority groups. Furthermore, according to the CHDE the needs of women and children in affected communities are taken into account in prioritisation, planning, and tasking of survey and clearance operations. However, as of May 2022, the CHDE did not disaggregate mine action data by sex.⁴³

The CHDE says it offers equal employment opportunities for both men and women. In 2021, seventeen of the fifty CHDE employees were women (32%, down from 36% in 2020), while women held six of sixteen managerial positions. Two of six staff in the Operations Department were women, as were two staff in the training centre and five of six staff in the explosive

ordnance risk education (EORE) Group. As of May 2022, survey teams did not include representatives from different ethnic or minority groups.⁴⁴ No update was available as at July 2023.

HALO, in its limited recent activities in Armenia, disaggregates mine action data by age and sex. It only employed one staff member in Armenia in 2022, a female administrator.⁴⁵ While HALO is an equal opportunities employer, due to the local cultural context and nature of the work, the majority of staff it deploys in Armenia are men.⁴⁶ NTS and risk education training-of-trainer teams that worked in Armenia in 2022 comprised men only.⁴⁷ HALO's teams adhere to a gender-sensitive approach and relevant policies, and consider the needs of minority groups and internally displaced persons (IDPs). All tasks, however, are allocated by the CHDE, and HALO is not involved in task prioritisation.⁴⁸

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

The CHDE manages the national IMSMA database.⁴⁹ In 2022, with UNDP and GICHD support, the CHDE completed the installation of IMSMA Core, which had been delayed by COVID-19.⁵⁰ By May 2023, an in-country server had been set up and configured. Basic IMSMA CORE training was provided to CHDE staff in the summer of 2022, and two CHDE staff members attended the GICHD's advanced administrator training in Spiez, Switzerland, in May 2023.⁵¹

PLANNING AND TASKING

A draft National Strategic Plan on Mine Action was originally presented to the Armenian Government for approval in 2018. Since early 2021, however, the draft plan has been under review primarily due to the emergence of new challenges in the aftermath of the 2020 conflict.⁵² The strategy, along with the operational plans, were finalised and adopted by the CHDE Board in May 2023.⁵³ The main objectives of the original draft plan were to address, as a priority, AP mines in CHAs that have a humanitarian impact, and increasing community safety in support of the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.⁵⁴ No information is available on the contents of the reviewed strategy.

Tasking for clearance is based on CHDE criteria. Priority is given first to contaminated areas that are up to 1km away from a population centre, then to those near agricultural land, and finally to contaminated areas that negatively affect the environment. These are mostly located in the mountains. To optimise efficient deployment of resources, clearance plans are typically drawn up on a community-by-community basis.⁵⁵

43 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022.

44 Ibid.

45 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

46 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 18 May 2022.

47 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

48 Ibid.

49 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, CHDE, 19 March 2014.

50 Email from Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May 2023.

51 Emails from Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May and 23 June 2023.

52 Emails from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 10 August 2020 and 26 April 2021.

53 Email from Karinée Khojayan, UNDP, 10 July 2023.

54 Email from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 19 April 2019.

55 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, CHDE, 28 April 2017.

In 2022, the CHDE started a baseline NTS to determine the extent of new explosive ordnance contamination arising from the 2020 conflict, and planned to clear 50,000m² of explosive ordnance-contaminated area and to reduce a further 60,000m².⁵⁶ Priorities for clearance were to be defined when the NTS results were analysed.⁵⁷ In June 2022, the CHDE reported that it had finalised NTS for all of Syunik province.⁵⁸ There is no available information on whether the land release targets were achieved in 2022.

At the strategy stakeholder workshop in December 2022, the CHDE indicated it would like HALO to help clear contamination arising from the September 2022 incursion.⁵⁹ UNDP was due to support the clearance of 130,000m² of mined area in 2023.⁶⁰

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

The CHDE developed the Armenian NMAS, which were approved by the government in 2014.⁶¹ The CHDE has reported that these have been reviewed to ensure they are consistent with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and international best practice.⁶² In 2022, UNDP supported a review of the NMAS.⁶³

The overall quality of Armenia's NMAS on land release varies. While some chapters provide sufficient and good-quality information on national requirements, others tend to be overly prescriptive with sections that are more procedural. There are sections on "All Reasonable Effort", evidence of criteria, liability, and residual risk. Some are taken directly from the IMAS although the text has been adapted to the local context.⁶⁴ The CHDE has initiated a review of the

NMAS which could be completed by the end of 2023, and intends to develop a NMAS on accreditation.⁶⁵

The CHDE has been developing standard operating procedures (SOPs) for several years.⁶⁶ SOPs on manual mine clearance, battle area clearance (BAC), marking of hazardous areas, and medical support were all elaborated by 2018.⁶⁷ In 2020, the CHDE elaborated SOPs on Information Management, NTS, TS, EOD, and quality management (QM).⁶⁸ No update was available for further progress in 2022.

When conducting occasional deployments in Armenia, HALO operates under SOPs that were updated in line with those in Nagorno-Karabakh, which were accredited by the CHDE.⁶⁹

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

The GICHD supported the CHDE in conducting a Baseline Capacity Assessment of the Armenia programme in 2022.⁷⁰ With the focus on BAC in 2022, the CHDE was planning to deploy two more clearance teams,⁷¹ but it is not known whether this was achieved. In 2021, the CHDE deployed three NTS teams, each comprising a team leader and three surveyors, and two TS teams. This constituted an increase in the number of operational teams from the previous year, with the addition of two NTS teams and two TS teams.

In 2022, HALO did not have any staff dedicated to mine survey and release, but did deploy two NTS teams with a total of eight personnel that continued to work on BAC tasks assigned by the CHDE.⁷²

QM is conducted in accordance with IMAS and the NMAS. Quality assurance (QA) is conducted by dedicated officers who make regular field visits to inspect cleared land.⁷³

COVID-19 had no significant reported impact on operations during 2022.⁷⁴

56 Emails from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022; and Ani Zakaryan, CHDE, 21 July 2022.

57 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022.

58 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 13 June 2022.

59 Emails from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023; and David Crawford, HALO, 19 June 2023.

60 Email from Karinée Khojayan, UNDP, 15 March 2023.

61 Email from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 19 April 2019.

62 Emails from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 19 April 2019 and 26 April 2021.

63 Email from Karinée Khojayan, UNDP, 15 March 2023.

64 Email from Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May 2023.

65 Emails from Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May and 23 June 2023.

66 Email from Varsine Miskaryan, CHDE, 8 August 2016.

67 Email from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 8 August 2018.

68 Email from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 26 April 2021.

69 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 18 May 2022.

70 Email from Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May 2023.

71 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022.

72 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023; and David Crawford, HALO, 19 June 2023.

73 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, CHDE, 8 June 2015.

74 Emails from Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May and 24 July 2023; and Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE IN 2022

No comprehensive data on land release were available for 2022. As indicated above, UNDP supported CHDE with NTS, TS, and land release operations for AP mined area and other contamination in 2022,⁷⁵ but no other details were reported. HALO conducted NTS of three previously unrecorded AP legacy minefields (but dating from 1998) near Pambak village, in Gegharkunik province in 2022. The total area surveyed was 46,643m² and HALO identified three AP mines, one AP mine in each area.⁷⁶ HALO reported the three mines to CHDE, but does not know whether they were destroyed.⁷⁷ This contrasts with 2021 when, for the second consecutive year, no AP mined area was surveyed or cleared.⁷⁸

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

In 2021, it was reported that no target date had yet been set for the completion of partial mine clearance, due to the uncertainty over future capacity and funding.⁷⁹ Moreover, due to the new UXO contamination resulting from the 2020 conflict with Azerbaijan, in 2021 the CHDE had prioritised BAC and TS in part of Syunik, and NTS in the newly contaminated provinces of Gegharkunik, Syunik, and Tavush.⁸⁰

For the five years until the end of 2021, demining in Armenia has been slow and productivity rates low, with very little demining taking place. Armenia has in the past claimed that challenges in its mine and ERW clearance include the low level of contamination and the random distribution of mines, which creates obstacles for the effective and efficient implementation of TS and clearance activities, and the absence of donor funding.⁸¹

Table 3: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	N/K
2021	0
2020	0
2019	*0.02
2018	*0.01
Total	0.03

N/K = not known. * Area rounded up.

The CHDE did launch a baseline NTS in 2022 and planned to clear mined and battle areas of 50,000m² within the year, with priorities to be determined following the completion of the NTS.⁸² The outcome of the survey is not known.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

According to the CHDE, Armenia has included provisions for addressing previously unknown mined areas following completion in national strategies. It is reported to have a limited but sustainable capacity to conduct survey and clearance. In addition to its own staff, the CHDE reports that it can also recruit additional staff from an internal roster of trained people.⁸³

75 Emails from Karinée Khojayan, UNDP, 15 March and 10 July 2023.
76 Emails from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2022; and David Crawford, HALO, 14 July 2023.
77 Email from David Crawford, HALO, 14 July 2023.
78 Emails from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022; and Ani Zakaryan, CHDE, 21 July 2022.
79 Emails from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 19 April 2019 and 26 April 2021.
80 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022.
81 Emails from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 10 August 2020; and Ruben Arakelyan, CHDE, 28 April 2017.
82 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022.
83 Emails from Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May and 24 July 2023.

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: MASSIVE,
BUT NOT QUANTIFIED**

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

3.52km²

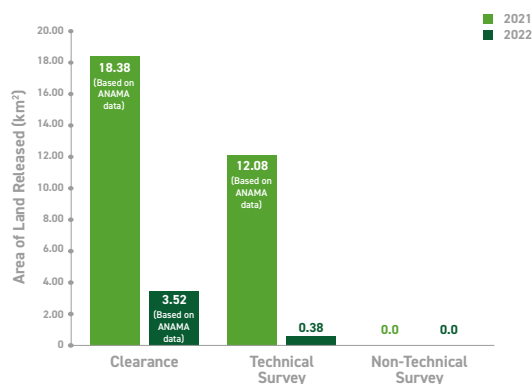
(BASED ON ANAMA DATA)

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

9,190

(INCLUDING 25 MINES
DESTROYED IN SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The six-week armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020 ended with Azerbaijan regaining control over seven districts and part of Nagorno-Karabakh (formally referred to in Azerbaijan as the Karabakh Economic Region of Azerbaijan).¹ The area along the former Line of Contact (LoC) between Armenia and Azerbaijan is heavily mined, leading to a huge area of anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination falling under Azerbaijan's control. A massive effort to survey and clear areas containing mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) continues, although the pace slowed markedly in 2022. The Mine Action Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (ANAMA) reported clearance of only 3.52km² of AP mined area in 2022, a huge drop on the previous year. Land release by the end of March 2023 is said to have covered 746km² of area affected by mines and ERW although this accounts for only 9% of total estimated contamination. On 19 September 2023, Azerbaijan launched a 24-hour large-scale military offensive which resulted in it regaining control of the rest of Nagorno-Karabakh.² Nagorno-Karabakh is now fully under Azerbaijan's jurisdiction and control. The leader of the de facto Nagorno-Karabakh authorities, Samvel Shahramanyan, signed a decree to dissolve all governmental institutions by 1 January 2024.³

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Azerbaijan should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- ANAMA should prioritise efforts to conduct evidence-based survey to better define the location and extent of the contamination and enhance planning and prioritisation of clearance.
- ANAMA should continue to capitalise on the use of the available technologies, including the Remote Aerial Minefield Survey (RAMS), to conduct more non-technical survey (NTS) and reduce the size of its suspected hazardous areas (SHAs).

1 Following a Presidential Decree in July 2021, Azerbaijan formally uses the term "the Karabakh Economic Region of Azerbaijan", which covers Khankendi city and Aghjabadi, Aghdam, Barda, Fuzuli, Khojali, Khojavend, Susha and Tartar regions.

2 "Azerbaijan halts Karabakh offensive after ceasefire deal with Armenian separatists", *BBC*, 21 September 2023, at: <https://bbc.in/3rCVK0e>.

3 "Nagorno-Karabakh's breakaway government says it will dissolve itself", *The Guardian*, 28 September 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/45ozvJ7>.

- ANAMA should consider the creation of technical working groups (TWGs) to identify and share lessons learned and promote best practice in land release.
- ANAMA should continue to strive to ensure that the revised National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), known as the Azerbaijan National Mine Action Requirements (ANMAR), are formally adopted and are fully understood and routinely implemented by all entities conducting clearance.

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Mine Action Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (ANAMA)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- ANAMA
- The Demining Battalion of the Ministry of Defence
- Ministry of Emergency Situations
- Ministry of Internal Affairs
- The State Border Service
- Four national commercial demining companies, each with an international commercial sub-contractor:
 - Qaya Safety Solutions partnering with SafeLane Global
 - Safe Point partnering with RPS (a Tetra Tech company)
 - Alpha Demining partnering with Altay Group
 - Azerbaijan Demining Company partnering with Piper
- International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) based in Azerbaijan)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Türkiye Armed Forces

OTHER ACTORS

- APOPO
- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of contamination from AP mines in Azerbaijan is currently unknown but is certainly massive, especially along the 254km-long, 5-km wide LoC that previously existed between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces. The defensive belts of berms, anti-tank ditches, and barbed wire along the LoC contain huge quantities of both AP and anti-vehicle (AV) mines, and the zone is now recognised as one of the largest mined areas in the world.⁴ The areas along the LoC were heavily mined over the three decades after 1990 by all parties to the conflict.⁵ Further minefields and other explosive ordnance contamination, including abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO), are found in areas previously occupied by Armenia outside the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Since the Russian-brokered ceasefire agreement, also known as the Trilateral Statement, came into effect on 10 November 2020, Azerbaijan has regained full control of the seven districts adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh: the four districts (Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Qubadli, and Zangilan) over which it took back control from Armenia, and the three districts (Aghdam, Kalbajar, and Lachin) from which Armenia agreed to withdraw its forces and return the districts to Azerbaijani

control.⁶ The fragile ceasefire has been interrupted by sporadic fighting by both parties to the conflict.

Azerbaijan also regained control of a substantial part of Nagorno-Karabakh, the rest of which was patrolled by Russian peacekeeping forces but still governed by the de facto Nagorno-Karabakh authorities⁷ until 20 September 2023 when Azerbaijan regained control of all remaining areas of Nagorno-Karabakh (See the Mine Action Review *Clearing the Mines 2023* report on Nagorno-Karabakh for further information).

The full extent of contamination across Azerbaijan will only be better known after completion of a countrywide survey that includes the areas it has newly regained. ANAMA has been surveying areas that came back under Azerbaijani control since November 2022, deploying a variety of methodologies including the Remote Aerial Minefield Survey (RAMS) multispectral data analysis, mine detection dogs (MDDs), and technical survey dogs (TSDs). In August 2023, it was also testing the use of mine detection rats (MDRs) to help identify SHAs as part of the baseline survey.

4 Online interview with Steiner Essen, Senior Mine Action Consultant, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Guy Rhodes, Chief Technical Advisor, UNDP, 29 April 2021; and email from Guy Rhodes, UNDP, 23 June 2021.

5 Statement of Armenia, APMBIC Intersessional Meetings (online), 22–24 June 2021.

6 See, e.g., International Crisis Group (ICG), "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: A Visual Explainer", last updated 7 May 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3uiOou2>.

7 ICG, "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: A Visual Explainer", Last updated 7 May 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3uiOou2>.

At the end of 2022, ANAMA has identified 1,008km² of mixed AP mines and AV mines contamination across nine confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs).⁸ The ongoing NTS and technical survey (TS) conducted in the regained territories identified a total of 8,234km² of SHAs contaminated with mines and other explosive ordnance. Of this, 1,479km² are classified as high threat and 6,755km² as medium to low threat areas.⁹ According to ANAMA's preliminary assessment, mined areas consist of roughly 60% flat agricultural land, 30% grassy hills, and 10% mountains.¹⁰ Between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023, national operator International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF) surveyed 2,162km² of land on both sides of the former LoC and estimated 782km² of SHAs.¹¹ Between the Trilateral Statement in November 2020 and the end of 2022, 160

landmine incidents occurred, killing or injuring 279 people. Of this total, 130 were victims of AP mines.¹²

Areas of highest mine contamination include a mix of AP and AV mines. ANAMA has found several cases of AP mines improvised with AV mines, or Armenian-produced OZM-type mines with booby-traps. Some of the cases of improvised mines were found in areas beyond the former LoC, including in cemeteries, along riverbanks, or in destroyed settlements. Improvised mine contamination is believed to cover approximately 5% of the total mined area.¹³ Demining conducted over an area of 3.41km² across 21 fields in high threat areas revealed a density of more than 3,000 mines per square kilometre.¹⁴

Table 1: Mined areas by type of contamination (at end 2022)¹⁵

Location	Type of mine contamination	CHAs (km ²)
Former LOC	AP mines	585
	AV mines	149
	Mixed AP mines and AV mines	186
Other regained territories	Mixed AP mines and AV mines	88
Totals		1,008

Table 2: Confirmed mined area by district (at end 2022)¹⁶

Districts	CHAs (km ²)
Aghdam	300
Fuzuli	287
Jabrayil	8
Kalbajar	118
Khojavend	63
Lachin	18
Qubadli	6
Tartar	207
Zangilan	1
Total	1,008

According to ANAMA, Armenia laid mines in haste, including while retreating in 2020. Mines have been found in recently cultivated land, with mine ploughs abandoned nearby. Armenia denied the claims, stating that the retreating

Armenian forces had had scarcely enough time to remove the bodies of the 1,500 Armenian soldiers who had been killed during the fighting.¹⁷ Between August 2022 and January 2023, ANAMA said that it detected and neutralised 3,166 mines that were made in Armenia in 2021, including types PMN-E, PMN-2, and TM-62.¹⁸ This, Azerbaijan claims, indicates that Armenia continued to emplace mines even after the Trilateral Statement. In January 2023, Azerbaijan appealed to the International Court of Justice to "urgently order Armenia to stop the laying of land mines and booby traps on Azerbaijani territory and disclose the location of those already planted." Armenia rejected the allegations saying that it had "laid mines on its own territory as a defensive tactic to combat Azerbaijani aggression".¹⁹

Azerbaijan has requested "the immediate release of information by Armenia on the location of the remaining minefields".²⁰ Armenia maintains that most of the mines were emplaced by Azerbaijan in the early years of the conflict to deter Nagorno-Karabakh forces.²¹ Following extensive international mediation, Armenia released some minefield records providing information on 263,067 AP mines and 127,427 AV mines as well as other explosive devices.

⁸ Email from Ramil Azizov, Operations Manager, ANAMA, 17 May 2023.

⁹ Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 28 July 2023.

¹⁰ ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 3.

¹¹ Email from Donald Macdonald, Survey Advisor, UNDP, 21 August 2023.

¹² Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023.

¹³ Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

¹⁴ ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 3.

¹⁵ Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Statement of Armenia, APMBC Intersessional Meetings (online), 22–24 June 2021.

¹⁸ ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, pp. 2 and 4; and Statement of Azerbaijan, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

¹⁹ "Azerbaijan to UN court: Armenia must stop laying land mines", *AP News*, 31 January 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3S5zk2B>.

²⁰ Statement of Azerbaijan, Intersessional Meetings (online), 22–24 July 2021.

²¹ Statement of Armenia, Intersessional Meetings (online), 22–24 July 2021.

According to ANAMA, these records constitute only 5% of the regained areas and less than one third of the high-threat areas. In Aghdam district, one of the seven reclaimed by Azerbaijan in 2020, the map revealed the presence of 97,000 AP and AV mines.²² The accuracy of the maps provided by Armenia has yet to be fully determined, but Azerbaijan said only some 25% of the data had proven to be reliable.²³

A report by the International Crisis Group in May 2023 cautioned that Azerbaijan's allegations that Armenia continued to transport and emplace mines on its territories create an "unhelpful" impression that the issue is political rather than humanitarian, and called on Azerbaijan to "depoliticise" support for mine clearance by making it clear it sees demining as a humanitarian imperative not linked to its conflict with Armenia.²⁴ Azerbaijan says it has published photographs and documents that attest to the presence of Armenian-produced landmines.²⁵

In August 2022, ANAMA reported that systematic NTS was being conducted using European Commission Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) funding started in April/May 2022. According to ANAMA, evidence-based TS is conducted prior to clearance and according to the national work plan.²⁶ In November 2022, the President of Azerbaijan signed off a decree approving the "First State Program on the Great Return to the liberated territories of Azerbaijan" (the "Great Return" programme), which aims to resettle 34,500 families between 2022 and 2026 in three stages. The first involves the rebuilding of social infrastructure in 227 cities, towns, and villages in the regained areas, contingent on clearance of 147km² for residential areas by the end of 2024, as well as the clearance

of additional land for agriculture and infrastructure to support residential areas.²⁷ The second and third stages of the programme were not announced in detail, but were said to draw on the lessons learned from the first stage.²⁸ The endorsement of the "Great Return" programme came one month after the President of Azerbaijan stated that Azerbaijan needs nearly 30 years and a staggering bill of US\$ 25 billion to "solve the issues related to demining".²⁹

Since the end of the 2020 conflict, ANAMA has undertaken massive clearance efforts in the regained territories, prioritising residential areas, agricultural areas, areas of ecological importance, social infrastructure, roads, and water sources.³⁰ ANAMA has also been amassing international support through various fora, including the organisation of several international conferences in Baku, and attending APMB meetings to mobilise international support.

Mine contamination in Azerbaijan is predominantly the consequence of the 1988–94 armed conflict with Armenia, which saw landmines laid by both sides. During the most recent conflict in 2020, media reported that the retreating Armenian forces planted mines in civilian infrastructure, lamp posts, canals, road junctions, rural and urban paths, courtyard entrances, cemeteries, and riverbanks.³¹ In 2018, ANAMA had estimated that mine contamination in areas occupied by Armenia covered between 350km² and 830km², and contained between 50,000 and 100,000 mines.³² Following the subsequent surveys conducted in areas where Azerbaijan subsequently gained access, has proved to be a significant underestimate.

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Azerbaijan is also suspected to be contaminated with cluster munition remnants (CMR) and other ERW: both unexploded ordnance (UXO) and AXO, the extent of which is not known (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Azerbaijan for further information).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action, which was established by Presidential Decree 854 in 1998, initiated humanitarian demining in 2000. In February 2021, again by presidential decree, ANAMA was restructured and given

the status of a public legal entity as the Mine Action Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan.³³ The rebranded ANAMA has the mandate to plan, coordinate, and oversee humanitarian demining by national and international operators.³⁴ ANAMA

22 Statement of Azerbaijan, Intersessional Meetings (online), 22–24 June 2021; "Armenia and Azerbaijan exchange detainees for mine maps", *Eurasianet*, 23 June 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3gXYWdx>; and ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 4.

23 Statement of Azerbaijan, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

24 ICG, "Defusing Azerbaijan's Landmine Challenge", 31 May 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/30ep6t8>.

25 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 23 August 2023.

26 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

27 Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), "Landmines in Azerbaijan continue to pose a lethal threat to peace and development", 22 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3DCZxgD>.

28 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023.

29 "Azerbaijan needs nearly 30 years and \$25 billion to solve issues related to demining – President Ilham Aliyev", *Trend News Agency*, 13 October 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3qe8edY>.

30 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023, and: Centre for Analysis of Economic Reforms and Communication of the Republic of Azerbaijan, "State Program on the Great Return to the liberated territories of Azerbaijan", 17 November 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3DDz9D1>.

31 "Mines, Karabakh and Armenia's Crisis", *New Eastern Europe*, 16 April 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3vezeaC>.

32 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018", p. 5.

33 "Azerbaijan establishes Mine Action Agency", APA news, 15 January 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/35MhtEu>.

34 ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 7.

has a national headquarters in Baku and two regional offices in Horadiz and Goygol.³⁵ In 2021, a national mine action law was drafted with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). As at July 2023, however, it was still pending approval.³⁶

Prior to the 2020 conflict, ANAMA had been conducting demining operations with two contracted national operators: Dayag-Relief Azerbaijan (RA) and IEPF. In March 2020, RA's field personnel were incorporated within ANAMA while RA as an organisation continued to provide logistical support to ANAMA.³⁷ Since the end of the 2020 conflict, both ANAMA and clearance operations in Azerbaijan have been rapidly scaled up to address the significant mine and ERW contamination newly under Azerbaijan's control. An interministerial mine action working group, chaired by ANAMA, continued to meet twice a month in 2022 and included Azerbaijan's most significant ministries, including of defence, interior, and emergency situations, as well as the State Border Service.³⁸

The Azerbaijani government has been funding the vast majority (90%)³⁹ of the mine action programme's operating costs,⁴⁰ and mine action is considered a national priority by the government of Azerbaijan.⁴¹ It is integrated into the Azerbaijan Socio-Economic Development plan 2019–2023 and is considered a key contributor to meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁴² Azerbaijan has adopted national SDG 18: mine action for safe return, settlement, recovery, prosperity, and peace.⁴³

ANAMA has set the following key priorities for international assistance: enhanced planning through the use of data management and technology, including scaling up RAMS capacity; TS and feasibility studies for accelerating and streamlining humanitarian mine clearance; increased demining capacity through establishment and accreditation of additional national non-governmental organisations (NGOs); continued support to the institutional capacity building of ANAMA; an increase in ANAMA's mechanical demining capacities; further development of MDD training

and advising capacity; establishment of and support for female demining teams; demarcation and permanent fencing; explosive ordnance risk education (EORE); and mine victim assistance.⁴⁴

ANAMA says that it stands ready to actively engage with potential donors and organisations interested in contributing to mine action in Azerbaijan.⁴⁵ On 31 March–1 April 2022, ANAMA and UNDP organised an international conference on Mine Action and the SDGs in Baku. Among recommendations made at the conference were the establishment of an in-country donor coordination mechanism, such as a Mine Action Forum, and of technical working groups (TWGs) to address key mine action challenges.⁴⁶ ANAMA also organised an international conference "Mine Action: Challenges and Opportunities" in Baku in November 2022.

UNDP provides strategic and technical capacity development to ANAMA.⁴⁷ In 2020, the capacity development project was extended to 2023.⁴⁸ UNDP has supported the creation of an enabling mine action environment, including for the drafting of the national mine action law, and the revision of the NMAS. Analysis by UNDP in May 2022 of ANAMA's "National Needs and Priorities" informs the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, foreign diplomats, and donors. A third edition of the report was published in January 2023. UNDP has also drafted a generic mine action strategy, which was submitted to ANAMA in October 2022 for its consideration. UNDP also conducted a gender and mine action needs assessment, leading to the adoption of a gender policy and strategy and the organisation of a workshop on gender in March 2023. Additional consultancies on victim assistance and EORE are planned for 2023.⁴⁹

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) also supported ANAMA in 2022, in particular with respect to information management. The GICHD provided the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core to ANAMA along with training on its use.⁵⁰

35 UNDP, assessment report, "Gender Organisational Assessment of Mine Action Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (ANAMA)", February 2023, p. 12.

36 Email from Mark Buswell, Strategic Advisor, UNDP, 20 March 2023.

37 Email from Nijat Karimov, ANAMA, 28 July 2020.

38 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023; interview with Vugar Suleymanov, Chair of the Board, ANAMA; and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, Baku, 29 March 2022; and presentation by ANAMA, International Conference on Humanitarian Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals, Baku, 31 March–1 April 2022.

39 Presentation by Hikmet Hajiyev, Assistant to the President, Head of Division for Foreign Policy, Office of the President, Baku, 25 May 2023.

40 Emails from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June and 7 July 2022.

41 ANAMA, quarterly report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 3.

42 UNDP, assessment report, "Gender Organisational Assessment of ANAMA", February 2023, p. 10.

43 Presentation by Huseyn Huseynov, Head of Department for Sustainable Development and Social Policy, Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Aghdam, 24 May 2023.

44 ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 2.

45 Ibid., p. 12.

46 Statement of the International Conference on Humanitarian Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals, Baku, 31 March–1 April 2022.

47 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023.

48 Email from Nijat Karimov, ANAMA, 21 May 2021.

49 Email from Mark Buswell, UNDP, 20 March 2023.

50 ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 8.

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with ANAMA in December 2021, with funding from the United States (US) and Canada. MAG provided a 10-month supervisor training course in 2022, with 16 ANAMA trainees successfully graduating from the course. Trainees also received refresher training on MDDs and mechanical assets deployment. A separate two-week refresher training was provided to 19 ANAMA supervisors. A post-training workshop was held on 19 December 2022, which was attended by the Head and Deputy Head of ANAMA's training and methodological assurance department.⁵¹ MAG had previously been present in Azerbaijan in 2000–02, training RA personnel.⁵²

ANAMA is also receiving capacity development support from the European Union (EU), France, the United Kingdom (UK), the US Department of State; the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and the Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI).⁵³ The ICRC provides training for ANAMA site paramedics⁵⁴ and conducts risk education and other activities.⁵⁵ The Counter Explosive Defence Engagement office of UK Ministry of Defence is providing technical support to ANAMA on explosive ordnance disposal (EOD).⁵⁶ MLI has been operational in Azerbaijan since 2005, with an MDD partnership programme. It has provided 60 MDDs to ANAMA

to date and agreed a new two-year partnership in 2021, funded by Azerbaijan and the private sector in the US.⁵⁷

In 2022, ANAMA stepped up its operational capacity and established new mobile field camps for deminers in Aghdam, Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Khojavend, Lachin, Shusha, and Zangilan. It planned a further increase in the number of mobile camps in 2023. In addition, a base camp was set up in Shusha and a training centre in Goygol.⁵⁸ ANAMA plans to use these mobile camps to expand mine clearance operations. The mobile container-type camps can be readily moved to other areas, depending on the location of demining operations.⁵⁹

Türkiye reported training Azerbaijan Armed Forces personnel in mine action, mine clearance, and mine detection, and mine/improvised explosive device (IED) awareness, in addition to deploying Turkish military demining teams and machines (see section below, Operators and Operational Tools).⁶⁰

In July 2022, the EU allocated € 2.25 million to support demining in Azerbaijan.⁶¹ In October 2022, the President of Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev, addressed the sixth Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia saying that "International experts estimate that Azerbaijan needs nearly 30 years and 25 billion US dollars to solve issues related to demining."⁶²

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Azerbaijan's newly revised standards were still to be adopted at July 2023. The draft Azerbaijan National Mine Action Requirements (ANMAR), which cover all demining activities, include a dedicated chapter on Environmental Protection.⁶³ According to the ANMAR, "these requirements shall be complied with to ensure that the environment is not degraded by mine action work and land is returned in a state that is similar to, or where possible better than, before mine action operations commenced, and that permits its intended use." The Environmental Protection chapter includes information on Azerbaijan's mine action environmental management system and requirements for the identification, assessment, and mitigation of environmental aspects. These include waste disposal, water supplies, burning and removal of vegetation, animals, open burning and demolition, environmental aspects of mechanical operations, emergency preparedness, monitoring, cultural and historical sites, and completion and remediation.

The Government of Azerbaijan may also require the conduct of a formal environmental impact assessment in relation to large or publicly significant mine action projects, or ones that will take place in areas of known environmental vulnerability.⁶⁴

51 Email from Jeanette Dijkstra, Programme Manager, MAG, 16 May 2023.

52 Presentation by MAG, International Conference on Humanitarian Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals, Baku, 31 March–1 April 2022; and email from Olivier David, Country Director, MAG, 25 April 2022.

53 Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022.

54 ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 8.

55 ICRC, "Azerbaijan: Activity highlights for 2022", February 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3PmE07w>.

56 Presentation by Bert Appleton, Head of the Counter Explosive Defence Engagement office of UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) on "Building capacity through Government to Government (G2G) Initiatives", 25 May 2023.

57 Presentation by Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI), International Conference on Humanitarian Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals, Baku, 31 March–1 April 2022.

58 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023.

59 "Azerbaijan Plans to Clear 40,000 Hectares of Liberated Land from Armenian Landmines", *Caspian News*, 30 January 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3FuQYW8>.

60 Statement of Türkiye to the Eighth International Pledging Conference to the APMBC, 24 March 2023; and Türkiye Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Forms D and I.

61 "EU allocates additional €4.25 mln to demining of Azerbaijani territories", *APA*, 11 July 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3DLSDW5>.

62 "Azerbaijan needs nearly 30 years and \$25 billion to solve issues related to demining – President İlham Aliyev", *Trend News Agency*, 13 October 2022.

63 Emails from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022.

64 ANMAR, Section IV Management Systems, Chapter 9 Environmental Protection.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Azerbaijan has much to do to ensure gender and diversity in mine action. In 2022, UNDP, with UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) funding, supported ANAMA in reviewing gender in mine action, and in partnership with ANAMA developed ANAMA's Gender Policy and Strategy documents.⁶⁵ UNDP carried out a gender needs assessment, which led to the drafting of a gender policy and strategy. A workshop on gender was organised in March 2023, and as at July 2023, UNDP was due to submit a draft strategy on gender.⁶⁶ The assessment underlines ANAMA's willingness to advance gender and diversity mainstreaming.⁶⁷

The Azerbaijani Code of Labour denounces any type of discrimination in labour relations, including between men and women. It does, however, include so-called "protective measures" which legally prohibit women from being hired into a wide array of jobs. Traditional norms and gender stereotyping also lead to women and men not being equally included in the different organisational levels. UNDP's assessment underlines the fact that concerns over women's reproductive health (for example, regarding pregnancy) are deeply rooted cultural norms that aim to protect women, but do present barriers to women's participation in the labour force.⁶⁸

In ANAMA, women are mostly concentrated in the headquarters in Baku and cover administrative roles. In ANAMA's headquarter, women constitute 31% of the team, but only 5% of the total employees in ANAMA's suboffices.⁶⁹ No, or very few, women are in operations or in leadership positions. On the other hand, few men are in non-operational roles, for example in the human resources (HR) department.⁷⁰ Women make up around 8% of ANAMA's total workforce, mainly employed in administrative positions. In 2022, no women were trained in demining in Azerbaijan.⁷¹

ANAMA has been working to mainstream gender and diversity and increase the proportion of women in its

workforce. Through the EU-UNDP funded project, MAG, in partnership with IEPF, will support ANAMA in deploying two fully equipped, women-only multi-task teams conducting clearance, battle area clearance (BAC), TS, animal detection systems, risk education, and NTS in 2023. MAG and IEPF will also establish two gender balanced/mixed teams through the 12-month US State Department Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM/WRA) funding. All four teams began training in June 2023. APOPO will develop the MDD capacity of the four teams alongside the team's deployment.⁷²

According to ANAMA, survey and community liaison personnel are mostly from affected communities and there are no restrictions on the basis of ethnic groups or religious affiliation. Risk education teams create a network of affected communities, which include women and children. The government's reconstruction and rehabilitation programme is aimed at returning internally displaced persons (IDPs), including women and children, and ensuring sustainable development of repatriated communities in a safe environment.⁷³ Due to the fact that the regained areas are not populated, determination of the baseline of contamination is currently not through inclusive consultation with women, girls, boys, and men. However, ANAMA plans for survey teams to be gender balanced.⁷⁴

The rapid upscaling of ANAMA's mine action operations taking place provides a valuable opportunity for ANAMA to improve the proportion of women in operational roles and to mainstream gender and diversity throughout its programme. The development of the gender strategy and the goals set to create female operational teams are hoped to translate into improved female participation in the mine action sector, both in terms of inclusion in positions other than administrative ones, and increase the overall number of females in the workforce.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Azerbaijan's newly revised national mine action standards include the establishment of a single, unified, information management system, which ANAMA is implementing.⁷⁵ As at May 2023, ANAMA was still transitioning to IMSMA Core but had established an Online ArcGIS Portal.⁷⁶

65 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023.

66 Email from Mark Buswell, UNDP, 20 March 2023.

67 UNDP, "Gender Organisational Assessment of ANAMA", Report, February 2023, p. 4.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid., p. 11.

70 Ibid., p. 4.

71 ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 11; and interview with Samir Poladov and Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, Baku, 24 May 2023.

72 Emails from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023; Jeanette Dijkstra, MAG, 16 May and 3 July 2023; online interview with Greg Crowther, Director of Programmes, MAG, 26 July 2023; and UNDP, "Gender Organisational Assessment of Mine Action Agency of ANAMA", Report, February 2023, p. 11.

73 Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022.

74 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

75 Presentation by ANAMA, International Conference on Humanitarian Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals, Baku, 31 March–1 April 2022.

76 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023.

In 2022, UNDP and the GICHD supported ANAMA's information management efforts, including evaluations and assessment on how to implement IMSMA Core in compliance with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) 5.0. The following was achieved in 2022: digitisation and standardisation of data collection forms; production of most land release output and quality management (QM) forms, production of multiple dashboards demonstrating different outputs and analysis; and data cleaning and migration.⁷⁷ As at May 2023, an IMSMA charter on mine action procedures had been signed by the prime minister, and ANAMA was contracting a local company to house its IMSMA database.⁷⁸

ANAMA's efforts, including data quality checks and system improvements to improve the quality of data in the mine action database are ongoing.⁷⁹ Verification occurs initially at the regional level and then at headquarters. With the significant upscaling of operations and area of responsibilities since 2020, the progress reporting period was reduced from two weeks to one.⁸⁰ ANAMA plans to generate daily progress reports once it has migrated to IMSMA Core.⁸¹

All data on clearance operations, including those of the military, are reported centrally to ANAMA.⁸² But despite improvements in information management, ANAMA does not yet fully disaggregate survey, clearance, and contamination data related to AP mine contamination from battle area data related to other types of explosive ordnance.

PLANNING AND TASKING

The existing national mine action strategy was for 2013–18. Its main aims were to continue mine and ERW clearance in support of government development projects and to provide safe conditions for the local population in affected regions.⁸³ The strategy expired at the end of 2018 and had not been replaced as of writing. As at March 2023, UNDP had developed and submitted to ANAMA a new mine action strategy but ANAMA was said to be working on a second strategy with the government.⁸⁴

According to its January 2023 progress report, ANAMA said that the area cleared of landmines and ERW so far constitutes around 6.9% of the overall high-, medium-, and low-threat areas. The work plan for 2023 foresaw a massive (and highly improbable) 500km² of release through clearance, and the draft strategy for the medium term is to further increase clearance capacity to achieve output of 650km² annually.⁸⁵ This includes all forms of explosive ordnance clearance, as well as visual search of battle areas, which is not clearance as the term is understood in mine action. ANAMA foresees that, over the long term, this level of predicted output will not be maintained, once high-priority areas have been cleared and only high-density, but low threat/priority areas remain.⁸⁶

ANAMA coordinates the mine action activities of several state implementing agencies, NGOs, and commercial contractors.⁸⁷

ANAMA performs NTS of polygons prior to tasking operators on clearance,⁸⁸ but this is more akin to task preparation rather than full survey. Thus, most polygons selected and prioritised by the Cabinet of Ministers and tasked by ANAMA for release have not been subject to rigorous NTS in advance. IEPF is the only organisation tasked by ANAMA to conduct NTS and generate hazardous area polygons, with support from UNDP, but despite IEPF's experience in survey, its technical and human capacity are limited due to insufficient funding.⁸⁹

The Cabinet of Ministers, as the highest level executive body in the country, determines which polygons are cleared with priorities are set in accordance with rehabilitation and reconstruction plans in the regained territories.⁹⁰ According to ANAMA'S quarterly report on progress of January 2023, in accordance with its policy of ensuring the return of IDPs, the government prioritises the demining of areas of high importance such as main access roads, key infrastructure (highways, railroads, and electricity lines), agriculture, and planned residential areas.⁹¹ Accordingly, highly contaminated areas do not necessarily equate to areas that are a high priority for clearance. According to ANAMA, much of the former LOC will not be cleared for years, with the exception of areas where construction of infrastructure is required.⁹²

77 Email from Mark Buswell, UNDP, 20 March 2023.

78 Interview with Samir Poladov and Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, Baku, 24 May 2023.

79 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023.

80 Emails from Nijat Karimov, ANAMA, 21 May 2021; and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022.

81 Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022.

82 Interview with Vugar Suleymanov and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, Baku, 29 March 2022.

83 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA 2 May 2018.

84 Email from Mark Buswell, UNDP, 20 March 2023.

85 ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 10.

86 Ibid.; and interview with Samir Poladov and Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, Baku, 24 May 2023.

87 ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 9.

88 Interview with Samir Poladov and Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, Baku, 24 May 2023.

89 Interview with UNDP, Baku, 24 May 2023; and email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 23 August 2023.

90 Interview with Samir Poladov and Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, Baku, 24 May 2023; presentation by ANAMA, International Conference on Humanitarian Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals, Baku, 31 March–1 April 2022; and email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022; and Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023.

91 ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, pp. 3, 5, and 8.

92 Interview with Samir Poladov and Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, Baku, 24 May 2023.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

The ANMAR were originally adopted in 2001 and then revised in 2003, 2004, and 2010.⁹³ In 2021, all chapters of the ANMAR were fully revised in line with IMAS.⁹⁴ As at June 2023, the revised standards were still in the process of being formally adopted,⁹⁵ but had been provided to all operators.⁹⁶ It is extremely important that the revised standards are formally adopted, as the existing standards do not allow for land release through NTS.

One of the challenges of conducting NTS in the regained territories is that many of the areas are unpopulated and therefore no local communities are present who can be asked about contamination.⁹⁷ To overcome this challenge, drones are accredited as an NTS tool and are used to identify areas suspected of contamination, despite their limitation in areas covered with vegetation. Due to this limitation, ANAMA systematically follows RAMS NTS with technical survey. When no evidence of contamination is found, areas are cancelled. However, this process is yet to be formalised into a standard. ANAMA reported that in some cases, the drones discovered the presence of minefields in very unexpected areas where contamination was unlikely to be found by any other means of information.

Azerbaijan faces the challenge of demining in urban areas with a high metal-content soil.⁹⁸ According a May 2023 report by the International Crisis Group, data on explosions of ordnance should be a crucial component of NTS in Azerbaijan, pointing to an experience in Cambodia where surveys helped shrink the area earmarked for demining by one third. This was made possible by gathering testimonies from locals, mine maps, data about deaths and injuries from mines, and aerial or satellite imagery to locate old military installations.⁹⁹ According to ANAMA, all incidents (including involving the military) are plotted in maps, which can serve as evidence points. ANAMA said that the demand for clearance is so high, however, that it is not always possible to conduct TS each time there is an accident involving a munition.¹⁰⁰

ANAMA takes into account planned land use in its prioritisation and tasking, and all clearance is conducted to three metres' depth in the plots where foundations will be laid for construction.¹⁰¹ In its January 2023 report, ANAMA referenced an Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) technical assessment visit report, which suggested that to speed up clearance and reduce the risk to deminers, "a mix of mine-resistant heavy plant (bulldozers, backhoe loaders, and similar protected earth moving machinery)" was needed.¹⁰²

At present, only hazard signs and not also fencing are placed at the edge of each polygon, even when explosive ordnance contamination is known to continue beyond the edge of the cleared polygon. ANAMA said it is considering using fencing, in addition to hazard signs, for polygons in which people will be returned and communities established. In addition, at least 50m² is cleared from the polygon boundary.¹⁰³

ANAMA delivered on its plan to train operators on the revised standards in 2022.¹⁰⁴ A further review of the ANMAR was underway as at May 2023, and the results were expected to be issued in the second half of 2023.¹⁰⁵ Together with ANAMA and UNDP, MAG is supporting the evaluation and revision of 29 mine action standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the revised national standards. As at May 2023, 10 of the 30 SOPs had been updated and ANAMA expected the process to be completed within six months.¹⁰⁶ In 2023, ANAMA was planning to organise training sessions on 22 different topics for mine clearance personnel of all agencies.¹⁰⁷ UNDP says more work is required to implement NTS and disaggregate data.¹⁰⁸ In 2022, survey and clearance data of AP mined area was disaggregated for the first time from other types of explosive ordnance, although disaggregation did not extend to district-specific survey and clearance or the numbers of AP mines destroyed.

93 Email from Tural Mammadov, ANAMA, 19 October 2016.

94 Interview with Vugar Suleymanov and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, Baku, 29 March 2022.

95 Interview with Samir Poladov and Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, Baku, 24 May 2023.

96 Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022.

97 Ibid.

98 Presentation of Azerbaijan, Intersessional Meetings, 19–21 June 2023.

99 ICG, "Defusing Azerbaijan's Landmine Challenge", 31 May 2023.

100 Interview with Samir Poladov and Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, Baku, 24 May 2023.

101 Ibid.; and email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 19 July 2023.

102 ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 7.

103 Interview with Samir Poladov and Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, Baku, 24 May 2023.

104 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023.

105 Email from Mark Buswell, UNDP, 20 March 2023.

106 Email from Jeanette Dijkstra, MAG, 16 May 2023; and interview with Samir Poladov and Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, Baku, 24 May 2023.

107 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023.

108 Email from Mark Buswell, UNDP, 20 March 2023.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

ANAMA has undergone a significant restructuring and upscaling following the conflict with Armenia in 2020.¹⁰⁹ According to UNDP, ANAMA had initially planned to train, equip, and deploy an additional 100 deminers per month in order to respond to the surge in need since the end of the 2020 conflict. This monthly upscaling rate, however, could not be sustained and ANAMA has been encouraging the expansion of other operator capacities instead, including a significant commercial base, as well as seeking to strengthen its role as the national mine action centre.¹¹⁰ ANAMA is responsible for accrediting and monitoring all humanitarian mine action operators, including state actors involved in demining process in Azerbaijan.¹¹¹

At the end of 2022, ANAMA's operational capacity consisted of 920 deminers, 34 MDDs, and 24 mine clearance machines.¹¹² The number of deminers has significantly increased in 2022 compared to 2021 where ANAMA operated with 762 deminers, 34 MDDs, and 25 machines.¹¹³ In 2023, ANAMA expected 630 new recruits would join basic humanitarian demining and BAC courses, and 295 staff would undergo in-service training at ANAMA's centre in Goygol.¹¹⁴

The Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Emergency Situations, and the State Border Service also conduct mine action. At the end of 2022, the Ministry of Defence had 450 deminers, 4 MDDs, and 20 machines. The Ministry of Emergency Situations was operating 50 deminers, 10 MDDs, and 4 machines, while the State Border Service had 30 deminers.¹¹⁵

As at December 2022, there were also four national commercial demining companies, each with an international commercial sub-contractor, to assist with operational planning and help build capacity. These are: Qaya Safety

Solutions partnering with SafeLane Global; Safe Point partnering with RPS (a Tetra Tech company); Alpha Demining partnering with Altay Group; and Azerbaijan Demining Company partnering with Piper.¹¹⁶ The four commercial companies combined had a capacity of 222 deminers, 11 MDDs, and 7 machines. In addition, as at December 2022, two national NGOs were working in mine action.¹¹⁷ Only one national demining NGO, IEPF, was conducting mine clearance in 2022.¹¹⁸ As noted above, IEPF is the only entity implementing NTS. It is tasked for this purpose by ANAMA and supported by UNDP.¹¹⁹

In 2022, Qaya Safety Solutions, in partnership with SafeLane Global, carried out demining in the 4.5km² area where a 240-megawatt solar power plant will be built in cooperation with the Ministry of Energy in Jabrayil district. Most of the mines found and neutralised were Armenian-made AP mines and AV mines with a plastic body.¹²⁰ Safe Point, in partnership with RPS, operated in Aghdam district based on instructions from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources. Alpha Demining, in partnership with Altay Group, carried out demining operations in Fuzuli and Khojavend districts under the directions of the committee on urban planning and architecture to clear areas where tourism facilities will be established. In 2022, IEPF completed clearing a highway in Tartar region and continued to clear agricultural fields around that road.¹²¹

All actors are accredited and trained by ANAMA, in accordance with the Decree. All data are reported and entered into ANAMA's IMSMA database. ANAMA conducts monitoring and external quality assurance (QA) for operators and issues hand-over certificates after QA.¹²²

Table 3: Operational resources for explosive ordnance clearance (at end 2022)¹²³

Operator	Operational Staff	MDDs	Machines
ANAMA	920	34	24
Ministry of Defence	450	4	20
Ministry of Emergency Situations	50	10	4
State Border Service	30	0	0

109 "Dying To Go Home: Displaced Azerbaijanis Risk Mines, Munitions To See Homeland", *Radio Free Europe*, 18 February 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3vgaKh5>; and "Following war, Armenia and Azerbaijan Reckon with Unexploded Ordnance", *EurasiaNet*, 23 December 2020.

110 Email from Guy Rhodes, UNDP, 23 June 2021.

111 ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 7.

112 Ibid.

113 Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 7 July 2022.

114 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023; and ANAMA, quarterly report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 8.

115 Ibid., p. 7.

116 Ibid.; and interview with Vugar Suleymanov and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, Baku, 29 March 2022.

117 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023; and ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 7.

118 Azerbaijan Campaign to Ban Landmines (AZCBL), "Landmines and Unexploded Ordnance Problem in The Liberated Territories of Azerbaijan", p. 6.

119 Interview with Samir Poladov and Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, Baku, 24 May 2023.

120 Azerbaijan Campaign to Ban Landmines (AZCBL) report, "Landmines and Unexploded Ordnance Problem in The Liberated Territories of Azerbaijan", November 2022, pp. 6 and 7.

121 AZCBL report, "Landmines and Unexploded Ordnance Problem in The Liberated Territories of Azerbaijan", November 2022, pp. 6 and 7.

122 Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 7 July 2022.

123 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023; and ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 7.

Table 3 Continued

Operator	Operational Staff	MDDs	Machines
Alpha Demining	63	5	2
Qaya Safety Solutions	46	2	1
Safety Point	79	0	1
Azerbaijan Demining Company	34	4	3
Totals	1,672	59	55

The Turkish Armed Forces are also conducting mine and ERW clearance in Azerbaijan. According to Türkiye, eight military demining teams have been conducting demining operations since December 2020 to support mine clearance.¹²⁴ In addition, six demining machines (MEMATT-I) manufactured in Türkiye were sent to Azerbaijan in 2021 and it plans to complete the deployment of 20 demining machines (MEMATT-II) to Azerbaijan in the coming years.¹²⁵

Azerbaijan continued using RAMS in 2022 to identify suspected areas as part of establishing a baseline survey,¹²⁶ collecting information on mines and ERW, and other information, such as the location of trenches and military positions.¹²⁷ As at May 2023, there were two RAMS teams which can cover approximately 300km² per year. ANAMA is looking to increase RAMS capacity, but the technology is of limited use in areas with thick vegetation.¹²⁸ ANAMA has also acquired some MDRs capacity and has been testing the possibility to deploy them as at July 2023.¹²⁹

ANAMA now has a QM division, reporting to the Chair of ANAMA and QM capacity has been increased by around 300%, reflecting the significant upscaling of clearance operations in the reclaimed territories of Azerbaijan. Previously, quality control (QC) was conducted on 10% of land, but this has been reduced to 5%, while frequent site visits have been maintained.¹³⁰ UNDP supported efforts to enhance ANAMA's QM system by conducting a QM evaluation and organising a workshop on QM for ANAMA staff in 2022.¹³¹

DEMINER SAFETY

ANAMA has reported that no personnel were injured or killed by AP mines or other explosive ordnance as a result of survey or clearance operations in Azerbaijan in 2022.¹³²

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

A total of 3.9km² of AP mined area was released in 2022, of which, 0.38km² was reduced through TS and 3.52km² cleared. In the process, 9,165 AP mines (including 385 of an improvised nature), 4,133 AV mines, and 14,114 items of ERW were destroyed. In addition, 25 AP mines were destroyed in spot tasks. Of the AP mined area released in 2022, 300m² of the reduced area and 2,220m² of the cleared area were contaminated with victim-activated IEDs and booby-traps that meet the definition of an AP mine.¹³³ It is not possible to draw conclusions from the area released in 2022 compared to the previous year, as the 2021 land release figures were not disaggregated per type of mine contamination.

124 Statement of Turkey, 8th International Pledging Conference to the APMB, 24 March 2023.

125 Turkey Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Forms D and I.

126 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023.

127 Ibid.; and interview with Vugar Suleymanov and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, Baku, 29 March 2022.

128 Interview with Samir Poladov and Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, Baku, 24 May 2023.

129 Presentation of Azerbaijan, Intersessional Meetings, 19–21 June 2023.

130 Interview with Vugar Suleymanov and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, Baku, 29 March 2022.

131 Email from Mark Buswell, UNDP, 20 March 2023.

132 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 19 July 2023.

133 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023.

SURVEY IN 2022

According to ANAMA data, 380,720m² of AP mined area was reduced through TS in 2022.¹³⁴ This is a significant decrease on 2021 when ANAMA reduced 12.08km² of AP mined area, although the 12.08km² of reduction included both AP and AV mined areas.¹³⁵ ANAMA also reported the reduction of a little over 177km² of explosive ordnance-contaminated area in 2022. (See Table 4). Less than 10% of the land released in 2022 was reduced through TS. None was cancelled through NTS.

Table 4: Release of contaminated area through TS in 2022¹³⁶

Districts	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
Aghdam	ANAMA	10,485,859
	MOD	40,377,656
Fuzuli	ALD	334,322
	ANAMA	229,710
	MOD	2,083,708
Goranboy	MOD	71,195
Gubadly	ANAMA	946,418
	MOD	13,500
Jabrayil	ADC	62,235
	ANAMA	4,044,076
	MOD	10,300
	QSS	143,210
Kalbajar	MOD	36,308,965
Khojaly	ANAMA	211,000
	MOD	3,263,900
Khojavend	ANAMA	499,703
	MOD	1,314,279
Lachin	MOD	7,841,825
Shusha	ANAMA	181,449
	MOD	1,180,000
Tartar	IEPF	775,512
Zangilan	ANAMA	6,825,221
	MOD	20,000
Total		117,224,043

IEPF reported conducting NTS over 1,422km² of land on both sides of the former LoC in 2022. A total of 347km² of areas suspected to contain AP mines was identified as a result.¹³⁷

CLEARANCE IN 2022

In 2022, a total of almost 3,515,388m² of mined area was cleared, with the destruction of 9,165 AP mines (including 385 of an improvised nature), 4,133 AV mines, and 14,114 items of ERW. Of the total cleared, 2,260m² was contaminated with victim-activated IEDs or booby traps that meet the definition of an AP mine. In addition, ANAMA destroyed 25 AP mines during spot tasks.¹³⁸ The AP mined area cleared in 2022 was a significant reduction compared to output in 2021 as ANAMA prioritised clearance in settlements located in the former LoC, which contained very dense contamination.¹³⁹ The number of AP mines destroyed in 2022 has more than doubled compared to 2021 when a total of 4,388 AP mines (including 1,909 AP mines of improvised nature) were destroyed.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

¹³⁶ Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023.

¹³⁷ Email from Donald Macdonald, UNDP, 21 August 2023.

¹³⁸ Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023.

¹³⁹ Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 23 August 2023.

¹⁴⁰ Emails from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 23 August 2023; and Nijat Karimov, ANAMA, 23 July 2021.

ANAMA also reported having released 197km² of explosive ordnance-contaminated area through combined clearance and TS in 2022, destroying in the process 1,994 AP mines, 787 AV mines, and 171,955 items of UXOs. (See Table 5). The 1,994 AP mines destroyed are included in the 9,165 figure reported above.

Table 5: Land release through clearance and TS in 2022¹⁴¹

Province	Operator	Area released (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Aghdam	ANAMA	10,042,366			
	MES	330,000	14	22	3,604
	SPT	10,382,313			
Fizuli	ADC	2,008,593			
	ADL	6,366,475	241	241	93,291
	ANAMA	43,931,957			
Gubadly	ANAMA	8,299,906	156	2	4850
Jabrayil	ADC	6,857,879			
	ANAMA	44,576,513	1,502	451	91,210
	QSS	6,361,366			
Kalbajar	MOD		0		179
Khojaly	ANAMA	208,742	0	5	2,232
Khojavend	ALD	8,501,323	5	5	53,573
	ANAMA	11,075,213			
Lachin	ANAMA	211,000	0	0	0
Shusha	ANAMA	1,075,601	4	0	5,361
Tartar	IEPF	19,631,827	72	61	845
Zangilan	ANAMA	18,030,720	0	0	3,264
Totals		197,891,794	1,994	787	258,409

ANAMA said that, together with the demining operators, they have worked in 703 affected sites and cleared 626km² of land from mines and ERW between 10 November 2020 and 31 December 2022. During this time, 27,557 AP mines, 13,716 AV mines, and 38,976 items of ERW were found and neutralised. In 2022 alone, 419km² was cleared from mines and ERW, which constitutes around 6.9% of the overall high, medium, and low threat areas.¹⁴²

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Following the armed conflict with Armenia in 2020, the extent of AP mined area falling under Azerbaijan's control has increased hugely. ANAMA has adapted rapidly to restructure itself and upscale operations to address the increased contamination and workload. In 2022, ANAMA estimated that it will take approximately 10 years to complete AP mine clearance in Azerbaijan, provided the necessary expansion takes place.¹⁴³ This is exceptionally ambitious given the extent of contamination. By November 2022, Azerbaijan seemed to have increased its estimate of the time needed to complete mine clearance by three.¹⁴⁴ There are also additional mined areas now under Azerbaijan's full control in areas previously under the control of the de facto Nagorno-Karabakh authorities and over which Azerbaijan regained full control in September 2023 following the military offensive (See the Mine Action Review *Clearing the Mines 2023* report on Nagorno-Karabakh for further information).

According to ANAMA, some 600,000 IDPs are poised to return to the 2020 liberated territories under the "Great Return" programme, which foresees the clearance of 337,95km² of land in three stages by the end of 2026. The initial stage of the programme envisions the demining of 147km² for construction of homes in more than 80 settlements of Aghdam, Fuzuli, Gubadly, Jabrail, Kalbajar, Khojavend, Lachin, Shusha, and Zangilan districts. New access routes and other infrastructure projects had reached the former LoC, and increased traffic is now supporting reconstruction efforts and resettlement plans.

¹⁴¹ Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023.

¹⁴² Ibid, 17 May 2023; and ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 2.

¹⁴³ Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

¹⁴⁴ "Azerbaijan needs nearly 30 years and \$25 billion to solve issues related to demining – President Ilham Aliyev", *Trend News Agency*, 13 October 2022.

As at the end of 2022, 201 residents have resettled in Aghally village of Zangilan district following the completion of demining and rehabilitation as part of the implementation of the first stage of the programme.¹⁴⁵

ANAMA has said that due to the extent of the problem it remains severely underfunded. It is seeking international support and funding to deal with the contamination, especially along the former LoC and in other parts of the area regained in 2020.¹⁴⁶ In its statement as an observer at the APMBC intersessional meetings in June 2022, ANAMA identified the following needs: data and technology, including for aerial survey; scaling up RAMS capacity as a method for gathering data; increased demining capacity through national NGOs; support for the institutional capacity building of ANAMA; increasing ANAMA's mechanical demining capacities and MDDs; establishing and supporting female demining teams; and demarcation and permanent fencing.¹⁴⁷

Table 6: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	3.52
2021	18.38
2020	0.10
2019	1.01
2018	0.35
Total	23.36

Azerbaijan has yet to join the APMBC. It should do as a matter of priority. Azerbaijan has participated as an observer in the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties (20MSP) in November 2022, and in the APMBC intersessional meetings in June 2023. In its statement to the Intersessional Meetings in June 2023, Azerbaijan called on the States Parties to the Convention, as well as the UN agencies, to help it to mobilise international support for demining in Azerbaijan.¹⁴⁸ But Azerbaijan has stated that "the continued conflict prevents Azerbaijan from acceding to the [APMBC]" and that it "would only accede to the Convention once all of its territories are liberated from occupation by Armenia and all IDPs and refugees return to their lands."¹⁴⁹ In September 2023,

Azerbaijan regained full control of all remaining areas of Nagorno-Karabakh.¹⁵⁰

Azerbaijan submitted voluntary APMBC Article 7 transparency reports in 2008 and 2009 but has not submitted a report since. Accuracy of reporting of contamination, survey, and clearance data continues to be an issue in Azerbaijan. So too are the effectiveness and efficiency of land release methodology, with many areas being cleared that prove to have little or no mine contamination.

ANAMA is making impressive progress in rapidly scaling up clearance efforts, and the process is nationally led, drawing on international expertise, such as UNDP and MAG, for capacity development. Systems to support the huge upscaling of the mine action programme in Azerbaijan, such as elaboration of a national mine action strategy and of revised national mine action standards, are being put in place. Applying efficient, evidence-based survey and clearance methodology, supported by strong national standards and an effective information management and QM system, will be pivotal for the success of demining efforts in Azerbaijan. ANAMA is also seeking to increase demining capacity through establishment of additional national NGOs accredited to conduct demining. ANAMA believes they could play a vital role in managing a residual risk to support safe repatriation of IDPs.¹⁵¹

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Azerbaijan has a national capacity which could be deployed to deal with residual risk post-completion. In July 2020, ANAMA reported that the elaboration of a plan for the management of residual risk is contingent upon the liberation of contaminated areas that are currently occupied by Armenia.¹⁵² In September 2023, Azerbaijan regained full control of all remaining areas of Nagorno-Karabakh.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁵ Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 17 May 2023, and "Great Return: First Group of Azerbaijanis Once Expelled by Armenians Returns Back Home", *Caspian News*, 19 July 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/470nKKf>.

¹⁴⁶ Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

¹⁴⁷ Statement of Azerbaijan, Intersessional Meetings, 20–22 June 2022; and ANAMA, "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", Baku, May 2022.

¹⁴⁸ Statement of Azerbaijan, Intersessional Meetings, 19–21 June 2023.

¹⁴⁹ APMBC, "Azerbaijan and Ottawa Process", undated but published on 13 June 2005, at: <https://bit.ly/3KLDnNV>.

¹⁵⁰ "Azerbaijan halts Karabakh offensive after ceasefire deal with Armenian separatists", *BBC*, 21 September 2023.

¹⁵¹ ANAMA, Quarterly Report "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", January 2023, p. 10.

¹⁵² Email from Nijat Karimov, ANAMA, 30 July 2020.

¹⁵³ "Azerbaijan halts Karabakh offensive after ceasefire deal with Armenian separatists", *BBC*, 21 September 2023.

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: UNKNOWNAP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

UNKNOWN

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

UNKNOWN

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- China should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- China should clear all remaining anti-personnel (AP) mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- No national mine action authority
- No national mine action centre

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of mine contamination remaining in China is not known. While very significant demining has occurred over the last two decades, some use of AP mines around military infrastructure remains.

In the 1990s, the United States reported that China had emplaced mines along its borders with India, the Russian Federation, and Vietnam.¹ China's military estimated that around two million mines of a wide variety of types were emplaced on the Vietnam border alone.² China has not reported on mine contamination along its borders with Russia and India or on operations to clear them.

1 US Department of State, "Hidden Killers 1994", Washington, DC, September 1998, p. 18, and Table A-1.

2 "Landmine sweeping on Sino-Vietnam border nearly completed", *Xinhua*, 31 December 2008, at: <https://on.china.cn/31F8D7u>.

China conducted clearance operations along its border with Vietnam between 1992 and 1999,³ between 2005 and 2009,⁴ and between 2015 and 2018.⁵ In 2009, China said it had completed demining along the Yunnan section of its border with Vietnam and that this “represents the completion of mine clearance of mine-affected areas within China’s territory.”⁶ This was followed by a statement in 2011 when a Foreign Ministry official reported that China maintains a small number of minefields “for national defence”.⁷ Two months later, at the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the APMB, China said that large-scale demining activities had “on the whole eliminated the scourge of landmines in our territories”.⁸

At the Third Review Conference of the APMB in 2014, China said it had “basically eradicated landmines on its own territory”.⁹ At the Fourth Review Conference in 2019, China said that, since the 1990s, it has carried out large-scale demining operations on the border many times. In the past three years, China has cleared approximately 58km² of mined area on its borders with Vietnam and Myanmar and “enclosed” 25km² of minefields (permanently perimeter-marking, fencing, and closing down mined areas).¹⁰ China began demining its border with Myanmar at the end of 2018 with a team of more than 300 deminers.¹¹

Demining of the Vietnam border was conducted in three “campaigns” in Yunnan province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. The first was in 1992–94 and the second in 1997–99.¹² However, these two campaigns did not deal with

minefields located in disputed areas of the border, where 500,000 mines covered an estimated 40km². After a technical survey of mined areas, China embarked on a third clearance campaign in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Yunnan province in 2005. China stated in 2009 that it had completed clearance of this border after clearing a total of 5.15km².¹³

In early November 2015, however, China embarked on a further demining operation along the border with Vietnam.¹⁴ Official victim numbers are not publicly available but civilian casualties were common in the bordering villages throughout the three decades that preceded the clearance.¹⁵ A physical rehabilitation centre in Kunming operated by the Yunnan branch of the Chinese Red Cross Society reported having produced prostheses to 400 mine victims between 2004 and 2019.¹⁶

In its Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II Article 13 transparency report submitted in March 2017, China reported that in November 2015–February 2017, the Chinese army cleared 18.4km² of minefields on the Yunnan border.¹⁷ According to media reports, Yunnan province contained 113 minefields and accounted for more than 95% of the total mined areas on the Chinese-Vietnamese borders. Mines were often laid in very hard-to-access mountainous areas. Online media reported that the last cleared field was handed over to the community by the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) marking the official completion of the third and last clearance operation in Yunnan province in November 2018.¹⁸

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

There is no formal mine action programme in China. Any mine clearance is conducted by the PLA as a military activity.

According to China, the military is building international humanitarian mine clearance classrooms and conducting research on the application of virtual reality technology in humanitarian mine clearance training.¹⁹ China has reportedly completed its upgrade of humanitarian demining classrooms and the construction of supporting facilities, so as to provide

good teaching conditions for conducting foreign aid demining training.²⁰ China also reported that it had carried out technical research related to mine and unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance and destruction, and research on unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) survey technology for mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) and on a multi-parameter real-time monitoring and effect evaluation system for mine detection training.²¹

3 Ministry of Defence, “Post-war Demining Operations in China”, December 1999, p. 11. Before the clearance operations, there were said to be more than 560 minefields covering a total area of more than 300km².

4 Interview with Shen Jian, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing, 1 April 2008; and L. Huizi and L. Yun, “Chinese soldiers nearly done with landmine sweeping on the Sino-Vietnam border”, *Xinhua*, 31 December 2008.

5 “Yunnan completes de-mining mission along Sino-Vietnamese border”, *Xinhua*, 16 November 2018, at: <https://bit.ly/2yYXXnL>.

6 Statement of China, Second Review Conference, Cartagena, 4 December 2009.

7 Email from Lai Haiyang, Attaché, Department of Arms Control & Disarmament, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 7 September 2011.

8 Statement of China, APMB Eleventh Meeting of States Parties, Phnom Penh, 29 November 2011.

9 Statement of China, Third APMB Review Conference, Maputo, 26 June 2014.

10 Statement of China, Fourth APMB Review Conference, Oslo, 27 November 2019.

11 J. Li, “Minesweeping operations along China-Myanmar border kick off”, *China Military Online*, 28 December 2019, at: <https://bit.ly/3f7P3qy>.

12 “Landmine sweeping on Sino-Vietnam border nearly completed”, *Xinhua*, 31 December 2008.

13 Statement of China, Second APMB Review Conference, Cartagena, 4 December 2009.

14 P. Scally, “Huge land mine clearance underway in Wenshan, Honghe”, Blog post, Gokunming, 5 November 2015.

15 “Guardians of the Extreme Realm: Life and Death Demining in the Southwest Frontier”, *CCTV*, 11 September 2019.

16 “From breadwinners to dependents, how can mine victims heal?”, *CGTN*, 4 April 2019, at: <https://bit.ly/3hiwt2f>.

17 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2016), Form B. Unofficial translation.

18 “Soldier loses both hands and eyes from a blast while clearing mines along Vietnam border”, *The Global Times*, 6 December 2018.

19 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2019), Form B.

20 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form B. Unofficial translation.

21 Ibid., Forms B and C.

In 2019, China said that it has continuously improved its demining capabilities and has developed a complete set of mine clearance equipment and technologies that meet international mine action standards and high cost-efficiency. It claimed to have achieved breakthroughs in research and development, including in unmanned mine detection and laser demining (use of directed energy weapons to destroy landmines).²² China reported that in 2021 the PLA Army Engineering University has set up special teaching content on landmine compliance in 20 professional teaching classes, with a total of 783 trainees.²³ In 2022, the PLA Army Engineering University conducted training on the detection and elimination of ERW and UXO found underwater.²⁴ China said that it sent experts to participate in the review and revision of international mine action standards (IMAS)²⁵ and that "China subscribes to the purposes of the Ottawa

Convention and supports the ultimate goal of comprehensive landmine ban".²⁶

In its reporting under CCW Amended Protocol II covering 2021, China said it donated US\$200,000 to the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC) for co-hosting relevant regional meetings. It also reported that it had provided mine detection equipment and humanitarian supplies to Cambodia and Lao PDR to help them strengthen their mine clearance capacity building. On 28 July 2021, China and Cambodia jointly held a video consultation meeting of the co-chairs of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) Plus Mine Clearance Expert Group, and on 14 September 2021, China and Cambodia co-hosted the tenth meeting of this group. On 23 December 2021, representatives from China participated in the online meeting of the ASEAN Technical Expert Group on Mine Clearance organized by ARMAC.²⁷

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTIONS

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in China in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

China has completed the compilation of the "Standard for Disposal of Improvised Explosive Devices" and promoted the application of this standard in related fields in China.²⁸

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Media accounts reported that mine clearance resumed in November 2017 in the Yunnan border area and in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.²⁹ Clearance was reportedly completed in November 2018, with 2,300 explosive items found and destroyed across 1.5km² in Guangxi province.³⁰ In Yunnan province an estimated 200,000 explosive items were found and destroyed in over 50km² of mined area between November 2015 and November 2018.³¹

As of writing, China has not submitted an Amended Protocol II report covering 2022 but China did report in its Protocol V Article 10 Report that in 2022 Chinese public security organisations had been working closely with the military to dispose of ERW such as artillery shells, aerial bombs, grenades, and landmines with a total of 17,035 items

destroyed.³² In its Amended Protocol II report covering 2021, China reported the destruction of 866 landmines (together with 11,151 artillery shells, 505 aerial bombs, 13,217 grenades, and 2,893 other ERW), but did not provide additional details and it is not known whether the mines destroyed were AP mines or anti-vehicle mines.³³ In its Amended Article II Article 13 report (covering 2020), China reported that, working in close cooperation, its military and public security departments disposed of 436 mines in 2020 without providing further details.³⁴ In September 2021, it was reported by an online media source that Chinese authorities had begun clearance operations along the Chinese side of the border between Yunnan province and Myanmar, near Yunnan's Nansan township and near the Mengdai township.³⁵

22 Statement of China, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 27 November 2019.

23 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form A. Unofficial translation.

24 Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Form A.

25 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form E. Unofficial translation.

26 Statement of China, Security Council Open Debate on Mine Action, 8 April 2021.

27 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form E. Unofficial translation.

28 Ibid.

29 "Land mine removal resumes on border", *China Daily*, 29 November 2017, at: <https://bit.ly/2ZXUwtr>; and "China's Guangxi completes de-mining mission along Sino-Vietnam border", *China Daily*, 26 November 2018, at: <https://bit.ly/33xCdNT>.

30 "China's Guangxi completes de-mining mission along Sino-Vietnam border", *China Daily*, 26 November 2018.

31 "Yunnan completes de-mining mission along Sino-Vietnamese border", *Xinhua*, 16 November 2018.

32 Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Form A.

33 Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2021), Form A. Unofficial translation.

34 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2020), Form E.

35 "China Begins Landmine Removal Operation Along Border With Myanmar", *Radio Free Asia*, 13 September 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3D3lhQB>.

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: UNKNOWNAP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

UNKNOWN

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

UNKNOWN

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Cuba should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Cuba should clear anti-personnel (AP) mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- No national mine action authority

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- No national mine action centre

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The extent of mine contamination in Cuba is unknown and is believed to have remained unchanged in the recent years. Cuban authorities maintain minefields around the United States (US) naval base at Guantanamo in the south-east of Cuba. According to online media, the Cuban government placed AP mines around the base as a means to defend against a possible US invasion.¹ In 2007, Cuba said it carries out “a strict policy with regard to guaranteeing a responsible use of AP mines with an exclusively defensive character and for [Cuba’s] national security”.² According to an earlier statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

1 “People of Guantanamo live under the danger of anti-personnel mines”, *Radiotelevisionmarti*, 4 December 2014, at: <https://bit.ly/3x4vCZD>.

2 Statement by Rebeca Hernández Toledano, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Cuba to the UN, “Item 29: Assistance in mine action”, UN General Assembly, Fourth Committee, New York, 6 November 2007.

existing minefields are duly “marked, fenced and guarded” in accordance with Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II.³ Cuba is party to the original CCW Protocol II but has not acceded to the amended version.⁴

In 1996, the then US President, Bill Clinton, issued an order to clear the US Guantanamo base of all “hair-triggered” explosives. By 1999, the US marines had cleared approximately 50,000 AP and anti-vehicle (AV) mines on the US side of the fence separating Cuba from the US naval base in Guantanamo and replaced them with motion and sound sensors.⁵

According to a book published in 2008, mines laid around the naval base detonate “at least once a month”,⁶ but it has not been possible to independently confirm this claim. In February 2018, a fire broke out in the 17-mile strip of land separating the Guantánamo base from Cuban territory which reportedly detonated 1,000 mines and burned 1,700 acres over three days before being extinguished.⁷

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

There is no mine action programme in Cuba.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Cuba has not conducted clearance in its minefields around the US naval base at Guantánamo over the last twenty years.

3 Statement of the Directorate of Multilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 19 June 2000.

4 High Contracting Parties and Signatories CCW, at: <https://bit.ly/3JFnFQM>.

5 “Marines unload deactivated land mines for destruction at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba”, US Department of Defence archives, at: <https://bit.ly/3x3BB0f>; and “Guantánamo ‘minesweepers’ perform a delicate task: Deadly devices disabled one by one”, *Miami Herald*, 6 March 2018 (original published on 18 March 1999).

6 “The Cuban mines detonate at least once a month, sometimes starting fires that sweep across the fence line. [Staff Sergeant Kaveh Wooley of the US Marines]... described a fire that started the previous summer and turned into a giant cook-off, with about 30 mines exploding....” D. P. Erikson, *Cuba Wars: Fidel Castro, the United States, and the Next Revolution*, Bloomsbury, United States, October 2008, pp. 196–97.

7 “U.S. and Cuban forces unite to fight a common foe: wildfire at Guantanamo”, *USA Today*, 1 March 2018, at: <http://bit.ly/2KytDH9>.

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: UNKNOWN

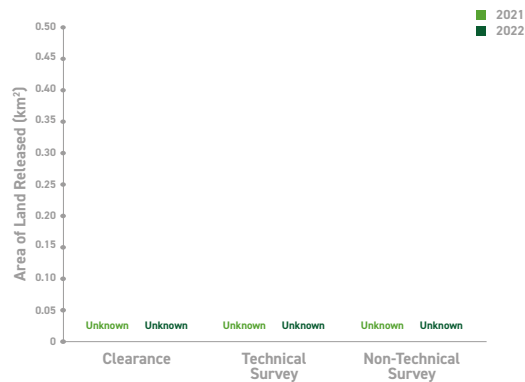
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

UNKNOWN

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

UNKNOWN

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Egypt should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Egypt should clear anti-personnel (AP) mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- Egypt should not use AP mines under any circumstances.
- Egypt should report accurately on land release, disaggregating clearance from release through survey.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- National committee for the Supervision of Mine Clearance and the Development of the North West Coast
- Executive Secretariat for the Demining and Development of the North West Coast (ESDD)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Corps of Military Engineers

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of AP mine contamination in Egypt remains unknown and past estimates have been wholly unreliable. Egypt is contaminated with mines in the Western Desert, which date from the Second World War, and in the Sinai Peninsula and Eastern Desert, which are a legacy of wars with Israel between 1956 and 1973.

In August 2016, reports indicated that Islamic State had been harvesting explosives from Second World War mines still uncleared in Egypt. Ambassador Fathy el-Shazly, former head of Egypt's Mine Clearance Secretariat, noted at least ten reports from the military about terrorists using old mines.¹ This was reiterated in June 2017 at a United Nations (UN) Security Council briefing by Egypt's permanent representative to the UN Mine Action Team.² In January 2018, it was reported that Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM), a group aligned with Islamic State since 2014, had been using old mines and caches of explosives left in Sinai to produce improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Egypt faced five major terrorist attacks using such devices in 2017.³ This underscores the urgency for Egypt to intensify mine clearance efforts.

Landmine Monitor has reported new use of improvised AP mines by Islamic State militants in the Sinai between 2020 and 2022. These include pressure plate IEDs found by the Egyptian Army in houses and arms caches in early 2022. Tarabin tribesmen have reportedly been killed by mines laid by a group associated with Islamic State.⁴ The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) database and the Fenix Insight database both contain details of numerous incidents involving IEDs in 2022. These include mines laid by Islamic State targeting the Egyptian military and what are likely to be incidents involving the Union of Sinai Tribes and/or the Union of Sinai Mujahideen.⁵ The Egyptian military may also be using AP mines. In May 2015, the military told an Egyptian newspaper that it had begun placing landmines around military outposts in Sinai, which resulted in the reported deaths of two militants.⁶

Most of the Western Desert contamination occurred around the location of Second World War battles that took place between the Qattara depression and Alamein on the Mediterranean coast. Other affected areas are around the city of Marsa Matrouh and at Sallum near the Libyan border. In November 2016, during a ceremony to mark the opening of a new prosthetic limb centre, the United Kingdom's Ambassador to Egypt announced that all the maps of minefields laid by British and Allied forces during World War II had been handed over.⁷ According to the head of the military engineering department, though, the British minefield maps were "sketch maps" and most of the mines were buried randomly.⁸ Major General Mahrous Kilani, Head of the General Secretariat for Mine Clearance, reported that while the mine maps are an indication of possible mine locations many have been found in areas unmarked on the maps.⁹

Data on contamination and clearance are unreliable. The Egyptian government has claimed, for instance, that 17 million mines remain in the Western Desert and another 5.5 million are in Sinai and the Eastern Desert.¹⁰ In an April 2009 assessment, though, the United Nations (UN) Mine Action Team cautioned that data needed careful analysis to avoid reporting areas that had already been cleared and thereby misrepresenting the problem.¹¹

In August 2010, the Executive Secretariat for the Demining and Development of the North West Coast (Executive Secretariat) reported to donors that the army had destroyed 2.9 million mines while clearing 38km² in five areas, leaving "more than 16 million mines" covering an estimated area of 248km².¹² In 2013, the army handed over to the Ministries of Housing and of Planning and International Cooperation an area of some 105km² in the Western Desert, which it had reportedly cleared of mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). Details of clearance operations were not reported. Minister of Housing Tarek Wafiq was quoted as saying that, with the completion of the project, one-fifth of the Western Desert had been cleared.¹³

1 P. Schwartzstein, "ISIS Is Digging Up Nazi Landmines From World War 2 As Explosives", *Newsweek*, 10 August 2016, at: <https://bit.ly/46JVT10>.

2 UN Security Council meeting, UN doc. SC/12866, 13 June 2017, at: <http://bit.ly/2YSmjPL>.

3 "How Egyptian security dealt with IEDs threat?", *Egypt Today*, 1 January 2018, at: <http://bit.ly/2HbRwCe>.

4 See: Landmine Monitor, Egypt: Mine Ban Policy, last updated 28 September 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3YSLixV>.

5 ACLED, "Filters: 01/01/2022-31/12/2022, Remote explosive/landmine/IED, Egypt," accessed 20 August 2023, at: www.acleddata.com; and Fenix Insight database, at: <https://fenix-insight.online/>

6 Egypt Mine Ban Policy, *Landmine Monitor*, 15 October 2020, at: <http://bit.ly/3trc5kb>.

7 A. Nayder, "Helping Landmine Victims in Marsa Matrouh-And Preventing More", *Because*, 3 November 2016, at: <http://bit.ly/2Hbsl2V>.

8 UK Parliament website, "North Africa: Land Mines", written question-122961, 16 January 2018, at: <http://bit.ly/2Z4gJsB>.

9 "MG: We cleared 130,000 acres of mines in El Alamein and there was no single incident", *Times of Egypt*, 26 February 2018, Unofficial translation at: <http://bit.ly/33EQrMO>.

10 State Information Services, "Landmines in Egypt", 20 July 2009; and M. Abdel Salam, "First phase of demining in Egypt complete", *Bikya Masr* (blog), 18 April 2010, at: <http://bit.ly/3S8PQPi>.

11 UN Mine Action Team, "Egypt Mine Action Inter-agency Assessment", 14–18 April 2009, p. 11.

12 "Egypt Mine Action Project Northwest Coast: Phase I Accomplishments", Presentation by Amb. Fathy El Shazly, Director, Executive Secretariat, Cairo, August 2010.

13 N. al Behairy, "20% of the Sahara in West Egypt cleared of landmines", *Daily News*, 20 March 2013.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Egypt's mine action programme has been developing extremely slowly since 2007 and includes only the basic structures and institutions to regulate, coordinate and implement mine action activities. As at 2015, the programme consisted of a three-tier structure that comprised the National committee for the Supervision of Mine Clearance and the Development of the North West Coast; the Executive Secretariat for the Demining and Development of the North West Coast (ESDD); and the Corps of Military Engineers, which has overall responsibility for demining operations in Egypt.¹⁴

In January 2017, Egypt's Minister of International Cooperation alongside a representative of the Ministry of Defence announced the establishment of the National Centre for Landmine Action and Sustainable Development. The centre set out to release 600km² of mined area in the North West Coast.¹⁵

A joint project between United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Egypt entitled, "Support the North West Coast Development Plan and Mine Action Programme: Mine Action" was conducted in two phases from 2007 to 2014 and from 2015 to 2017.¹⁶ In August 2017, it was reported that negotiations had begun on a third phase of the project to allocate \$5 million to clear the rest of the northern coast and the Sinai peninsula.¹⁷ The project supported the expansion of the organizational structure of the ESDD, which is mandated with coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the development plan and humanitarian mine action activities in the North West Coast.¹⁸ As at July 2020, it was reported that a total area of 2,182km² of land has been demined (released)

from 5,100km² of mined area since the beginning of the project in 2009.¹⁹

Trained deminers from the Corps of Military Engineers conduct manual and mechanical demining. The ESDD is said to have procured 461 mine detectors, 355 demining suits and protective helmets, 1 Casspir armoured vehicle with the "Mine Lab" detecting device, and 5 Amtrak vehicles.²⁰

According to the ESDD website, "the Executive Secretariat's Quality Management Unit proactively guarantees quality in all key processes, makes sure that quality requirements are fulfilled in accordance with international mine action standards (IMAS), measures process performance, develops procedures, and provides the right equipment".²¹ Funding was also used for capacity building, establishing a quality management unit, and supporting the creation of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database.

In November 2019, Egypt's Minister of Investment and International Cooperation signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) on mine clearance and development of Egypt's North West coast. The MoU provides a cooperation framework to enhance capacity building for the Egyptian mine action programme but according to the GICHD there has been no activity since the signing of the MoU.²² In March 2022, the Executive Secretariat participated in an Arab Regional Cooperation Programme (ARCP) IMSMA Core Workshop organised by the GICHD in Beirut.²³

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in Egypt in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Egypt has not reported in detail on its release of mined areas in recent years and no target date has been set for the completion of mine clearance. New use of mines by the military is seemingly inconsistent with its obligations under international law.

In August 2022, a spokesman for the Egyptian Armed Forces said that the army had destroyed "more than 25 million mines, explosive objects and ammunition over the past years" including in areas around El Alamein, and the Hamman canal, although no detailed information was provided on the timeframe, number of mines or amount of area cleared.²⁴

¹⁴ UNDP Project Document, at: <http://bit.ly/3ghRon1>, p. 6.

¹⁵ "Establishment of National Center for Mines Action and Sustainable Development completed: Nasr", *Daily News Egypt*, 23 January 2017, at: <http://bit.ly/3dqbcmu>.

¹⁶ UNDP, "Support to the North West Coast Development and Mine Action Plan", undated.

¹⁷ "Egypt to invest \$17.5M in Anti-Mines Action Project", *APA News*, 11 August 2017, at: <http://bit.ly/2z1ChYn>.

¹⁸ The Executive Secretariat for the Demining and Development of the North West Coast website, accessed 5 July 2020.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² "Egypt, Switzerland sign agreement on demining North West Coast", State Information Service, 14 November 2019, available at: <http://bit.ly/2CcF0mj>; and email from Boris Ohanyan, Junior Programme Officer, GICHD, 22 March 2022.

²³ Email from Boris Ohanyan, GICHD, 22 March 2022.

²⁴ "Egyptian army has cleared 25 million WWII landmines, explosives from Western Desert: Spox", *Ahram Online*, 31 August 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/47R1gfQ>; and "Egypt removes 25 million mines planted during World War II", *Daily News Egypt*, 1 September 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3Pd4MKp>.

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION:

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

2.8km²

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

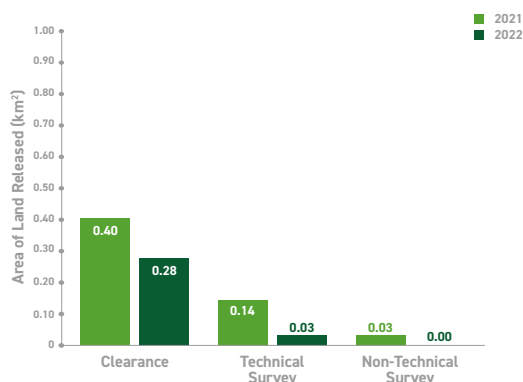
0.28km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

108

(INCLUDING 26 DESTROYED
IN SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2022, The HALO Trust (HALO) was able to resume previously suspended operations in Georgia's Tbilisi Administered territory (TAT) and undertake non-technical survey (NTS) at two minefields at Khojali and Kadoeti, having secured permission to clear them in 2019 and then securing funding for the work in 2022. There has been no progress, however, on the granting of access to the minefields at Barisakho or Osiauri, nor to the Red Bridge area. This is the largest minefield in the Caucasus region, which consists of mined area on the territory of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Russia.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Georgia should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Georgia should clear anti-personnel (AP) mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- Georgia should continue to engage in bilateral political dialogue with Azerbaijan as well as multilateral dialogue with all stakeholders via the Landmine Free South Caucasus (LMFSC) Campaign, to enable full clearance of the Red Bridge border minefield.
- Georgia should develop a resource mobilisation strategy and engage with donors to secure the resources needed to complete clearance.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- State Military Scientific Technical Centre (DELTA)
- Humanitarian Demining Control Division (HDCD)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Engineering Battalion of the Ministry of Defence (MoD)
- Georgian State Security Service (SSS) Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust (HALO)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The full extent of mine contamination in Georgia is not known due to access restrictions and lack of survey. According to official estimates provided in 2022, as set out in Table 1, Georgia has at least 2.8km² of contamination across five mined areas in the TAT.¹ HALO believes that, with the exception of the addition of previously unquantified mined areas at Kadoeti and Khojali, the information on known contamination at end of 2021 remained correct a year later.² Contamination comprises both AP mines, and, in two areas, also anti-vehicle (AV) mines.³

Table 1: Mined area in TAT (at end 2022)⁴

Region	District/Municipality	Village	Type of contamination	Mined areas	Area (m ²)
Kvemo Kartli	Marneuli	Kirach-Muganlo	Mixed AP/AV	1	2,738,730
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	Dusheti	Kadoeti	Mixed AP/AV	1	*29,828
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	Dusheti	Barisakho	AP only	2	28,058
Shida Kartli	Khashuri	Osiauri	AP only	1	N/K
Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti	Mestia	Khojali	AP only	2	**26,000
Totals				7	2,822,616

N/K = not known * This includes 16,825m² of confirmed hazardous area (CHA), and 13,003m² of suspected hazardous area (SHA) identified by HALO during NTS in 2022.

** Identified as SHA by HALO in 2022.

The Humanitarian Demining Control Division (HDCD) of Georgia and HALO consider this baseline to be evidence-based and accurate.⁵ However, HALO cautioned in 2022 that the Georgian Government, through the HDCD, was in the process of conducting Georgia's first General Mine Action Assessment (GMAA), since 2011. This assessment may result in the current baseline being updated.⁶ No update on the progress of the GMAA had been received from the national authority as at June 2023.

In the mined areas of Barisakho, Osiauri, and at the Red Bridge in TAT, the full extent of contamination is unknown. HALO has faced challenges in securing the necessary permission and funding to be able to complete NTS at these areas. HALO has continued to advocate for permission for access, both through bilateral channels and through participation in the LMFSC, which brings governments and civil society organisations together to encourage dialogue and cooperation. HALO asserts that both technical survey (TS) and NTS are required at all the sites to accurately determine the size of the contaminated areas.⁷

The Red Bridge minefield is an unfenced 7km-long and 2.2km² minefield consisting of densely packed lines of AP and AV mines at the "Red Bridge" border crossings between Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia. Laid in 1991 by Azerbaijan during the 1988 Nagorno-Karabakh war, it is the largest minefield in the Caucasus and the last major minefield not in the vicinity of a functioning military establishment. The Red Bridge minefield affects more than 4,000 people. As at May 2022, there had been 88 incidents: 22 involving people and the other 66 involving livestock. No new incidents were reported during 2021.⁸ It is not known if there were any incidents in 2022.

In Barisakho, there are two mined areas close to a police station on the Russian border, which were laid to prevent entry from Ingushetia during the Second Chechen War. In Osiauri, a military base in the interior of the country, next to the main east-west road through Georgia, mines were laid around the perimeter of an ammunition storage area to defend the position in an event of an invasion.⁹

In May 2019, HALO finally received permission to survey

1 TAT does not include the republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which are outside Georgia's effective control.

2 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, Partnerships and Programme Support Manager, HALO, 12 April 2023.

3 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, Head of Division, DELTA, 31 May 2022; and Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

4 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022; Michael Montafi, Partnerships and Programme Support Manager, HALO, 26 July 2022; and Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023. Data on mined areas at the villages of Kadoeti and Khojali were provided by HALO in April 2023. All other information in this Table was provided by Georgia's national authority in May 2022 and stated as correct as at the end of 2021.

5 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022; and Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May 2022.

6 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May 2022.

7 Ibid.

8 Emails from Michael Montafi, HALO, 8 May 2020 and 17 May 2022.

9 Emails from Michael Montafi, HALO, 30 April 2021 and 17 May 2022.

and clear at Kadoeti and Khojali, and in June 2022, HALO secured funding from Norway to conduct NTS of these minefields.¹⁰ Historical estimates of the size of Kadoeti and Khojali minefields originate from HALO's initial NTS of both tasks in 2009.¹¹ The Kadoeti minefield, which was laid in 2008, stretches along 950 metres of road near the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL) with South Ossetia. A livestock accident in 2009 and a non-fatal vehicle accident in 2010 indicated that the area was still mined. The mined areas at Khojali include two adjacent minefields about 12km from the ABL with Abkhazia. One of the two minefields was believed to lie along an approximately 300-metre-long path.¹²

HALO was able to conduct NTS at Kadoeti and Khojali as planned in 2022. Evidence of AV mines was found at Kadoeti, where 16,825m² of confirmed hazardous area (CHA), was identified and 13,003m² of suspected hazardous area (SHA) was identified. At Khojali, two sections of SHA covering an area of 26,000m² of were identified.¹³

There may also be mined areas in South Ossetia as a result of the 1990–92 Georgian–Ossetian war, and the more recent 2008 conflict with Russia. HALO had planned to conduct NTS in South Ossetia, but following a preliminary fact-finding mission to South Ossetia by the HALO Abkhazia programme in 2008, no permissions for access or clearance have been given by the *de facto* South Ossetian authorities. South Ossetia is effectively subject to Russian control and is inaccessible to both Georgian authorities and international

non-governmental organisation (NGO) demining operators. As at May 2022, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) remained the only international organisation with regular access to South Ossetia.¹⁴

In addition to the minefields in TAT summarised in Table 1, six minefields located in the Gulripsh, Ochamchire, Tkvarcheli, and Sukhumi regions of Abkhazia, an autonomous republic outside the effective control of the Georgian government, came to HALO's attention between 2019 and 2021.¹⁵ In 2021, HALO undertook clearance at Gulripsh, Ochamchire, Tkvarcheli and began clearance at Lindava,¹⁶ with clearance at Lindava completed in December 2022.¹⁷ HALO is not aware of any remaining areas of contamination in Abkhazia.¹⁸

HALO also believes that, besides the areas already identified, any additional AP mine contamination in Georgia is so sparse and spread over such large areas that further survey of areas where access is permitted would not be productive.¹⁹ However, it is not certain that the contamination data in Table 1 is comprehensive. The national authority has informed Mine Action Review of clearance that took place in 2022 at two locations in TAT that were not previously listed in the information last supplied on contaminated areas as at the end of 2021; one being "near" the major seaport of Poti in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region and the other being the military firing range near the village of Gonio, in the Adjara region (see Table 6).²⁰

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Georgia is believed to be free of cluster munition remnants (CMR), with the possible exception of South Ossetia, which is occupied by Russia and inaccessible to both the Georgian authorities and international mine action NGOs (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants* report on Georgia for further information).²¹ Georgia remains contaminated by other unexploded ordnance (UXO), likely in South Ossetia and also within Georgia in former firing ranges.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Georgia's national mine action authority is the Humanitarian Demining Control Division (HDCD). Renamed after a reorganisation in January 2019, HDCD sits under the State Military Scientific Technical Centre, known as DELTA, within the Ministry of Defence (MoD).²² The primary task of the HDCD is to coordinate mine action in Georgia, including overseeing the national mine action strategy and quality assurance (QA)/quality control (QC), and facilitating the development and implementation of Georgian National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).²³ HDCD also undertakes some NTS and TS.²⁴

10 Emails from Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May and 26 July 2022.

11 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May 2022.

12 Emails from Michael Montafi, HALO, 30 April 2021 and 17 May 2022.

13 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

14 Emails from Michael Montafi, HALO, 8 May 2020 and 17 May 2022.

15 Emails from Michael Montafi, HALO, 30 April 2021 and 17 May and 26 July 2022.

16 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May 2022.

17 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

18 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick, Head of Region, Europe (South Caucasus), HALO, 12 June 2023.

19 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

20 Email from Jemal Kopaleishvili, Interim Head of DELTA, 18 May 2023.

21 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 12 May 2020 and 31 May 2022; and Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May 2022.

22 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 20 June 2016, and 28 March and 10 June 2019; and Matthew Walker, Programme Officer, HALO, 8 April 2019; Decree 897 issued by the Minister of Defence, 30 December 2010; and Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V Article 10 Report (for 21 March 2017 to 31 March 2018), Form A.

23 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 6 July 2015 and Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May 2022.

24 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 2 September 2022.

The Georgian government funds the running costs of the HDCD. In 2022, this was reported to include all salary and administrative expenses as well as the costs of survey, QA/QC activities of ongoing clearance, and monitoring of stockpile destruction tasks.²⁵ It also included funding for the Engineering Battalion, which carries out some survey and battle area clearance (BAC).²⁶ Mine Action Review was not able to obtain information on the amount of funding provided by the Georgian government to support mine action in 2022.

The national authority has received capacity development support from HALO and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). HALO did not provide any direct capacity development support to the national authorities in Georgia or the *de facto* Abkhaz authorities in 2021²⁷ or 2022.²⁸ Previously, however, HALO provided training on IMAS, geographic information systems (GIS), and clearance and survey techniques.²⁹

In previous years, the GICHD provided training for HDCD staff on the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core database, ammunition storage, and TS.³⁰ It is not known if the national authority received any capacity development support from any organisations in 2022.

HALO reports that the Georgian authorities are enabling of mine action within the country where access is granted. HALO has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Georgian national mine action authority, which allows HALO to work in Georgia. HALO maintains relations with relevant government ministries on both sides of the ABL and is registered in Georgia as an international NGO. HALO is able to procure items in Georgia and transfer them across the ABL into Abkhazia by coordinating permissions from the Government of Georgia and the *de facto* authorities in Abkhazia.³¹

Gaining access to some areas in Georgia for humanitarian demining continues to prove challenging, however. HALO has submitted several requests to the MoD seeking access to the remaining minefields where access is denied. While permission to begin clearing two of the six remaining minefields, at Khojali and Kadoeti was granted in 2019, permissions for the remaining four minefields have not yet been granted. HALO does not expect permissions for Barisakho or Osiauri to be forthcoming in the near future. This is mainly due to the perceived tactical value of these minefields to the Georgian military.³² Permission to access the Red Bridge area has also been denied since July 2015 when, following initial granting of access to HALO and their initiation of NTS, the Azerbaijani military demanded a month later that TS be halted.³³ Georgia has reported further discussions with Azerbaijan regarding the clearance of Red Bridge minefield.³⁴ As at March 2023, however, HALO had still not been granted permission to restart clearance.³⁵

While the national authorities in Georgia have facilitated mine action where access is permitted, HALO reports that clearance operators are not involved in key decision-making processes by the national authorities. There is no in-country platform for dialogue among all stakeholders that meets on a regular basis to collectively discuss progress, challenges, and support for AP mine survey and clearance in Georgia.³⁶ Georgia has, however, engaged in regional co-operation for mine action through its participation in regional meetings of the LMFSC campaign, hosted in Tbilisi in cooperation with DELTA in both November 2021³⁷ and October 2022. HALO is also a member of the campaign, which it has found to be a useful platform for advocating for the release of the remaining minefields in Georgia as well as continued lobbying for the accession of all three States in the South Caucasus to the APMBC.³⁸

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

In 2022, DELTA reported that Georgia's draft National Mine Action Standards contained a standard on environmental management and policy, although HALO was not aware of this.³⁹ DELTA has stated that all national and international demining operators are expected to abide by state laws relating to environmental protection when planning and conducting demining operations.⁴⁰

HALO has an institutional environmental policy as well as strict environmental standard operating procedures (SOPs), which aim to leave the environment in a state similar to or, where possible, better than it was before demining operations, and in a state that permits intended land use once operations are complete.⁴¹ Once inspected and found to be clear, soil that has been

25 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May and 2 September 2022.

26 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 12 May 2020.

27 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May 2022.

28 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

29 Emails from Matthew Walker, HALO, 8 April 2019; Michael Montafi, HALO, 8 May 2020; and Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 10 June 2019.

30 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 12 May 2020.

31 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

32 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 26 July 2022.

33 Emails from Andrew Moore, HALO, 18 October 2016; Irakli Chitanava, HALO, 2 May 2017; and Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 3 April 2017.

34 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019.

35 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

36 Ibid.

37 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022 and; commonspace.eu, "Georgia supports efforts to clear the South Caucasus from all landmines and unexploded ordnance", 7 November 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3zDRWxn>.

38 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May 2022.

39 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022; and Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May 2022.

40 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.

41 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May 2022.

displaced during mechanical excavation is returned to the place of origin. Prior to handing over a task to the local community, HALO teams remove items used to mark the ground during clearance and make every effort not to leave any negative impact behind.

HALO's operations in Georgia reflect its efforts globally to develop projects that combine mine clearance with environmental protection. For example, subsurface clearance at Primorsky was conducted to a depth that would help to remove from the soil heavy metal contamination caused by UXO to allow local residents to use the land for agriculture. Clearance at Khojali is intended to help facilitate development of ecotourism in the area. It is also hoped that, as this is an SHA, reduction through TS will allow HALO to minimise further the environmental impact of clearance.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Georgia has a Gender and Diversity policy in place.⁴² In 2022, the national authority reported that there is equal access to employment for qualified women and men in survey and clearance teams in Georgia, including for managerial level/supervisory positions even though, proportionately, the number of women has remained low. Among the HDCC's staff in 2020 and 2021, one of seven members—the GIS/IMSMA specialist—was a woman. While no women were employed by HDCC in operational roles or in managerial/supervisory positions in 2020 or 2021, 1% of military personnel within the EOD [Explosive Ordnance Disposal] Company of Combat Engineer Battalion were women in 2021.⁴³ No information was provided on the gender balance of HDCC's staff or of personnel within the EOD Company of Combat Engineer Battalion in 2022.

In 2022, women made up 31% of HALO staff, including those based in Abkhazia and HALO's two Tbilisi-based members of staff. 36% of managerial and supervisory positions were occupied by women and 29% of operational positions were occupied by women (see Table 2).⁴⁴ Overall, the proportion of female staff is similar to that reported for 2021, when women made up 28% of HALO staff in Abkhazia, with an additional female member of staff based in Tbilisi, dedicated to the administration of the Georgia programme (at the time, HALO's only member of staff outside Abkhazia). The proportion of managerial and supervisory positions occupied by women has increased however, from the 15% reported for 2021. The proportion of operational positions occupied by women remains the same as that reported for 2021.⁴⁵

In 2022, funding from an anonymous donor allowed HALO to continue to provide childcare support stipends to female staff

with school-aged children. A new grant from this donor was due to begin in June 2023, intended to fund these stipends, along with professional development training for women working in HALO's Abkhazia programme.⁴⁶

HALO has a gender and diversity policy in place and beneficiary data is disaggregated by gender and age. HALO also supports use of mixed-gender teams to conduct survey, which allows for greater engagement with women and children.⁴⁷ Manual mine clearance teams deployed to Lindava in 2022 were gender-equal and included two women who had previously worked in BAC at Primorsky and had been retrained to conduct manual clearance. EOD teams continued to be mixed-gender and mixed-ethnicity in 2022, as they were in 2021. Due to restrictions on movement between Abkhazia and TAT and the difficult access conditions at Khojali and Kadoeti, HALO did not succeed in recruiting women for NTS operations in TAT in 2022. HALO states that ensuring mixed-gender and mixed-ethnic teams for clearance of these areas will be a major priority once funding for clearance is secured.⁴⁸

HALO notes that, when responding to EOD callouts, the presence of female personnel is extremely important to ensure gender sensitivity of project delivery and ensure that the teams are able to reach all members of the community. In accordance with local gender norms in villages, female EOD team members take the lead when interacting with female-led households. In the Gali-based EOD team, the presence of an acting female team leader at various times has had a significant impact in positively shifting perceptions among community members about the kinds of roles that women in Abkhazia are capable of undertaking.⁴⁹

42 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 April 2021.

43 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 April 2021 and 31 May 2022.

44 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

45 Emails from Michael Montafi, HALO, 30 May 2021, 17 May 2022, and 7 and 10 June 2022.

46 Emails from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April and 12 July 2023.

47 Email from Matthew Walker, HALO, 8 April 2019.

48 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

49 Ibid.

HALO's survey and EOD teams make every effort to reach all members of affected communities, including women and children, and to visit schools and other locations frequented by these populations. HALO also considers the potential impact of clearance in the task prioritisation process on women, children, and marginalised or vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities and elderly. In the case of Kadoeti, for example, mine contamination has led to all women and children leaving the village, with only seven residents remaining, all of whom are men. It is hoped that clearance at Kadoeti will facilitate the return of former residents, including women and children. Similarly, clearance of Lindava, completed in 2022, was significant for its potential to facilitate the return of ethnic Georgian displaced persons to the village, a key reason for HALO's high prioritisation of the task. When selecting tasks in Abkhazia, HALO makes an effort to select an equitable proportion of tasks in both

predominantly ethnic Abkhaz and predominantly ethnic Georgian communities.

HALO's EOD project has been designed to serve diverse communities from across Abkhazia's districts and to deploy teams based on the ethnic composition of the settlements where HALO operates, i.e. an ethnic Georgian team based in Gali, serving ethnic Georgian communities in the eastern part of Abkhazia, and an ethnic Abkhaz team serving the ethnic Abkhaz communities.⁵⁰

HALO has also collaborated with local women's organisations to increase the visibility of its work to women. In 2021–22, for example, the HALO Abkhazia programme was able to partner with United Nations (UN) Women in Abkhazia to distribute information about ending violence against women, including how to access UN Women-supported local shelter hotlines.⁵¹

Table 2: Gender composition of mine action operators in 2022⁵²

Organisation	Total staff	Total women employed	Total staff in managerial/supervisory positions	Total women in managerial/supervisory positions	Total staff	Total staff in operational positions
HALO	35	11	11	4	24	7
DELTA HDCD	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

The HDCD uses the IMSMA database and, according to HALO, the data are accurate. Data archives go back to 2009 and are regularly updated, based on HALO's operations reports and on work by the Engineering Battalion.⁵³

In 2022, Georgia outlined how various government agencies, in particular the Defence Forces and the EOD team of the Georgian State Security Service, work effectively to report contamination discovered through their established networks and in response to information from local residents. The HDCD regularly collects, analyses, documents, and stores information on areas contaminated by mines or ERW. The HDCD also compiles and regularly updates digital and printed maps of contaminated and cleared areas within and through the national IMSMA database.⁵⁴

Previously, in 2019, HALO said that it had access to the data in Georgia's national information management system.⁵⁵ In 2023, however, the organisation reported it no longer has access to the system.⁵⁶ HALO uses its own IMSMA-compatible data collection forms that DELTA has approved while the HDCD QA/QC team also has its own forms.⁵⁷ As at March 2023, HALO was considering a shift to new data collection and IM systems used by other HALO programmes, commenting that, while the current data collection forms do enable collection of the necessary data, this change would allow the programme to analyse the data more easily and with greater sophistication.⁵⁸

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May 2022.

⁵² Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

⁵³ Emails from Michael Montafi, HALO, 8 May 2020 and 17 May 2022.

⁵⁴ CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2021), Form B.

⁵⁵ Email from Matthew Walker, HALO, 8 April 2019.

⁵⁶ Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

⁵⁷ Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019; and Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

⁵⁸ Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Georgia has previously reported having a national mine action strategy in place. Its main aims and targets are focused on clearing the remaining mined areas (unless they are deemed to have military utility) and to clear other areas contaminated with ERW.⁵⁹ In 2021, implementation of Georgia's annual mine action plan was compromised by COVID-19 restrictions, poor funding of humanitarian demining operators, and national staffing challenges. Georgia had a mine action plan in place for 2022.⁶⁰ No update was available on the implementation of this 2022 plan or as to whether a mine action plan was in place for 2023.

DELTA prioritises clearance in areas of high risk to the population, as well as land used for livestock and other agriculture, along with roads, border security, and other key infrastructure. In addition, Georgia has long-term plans for survey and clearance of mines and UXO at commercial sites to support the country's socio-economic development.⁶¹ DELTA explains how, in the aftermath of the August 2008

Russian-Georgian conflict, the safety of local populations clearly determined prioritisation of mine and UXO clearance. However, since the immediate post-conflict period, Georgia has had no national level prioritisation system for clearance, with clearance operations conducted by HALO as and when possible and when resources allow. Clearance is also sometimes conducted at the request of ministries, organisations, or commercial companies to facilitate safe infrastructure development.⁶²

HALO has confirmed that the prioritisation of tasks continues to be predominantly determined by the level of risk to the population, release of land used for agriculture and facilitation of access to key infrastructure.⁶³ In TAT, HALO collaborates with the national mine action authorities to determine annual operational planning and task priority.⁶⁴ In Abkhazia, however, HALO prioritises tasks based on its own data.⁶⁵

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

As at June 2022, Georgia's National Mine Action Standards and National Technical Standards Guidelines were drafted and awaiting approval by the GICHD IMAS department. Once approved by GICHD IMAS, they were due to be translated into Georgian and then sent to Parliament for approval.⁶⁶ The International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATGs) have been translated into Georgian but the translation of the IMAS remains ongoing.⁶⁷ HALO states that it has not been given access to the draft NMAS or received a request to provide input. HALO was also not aware of whether translation of the NMAS had been completed or if their approval from parliament had been granted.⁶⁸

In 2022, HALO created a new SOP on NTS for the Kadoeti and Khojali tasks, in line with IMAS, as it had been several years since NTS was conducted in TAT.⁶⁹

Mine Action Review requested data from the national authority on Georgia's current national clearance capacity and range of demining assets, but none was provided. In TAT, quality management (QM) is conducted by DELTA. In Abkhazia, HALO is responsible for its own QM.⁷⁰

All areas cleared by HALO in Georgia in 2022 proved to contain AP mines.⁷¹ The Engineering Battalion of the MoD cleared an area of 32,451m² near Poti Port in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region of TAT, which proved to contain no AP mines.⁷²

⁵⁹ Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019.

⁶⁰ Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May and 26 July 2022.

⁶³ Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

⁶⁴ Emails from Michael Montafi, HALO, 30 April 2021 and 17 May 2022; and Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 July 2023.

⁶⁵ Emails from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April and 12 July 2023.

⁶⁶ Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.

⁶⁷ Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 April 2021 and 31 May 2022.

⁶⁸ Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019; and Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

⁷¹ Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

⁷² Emails from Jemal Kopaleishvili, DELTA, 18 May and 16 June 2023.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

At the time of writing, no up-to-date information from the national authority was available on national operational capacity deployed in 2022 or on plans to increase, decrease or maintain this capacity in 2023. In 2022, DELTA had reported that the Ministry of Defence retained a small demining and EOD capacity in TAT. In 2021 the EOD Company of Combat Engineer Battalion had one survey team (for both NTS and TS), and one manual clearance team of ten personnel.⁷³ The HDCC was continuing to coordinate and monitor operations and carry out NTS and TS but was not conducting clearance.⁷⁴ As in 2021, the Georgian State Security Service (SSS) EOD team conducted EOD tasks in response to call-outs.⁷⁵ In Abkhazia, the emergency services (EMERCOM) had a small EOD capacity, although HALO continued to be generally relied upon to deal with all items of UXO.⁷⁶ In July to September 2022, personnel from DELTA-HDCC joined HALO Abkhazia programme personnel to conduct NTS at Khojali and Kadoeti in TAT.⁷⁷

HALO, which is the only international operator working in the country, conducts survey and both BAC and mine clearance in Abkhazia⁷⁸ and resumed NTS in TAT in 2022.⁷⁹ HALO's ethnic Georgian and ethnic Abkhaz EOD teams, funded by the UK's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF), also continued to respond to call-outs in the conflict-affected areas across the whole of Abkhazia in 2022.⁸⁰ HALO secured three-year funding for its EOD work in Abkhazia in 2020.⁸¹

This funding has not been extended and EOD operations in Abkhazia therefore were suspended on 31 March 2023. HALO is currently awaiting a funding decision for another project, which would allow the EOD programme to resume.⁸² HALO's operations in TAT resumed in 2022 having remained suspended in 2021 due to lack of donor funding.⁸³ However, as of April 2023, HALO had no mine clearance, survey, or EOD teams active in Abkhazia or TAT. If HALO is successful in securing funding for clearance of the minefields at Khojali and Kadoeti, it expects that three teams of deminers will be deployed to conduct this work.⁸⁴

Beginning in June 2020, HALO responded to the COVID-19 crisis in Abkhazia through the deployment of six HALO ambulances. The programme completed its last COVID-19 response project in mid-October 2022 and has handed over the vehicles and equipment to two local hospitals.⁸⁵

In 2021, the international demining company, SafeLane Global, requested accreditation from DELTA/HDCC to conduct offshore survey and clearance of Poti Harbour, in order to allow some construction work to proceed safely. As at May 2022, the accreditation process was ongoing.⁸⁶ At the time of writing, no further update was available from the national authority and there was no information on SafeLane Global's website indicating demining activity in Georgia.⁸⁷

Table 3: Operational NTS and TS capacities deployed in 2022⁸⁸

Operator	NTS/TS teams	Total NTS/TS personnel	Comments
HALO	1	4	Conducted NTS in cooperation with HDCC DELTA. An increase in survey capacity as none deployed by HALO in 2021.
EOD Company of Engineer Battalion of MoD of Georgia*	1	10	Deployed in 2021. Conduct both NTS and TS. Updated information not available for 2022.
Totals	2	14	

* This information was supplied by DELTA in May 2022 and stated as correct as at the end of 2021. Relevant information was requested for 2022 but was not provided.

73 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May, 26 July, and 2 September 2022.
74 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 2 September 2022.
75 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.
76 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019 and 12 May 2020; and Matthew Walker, HALO, 8 April 2019.
77 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.
78 Email from Irakli Chitanava, HALO, 2 May 2017.
79 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.
80 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022; and Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.
81 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 30 April 2021.
82 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.
83 Emails from Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May 2022; Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022; and Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.
84 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.
85 Ibid.
86 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.
87 SafeLane Global, accessed 11 June 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/3qye61v>.
88 Emails from Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May 2022; Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023; and Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.

Table 4: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2022⁸⁹

Operator	Manual clearance teams	Total deminers*	Mechanical assets/machines**	Comments
HALO	2	10	0	Increase on 1 team of 4 deminers in 2021. As in 2021, also deployed two EOD call-out teams (8 personnel), and, at Primorsky, two BAC teams (15 personnel in total). A decrease in mechanical assets compared to the two deployed in 2021.
EOD Company of Engineer Battalion of MoD of Georgia***	1	10	0	Deployed in 2021. Georgian State Security Service (SSS) EOD team conducts EOD tasks. Abkhazia emergency services (EMERCOM) have a small EOD capacity. Updated information not available for 2022
Totals	3	20	0	

* Excluding team leaders, medics, and drivers. ** Excluding vegetation cutters and sifters. *** Information correct as at the end of 2021; information was not provided for 2022.

DEMINER SAFETY

There were no demining accidents involving HALO staff in 2022.⁹⁰

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

A total of 0.28km² of land was released through clearance in Georgia in 2021, destroying in the process 82 AP mines and 131 items of UXO (see Table 6). All clearance by HALO took place in Abkhazia, while that undertaken by the Engineering Battalion of the MoD took place in TAT. In addition, 26 AP mines, 2 AV mines, and 1,068 items of UXO were destroyed in spot tasks by HALO (operating EOD teams in Abkhazia only) (see Table 6).

No land was released through NTS in 2022. However, NTS by HALO in TAT resulted in identification of 39,003m² of SHA and 16,825m² of CHA. A total of 32,456m² was reduced through TS by the Engineering Battalion of the MoD in TAT.⁹¹

SURVEY IN 2022

No land was released through NTS in 2022.⁹² This is a decrease compared to 2021 when, in Abkhazia, 25,453m² of mined area was cancelled through NTS by HDCD.⁹³ A total of 32,456m² was reduced through TS by HDCD in TAT in 2022 (see Table 5). This is a decrease compared to 2021, when 0.14km² was reduced through TS by HDCD and the Engineering Battalion of the MoD.⁹⁴

Having gained permission in 2019 and after securing funding in 2022,⁹⁵ HALO, supported by HDCD personnel, was able to conduct NTS at the Kadoeti and Khojali minefields during July to September 2022. This resulted in 26,000m² of SHA being identified at Khojali as well as 13,003m² of SHA and 16,825m² of CHA at Kadoeti (see Table 1).⁹⁶ These areas were not added to the national database as HALO did not have access to the database in 2022.⁹⁷

89 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022; Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May 2022; and Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

90 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

91 Email from Jemal Kopaleishvili, DELTA, 18 May and 16 June 2023.

92 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

93 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.

94 Ibid.

95 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May 2022.

96 Emails from Jemal Kopaleishvili, DELTA, 18 May 2023; and Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

97 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 and 19 April 2023.

Table 5: Release of mined area through TS in 2022⁹⁸

Region/Village	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
Dedoplistskaro utilization base, Kakheti region, TAT	HDCD	32,456
Total		32,456

CLEARANCE IN 2022

A total of 0.28km² of mined area was released through clearance in Georgia in 2022, during which 82 AP mines were destroyed along with 131 items of UXO (see Table 6). The area cleared represents a decrease compared to the 0.4km² cleared in 2021.⁹⁹ All clearance by HALO took place in Abkhazia, while that undertaken by the Engineering Battalion of the MoD took place in TAT. In addition, 26 AP mines, 2 AV mines, and 1,068 items of UXO were destroyed in spot tasks by HALO (operating EOD teams in Abkhazia only).¹⁰⁰

HALO saw a decrease in the amount of clearance it undertook in 2022, at 246,949m² compared to 397,766m² in 2021.¹⁰¹ This was due to HALO's efforts across multiple tasks and projects, leading to a decrease in work undertaken in mined areas. Following completion of battle area clearance at Primorsky in July 2022, HALO was able to reallocate resources and undertake clearance at one minefield at Lindava, which was completed in December 2022.¹⁰²

HALO's operations at Primorsky, which were initiated in 2017, were completed in July 2022.¹⁰³ AP mines there were the result of an ammunition storage area explosion in August 2017. The mines were scattered across the landscape as a result of the explosion and had not been emplaced.¹⁰⁴ HALO did not deploy any mechanical assets in 2022.¹⁰⁵

The EOD Company of the Engineering Battalion undertook clearance at a military firing range, near Gonio, in the Adjara region of TAT. A total of 0.75km² has been cleared since work began in 2016, but the national authority was unable to specify how much of this clearance took place there during 2022.¹⁰⁶

Table 6: Mine clearance in 2022¹⁰⁷

Region & District/Village	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Lindava, Abkhazia	HALO	11,684	5	0
Primorsky, Abkhazia (BAC)	HALO	235,265	*77	131
Abkhazia EOD call-outs	HALO	0	**26	1,068
Near Poti Port, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region, TAT	EOD Company of the MoD Engineering Battalion	32,451	0	0
Military firing range near Gonio, Adjara region, TAT***	EOD Company of the MoD Engineering Battalion	N/K	N/K	N/K
Totals		279,400	108	1,199

* AP mines destroyed at Primorsky were the result of BAC and mechanical clearance of the site of an unplanned ammunition storage area explosion that occurred in August 2017. As such, the mines were not emplaced but rather scattered around the storage area. ** Two AV mines were also destroyed during Abkhazia EOD call-outs.

*** The EOD company of the MoD Engineering Battalion has been working at the former military facility of Gonio since 2016. A total of 750,000m² has been cleared to date. No information was available on the number of AP mines destroyed during 2022.

98 Emails from Jemal Kopaleishvili, DELTA, 18 May and 16 June 2023.

99 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 April 2021; and Michael Montafi, HALO, 30 April 2021.

100 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

101 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022; and Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

102 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

103 Ibid.

104 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May 2022.

105 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

106 Emails from Jemal Kopaleishvili, DELTA, 18 May and 16 June 2023.

107 Emails from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023; and Jemal Kopaleishvili, DELTA, 18 May and 16 June 2023.

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

No target date has been set for completion of AP mine clearance in Georgia. DELTA reiterated in 2021 that, “given all the impediments, it is difficult to name specific timelines”.¹⁰⁸ The Red Bridge minefield is Georgia’s largest, clearance of which has previously been identified as one of its key strategic mine action priorities.¹⁰⁹ Georgia previously reported plans to start clearing the Red Bridge minefield in 2015, but after discussions between Georgian and Azerbaijani representatives only survey was permitted.¹¹⁰ In 2022, HALO reported that, while there had been indications from the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that progress had been made on general demarcation disputes between Georgia and Azerbaijan, there was still no clear evidence of progress towards Red Bridge clearance.

As at March 2023, HALO had not been granted permission to clear any part of the minefield.¹¹¹ The Georgian MFA stated in October 2021 that HALO remains the Georgian Government’s preferred implementer for clearance of the Red Bridge minefield, should clearance become possible.¹¹² But while HALO has previously stated it would maintain its residual presence in TAT as long as it was undertaking operations in Abkhazia, it expressed concern in 2022 at the outlook for tackling the Red Bridge minefield, should HALO be forced to exit Georgia before necessary permission and funding to operate at Red Bridge are secured.

In addition to a lack of access to the Red Bridge minefield, permission has still not yet been granted for HALO to survey and clear mined areas in Barisakho or Osiauri.¹¹³ Notable progress has been made, however, with NTS of the minefields at Khojali and Kadoeti in 2022 by HALO.¹¹⁴

HALO cautions that, while the Engineering Battalion of the MoD would be a suitable entity to deal with any residual contamination once all minefields have been cleared, it would struggle to conduct the large-scale, systematic clearance that a minefield like Red Bridge would require. HALO would be prepared to return to Georgia to undertake the clearance, even if it had left Georgia.¹¹⁵ This issue has now become pressing as, as at April 2023, HALO had no mine clearance, survey, or EOD teams active in Abkhazia or TAT. HALO is continuing to lobby for permission to access the Red Bridge area and pursuing funding to enable clearance of at Khojali and Kadoeti.¹¹⁶

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Georgia’s national strategy provides for action to address previously unknown mined areas that are found after completion.¹¹⁷ The Engineering Battalion of the MoD has been trained to carry out EOD, demining, and BAC by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Partnership for Peace and has the capacity to deal with any residual contamination once all the known minefields have been cleared.¹¹⁸ However, Georgia has expressed concern that this capacity to tackle residual contamination is limited.¹¹⁹

108 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.

109 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 3 April 2017.

110 Interview with George Dolidze, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Geneva, 28 May 2009; and email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 3 June 2015.

111 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May 2022.

112 Ibid.

113 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

114 Emails from Michael Montafi, HALO, 17 May and 26 July 2022.

115 Ibid.

116 Email from Rachael Rosenberg, HALO, 12 April 2023.

117 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.

118 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 April 2021; and Michael Montafi, HALO, 30 April 2021.

119 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: UNKNOWNAP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

UNKNOWN

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

UNKNOWN

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- India should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- India should clear anti-personnel (AP) mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- India should report publicly on the extent and location of AP mines and prepare a plan for their clearance and destruction.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Director-General of Military Operations

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Army Corps of Engineers
- Indian Police Service

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The extent of AP mine contamination is not known. India used mines in three wars with Pakistan in 1947, 1965, and 1971, and in its war with China in 1962.¹ Large-scale mine-laying was conducted by government forces on and near the Line of Control (LoC) separating India and Pakistan during the 1971 war and the 2001–02 stand-off between the two states. Both AP and anti-vehicle (AV) mines were laid on cultivated land and pasture, as well as around infrastructure and a number of villages. In 2002, media resources reported that India was in the process of laying mines along virtually the entire length of its 2,897km border with Pakistan. One army commander said the mined area extended roughly two kilometres deep.²

1 Human Rights Watch, Recent Landmine Use by India and Pakistan, Background, May 2002, at: <http://bit.ly/3srXtQz>, p. 3.

2 "India's Minefields Mean Bitter Harvest for Farmers", *The New York Times*, 4 January 2002, at: <http://nyti.ms/3mTiBhp>.

Despite repeated official claims that all the mines laid were subsequently cleared, reports of contamination and casualties have persisted. A media report in 2013 cited a government statement that about 20km² of irrigated land was still mined in the Akhnoor sector of the LoC alone.³ In June 2016, India's *NDTV news* reported that the Indian army was demining areas of the LoC in Rajouri district, Kashmir, in order to return land to communities for agricultural use as it vacated fields near the border that were reportedly taken over and mined during the Kargil Conflict in 1999 and Operation Parakram in 2001.⁴ India asserts that the Indian Armed Forces have never used landmines in internal armed conflicts in its northern and north-eastern states.⁵

The Landmine Monitor identified India as one of only a handful of countries that it believes to be actively producing mines.⁶ In 2019, according to an online media report the Indian Army was planning to procure one million AP mines over a five-year period to be used along the LoC.⁷ In 2021, the Indian Army's Corps of Engineers received delivery of the first of 700,000 Nipun AP mines and were also carrying out trials on new AV mines which it planned to deploy along the LoC (if the trials were successful).⁸

Incidents involving Indian army personnel who step on mines during patrols of the LoC continue to be reported, as well as among Kashmir rebels who try to cross the LoC, and civilians, often children, who are killed or injured when grazing cattle or collecting firewood near the LoC.⁹

Security forces have also reported extensive use of mines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by Maoist fighters in the north-eastern states of Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand causing civilian and military casualties. Landmine Monitor has reported an increase in the past few years in the number of incidents involving pressure-plate mines attributed to recent use by the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-M) or other Naxal-Maoist rebel groups.¹⁰ Data from the ACLED database and the Fenix Insight database support this finding with both civilian and security force (police and paramilitary) casualties recorded in 2022 and 2023.¹¹

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

India has no civilian mine action programme. The Director-General of Military Operations decides on mine clearance after receiving assessment reports from the command headquarters of the respective districts where clearance is needed.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in India in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

At the time of writing, India had not submitted an Article 13 report under Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) covering 2022. In its Article 13 report covering 2021 it did not provide information on land release in 2021 as it had in previous years. It does provide information on the demining training sessions which the Indian Army undertook during the year.¹²

3 "Heavy rainfall worsening landmine peril for Kashmiri farmers", *Thomson Reuters Foundation*, 5 November 2013, at: <http://tmsnr.rs/33xqBun>.

4 "Farmers Hope to Return to Fields as Army Clears Landmines on Line of Control", *NDTV*, 27 June 2016, at: <http://bit.ly/2Z1AJJL>.

5 Recent Landmine Use by India and Pakistan, Human Rights Watch Backgrounder, May 2002, p. 3.

6 *Landmine Monitor* 2022, p.22, at: <https://bit.ly/3E9ELWa>.

7 "Army wants 1 million mines from private sector", *The Economic Times*, 3 October 2019, at: <https://bit.ly/3L22UiQ>.

8 "Nipun anti-personnel mines: Army gets weapons boost for Pakistan, China borders", *Hindustan Times*, 21 December 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3P6SnaJ>.

9 ACLED, "Filters: 01/01/2022-12/08/2023, Remote explosive/landmine/IED, India," accessed: 12 August 2023 at: www.acleddata.com; and Fenix Insight database, at: <https://fenix-insight.online/>.

10 *Landmine Monitor Report* 2022, p.22.

11 ACLED, "Filters: 01/01/2022-12/08/2023, Remote explosive/landmine/IED, India," accessed: 12 August 2023 at: www.acleddata.com; and Fenix Insight database, at: <https://fenix-insight.online/>.

12 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form E.

The Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for clearing mines placed by non-State armed groups.¹³ In July 2017, for instance, according to a media account, the Indian Army was manually clearing mines in the border districts of Jammu and Kashmir and was procuring more advanced demining equipment with a view to improving safety and decreasing the number of deminer casualties.¹⁴ Media reports have indicated the police also play an active part in clearing mines and other explosive hazards on an ad hoc basis in states dealing with insurgency.¹⁵ According to media reports, the Army's bomb disposal squad is responsible for destroying mines near the LoC that have drifted due to seasonal rainfall and been reported during Army patrols.¹⁶

No target date has been set for the completion of mine clearance. In a statement delivered at the Fourth APMBC Review Conference in November 2019, India said: "Mines that are used for defensive military operations are laid within fenced perimeters and marked, in accordance with the requirements specified in AP [Amended Protocol] II. Post operations, these mines are cleared by trained troops".¹⁷ During the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties of the APMBC, India affirmed its commitment to the "eventual elimination" of AP mines. However, India also noted that the achievement of this objective hinges on the "availability of militarily effective technologies that can perform cost effectively the legitimate defensive role of anti-personnel landmines."¹⁸

13 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2006), Form B.

14 "Advanced tech to help soldiers map minefields", *The Times of India*, 10 July 2017, at: <http://bit.ly/2KyoVt7>.

15 "IEDs pose huge challenge in efforts to counter Naxals: Police", *The Indian Express*, 24 July 2017, at: <http://bit.ly/2MgNRrb>; and "Telangana police defuse landmines laid by Maoist in Mulugu, explosives recovered", *India Today*, 8 February 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3JuTc82>.

16 "Six land mines destroyed along LoC in Balakote", *Northlines*, 5 May 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3qQG6hj>; and "Rusted landmine found in J-K's Poonch; destroyed", *The Print*, 31 July 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/44jlhrC>.

17 Statement of India, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 26 November 2019.

18 Statement of India, Twentieth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 21 November 2022.

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: UNKNOWN

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

UNKNOWN

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

UNKNOWN

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Available data on contamination and land release of anti-personnel (AP) mined areas in Iran continue to be extremely limited. It has been informally reported that 188 AP and anti-vehicle (AV) mines were destroyed during commercial clearance operations in 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Iran should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Iran should clear AP mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- Iran should report publicly on the extent and location of mined areas and prepare a plan for their clearance and destruction.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Iran Mine Action Center (IRMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- IRMAC
- Iranian Army
- Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps
- Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC)
- Commercial operators

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Iran is contaminated by AP and AV mines, mainly as a result of the 1980–88 war with Iraq. The extent of the remaining mined areas is unknown, but mine contamination is concentrated in five western provinces bordering Iraq.

According to the Iran Mine Action Center (IRMAC), the initial estimation of undefined “contamination” in Iran was 42,000km² (Ilam province, 17,000km²; Kermanshah province, 7,000km²; Khuzestan province, 15,000km²; Kurdistan province, 1,500km²; and West Azerbaijan, 1,500km²); which by February 2020 had reportedly been reduced by “90%”.¹ There are also said to be mined areas around military bases.² One online report describes remaining contamination as being in hard-to-reach areas, stating that “one per cent of the remaining lands with war mines include impassable mountainous areas”, with some mined areas situated on slopes, in marshes, or as deep as three metres below the surface, making detection very challenging.³

A further complication for contamination estimates pertains to reports of continuing casualties in areas that were supposed to have been cleared, calling into question whether mine clearance has been conducted to international standards. For example, in 2012, Kermanshah province was declared “free from landmines” but several people were killed or injured by landmines only a few days after the announcement, which led the government to consider re-clearing the area.⁴

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Iran is also believed to have cluster munition remnants (CMR) contamination remaining on its territory (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Iran for further information).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

IRMAC was established as the national mine action centre in 2005, taking the place of a Mine Action Committee within the Ministry of Defence (MoD). In 2014, IRMAC reported that it was responsible for planning, data, managing survey, procurement, and the accreditation of demining operators. It was also tasked with setting standards, providing training for clearance operators, concluding contracts with demining operators, and ensuring quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) of their operations. IRMAC also coordinated mine action with the General Staff of the Armed Forces, the Ministry of Interior, the Management and Planning Organisation of Iran, and other relevant ministries and organisations, and handled international relations.⁵ Several IRMAC staff are believed to be serving or former military personnel, including its Director, while others are civilians employed by the MoD. It is not known if this description of IRMAC's role and responsibilities remains accurate.

The amount of national resources Iran contributes to support the cost of IRMAC or the survey and clearance of AP mined areas is not known. Iran is believed to have dedicated significant resources and effort to clearing areas on its territory contaminated by mines, CMR and other explosive remnants of war (ERW),⁶ but results of survey and clearance and the standards to which clearance has been conducted have not been made publicly available.

As part of an ongoing mine action programme in Iran, which also includes victim assistance and mine risk education, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reports that it has undertaken technical training of mine action actors in co-operation with IRMAC, though no dates for this are given.⁷ In 2020, the ICRC reported that it had signed a mine action partnership memorandum of understanding (MoU), with IRMAC, which included support to Iran for safe humanitarian demining.⁸

Iran has engaged in numerous activities to promote regional and international co-operation for mine action in recent years. In November 2019, Iran opened its first international humanitarian demining training centre in Tehran, with the aim of offering training courses on demining to other countries in the region struggling with landmine contamination.⁹ In late 2022, an MoU for the development of mutual co-operation in mine action was signed between the national mine action centres of Iran and Armenia, following a visit to IRMAC from the Director of the Armenian Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise (CHDE).¹⁰ It was reported in June 2023 that demining would begin in the near future at the Armenia-Iran border, on the Armenian side.¹¹

1 IRMAC PowerPoint presentation, available at: <http://bit.ly/38ALojt>; and presentation by Mr. Pourbagher, Deputy Director of IRMAC, National Directors Meeting, Geneva, 12 February 2020.

2 “Landmines Still a Major Menace in Iran”, *Atlantic Council*, 25 August 2016, at: <https://bit.ly/3dVTKp2>.

3 “The ominous legacy of war still takes victims”, *Iranian Labour News Authority*, 22 May 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/3S1UfBk>.

4 “Landmines Still a Major Menace in Iran”, *Atlantic Council*, 25 August 2016.

5 IRMAC PowerPoint Presentation, Tehran, 9 February 2014; and IRMAC, “Presentation of IRMAC”.

6 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), “Experts from over 15 nations attend round-table on humanitarian mine action”, Press release, 15 March 2019, at: <https://bit.ly/3N7Ca4e>; and ICRC, “Weapon Contamination” accessed 9 February 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/30TC55t>.

7 ICRC, “Weapon Contamination”.

8 F. Arabpour (Weapon Contamination Coordinator, ICRC delegation in Tehran), “ICRC Mine Action activities in the I.R. of Iran”, Presentation to the 23rd International Meeting of National Mine Action Program Directors and United Nations (UN) Advisors, Geneva, 11–14 February 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/43EjVZD>.

9 “1st International Humanitarian Demining Training Center opens in Tehran”, *Mehr News Agency*, 12 November 2019, available at: <http://bit.ly/2C7wRzG>.

10 “Iran, Armenia ink MoU on humanitarian demining cooperation”, *Iran Press News Agency*, 19 September 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3WyeypJ>.

11 Email from Narges Jahanparast, Ambassadors for Development Without Borders, 6 June 2023.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known whether Iran has a national mine action standard (NMAS) on environmental management and/or a policy on environmental management. It is also not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in order to minimise potential harm from clearance. It has been reported, however, that Iran's Ministry for the Environment does impose some relevant regulations around environmental practices in mine action.¹²

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The extent to which gender and diversity are mainstreamed into mine action in Iran is not known.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

It is not known to what extent IRMAC is able to disaggregate AP mine contamination and clearance output from that of other explosive ordnance. It has been reported that IRMAC's database is comprehensive and accurate and that operators provide regular activity reports to IRMAC on both humanitarian and commercial mine action projects.¹³ However, Mine Action Review has not been able to obtain further information on this from IRMAC.

In 2020, IRMAC reported that it has a geographic information system (GIS), web-based, integrated information management system, which integrates information on quality, safety, and the environment.¹⁴ In 2022, IRMAC launched an application for smartphones, which is reported to contain all data from historical and current clearance operations and intended to provide mine action organisations with a comprehensive view of contaminated and cleared areas identified by IRMAC. The application is also said to contain information about explosive accidents and is updated on a regular, even daily, basis. The application is available to operators and interested parties upon request.¹⁵

PLANNING AND TASKING

It is not known whether Iran has a national mine action strategy or an annual work plan for the survey and clearance of AP mines or agreed and specified criteria for the prioritisation of tasks.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Iran reportedly has NMAS in place.¹⁶ At the time of writing no information was available on quality management (QM) procedures for humanitarian demining in Iran, although it was reported in 2023 that a subsidiary of IRMAC performs QA and QC of commercial demining.¹⁷

IRMAC undertakes two main types of clearance activity: shallow clearance and deep clearance.¹⁸ After Kermanshah province was declared "free from landmines" in 2012 but several people were killed and injured by landmines only a few days later, an Iranian member of parliament commented that the clearance had not respected the minimum depth set in national standards.¹⁹

¹² Email from Narges Jahanparast, Ambassadors for Development Without Borders, 26 April 2023.

¹³ Email from Reza Amaninasab, Director, Ambassadors for Development Without Borders, 23 March 2023.

¹⁴ IRMAC PowerPoint presentation, available at: <http://bit.ly/38ALojt>; and presentation by Mr Pourbagher, IRMAC, 23rd International Meeting of Mine Action National Directors and UN Advisers, Geneva, 11–14 February 2020.

¹⁵ Emails from Reza Amaninasab, Ambassadors for Development Without Borders, 23 March 2023; and Narges Jahanparast, Ambassadors for Development Without Borders, 26 April and 6 May 2023.

¹⁶ Email from Narges Jahanparast, Ambassadors for Development Without Borders, 6 June 2023.

¹⁷ Email from Narges Jahanparast, Ambassadors for Development Without Borders, 26 April 2023.

¹⁸ IRMAC PowerPoint presentation, 2020, p. 5.

¹⁹ "Landmines Still a Major Menace in Iran", *Atlantic Council*, 25 August 2016.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2023, it was reported that IRMAC continued to undertake humanitarian demining.²⁰ However, as of writing, no up-to-date information was available on Iran's current survey and clearance capacity.

IRMAC combines the roles of regulator and operator and, in 2019, was reported to have demining teams and support staff deployed in five affected provinces. In Kurdistan province, IRMAC was conducting verification, mainly through mechanical clearance. IRMAC also responds to calls from the local community reporting landmines or items of unexploded ordnance (UXO). In 2019, demining capacity in Kurdistan province was believed to stand at only around 12 personnel, a reduction on earlier capacity. Available demining assets, such as mechanical assets, vary from province to province.²¹

The Iranian Army and Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps assisted demining efforts to support the response to the flash flooding which affected Iran in March and April 2019.²² At the time of writing no information was available as to whether the Army or Revolutionary Guard Corps currently conduct clearance activities.

In 2022, commercial operators included Immen Zamin Spadana, Immen Gostaran Mohit (reportedly working in western and south-west Iran), and Zamin Pak Persia (reportedly working in western Iran).²³ Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC), the development arm of the National Iranian Oil Company, contracts and monitors commercial operators conducting clearance of Iran's oil and gas producing areas which are concentrated in mine-affected areas of western and south-western Iran bordering Iraq.²⁴

Commercial mine and ERW clearance in Iran is conducted to ensure that land is free from explosive ordnance before it is used for economic purposes or developed. It is separate to humanitarian demining of areas known or suspected to contain explosive ordnance in order to make the land safe for civilian use, which comes under the remit of IRMAC. In a number of countries, commercial demining is applied to areas whether or not there is firm evidence of a threat from explosive ordnance.

International operators are not believed to have been active in Iran since 2008.

DEMINER SAFETY

There were no accidents as a result of AP mine survey or clearance activities in Iran in 2022 according to one source.²⁵ In the past, exceedingly high levels of demining accidents have been reported. In 2020, IRMAC stated that since its establishment in 2005, 200 deminers had been killed or injured during clearance of mines and ERW, equating to one accident for every 15,000 mines or ERW detected.²⁶

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Only limited information is available on land release activities in Iran in 2022 and it is not known if any AP mined areas were released through survey or clearance. Reports suggest that some survey and clearance took place, with 188 landmines destroyed during commercial clearance activity. At the time of writing it had not been possible to verify this information with IRMAC or to confirm whether this was both AV and AP mines.

It is not known if any AP mined areas were added to the national database in 2022. Nor is the extent to which nationally coordinated AP mine survey and clearance have taken place in Iran since Mine Action Review initially reported on the issue in 2016.

SURVEY IN 2022

It has been reported that both non-technical and technical survey took place in the provinces of Khuzestan and Ilam in the south-west of Iran 2022.²⁷

20 Email from Narges Jahanparast, Ambassadors for Development Without Borders, 26 April 2023.

21 Information provided by Reza Amaninasab, Ambassadors for Development without Borders, September 2019.

22 Ibid.

23 Email from Narges Jahanparast, Ambassadors for Development Without Borders, 6 May 2023.

24 Information provided by mine action expert on condition of anonymity.

25 Email from Narges Jahanparast, Ambassadors for Development Without Borders, 21 August 2023.

26 IRMAC PowerPoint presentation, 2020; and presentation by Mr Pourbagher, IRMAC, National Directors Meeting, Geneva, 12 February 2020.

27 Email from Narges Jahanparast, Ambassadors for Development Without Borders, 6 May 2023.

CLEARANCE IN 2022

It has been reported that two mine action projects of approximately 32km² were underway in western Iran in 2022, of which more than half had been cleared. No data were available regarding humanitarian clearance of this area. However, it was reported that commercial clearance activity had resulted in the destruction of 188 landmines as well as 13 submunitions and 1,690 items of UXO, with the majority of these items found in 2022.²⁸

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Iran is believed to have dedicated significant resources and effort to clearing areas on its territory contaminated by mines, CMR and other ERW,²⁹ but results of survey and clearance have not been made publicly available. According to IRMAC in 2020, more than 2 million mines and over 1 million items of ERW had been destroyed since the start of its programme 15 years earlier.³⁰

IRMAC lists the challenges it faces in humanitarian clearance in Iran as: high density of contamination; minefield barriers in place; flooding in contaminated areas, which hinders access; mines and UXO displaced by flooding; displacement of mines to bottom layers of soil (up to 6 metres); the transformation [degradation] of mines, and vegetation.³¹

It has been reported that a new, major commercial project for release of land containing AP mines was due to commence in June 2023 in the Sohrab oil field development in the south-west of Iran.³²

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

It is not known to what extent Iran is making provision for a sustainable capacity to address previously unknown AP mine contamination following completion (i.e. residual contamination).

28 Emails from Narges Jahanparast, Ambassadors for Development Without Borders, 26 April, 6 May, and 6 June 2023.

29 ICRC, "Experts from over 15 nations attend round-table on humanitarian mine action", Press release, 15 March 2019, at: <https://bit.ly/3N7Ca4e>; and ICRC, "Weapon Contamination", accessed 9 February 2023.

30 IRMAC PowerPoint presentation, 2020; and presentation by Mr Pourbagher, IRMAC, National Directors Meeting, Geneva, 12 February 2020.

31 Ibid.

32 Emails from Narges Jahanparast, Ambassadors for Development Without Borders, 26 April, 6 May, and 6 June 2023.

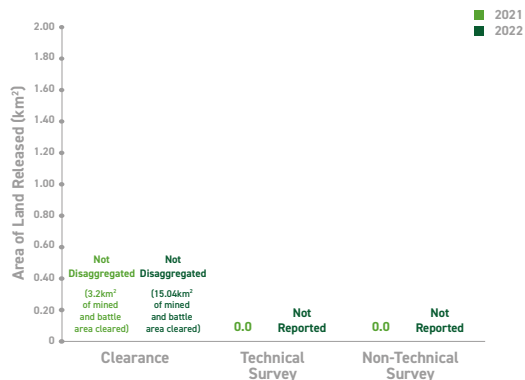
KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: HEAVY**

(PRECISE EXTENT UNKNOWN)

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022**NOT DISAGGREGATED**(15.04KM² OF MINED AND BATTLE AREA CLEARED IN 2022)AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022**NOT DISAGGREGATED**(AP MINES WERE NOT DISAGGREGATED FROM OTHER
EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In early 2023, the Minefield Clearance Bill (Amendment No. 2) was progressing through Israel's Knesset. The Bill would allow the national authority to collect fees for minefield clearance from developers planning to develop on contaminated land. The Bill also proposes to make permanent a temporary provision regulating clearance of unexploded ordnance (UXO) at the expense of developers. Israel did not disclose the extent of anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination nor provide disaggregated land release data for 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Israel should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Israel should clear AP mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- Israel should report transparently on the full extent of mined area and its release, disaggregating AP mines from anti-vehicle (AV) mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW).

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Israeli Mine Action Authority (INMAA)

NATIONAL OPERATORS*

- Israel Defense Forces (IDF)
- IMAG
- 4M
- Minefree
- AMAN
- QUADRO Projects & Technologies LTD

- IEOD
- GA-MAN (Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC))
- 4CI SECURITY LTD (QA/QC)
- OpMS-Open Minded Solutions Ltd (QA/QC)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust (HALO)

OTHER ACTORS

- None

* As reported for 2022.¹ In January 2023, INMAA reported that only two companies in Israel could be hired to conduct mine clearance.²

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The exact extent of AP mined area in Israel is not known. Israel reported 41.58km² of confirmed mined area and a further 48.51km² of suspected mined area as at the end of 2017,³ but has not provided updated contamination data. The combined 90km² (as at end 2017) represents only the area affected by mines that is not deemed essential to Israel's security. The size of other mined areas is not made public. In January 2023, the Director of the Israeli Mine Action Authority (INMAA) reported a significantly different contamination figure in The Knesset, stating that there was the equivalent of 150km² of minefields in Israel [150,000 dunams],⁴ though it is unclear whether this figure includes mined area deemed essential for Israel's security. The total figure reported for 2017 included 18.38km² of mined area in the Jordan Valley (11.84km² of AP mined area, 6.19km² of AV mined area, and 0.35km² of mixed mined area) and in the West Bank.⁵ Since the last updated contamination data at the end of 2017 through to the end of 2022, The HALO Trust (HALO) has cleared a total of 69,320m² of AP mined area in the Jordan Valley and the West Bank. (See the *Clearing the Mines* reports on Palestine 2023 for further information).

Table 1: Mined area (at end 2017)⁶

Type of contamination	CHAs	Area (km ²)	SHAs	Area (km ²)
AP mines only	201	19.93	5	39.54
AV mines only	29	17.00	8	1.17
AP and AV mines	2	4.65	9	7.80
Totals	232	41.58	22	48.51

CHA = Confirmed hazardous area SHA = Suspected hazardous area

The INMAA and Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) have continued to contract and conduct clearance since then but have not provided comprehensive, disaggregated data on mine contamination or land release. In its Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II Article 13 report covering 2022, Israel reiterated that the IDF had made "significant progress" in re-surveying mined areas, and in examining the possibility of area cancellation, following the completion of a fully detailed non-technical survey (NTS).⁷

The head of the INMAA told media in 2020 that INMAA estimated a total of 200km² of mined area in Israel. Of this, some 100km² are deemed essential to Israel's national security while the remaining 100km² will be cleared in order of priority. The online media source had obtained a map from the Israeli Ministry of Defence (MoD) that shows mines planted in a series of hotspots along Israel's eastern border. The minefields start from the north-eastern Israeli borders with Syria in the Golan Heights, with high concentration around the sea of Galilee (also known as the Tiberias lake).

Mined areas stretch southwards along the Jordan valley (east) all the way to the southern region of Eliat bordering Egypt.⁸ It is not clear whether the map includes the minefields considered essential to Israel's security or only the ones that can be cleared.

Israel's mine problem dates back to the Second World War. Subsequently, Israel laid significant numbers of mines along its borders, near military camps and training areas, and near civilian infrastructure. In August 2011, Israel's military reported planting new mines to reinforce minefields and other defences along its de facto border with Syria in the Golan Heights.⁹ The extent of mines laid by Syrian forces remains largely unknown although certain areas have been fenced off by the IDF. According to an online media report, however, fencing is not always properly maintained with warning signs, and civilians occasionally cross into minefields looking for edible plants.¹⁰

1 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2022), Form G.

2 "Approved in final readings: Temporary provision regulating clearance of unexploded ordnance at the expense of developer interested in developing land—to become permanent provision", *Knesset News*, 14 February 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/44ZKWHp>.

3 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly Director of Technology and Knowledge Management, Israeli National Mine Action Authority (INMAA), 26 May 2018.

4 "Approved for second and third readings by Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee: Israel National Mine Action Authority's power to remove unexploded ordnance to be made permanent", *Knesset News*, 30 January 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3ACxRXG>.

5 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly INMAA, 26 May 2018.

6 Ibid.

7 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form B.

8 "Below the surface: Israel's mine map is exposed", *N12*, 19 September 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/3xfQ9KV>.

9 "Israel army plants new mines along Syria border", *Associated Press*, 13 August 2011.

10 "New Golan mine-clearing project to begin this summer", *Jerusalem Post*, 16 March 2017, at: <http://bit.ly/2MyEKBC>.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

A March 2011 law on minefield clearance established the INMAA to undertake a “comprehensive programme of mine clearing projects inside Israel”.¹¹ The law’s aim was “to create a normative infrastructure for the clearance of minefields that are not essential to national security, and to declare them as free from landmines with the highest degree of safety to civilians, in accordance with the international obligations of the State of Israel, and within the shortest period of time possible.”¹²

The law provides for the establishment of a professional Advisory Board, to be composed of representatives of relevant ministries and governmental and municipal authorities, as well as a representative for mine victims. The amendment to the Minefield and Unexploded Ordnance Clearance Bill 2023, proposes that representatives of the Ministries of Finance and Energy join the Advisory Board.¹³ The 2011 law calls for the formulation of annual and multi-year plans; coordination and cooperation between INMAA and the IDF; employment of private contractors in mine clearance operations; earmarking of specific government budget for such activities; and the creation of a National Minefield Clearance Fund to receive, manage, and allocate donations.¹⁴

In 2019, the Director of INMAA reported that a new regional law had given INMAA responsibility for clearing former military bases and for addressing abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO), UXO, and AV mines. Prior to this, the

INMAA had only had responsibility for addressing AP mines and mixed mined areas.¹⁵ As indicated above, in 2023, the Minefield and Unexploded Ordnance Clearance Bill (Amendment 2) proposed various changes, including allowing INMAA to collect fees from developers for clearing minefields and UXOs on land that developers plan to develop.¹⁶

INMAA was established within the MoD, with ministry staff responsible for planning mine action.¹⁷ INMAA was charged with clearance operations and release of land intended for civilian use.¹⁸ It assumed responsibility to: establish a national policy for mine clearance, taking into consideration military procedures and international demining standards; liaise with operators to carry out demining; oversee clearance activities and contact relevant military commanders for the opening of closed military zones; coordinate activities with the IDF and other government authorities; execute public relations activities to increase awareness of existing minefields; and prepare annual and long-term demining plans.¹⁹

In 2017, the annual mine action budget for Israel was NIS41.7 million (approx. US\$11.5 million), of which NIS27 million was from the INMAA’s budget and the remaining NIS14.7 million from additional external funding by various infrastructure development companies and state authorities.²⁰ In 2023, the Director of INMAA indicated its budget of NIS27 million had remained constant “over the years” and was not linked to inflation.²¹

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICES AND ACTION

The INMAA website indicates that Israel has a standard operating procedure (SOP) on environmental protection and preservation of nature and landscape values.²² The website has one page dedicated to “Preserving the environment” and another on how operations are conducted. The latter indicates that when a project is identified for clearance, research includes environmental factors and environmental impact and involves various authorities and stakeholders including the Nature Reserves Authority, agricultural coordinators, and the regional council.²³

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The extent to which gender and diversity are mainstreamed in Israel’s mine action programme is not known. Israel has said mine risk education (MRE) material is produced in both Hebrew and Arabic, and warning signs on the perimeters of minefields are also in English.²⁴

11 Minefield Clearance Law 5771-2011 of March 2011, unofficial translation at: <http://bit.ly/2GDOQgJ>; Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2010), Form A. Form A refers to details provided in Form D, but the information in Form D has been deleted.

12 Minefield Clearance Law 2011 (MCL 5771-2011).

13 “Approved in final readings: Temporary provision regulating clearance of unexploded ordnance at the expense of developer interested in developing land—to become permanent provision”, *Knesset News*, 14 February 2023.

14 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report submitted in 2022 (covering 2022), Form D.

15 Interview with Marcel Aviv, Director, INMAA, in Geneva, 7 February 2019.

16 “Approved for second and third readings by Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee: Israel National Mine Action Authority’s power to remove unexploded ordnance to be made permanent”, *Knesset News*, 30 January 2023; and “Approved in final readings: Temporary provision regulating clearance of unexploded ordnance at the expense of developer interested in developing land—to become permanent provision”, *Knesset News*, 14 February 2023.

17 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly INMAA, 26 May 2018.

18 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2020), Form B.

19 IDF website, “Israel National Mine Action Authority”, undated but accessed 17 August 2022 at: <https://bit.ly/3AmMLAT>.

20 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly INMAA, 26 May 2018.

21 “Approved for second and third readings by Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee: Israel National Mine Action Authority’s power to remove unexploded ordnance to be made permanent”, *Knesset News*, 30 January 2023.

22 Standard 06.50 (Version 05/2020) listed on INMAA’s website (Hebrew text), accessed on 28 April 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/3dDNSEf>.

23 INMAA’s website (Hebrew text), accessed on 18 August 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/44h6zT9>.

24 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2022), Form A.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

According to Israel, in 2022, the IDF's Engineering Corps continued to promote improved minefield Global Positioning System (GPS) recording and geographic information system (GIS) capacity to build an "accurate archive of manually-emplaced minefields".²⁵ Moreover, the IDF is reported to provide information to local authorities and to the general population on land rights and use, and responds to requests for updated information on minefields, "as appropriate".²⁶ The Engineering Corps maintains a set of detailed regulations and instructions for recording minefields and mined areas.²⁷ In addition, INMAA manages a "minefield information bank" that is open for public queries concerning demining plans and programmes, and indicates measures taken to enhance public awareness of safety and security to minimise mine-related risks.²⁸

In 2022, the IDF continued its programme to preserve the history of the minefields, including in digital records, while the Israeli Mapping Centre (IMC) produces "commercially available" maps with minefields said to be clearly marked.²⁹

PLANNING AND TASKING

INMAA is "tasked with forming a national demining plan, which will be consistent with Israel's international obligations and based on IDF's demining procedures and instructions, as compatible as possible with International Mine Action Standards".³⁰ According to Israel, INMAA defines clearance policies, sets the national priorities, creates a work plan for mine clearance, and implements these in coordination with the relevant governmental ministries, the IDF, and local authorities.³¹

INMAA approves annual and perennial mine clearance plans which are executed by "civilian local operators".³² INMAA's multi-year clearance plan for 2017-20 focused on technical survey (TS) and clearance in the Golan Heights in the spring/summer/autumn, and in the Jordan Valley and Arava Plain in the winter.³³ Information on the priorities of the updated mine clearance plan were not made available. According to its website, however, part of INMAA's plan since 2020 has been to conduct mechanical and manual clearance of nearly 0.17km² across three minefields in the Golan Heights, and of 0.19km² in Naama Bell in the Jordan valley.³⁴ According to online media reports, as at March 2021, clearance in Naama Bell area was reported to be underway,³⁵ and as at February 2022, clearance was nearing completion at least in one of the sites in the Golan Heights (Mitzpe Gadot)³⁶ although the INMAA website still shows the sites as in planning.³⁷

Clearance tasks are assigned according to a classification formula laid down by INMAA. The criteria used for the formula are largely based on the risk level and development potential of the affected areas.³⁸ INMAA has in the past (in the four years to 2016) studied the social and economic impacts of land released, as well as on the potential impact for future clearance sites,³⁹ but it is unclear to what extent this continues.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid., Forms A and B.

27 Ibid., Form A.

28 Ibid., Forms A and B.

29 Ibid., Form A.

30 Ibid., Form D.

31 Ibid., Form B.

32 Ibid.

33 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly INMAA, 26 May 2018.

34 INMAA website, accessed on 6 July 2021.

35 "Watch: Minefield clearance near Jericho Israel today", *The Limited Times*, 30 March 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3wu6Wc9>.

36 "Documentation: Ammunition discovered in an old Syrian bunker in the Golan Heights was destroyed Israel today", *The Limited Times*, 1 February 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3PX13hC>.

37 INMAA website (Hebrew text), accessed on 31 July 2023.

38 Email from Michael Heiman, INMAA, 23 July 2017.

39 Email from Michael Heiman, INMAA, 19 September 2016.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

National mine action standards, which concern rules and regulations covering clearance methods, quality management, legislation, and insurance, are available on the INMAA website and updated “on occasion”.⁴⁰ There are also IDF regulations and orders concerning marking, fencing, and monitoring, as well as demining and disposing of mines, booby-traps, and other devices.⁴¹ IDF’s instructions and SOPs are reported to be regularly reviewed.⁴²

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Commercial companies are contracted to conduct clearance as well as quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC). In 2017, 106 demining personnel and 36 machines were deployed for clearance operations.⁴³ For 2022, INMAA listed seven approved mine clearance companies and three QA/QC companies in its CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report.⁴⁴ No further information was disclosed for 2022, although in January 2023, INMAA reported in the Knesset that only two companies in Israel could be hired to undertake mine clearance.⁴⁵

Israel has reported that the IDF conducts mine clearance according to their own mine action plans “that are executed by their military methods and techniques”. They have an annual programme that includes demining, monitoring, and maintenance of mined area protection.⁴⁶ During the winter, the IDF give special attention to minefields that are close to farms, residential areas, or hiker routes, as mines may be carried into these areas by floods.⁴⁷ In 2022, Israel again reported that the IDF conducted hundreds of inspections of the fencing and marking of minefields, and that it had installed additional signs in the north of the country.⁴⁸

HALO works under the auspices of both INMAA and the Palestine Mine Action Centre (PMAC) in the West Bank (see the *Clearing the Mines* report on Palestine for further information). Every mine clearance project in Israel has an INMAA supervisor, a QA/QC contractor, and a clearance operator.

Israel uses several types of machines in its mine clearance operations for ground preparation, survey, and clearance. They are said to include, as and where appropriate, screening and crushing systems, bucket loaders, excavators, sifters, and flails/tillers. Israel has reported that all mine clearance machines are tested and approved by INMAA during the initial preparation period of an operation, and that it has a system of quality management and results based management for its mechanical operations.⁴⁹

A pilot project in 2017 using mine detection dogs (MDDs)⁵⁰ had concluded that dogs would not be a valuable tool.⁵¹ However, after investigating and conducting further research into animal detection and behaviour, INMAA planned to conduct further trials.⁵²

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

The precise extent of release of AP mined area has not been reported for 2022, and Israel has not reported any disaggregated data to Mine Action Review on the release of AP mined area since 2017. Israel does not disaggregate between clearance of mined area and clearance of battle area in its CCW Amended Protocol II reporting. As previously mentioned, in its Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report for 2022, Israel reiterated that the IDF had made “significant progress” in re-surveying mined areas, and assessing the possibility of area cancellation, following completion of NTS.⁵³ Israel stated that in 2022, the IDF cleared 35,000m² of land destroying approximately 400 mines and ERW,⁵⁴ in comparison with 564,000m² of land cleared in 2021, when a combined total of 140 mines and ERW were destroyed.⁵⁵ In addition, Israel indicated that the INMAA cleared

40 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2022), Form B; and INMAA’s website (Hebrew text), accessed on 24 July 2023.

41 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

42 Ibid., Form A.

43 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly of INMAA, 26 May 2018.

44 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2022), Form G.

45 “Approved in final readings: Temporary provision regulating clearance of unexploded ordnance at the expense of developer interested in developing land—to become permanent provision”, *Knesset News*, 14 February 2023.

46 Email from Eran Yuwan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 29 April 2014; and Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2019), Form B.

47 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2022), Form B.

48 Ibid., Forms A, B, and C.

49 Ibid., Form C.

50 Ibid.

51 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly INMAA, 26 May 2018.

52 Interview with Marcel Aviv, INMAA, Geneva, 7 February 2019.

53 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2022), Form B.

54 Ibid.

55 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form B.

approximately 15km² of land and destroyed 2,917 mines and ERW in 2022,⁵⁶ a significant increase from the 2.65km² of land cleared and 13,370 mines and ERW reported destroyed in 2021.⁵⁷

HALO resumed clearance of minefields in Area C of the West Bank in 2022, working under the auspices of both INMAA and PMAC, after this was paused in 2021 due to a lack of funding.⁵⁸ HALO completed clearance at a minefield site in Tulkarem (Nur a-Shams) in 2022,⁵⁹ and two minefields in Jenin (Yabad and Qabatiya) by the start of June 2023, thus completing Phase 1 of HALO's operations in the West Bank. This concerned in total nine high-priority, Jordanian-laid minefields (see the *Clearing the Mines 2023* report on Palestine for further information).⁶⁰

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

It is likely to take many decades to clear remaining AP mine contamination in Israel, in areas deemed not essential to Israel's security alone. The Director of INMAA acknowledged the extent of the challenge in January 2023, informing the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that, "There are 150,000 dunams [150km²] of minefields in Israel, and the army has already given up on [sic] 100,000 [100km²]. With our existing resources, it will take us at least 100 years to clear all these areas. With such budgets, companies from abroad won't come, and additional Israeli companies will not be opened. At present there are only two companies in Israel that can be hired, and that also affects the rate of progress."⁶¹

56 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2022), Form B

57 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form B.

58 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 17 May 2022 and 26 March 2023.

59 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

60 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 27 July 2023 and 2 August 2023.

61 "Approved in final readings: Temporary provision regulating clearance of unexploded ordnance at the expense of developer interested in developing land—to become permanent provision", *Knesset News*, 14 February 2023.

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: UNKNOWN

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

UNKNOWN

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

UNKNOWN

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Kyrgyzstan should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Kyrgyzstan should clear anti-personnel (AP) mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- Kyrgyzstan should detail whether it has fully addressed mine contamination in areas under its jurisdiction or control and, if not, report on the extent and location of remaining mined areas and clearance operations.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT*

- Kyrgyzstan has no functioning mine action programme.

NATIONAL OPERATORS*

- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) undertakes clearance of explosive remnants of war (ERW).

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS*

- None

* This is based on information from earlier years. It is not known if the information remains accurate.

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Kyrgyzstan is suspected to be contaminated by mines, though the precise location and extent of any mined areas is not known. According to the Minister of Defence, contamination in the southern Batken province bordering Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the result of mine use by Uzbekistan's military between 1999 and 2000, was cleared by Uzbek forces in 2005.¹ It was reported, however, that rainfall and landslides had caused some mines to shift.² In 2003, Kyrgyz authorities claimed that Uzbek forces had also laid mines around the Uzbek enclaves of Sokh and Shakhimardan located within Kyrgyzstan. Press reports have suggested that Uzbek troops partially cleared territory around the Sokh enclave in 2004–05 and that they completely cleared mines around the Shakhimardan enclave in 2004.³

Kyrgyzstan has admitted using AP mines in 1999 and 2000 to prevent infiltration across its borders, but has claimed that all the mines were subsequently removed and destroyed.⁴ In June 2011, a government official confirmed: "We do not have any minefields on the territory of Kyrgyzstan."⁵ An online news source reported that demining of areas along the Kyrgyzstan side of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border, in the Batken region and the Chon-Alai district of the Osh region, began on 20 September 2022. This was according to the Border Service of the State Committee for National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic (also known as GKNB). Work was to be carried out to clear these areas of unexploded ordnance (UXO), mines, ammunition and other explosive devices and was to be undertaken in co-ordinated between the authorities of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.⁶

In October 2017, Uzbek President Islam Karimov, and his Kyrgyz counterpart, Almazbek Atambaev, signed an agreement to demarcate some 85% of the countries' nearly 1,300km-long border and began discussing options for the 36 disputed sectors.⁷ In March 2021, the prime ministers of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan reached an agreement to end territorial disputes. The agreement entails land swaps and facilitation of movement between the two countries. According to online media sources, the Kyrgyz head of security services, Kamchybek Tashiyev, announced that "issues around the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border have been resolved 100 percent" and that "there is not a single patch of disputed territory left".⁸ However, other sources suggested that, in April 2021, just a month later, Mr Tashiyev had told residents of some disputed areas in Kyrgyzstan's southern provinces that the agreement was "not completely a done deal".⁹ It has also been reported that the agreement was not ratified after Kyrgyz citizens voiced dissatisfaction over terms concerning use of a reservoir.¹⁰

Subsequently, it was reported that Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan signed an agreement on 3 November 2022 covering disputed sections of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border, particularly around the Andijan reservoir (also known as the Kempir-Abad reservoir). The agreement includes a land swap between the two countries and stipulates that Uzbekistan will supply water to Kyrgyz villages.¹¹ In July 2023, Kyrgyzstan was said by the Kyrgyz government press service to be determined to complete the process of delimitation and demarcation of the border with Uzbekistan as soon as possible.¹²

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Kyrgyzstan has no functioning mine action programme. Clearance of explosive remnants of war (ERW) is carried out by the Ministry of Defence (MoD).¹³

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), of which Kyrgyzstan is a member, has reported that on 24 June 2022, following a meeting of the CIS Council of Defence Ministers, Russia's Minister of Defence, Sergei Shoigu, pledged that a joint unit of humanitarian demining will be created in the CIS.¹⁴ No timeline for this was given and Mine Action Review has not been able to source any further updates on the matter.

1 Fax from Abibilla Kudaiberdiev, Minister of Defence, 4 April 2011.

2 See, e.g., Y. Yegorov, "Uzbekistan agrees to remove minefields along its border with Kyrgyzstan", *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 1, No. 41 (29 June 2004).

3 S. Zhimagulov and O. Borisova, "Kyrgyzstan Tries to Defend Itself from Uzbek Mines", *Navigator* (Kazakhstan), 14 March 2003; and "Borders are becoming clear", Blog post, at: <http://bit.ly/2z0s7qU>.

4 Statement of Kyrgyzstan, Intersessional Meetings (Standing Committee on General Status and Operation of the Convention), Geneva, 8 May 2006; and Letter 011-14/809 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 30 April 2010.

5 Letter from Amb. G. Isakova, Permanent Mission of Kyrgyzstan to the United Nations (UN) in Geneva, 29 June 2011.

6 "Demining work began on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border", *Azerbaijan 24*, 20 September 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3DrPbA3>.

7 "Tug-Of-War: Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan Look To Finally Settle Decades-Old Border Dispute", *Radio Free Europe*, 14 December 2017, at: <http://bit.ly/2yXsrXt>.

8 "Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan sign deal to end border disputes", *Euroasianet*, 26 March 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3vD5QKA>.

9 "'No Issues Remain?' Not So Fast. Kyrgyz-Uzbek Border Disputes Don't Appear To Be Decided", *Radio Free Europe*, 2 April 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3zrFrEK>.

10 "Kyrgyzstan reports deaths after Uzbek border troops open fire", *Aljazeera*, 6 May 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3zuH4pT>.

11 "Resolution of Uzbek border disputes heralds increasingly united Central Asia", *Central Asia News*, 12 January 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3r0lp4z>.

12 "Kyrgyzstan hopes to complete process of delimitation, demarcation of state border with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan shortly", *Kazakhstan Interfax*, 20 July 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3rlweq9>.

13 "Border guards of Kyrgyzstan begin clearance on the border with Tajikistan", *EurAsia Daily*, 4 May 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3dbirOT>.

14 CIS, "Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said that a joint unit of humanitarian demining will be created in the CIS", Press release, 27 June 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3b1ulgn>.

ENVIRONMENT POLICES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in Kyrgyzstan in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The extent to which gender and diversity are mainstreamed into mine action in Kyrgyzstan is not known.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Mine Action Review has been unable to source any information on any efforts in Kyrgyzstan to implement or maintain a national mine action database.

PLANNING AND TASKING

It is not known whether Kyrgyzstan has a national mine action strategy in place. Nor is it known if Kyrgyzstan has annual work plans for the survey and clearance of AP mines or criteria for the prioritisation of clearance tasks.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

It is not known whether Kyrgyzstan has national mine action standards in place.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

The United States (US) Quick Reaction Force (QRF) is a team of civilian explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) technical experts that serve as the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs' (PM/WRA's) first responders to conventional weapons disposal-related emergencies around the world, including ERW that pose significant threats to civilians. The QRF and its precursor, the Quick Reaction Demining Force, have deployed to Kyrgyzstan since 2001 to support efforts to tackle the substantial risk from unsecured, deteriorating weapons and ammunition stockpiles.¹⁵ It is not stated if the US QRF has been involved in any disposal or clearance of AP mines.

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) have a presence in Kyrgyzstan to support with the through-life management of ammunition, working with the MoD. Efforts have included disposing of expired artillery and ammunition, training with the Kyrgyz military to provide knowledge on ammunition management, conducting technical assessments on storage facilities and methods for fuel components disposal, and regional assessment visits on Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) practices.¹⁶

Mine Action Review has been unable to source any recent information on Kyrgyzstan's national operational capacity for AP mine survey and clearance.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

As noted above, demining along the Kyrgyzstan side of the border with Tajikistan, in the Batken region and the Chon-Alai district of the Osh region, began on 20 September 2022. No further details were available at the time of writing.

15 "To Walk the Earth in Safety, Documenting the United States' Commitment to Conventional Weapons Destruction, Fiscal Year 2022, October 1, 2021-September 30, 2022", pp. 25, 46, and 50.

16 GICHD, "Kyrgyzstan", accessed 21 August 2023 at <https://bit.ly/45D8Pou>.

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: UNKNOWN

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

7,467_{M²}

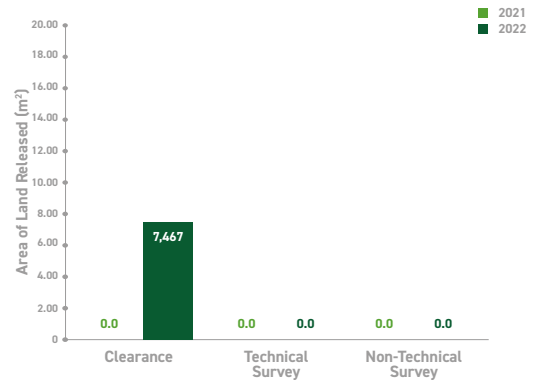
(NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION (NGO) DATA)

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

54

(NATIONAL AUTHORITY DATA AND DID NOT SPECIFY WHETHER AP OR AV MINES, BUT BELIEVED TO BE ALMOST ENTIRELY AP MINES BASED ON NGO DATA)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2022, two dedicated mine clearance teams from The HALO Trust (HALO) were clearing a former Royal Lao Army military base in a district of Savannakhet province. As at August 2023, Humanity & Inclusion (HI) was awaiting funding for a project to enable it to build national capacity, in partnership with UXO Lao, for landmine survey and clearance in Houaphanh province. The National Regulatory Authority (NRA) is developing capacity to be able to undertake quality assurance (QA)/quality control (QC) of mine clearance with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Lao PDR should clear anti-personnel (AP) mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- Lao PDR should commission and publish a detailed assessment of mined areas.
- In light of the continuing reports by clearance operators of AP mines being encountered during cluster munition remnant survey (CMRS) and roving tasks, the NRA should consider convening a sector-wide meeting to discuss National Standards, accreditation, and procedures for addressing mine contamination. This process might benefit from the establishment of a technical working group specifically for landmines.
- The NRA should ensure that its Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database can easily disaggregate AP mines from anti-vehicle (AV) mines.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT

- National Regulatory Authority (NRA) Board
- National Regulatory Authority (NRA) Office

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- UXO Lao
- Humanitarian teams of the Lao People's Army (Unit 58)
- Commercial operators

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Humanity & Inclusion (HI)

- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Commercial operators

OTHER ACTORS

- ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC)
- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Tetra Tech

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

While by far the greatest contamination in Lao PDR is from explosive remnants of war (ERW), in particular cluster munition remnants (CMR)¹, Lao PDR is also contaminated by AP mines and AV mines. The extent of the contamination is not, however, known. During the Indochina conflicts of the 1960s and 1970s, all sides in the war laid AP mines, particularly around military installations and patrol bases. Mined areas also exist in some border regions as a legacy of disputes or tensions with or within neighbouring countries.²

A 1997 survey by HI found mines in all 15 provinces it surveyed, contaminating a total of 214 villages.³ AP mines it discovered included United States (US)-manufactured M7, M16, and M14 mines; Vietnamese MBV-78A1 mines; and Soviet POMZ mines.⁴ In 2023, HI also found M2A1 bounding fragmentation mines.⁵ As at March 2022, HI had identified 54 suspected mined areas in 22 villages in Houamuang district of Houaphanh province, where it is currently operating.⁶ The figure remained the same as at April 2023, and HI was awaiting confirmation of funding for a national capacity building project, in partnership with UXO Lao, on landmine survey and clearance in Houaphanh province.⁷

Across Lao PDR as a whole, the NRA has reported that "gravel mines" (US air-dropped AP mines) had all degraded, but remaining mine types included M14 blast mines, M16 bounding fragmentation mines, M18 claymore mines, and M15 and M19 blast AV mines, as well as Soviet or Chinese PMN blast AP mines, POMZ fragmentation mines, and TM41, TM46, and TM57 AV mines.⁸ HI has found increasing evidence that few of the M16 mines are still in a full working state. Most were exposed to fire, the expelling charge is missing, or there was no longer a trip wire present.⁹

The remote location of many mined areas means that mines have negligible impact and are not a clearance priority. The NRA, however, had formerly observed that "with a steady expansion of land use 'mined areas' will become areas for growing concern."¹⁰ Demographic pressures regarding land will lead to people accessing remote places that could be mined. Action on locating and recording mined areas therefore needs to occur before the older generations that know about the presence of landmines disappear.¹¹

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The NRA, created by government decree in 2004 and active since 2006, has an inter-ministerial board composed of representatives from government ministries and is chaired

by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare.¹² A 2018 decree, "On the Organisation and Operations of the National Regulatory Authority for UXO in Lao PDR" defines the

1 See Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Lao PDR for further information.

2 NRA website, "UXO types: Mines", accessed 9 March 2020 (page no longer online).

3 HI, "Living with UXO, National Survey on the Socio-Economic Impact of UXO in Lao PDR", Vientiane/Brussels, 1997, p. 7.

4 Emails from Julien Kempeneers, Humanitarian Mine Action Coordinator, HI, 27 August 2019, and 25 March and 29 June 2020.

5 Email from Yvon Le Chevanton, Technical Survey/Clearance Operations Manager, HI, 10 August 2023.

6 Email from Julien Kempeneers, HI, 30 March 2022.

7 Email from Alexandra Letcher, Regional Armed Violence Reduction (AVR) Specialist – Mekong and Myanmar-Thailand, HI, 6 April 2023.

8 NRA website, "UXO types: Mines", 9 March 2020 (page no longer online).

9 Email from Alexandra Letcher, HI, 6 April 2023.

10 NRA website, "UXO types: Mines", 9 March 2020 (page no longer online).

11 Email from Julien Kempeneers, HI, 25 March 2020.

12 Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Extension Request 2019, Part B, Detailed Narrative, p. 18.

position, role, duties, rights, organisational structure, and the working principles and methods of the NRA.¹³ A new National Decree on unexploded ordnance (UXO) management was endorsed by the government in July 2022.¹⁴ In an important development for the UXO sector, the NRA was set to be moved from under the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from August 2023, which would likely demand a period of transition.¹⁵

The NRA acts as the coordinator for national and international clearance operators and serves as the national focal point for the sector. This includes overall management and consideration of policy, planning, projects, and coordination of the implementation of the national strategy nationwide, as well as NRA planning and coordination functions at the provincial and district levels.¹⁶ The current director of the NRA has been in post since June 2019.¹⁷

The main focus of the NRA is on addressing the massive contamination from CMR and other ERW. However, responsibility for the clearance of mined areas in Lao PDR is also led by the NRA.¹⁸ According to the National Strategy for the UXO Sector (2021–30), "Safe Path Forward III", from the beginning of formal UXO clearance in 1996 until 16 December 2021, a total of 2,379 landmines were destroyed (AP mines and AV mines were not disaggregated in the data).¹⁹

UNDP provides programmatic and technical support to the NRA focusing on areas such as quality management (QM), policy, and support with national standards and treaty compliance. UNDP also supports UXO Lao with funding and capacity building support.²⁰ Further capacity development in information management (IM), QM, and operations support is provided, primarily to UXO Lao, and to a lesser extent the NRA, through a US-funded contractor, Tetra Tech.²¹ Additionally, with US financial support, NPA is providing assistance to the NRA under a three-year IM Capacity Development project for 2022–2024. The project aims to develop and strengthen the information management

capacity of the NRA at the national, provincial and district levels, in nine provinces and fifty-five districts.²²

In 2022, UXO Lao received a range of capacity development support through various implementing partners.²³ HI provides capacity development support to the provincial NRA in Houaphanh and Phongsaly provinces.²⁴

In 2019, Lao PDR reported it had begun to create a Country Coalition "by modifying the existing mechanism through the Round Table Meeting process". However, progress had been delayed by the outbreak of COVID-19.²⁵ In May 2022, Lao PDR announced during the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) intersessional meetings that a Country Coalition had been set up under the existing name of the "UXO Sector Working Group" (SWG), which the national authorities had developed from their existing coordination mechanism.²⁶

International clearance operators continued to have good cooperation and coordination with the NRA at the national, provincial, and district levels,²⁷ but the multiple layers of bureaucracy in Lao PDR remained a challenge. Humanitarian clearance operators are involved in key decision-making processes by the NRA, including through participation in sector meetings and Technical Working Groups (TWG) meetings, and through discussions during other formal and informal meetings and field visits.²⁸ There are four TWGs: for survey and clearance, IM, explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), and victim assistance (VA), each of which meets quarterly.²⁹ One of the biggest challenges encountered by operators in Lao PDR continues to be the procedure for memoranda of understanding (MoUs), which remains lengthy, complex, and labour-intensive. That said, UXO Sector MOUs are regularly approved quicker than most of the other sectors of Development Cooperation in Lao PDR³⁰ and the NRA is attempting to improve the situation (See the Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Lao PDR for further information).

- 13 Government Decree No. 67, dated 12 February 2018; CCM Extension Request 2019, Part B, Detailed Narrative, p. 17; and Statement of Lao PDR on National Implementation Efforts, CCM Eighth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 3 September 2018.
- 14 Government Decree No. 210, dated 29 July 2022. Presentation by Chomyaeng Phengthongsawat, Director General, NRA, minutes of the UXO Sector Working Group meeting, 16 September 2022.
- 15 Email from Olivier Bauduin, UXO Program Advisor, US Embassy Vientiane, 21 July 2023.
- 16 CCM Extension Request 2019, Part B, Detailed Narrative, p. 18.
- 17 Email from Olivier Bauduin, US Embassy Vientiane, 29 September 2020.
- 18 Email from Douangsy Thammavong, Deputy Director, NRA, 20 June 2022.
- 19 Lao PDR, "Safe Path Forward III", p. 5.
- 20 Email from Rupert Leighton, Chief Technical Advisor, UNDP, 14 August 2023.
- 21 Email from Nigel Orr, Technical Advisor Survey and Clearance, Tetra Tech, 14 June 2019; and "US Renews Partnership with Lao PDR to Build Capacity in UXO Sector", US Embassy in Lao PDR, 31 January 2020, at: <http://bit.ly/2LzmG8J>.
- 22 Email from Katherine Harrison, Programme Coordination, NPA, 15 August 2023.
- 23 Email from Vilaivanh Thongmanivong, Chief of Programme Office and Public Information Unit, UXO Lao, 25 May 2023.
- 24 Email from Alexandra Letcher, HI, 6 April 2023.
- 25 Statement of Lao PDR on International Cooperation and Assistance, Second Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Review Conference (Part 1, virtual meeting), 25–27 November 2020.
- 26 Statements of Lao PDR on International Cooperation and Assistance, CCM Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 16–17 May 2022; and CCM Tenth Meeting of States Parties, 30 August–2 September 2022.
- 27 Emails from William Hunter, HALO, 8 May 2023; Alexandra Letcher, HI, 6 April 2023; and Portia Stratton, MAG, 15 May 2023; and Katherine Harrison, NPA, 9 May 2023.
- 28 Emails from Simon Rea, Regional Director, South and South East Asia, MAG, 17 June 2020; Katherine Harrison, NPA, 6 May 2020 and 31 March 2021; Rebecca Letven, MAG, 30 March 2022; Cameron Imber, HALO, 31 March 2022; and Alexandra Letcher, HI, 6 April 2023.
- 29 CCM Extension Request 2019, Part B, Detailed Narrative, p. 25; and emails from Alexandra Letcher, HI, 6 April 2023; and Rupert Leighton, UNDP, 18 July 2023.
- 30 Email from Olivier Bauduin, US Embassy Vientiane, 21 July 2023.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICES AND ACTION

Lao PDR has a national mine action standard (NMAS) on Environmental Management (chapter 21), but it is in need of revision. The NMAS refers to outdated 1999 national laws on environmental protection, rather than the current national environmental legal framework with which UXO sector activities should comply.³¹ In the new Safe Path Forward III strategy, the NRA says that climate change is a challenge to addressing UXO issues in the Lao PDR.³² It also reiterates that mine action activities have to be "compliant with national standard and Environmental Protection Law (EPL) of Lao PDR".³³

For more details on measures being taken by HI, HALO, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), and UXO Lao, to take the environment into consideration during the planning and tasking process for survey and clearance of explosive ordnance in Lao PDR, see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Lao PDR.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

For details regarding gender and diversity in Lao PDR's survey and clearance programme, please see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Lao PDR.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

In November 2019, Lao PDR stated at the Fourth Review Conference of the APMBC in Oslo, that it was in the process of preparing a voluntary APMBC Article 7 report.³⁴ However, as at July 2023, a voluntary report had yet to be submitted. The only voluntary Article 7 report submitted previously by Lao PDR was in 2011.

As yet, no distinction is made in the NRA's reporting between AP mines and AV mines. The NRA records all mines as landmines. In the national IMSMA database, an item is first registered as a landmine (rather than as an AP mine or AV mine), and then the model type/number is recorded, from which it is then possible to extrapolate AV and AP mines.³⁵

For details regarding Information Management and Reporting in Lao PDR's survey and clearance programme more broadly, please see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Lao PDR.

PLANNING AND TASKING

A new 10-year National Strategy for the UXO Sector (2021–30), Safe Path Forward III, was developed under the leadership of the NRA with support from UNDP and in consultation with relevant stakeholders.³⁶ The new strategy, which was adopted in January 2023, was developed based on the results of the evaluation of the implementation of the previous ten-year strategy, Safe Path Forward II and in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 18 under the 2030 SDG agenda.³⁷ The target by 2030, is to have identified 250,000 hectares (2,500km²) of confirmed hazardous area (CHA) and conducted clearance of 100,000 hectares (1,000km²) of land for agricultural and development purposes.³⁸ While Safe Path Forward III includes reference to landmines, it does not set out any specific strategy or targets for the survey or clearance of mined areas.

In a positive development, a first-ever sector-wide annual work plan for Lao PDR for 2018 was developed in an inclusive manner and approved by the NRA Board.³⁹ Consultative workshops to support the development of annual sector-wide work plans have taken place to varying degrees in subsequent years. While there were sector-wide work plans in 2022 and 2023,⁴⁰ the NRA had not shared these with international non-governmental organisations (NGOs).⁴¹

31 Email from Katherine Harrison, NPA, 9 May 2023.

32 Lao PDR, "Safe Path Forward III", p. 12.

33 Ibid., p. 17.

34 Statement of Lao PDR, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 29 November 2019.

35 Email from Rupert Leighton, UNDP, 14 August 2023.

36 Statement of Lao PDR on National Implementation Measures, Second CCM Review Conference (Part 1, virtual meeting), 25–27 November 2020; email from Chomyaeng Phengthongsawat, NRA, 21 June 2021; and Lao PDR, "Safe Path Forward III", p. 2.

37 Statement of Lao PDR on victim assistance, CCM Tenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 30 August–2 September 2022; and Lao PDR, "Safe Path Forward III", p. 2.

38 Lao PDR, "Safe Path Forward III", p. 14.

39 Email from Bouala Thongsavanh, NRA, on behalf of Phoukhieo Chanthasomboune, NRA, 30 April 2018; and interview with Phoukhieo Chanthasomboune, NRA, Vientiane, 2 May 2018.

40 Email from Khammoungkhoun Southivong, NRA, 8 June 2023.

41 Emails from Amanda Shiel, UXO Unit Programme and Partnership Support Officer, UNDP, 4 September 2020; Olivier Bauduin, US Embassy Vientiane, 29 September 2020; Rebecca Letven, MAG, 26 March 2021 and 30 March 2022; Katherine Harrison, NPA, 22 March 2021 and 9 May 2023; Julien Kempeneers, HI, 16 March 2021; and Cameron Imber, HALO, 31 March 2022.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Lao PDR's National Standards make a clear distinction between UXO clearance (including CMR) and mine clearance, and, for the purpose of the National Standards, "UXO does not include hand-laid mines but it may include disposal of 'one off' mines located during EOD roving tasks."⁴² As such, the National Standard on UXO clearance only relates to UXO clearance and not to mine clearance.⁴³ According to Lao PDR's National Standard on Mine Clearance Operations (Chapter 12), "the systematic locating and clearing of hand-laid mines in known or suspected mined areas, are not commonly conducted in Lao PDR. However, it is known that mined areas exist in Lao PDR and at some stage in the future these areas will have to be cleared."⁴⁴

According to Chapter 7 of the National Standards, if a mine is located during UXO clearance, work is immediately ceased and "the clearance supervisor should then assess the situation and determine if the mine is a random one or part of a mined area. If the mine is assessed as being part of a mined area, work on the site is to cease and the matter reported to the tasking authority. Details of mined areas are to be reported by the clearance organisation concerned to the NRA head office and the NRA provincial office."⁴⁵ The standards also note that: "Some relatively small-scale mine clearance has been carried out by UXO Lao and by commercial operators in the past but mine clearance operations are not regularly carried out as a deliberate mine action activity in Lao PDR."⁴⁶

According to the National Standards: "Mine clearance operations are considerably more dangerous than UXO area clearance operations and the requirements and procedures for mine clearance are more stringent. When mine clearance operations are necessary, they are only to be carried out by accredited mine clearance organisations with personnel with the appropriate training and equipment and specific mine clearance operating procedures."⁴⁷

With respect to landmines, the National Standards are in need of being brought up to date in accordance with the latest International Mine Action standards (IMAS). According to its most recent reporting under Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), covering 2021, the standards section of the NRA reviews the national standards at least every three years and all mine action stakeholders are invited to participate in these reviews. According to Lao PDR's Protocol V transparency report, UXO/mine action organisations and other UXO/mine action stakeholders are encouraged to make written recommendations for changes to the national standards at any time, on which the NRA will seek input from other stakeholders and consider the recommendation and the inputs received.⁴⁸

HALO and HI have both provided the NRA with suggested amendments to the national standards regarding landmine survey and clearance.⁴⁹ The NRA has said that the national standards related to AP mines were being reviewed.⁵⁰ While the current national standards do already allow for mine clearance and set parameters for safe distances and other relevant issues, there is a need to strengthen national institutional knowledge on mine clearance, including in relation to QA and training.⁵¹ UNDP, with Canadian funding, is supporting the development of a revised national standard on landmines, in addition to supporting a QA/QC project which will involve training the QM department of the NRA to be able to undertake QA/QC of landmine clearance. The planned start date for the project was Q4 2023.⁵²

NGO clearance operators in Lao are not currently formally accredited for mine clearance and permission for explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) is given on a case-by-case basis when landmines are found.⁵³ UXO Lao said that, working in collaboration with Tetra Tech, it was revising its standard operating procedure for addressing mine contamination. It expected the updated standard operating procedure (SOP) to have been completed by the end of 2022,⁵⁴ but as at May

42 Lao PDR National UXO/Mine Action Standards (NS), "Chapter 0: Introduction and Glossary", accessed on NRA website on 29 July 2021, p. xi.

43 Lao PDR NS, "Chapter 7: UXO Clearance Operations", accessed on NRA website on 29 July 2021, p. 5.

44 Lao PDR NS, "Chapter 12: Mine Clearance Operations", accessed on NRA website on 29 July 2021, p. 5.

45 Lao PDR NS, "Chapter 7: UXO Clearance Operations", p. 13.

46 Lao PDR NS, "Chapter 12: Mine Clearance Operations", accessed on NRA website on 29 July 2021, p. 5, note 1.

47 Ibid., p. 5.

48 CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

49 Emails from Cameron Imber, HALO Laos, 31 March 2022; and Julien Kempeneers, HI, 30 March 2022.

50 Email from Chomyaeng Phengthongsawat, NRA, 21 June 2021.

51 Email from Rebecca Letven, MAG, 26 March 2021.

52 Rupert Leighton, UNDP, 14 August 2023.

53 Emails from Cameron Imber, HALO Laos, 31 March 2022; Julien Kempeneers, HI, 30 March 2022; Katherine Harrison, NPA, 6 May 2020; and Rebecca Letven, MAG, 30 March 2022.

54 Email from Noupin Phimmasy, UXO Lao, 4 June 2022.

55 Email from Vilaivanh Thongmanivong, UXO Lao, 25 May 2023.

2023 this had still to occur.⁵⁵ HALO drafted a mine clearance SOP and submitted it for approval to the NRA in 2021.⁵⁶ As at May 2023, HALO had yet to receive any feedback on the SOP,⁵⁷ though it had received the tacit approval of the NRA to start mine clearance. HALO's first dedicated mine clearance teams were deployed in November 2021.⁵⁸

In 2022, two HALO mine clearance teams were conducting operations on the first dedicated mine clearance task in Lao PDR, a former Royal Lao Army military base in Phalanxai district, Savannakhet province, where there was significant contamination from fragmentation mines. HALO said it was eager to work with the NRA and other operators to help them build capacity in this area.⁵⁹ HALO conducted a manual mine clearance training course in June 2022, attended by 20 HALO staff, two NRA QM staff, and two personnel from HI.⁶⁰ HI reported good discussions between HALO and HI EOD relating to methodologies, equipment, detectors, and training.⁶¹

HI believes that reporting on the presence of landmines needs to be strengthened, and that survey is needed before defining an area as a minefield and areas should instead be referred to as suspected mined areas until completion of survey.⁶² HI said that, in practice, determining whether a mine is part of a bigger mined area can prove challenging, especially if field-based personnel are not trained (or equipped) to address AP mines. Landmines may, for example, have been left behind, moved by villagers, or washed away by water, and areas where there is no strong evidence that further mines are planted or emplaced might be reported or wrongly interpreted as mined areas.⁶³ HI also noted that "additional information should be gathered to add weight to the conclusions; namely the location of wartime military bases and location of other landmine finds",⁶⁴ as well as whether mines discovered by members of the local community had been moved.

During non-technical survey (NTS) and risk education visits, HI interviews older generations to understand the village history during the war, including anti-aircraft gun and other military positions; often M16 and M14 mines were laid around defensive positions. HI also collects information on injuries sustained in forests from mines and on areas

not developed or which are not accessed due to previous accidents or reports of injured animals, or mines being detonated by fires during "slash and burn" operations. In some instances, villagers had collected or moved mines they had discovered.⁶⁵

HI suggests that specific markings should be displayed where the mine was found/an accident happened.⁶⁶ At the July 2019 TWG meeting on clearance, HI proposed an addendum to the national standard to help address community interaction with mines.⁶⁷ Landmines continue to be a regular topic of discussion in TWG meetings and other meetings, and HI believes it would be useful to have a TWG with the NRA and interested operators, specifically for landmines, as had been suggested by the NRA at one point.⁶⁸ However, as at May 2023, no such TWG had yet been established.⁶⁹

In addition, HI believes that the NRA should coordinate and organise training, and adjust the standards accordingly, with regard to CMRS in areas also affected by mines. HI developed a "clearance while surveying" (CWS) procedure, to allow for safe release of CMR in areas where there is a potential risk of landmines. CWS involves the commencement of full clearance from the evidence point.⁷⁰ HI revised its clearance SOP to integrate CWS. As at April 2023, the SOP had yet to be formally approved, but the NRA had deemed the procedure adequate, including during QA and QC inspections and during a TWG presentation.⁷¹

With respect to spot tasks, HI will only destroy mines that are clearly identified in a location where the munition can be accessed safely.⁷² If mines are discovered during cluster munition survey or clearance operations, the task is immediately suspended and the discovery reported to HI's Operations Manager, who then visits the site to assess the situation. If the discovered mine was not emplaced and was found in land used for agriculture it is destroyed. Additional information is obtained about the threat of mines from the landowner and a risk assessment conducted before deciding whether or not operations are allowed to resume. If the mine found is emplaced and is in an area which has not been developed, the task is halted, additional data collected, and external boundaries of the site are tentatively identified (historically safe tracks). A mine report is then submitted by HI to the NRA.⁷³

56 Email from Cameron Imber, HALO, 14 March 2021.

57 Email from William Hunter, HALO, 8 May 2023.

58 Email from Cameron Imber, HALO, 31 March 2022.

59 Ibid.; and email from Olivier Bauduin, US Embassy Vientiane, 23 August 2022.

60 Email from William Hunter, HALO, 8 May 2023.

61 Emails from Julien Kempeneers, HI, 30 March 2022; and Alexandra Letcher, HI, 6 April 2023.

62 Email from Alexandra Letcher, HI, 6 April 2023.

63 Emails from Julien Kempeneers, HI, 27 August 2019 and 30 March 2022.

64 Emails from Julien Kempeneers, on behalf of Yvon Le Chevanton, HI, 25 March 2020; and Minla Nanthavong, HI, 2 August 2021.

65 Email from Julien Kempeneers, on behalf of Yvon Le Chevanton, HI, 25 March 2020.

66 Email from Alexandra Letcher, HI, 6 April 2023.

67 Email from Julien Kempeneers, HI, 27 August 2019.

68 Email from Julien Kempeneers, HI, 16 March 2021.

69 Emails from Khammoungkhoun Southivong, NRA, 8 June 2023; William Hunter, HALO, 8 May 2023; Alexandra Letcher, HI, 6 April 2023; Portia Stratton, MAG, 15 May 2023; and Katherine Harrison, NPA, 9 May 2023.

70 Email from Julien Kempeneers, HI, 25 March 2020.

71 Emails from Julien Kempeneers, HI, 30 March 2022; and Alexandra Letcher, HI, 6 April 2023.

72 Email from Julien Kempeneers, HI, 25 March 2020.

73 Email from Julien Kempeneers, on behalf of Yvon Le Chevanton, HI, 25 March 2020.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Land release operations in Lao PDR are conducted by a range of implementing partners, which includes humanitarian operators such as the national operator UXO Lao; international NGOs, HALO, HI, MAG, and NPA; commercial clearance operators; and humanitarian teams of the Lao People's Army (Unit 58).

Survey and clearance by the humanitarian operators focus almost exclusively on addressing contamination from CMR and other ERW. HALO does, however, have two mine clearance teams with 34 operational staff (including team leaders) and one survey team that has been trained in NTS of suspected mined areas.⁷⁴

For further details on CMR survey and clearance capacity of humanitarian operators, see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Lao PDR.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

HALO reported clearing 7,467m² through manual mine clearance in Phalanxai district of Savannakhet in 2022, destroying 13 AP mines. All other mines found and destroyed by NGOs and UXO Lao in 2022 were during EOD spot tasks.

Lao PDR's CCM Article 7 report covering 2022 declared more than 54.37km² of CMR clearance, with the destruction of 64,516 submunitions, 89 big bombs, 20,473 other items of UXO, and 54 mines.⁷⁵ This compares to 56 mines destroyed from a total of 81,646 items of explosive ordnance in 2021.⁷⁶ Humanitarian demining organisations reported finding and destroying a total of 50 AP mines and 1 AV mine in 2022, compared to 62 AP mines reported in 2021. This excludes AP mines destroyed by the Lao army.

SURVEY IN 2022

Neither HI, MAG, NPA, nor UXO Lao surveyed any mined area in 2022.

HALO confirmed the remnants of a large minefield on the outskirts of Savannakhet city, the second largest city in Laos. The minefield had been laid to protect the Royal Laos Army's Military Region 3 Headquarters Weapons Depot. Though most of the minefield has long ago been ploughed or levelled for housing, a few sections of the minefield remain untouched. Locals reported many accidents in the area involving people and animals between 1975 and 1990. As the NRA has not yet created a mechanism for the reduction or cancellation of land, no release of mined area through survey took place in 2022.⁷⁷

CLEARANCE IN 2022

With the exception of HALO, none of the other humanitarian demining organisations (HI, MAG, NPA, and UXO Lao) cleared any mined area in 2022. However, they did each discover a small number of AP mines during CMR survey, clearance, or EOD spot tasks in 2022 (see Table 1). According to operator data a total of 50 AP mines and 1 AV mine were discovered and destroyed in 2022. This excludes mines found and discovered by the Lao People's Army (Unit 58).

According to data contained in Lao PDR's CCM Article 7 transparency report, 54 mines were cleared in 2022, with no disaggregation between AP and AV mines.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Email from William Hunter, HALO, 8 May 2023.

⁷⁵ CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

⁷⁶ Email from Douangsy Thammavong, NRA, 20 June 2022; CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2021), Form A; CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F; and NRA Annual Project Progress Report for 2021 reporting period.

⁷⁷ Email from William Hunter, HALO, 8 May 2023.

⁷⁸ CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

Table 1: Mines discovered in 2022 (based on operator data)⁷⁹

Operator	AP mines	AV mines	Comments
HALO	17	0	Thirteen AP mines were discovered and destroyed during clearance. In addition, one surface AP mine was found and destroyed during survey, and a further three surface AP mines were destroyed by HALO during EOD spot tasks.
HI	4	0	All found and destroyed during EOD spot tasks.
MAG	19	0	Seventeen AP mines were found and destroyed during clearance; one during technical survey; and one during an EOD spot task.
NPA	9	1	Four AP mines and one AV mine were destroyed during CMRS; one AP mine during clearance; and four AP mines during EOD spot tasks.
UXO Lao	1	0	
Totals	50	1	

HALO cleared 7,467m² through manual mine clearance in Phalanxai district of Savannakhet in 2022, destroying 13 AP mines. In addition, HALO destroyed three surface AP mines during EOD spot tasks (one in Atsaphangthong district and two in Phalanxai district) and one surface AP mine during survey in Champhon district. HALO did not find any AV mines in 2022. While locals reported seeing “plate-shaped” items of UXO in Phalanxai and Nong districts, HALO was not able to confirm whether any of these items were AV mines.⁸⁰

HI found and destroyed 4 emplaced AP mines during roving spot tasks in 2022. Three were found in Houameuang district, Houaphanh province (one POMZ-2M mine with its fuze corroded and peg broken and two M16 mines) and one M16 mine in Phongsaly province. The latter was found in a water course and had lost its fuze.

In addition, HI found four M2A1 bounding fragmentation mines during clearance of a development project in Khao District, Phongsaly province in July 2023. However, some of the 60mm mortar used as the fragmentation projectile was found buried separately from the canister pots, therefore these mines are not considered as having been emplaced. Some were completely buried under the local road. The area where the mines were discovered was found to be in the surroundings of an old French military position. HI halted clearance of the task, upon discovery of the mines.⁸¹

HI did not find any AV mines in 2022, but did find an emplaced M7 AV mine at the end of 2021, in a CHA CMR clearance site in

Houameuang, Houaphanh province. The mine was discovered on a steep area where no tanks/vehicles could access. According to HI, the M603 pressure fuze is given to function under pressure of between only 63kg and 109kg.⁸²

MAG discovered 19 AP mines in 2022: 17 during clearance, 1 during an EOD spot task, and 1 during technical survey, all of which were reported to the NRA. No AV mines were discovered during the year. Discovery of mines did hinder CMRS, as in some cases operations were suspended when it was suspected that the AP mine was an indication of a mined area. In these instances, MAG created and submitted an ESHA to the NRA for further action, and conducted basic EORE safety messaging on mines awareness to the affected communities.⁸³

NPA found and destroyed 9 AP mines in 2022: four during CMRS (one in Houayko village and three in Nalan village, Pathoumphone district, Champasak province); one during clearance in Houayset village, Paksong district, Champasak province; and four during roving EOD tasks (two in Houayset, one in Nongkha village, Paksong district, Champasak province, and one in Nalan village, Pathoumphone district, Champasak province).⁸⁴ In addition, NPA found and destroyed 1 AV mine during CMRS in 2022 in Lichuang village, Paksong district, Champasak Province.⁸⁵

UXO Lao located and destroyed an AP mine in Phin district of Savannakhet province in 2022.⁸⁶

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Lao PDR has not set a deadline for completion of AP mine clearance.

⁷⁹ Emails from William Hunter, HALO, 8 May 2023; Alexandra Letcher, HI, 6 April 2023; Yvon Le Chevanton, HI, 10 August 2023; Portia Stratton, MAG, 15 May 2023; Katherine Harrison, NPA, 9 May and 15 August 2023; and Vilaivanh Thongmanivong, UXO Lao, 25 May 2023.

⁸⁰ Email from William Hunter, HALO, 8 May 2023.

⁸¹ Email from Yvon Le Chevanton, HI, 10 August 2023.

⁸² Emails from Alexandra Letcher, HI, 6 April 2023; and Yvon Le Chevanton, HI, 24 August 2023.

⁸³ Email from Portia Stratton, MAG, 15 May 2023.

⁸⁴ Emails from Katherine Harrison, NPA, 9 May and 15 August 2023.

⁸⁵ Email from Katherine Harrison, NPA, 15 August 2023.

⁸⁶ Email from Vilaivanh Thongmanivong, UXO Lao, 25 May 2023.

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM

NATIONAL AUTHORITY ESTIMATE

16.9 km²

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

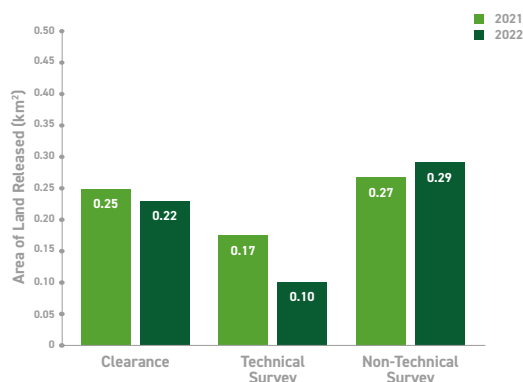
0.22 km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

22,737

(INCLUDING 6 DURING
SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The Lebanon Mine Action Centre (LMAC) and its national and international partners continued to make progress in mine clearance in 2022, although mine clearance output fell for the fourth consecutive year, attributed largely to cuts in international funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Lebanon should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Lebanon should clear anti-personnel (AP) mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- Wherever possible, evidence-based non-technical survey (NTS) and technical survey (TS) should be used to define areas of mine contamination more accurately prior to initiating clearance. This is particularly important in non-pattern minefields, such as the mined areas in Mount Lebanon.
- Where appropriate, LMAC should consider using demining machinery and mine detection dogs (MDDs) as primary as well as secondary clearance assets. LMAC should amend the national mine action standards (NMAS) to enable this.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT

- Lebanon Mine Action Authority (LMAA)
- Lebanon Mine Action Centre (LMAC)
- Regional Mine Action Centres (RMAC-N and RMAC-RB)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF)/Engineering Regiment (ER)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- DanChurchAid (DCA)

- Humanity & Inclusion (HI)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)
- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

At the end of 2022, Lebanon had more than 16.9km² of confirmed mined area, including along the Blue Line, across 11,042 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) (see Table 1).¹ This is a reduction of mined area compared to the end of 2021, when Lebanon had over 17.5km² of confirmed mined area, including along the Blue Line.

A total of 15,202m² of previously unrecorded legacy AP mine contamination across nine sites was added to the database in 2022.²

Table 1: Mined area by province (at end 2022)³

Province	CHAs	Area (m ²)
Al Beqaa	47	4,788,258
Al Janoub and Al Nabatiyeh (south Lebanon)	811	6,825,654
Jabal Loubnan (Mount Lebanon)	184	5,300,907
Totals	1,042	16,914,819

In addition, as at end 2022, LMAC reported a total of 4,539,214m² of all “Dangerous Areas”,⁴ some of which may contain booby-traps and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). These “Dangerous Areas” relate predominantly to rapid response or explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) spot tasks and are often the result of incidents having been reported to LMAC by the local community⁵ and where further investigation/survey is required in order to confirm the existence, type, and extent of any contamination.⁶ Of these Dangerous Areas as at the end of 2022, 0.16km² had contained IEDs, in north-east Lebanon, but most of the improvised devices found in such areas did not meet the definition of a mine.⁷ Furthermore clearance of explosive ordnance in this region has since been completed.⁸

The majority of mined areas are in the south of Lebanon, in conventional minefields laid according to a pattern, and with the location of the mines identified on minefield maps. The minefields in Mount Lebanon are typically “militia” or “scattered” minefields (i.e. were laid without a pattern and for which minefield records and maps do not exist), and were laid by multiple actors during the civil war.⁹

Lebanon’s mine problem is largely a legacy of 15 years of earlier civil conflict and Israeli invasions of south Lebanon (in 1978 and 1982) and subsequent occupations that ended in May 2000. There had also been a small amount of new mine contamination in “Jroud Aarsal” on the north-east border with Syria, resulting from spill-over of the Syrian conflict onto Lebanese territory in 2014–17.¹⁰ The Lebanese territory in question was fully regained by the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in August 2017 and was assigned to LMAC for survey and clearance. Following completion of land release operations, LMAC reported this area to be free from explosive ordnance as at June 2023.¹¹

The LAF continue to play a major role in this northern region, as the number of rapid-response missions remains high. In recent years, LMAC has had to address contamination from mines migrating from the north Syrian border, through floods and riverbeds, to new areas in Wadi Khaled and Wadi Nahle in the north.¹² Mine migration can happen anywhere along the border river and LMAC only knows about the migrated mines through the reporting of accidents. LMAC surveyed the location of accidents and submitted a report to the LAF headquarters, recommending that, where possible, berms are raised in these locations to prevent future migration. The LAF Engineering Regiment search and clear large fade-out areas and erect fences and marking signs where possible, and mine risk education is conducted.¹³ In its 2022 annual report, LMAC said that one of the four engineering regiment teams dedicated to mine action had completed a survey in the area and had been conducting clearance where needed.¹⁴

1 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, Operations Section Head, LMAC, 19 April 2023.
2 Ibid.
3 LMAC, “Annual Report 2022”, p. 15; and email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023.
4 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023.
5 Interview with Brig.-Gen. Elie Nassif, Director, and Brig.-Gen. Fakh, Head of Operations, LMAC, Beirut, 18 April 2016.
6 Interview with Brig.-Gen. Elie Nassif and Brig.-Gen. Fakh, LMAC, Beirut, 18 April 2016.
7 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023.
8 Email from Lt.-Col. Charbel Njeim, Head of Operations, LMAC, 7 September 2023.
9 Interview with Brig.-Gen. Elie Nassif and Brig.-Gen. Fakh, LMAC, Beirut, 11 April 2016.
10 Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 7 March 2019; David Willey, Programme Manager, MAG, 7 March 2019; and Emile Ollivier, Grants Coordinator, NPA, 19 March 2019.
11 Email from Lt.-Col. Charbel Njeim, LMAC, 7 September 2023.
12 LMAC, “Annual Report 2019”, pp. 7 and 25.
13 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 March 2021.
14 LMAC, “Annual Report 2022”, p. 12.

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Lebanon is also contaminated with cluster munition remnants (CMR) and other explosive remnants of war (ERW). For details on CMR contamination, see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Lebanon.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Lebanon's mine action programme is under the control of the military. The Lebanon Mine Action Authority (LMAA), which has overall responsibility for Lebanon's mine action programme, is the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence and is chaired by the Minister of Defence. In 2007, a national mine action policy outlined the structure, roles, and responsibilities within the programme, and LMAC was tasked to execute and coordinate the programme on behalf of the LMAA.¹⁵

LMAC, part of the LAF, is based in Beirut. Since 2009, the Regional Mine Action Centre-Nabatiyeh (RMAC-N), which is a part of LMAC, has overseen operations in south Lebanon and western Beqaa, under LMAC supervision.¹⁶ A regional centre, the RMAC-Ras Baalbek (RMAC-RB), oversaw operations in the north-east of the country.¹⁷ To a large extent LMAC has a well-functioning capacity, but, as they are army officers, the senior management of LMAC and RMAC are typically routinely rotated every two years or so, which can hamper development and continuity in the management of the three mine action centres.¹⁸ The current director of LMAC, however, started in March 2019.¹⁹

A new standard operating procedure (SOP) for LMAC was approved in November 2020. The SOP specifies the roles of each section of LMAC and clarifies the responsibilities and cooperation between sections. It is hoped that it will help preserve institutional memory, assist new LMAC staff, and reduce the impact of staff rotations.²⁰

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) personnel, funded by the Netherlands, are also seconded to LMAC, providing support for capacity building, including for studies, NTS, community liaison, and information management.²¹ In 2022, there were four UNDP personnel supporting LMAC,²²

down from six in 2021.²³ UNDP also received six month's funding in 2020 from Norway,²⁴ and then in April 2021, the Netherlands agreed a three-year contract with UNDP for international support to LMAC, totalling US\$1.5 million.²⁵

In 2022, the Netherlands also provided capacity development to LMAC through Mines Advisory Group (MAG), with office equipment and training on demining accident investigation. The United States (US) started a project in 2022 to support LMAC through the International Trust Fund (ITF) Enhancing Human Security, aimed at sustaining LMAC during the financial crisis (e.g. car maintenance, solar power systems, demining equipment, and training).²⁶

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) provides support to LMAC on information management and on gender and diversity. LMAC and Regional School for Humanitarian Demining in Lebanon (RSHDL) staff have benefitted and co-supported GICHD with courses under the regional framework of the Arab Regional Cooperation Programme (ARCP). In 2022, LMAC hosted a regional ARCP Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core implementation workshop and the RSHDL hosted the first two weeks of the ARCP IMSMA Core Training course.²⁷ IM staff from LMAC have also supported the GICHD to deliver the IMSMA Core training²⁸ and participated as co-instructor to NTS training in Switzerland. LMAC also attended the GICHD global All reasonable Efforts workshop in May 2023.²⁹

MAG is supporting LMAC through the delivery of training, including on gender and diversity.³⁰ In 2022, MAG, in collaboration with LMAC, hosted a four-day exposure visit to Lebanon from the Iraqi Directorate of Mine Action (DMA) and Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Authority (IKMAA).³¹

15 LMAC, "Mid-term Review to Strategy 2011–2020, Milestone 2013", August 2014, pp. 4–5.

16 LMAC, "Lebanon Mine Action Strategy 2011–2020", September 2011, p. 4.

17 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 21 August 2019.

18 LMAC, Lebanon Mine Action Strategy 2020–25, signed June 2020, p. 4.

19 Email from Brig.-Gen. Ziad Nasr, Director, LMAC, 26 March 2019.

20 Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 March 2020 and 15 March 2021; and LMAC, "Annual Report 2020", p. 28.

21 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023.

22 Ibid.

23 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 29 March 2022.

24 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 March 2020; and LMAC, "Annual Report 2020", p. 28.

25 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 June 2021; and LMAC, "Annual Report 2021", p. 38.

26 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023.

27 Email from the GICHD, 6 April 2023.

28 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 March 2020.

29 Email from the GICHD, 14 August 2023.

30 Email from Sylvain Lefort, Country Director, MAG, 14 April 2023.

31 Ibid.

A "Mine Action Forum" was established in Lebanon in close partnership between LMAC and Norway. The forum aims to meet twice a year, with UNDP designated as the secretariat for the Forum.³² In 2021, the Netherlands took over from Norway as Forum co-chair.³³ In 2022, the Forum met twice.³⁴ The most recent forum meeting, in September 2023, was co-chaired by LMAC and the Netherlands, and moderated by the Project Manager of Mine Action Review. The Forum is said to have resulted in better coordination and greater transparency as well as enhancements to land release methodology, reflected in the revised national mine action standards (NMAS).³⁵

There is good coordination and collaboration between LMAC/ the RMAC and clearance operators, with the operators consulted before key decisions are taken.³⁶ International clearance operators reported that an enabling environment exists for mine action in Lebanon, with LMAC facilitating the processing of visas for international staff and assisting with the importation of equipment, including exemption of customs fees for equipment.³⁷ In 2022, however, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) reported that a challenge was the length of time needed to obtain security clearances for new local staff. This process can take more than three months,³⁸ although usually it takes less than a month, during which time the operator is allowed to start training the new staff.³⁹

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

LMAC said that it recognises its responsibility to ensure that demining operations are conducted responsibly and efficiently while also minimising the impact on the environment. Lebanon's NMAS on Safety and Occupational Health – Protection of the Environment (10.70) specifically aims to achieve this. LMAC and its implementing partners ensure that they operate in conformity with NMAS 10.70 including coordinating with local authorities and landowners before start of operations; and compiling a list of factors related to operations that may affect the environment for all types of assets, assessing the threat, and making informed decisions. In addition, after demining and EOD operations have been completed at a worksite, but before the formal release of the area, implementing agencies are required to

A technical working group (TWG) was established in March 2018, under the auspices of LMAC, based on recommendations of the Mine Action Forum and following the release of the revised NMAS. The TWG, which met twice in 2022,⁴⁰ provides a useful forum for LMAC/the RMACs to meet collectively with clearance operators to review and discuss field issues.⁴¹

As in the previous year, the Lebanese government contributed US\$9 million annually in 2022 towards mine action in Lebanon (for both mine- and CMR-related work), to support costs associated with the running of LMAC (facilities and staff); two LAF Engineering Regiment battle area clearance (BAC) teams and three Engineering Regiment's companies to cover rapid response across Lebanon; risk education; victim assistance; training; and advocacy.⁴² However, the devaluation of the Lebanese Pound due to the economic crisis in the country affects the amount actually received.⁴³ The economic crisis affects the work of the Engineering Regiment humanitarian demining teams. In particular, the increase in support and maintenance costs, and fuel shortages, were major obstacles.⁴⁴ Another consequence of the economic crisis in Lebanon is the enormous strain and the severe blow on the morale of the LMAC staff whose income was reduced in a few months to less than one tenth of previous income.⁴⁵

remove and appropriately dispose of all rubbish and large fragments of ordnance, and fill in any holes in the ground to stabilise the surface to allow for natural regeneration, using water to consolidate the soil when appropriate.⁴⁶

DanChurchAid (DCA) reported that it is compliant with the Environmental Health and Safety Guidelines and that it follows NMAS and international mine action standards (IMAS) procedures with regards to the environment. DCA's SOPs identify specific smoking areas at task sites to prevent uncontrolled fires and DCA monitors all vegetation-cutting procedures to prevent damage to flora that is protected under Lebanese law, especially when its teams are deployed in national reserves such as the Al Shuf Cedars, where DCA conducted clearance in 2021.⁴⁷

32 LMAC, "Annual Report 2018", p. 23.

33 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 29 March 2022.

34 Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023; Tomislav Vondracek, Programme Manager, NPA, 5 May 2023; and Aurélien Thienpont, Country Manager, HI, 13 April 2023.

35 Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 7 March 2019 and 19 March 2020; LMAC, "Annual Report 2018", p. 23; and revised 2020 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, 25 February 2020, pp. 38 and 39.

36 Emails from Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 24 March 2021; Hala Amhaz, NPA, 15 March 2021; Mahmoud Rahhal, POD, 8 March 2019; and David Ligneau, Mine Action Programme Manager, Humanity and Inclusion (HI), 21 April 2020.

37 Emails from Hiba Ghandour, Programme Manager, MAG, 7 April 2022; and Southern Craib, Operations Manager, NPA, 28 March 2022.

38 Email from Southern Craib, NPA, 28 March 2022.

39 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 30 June 2023.

40 Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023; Mouhamed Chour, Head of Operations, DCA, 3 May 2023; Tomislav Vondracek, NPA, 5 May 2023; and Aurélien Thienpont, HI, 13 April 2023.

41 LMAC, "Annual Report 2018", pp. 4, 7, and 17; and emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 7 March 2019; Emile Ollivier, NPA, 19 March 2019; Hiba Ghandour, MAG, 7 April 2022; Southern Craib, NPA, 28 March 2022; and Mouhamed Chour, DCA, 4 April 2022; and revised 2020 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, 25 February 2020, pp. 8 and 54.

42 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023; and Article 7 report (covering 2022), Form I.

43 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023.

44 LMAC, "Annual Report 2022", p. 24.

45 Ibid., p. 37.

46 Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 29 March 2022 and 5 May 2023.

47 Emails from Mouhamed Chour, DCA, 4 April 2022 and 3 May 2023.

Humanity & Inclusion (HI) has an environmental management system in place and its SOP21 on environmental management includes general protection for watercourses and groundwater, during vegetation clearance, in the construction and removal of temporary support facilities, during transport of toxic and hazardous materials, for livestock, wildlife, and cultural resources, and provision for the environmental awareness of clearance personnel. HI operates according to the NMAS and its SOPs at all times, with a view to minimising the environmental impact of its operations.⁴⁸

MAG has an environmental management system in place, and its environmental SOP takes into consideration the environment. In particular, special measures are implemented to avoid spreading of fires on mine clearance tasks, caused by demolitions.⁴⁹

NPA Lebanon said it has an environmental plan in place which it is implementing, including recent installation of a solar system; a recycling programme (for paper, plastic, glass, and plastic); and upgrading of its fleet for fuel efficiency. It also strives to minimise the removal of vegetation to the extent that it is safe. NPA has also begun to track its environmental footprint through the use of an annual reporting tool.⁵⁰

The UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) said it has been committed to environmental safety, including staggered timings for demining activities to reduce risks of bush fires during the summer season, and only trimming back branches and keeping the roots of trees in minefields.⁵¹

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The gender and diversity-related policy applied at LMAC is that of the LAF military rules. According to LMAC, all its personnel are familiar with these rules and the specific provisions related to gender equality and inclusion, safeguarding, and behavioural codes.⁵²

LMAC remains committed to promoting the mainstreaming of gender and diversity among key stakeholders and mine action operators in Lebanon.⁵³ It has taken several actions to mainstream gender in its implementation plan, including through inclusive policies, data disaggregation in risk education and victim assistance, assigning a gender focal point, and organising and participating in courses at the RSHDL.⁵⁴ Women, girls, boys, and men are said to be consulted during survey and community liaison activities.⁵⁵ According to LMAC, Lebanon's baseline of contamination has been developed over many years. As per Lebanon's NMAS, NTS teams consult with women, girls, boys, and men, including, where relevant, minority groups, in order to make sure all available information is included.⁵⁶

MAG has supported LMAC in the implementation of the gender work plan and has assisted LMAC in establishment of a Gender Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee led by LMAC's gender focal point and consisting of gender focal points and human resources (HR) managers from all clearance NGOs.⁵⁷ The GICHD conducted its most recent gender and diversity capacity assessment mission to the Lebanon programme in November 2021 and said LMAC had followed many of its recommendations on gender and diversity mainstreaming from that visit.⁵⁸

In August 2022, LMAC organised a three-day course titled "Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming in Mine Action in Lebanon", in partnership with MAG, supported by UNDP, and funded by the Netherlands. The course was aimed at strengthening the integration of gender and diversity considerations among key stakeholders and mine action operators in Lebanon.⁵⁹ It brought together 22 participants from the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) MAG, NPA, DCA, HI, UNDP, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), and others, in addition to an officer from LMAC and the head of gender department at the Lebanese Army.⁶⁰

48 Emails from Nahed Al-Khlouf, HI, 6 August 2022; and Aurélien Thienpont, HI, 13 April 2023.

49 Email from Hiba Ghandour, MAG, 7 April 2022.

50 Emails from Southern Craib, NPA, 28 March 2022; and Tomislav Vondracek, NPA, 5 May 2023.

51 Email from Maj. (CHN) Yu Wang, UNIFIL Force HQ, 28 April 2023.

52 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 March 2020.

53 LMAC "Annual Report 2022", p. 33.

54 LMAC, "Annual Report 2018", p. 5; and email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 7 March 2019.

55 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 5 April 2019.

56 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 March 2020.

57 Email from Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 14 April 2023.

58 Email from the GICHD, 6 April 2023.

59 Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023; Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 14 April 2023; and GICHD, 6 April 2023; and LMAC, "Annual Report 2022", p. 33.

60 Email from the GICHD, 6 April 2023.

Lebanon's new National Mine Action Strategy 2020–25, approved by the LMAA in June 2020, includes considerations on gender and diversity.⁶¹ Of the five objectives in the new strategy, the fifth states that: “The specific needs and perspective of women, girls, men and boys from all groups of society are considered, in order to deliver an inclusive HMA [mine action] response”. LMAC also acknowledges in the strategy that mine action “is a male-dominated environment and we have therefore a particular responsibility to empower women and ensure that we have a gender sensitive approach to our work”.⁶²

As per its strategic implementation plan,⁶³ and through the TWG, LMAC finalised a code of conduct for the Lebanese Mine Action Programme, in 2022.⁶⁴ The code of conduct

provides a framework for cooperation, coordination, and transparency between LMAC and implementing agencies. It aims to promote gender and diversity inclusion in all aspects of the organisations' work and ensure that the implementation of mine action activities is conducted in a professional, ethical, and accountable manner. It also aims to promote the safety and security of mine action personnel and to protect the rights and interests of affected communities, by setting guidelines for the protection of human rights and the promotion of gender equality and inclusivity, as well as provisions for the management of mine action-related risks and incidents.⁶⁵

LMAC planned to conduct a full review of the NMAS in 2023 and to consider the gender perspective during the review.⁶⁶

Table 2: Gender composition of mine action operators in 2022⁶⁷

Operator	Total staff	Women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Women in operational positions
DCA	70	14	15	8	54	6
HI	27	5	2	1	22	2
LMAC	161	19	22	1	52	9
MAG	203	37	50	7	179	30
NPA	83	17	22	3	74	12
UNIFIL J3-Combat Engineer Section (J3-CES) & UNMAS	12 (6 x J3-CES + 6 x UNMAS)	4 (1 x J3-CES and 3 x UNMAS)	4 (1 x J3-CES and 3 x UNMAS)	2 (UNMAS)	8 (5 x J3-CES and 3 x UNMAS)	2 (1 x J3-CES and 1 x UNMAS)
UNIFIL Chinese Multi-Role Engineering Unit	65	4 (deminers)	7 (3 supervisors & 4 team leaders)	0	58	4 (deminers)
UNIFIL Cambodian Multi-Role Engineering Unit	62	10	18	3	44	10
UNIFIL Force Commander Reserve IED Disposal Unit (French)	4	0	1	0	3	0

61 Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 March and 22 July 2020.

62 LMAC, Lebanon Mine Action Strategy 2020–25, p. 8.

63 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 29 March 2022.

64 Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023; and GICHD, 6 April 2023; and LMAC, “Annual Report 2022”, p. 34.

65 LMAC, “Annual Report 2022”, p. 34.

66 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023.

67 Emails from Mouhamed Chour, DCA, 3 May 2023; Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023; Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 14 April 2023; Tomislav Vondracek, NPA, 5 May 2023; Aurélien Thienpont, HI, 13 April 2023; Mohammad Husein Karak, POD, 3 July 2023; and Julie Myers, Chief Mine Action Programme, UNMAS, 4 May 2023.

The number of staff at LMAC is determined by the LAF headquarters, so LMAC has limited control over the number of women, but it consistently requests that the percentage of women be increased.⁶⁸ However, the proportion of women at LMAC is more than double the 5% average of the Lebanese armed forces and LMAC seeks to improve this ratio further.⁶⁹ LMAC now has a female member of staff in an operational role, which is progress compared to last year when there were no women in operational positions.⁷⁰

DCA, HI, MAG, and NPA all reported having gender policies in place and disaggregating data by sex and age.

MAG reported that it consults women during survey and community liaison activities; that all its community liaison teams are mixed; and that its data are disaggregated by sex, age, and nationality.⁷¹ In 2022, MAG began systematic outreach to civil organisations to look for joint efforts to empower women and overcome stereotyping in the communities it works in, conducted detailed gender analysis to better disaggregate its data, and created a platform for reaching women in the community to attract more women to be involved in mine action.⁷²

NPA was implementing its organisational gender policy for Lebanon, based on recommendations from the GICHD. It is encouraging more women to apply for field positions through job postings and social media.⁷³

INFORMATION AND MANAGEMENT REPORTING

In 2021, LMAC completed migrating from its former version of IMSMA (New Generation) to IMSMA Core, with support from the GICHD. The new database is now being used for all activities.⁷⁴

Several key improvements have been made in the new IM system, to ensure the quality of data. These include more accurate drawing of surveyed polygons using tools based on GPS and imagery base maps; reducing instances of double counting of polygons, for examples when different land release methods were used, as IMSMA core tracks the relationship between the parent and child activities using a unique ID; and the recording of the depth at which ordnance was discovered, its condition, and whether it is safe to move.⁷⁵

Some of the information in the database may not be accurate. This is especially the case with respect to scattered/militia minefields from civil war, for which NTS was conducted many years ago, with limited reliable information available. HI undertakes re-survey to have a clearer and up-to-date picture of contamination before starting clearance. It can be challenging to gain a clear picture of what contamination was cleared by the LAF in the north and if the related clearance documents were transferred to LMAC and are included in the

information management database.⁷⁶ LMAC has said that NTS will be extremely important for these scattered minefields.⁷⁷

DCA has been using Tiramisu Information Management Tool (T-IMS) for the past three years.⁷⁸ HI uses ArcGIS and Trimble, in addition to IMSMA Core for reporting to LMAC.⁷⁹ MAG started using "Survey123" software in Lebanon in August 2021 after training and field testing the new data collection system.⁸⁰ In 2022, MAG introduced version 2.0 of the Operational Management Information System, which will allow data to be automatically transferred from its database to LMAC's, removing the need for manual reporting of data and reducing manual errors. The new version will be implemented in 2023.⁸¹ In the second half of 2020, NPA introduced the ARC-GIS programme for data collection to its information management system, which has allowed more precise monitoring and evaluation of the programme's activities, efficiency, outputs, and reporting.⁸²

In the Lebanon Mine Action Strategy 2020–25, and the accompanying implementation plan, LMAC states that it will initiate voluntary APMBC Article 7 reporting.⁸³ However, as at September 2023, no APMBC voluntary Article 7 report had yet been submitted.

68 Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 March 2020 and 15 March 2021; and LMAC, "Plan for the Implementation and Monitoring of the LMAP Strategy (2020–25)", p. 19.

69 LMAC, "Annual Report 2020", p. 37.

70 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023.

71 Email from Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 27 May 2021.

72 Ibid.

73 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 28 May 2020.

74 LMAC, "Annual Report 2022", p. 31.

75 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023.

76 Emails from David Ligneau, HI, 21 April 2020; and Aurélien Thienpont, HI, 9 August 2023.

77 LMAC, "Plan for the Implementation and Monitoring of the LMAP Strategy (2020–25)", p. 16.

78 Email from Matthew Benson, Country Director, DCA, 4 June 2021.

79 Email from Nahed Al-Khlouf, HI, 12 August 2022.

80 Email from Hiba Ghandour, MAG, 7 April 2022.

81 Email from Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 14 April 2023.

82 Email from Hala Amhaz, NPA, 15 March 2021.

83 LMAC, Lebanon Mine Action Strategy 2020–25, June 2020, p. 4; and LMAC, "Plan for the Implementation and Monitoring of the LMAP Strategy (2020–25)", p. 5.

PLANNING AND TASKING

In September 2011, LMAC adopted a strategic mine action plan for 2011–20.⁸⁴ The plan called for clearance of all CMR by 2016 and for completion of mine clearance outside the Blue Line by 2020. Both goals were dependent on capacity, but progress fell well short of planning targets, which were not met.

LMAC developed a new National Mine Action Strategy for 2020–25, with support from the UNDP project funded by the European Union (EU), in a participatory approach with national and international implementing agencies, mine action NGOs, UN agencies, and donors.⁸⁵ The new strategy was approved by the LMAA in June 2020. A mid-term and final external review are planned, as well as annual reporting on progress.⁸⁶

LMAC has also elaborated a strategic implementation plan for 2020–25, based on the new strategy and in collaboration with implementing partners, to operationalise the new strategy with objectives, outputs, and indicators.⁸⁷ Results from the monitoring of the strategic implementation plan will be discussed at the operational level with implementing agencies at the TWG and a group of recommendations agreed and then presented at the biannual Mine Action Forum meetings.⁸⁸ The implementation plan will be revised annually by LMAC, the Institutional Support Programme (UNDP at present), and in consultation with humanitarian clearance operators.⁸⁹ LMAC had planned to conduct a full review of the strategy and implementation plan in 2022, in cooperation

with all stakeholders.⁹⁰ The review did not take place in 2022, and is instead planned for 2023.⁹¹ In addition, LMAC had an annual work plan for 2022 and has an annual work plan in place for 2023.⁹²

According to LMAC, increased urbanisation; clearance of the Blue Line; spill-over from Syria creating new contamination, including IEDs; and the sudden increase in residents, have combined to result in a change to clearance priorities.⁹³ With regard to task prioritisation, LMAC conducted a study, whose results have informed a new national prioritisation system, based on three strategic categories: safety, economy, and treaty compliance. Each category contains subcategories which take operational considerations and impact into account.⁹⁴ The prioritisation of actions and allocation of resources is automated in IMSMA Core, during the data collection phase.⁹⁵ The new IMSMA Core database only became fully functional in 2021, therefore additional information is still required to be able to specify the priorities. In 2022, NTS teams continued to update data for the new prioritisation system. In 2023, LMAC aimed to complete 80% of the tasks in Mount Lebanon.⁹⁶

Prior to 2016, demining along the border with Israel had been said to depend on “political developments”,⁹⁷ but the Lebanese government subsequently took the decision to initiate larger-scale, planned clearance on the Blue Line.⁹⁸ Clearance by humanitarian demining operators, which began in November 2016,⁹⁹ was still ongoing as of writing.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Lebanon developed its first NMAS in 2010.¹⁰⁰ In 2017, LMAC started revising and harmonising national standards with IMAS, adding new modules not present in the original standards.¹⁰¹ It has since continued to review and further revise the NMAS to focus more on land release and evidence-based decision making, based on recommendations and analysis of operational data.

84 LMAC, Lebanon Mine Action Strategy 2011–2020, September 2011, p. 4.

85 LMAC, Lebanon Mine Action Strategy 2020–25; and LMAC, “Annual Report 2019”, p. 7.

86 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 22 July 2020; and LMAC, Lebanon Mine Action Strategy 2020–25, p. 4.

87 Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 22 July 2020 and 15 March 2021; and LMAC, “Plan for the Implementation and Monitoring of the LMAP Strategy (2020–25)”, p. 3.

88 LMAC, “Plan for the Implementation and Monitoring of the LMAP Strategy (2020–25)”, p. 21.

89 LMAC, “Annual Report 2020”, p. 33.

90 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 29 March 2022.

91 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023.

92 Ibid.; and LMAC Annual Report 2022, pp. 38–39.

93 LMAC, “Annual Report 2019”, p. 30.

94 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 March 2021; and LMAC, “Annual Report 2020”, p. 35.

95 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023; and LMAC, “Annual Report 2022”, p. 32.

96 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023.

97 Presentation by Maj. Bou Maroun, RMAC, Nabatiyeh, 4 May 2012; and response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by Leon Louw, Programme Manager, UN Mine Action Support Team (UNMAST), 7 May 2014.

98 Interview with Brig.-Gen. Elie Nassif and Brig.-Gen. Fakhri, LMAC, Beirut, 11 April 2016.

99 Email from Brig.-Gen. Ziad Nasr, LMAC, 24 April 2017.

100 Email from Brig.-Gen. Elie Nassif, LMAC, 17 June 2015.

101 Emails from Brig.-Gen. Elie Nassif, LMAC, 7 July 2015; Dave Wiley, MAG, 27 April 2018 and 7 March 2019; and Craig McDiarmid, Programme Manager, NPA, 17 April 2018 and 19 March 2019; and Revised 2020 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, 25 February 2020, p. 15.

Notable enhancements in recent years have included: reduction of the required clearance depth from 20cm to 15cm; revision of fade-out specifications for pattern minefields; enhancements in how rapid response tasks are addressed and recorded¹⁰² and changes to the NMAS on demolitions.¹⁰³ No updates were made to the NMAS in 2022,¹⁰⁴ but in line with its commitment to continuous improvement, LMAC planned a biannual review of the NMAS in 2023.¹⁰⁵

Strengthening survey has been a key area of focus, in order to more accurately define the presence of an explosive threat (or confirm its absence).¹⁰⁶ A study on operational efficiency found that the NMAS generally places heavy limitations on how mine action operators are able to operate and that this drastically affects efficiency.¹⁰⁷ The study called for, among other things, an emphasis on the importance of evidence-based TS before clearance.¹⁰⁸ The recommendations were implemented in 2021.¹⁰⁹

LMAC also updated its strategic implementation plan to reflect the increased focus on TS,¹¹⁰ and it was agreed at the TWG meeting in December 2021 that more TS will be conducted by manual search teams. Further training was conducted in February 2022 to unify and enhance understanding of the concept and improve the application of TS in all hazardous areas, and specifically in CMR tasks.¹¹¹ The NMAS allows for areas under full clearance to be reduced (or in part reduced), based on information gathered during clearance, as well as for the original task boundaries to be changed based on experience during clearance.¹¹² Clearance operators confirmed that flexibility remains on a case-by-case basis through discussions with LMAC to improve efficiency.¹¹³

Mined areas in pattern minefields/along the Blue Line are classified into high-threat hazardous area (HTHA) and low-threat hazardous area (LTHA). The use of TS instead of full clearance is permitted for some parts of CHAs based on discussion and agreement between LMAC operations officers

and clearance operators.¹¹⁴ Previously, full clearance had been required for 15 metres from the mine rows, but in the revised NMAS this has been changed to a required fade-out of 5 metres from the mine rows, and TS from the edge of the 5-metre fade-out up to the minefield fence, for minefields in which the lanes have not been disrupted.¹¹⁵ If there is no fence, 10 metres of TS is required from the edge of the 5-metre fade-out. Fade-out for anti-vehicle (AV) mines has been reduced from 20 metres to 10.¹¹⁶

Based on empirical evidence, international operators have not found mines further than five metres from the outer mine row, in minefields in which the lanes have not been disturbed.¹¹⁷ Arguably therefore, TS beyond the five-metre fade-out should only be required if there is sufficient evidence to suggest mines have migrated from the mine rows. However, while TS is still required beyond the five metres from the outer mine row, the amended NMAS now provides for improved flexibility in the percentage of area searched as part of TS. TS requirements are now being decided more in line with operational observations and decisions are being made collaboratively with RMAC, with good effect.¹¹⁸

With respect to TS requirements, NPA focuses its efforts on areas adjacent to missing mines, where the terrain may have allowed migration or where there appears to be a logical tactical reason for laying mines somewhere other than the defined line. Until recently, NPA had yet to discover any mines in these areas, but in 2022 reported that it had discovered six mines during TS in a single task which were well away from the mine rows. The six mines were all in an area that could have been run off from the mine line, but were all found at a depth of approximately 10cm and were all orientated correctly. This suggests they may have been deliberately emplaced, possibly as a result of the engineers who originally laid the minefields having a number of mines "left over" which they subsequently deployed wherever convenient. These mines would not have been found had it not been for the requirement for TS.¹¹⁹

102 Emails from Brig.-Gen. Ziad Nasr, LMAC, 27 April 2018; Craig McDiarmid, NPA, 17 April 2018; and Dave Wiley, MAG, 27 April 2018; and LMAC, "Annual Report 2018", p. 17.

103 Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 March and 2 September 2020.

104 Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023; Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 14 April 2023; Mouhamed Chour, DCA, 3 May 2023; and Tomislav Vondracek, NPA, 5 May 2023.

105 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023; and LMAC, "Annual Report 2022", p. 38.

106 Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 7 March 2019; Dave Wiley, MAG, 27 April 2018; and Craig McDiarmid, NPA, 17 April 2018; and Statement of Lebanon on Clearance, Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Ninth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 2 September 2019.

107 Email from Hala Amhaz, NPA, 15 March 2021.

108 LMAC, "Annual Report 2020", p. 36.

109 Emails from Mouhamed Chour, DCA, 4 April 2022; and Hiba Ghandour, MAG, 7 April 2022.

110 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 June 2021.

111 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 29 March 2022.

112 Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 March and 2 September 2020.

113 Emails from Aurélien Thienpont, HI, 13 April 2023; and Tomislav Vondracek, NPA, 5 May 2023.

114 Email from Brig.-Gen. Ziad Nasr, LMAC, 27 April 2018.

115 Email from Dave Wiley, MAG, 19 August 2019.

116 Emails from Brig.-Gen. Ziad Nasr, LMAC, 27 April 2018; Craig McDiarmid, NPA, 17 April 2018; and Ali Nasreddine, MAG, 24 July 2018.

117 Emails from Ali Nasreddine, MAG, 24 July 2018; Craig McDiarmid, NPA, 17 April 2018 and 8 April 2019; and Hala Amhaz, NPA, 17 March 2021.

118 Emails from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 23 July 2021; Southern Craib, NPA, 12 April 2022; and Hiba Ghandour, MAG, 7 April 2022.

119 Email from Southern Craib, NPA, 12 April 2022.

NPA believes changes could be considered to the procedure for missing mines in patterned minefields along the Blue Line. Many mines are missing due to water and soil-related movement or detonation by animals and the current "missed-mine" protocol is resource-intensive.¹²⁰ NPA believed a study of the empirical evidence would be useful, including how many missed mine drills each agency has performed and how many mines were discovered as a result.¹²¹ NPA's own data suggests the process of the missing mine drill serves no useful purpose beyond added "peace of mind". Between 2017 and 2022, NPA had conducted 1,648 missing mine drills in Lebanon and had found no mines or evidence of such. However, analysis of the data also suggests that the impact on clearance rates is not as significant as originally thought. On average, a missing mine drill takes approximately 45 minutes to perform whereas a deminer would otherwise clear 1.55m² in the same time.¹²²

Following a TWG meeting in early 2021 in which international NGOs highlighted that missing mine excavations had not resulted in any missing mines being located, there has been increased flexibility from RMAC with regard to the "missing mine" drill. RMAC officers have permitted some of NPA's requests not to conduct the drill where there was evidence that the mine had been moved (and located nearby) or that it was previously detonated.¹²³

In 2019, NPA began to consider using Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR)-equipped detectors as a solution and was planning to arrange a potential trial of UNMAS-owned dual sensor equipment in 2020 to conduct missed-mine checks.¹²⁴ COVID-19 lockdowns and evacuation of relevant UNMAS personnel, resulted in a delay of the planned trial in 2020.¹²⁵ As at April 2022, NPA had conducted limited trials on GPR detectors to date, and the trials were inconclusive with

respect to their potential use on missing mines.¹²⁶ The GPR detectors were returned to UNMAS at their request.¹²⁷

Minefields in areas outside of the Blue Line, for example in Mount Lebanon, will each be studied to determine where full clearance is required and where TS must be applied.¹²⁸ In northern Lebanon, the main contamination is in scattered mined areas, and past land release has typically been characterised by large areas cleared and small numbers of AP mines destroyed.

LMAC accepted the recommendations proposed by the clearance operators regarding the "metal-free" criteria, and LMAC's requirement for "metal-free" in the north-east was changed in early 2021. The criteria is now "half of the MUV-9 fuze" for the clearance of the minefields on the Blue Line, with confirmed contamination of No. 4 AP mines only.¹²⁹

Both DCA and MAG welcomed the change of the demolition timings to the morning, which MAG said provides a longer time window to conduct more demolitions if needed,¹³⁰ and which DCA said reduces fire risk at the sites.¹³¹

LMAC has said that with the introduction of IMSMA Core, the assigning of tasks for NTS teams, and the reviewing of them by the implementing partners and by LMAC's NTS officer, is faster, easier, and very effective. LMAC's NTS officer meets with the NTS teams from implementing agencies on a weekly basis, to discuss results and planning. LMAC also assigns a group of tasks to implementing agencies rather than one task, and the operators have the capability in IMSMA Core to see which tasks are close by to the area in which they are working and to ask to expand their mission directly while in the field. Priority levels in accordance with the new system are then determined based on their reports.¹³²

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2022, manual mine clearance was conducted by international operators DCA, HI, MAG, and NPA, along with the Engineering Regiment of the LAF. In addition, UNIFIL continued conducting clearance for humanitarian purposes (first commenced from June 2020), in addition to its regular demining operations for demarcation purposes on the Blue Line. Mine clearance capacity in Lebanon in 2022 was broadly the same as the previous year.¹³³

The LAF Engineering Regiment has two BAC teams. A further three Engineering Regiment companies conduct rapid response call-outs. In addition, each deployed combat brigade has its own combat engineering company which can also conduct rapid-response call-outs. The LAF has seven MDD teams for TS and for use as a secondary asset supporting clearance. Through the Engineering Regiment, LMAC provides mechanical assistance to clearance operators that lack this capacity.¹³⁴

120 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 28 May 2020.

121 Email from Hala Amhaz, NPA, 17 March 2021.

122 Email from Southern Craib, NPA, 12 April 2022.

123 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 23 July 2021.

124 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 28 May 2020.

125 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 23 July 2021.

126 Email from Southern Craib, NPA, 12 April 2022.

127 Email from Tomislav Vondracek, NPA, 5 May 2023.

128 LMAC, "Annual Report 2020", p. 10.

129 Email from Hiba Ghandour, MAG, 7 April 2022.

130 Ibid.

131 Email from Mouhamed Chour, DCA, 2 June 2022.

132 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 29 March 2022.

133 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023.

134 Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 29 March 2022 and 5 May 2023.

In Lebanon, machines are only used as secondary assets to support clearance teams (e.g. for ground preparation, rubble removal, or for fade-out); in areas where manual clearance is difficult; and for TS and LTHA.¹³⁵ Often, however, the terrain is not suitable for machines. Unfortunately, the economic crisis in Lebanon has resulted in huge budget cuts in all government institutions and therefore the LAF teams are not able to conduct the same level of activities as before, including with respect to some of the mechanical assets. Clearance operators who are supported by mechanical assets from the LAF are providing fuel, maintenance, and spare parts for the machines.¹³⁶ In addition, new mechanical assets have been introduced by MAG.¹³⁷

Table 3: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2022¹³⁸

Operator	Manual teams	Total clearance personnel*	Dogs and handlers	Machines**	Comments***
DCA	4	31	0	0	Combined mine and BAC capacity. Clearance personnel also conduct TS. LMAC reported that DCA had two clearance teams.
HI	1	8	0	0	Clearance personnel also conduct technical survey when required. Significant drop in clearance capacity in 2022, compared to 2021, due to lack of funding.
MAG	7	70	0	6	Clearance personnel also conduct technical survey. LMAC reported that MAG had six clearance teams.
NPA	2	16	0	1	NPA continued to operate with two mine clearance teams in 2022. Clearance personnel also conduct technical survey when required
UNIFIL	5	42	0	1	UNIFIL also has one mechanical team. The demining machine is an armed excavator which can be used as a primary tool (using the bucket attachment for excavating and sifting) or for area confirmation or reduction (using the rotary attachment).
Totals	19	167	0	8	

* Clearance personnel may also conduct TS. ** Excluding vegetation cutters and sifters. *** Clearance teams also work on TS tasks.

The UNIFIL capacity was provided by its two Troop-Contributing Countries: Cambodia and China. Operational capacities and capabilities of UNIFIL are determined by operational need. In 2022, UNIFIL capacity totalled 42 personnel (five manual clearance teams), in addition to one mechanical team. UNMAS provides initial training with UNIFIL demining units when they rotate into the country, refresher training, and quality assurance (QA) and validation of the demining teams.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 29 March 2022.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ LMAC, "Annual Report 2022", p. 11; and emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023; Mouhamed Chour, DCA, 4 May 2023; Aurélien Thienpont, HI, 13 April 2023; Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 26 April 2023; Tomislav Vondracek, NPA, 5 May 2023; and Maj. (CHN) Yu Wang, UNIFIL Force HQ, 28 April 2023.

¹³⁹ Email from Maj. (CHN) Yu Wang, UNIFIL Force HQ, 28 April 2023.

UNIFIL was established in 1978¹⁴⁰ in order to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon (which occurred in 2000); restore international peace and security; and assist the Government of Lebanon to re-establish its authority in the area.¹⁴¹ The primary task of UNIFIL mine clearance teams has been to clear access lanes through minefields in order to visibly demarcate the 118km-long Blue Line. Historically, UNIFIL has not conducted clearance on the Blue Line for humanitarian purposes but only to facilitate placement of markers by clearing three-metre-wide lanes into mined areas,¹⁴² and also to clear mines close to UNIFIL posts or which pose a danger to UNIFIL patrols. However, in 30 January 2020, UNIFIL and LMAC signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on Humanitarian Demining, and planned to work together, with UNIFIL helping the LAF/LMAC clear areas contaminated by both mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO).¹⁴³ UNIFIL Engineering Units subsequently started humanitarian demining in June 2020, with two teams.¹⁴⁴ As per the MoU, LMAC joined UNMAS in the accreditation of the UNIFIL teams and QA visits.¹⁴⁵

With respect to NTS capacity (for both mines and CMR) in 2022, LMAC had two teams (totalling two personnel);¹⁴⁶ DCA had two DCA teams (totalling two personnel);¹⁴⁷ HI had one team (totalling two personnel);¹⁴⁸ and MAG had three teams (totalling five personnel).¹⁴⁹ As at April 2022, NPA no longer had dedicated NTS or TS capacity and when survey is required, suitably trained NPA personnel are drawn from existing clearance capacity.¹⁵⁰

Due to funding cuts, HI's demining personnel in 2022 decreased significantly, compared to the three teams totalling 24 deminers for clearance and TS in 2021. HI had been forced to temporarily suspend all mine action operations in Lebanon between February and June 2023,¹⁵¹ but secured new funding starting July 2023, which enabled it to recommence operations in Chouf district. As at August 2023, HI was waiting for additional funds to scale up operations.¹⁵²

While MAG's capacity in 2022 remained relatively constant compared to 2021, it expected to have to make 42 personnel from three TS/clearance teams in north-east Lebanon redundant, upon completion of the project in 2023.¹⁵³

NPA employs a multitask approach, with all deminers, team leaders, and team supervisors trained to address all explosive ordnance types in Lebanon, which has enabled NPA to respond to changing priorities and operational constraints.¹⁵⁴ NPA saw a significant reduction in overall operational capacity in 2021 due to loss of funding, in particular from the EU and the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO), which resulted in closure of NPA's sub-base and operations in north-east Lebanon from the end of April 2021.¹⁵⁵ NPA's mine clearance capacity in 2022 remained the same as in 2021, but NPA said that Japan's decision to stop funding clearance in Lebanon in 2023 meant that NPA's mine-clearance capacity was redeployed onto CMR tasks when the Japanese contract ended in April 2023.¹⁵⁶

MAG Lebanon has introduced two new mechanical assets: the Rebel Crusher, which since late 2021 has been used for processing (crushing) of soil contaminated with AP mines; and the GCS-200, which is equipped with flail attachment for mechanical ground preparation of TS lanes. MAG conducted trials with the Rebel Crusher and training for GCS-200 and both assets were then accredited by LMAC and put into operations in the second half of 2022.¹⁵⁷

In 2022, MAG introduced a targeted detector (VMH4) for BAC which improves productivity as it eliminates signals caused by metal smaller than the targeted items. This improved BAC productivity in 2022, and MAG was planning to use this equipment where possible in minefields in 2023. MAG has already started training teams working on AP mines on its use, which were successfully accredited by LMAC.¹⁵⁸

NPA fully used its mechanical excavator during 2022. It said that the machine was invaluable at dealing with small spoil piles placed on top of mined areas and areas of seasonal flooding that had resulted in the movement of topsoil, resulting in deep buried mines.¹⁵⁹

140 UN Security Council Resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978).

141 UNIFIL, "UNIFIL Mandate", at: <http://bit.ly/2YpCwuD>.

142 Presentation by Maj. Pierre Bou Maroun, RMAC, Nabatiyeh, 4 May 2012; and emails from Henri Francois Morand, UNMAS, 2 October 2015 and 18 September 2017.

143 Emails from Lt.-Col. Zengliang Zhou, UNIFIL, 20 April 2020; and Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 March 2020.

144 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 March 2021; and LMAC, "Annual Report 2020", p. 17.

145 LMAC, "Annual Report 2020", p. 17.

146 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023.

147 Email from Mouhamed Chour, DCA, 4 May 2023.

148 Email from Aurélien Thienpont, HI, 13 April 2023.

149 Email from Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 26 April 2023.

150 Email from Southern Craib, NPA, 12 April 2022.

151 Emails from Aurélien Thienpont, HI, 13 April and 29 August 2023.

152 Email from Aurélien Thienpont, HI, 9 August 2023.

153 Email from Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 26 April 2023.

154 Email from Valerie Warmington, NPA, 7 September 2022.

155 Email from Southern Craib, NPA, 28 March 2022.

156 Email from Tomislav Vondracek, NPA, 5 May 2023.

157 Emails from Hiba Ghandour, MAG, 7 April 2022; and Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 26 April 2023.

158 Email from Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 26 April 2023.

159 Email from Tomislav Vondracek, NPA, 5 May 2023.

As part of NTS on the north-east border of Lebanon, contaminated during spill-over of the Syrian conflict in 2014–17, drones were used for the first time in 2018, and proved very helpful in helping inform survey efforts according to LMAC.¹⁶⁰ HI organised a visit by its unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) expert partner to Lebanon on 19–23 April 2021, to study the feasibility of the use of drones/UAV in HI's land release operations, with a view to enhancing NTS and TS as well as testing innovative methods based on thermal and LiDAR sensors. The visit found that Lebanon is a "perfect environment" for the deployment of drones and a project for 2022 was developed and submitted to donors.¹⁶¹

From 2022 to the middle of 2023, HI was trialling the use of drones/UAVs in land release operations in Mount Lebanon collaboration with LMAC. As at April 2023, more than 50 polygons had been surveyed by drones in collaboration

with LMAC. The trial aims to determine whether small aerial systems can provide better situational awareness of the surface of SHAs and CHAs, with imagery and cartography from drones helping to spot indicators—such as animal and vehicle accidents, or other "ground signs"—, which can be used to target the starting point for where demining assets should be deployed, ideally working from the inside outward. At a more advanced level, the concept is to pioneer the use of more sophisticated sensors and techniques to locate anomalies emitted from buried explosive contamination, which may not display indicators on the surface. A major objective of the project is to build national capacity for this innovative technology, and several teams (drone pilots and NTS team leaders) were scheduled to be trained in 2023. As at August 2023, HI was awaiting purchase of the UAVs.¹⁶²

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

A total of 605,360m² of mined area (i.e. area suspected or confirmed to contain AP mines) was released in 2022, of which 216,405m² was cleared, 102,529m² was reduced through TS, and 286,426m² was cancelled through NTS. A total of 22,737 AP mines were destroyed in 2022, including 6 during EOD spot tasks.¹⁶³

A total of 15,202m² of previously unrecorded AP mined area was added to the database in 2022.¹⁶⁴

SURVEY IN 2022

In 2022, 286,426m² of mined area was cancelled through NTS and 102,529m² was reduced through TS (see Tables 4 and 5).¹⁶⁵ This was a slight increase compared to the 266,348m² of mined area cancelled through NTS in 2022 and a slight decrease on the 169,288m² reduced through TS in 2022.¹⁶⁶

160 Presentation by Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, at the Regional School for Humanitarian Demining in Lebanon (RHDSL), Beirut, 8 April 2019; and email, 24 September 2022.

161 LMAC, "Annual Report 2021", p. 50.

162 Emails from Aurélien Thienpont, HI, 13 April and 9 August 2023.

163 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023.

164 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023. DCA reported discovering 400m² of previously unknown mined area during NTS in 2022 (email from Mouhamed Chour, DCA, 4 May 2023) and MAG reported discovering one area of previously unknown mined area in 2022, which totalled 3,049m² (email from Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 26 April 2023).

165 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023. In Lebanon, the term "Mined Area" is used to denote dangerous areas entered into the database when the first impact survey was executed, which were not accessible, and where the type of hazard was not identified. However, for the purposes of this report, mined area refers to areas suspected or confirmed to contain AP mines.

166 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 1 June 2022.

Table 4: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022¹⁶⁷

Province	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Bekaa and South Lebanon	LMAC	6,000
	MAG	1,877
Mount Lebanon	HI	51,612
	DCA	226,937
Total		286,426

Table 5: Release of mined area through TS in 2022¹⁶⁸

Province	Operator	Area (m ²)
Bekaa	MAG	26,062
Mount Lebanon	DCA	2,016
	HI	9,464
South Lebanon	DCA	34,942
	MAG	15,310
	NPA	14,735
Total		102,529

A total of 15,202m² of previously unrecorded legacy AP mine contamination was identified by NTS teams across nine sites (five sites in Bekaa and two sites in, respectively, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon) and was added to the database in 2022.¹⁶⁹

CLEARANCE IN 2022

A total of 216,405m² of mined area was cleared in Lebanon in 2022 (205,014m² by demining NGOs and UNIFIL, and 11,391m² by the LAF), destroying in the process a total of 22,731 AP mines (22,668 by demining NGOs and UNIFIL; and 63 by the LAF), along with 404 anti-vehicle mines, and 60 items of other UXO (see Table 6).¹⁷⁰ In addition, during EOD spot tasks in 2022, DCA destroyed 4 AP mines and MAG destroyed 2 AP mines.¹⁷¹

Total clearance in 2022 was a decrease on the 246,817m² of mined area cleared in 2022 (219,470m² by demining NGOs and UNIFIL, and 27,347m² by LAF).¹⁷²

LMAC has its own category for IED tasks and they are not registered as mine clearance. However, any victim-activated IEDs discovered are included in the total of AP mines destroyed. None of the AP mines destroyed in 2022 was of an improvised nature.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁷ LMAC, "Annual Report 2022", p. 14; and email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023. There was a discrepancy between data reported by LMAC and what was reported by DCA, HI, and MAG. DCA reported cancelling 173,060m² of mined area in 2022. DCA reported only the mined areas cancelled, but said LMAC cancellation data looked to also include cluster munition-contaminated and UXO-affected areas cancelled. (emails from Mouhamed Chour, DCA, 4 May and 8 August 2023). HI reported cancelling 22,931m² of mined area in 2022 (email from Aurélien Thienpont, HI, 13 April 2023). MAG reported cancelling 9,003m² of mined area in 2022, plus 488,026m² of IEDs. MAG believes the discrepancy is because MAG reported the area recommended for cancellation, while LMAC reported the approved area for cancellation (email from Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 26 April 2023).

¹⁶⁸ LMAC, "Annual Report 2022", p. 13; and emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023; Mouhamed Chour, DCA, 4 May 2023; Aurélien Thienpont, HI, 13 April 2023; and Tomislav Vondracek, NPA, 5 May 2023. There was a discrepancy between data reported by LMAC and what was reported by MAG. MAG reported reducing 47,101m² in Baalbak Hermel. The reason for the discrepancy was MAG included reduction in both AP mine tasks and IED tasks, whereas LMAC only reported reduction in AP mine tasks. According to LMAC, historical data shows that very few IED tasks contain improvised AP mines (emails from Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 26 April 2023 and Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023).

¹⁶⁹ Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023. DCA reported discovering 400m² of previously unknown mined area during NTS in 2022 (email from Mouhamed Chour, DCA, 4 May 2023) and MAG reported discovering one area of previously unknown mined area in 2022, which totalled 3,049m² (email from Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 26 April 2023).

¹⁷⁰ Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023.

¹⁷¹ LMAC, "Annual Report 2022", p. 11; and emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023; and Mouhamed Chour, DCA, 4 May 2023.

¹⁷² Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 1 June and 24 September 2022; and LMAC, "Annual Report 2021", p. 13.

¹⁷³ Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 1 June 2022 and 19 April 2023.

Table 6: Mine clearance in 2022¹⁷⁴

Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
DCA	41,504	4,574	0	20
HI	16,009	8	0	1
MAG	91,068	8,477	396	37
NPA	31,825	4,259	0	2
LAF	11,391	63	8	Not reported
UNIFIL	24,608	5,350	0	0
Totals	216,405	22,731	404	60

DCA released more mined area in 2022, than in the previous year. However, this included clearance of three minefield tasks, totalling 9,179m², in which CMR and other ERW were found, but no mines.¹⁷⁵

HI's mine clearance output dropped significantly in 2022, compared to 2021. This was due to a reduction in the number of clearance teams; having to conduct full excavation at two sites due to non-metallic mines in the area; the impact of COVID-19; and poor weather in January to March 2022. HI also reported that it cleared two tasks in 2022 totalling 2,600m² suspected to contain AP mines but containing none.¹⁷⁶

MAG saw a significant increase in clearance in 2022, compared to 2021, which it attributed to the effective use of mechanical assets leading to less dependence on manual TS. In 2022, MAG cleared 37 tasks, totalling 82,334m² in north-east Lebanon in which no AP mines were discovered.¹⁷⁷ However, of the 37 tasks, only two were AP mine tasks (totalling 1,170m²) and the remaining 35 were classified by LMAC as IED tasks and not included in mine clearance data.¹⁷⁸ According to LMAC, most IED tasks cleared to date have not contained improvised AP mines.¹⁷⁹

NPA's clearance output in 2022 was a slight increase on 2021 and NPA found AP mines in all mined areas which it cleared during the year.¹⁸⁰

There was a slight decrease in the total mined areas cleared by the LAF in 2022 compared to 2021, due to a decrease in the number of working days for the LAF ER teams.¹⁸¹ UNIFIL's clearance output in 2022 also decreased slightly compared to the previous year, but the number of AP mines destroyed increased.

According to LMAC, DCA, MAG, NPA, COVID-19 had no significant impact on operations in 2022,¹⁸² despite DCA also reporting that several cases of COVID-19 between the searchers and team members resulted in personnel being off work sick or in quarantine awaiting negative test results.¹⁸³ However, HI reported a notable impact of COVID-19 in 2022. In January 2022, 10 HI staff were exposed to COVID-19, which led to the temporary closure of the project's base and the rescheduling of activities. In total, HI lost 34 days to COVID-19 and bad weather in 2022, and a compensation plan was put in place for 7 months in coordination with LMAC, including working during weekends and some holidays, to compensate and make back some of the lost days.¹⁸⁴ UNIFIL also reported that COVID-19 resulted in the delayed deployment of three demining teams by around a month.¹⁸⁵

HI reported that roadblocks due to civil unrest affected the daily movement of its staff from their homes to and from the base. In addition, the anxiety and insecurity was said to have impacted the morale of staff.¹⁸⁶

174 LMAC, "Annual Report 2022", pp. 11 and 12; and emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023; and Aurélien Thienpont, HI, 13 April 2023. There were some discrepancies between data reported by LMAC and what was reported by DCA, MAG, NPA, and UNIFIL. DCA reported that it cleared a total of 32,458m² in 2022 in south Lebanon and in 9,179m² in Mount Lebanon, with the destruction of a total of 4,578 AP mines and 35 items of UXO (email from Mouhamed Chour, DCA, 4 May 2023). MAG reported that it cleared a total of 99,040m² in 2022 in the south and 126,915m² in north-east. MAG believes the discrepancy in mined area cleared in 2022 is because LMAC clearance data does not include the confirmation of area following the use of mechanical assets for flail (used to cut vegetation), which MAG classified as surface clearance and which LMAC classified as confirmation. NPA reported that it cleared 31,905m² in Nabatiyeh in 2022 (email from Tomislav Vondracek, NPA, 5 May 2023). UNIFIL reported that it cleared 25,479m² in 2022, with the destruction of 5,571 AP mines and 2 UXO (email from Maj. (CHN) Yu Wang, UNIFIL Force HQ, 28 April 2023).

175 Email from Mouhamed Chour, DCA, 4 May 2023.

176 Email from Aurélien Thienpont, HI, 13 April 2023.

177 Email from Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 26 April 2023.

178 Email from Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 11 August 2023.

179 Email from Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023.

180 Email from Tomislav Vondracek, NPA, 5 May 2023.

181 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 April 2023.

182 Emails from Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 15 May 2023, Sylvain Lefort, MAG, 14 April 2023 and Tomislav Vondracek, NPA, 5 May 2023.

183 Email from Mouhamed Chour, DCA, 4 May 2023.

184 Email from Aurélien Thienpont, HI, 13 April 2023.

185 Email from Maj. (CHN) Yu Wang, UNIFIL Force HQ, 28 April 2023.

186 Email from Aurélien Thienpont, HI, 13 April 2023.

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

According to Lebanon’s Statement as an observer at the Fourth Review Conference of the APMBC in Oslo in November 2019, Lebanon’s national mine action policy affirms its aspiration to become a State Party to the APMBC. The Minister of Defence, who also heads the LMAA, sent a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stating that the Ministry of Defence has no objections to Lebanon acceding to the Treaty. LMAC will work in the spirit of the APMBC and LMAC also asserts that it will implement the Oslo Action Plan, adopted at the Fourth Review Conference of the APMBC.¹⁸⁷ LMAA says that it will continue to promote an accession to the Convention.¹⁸⁸

Clearance of mined areas was originally expected to be completed by the end of 2020, in accordance with the 2011–20 national strategy, but actual mine clearance capacity was far lower and progress against the strategy fell well behind schedule. Lebanon’s new National Mine Action Strategy 2020–25 sets out annual targets for the next six years. In 2020, LMAC expected Lebanon to be free from known mined areas in ten years, with the application of efficient land release methodology and subject to securing the necessary funding.¹⁸⁹ However, this looks to be very ambitious, considering the extent of the remaining mined area (16.9km²) and annual mine clearance rates of considerably less than 0.5km² per year, with a total of less than 2km² of mined area cleared in the last five years (see Table 7).

Furthermore, Lebanon has ambitious clearance targets set under the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), to which Lebanon is a State Party. It is therefore likely that the focus of clearance efforts will be on CMR, especially given the funding constraints.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

According to LMAC, the strategic implementation plan, which will support the National Mine Action Strategy 2020–25, will address an exit strategy and long-term risk management.¹⁹¹ LMAC provided summary information on its plans regarding an exit strategy with respect to addressing residual risk after CCM Article 4 fulfilment,¹⁹² but details have yet to be provided on an exit strategy and long-term risk management strategy for mined areas.

Operators have said that the economic and political crises have led to hyper-inflation, currency collapse, and problems with already strict and reducing budgets. This has resulted in supplies being more expensive; fuel less readily available; and protests and roadblocks hampering the security situation. The impact of this is particularly challenging in respect to funding from some donors which do not fund the full cost of operations.¹⁹⁰

While Lebanon is still many years from completing mine clearance, progress is expected to be accelerated by adoption of better land release procedures in recent years. Crucially, LMAC’s demonstrated commitment to enhance the use of NTS and TS should help to cancel or reduce areas more efficiently. Better use of TS will help bring down the number of CHAs believed to contain mines, which are cleared, but are then found not to contain AP mines, as was the case with clearance tasks implemented by DCA, HI, and MAG in 2022.

Table 7: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	0.22
2021	0.25
2020	0.35
2019	0.48
2018	0.39
Total	1.69

187 LMAC, Lebanon Mine Action Strategy 2020–25, signed June 2020, p. 4; and LMAC, “Plan for the Implementation and Monitoring of the LMAP Strategy (2020–2025)”, p. 5.

188 LMAC, “Lebanon Mine Action Strategy 2020–2025”, pp. 1 and 4.

189 Emails from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 March and 22 July 2020; and 15 March 2021; LMAC, “Annual Report 2020”, p. 31; and LMAC, “Plan for the Implementation and Monitoring of the LMAP Strategy (2020–2025)”, p. 9.

190 Email from Matthew Benson, DCA, 24 May 2021.

191 Email from Lt.-Col. Fadi Wazen, LMAC, 19 March 2020.

192 LMAC, “Annual Report 2020”, p. 31.

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION:
NO CREDIBLE ESTIMATE,
BUT BELIEVED TO BE LIGHT**

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

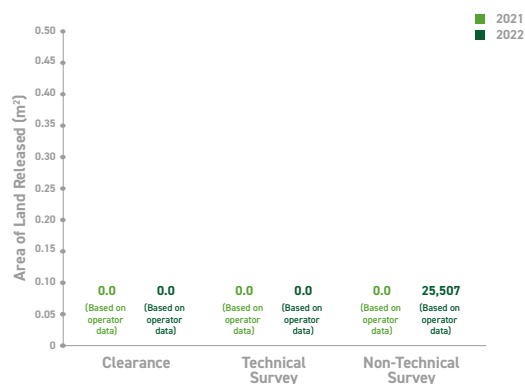
0_{M²}

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

0

(OPERATOR DATA)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Libya made little progress in clearing anti-personnel (AP) mined area in 2022. Reduced funding has led to significant cuts in demining capacity.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- The Libyan Mine Action Centre (LibMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Free Fields Foundation (3F)
- The Safe Trust non-governmental organisation (NGO) (Al-Thiqqa al-Ameha, accredited and supported by DCA)
- The Communication NGO (Al-Tawasol)
- Libyan Peace Organisation (accredited, and supported by DRC)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- DanChurchAid (DCA)
- Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Humanity & Inclusion (HI)

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Libya should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Libya should conduct a national baseline survey to identify the extent of AP mine contamination.
- Libya should strengthen the Libyan Mine Action Centre (LibMAC)'s leading role as a coordinator of the mine action programme in close consultation with the national and international operators.
- Libya should facilitate the granting of visas to international clearance operators.

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

There is no accurate figure for the extent of mined area in Libya and reports of mine contamination are confused and sometimes contradictory. Mine contamination is a legacy of the Second World War (mainly in the east and predominantly anti-vehicle (AV) mine contamination), as well as subsequent armed conflict with Egypt in 1977 (pattern minefields mapped, fenced and marked), with Chad in 1978–87, which resulted in mines being laid on Libya's borders with these two neighbours, and the Libya uprising of 2011 and subsequent armed conflicts.¹ The border with Tunisia is also believed to be affected. During Colonel Muammar Qaddafi's four decades in power, mines were emplaced around a number of locations, including military facilities and key infrastructure.

Mines were used by both the government and the opposition forces during the 2011 conflict leading to Colonel Qaddafi's overthrow. According to the Libyan Mine Action Centre (LibMAC), around 30,000–35,000 mines were laid in five regions and cities, but were "largely cleared" after the downfall of the Gaddafi regime by volunteers with previous military experience.² This claim is not credible. In the course of the Libyan conflict, the Gaddafi regime lost control over large parts of its conventional weapons arsenal. Weapons storage sites were accessible to opposition fighters, civilians, and soldiers alike. Since the end of the fighting, central control over the weapons arsenal has not been re-established and has led to widespread use and trafficking of arms.³

Since February 2014, Libya's governance has been divided between two main entities: the United Nations (UN)-recognised Government of National Accord (or GNA) and the self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA), led by commander Khalifa Haftar. After a long negotiation process in 2015, a political agreement was signed in December 2015 under UN supervision. Clashes in Tripoli between rival militias escalated again in 2019, and the LNA surrounded Tripoli in January 2020 launching constant artillery and rocket attacks. In June 2020, LNA forces withdrew 600km east of Tripoli leaving behind an unknown number of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).⁴ Many of these fall within the scope of the APMBC. The fighting ended with parties to the conflict signing an agreement of "complete and permanent" ceasefire in October 2020 in Geneva under the UN auspices.⁵

According to multiple reports, fighters affiliated with the group commanded by Khalifa Haftar, and foreign fighters from Russia emplaced AP mines, including victim-activated IEDs and booby-traps, in Tripoli's southern suburbs as they withdrew.⁶ Human Rights Watch said that between April 2019 and June 2020, Haftar and affiliated forces, including the Wagner Group, a Russian government-linked private military security contractor, placed "enormous" quantities of munitions, including anti-personnel mines, in Tripoli's southern districts. Some devices were hidden inside homes and other structures, in some cases inside furniture, and often activated by tripwire.⁷ The American Embassy in Tripoli said that a United States (US)-supported demining team near the capital had deactivated 34 mines in May–June 2020, including MON-50 and POM-2 Russian-made AP mines, adding that the mines were emplaced by the Wagner Group in residential areas.⁸

In March 2021, the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU), headed by Abdelhamid Dabeida, replaced these former eastern- and western-based authorities. However, the relationship with Haftar's LNA remained fraught.⁹ In spite of the challenging political and security environment, the situation in Libya continued to improve and the 2020 ceasefire agreement held. While the lessening of hostilities has brought new emplacement of mines and other explosive ordnance to a halt, considerable contamination—unexploded ordnance (UXO) and mines, booby-traps, and to other IEDs used during the siege of Tripoli—along with ordnance used during previous conflict in Libya, remain a threat.¹⁰

Media reports suggest that most of the AP mines laid since the 2011 Libyan conflict are of an improvised nature.¹¹ DanChurchAid (DCA), which has been operating in Libya since 2010, confirmed the presence of AP tripwire mines, bounding mines, and anti-lift devices in Tripoli, and legacy IEDs in Benghazi and Sirte. DCA thought that the extent of mine contamination has remained the same since the fighting in and around Tripoli in 2020.¹²

In Benghazi in the east, Libyan military engineering personnel told the media that mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) in Benghazi remains in the rubble of damaged buildings. Local people are said to improvise markings to warn civilians of the presence of explosive devices amid the lack of a systematic response from the authorities.¹³

1 Interview with Col. Turjoman, Director, LibMAC, in Geneva, 7 February 2019; and "Libya: The Toxic and Explosive Legacy of Modern Conflict", Presentation by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), UN National Directors Meeting, Geneva, 12 February 2020.

2 Interview with Col. Turjoman, LibMAC, in Geneva, 7 February 2019.

3 ITF Enhancing Human Security, Annual Report 2020, at: <http://bit.ly/3t8SbcV>, p. 78; and email from Catherine Alice Smith, Programme Manager, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), 20 April 2021.

4 ITF Enhancing Human Security, Annual Report 2020, p. 78.

5 UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Agreement for a complete and permanent ceasefire in Libya, Geneva, 23 October 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3Bunnej>.

6 Human Rights Watch, "Libya: landmines left after armed group withdraws", 3 June 2020, at: <http://bit.ly/2DIE5AM>; and "Libya: Landmines, Other War Hazards, Killing Civilians", 27 April 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3nkVPju>.

7 Human Rights Watch, "Libya: Russia's Wagner Group Set Landmines Near Tripoli", 31 May 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3xRfzQy>.

8 Embassy of the United States in Libya website, 21 July 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3DJZX4G>.

9 Human Rights Watch, "Libya: Landmines, Other War Hazards, Killing Civilians", 27 April 2022.

10 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Libya Humanitarian Overview 2023, December 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3o4xPEM>, p. 10.

11 "Libya inhabited with fear. Battles ended but the mines stay", *The Independent* (Arabic), 4 April 2023, at <https://bit.ly/3DKC6qk>.

12 Emails from Graeme Ogilvie, Programme Manager, DanChurchAid (DCA), 1 April 2022 and 17 March 2023.

13 "Without a serious survey, mines kills Libyans", *The New Arab*, 11 November 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/441cs6K>.

Conventional minefields are rare in the west and central coastal area of Libya.¹⁴

According to The HALO Trust (HALO), the contamination of mines across Tripoli featured a mix of previously unseen items, and a possible distribution and laying of mines from the former Gaddafi stockpiles, such as the Belgian PRB-M3 AV mines. There have been reports of mines causing fatalities in the west of Sirte, but non-technical survey (NTS) has not been conducted for a baseline survey of mine contamination there.¹⁵ In 2023, HALO added that the deployment of AP mines was not a common characteristic of conflict in Libya over the last decade of conflict. HALO, therefore, believes that a countrywide survey or resurvey of AP mined area is not required. One AP mine (OZM72) was found in Tripoli that had been deployed and intended to be used as an IED.¹⁶ On 13 December 2022, the British Embassy in Tripoli reportedly tweeted that it had supported HALO in mapping of contamination areas south of Tripoli, and that it had concluded producing maps of suspected mined areas. HALO said it had identified more than 100 areas suspected of ERW contamination in Ain Zara (South of Tripoli).¹⁷

The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reported that after the withdrawal of LNA forces in May 2020, explosive ordnance (booby-traps, landmines, and IEDs) were found scattered across southern Tripoli.¹⁸ Sophisticated tactics were deployed to hinder demining and target deminers, including placement of minimum-metal AP mines next to AV mines and the use of anti-lift devices. In addition, UNMAS reported extensive use of booby-traps and victim-activated IEDs in civilian houses that served no military purpose but inflicted high civilian casualties.¹⁹ HALO reported that finding ML-7/8 anti-lift devices being laid underneath OZM-72 AP bounding fragmentation mines.²⁰ In Tripoli, there has been evidence of conventional munitions being repurposed to operate in an improvised manner as landmines. These include projectiles containing a Soviet MUV fuze, which are tripwire initiated.²¹

In June 2020, the President of the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC (19MSP) issued a press release expressing concern at reports of the use of AP mines of an improvised nature in and around Tripoli. In his November 2021 report on Libya to the UN Security Council, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) said that his office continued “to gather evidence related to

alleged crimes committed during the April 2019 attack on Tripoli”, but did not announce the nature of these investigations.²² Amnesty International, however, has evidence that LNA-affiliated forces have laid extensive tripwire-activated AP mines and booby-traps in homes and other civilian objects.²³

Multiple types of AP mines: (T-AB-1, NR-413, NR-442), were used or left behind as part of abandoned stockpiles across the country at the start of the conflict in 2011.²⁴ Since then, Human Rights Watch has identified 10 AP mines of Soviet and Russian origin in Libya: PMN-2, OZM-72, MON-50, MON-90, MON-100, POM-2S, POM-2R, MS-3, ML-7, and ML-8. Other AP mines (GYATA-64), in addition to AV mines (TM-62M, TM-62P3, and TM-83) have also been found. Four types of AP mine of Russian origin had not been previously documented in Libya. Explosive devices of an improvised nature were assembled and used in a manner intended to be detonated by the presence, proximity, or contact of a person, meeting the treaty definition of an AP mine.²⁵

As at March 2021, national NTS had identified more than 15km² of hazardous area, of which 62% was in the east of the country, 33% in Tripoli and Al Jefarah, and the remaining 5% in Misrata and Sirte. In 2022, more than 27,400 different types and calibres of ordnance were disposed of in Libya, of which two thirds were projectiles and rockets, and the rest were grenades, aircraft bombs, mines, and small arms ammunition. Additional areas could be identified as hazardous areas in 2023 as NTS operations are ongoing.²⁶

Many suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) have yet been surveyed. According to the latest updates at April 2021, national data from the LibMAC database suggested total contamination of 287km² of mines across 61km² of confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and 226km² of SHAs, distributed over seven localities.²⁷ The data provided by LibMAC indicate mostly mixed contamination and are not disaggregated by contamination type. LibMAC data from 2017 indicate that the SHA of 223km² in Sirte is suspected to contain only AV mines.²⁸ Moreover, the contamination data of Sirte do not reflect clearance in 2017–20 and are therefore believed to be outdated. Aside from the SHA in Sirte, total confirmed and suspected AP and AV mined area combined is nearly 64km². It is likely that further survey will drastically reduce the figures, especially for AP mined area.

14 Emails from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 1 April 2022 and 17 March 2023.

15 Emails from Zita Andrassy, Programme Officer Libya, HALO, 27 February 2022; and Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 1 April 2022.

16 Email from Charles Fowle, Libya Programme Manager, HALO, 5 May 2023.

17 “Libya: The UK announces the conclusion of producing landmine maps in Tripoli” (Arabic), *Anadolu Agency*, 14 December 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3DRdUxC>, and “Libya seeks international help to clear developed mines”, *The Libya Observer*, 24 December 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/43TSeM4>.

18 Email from Sharmeela Aminath, Chief Mine Action Programme, UNMAS, 16 March 2023.

19 Presentation by UNMAS and LibMAC to the 24th NDM meeting, Geneva, 26 May 2021.

20 Email from Lucy Reeve, Programme Manager, HALO, 12 May 2021.

21 Email from Zita Andrassy, HALO, 27 February 2022.

22 Statement of International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor, Karim A.A. Khan QC, to the UN Security Council on the Situation in Libya, pursuant to UNSCR 1970 (2011), November 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3vtpDyS>.

23 Amnesty International UK, “Libya: shocking new evidence of retaliatory attacks on civilians”, 5 June 2020, at: <http://bit.ly/3f9WiPN>.

24 Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, “Libya”, accessed 27 June 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3y0blpF>.

25 Human Rights Watch, “Libya: Landmines, Other War Hazards, Killing Civilians”, 27 April 2022.

26 Email from Sharmeela Aminath, UNMAS, 16 March 2023.

27 Email from Col. Adel Elatwi, Operations, LibMAC, 22 April 2021.

28 Emails from Abdullatif Abujarida, LibMAC, 20 February and 9 March 2017.

In July 2022, LibMAC told Human Rights Watch that since 2019, landmines and other ordnance contaminated 720km² of the southern Tripoli districts alone.²⁹ In the absence of systematic survey efforts, however, this figure is thought to be a significantly overestimate.

Table 1: Mixed AP and AV mined area (at end 2020)³⁰

Locality	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total SHAs/ CHAs	Total area (m ²)
Al Jifarah	0	0	1	5,280	1	5,280
Al Jufrah	0	0	1	408,572	1	408,572
Benghazi	16	12,382,269	4	1,564,907	20	13,947,176
Jabal Nafusa	1	0	1	604,139	2	604,139
Misratah	3	3,387,431	0	0	3	3,387,431
Sabha	2	3,990,067	0	0	2	3,990,067
Sirte	3	40,747,944	1	222,934,834	4	263,682,778
Greater Tripoli	41	654,576	14	131,990	55	786,566
Totals	66	61,162,287	22	225,649,722	88	286,812,009

LibMAC told Human Rights Watch that, between May 2020 and March 2022, 130 people died and 196 others were injured by mines and explosive devices across Libya, mostly in southern Tripoli. Of the total casualties, 78 (24%) were specialists in mine action, none of whom was able to return to work.³¹

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Libya is also contaminated by cluster munition remnants (CMR) (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Libya for further information). Conflicts, some of which are still ongoing, have left large quantities of ERW and UXO and in cities across Libya, a large proportion of which resulted from the siege of Tripoli in 2020.³²

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Mine action exists in a fragmented and occasionally violent political context. Since the UN-sponsored ceasefire agreement of October 2020, a roadmap leading to national elections in December 2021 did not materialise amid disputes over the eligibility of major candidates. In March 2023, Libya's UN envoy said that national elections could be held by the end of 2023 provided that a clear roadmap and electoral laws are put in place by June.³³ Despite the deadlock in the political process and the challenging environment, Libya has been slowly moving towards stability.³⁴

LibMAC was mandated by the Minister of Defence (MoD) to coordinate mine action in December 2011.³⁵ Operating under the UN-backed GNA, LibMAC's headquarters are in Tripoli, in the west of the country, and it also has offices in Benghazi³⁶ and Misrata.³⁷ ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF) has been supporting the overhead costs of LibMAC since it initiated a programme in Libya in 2014. In 2022, ITF paid the salaries of 27 LibMAC employees and covered the Centre's day-to-day costs.³⁸ LibMAC and military engineering personnel told the media that Libya lacks the capacity to tackle the scale of mine and ERW contamination, and sometimes lack the expertise

29 Human Rights Watch, "Libya: Landmines, Other War Hazards, Killing Civilians", 27 April 2022.
30 Email from Col. Adel Elatwi, LibMAC, 22 April 2021.
31 Human Rights Watch, "Libya: Landmines, Other War Hazards, Killing Civilians", 27 April 2022.
32 OCHA, Libya Humanitarian Overview 2023, December, p. 10.
33 "Libya elections: Presidential poll postponed", *BBC News*, 23 December 2021, at: <https://bbc.in/39ohwez>; and "Libyan elections are possible this year, U.N. envoy says", *Reuters*, 11 March 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/40FCHy1>.
34 OCHA, Libya Humanitarian Overview 2023, December, p. 8.
35 LibMAC website, accessed 20 March 2020, at: <http://bit.ly/2JqVr0S>.
36 Email from Jakob Donatz, Associate Programme Officer, UNMAS, 21 June 2018.
37 Email from Roman Turšič, Head of Implementation Office Libya/Afghanistan, ITF, 26 February 2017; and interview with Brig. Turjoman, LibMAC, in Geneva, 10 January 2017.
38 ITF, "Annual Report 2022", p. 143.

to tackle certain types of mines. This poses risk for the deminers, some of whom have lost their lives as a result.³⁹

Danish Refugee Council (DRC) provided training on the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) levels 1 and 2 to the local non-governmental organisation (NGO) Libyan Peace Organisation, LibMAC, and other local partners. DRC sponsored 13 individuals, including five DRC staff, five officers from the Libyan Peace Organisation, and three representatives from LibMAC.⁴⁰

In March 2022, HALO carried out an EOD Level 1 and 2 training course in Tripoli for 12 people, including LibMAC staff members and personnel from the Libyan Peace Organisation. HALO has also been providing ad-hoc support to LibMAC's transition to the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core in 2022, and intended to conduct an EOD Level 3 training for LibMAC in 2023. There was concern, though, that the training might not be possible due to difficulties in obtaining visas.⁴¹

UNMAS, which is an integral part of the United Nations Support Mission to Libya (UNSMIL), has largely been operating from Tunis since November 2014.⁴² UNMAS returned with international personnel to Libya in 2018, and since then has maintained permanent presence of critical operational and technical staff.⁴³ UNMAS helped LibMAC to develop the Libyan mine action standards on explosive

ordnance risk education (EORE), the migration of the database, and the accreditation assessments of four mine action organisations in 2022.⁴⁴

UNMAS also acts as the mine action lead, providing non-technical coordination through information sharing, and represents the mine action sector in various fora, including the UN protection cluster, the inter-sectoral coordination group, and the UN country team.⁴⁵ UNMAS and LibMAC chair monthly mine action sub-cluster working groups, which are attended by key mine action stakeholders.⁴⁶ UNMAS sought a budget of US\$7.5 million for the mine action sector in Libya in 2022 and was able to secure 99% of the requested amount.⁴⁷

DCA, DRC, and HALO have all experienced an eight-month long visa blockade for international staff, which has substantially impacted their operations. Operators have also unanimously reported that LibMAC has been doing what it can to support their visa requests, but to no avail.⁴⁸ DCA said that its annual Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between LibMAC and the international mine action organisations has seen delays while accreditation and registration were being sought.⁴⁹ Both DRC and HALO faced difficulties moving equipment within the country, and in the case of HALO, also into the country.⁵⁰ For DCA, there was no problem bringing equipment into the country aside from the UN arms embargo, which prohibits the importation of detonators.⁵¹

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Libya does not have a national mine action standard (NMAS) or a policy on environmental management.⁵²

DCA has an environmental management system and standard operational procedures (SOPs) in place. It takes into account the impacts of the destruction of ERW prior to any battle area clearance (BAC) or EOD spot task, and puts in place mitigation measures. DCA has a policy of non-use of explosives in favour of thermite to stop more nitrates from contaminating topsoil when operating in farmland. No open burning takes place and sandbags are made from hemp instead of plastic.⁵³

DRC does not have an environmental management system. DRC takes into account "do-not-harm" elements in consideration of environmental impact and policy when planning its operations.⁵⁴ HALO does not have an environmental management system. A global environment advisor was recruited in January 2022 to support progress in this regard, but the advisor has not visited the Libya programme nor developed an environmental management system at the global or programme level.⁵⁵ HALO's work in Libya is focused on urban clearance and therefore has little impact on biodiversity and vegetation.

39 "Libya seeks international help to clear developed mines", *The Libya Observer*, 24 December 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/43TSeM4>.

40 Email from Sonia Joly, Head of Programme, DRC, 21 August 2023.

41 Email from Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

42 UNMAS, "Programmes: Libya", accessed 14 May 2022, at: <http://bit.ly/31tU1tB>.

43 Email from Samir Becirovic, UNMAS, 2 March 2022.

44 Emails from Sharmeela Aminath, UNMAS, 16 March 2023; and Samir Becirovic, UNMAS, 2 March 2022.

45 Ibid.

46 Emails from Sharmeela Aminath, UNMAS, 16 March 2023; and Samir Becirovic, UNMAS, 10 June 2022.

47 Email from Sharmeela Aminath, UNMAS, 16 March 2023.

48 Emails from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 17 March 2023; Anna Salvari, DRC, 2 April 2023; and Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

49 Email from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 17 March 2023.

50 Emails from Anna Salvari, DRC, 2 April 2023; and Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

51 Email from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 17 March 2023.

52 Emails from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 1 April 2022; Alessandro Di Giusto, DRC, 7 March 2022; and Zita Andrassy, HALO, 27 February 2022.

53 Emails from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 17 March 2023 and 1 April 2022.

54 Email from Alessandro Di Giusto, DRC, 7 March 2022.

55 Email from Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

LibMAC does not have a gender and diversity policy for mine action in place. LibMAC disaggregates mine action data by sex and age.⁵⁶ Libyan women participation in the workforce in general is challenged due to societal norms. Those participating in mine action face additional obstacles from the widespread perception of the sector as male-dominated. Despite the challenges, Libyan women are becoming deminers.⁵⁷

DCA's Libya programme has an active policy of employing women into programme roles to increase their financial independence and teach them transferable skills that they may use beyond their current employment with DCA.⁵⁸ Gender mainstreaming and mainstreaming of marginalised groups form part of the programme's core policies. DCA also employs all-women teams, including two all-female EORE teams and one all-female multi-task team, to be able to engage with female-headed households. DCA actively engages with local councils, civil society organisations, community leaders, and groups working for the rights of minorities. These engagements drive project design and ensure community ownership. Women constituted 27% of all DCA employees in 2022. Of operational and managerial positions, 27% and 54% were occupied by women, respectively.⁵⁹

DRC takes into consideration gender and age factors when collecting information on how contamination impacts different groups. DRC adopts a transparent and inclusive

recruitment process to ensure that staff as much as possible originate from the area of operations and are representative of the local social context. DRC employed mixed gender teams in the field in 2022, and continues where possible.⁶⁰ DRC contracted the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to carry out a gender and diversity assessment in the first quarter of 2023.⁶¹ Women made up 15% of DRC total employees in 2022.⁶²

HALO's community liaison officers in Libya are all women who can engage with both men and women. As of writing, HALO staff were not specifically trained to work directly with children, but rather to ask parents for specific considerations for vulnerable persons under their responsibility, including children, elderly, and persons with disabilities. Data collected are disaggregated by gender and age so that representation can be targeted in a proportionate manner. HALO community liaison activities are performed at the same time as surveys, including focus group discussions when applicable, ensuring that women's voices are also heard. HALO staff are required to complete the online "Gender and Diversity in Mine Action" training module developed by the GICHD after their recruitment. HALO, however, reported difficulty in hiring women for operational roles.⁶³ Of a total of 39 national staff in 2022, 4 (10%) were women. In terms of supervisory positions, 3 out of 7 (43%) were filled by women. Women did not occupy any operational positions in 2022.⁶⁴

Table 2: Gender composition of mine action operators in 2022⁶⁵

Operator	Proportion of women among total staff	Proportion of women in operational positions	Proportion of women in managerial positions
DCA	27%	27%	54%
DRC	19%	19%	25%
HALO*	10%	43%	0%

* HALO's figures concern only national staff.

56 Email from Col. Adel Elatwi, LibMAC, 22 April 2021.
57 "Demining: Libyan women venture into the fields of death", *Deutsche Welle*, 10 March 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3QpAyVz>.
58 Email from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 20 April 2021.
59 Emails from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 1 April 2022 and 17 March 2023.
60 Emails from Alessandro Di Giusto, DRC, 7 March 2022; and Anna Salvari, DRC, 26 June 2023.
61 Email from Anna Salvari, DRC, 2 April 2023.
62 Email from Anna Salvari, DRC, 26 June 2023.
63 Email from Zita Andrassy, HALO, 27 February 2022.
64 Emails from Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.
65 Emails from Anna Salvari, DRC, 26 June 2023; Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023; and Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 17 March 2023.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

LibMAC receives technical support for the IMSMA from the GICHD and UNMAS. With support of both organisations, LibMAC's transition from IMSMA New Generation (NG) to IMSMA Core, which started in 2020,⁶⁶ was completed in August 2023.⁶⁷ All EORE, EOD, and victim assistance data were expected to be fully migrated by the end of May 2023. HALO's EOD work, which began in July 2023, will be reported to the IMSMA Core database. The remaining activities will follow the same process by the end of the 2023.⁶⁸ It is hoped that this transition leads to an improvement in the quality of mine action data.

IMSMA is accessible to clearance organisations and data collection forms are reported to be consistent and enable collection of necessary data.⁶⁹ According to HALO, software user-friendliness could be improved, especially with the shift towards IMSMA Core. This transition should allow all actors to view the entirety of data in the form of online maps, which should allow more quality checks of the information. While IMSMA NG did not support the collection of mechanical clearance data, the change to IMSMA Core is expected to enable this type of activity to be added to the clearance form. LibMAC promised to organise a workshop to finalise adding

mechanical clearance data to the IMSMA database, which requires an operational solution and not on a technical one.⁷⁰

Both HALO and DCA agree that the IMSMA database is largely reliable, accurate, and up to date. DCA reported that LibMAC lacks resources to ensure or improve the quality of data as only one person works on IMSMA. Some concerns related to the quality of data from the source (i.e. the calculation of direct beneficiaries, the reporting on ERW-related scrap during spot tasks). In addition, some data, such as on specific land use, are not always available because the previous IMSMA NG system did not consider it as a minimum reporting.⁷¹ Data is made available in the system three or four days after its reporting.⁷² According to HALO, organisations submit their information in a timely fashion. Certain entities, however, that are not working under the MoD do not submit their reports regularly, if at all.⁷³

Mine action data are checked by both the implementing organisation and LibMAC. Ongoing NTS remains critical to ensure that data are up to date. Otherwise, there is a risk that data maintenance is perceived as a static and not a dynamic activity.⁷⁴

PLANNING AND TASKING

There is no national mine action strategy for Libya.⁷⁵ In April 2021, LibMAC reported it had a short-term national operational plan.⁷⁶ LibMAC prioritises survey and clearance operations based on humanitarian, security, and development indicators,⁷⁷ and is responsible for issuing task orders. DCA considers that LibMAC is doing its best to issue task orders in a timely and effective manner within its limited capacity and resource, and reported that task orders were mostly received in a timely manner in 2022.⁷⁸ According to HALO, the issuance of clearance and/or survey task orders varied in timeliness depending on the geographic location and security situation at the time of request.⁷⁹

DCA continues to clear ERW in support of electricity and water supply facilities, and to survey and clear schools, medical facilities, and housing so that internally displaced people (IDPs) can return safely. This approach is in line with the "triple nexus" approach, which seeks to link humanitarian action to development projects as well as to contribute to stability and peace.⁸⁰ Mine action operators liaise with the municipal councils, community leaders, and security providers to build a picture of priority areas for survey and follow-on clearance. Operators then apply for task orders through LibMAC. Due to the small number of clearance teams and personnel in Libya, the priority is responding to call-outs, particularly from returning IDPs. Therefore, much of the clearance is reactive EOD spot tasks in order to minimise an immediate threat to life.⁸¹

HALO responds to the tasks as issued by LibMAC.⁸² HALO's prioritisation criteria for NTS are: number of conflict events, population density, critical infrastructure, duration of active fighting in a given area, recorded mines removed, and explosive ordnance accidents. For technical survey (TS) and clearance, HALO's criteria are: access, land use, number of beneficiaries, and direct evidence of contamination.⁸³

66 Email from Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 14 April 2020.

67 Interview with Ahmad Al-Shibani, LibMAC, Geneva, 21–22 June 2023; and email from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 23 August 2023.

68 Emails from Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May and 16 August 2023.

69 Emails from Catherine Smith, HI, 12 March 2019; and Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

70 Email from Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

71 Email from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 17 March 2023.

72 Ibid.

73 Email from Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

74 Ibid.

75 Email from Col. Adel Elatwi, LibMAC, 22 April 2021.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

78 Emails from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 1 April 2022 and 17 March 2023.

79 Email from Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

80 Email from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 1 April 2022.

81 Emails from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 20 April 2021 and 17 March 2023.

82 Emails from Zita Andrassy, HALO, 27 February 2022; and Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

83 Emails from Lucy Reeve, HALO, 23 April 2021; and Zita Andrassy, HALO, 27 February 2022.

While the above considerations are integrated in the assessment of contamination impact, survey, and community liaison activities, final decisions on task prioritisation fall to LibMAC, which ultimately issues task orders based on its set of criteria, plans, and engagement with local authorities.⁸⁴

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

There is no national mine action legislation in Libya, but national mine action standards (LibMAS), in Arabic and English, have been elaborated with the support of the GICHD and UNMAS, and were approved by the GNA in August 2017. The LibMAS are available on the LibMAC website.⁸⁵ According to international clearance operators, the NMAS are sufficient and aligned to the IMAS.⁸⁶ Further, while the Arabic version of the LibMAS is largely accurate, the English version misstates the issue of liability after land release, which remained uncorrected in 2022.⁸⁷ The LibMAS have not been updated since being first approved in 2017. UNMAS helped LibMAC to develop the Libyan mine action standard on EORE in 2022.⁸⁸

LibMAC and HALO are collaborating on how best to establish land release principles for urban clearance.⁸⁹ The mechanical clearance NMAS were likely to be updated in the last quarter of 2023.⁹⁰

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Table 3: Operational survey capacities deployed in 2022⁹¹

Operator	NTS teams	Total NTS personnel	TS teams	Total TS personnel	Comments
3F ⁹²	2	6	0	0	
DCA	6	39	6	39	The 39 personnel (multi-task teams), are the same as the NTS and clearance team.
DRC	2	6	0	0	One team leader and two surveyors per team.
HALO	2	7	1	4	Four TS personnel are also clearance personnel.
Libya Peace Organisation ⁹³	2	6	0	0	
Totals	14	64	7	43	

84 Emails from Alessandro Di Giusto, DRC, 7 March 2022; Zita Andrassy, HALO, 27 February 2022; and Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

85 LibMAC website, accessed 20 May 2022 at: <https://bit.ly/3ldhvx2>. Report of the Secretary-General on UNSMIL, UN doc. S/2018/140, 12 February 2018, p. 12; and UNMAS, "Programmes: Libya", accessed 14 May 2022 at: <http://bit.ly/31tU1tB>.

86 Emails from Catherine Smith, HI, 12 March 2019; Nicholas Torbet, HALO, 14 April 2020; and Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

87 Emails from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 1 April 2022 and 17 March 2023.

88 Email from Sharmeela Aminath, UNMAS, 16 March 2023.

89 Emails from Zita Andrassy, HALO, 27 February and 19 June 2022.

90 Email from Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

91 Emails from Col. Adel Elatwi, LibMAC, 22 April 2021; Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 17 March 2023; Anna Salvani, DRC, 2 April 2023; and Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

92 This information was last updated in April 2021, and might not be up to date as at May 2023.

93 Ibid.

Table 4: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2022⁹⁴

Operator	Manual clearance teams	Total deminers*	Mechanical assets/machines	Comments
DCA	5	39	3	
HALO	1	4	4	In mid 2022, one machine was transferred to 3F.
Totals	6	43	7	

* Excluding team leaders, medics, and drivers.

Demining has been conducted by the army engineers, a police unit, and the Ministry of Interior's national safety authority (NSA), also known as Civil Defence.⁹⁵ Military engineers reportedly lack mine detectors and are working with basic tools.⁹⁶ The NSA is mandated to conduct EOD in civilian areas.⁹⁷ These institutions liaise with LibMAC but are not tasked or accredited by them, nor do they provide clearance reports to the Centre.⁹⁸ LibMAC contacted all operators in May 2023 with instructions to shift EOD-focused activities to systematic release of land.⁹⁹

The national operator, Free Fields Foundation (3F), was operational in 2022, working with DRC,¹⁰⁰ and is accredited to conduct clearance and EOD tasks.¹⁰¹ In 2020, LibMAC reported having accredited two additional local operators: The Safety Trust NGO (*Al-Thiqa al-Amna*) and the Communication NGO (*Al-Tawasol*).¹⁰² Another national operator, the Libyan Peace Organisation, was present in Libya in 2022, and collaborated with DRC on EOD, EORE, and NTS.¹⁰³

DCA conducts risk education, clears residential, commercial, education, medical, and agricultural sites of mines and ERW, and provides training in clearance, search, and EOD.¹⁰⁴ Now in its thirteenth year of working in Libya, DCA has offices in Benghazi, Misrata, Sirte, and Tripoli, and is accredited to conduct clearance and EOD.¹⁰⁵ In 2022, DCA had part of its funding discontinued, which led to it losing one multi-task team, its all-female survey team, and one clearance team. Capacity was expected to continue unchanged in 2023.¹⁰⁶

DRC has been set up in Libya since 2011 and has two offices in Benghazi and Tripoli. Its offices in Misrata and Zwara were closed at the end of 2020, and its Sabha office closed in December 2021, resulting in the reduction of the number of EOD, NTS, and EORE teams.¹⁰⁷ DRC established a new EOD team in Tripoli in September 2022. In 2022, DRC conducted NTS and continued to partner with the Libyan Peace Organisation. In 2023, DRC was losing one NTS team as donors prioritised EORE and EOD.¹⁰⁸

HALO been present in Libya since November 2018, and has offices in Misrata, Sirte, and Tripoli. HALO's main operation focused on mechanical clearance in a Misrata ammunition storage area where it found CMR in 2022. HALO accredited two TS teams and one EOD team in 2021. The EOD team was deployed to support the clearance activities in Misrata in 2022. HALO also conducted NTS in Misrata in February 2022, and in Sirte between January and March 2022.¹⁰⁹ HALO's programme in Libya saw a decrease in the number of survey and clearance teams in 2022 compared to 2021. Going forward, HALO expects further reductions in the numbers of clearance personnel due to donor cuts. HALO has used the T Jet (a pyrotechnic torch used for low-order deflagration of UXO) in Libya in 2022.¹¹⁰

In 2022, LibMAC personnel opened 130 tasks mostly for NTS by international and local NGOs in Benghazi, Sirte, Tawargha, and Tripoli. In addition, LibMAC personnel conducted 134 quality control (QC) and quality assurance (QA) missions. LibMAC recorded 90 finished tasks during 2022.¹¹¹

94 Emails from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 1 April 2022; and Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

95 Interview with Brig. Turjoman, LibMAC, in Geneva, 10 January 2017.

96 "Mines still claim legs and lives in Libya's Benghazi, months after war ceased", *Reuters*, 21 January 2018.

97 Email from Diek Engelbrecht, UNMAS Libya, 20 July 2013.

98 Email from Col. Adel Elatwi, LibMAC, 22 April 2021.

99 Interview with Ahmad Al-Shibani, LibMAC, in Geneva, 21 June 2023.

100 Emails from Alessandro Di Giusto, DRC, 7 March 2022; and Samir Becirovic, UNMAS, 2 March 2022.

101 Email from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 1 April 2022.

102 Email from Col. Adel Elatwi, LibMAC, 22 April 2021.

103 Email from Anna Salvani, DRC, 2 April 2023.

104 DCA website, accessed 3 May 2021, at: <http://bit.ly/2vYatmb>.

105 Emails from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 1 April 2022 and 17 March 2023.

106 Email from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 17 March 2023.

107 Email from Alessandro Di Giusto, DRC, 7 March 2022.

108 Email from Anna Salvani, DRC, 2 April 2023.

109 Emails from Zita Andrassy, HALO, 27 February 2022; and Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

110 Email from Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

111 ITF, "Annual Report 2022", p. 143.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

According to data provided by international operators, 25,507m² was cancelled and released in 2022 through NTS. No mined area was released through TS or clearance in 2022, and no AP mines were destroyed.¹¹² DRC disposed of seven AV mines during spot tasks.¹¹³ HALO destroyed 259 items of UXO in 2022.¹¹⁴ The national authorities and/or operators have been conducting NTS and EOD in 2022 as reported by the international mine action stakeholders, but the results of these surveys have not been shared by LibMAC.

UNMAS has claimed that EOD spot tasks and BAC teams removed or destroyed 27,478 explosive items, of which 66% were projectiles and rockets, and the rest were grenades, aircraft bombs, mines, and small arms ammunition.¹¹⁵ It is not known how many of these, if at all, were AP mines.

SURVEY IN 2022

DRC reported releasing 25,507m² AP mined land through NTS in Al Sabri (Benghazi) in 2022.¹¹⁶ International operators did not report releasing AP mined area through TS in Libya in 2022.¹¹⁷

CLEARANCE IN 2022

There was no clearance of AP mined area in Libya by international operators in 2022.¹¹⁸ DRC destroyed seven AV mines during spot tasks.¹¹⁹ HALO reported destroying 259 items of UXO in 2022.¹²⁰ DCA removed and destroyed 3,670 items of UXO. A total of 1.6km² of UXO-contaminated land was cleared and released back into socio-economic use.¹²¹ International operators were advised by the national authorities, UNMAS, and LibMAC to report encountered IEDs for subsequent removal by the national police or army personnel.¹²² UNMAS reported that EOD spot tasks and BAC teams removed or destroyed 27,478 explosive items in 2022, mainly projectiles and rockets.¹²³ It is not known how many of these, if at all, were AP mines.

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LibMAC describes the following challenges to implementation of mine action operations: the high level of contamination; ongoing conflict and the continued presence of Islamic State; the difficulty in convincing displaced persons to delay their return until the ERW threat is addressed; security and access to priority areas; the limited ERW and EOD capacity in Libya; the vast geographical area; and limited governmental and international support.¹²⁴ The strengthening of LibMAC as a mine action coordination entity in Libya continues to be needed, supported by efforts to build its capacity and enhance its resources.

112 Emails from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 17 March 2023; Anna Salvati, DRC, 2 April 2023; and Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

113 Email from Anna Salvati, DRC, 2 April 2023.

114 Email from Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

115 Email from Sharmeela Aminath, UNMAS, 16 March 2023.

116 Email from Anna Salvati, DRC, 2 April 2023.

117 Emails from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 17 March 2023; Anna Salvati, DRC, 2 April 2023; and Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

118 Ibid.

119 Email from Anna Salvati, DRC, 2 April 2023.

120 Email from Charles Fowle, HALO, 5 May 2023.

121 Email from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 23 August 2023.

122 Email from Graeme Ogilvie, DCA, 1 April 2022.

123 Email from Sharmeela Aminath, UNMAS, 16 March 2023.

124 PowerPoint presentation by Brig. Turjoman, LibMAC, UN National Programme Directors' Meeting, Geneva, 8 February 2017.

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: MASSIVE
(NO CREDIBLE FIGURE)**

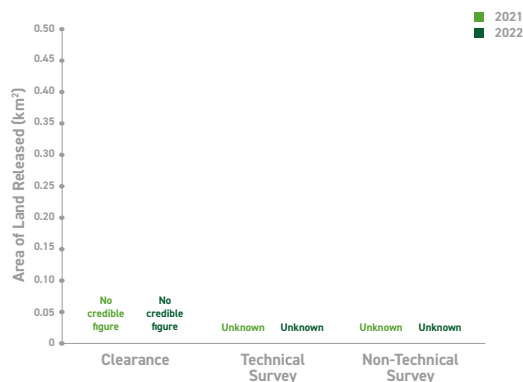
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022
**NO CREDIBLE
FIGURE**

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

34

(NATIONAL AUTHORITY DATA)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Morocco should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Morocco should clear anti-personnel (AP) mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- Morocco should continue to submit voluntary APMBC Article 7 reports. It should provide greater detail on the extent of mine contamination and report on progress in land release according to the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).
- Morocco should establish a timeline for completing clearance of all mined areas on territory under its jurisdiction or control.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- No national mine action authority
- No national mine action centre

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Royal Moroccan Army (RMA)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mission for the Referendum in the Western Sahara (MINURSO) Mine Action

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The exact extent of contamination from mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) in Morocco, including the area under its control in Western Sahara, on the west side of the Berm,¹ is not known. In the past, Morocco declared, highly improbably, that a total of 120,000km² of area was contaminated,² although the threat is undoubtedly massive. According to the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), of the 2,700km-long Berm, 1,465km is significantly contaminated with landmines and ERW on both sides.³

Morocco's contamination is mostly a result of the conflict of 1975–91 between the Royal Moroccan Army (RMA) and Polisario Front forces over Western Sahara. Morocco acknowledges that it had laid mine belts during the construction of the Berm, and states that the mines were laid before the entry into force of the APMBC, and that mined areas are surveyed and mapped. Morocco has pledged to clear the mines it laid as soon as the conflict over Western Sahara is “definitely settled”.⁴

Morocco reported in its latest voluntary APMBC Article 7 transparency report (covering 2022) that the following provinces were mine affected: Akka, Aousserd, Assa-Zag, Boujdour, Dakhla, Laayoune, Smara, Tantan, and Tata.⁵ In its Article 7 report covering 2018, Morocco had reported that 10 localities within these provinces contain mines: Bir Anzarane, Douiek, Gerret Auchfaght, Gor Lbard, Gor Zalagat, Hagounia, Idiriya, Imlili, Itgui, and Tarf Mhkinza. It claimed these contain contamination as the result of “haphazard” mine-laying across the south of Morocco by the Polisario front in 1975–91.⁶ In its Article 7 reports covering 2020 and 2021, Morocco also reported suspected mined areas in its far eastern corner bordering Algeria in the El-Melias corridor in Figuig province.⁷ It is not clear when these mines were emplaced or by whom, but media reports indicate that they were laid in the 1990s as a result of border tensions between the two neighbouring States.⁸

Since 1975, Morocco has registered 2,743 mine and ERW victims, of whom 819 were killed. In 2022 alone, five persons were killed and 21 injured as a result of mine and ERW-related accidents.⁹

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Morocco does not have a national mine action authority or a mine action centre. The RMA carries out demining, which, it has reported, is conducted in collaboration with MINURSO.¹⁰

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known what environmental policies and practices Morocco adheres to, if any, but it has reported that “normal safety and environmental protection standards have been followed” in clearing mines and ERW.¹¹

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

It is not known which information management system is used in Morocco for recording mine action data.

PLANNING AND TASKING

It is not known how Morocco plans and prioritises its demining operations.

1 The Berm refers to the defensive wall built by Morocco in 1982–87 to secure the north-western corner of Western Sahara. It is constituted of earthen walls some 2,700 kilometres long and three metres in height. Morocco controls the area located on the west side of the Berm.

2 Statement of Morocco, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 25 May 2009.

3 MINURSO website, Mine Action, accessed 28 July 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3BmYLnM>.

4 Statement of Morocco, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

5 Voluntary Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

6 Voluntary Article 7 Report (covering 2018), Form D. Idiriya is spelled “Jdiriya” in the 2018 report. From 2015, the area of Glibat Jadiane, which had been listed as contaminated in earlier years, was no longer included on the list of mined areas.

7 Voluntary Article 7 Reports (covering 2020 and 2021), Form D.

8 “Figuig, mine disposal leads to rumours of conflict on the eastern borders”, *Chouf TV* (Arabic), 20 February 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3rIWGvO>.

9 Voluntary Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form G.

10 Voluntary Article 7 Report (covering 2018), Form D.

11 Ibid.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Morocco is not believed to have a gender policy in place for its demining operations.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

Morocco appears to use only manual demining techniques, which is not efficient given the size and type of terrain being released.

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Morocco has not adopted national mine action legislation or standards, but has reported that "normal safety and environmental protection standards have been respected" in the clearance of mines and ERW¹² and that demining by the RMA conforms to international rules and techniques.¹³

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

All mine clearance in Morocco is conducted by the RMA. In June 2022, Morocco indicated that 13 demining units had been continuously deployed each year since 2007 until March 2023, and that 1,258 limited interventions were undertaken since 2014 through to 31 March 2023.¹⁴ By "limited interventions" it is understood that Morocco refers to explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) spot tasks.

In 2010, Morocco had declared it had employed 10,000 deminers, although only 400 detectors were at their disposal at that time.¹⁵ This raised serious questions both about the procedures being used and the accuracy of clearance figures being reported, which are not credible. Morocco reports that demining takes places in the framework of a vast annual programme that aims to release suspected areas of contamination.¹⁶

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Morocco has not reported in detail on its release of mined areas in recent years, nor given any indication of implementing land release methodology. The figures it does provide are not credible with respect to physical clearance and should be taken as an indication of land released or declared as clear of contamination rather than land actually released by clearance.

In its voluntary Article 7 report covering 2022, Morocco reported "clearance" of a total area of 95.24km² with the destruction of 34 AP mines, 23 anti-vehicle (AV) mines, and 174 items of ERW.¹⁷ In 2021, Morocco stated it had "cleared" 217km² and destroyed in the process 1,289 AP mines, 281 AV mines, and 564 items of ERW.¹⁸ Neither claim for the extent of physical clearance is credible.

Morocco reported that as at 31 March 2023, a total of 6,161km² of contaminated land has been cleared. During the process, 49,391 AP mines, 47,475 anti-vehicle mines, and 21,886 items of ERW have been destroyed. The year starting from which these figures are reported was not made clear, but it was understood to be since 1975.¹⁹

An eight-year view into Morocco's reporting on its clearance outputs (see Table 1) reveals a big fluctuation in the number of AP mines destroyed per year, with two peaks of over one thousand AP mines destroyed in two years (2015 and 2021).

¹² Voluntary Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

¹³ Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form B.

¹⁴ Statement of Morocco, APMBC Intersessional meeting, Geneva, June 2022; and Information Leaflet, *Strong Commitment for Population's Safety – All Against Antipersonnel Mines and Remnants of War* (covering 1975 to 2023), Kingdom of Morocco, undated.

¹⁵ Statement of Morocco, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 23 June 2010.

¹⁶ CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form B.

¹⁷ Voluntary Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

¹⁸ Voluntary Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

¹⁹ Information leaflet, *Strong Commitment for Population's Safety – All Against Antipersonnel Mines and Remnants of War* (covering 1975 to 2023), Kingdom of Morocco, undated.

Table 1: Eight-year summary of Morocco's reported AP mine clearance

Year	Area released (km ²)	AP mines destroyed
2022	95	34
2021	217	1,289
2020	171	22
2019	301	23
2018	313	232
2017	232	69
2016	283	288
2015	275	1,345
Total	1,887	3,302

In his October 2022 report to the UN Security Council on the situation in Western Sahara, the UN Secretary-General indicated that the RMA had reported the release of 134km² of land west of the Berm between 1 September 2021 and 31 July 2022, with the destruction of 770 items of ERW and 52 AP and anti-tank mines.²⁰ This compares with 145km² of land west of the Berm reported by the RMA as released between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021, with the destruction of 1,104 items, including 31 landmines.²¹ No further details were provided. MINURSO continues to promote enhanced cooperation between the RMA and MINURSO mine action.²²

Morocco initiated major demining efforts in 2007, following an increase in the number of incidents. In April 2016, Morocco reported plans to clear mines from along the Berm. The units to be deployed were reportedly those trained by the US Marines.²³

Morocco has stated on numerous occasions its determination to comply voluntarily with the provisions of the APMBC, including completion of stockpile destruction of AP mines and demining. It has submitted annual voluntary APMBC Article 7 reports over the past decade and attends APMBC meetings as an observer. It has not, however, indicated when it might complete mine clearance. In a statement at the APMBC Intersessional Meetings in June 2023, Morocco repeated its commitment to the APMBC.²⁴ It indicated that its accession to the APMBC is a strategic objective, which has been "momentarily delayed" pending "the resolution of the regional dispute over the Moroccan Sahara".²⁵

20 Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara, UN doc. S/2022/733, 1 October 2022, para. 48.

21 Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara, UN doc. S/2021/843, 1 October 2021, para. 46.

22 Ibid.

23 "Morocco to Deploy Highly Qualified Team to Remove Sahara Landmines", *Sahara Question*, 25 March 2016, at: <http://bit.ly/2Llu9d4>.

24 Statement of Morocco, Intersessional Meetings, 22 June 2023.

25 Statement of Morocco, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 23 June 2010.

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: UNKNOWN

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022
UNKNOWN

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022
UNKNOWN

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Myanmar made no concrete progress in 2022 towards the establishment of a fully functioning mine action programme. With the possibility to conduct technical survey, clearance, or explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) spot tasks stymied, humanitarian demining operators have been limited to non-technical survey (NTS), risk education, and victim assistance. A March 2023 resolution of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council called on the Myanmar military to halt all use of anti-personnel (AP) mines.¹

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Myanmar's armed forces and armed ethnic organisations should halt the use of AP mines, including victim-activated mines of an improvised nature.
- Myanmar should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Relevant authorities in Myanmar should grant permission to humanitarian mine action organisations to undertake surveys to identify and mark mined areas using conventional marking systems, particularly where returns of internally displaced persons (IDPs) are planned.
- Mine action non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and their implementing partners should develop standards for implementing and reporting permitted activities, including community-based assessments and NTS.

¹ Human Rights Council Resolution 52/31, adopted without a vote on 4 April 2023, operative para. 12.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT

- Department of Rehabilitation (DoR)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Tatmadaw (Army)
- Unspecified ethnic armed entities/non-State armed groups
- Unspecified non-government organisations

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- DanChurchAid (DCA)

- Danish Refugee Council Humanitarian and Disarmament and Peacebuilding Sector (DRC)
- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Humanity & Inclusion (HI)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Myanmar is heavily mined as a result of conflicts between the Tatmadaw (army) and numerous non-State armed groups (NSAGs) affiliated with ethnic minorities. The conflicts started after the nation's independence in 1948. AP mines, including those of an improvised nature, as well as other improvised explosive devices (IEDs) continue to be laid by government forces and NSAGs.² Mine use is reported to have accelerated since the military's February 2021 coup and the escalating conflict it has ignited across the country.³

There is no accurate estimate of the extent of mine contamination but in the years before the coup available data showed that nine of the fourteen states and regions were contaminated with landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW).⁴ Mine contamination was concentrated in the states bordering Bangladesh, China, and Thailand. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) monitoring of mine and ERW incidents found that most casualties in 2021 occurred in Shan and Kachin states in the north and east of the country, in the western state of Rakhine, and in the south-eastern Kayah and Magway states. Other states experiencing mine/ERW casualties included Bago, Chin, Kayah, Mon, Sagaing, and Tanintharyi.⁵ Since the coup, analysis of casualties suggests mine use has spread more widely.⁶ UNICEF data showed 40% of casualties in the first half of 2023 occurred in the central

Sagaing region, an area that was mostly peaceful before the coup but has since experienced fierce resistance to the military from the People's Defence Forces.⁷

The Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, established by the UN Human Rights Council, reported in September 2019 that northern Myanmar is "heavily contaminated with landmines" and that the parties to the conflict, including the Tatmadaw, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the Restoration Council of Shan state (RCSS, formerly referred to as the Shan State Army South (SSA-S), and the Shan State Progressive Party (SSPP, formerly referred to as the Shan State Army North (SSA-N)), all continued to emplace landmines and IEDs.⁸

In 2021 and 2022, the Tatmadaw was reported laying mines to protect infrastructure such as pipelines and telecommunications towers.⁹ The Tatmadaw was also reported laying landmines "on a massive scale" in Kayah state using mainly M-14 and MM-2 AP mines that are manufactured by Myanmar's military to protect military positions and to lay in areas from which troops withdrew. Troops were also said to be placing mines around entrances to houses and on paths to rice fields.¹⁰

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Myanmar has pursued a number of options for setting up a national mine action authority (NMAA) since 2012

but none had reached a conclusion before the military coup in February 2021. The Tatmadaw established a State

2 Amnesty International, "Myanmar: Military's use of banned landmines in Kayah state amounts to war crimes", 20 July 2022 at: <https://bit.ly/3FBrbLD>; and "Myanmar: In reverse: Deteriorating Human Rights Situation, Report, January–February 2021, p. 8, at: <https://bit.ly/3Sd74er>.

3 See, e.g., United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Myanmar Emergency Update: Key displacement figures and, 6 March 2023; and R. Ayisi, "Children pay a heavy price as more landmines are laid," UNICEF, 4 April 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3tQFuJE>

4 Landmine Monitor, Myanmar Burma Mine Ban Policy, Last updated 12 November 2019, at: <https://bit.ly/2Trv0m>.

5 UNICEF, Myanmar Landmines/ERW Incidents Information (2021), Factsheet (covering January–December 2021), at: <https://uni.cf/3cgxhWW>.

6 V. Milko and D. Rising, "I just want my legs back: Myanmar landmine casualties soar", *Associated Press*, 19 February 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/40b0PrW>

7 UNICEF, Overview of incidents and casualties nationwide in 2023 (January–June), at: <https://bit.ly/45pOZ0o>.

8 "Report of the Detailed Findings of the Independent International Fact Finding Mission on Myanmar", UN doc. A/HRC/42/CRP.5, 16 September 2019, pp. 155–58.

9 See, e.g., "Myanmar junta lays landmines around Chinese-backed pipelines", *The Irrawaddy*, 21 January 2022; at: <https://bit.ly/3Q5FYTX>; and G. Moeller, "Myanmar military lays landmines around Telenor's telecoms towers", *ScandAsia*, 8 November 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3s637gV>.

10 Amnesty International, "Myanmar: Military's use of banned landmines in Kayah State amounts to war crimes", 20 July 2022.

Administration Council (SAC) to lead the government but has not set up a mechanism for managing or coordinating mine action.

The government first set up a Myanmar Mine Action Centre under the Myanmar Peace Centre (MPC) in 2012 with support from Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), but the centre was never fully staffed. The MPC was dissolved at the end of March 2016 and replaced by a National Reconciliation and Peace Centre, which reported to the then head of government, State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi.¹¹ In 2019 and early 2020, Myanmar was making progress towards establishing an NMAA, which is needed to strengthen its humanitarian mine action programme. The government told the Fourth APMBC Review Conference in November 2019 that "Myanmar will as soon as feasible establish the needed national legislation to establish a national mine action authority."¹²

Myanmar held an international workshop on how to establish an NMAA to lead and manage a humanitarian mine action programme in Nay Pyi Taw in October 2019, attended by the Tatmadaw, humanitarian mine action NGOs in Myanmar, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC), the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), and several ambassadors.¹³ Discussions focused on which ministries would form part of a future NMAA and the mechanisms for establishing the Authority.¹⁴ An interministerial meeting on 3 January 2020, attended by 14 different ministries including the Ministry of Defence, agreed in principle to establish an NMAA.¹⁵

The government then created an interministerial task force in 2020 to work towards setting up the NMAA.¹⁶ Myanmar informed the Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC in November 2020 that it had set up a Mine Action Working Group in May 2020 as "the first step towards formulating a National Strategy and Plan of Action for mine clearance".¹⁷ However, momentum was lost with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting shift in government priorities, and was further eclipsed by government elections in November 2020 and the February 2021 coup.¹⁸

The operating context for humanitarian demining organisations—as for humanitarian and civil society organisations in general—has become increasingly challenging. A Department of Rehabilitation (DoR) created in 2018 gradually took over responsibility for overseeing mine

action operators and their activities. Operators found the DoR cooperative and engaged.¹⁹ As the department charged with implementing the government's "National Strategy on Resettlement of IDP Return and Closure of IDP Camps", it was said to be committed to acquiring approvals needed to allow humanitarian demining to begin, but it was also felt to lack the capacity needed to tackle national-level issues such as creating an NMAA and mine action legislation. In November 2020, the DoR's Director General announced during a mine risk working group (MRWG) meeting that it had finalised the vision and terms of reference of a working committee that was to be set up prior to the establishment of an NMAA and had submitted it to the President office for consideration. No concrete results emerged by the time the Tatmadaw took over the government in February 2021. Since then, operators have followed a policy of non-engagement with the DoR.²⁰

Meetings of the MRWG also came to a halt after February 2021. The SAC expressed interest in establishing a new MRWG in April 2022 but engagement between the government and humanitarian actors has remained largely frozen and no further action followed on the issue.²¹ Movement restrictions, the proliferation of military checkpoints, deteriorating communications and additional controls imposed by a Registration of Associations Law introduced in October 2022, in addition to deteriorating security, have complicated the operating environment.

In response to mounting conflict and casualties, UNICEF led the creation of a Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MAAoR) in December 2021 "to ensure predictable, accountable and effective responses to the threat posed by landmines and explosive remnants of war in Myanmar" and to ensure that "action on mines is at the centre of humanitarian planning and responses."²² Demining organisations endorsed the terms of reference. The MA AoR met monthly in 2022, attended by demining organisations, NGOs, and UN humanitarian agencies, reviewing developments, displacement trends and available data. Meetings were co-chaired by Mines Advisory Group (MAG) in the first six months with the position due to rotate every half-year between international and national organisations every six months. Sub-national coordinating bodies were set up for Rakhine state, the South East (Kayin, Mon, and Tarintharyi states), and Kachin state.²³

At the Fourth APMBC Review Conference in November 2019, Myanmar acknowledged that mine action "is a precondition for safe return and resettlement of IDPs, and sustainable

11 R. Fasth and P. Simon, "Mine Action in Myanmar", *Journal of Mine Action*, Issue 19.2 (July 2015).

12 Statement of Myanmar, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 25–29 November 2019.

13 Ibid.; and emails from Bekim Shala, Country Director, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), 13 April 2020; and Geoff Moynan, Programme Manager, HALO, 8 May 2020; and "Multi-stakeholder workshop on establishing a National Mine Action Authority in Myanmar", ARMAC, 30 October 2019, at: <http://bit.ly/2An5L6H>.

14 Email from Bekim Shala, MAG, 13 April 2020.

15 Interview with Win Naing Tun, Department of Rehabilitation, MSWRR, Geneva, 14 February 2020; and email from Kyaw Lin Htut, Programme Manager, NPA, 3 April 2020.

16 Interview with Win Naing Tun, Department of Rehabilitation, MSWRR, Geneva, 14 February 2020; and email from Hilde Jørgensen, Programme Manager – Humanitarian Mine Action, NPA, 27 May 2021.

17 Statement of Myanmar, Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties (18MSP), Geneva 16–20 November 2020.

18 Email from Hilde Jørgensen, NPA, 27 May 2021.

19 Email from Liam Harvey, Programme Manager, DRC, 21 April 2020.

20 Email from Matthew Walsh, Head of Humanitarian Response and Mine Action, DCA, 22 April 2021.

21 Email from mine action stakeholders, August 2022.

22 UNICEF Myanmar Country Office Situation Report No. 6, 5 August 2022.

23 Email from Kim Warren, Coordinator, MA AoR, 11 August 2022, zoom interview, 12 August 2022.

and durable solutions." It declared that the government was "finding practical ways to move forward to closing the IDP camps using this national strategy" and that it aimed "to start humanitarian demining in non-conflict areas as a part of this camp closure strategy".²⁴ That position and any

consideration of how to put it into practice has been eclipsed by the February 2021 military coup and the subsequent intensification of conflict resulting in a sharp rise in the number of IDPs.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in Myanmar in order to minimise potential harm.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

International demining operators present in Myanmar, including DanChurchAid (DCA), The HALO Trust (HALO), MAG and NPA, pursued gender and diversity policies in relation to employment and inclusive consultation with communities.²⁵ It was not known how gender and diversity policies were applied in 2022.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Myanmar does not have a centralised mine action information management database. Data collection and information management were included as one of the six main priorities of the 2018–19 MRWG strategic plan.²⁶ It was hoped that a national database would be set up once an NMAA was established,²⁷ but that process stalled after the February 2021 coup.

The MA AoR ranked improving information management as a top objective and specifically creating a comprehensive mine victim information system. UNICEF continues to collect victim data from open sources which it releases quarterly but the number of victims is believed to significantly exceed that recorded in available data.²⁸

DCA in 2021 had a project with a component related to information management which sought to build partners to capacity to gather, input, manage, and analyse data and included plans to introduce and train them in the use of Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core. The project was delayed as a result of the coup.²⁹

PLANNING AND TASKING

In the absence of a national mine action authority, Myanmar has not formulated national or state level plans for mine action.

The MA AoR drew up a strategic plan setting out general goals for the sector, including improving information management, risk education, victim assistance, improving coordination, and developing advocacy to raise the profile of humanitarian demining operators in Myanmar and attract more funding for delivery of protection services. In the first six months of 2022, MA AoR members reportedly provided explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) to approximately 150,000 people, of whom 68,434 were children.³⁰

Operators are not tasked by central authorities but liaise with local communities in their operating areas to identify tasks.³¹ The location of armed clashes and displacement as well as results of community survey helped operators to determine priorities.³²

24 Statement of Myanmar, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 25–29 November 2019.

25 Emails from Matthew Walsh, DCA, 22 April 2021; Liam Harvey, DRC, 21 April 2021; Julie Utting, HALO, 10 May 2022; Sofia Raineri, Project Manager, Kachin and South-East Myanmar, MAG, 8 August 2022.

26 Email from Matthew Walsh, DCA, 22 April 2021.

27 Emails from Bekim Shala, MAG, 13 April 2020; Fabrice Vandeputte, HI, 8 May 2020; Kyaw Lin Htut, NPA, 3 April 2020; and Liam Harvey, DRC, 22 May 2020; and Matthew Walsh, DCA, 22 April 2021.

28 Email from Kim Warren, MA AoR, 11 August 2022; and Zoom interview, 12 August 2022.

29 Email from Matthew Walsh, DCA, 22 April 2021.

30 UNICEF Myanmar Country Office, Situation Report No. 6, 5 August 2022.

31 Email from Julie Utting, HALO, 10 May 2022.

32 Email from Sofia Raineri, MAG, 8 August 2022.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Historically, Myanmar has not developed national standards and therefore operators have followed the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and their own standard operating procedures (SOPs). Operators are not permitted to conduct technical survey, clearance, or EOD so the focus of the mine action sector is on developing standards for permitted activities.

Prior to the February 2021 military coup, tentative steps to develop national standards saw the drafting of a first national standard on marking, which was approved by the government in January 2020. A Non-technical Survey Working Group also worked on a standard for NTS in 2020, led by the Mine Action Advisor from the New Zealand

Embassy,³³ but the group had not finalised and approved the standard by the February 2021 coup which suspended discussions on national standards.

The civilian-led government in office in 2018 agreed that physical marking (with warning signs) and fencing should be included as part of NTS³⁴ but implementation has been patchy. It also approved marking of polygons, though local authorities were also involved in the approval process.³⁵ Circumstances prevailing after the coup, including increased hostilities, the junta's crackdown on civil society and humanitarian programmes, and increased use of mines by parties to the conflict left little space for developing humanitarian mine action.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Five international demining organisations (DCA, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), HALO, MAG, and NPA) have offices in Yangon and some provincial locations. Demining organisations are not permitted to conduct technical survey or clearance and therefore have concentrated on building up NTS, risk education, and community liaison. The level of activity operators can undertake in Myanmar has become unclear due to visa restrictions and lack of clarity from national authorities over the scope and implementation of an Organisation Registration Law introduced in October 2022. This law carries severe penalties for non-compliance.³⁶

DCA works entirely through local partner organisations in Myanmar. DCA had around 15 formal partners in 2020, the last year for which it provided information, and supported a number of other small civil society organisations (CSOs) implementing risk education and victim assistance. Prior to February 2021, DCA also worked closely with the Departments of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation on EORE activities. As at April 2021, DCA hoped to be able to provide NTS training and implementation support to its partner organisations though this was contingent on the political situation.³⁷

DRC had planned to start NTS in Kachin and Shan states in 2020 but it was prevented from proceeding, first by COVID-19 restrictions and then, after February 2021, by political-security circumstances. In partnership with national CSOs, DRC conducted community liaison and mapping activities continued throughout 2020, the last year for which it provided information, and started conducting risk education in Rakhine state.³⁸

HALO's Myanmar programme had a total staff of 52 in 2021, including seven risk education teams with thirty personnel, working from five locations in three of the most heavily impacted states. Visa restrictions obstructing entry of international staff resulted in remote management of the programme. In addition to a headquarters in Yangon, it had team locations established in Lashio (Shan state), Myitkyina (Kachin state) and in Hpa-an (Kayin). HALO teams are dual-trained for NTS and risk education but in view of COVID-19 restrictions focused on risk education in 2021. In response to escalating conflict in Myanmar after the February coup, HALO introduced additional emergency procedures in 2021 creating a more responsive security alert and monitoring system.³⁹

MAG had a total staff of 47 in 2022, including 9 risk education/community liaison teams with 25 people, an expansion from its 6 teams in 2021.⁴⁰ MAG was operating in Kayin and Tanintharyi at the start of 2021 and through partners in Kayah and Kachin states. After February, MAG suspended NTS but expanded operations to Chin state (Mindat, Paletwa, and Thantlang) concentrating on risk education and community-based assessments of the mine/explosive ordnance threats using community interviews to develop a sense of the scale of contamination.⁴¹ It added two project manager positions in 2022, one to run programmes in Rakhine State and the north-west with the other covering Kachin State and the south-east. MAG chaired a MA AoR for Rakhine State and the north-west which started meeting in October 2022. Meetings lapsed at the end of the year but restarted in 2023. MAG also supported an MA AoR meeting in the south-east.⁴²

33 Email from Liam Harvey, DRC, 21 April 2021.

34 Emails from Liam Harvey, DRC, 21 April 2021; and Matthew Walsh, DCA, 22 April 2021.

35 Emails from Bekim Shala, MAG, 16 August 2019 and 26 May 2020; and Kyaw Lin Htut, NPA, 21 August 2019.

36 See, e.g., R. L. Root, "New NGO law imposed by military in Myanmar threatens aid delivery", *Devex*, 15 February 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/46ESKQc>.

37 Emails from Matthew Walsh, DCA, 22 April and 29 June 2021.

38 Email from Liam Harvey, DRC, 21 April 2021.

39 Email from Julie Utting, HALO, 14 September 2023.

40 Email from Camille Marie-Regnault, Country Director, MAG, 15 May 2023.

41 Email from Sofia Raineri, MAG, 8 August 2022.

42 Email from Camille Marie-Regnault, MAG, 15 May 2023.

Since 2021, NPA also shifted the focus of its operations away from non-technical survey and preparing for land release to risk education and conflict protection and preparedness. In 2022, NPA closed down its Head Office in Yangon and field offices in Bago, Kachin, and Mon states but continued to work remotely on Conflict Preparedness and Protection (CPP) through its partners.⁴³

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Even before the February 2021 military coup, demining operators were not permitted to conduct technical survey, clearance, or EOD spot tasks by either the government or ethnic minority authorities. After the coup, operators largely limited their activities to community-based assessments of contamination and risk education. In 2023, donor support has mainly focused on risk education and victim assistance.⁴⁴

⁴³ Email from Felipe Atkins, Country Director, NPA, 1 September 2023.

⁴⁴ Email from Camille Marie-Regnault, MAG, 15 May 2023.

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION:
UNKNOWN BUT VERY HEAVY**

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

UNKNOWN

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

UNKNOWN

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- North Korea should cease all use of anti-personnel (AP) mines.
- North Korea should resume mine clearance in the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) as soon as possible and permit independent verification of clearance.
- North Korea should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- North Korea should clear AP mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- No functioning mine action programme

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Korean People's Army engineers

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The extent of North Korea's mine problem is not known. In 1998 North Korea admitted laying mines in the DMZ, a 1,000km² strip of land between the north and south of the peninsula believed to be one of the most densely contaminated areas in the world. Mined areas are reported to be marked and fenced but mines are also believed to have shifted as a result of flooding and landslides.¹

¹ Statement of North Korea, United Nations (UN) General Assembly, New York, 4 December 1998, UN doc. A/53/pv79, pp. 8-9; Choe Sang-Hun, "Koreas start clearing landmines at DMZ in effort to ease tensions", *The New York Times*, 1 October 2018.

North Korean soldiers are also reported to have laid BBM-82 fragmentation mines along parts of its 880km-long border with China in 2020 in order to deter and prevent people from illegally leaving the country or entry by people who might bring in COVID-19. Troops reportedly sustained injuries from mine detonations as they emplaced mines on the two provinces' border with China.²

North and South Korea completed clearance of the Joint Security Area (of the DMZ) in Panmunjom in October 2018 under an agreement on measures to ease tensions. Additional clearance was conducted in late 2018 around Arrowhead Hill (also known as Hill 281) in Cheolwon, Gangwon province, under a pilot, joint operations project to recover human

remains.³ South Korea reported clearing 158 mines (not disaggregated by type) and 2,410 items of unexploded ordnance around Arrowhead Hill in 2020.⁴

In April 2022, South Korea resumed demining operations in the Baekmagoji area of the DMZ. Operations had been suspended following threat of hostile action from North Korea in the border area.⁵ In November 2022, during a statement to the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties, South Korea reported it was "continuing with its mine clearing efforts, where possible, in a systemic and phased manner" and in line with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) but did not provide information on the where these activities were taking place.⁶

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

North Korea has no functioning mine action programme.

In September 2018, the North Korean and South Korean Ministers of Defence signed a military agreement, the Panmunjom declaration, which mandated North Korea, South Korea, and the United Nations Command (UNC) to "remove all mines in the Joint Security Area (of the DMZ) in Panmunjom within 20 days, beginning on October 1, 2018".⁷ Diplomacy intended to improve relations between North and South Korea in 2019 did not lead to any additional action.

Following a request from North Korea to the UNC, the Korean People's Army engineers received training on use of US detectors using ground-penetrating radar for tackling box mines.⁸ US army engineers trained South Korean army engineers who in turn provided the training to the Korean People's Army.⁹

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in North Korea in order to minimise potential harm.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

No clearance or land release is known to have occurred in 2022.

South Korean officials confirmed on 22 October 2018 that clearance of the Joint Security Area in Panmunjom by North and South Korea had been completed.¹⁰ Officials said North Korea had notified the government it had cleared 636 mines while South Korea found none.¹¹ At the request of the Korean People's Army, South Korean troops trained by the US Army cleared one area on the northern side of the Joint Security Area (JSA) that was heavily contaminated by box mines. Deminers used US-supplied Minehound dual-purpose detectors.¹² North Korean forces also reportedly cleared a 1.3km-long mine belt in the Arrowhead Hill region.¹³

Reviving tensions between North Korea and the United States in 2019 have held back further progress in demining.

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- 2 Sewon Kin, "Soldiers injured as North Korea deploys landmines at Sino-Korean border to stop escapees", *Radio Free Asia*, 22 October 2020; "N. Korea lays landmines in border areas to fend off coronavirus: NIS", *Yonhap*, 3 November 2020; Lee Chae Un, "Storm Corps trooper killed in landmine explosion on border with China", *Daily NK*, 10 November 2020.
 - 3 Song Young-moo and No Kwang Chol, "Agreement on the Implementation of the Historic Panmunjom Declaration in the Military Domain", National Committee on North Korea, 19 September 2018, Annex 2, p. 7, at: <http://bit.ly/2XXbuXd>; and "Korean leaders sign agreement for North Korea to take further steps to denuclearize", *ABC News*, 20 September 2018, at: <http://abc7.ws/2XZM0bq>.
 - 4 Jung Bitna, "Unearthed 143 remains of this year's Arrowhead Bill", *Yonhap News Agency*, 19 November 2020.
 - 5 Emails from Eum Soohong, KCBL, 3 and 11 April 2022.
 - 6 Statement of the Republic of Korea, 20MSP, 24 November 2022.
 - 7 "Agreement on the Implementation of the Historic Panmunjom Declaration in the Military Domain", 19 September 2018, Annex 2, p. 7; and "Korean leaders sign agreement for North Korea to take further steps to denuclearize", *ABC News*, 20 September 2018.
 - 8 Presentation by Col. J. P. Lloyd, Command Engineer, UNC, Side event, National Directors' Meeting, Geneva, 11 February 2020.
 - 9 Emails from Col. John P. Lloyd, UNC, and Maj. Mark S. Born, UNC, 14 April 2020.
 - 10 "Koreas finish removing land mines from border village", *Associated Press*, 22 October 2018, at: <http://bit.ly/2GhPFvn>.
 - 11 "Two Koreas Complete Mine Removal in JSA", *KBS World Radio*, 19 October 2018, at: <http://bit.ly/2XTl8Kk>; "Minister: N. Korea eliminated 636 mines from Panmunjom area", *Yonhap*, 12 November 2018, at: <http://bit.ly/2Nbv2Fc>.
 - 12 Emails from Col. John P. Lloyd, UNC; and Maj. Mark S. Born, UNC, 14 April 2020.
 - 13 PowerPoint presentation by Maj. Gen. (ret.) Han Cheol Ki, Side event, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 24 May 2019.

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: UNKNOWN

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

UNKNOWN

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

UNKNOWN

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Pakistan should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Pakistan should clear anti-personnel (AP) mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- Pakistan should report publicly on the extent and location of AP mined areas and prepare a plan for their clearance.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- No national mine action authority or centre

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Pakistani military engineering units
- Frontier Constabulary
- Police bomb disposal squad

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The extent of AP mine contamination in Pakistan is not known. Pakistan remains affected by mines and other explosive ordnance resulting from the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (1979–89) and three wars with India: in 1947, 1965, and 1971. Pakistan has also laid AP mines in front of its defended location in Pakistan-administered Kashmir.¹ More recent contamination results from the continuing conflicts in areas bordering Afghanistan, including, in particular, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

¹ Recent Landmine Use by India and Pakistan, Human Rights Watch Backgrounder, May 2002, at: <http://bit.ly/3srXtQz>, p. 4.

In 2019, Pakistan reiterated past statements that the country “at present faces no problem of uncleared mines since no mines have been laid by [the] Pakistan Army after escalation of 2001–2002 on Pakistan’s Eastern Border”.² Pakistan did not submit a Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report in 2021 or 2022. Previously it had stated that mines laid during the tensions in 2001–02 were all cleared and that no mines have since been laid.³

In 2018, Pakistan stated that non-state armed groups (NSAGs) have employed improvised explosive devices (IEDs) including mines during attacks.⁴ Pakistan reported that in 2019 a total of 349 IED attacks were “attempted by terrorists all over the country” and that 187 of these IEDs attacks had resulted in casualties.⁵ While in its CCW Protocol V on explosive remnants of war (ERW) Article 10 Report,

submitted in 2023 but covering 2020, the number of IED attacks had increased to 399 but Pakistan did not specify how many of these attacks resulted in casualties or how many involved the use of improvised mines.⁶

Use is attributed to a variety of militant groups, frequently referred to as “miscreants” in local media reports, but generally accepted to be constituent groups of the Tehrik-i-Taliban in Pakistan (TTP) and Balochi insurgent groups.⁷ In fact, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) and Fenix Insight databases, across Pakistan in 2018–22 casualties were reported from mines of an improvised nature laid by NSAGs, mines laid by troops along the Line of Control (LoC) between India and Pakistan, and from mines and other explosive hazards in South Waziristan (in an area that had been cleared and declared safe by the military).⁸

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Pakistan has no formal civilian mine action programme. Pakistani military engineering units have been responsible for mine clearance in conflict zones, while the Frontier Constabulary has conducted clearance in contaminated areas of Baluchistan, FATA, and other conflict zones in the North-West Frontier Province. According to a media report some clearance is also done by the police’s bomb disposal squad.⁹

LAND RELEASE IN 2022

There are no reports of formal survey or clearance of mined area in 2022 as in previous years in Pakistan. No target date has been set for the completion of mine clearance.

According to a media report, on 15 December 2018 an unnamed senior security official said that 22 demining teams were being formed by the Pakistani Army to defuse and remove IEDs and mines in the North Waziristan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and in the FATA. These deminers would be in addition to the reported 43 teams already working in the seven former tribal districts.¹⁰ In September 2019, the Pakistan Army said in a press release that it had 100 teams in the field removing landmines which it claimed were planted by the TTP, and that “much” of the area had been cleared of mines.¹¹

In a statement delivered at Fourth Review Conference of the APMBC in November 2019, Pakistan said that: “The

use of landmines is exclusively by the military for defence purposes”. Pakistan also acknowledged that although it was occurring at [a] “much lower scale now, Pakistan has itself been a victim of the use of landmines, including as IEDs by terrorists and non-state actors. Notwithstanding their use by terrorists. Pakistan security forces do not use mines for the maintenance of internal order and law enforcement in counter-terrorism operations.”¹² Pakistan also stated that: “Marking, fencing and monitoring of mined areas are common ways through which effective exclusion is accomplished by the Pakistan army.”¹³ In its Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report covering 2019 Pakistan said it had established a National Counter IED Forum with representatives from the Armed Forces, civil defence organisations, law enforcement agencies, and the police to develop a coordinated response to the IED threat and that capacity of these organisations was being built.¹⁴

2 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2019), Form B.

3 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2018), Form B; and Statement of Pakistan, Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties to the APMBC, 18–21 December 2017.

4 Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2018), Form E.

5 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2019), Form B.

6 Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2020), Form E.

7 *Landmine Monitor Report 2020*, at: <http://bit.ly/2Qw7lLy>, p. 14; and “Balochistan: One Pakistani soldier killed in landmine blast another wounded”, *Balochwama*, 6 April 2020, at: <http://bit.ly/3gltcjv>.

8 ACLED, “Filters: 01/01/2018–12/08/2023, Remote explosive/landmine/IED, Pakistan,” accessed: 12 August 2023 at: www.acleddata.com; and Fenix Insight database, at: <https://fenix-insight.online/>.

9 “Landmines recovered from Bajaur college”, *DAWN*, 22 January 2020, at: <http://bit.ly/2Qy2LfY>.

10 “Pakistan: IEDs and Continuous Haemorrhage – Analysis”, *Eurasia Review*, 24 July 2019, at: <http://bit.ly/31xt1qW>.

11 “People Effected by Landmines were Provided free treatment and training by Pak Army 2019”, *Pakistan Defence*, 19 September 2019, at: <http://bit.ly/3x6FjXW>.

12 Statement of Pakistan, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 29 November 2019.

13 Statement of Pakistan, Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 26 November 2018.

14 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2019), Form B.

In January 2020, the media reported clearance of 26 AP mines planted by unknown groups in a rural college in Khar Tehsil of Bajaur District in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, near the border with Afghanistan.¹⁵ In June 2021, it was reported by the media that security forces had completely cleared the Malakand and Bajaur districts of explosives, including landmines, while clearance operations in other districts of the FATA were in progress with more than 80 teams operating. Security forces had reportedly cleared 13km² in Mohmand; 8km² in Khyber; 5km² in Orakzai; 4km² in Kurram; 4km² in North Waziristan; and 15km² in South Waziristan tribal district.¹⁶

15 "Landmines recovered from Bajaur college", *DAWN*, 22 January 2020.

16 "Large area in ex-Fata yet to be de-mined", *DAWN*, 12 June 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/30dJ4TP>.

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: UNKNOWN

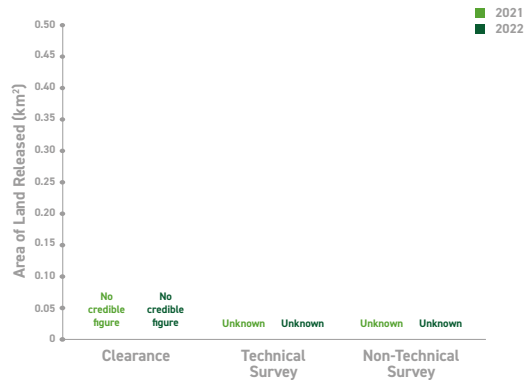
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

**NO CREDIBLE
FIGURE**

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

NOT REPORTED

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Russia should cease laying anti-personnel (AP) mines in Ukraine and accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Russia should clear AP mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT*

- No national mine action authority or civilian mine action programme
- International Mine Action Centre of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (IMAC), formerly known as the International Demining Action Centre. IMAC is a training base that co-ordinates Russia's mine action activities internationally. It is not a mine action centre as the term is generally understood in mine action.

NATIONAL OPERATORS*

- Military units of the Engineering Troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation

- Military Engineers of the Airborne Forces
- Federal Ministry of Defence Engineers
- Demining brigades of the Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES) specialised demining units (EMERCOM Demining, the "Leader" Center for Special Tasks, and Pyrotechnic Units)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- None

* IMAC, the Military Units of the Engineering Troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, EMERCOM, and EMERCOM Pyrotechnic Units are referred to in publicly available sources dated 2022. Other information here is based on information from earlier years. It is not known if it remains accurate.

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

There is no accurate estimate of the extent of mine contamination but Russia remains contaminated with mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) as a result of the Second World War, the two Chechen wars (1994–96 and 1999–2009), and armed conflicts in the Caucasian republics of Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria.

AP mines and anti-vehicle (AV) mines were used extensively in the two major conflicts in Chechnya. Estimates of the extent of contamination vary greatly because no systematic effort has been undertaken to assess the scope or impact of the problem. In 2010, Russia's deputy prime minister and presidential special envoy to the Caucasus, Aleksandr Khloponin, claimed that mines affected 14km² of land and posed a major obstacle to development.¹ In contrast, Chechen officials and human rights organisations have previously estimated that 245km² of land was mined, including 165km² of farmland and 73km² of woodland.²

In January 2017, a commander in the Russian Armed Forces reportedly told press agency Interfax that more than 100km² of land remained to be cleared in Chechnya, and a further

20km² in neighbouring Ingushetia.³ According to the online media report, areas cleared to date had nearly all been in lowland Chechnya and remaining mined area is in more mountainous terrain, complicating demining efforts.⁴

Area clearance in Chechnya and Ingushetia started in 2012; most of the explosive devices destroyed were the result of the two Chechen wars.⁵ In 2021 Russia's Ministry of Defence (MoD) stated that Russia had planned to clear approximately 160km² of agricultural and forest land, but that over the course of nine years, military personnel had exceeded this, surveying approximately 240km² and discovering and destroying more than 41,000 explosive items (mines, shells, grenades, and other ammunition), as well as improvised explosive devices (IEDs). It is not clear how much of this 240km² represents AP mined area.⁶

In 2020, EMERCOM reported that annually it clears about 40,000 items of ordnance remaining from the Second World War in Russia. The bulk of the items found are said to be unexploded bombs, artillery shells, grenades, and landmines.⁷

USE OF MINES IN UKRAINE SINCE 2014

At the APMBBC Intersessional Meetings in May 2019, Ukraine accused Russia of having used AP mines in its territory since 2014. According to Ukraine, these mines have been emplaced by Russia-backed illegal armed groups in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and it said that Russia has also put mines on the administrative border between Crimea and the rest of Ukraine.⁸ The mines allegedly used by separatist groups include PMN-1, PMN-2, PMN-4, POM-2R, OZM-72, MES type mines, and MON-50 mines with tripwire.⁹

In the most recent conflict in Ukraine, which began with Russia's invasion in February 2022, Russia has made very

widespread use of both AP and AV mines.¹⁰ Media reports indicate that Russian forces have scattered mines in a haphazard and disorganized fashion across civilian areas.¹¹ In April 2022, Ukraine's government said that its teams were removing thousands of explosive devices a day across the country, including from homes and businesses, and especially in the countryside.¹² Many Ukrainians have faced little choice but to try and remove the mines themselves; an extremely risky undertaking made far more deadly due to the lack of laying patterns and the widespread use of booby-traps and anti-lift devices by the Russian forces.¹³

1 "Medvedev emphasizes vision of Chechnya's future with personal visit", *Russia Today*, 14 June 2010, at: <https://bit.ly/33H4BgO>.

2 "MoE sappers to demine arable land in Chechnya", *Caucasian Knot*, 3 April 2009; "In Chechnya MES deminers destroyed 25 explosive devices", *Caucasian Knot*, 5 October 2009; and "Human rights activists: 25,000 hectares of Chechen territory are still mined", *Caucasian Knot*, 7 May 2008, at: <https://bit.ly/46Hy6z3>.

3 "Landmine threat in Chechnya still prevalent", *OC Media*, 23 January 2017, at: <https://bit.ly/33HxfOT>.

4 Ibid.

5 "Land Without Mines", *RGRU news*, 2 June 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/3gcKM93>; "Chechnya. Russian mines continue to kill people", *Caucasus Realities*, 19 December 2019, at: <https://bit.ly/3vaMXyd>; "Sappers of the Southern Military District neutralized more than 2 thousand explosive objects on the territory of Chechnya and Ingushetia", *TAC*, 27 November 2019, at: <https://bit.ly/3iBuisH>.

6 "Sappers of the Southern Military District completed demining work on the territory of Chechnya", Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, at: <https://bit.ly/3QdfQE0>.

7 "About 40 thousand explosive objects from the time of the Great Patriotic War are annually destroyed by the pyrotechnic units of the Ministry of Emergencies of Russia", *EMERCOM media news*, 8 May 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/3wsuLLr>.

8 Statement of Ukraine, Committee on Article 5 implementation, Geneva, 22 May 2019.

9 Government of Ukraine, "Measures to ensure compliance", Geneva, 9 June 2017; Statement of Ukraine on Article 5, APMBBC Fifteenth Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 29 November 2016; and Preliminary observations of the committee on cooperative compliance, "Ukraine", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 8–9 June 2017.

10 "Russians booby-trap 'safe corridor' in Ukraine with landmines: report", *New York Post*, 7 March 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3wkW2rT>; "Ukraine: Russia Uses Banned Antipersonnel Landmines", *Human Rights Watch*, 29 March 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3CiVpTg>; "Russia using banned 'jumping' landmines in Ukraine", *The Telegraph*, 30 March 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3dNKP6t>; "Russia 'using banned landmines' in north-eastern Ukraine", *The Times*, 30 March 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3RImvCO>; "Russia urged to stop using land mines in its war in Ukraine", *ABC News*, 5 April 2022, at: <https://abcn.ws/3K9VNW3>; "Russia likely using Soviet-era landmines in Ukraine, say U.K. officials", *The Washington Times*, 8 August 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3AdfsA4>.

11 "Land mines create a deadly legacy for Ukraine and possibly beyond", *The Washington Post*, 12 April 2022, at: <https://wapo.st/3e2X9WP>.

12 "Ukraine's efforts to remove booby traps left behind by Russian troops", *CBC News*, 21 April 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3ckM1nS>.

13 "We couldn't wait: Ukrainian farmers improvise to clear their land of mines", *The Guardian*, 19 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/44iX13N>; Ukraine's Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food website, 21 March 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3r0lphu>; and "Clearing land mines by hand, farmers in Ukraine risk their lives for planting season", *CNN*, 27 March 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3PURnrf>.

As at June 2023, Human Rights Watch had documented use of at least 13 types of AP mines since the 2022 assault on Ukraine.¹⁴ Amnesty International has reported that, between March and April 2022, Russian forces fired rockets to disperse PTM-1S scatterable mines on residential neighbourhoods in Kharkiv. Russian forces have also emplaced numerous victim-activated booby-traps as they retreated from positions they had taken, occupied, or fortified during the 2022 invasion. The booby-traps were constructed with various types of hand-grenades equipped with tripwires, including F-1, RGD-5, and RGN-type grenades.¹⁵ A considerable portion of the booby-traps are considered AP mines under the APMBC.

The full nature and extent of contamination caused by use of AP and AV mines by Russia in Ukraine since February 2022 will remain unclear until an effective cessation of hostilities and a comprehensive survey has been completed (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Ukraine for further information). While Russia is not a State Party or signatory to the APMBC it also has obligations under international human rights law to clear AP mines as soon as possible in any areas of Ukraine over which it exercises effective control, by virtue of its duty to protect the right to life of every person under its jurisdiction.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

There is no formal civilian mine action programme in Russia and no national mine action authority. Mine clearance is carried out by Military units of the Engineering Troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation,¹⁶ the Military Engineers of the Airborne Forces,¹⁷ Federal Ministry of Defence engineers, demining brigades of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and by the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES), through its specialised demining units (EMERCOM Demining, the "Leader" Center for Special Tasks,¹⁸ and Pyrotechnic Units¹⁹).

Russia reported that its armed forces established an International Demining Action Centre in 2014. The Centre serves as a base for specialist training in detection and clearance of explosive devices, demining, and operation of mobile robotic tools, and does not function as a mine action centre (MAC) as the term is generally understood in mine action.²⁰ Since 2021, Russia has referred instead to its International Mine Action Centre (IMAC) and reported that this centre, along with the Office of the General of the Engineering Troops, convened a Fourth International Demining Conference, attended by participants from 24

countries. Conference topics included training, search techniques, personal protective equipment, and robotics.²¹ IMAC receives a contribution from Russia's federal budget, though the amount is unknown.²²

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), of which Russia is a member, has reported that, on 24 June 2022, following a meeting of the Council of Defence Ministers of the CIS countries, that Russian Defence Minister, Sergei Shoigu, had said that a joint unit of humanitarian demining will be created in the CIS.²³ No timeline for this was given and Mine Action Review has not been able to source any further updates on the matter.

Russia reports regularly on its efforts to deploy troops internationally to clear landmines and train foreign military personnel in related activities. In 2022 IMAC trained a total of 135 military personnel across Armenia, Belarus, Djibouti, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), and Myanmar, as well as undertaking humanitarian demining operations in Lao PDR.²⁴

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in Russia in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

14 Human Rights Watch, "Landmine Use in Ukraine", Briefing Paper, 13 June 2023, pp. 2, 3, 8, and 10.

15 Ibid., pp. 3 and 8.

16 CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Form A.

17 Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, "Military engineers of the Airborne Forces neutralized more than 15 thousand explosive objects in 2021", at: <https://bit.ly/3SfbDCt>.

18 See, e.g., "It is planned to establish special groups for demining of lands within MES", *Caucasian Knot*, 23 July 2009; and "Autumn demining is completed in Chechnya", *Vesti Kavkaza*, 28 October 2009.

19 EMERCOM, "Alexander Kurenkov summed up the work of the Russian Emergencies Ministry in the main areas of activity", 19 July 2023, accessed at: <https://bit.ly/43DGL3e>

20 Protocol V Article 10 Report, 31 March 2015, Form B; and meeting with Andrey Grebenshchikov, First Secretary, Department for Non-Proliferation and Arms Control, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Geneva, 9 April 2015.

21 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form E.

22 Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

23 Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), "Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said that a joint unit of humanitarian demining will be created in the CIS", 27 June 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3b1ulgn>.

24 Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The extent to which gender and diversity are mainstreamed into mine action in Russia is not known.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Russia records information on the use of explosive ordnance at the headquarters of military units, with annual reports submitted to the Office of the Chief of Engineering Troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.²⁵

Russia submits Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol II Article 13 reports and Protocol V Article 10 reports annually. As at July 2023, Russia had submitted a Protocol V Article 10 covering 2022 but had yet to submit a Protocol II Article 13 report covering 2022.

PLANNING AND TASKING

It is not known whether Russia has a national mine action strategy in place. It is also not known whether Russia has annual work plans for AP mine survey and clearance or criteria for the prioritisation of clearance tasks.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

It is not known whether Russia has National Mine action Standards (NMAS) in place for land release. In 2022, Russia reported that procedures for ERW disposal are regulated by the "Manual for clearing terrain from explosive objects for the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation".²⁶

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Reporting on clearance of land affected by explosive ordnance in 2022, Russia referred to the involvement of the demining units and the Engineering Troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation²⁷ as well as the Pyrotechnic Units of EMERCOM.²⁸ For 2021, Russia reported that 1,608 military personnel were involved in explosive ordnance clearance, including 292 officers, 38 survey teams, 464 automobile technician units, and 27 engineering technician units.²⁹

DEMINER SAFETY

It is not known whether any accidents involving deminers took place during AP mine survey or clearance in Russia in 2022.

²⁵ Ibid., Form B.

²⁶ Ibid., Form C.

²⁷ Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2022), Forms A, B, and F.

²⁸ EMERCOM "Alexander Kurenkov summed up the work of the Russian Emergencies Ministry in the main areas of activity", 19 July 2023.

²⁹ Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form B.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Russia reported that, in 2022, more than 321km² of territory were cleared in the Russian Federation, with 974,604 explosive objects found and destroyed.³⁰ Demining was carried out in Chechnya and Ingushetia, as well as areas where military operations were conducted during the Second World War.³¹ It is not known how many of the items destroyed were AP mines. This land release represents an increase on 2021, when Russia reported that Ministry of Defence forces had cleared just over 175km² of mined area on Russian Federation territory, with 123,683 items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) found and destroyed.³² However, none of the figures is credible for the extent of clearance alone.

It was also reported that, in 2022, the Pyrotechnic Units of EMERCOM “continued demining” in the Kaliningrad region

(a Russian semi-enclave situated between Lithuania and Poland), the Central, North-Western, and Southern regions, the territories of the Russian Federation in the waters of the Black and Baltic Seas and in the Republic of Crimea (a territory of Ukraine, which has been under Russian occupation since 2014). EMERCOM reported that, as a result, more than 24,000 explosive objects were defuzed,³³ although there is no reference to AP mines specifically or indeed landmines of any type.

In 2021, as in 2022, mine clearance was carried out in Chechnya and Ingushetia, as well in areas where military operations were conducted during the Second World War,³⁴ with more than 70% of reported clearance in 2021 (125.8km²) taking place in the Western Military District.³⁵

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Russia has not provided information on whether it has a plan in place for dealing with any residual contamination following completion of clearance of known mined areas.

30 Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Form A.
31 Ibid., Form F.
32 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form B; and Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2021), Form A.
33 EMERCOM “Alexander Kurenkov summed up the work of the Russian Emergencies Ministry in the main areas of activity”, 19 July 2023.
34 Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2021), Form F.
35 Ibid., Form A.

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: MASSIVE

(NATIONAL ESTIMATE)

128km²

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

UNKNOWN

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

UNKNOWN

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The Republic of Korea (South Korea) should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- South Korea should establish a national mine action authority to assume responsibility for planning and implementing mine clearance.
- South Korea should enact long-awaited legislation permitting mine clearance by accredited civilian demining organisations.
- South Korea should clear anti-personnel (AP) mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Ministry of National Defence

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Army engineers

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Command (UNC)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) and the Civilian Control Zone (CCZ) immediately adjoining the southern boundary of the DMZ remain among the most heavily mined areas in the world due to extensive mine-laying during the Korean War and in the 1960s, in 1978, and in 1988.

The Army's Joint Chiefs of Staff disclosed in October 2020 that South Korea had 1,308 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) affecting a little over 128km² (see Table 1), 8% more than the area of contamination identified by the National Defence Committee in a 2020 report.¹

Table 1: CHAs in South Korea (at October 2020)²

	Controlled Protection Zones		Restricted Protection Zones	Rear Area	Totals
	DMZ	CCZ			
No. of sites	786	433	22	1,308	1,308
Area (m ²)	10,030,000	114,780,000	2,470,000	128,160,000	128,160,000
No. of mines	380,000	389,000	50,000	828,000	828,000

Contamination data were largely unchanged from previous years. A report presented to a side event at the 2019 APMBC intersessional meetings also referred to 1,308 mined areas containing an estimated 828,000 mines.³ Information provided by the Army's Joint Chiefs of Staff in 2018, also showed 380,000 of these mines were emplaced in 786 sites within the DMZ.⁴

Mined areas in the DMZ include 771 emplaced minefields which are mapped and 15 undocumented mined areas covering a total of 10.03km². CCZ contamination includes 257 defined mined areas and 176 undocumented sites covering a total of 114.79km².⁵

The Ministry of National Defence previously reported that it had emplaced some 53,000 M14 AP mines around 37 rear air defence bases between 1960 and 1980 and in demining operations conducted between 1998 and 2007 it had cleared around 50,000 of these mines. However, floods, landslides, and changes in topography are believed to have caused mines to move and some 3,000 mines remained to be found and destroyed.⁶

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The southern half of the Demilitarized Zone is controlled by South Korea but under the Armistice Agreement the area between the Demarcation Line and the Southern Line Limit is under the jurisdiction of the United Nations Command (UNC) and any mine clearance is conducted with its approval.

Mine action in the Civilian Control Zone (between the SLL and the Civilian Control Line) and the rest of South Korea is overseen by the Ministry of National Defence and is conducted exclusively by South Korean army engineers.

There is no national mine action authority or mine action centre in South Korea and only the South Korean army is permitted to conduct clearance. Government ministries have discussed creating a mine action authority but no decision has been taken whether to proceed and the idea reportedly remains in its infancy.⁷ In November 2022, the

Ministry of National Defence resubmitted a bill for an Act on Mine Response Activities, including Mine Clearance. The bill proposed that the Ministry of National Defence establish a strategy for mine clearance, forms a Mine Response Activity Committee, which will become the national mine action authority, permits qualified non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to conduct clearance alongside the military, sets national standards aligning with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), and creates an information management system for mine action. The bill requires National Assembly approval for enactment, which was pending at the time of writing, and if it is not approved by the end of 2023 it will automatically be repealed.⁸

A document submitted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the National Assembly in 2020 identifying obstacles to mine

1 Yoo Hyun-min, "828,000 landmines buried nationwide...59,000 even south of the Civilian Control Line", *Yonhap News Agency*, 9 October 2020.
2 Ibid.
3 PowerPoint presentation by Maj.-Gen. Han Cheol Ki (ret.), Side event to the APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 24 May 2019.
4 South Korea Joint Chiefs of Staff (ROK JCS), cited in "Mine Action in the Korean Peninsula", unpublished paper by Eum Soohong, member, Korean Campaign to Ban Landmines (KCBL), September 2019.
5 United Nations Command (UNC) South Korea PowerPoint presentation in Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) Side event, UN National Directors' Meeting, Geneva, 11 February 2020.
6 Ministry of National Defence press release, 16 October 2019.
7 Interview with Cho Jai Kook, Coordinator, KCBL, and Eum Soohong, KCBL, in Geneva, 13 February 2020.
8 Emails from Eum Soohong, KCBL, 9 November 2022 and 26 August 2023.

action pointed to the absence of an institutional framework and the lack of a legal basis for mine clearance, which can only be conducted with the consent of land owners. The memo said existing demining capacity was overburdened and recommended expanding capacity from one brigade to two or three. It also called for quality assurance and post-clearance analysis.⁹

The Ministry of National Defence announced in 2019 that it had embarked on a three-year programme to complete survey and clearance of rear areas by October 2021. The proposal called for demining capacity to be increased from 6 teams with 200 personnel to 31 teams with 1,200 personnel. It also called for investment in upgrading detectors to detect plastic mines and in mechanical assets.¹⁰ The extent to which the Army has progressed in implementing the plan remains unclear. A Joint Chiefs of Staff memo to the National Assembly reported an increase in the budget for mine clearance from KRW180 million (approximately US\$161,000)

in 2018 to KRW330 million in 2019 and KRW8.2 billion (US\$7.3 million) in 2020.¹¹ In 2021, the Army Engineering School launched a demining training programme in demining in which 249 officers participated.¹²

In February 2022, 334 Korean NGOs demanded that demining of rear areas should be on the agenda during the presidential election and called for responsibility for mine clearance to be transferred from the Ministry of National Defence to the Ministry of Public Administration and Security, which is the body in charge of national disasters and public safety. In addition, there were calls for the application of IMAS to mine clearance; public disclosure of information on the 37 minefields in the rear areas; development of a comprehensive mine clearance plan; creation of a mine clearance committee reporting directly to the President; and the enactment of a law on mine clearance.¹³ Several municipalities also called for demining in the rear regions and mine action legislation to be passed following incidents in those areas.¹⁴

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in South Korea in order to minimise potential harm.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

South Korea reported clearing 158 mines (not disaggregated by type) and 2,410 items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) in the course of operations to exhume remains of Korean War casualties around Arrowhead Hill in the DMZ in 2020. North Korea did not conduct clearance in the DMZ as provided for in the September 2018 Panmunjom Declaration.¹⁵ According to online media, 120,000m² of minefields in rear air-defence sites south of the CCZ were cleared from April 2020 to July 2023 with 180 mines found and destroyed.¹⁶ In October 2019, the Ministry of National Defence declared its intent to clear all mines from the rear area, although this task remains unfinished to date.¹⁷

From April to November 2022, South Korea resumed operations to exhume remains of Korean War casualties, with a total of 45 bodies found, and conducted demining in the Baekmagoji area of the DMZ. Operations had been suspended

following threat of hostile actions from North Korea in the border area.¹⁸ In November 2022, during a statement to the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties (20MSP), South Korea reported it was "continuing with its mine clearing efforts, where possible, in a systemic and phased manner" and in line with IMAS, but did not provide information on the area cleared or number of mines found and destroyed.¹⁹ In 2023, the Ministry of National Defence was planning to conduct exhumation operations in the Baekmagoji area from April to November and further demining around seven rear air-defence sites south of the CCZ.²⁰ The Agency for KIA Recovery & Identification under the Ministry of National Defense (MAKRI) is responsible for these operations. MAKRI is also collaborating with the US Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency to recover the remains of American soldiers from the DMZ.²¹

9 Memo from the Engineering Department, Joint Chiefs of Staff, to the National Assembly (unofficial translation by Eum Soohong, KCBL), October 2020.

10 Ministry of National Defence press release, 16 October 2019.

11 Memo from the Engineering Department, Joint Chiefs of Staff, to the National Assembly (unofficial translation by Eum Soohong, KCBL), October 2020.

12 Statement of the Republic of Korea, Twentieth Meeting of States Parties to the APMB, 24 November 2022.

13 Jin-yong Cho, "Removal of rear mines such as in Naju and Boseong urged to be adopted as 'the presidential election task'", *Jnilbo*, 16 February 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3Qjlu9D>.

14 See: "Goyang City Council: Necessary to revise the Special Act on Support for Victims of Landmine Explosion", *Newsis*, 21 January 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3xBudvd>; "Gimpo city council calls for realistic compensation for victims of landmine accident in Han River estuary", *Siminilbo*, 20 January 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3zZUtCr>; "Yeoncheon County Council, Resolution Calling for Enactment and Revision of Landmine-Related Laws", *Yonhap*, 15 February 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3MZS516>.

15 Jung Bitna, "Unearthed 143 remains of this year's Arrowhead Bill", *Yonhap News Agency*, 19 November 2020.

16 "Civilian, Government, and Military Collaborate for Public Verification... 'Beyond Normal' National Safety", Ministry of National Defense, 10 August 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3Phqc9i>.

17 Email from Eum Soohong, KCBL, 26 August 2023.

18 Emails from Eum Soohong, KCBL, 3 and 11 April 2022 and 26 August 2023; and "We will not forget the noble sacrifices of our national heroes", Ministry of National Defence, 30 November 2022 at: <https://bit.ly/3szd2LQ>.

19 Statement of the Republic of Korea, 20MSP, 24 November 2022.

20 Email from Eum Soohong, KCBL, 4 September 2023.

21 Email from Eum Soohong, KCBL, 26 August 2023.

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: UNKNOWN

BUT AT LEAST

20_{km²}

IN THE NORTH-EAST

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

1.15_{km²}

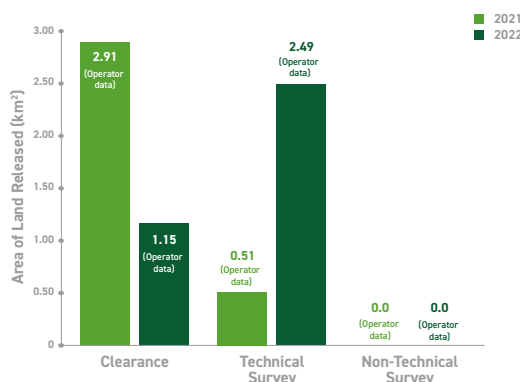
(OPERATOR DATA)

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

110

(INCLUDING 32 DESTROYED IN
SPOT TASKS) (OPERATOR DATA)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

A ceasefire agreement brokered in March 2020 between Türkiye and Russia, which support opposing sides in the Syrian conflict, has brought a tenuous calm to the country. But Syria registered, for the second year in a row, the highest number of mine casualties worldwide. Despite the urgent need for mine action, efforts remain fragmented and underfunded with financial support to the sector dropping for the fourth consecutive year. Only one operator, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), which is working in the north-east of Syria, was able to report land release through technical survey (TS) and area clearance in 2022. The HALO Trust (HALO), which operates in the north-west, received permission to carry out non-technical survey (NTS) in Idlib governorate and in the west of Aleppo governorate, as well as a long-awaited authorisation to carry out explosive ordnance disposal (EOD). In government-controlled territory, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) received operational accreditation in early 2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Syria should undertake never again to use anti-personnel (AP) mines and accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Syria should clear mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- Syria should undertake a baseline survey of AP mine contamination in areas it controls.
- Syria should formally establish a national mine action centre and national mine action authority.
- A centralised mine action information management database should be established. All mine action operators in Syria should ensure that survey and clearance data are recorded and safeguarded in a digital format in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- The interministerial Mine Action Coordination Committee (headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Engineering Unit of the Syrian Army
- The Syria Civil Defence (SCD), also known as the White Helmets, operating in the north-west
- Roj Mine Control Organization (RMC), operating in the north-east
- iMFAD (based in Türkiye)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- DanChurchAid (DCA), operating in the north-east
- Enhancing Human Security (ITF), operating in the north-east

- HAMAP Humanitaire, operating in the north-east until the closure of its programme in August 2022
- Humanity & Inclusion (HI), operating in the north-west through implementing partners
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG), operating in the north-east
- The HALO Trust (HALO), operating in the north-west
- The Armenian Centre for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise (ACHDE), operating in government-controlled areas

OTHER ACTORS

- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), established in Damascus (December 2021)
- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), operating from Damascus

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Syria is heavily contaminated by mines and mines of an improvised nature used extensively by parties to the country's 12-year-old conflict. It also has mined areas left by a succession of Arab-Israeli wars since 1948. The Syrian government laid mines along borders with Türkiye and Lebanon in 2012 with Turkish authorities claiming that up to 715,000 mines had been planted along Syria's border with Türkiye.¹ Syrian government forces also placed landmines with a view to obstructing the advance of opposition fighters; on illegal migration routes; and in areas it subjected to siege, such as in Madaya and al-Zabadani (Rural Damascus).

Non-State armed groups (NSAGs) also laid mines, including around besieged towns such as Kafarayya and al-Fouaa in 2015–18.² In Raqqa, where 80% of the city has been destroyed, rubble was mixed booby-traps left by the parties to the armed conflict.³ Retreating Islamic States forces emplaced huge numbers of AP mines of an improvised nature and other improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Humanity & Inclusion (HI) claimed in May 2022 that improvised AP mines and other explosive ordnance continued to be laid in Syria in 2021–22 as a result of ongoing hostilities and criminal activities.⁴ In contrast, DanChurchAid (DCA) reported that most of the improvised mines it encountered during spot tasks were anti-vehicle (AV) mines.⁵ From the middle of 2020 and through October 2022, Landmine Monitor

reported allegations of new AP mine use by NSAGs but did not believe that the Syrian authorities had laid new mines.⁶

Data on the types of destroyed mines provided by operators indicates that the vast majority of AP mines used in Syria are of an improvised nature. For example, from the 103 AP mines discovered and destroyed by MAG, 98 were improvised.⁷ Many improvised AP mines have acquired local names from the way they were handcrafted (e.g., the ruler, the rosary, the stone). Other organisations or media outlets documented use of mostly Russian-made PMN-2 and POMZ AP mines.⁸

The full extent of AP mine contamination is unknown. No countrywide survey of contamination has yet been conducted with access restricted in many areas by the fragmented state of security, although the north-east has seen more extensive survey with several organisations having undertaken NTS since 2016 across four governorates under the control of the Syrian Defence Forces.⁹ However, intensive mine-use has resulted in significant humanitarian impact across the country. The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) has reported that as at April 2023, 3,353 civilians, including 889 children, had been killed by landmines in Syria since 2011. Two thirds of all landmine-related deaths were documented in the governorates of Aleppo (26%), Raqqa (22%), and Deir Ezzor (17%). It is estimated that a further 10,400 civilians have been injured by mines since the beginning of the uprising in 2011.¹⁰

- 1 Human Rights Watch, "Syria: Army planting banned landmines", 13 March 2012, at: <http://bit.ly/2Ybz9rK>; "Thousands of landmines planted along Turkish-Syrian border", *Middle East Monitor*, 21 November 2013, at: <https://bit.ly/2Mt7efE>.
- 2 The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), "On the International Day for Mines Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action: Landmines Continue to Plague Large Areas of Syria and Threaten the Lives of Millions", Report, at: <https://bit.ly/43Vp2UQ>, pp. 3 and 17; and "Inside Foua: A Shi'a town in the eye of the Syrian storm", *Middle East Eye*, 19 August 2018.
- 3 Humanity and Inclusion (HI), "Syria: it will take at least two generations to rebuild", 25 February 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3fPFoaf>.
- 4 HI, "Explosive ordnance in Syria: impact and required action", May 2022, at <https://bit.ly/3zCLJRK>, p. 5.
- 5 Email from Kevin Starker, Humanitarian Mine Action Operations Manager, DCA, 28 June 2023.
- 6 *Landmine Monitor Report 2021*, at: <https://bit.ly/3s67WXC>, p. 16.
- 7 Email from Akram Alsaedi, Country Director, MAG, 24 March 2023.
- 8 SNHR, "On the International Day for Mines Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action: Landmines Continue to Plague Large Areas of Syria and Threaten the Lives of Millions", Report, p. 6; See also The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, "Syria's Landmines: Silent Killing", Report, April 2021, pp. 11–15.
- 9 Email from Greg Crowther, MAG, 4 October 2023.
- 10 SNHR, "On the International Day for Mines Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action: Landmines Continue to Plague Large Areas of Syria and Threaten the Lives of Millions", Report, p. 23.

In 2021 and 2022, the Landmine Monitor reported that Syria had the highest number of recorded casualties worldwide (2,729, and 1,227, respectively). The casualties reported for 2020 were the highest the Monitor ever reported in a single year since it began reporting in 1999. Moreover, due to inconsistency in data availability, mine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) casualties in Syria may even be a considerable undercount.¹¹

SYRIAN EARTHQUAKE

On 6 February 2023, Syria was struck by a devastating 7.8 magnitude earthquake followed by a series of more than 14,000 aftershocks. The tremors severely affected the north-west of Syria, most notably, the governorates of Idlib, Aleppo, and to a lesser extent, Latakia and Hama in the north-west and Raqqqa and Al-Hassakeh in the north-east. HALO conducted a rapid assessment in February–March 2023, which identified explosive ordnance in 42 earthquake-affected communities affecting 730,000 people. According to HALO, the earthquake may have led explosive items to move or resurface, possibly necessitating resurvey in impacted communities.¹² Weapons and ammunition stored in houses may have been buried under the rubble. Returnees expose themselves to danger by returning to their destroyed homes to gather belongings, or by starting to remove the rubble to try and rebuild their homes.¹³

Before the earthquake, the 2023 Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview, which was published in December 2022, estimated that a third of communities across Syria were affected by some form of explosive contamination, with the highest percentages being in Aleppo, Damascus, Daraa, Quneitra, Raqqqa, Rural Damascus, and Sweida.¹⁴ In 2020, an average of 76 explosive incidents per day were recorded in Syria.¹⁵

HALO obtained permission to conduct NTS in Idlib and Western Aleppo in February 2022 in areas controlled by the Syria Salvation Government (an alternative opposition authority). HALO's NTS teams assessed 25 communities and identified 158,000m² of hazardous areas across six confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and six suspected hazardous areas (SHAs). Of this total are, 138,000m² were mined areas and the remaining 20,000m² contained a mix of explosive ordnance.¹⁶ Earlier assessment by HALO in 2018–20 in Aleppo and Idlib governorates found 113 suspected mined areas (89 in northern Aleppo and 24 in Idlib) and 38 suspected areas containing IEDs (34 in northern Aleppo and 4 in Idlib). During this earlier exercise, the extent to which the devices

amounted to mines was not known as data were collected in a rapid assessment without full NTS.¹⁷

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) also conducted a joint mine risk needs assessment of 573 communities in Al-Hassakeh, Aleppo, Daraa, Deir Ezzor, Hama, Homs, Idlib, Quneitra, and Sweida governorates. According to the assessment, 530 (92%) communities reported the presence of ERW. Of the assessed communities, 57% reported the presence of AP mines, 46% reported cluster munition remnants (CMR), and 25% other explosive ordnance.¹⁸

MAG has been conducting surveys across several governorates in the north-east of Syria since 2016. In 2022, MAG registered 2.57km² of previously unknown AP mined area in the north-east: in Aleppo, Al-Hassakeh, Deir Ezzor, and Raqqqa governorates. Of this total, MAG estimates that 95% are victim-activated IEDs that meet the definition of an AP mine.¹⁹ Previously, at the end of 2021, MAG had registered 17.75km² of mined area in the same governorates.²⁰

Working from the Syrian capital, Damascus, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) continued an explosive ordnance assessment team (EOAT) survey in Rural Damascus (South) it started in August 2020.²¹ At the end of 2021, the EOAT surveyed 10km² in four locations in Daraya (Rural Damascus governorate), of which around 6km² were confirmed as hazardous. The EOAT also surveyed residential buildings in Yarmouk camp in Rural Damascus. Of the 423 buildings assessed, 88 were confirmed as contaminated. The EOAT survey was planned to continue throughout 2022.²²

In 2021, mine action funding channelled to Syria decreased for the fourth consecutive year. Syria received US \$1.9 million less than in 2020 (a 7% decrease). Previously, in 2020, support to mine action activities in Syria fell more steeply, by US \$16.4 million, or a decrease of 39%, than in 2019.²³

11 Landmine Monitor Report 2021, pp. 2, 42, and 45; and Landmine Monitor Report 2022, pp. 3 and 20. See also Human Rights Watch, "It Was Really Hard to Protect Myself", 8 September 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/43VM1PU>.

12 Email from Damian O'Brien, Programme Manager, HALO, 10 April 2023.

13 HI, "Safety messages in the wake of the earthquake", accessed on 3 July 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3pwz05R>.

14 Syria 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 22 December 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3NcDL9l>, p. 81.

15 Syria 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview, March 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/43biWQZ>, p. 10.

16 Email from Damian O'Brien, HALO, 10 April 2023.

17 Email from Mairi Cunningham, Programme Manager, HALO, 7 June 2021.

18 ICRC and SARC, Mine Risk Needs Assessment and Education, PowerPoint presentation to the 24th NDM, 25 May 2021, slides 7–8, at: <https://bit.ly/3zxkRRk>.

19 Email from Akram Alsaeedi, MAG, 24 March 2023.

20 Email from Fabrice Martin, Country Director, MAG, 9 March 2022.

21 Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview, March 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3vzUXwp>, p. 10.

22 Emails from United Nations Mine Action Services (UNMAS), 30 June 2021; and Francesca Chiaudani, Mine Action Coordinator, UNMAS, 31 March 2022.

23 Landmine Monitor Report 2022, p. 103.

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Syria also has significant contamination from CMR and other ERW (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Syria for further information).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

There is no national mine action authority in Syria. In government-controlled areas, an Interministerial National Mine Action Coordination Committee is said to have been formed by presidential decree in 2019 and is chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates (MoFA).²⁴ MoFA assigned a focal point for liaison with UNMAS for all mine action.²⁵

Mine action in Syria is coordinated by three response mechanisms:

- Damascus-based Mine Action Sub-Sector (MASS) coordinated by UNMAS;
- The north-west Mine Action Sub-Cluster (MASC) coordinated by HALO; and
- The north-east Mine Action Working Group (MAWG), which sits under the protection working group in the non-governmental organisation (NGO), forum-led response coordinated by iMMAP.²⁶ Coordinators of the three structures organise monthly meetings with the respective mine action actors,²⁷ but in November 2022, the MAWG's monthly meetings were temporarily suspended.²⁸ The Damascus-based MASS meets on a monthly basis, and is attended by a variety of mine action partners, including UN agencies, NGOs, and the ICRC.²⁹

The local authorities of the north-east of Syria established a north-east Syria Mine Action Office (NESMAO) in 2022. NESMAO introduced the signature of an memorandum of understanding (MoU) for all humanitarian mine action operators as a prerequisite to continuation of field operations. This led to the suspension of all humanitarian demining for up to four months in 2022.

UNMAS continues to represent the mine action area of responsibility within the UN-led coordination mechanism for Syria, as well as supporting the hub-based coordination

mechanisms. UNMAS provides technical expertise and support to the humanitarian clusters, sectors, and mine action partners.³⁰ Given the lack of national mine action structures, UNMAS grants de facto accreditation to clearance operators. UNMAS does not provide capacity building to the national authorities, but operating as a mine action coordination body in 2020, UNMAS drafted national technical standards and guidelines for mine action and provided them to the Syrian government for its consideration.³¹

Until November 2022, the north-east MAWG coordination meetings were held on monthly and ad-hoc basis, and attended regularly by MAG, HI, DCA, and ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF) among others.³² In 2023, iMMAP, in collaboration with DCA, HI, MAG, and ITF, initiated an NTS project, prioritising communities across the north-east of the country.³³

In the north-east of the country, the sector faced particular operational challenges in late 2021 and early 2022. The continuation of operators' activities in the north-east was contingent on the signature of an MoU with the NESMAO, the provisions of which were said to include taxations on salaries of the national staff and a pre-defined list of names for organisations to recruit from.

Discussions about the MoU between NESMAO and mine action actors, which were facilitated by iMMAP, reached a stalemate, forcing the mine action actors to cease operating for almost two months at the beginning of 2022.³⁴

According to iMMAP, mine action actors face a drastic reduction in funding for the north-east of Syria as more donors are withdrawing from mine action support. This affects the crucial need to clear water sources and agricultural land due to the ongoing drought and increasing food prices.³⁵

24 This information was provided on condition of anonymity.

25 Emails from UNMAS, 30 June 2021; and Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 31 March 2022 and 30 April 2023. According to Syria's statement to the APMB 20MSP, a "National Committee on Demining was established in June [of 2022] under the chairmanship of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates". Mine Action Review believes that the committee Syria refers to is the same Interministerial Committee that was established in 2019, and that Syria has incorrectly indicated the formation date of the committee.

26 Emails from UNMAS, 30 June 2021; and Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 31 March 2022 and 30 April 2023.

27 iMMAP, Coordination Support to Humanitarian Mine Action, 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/3yGh9nQ>; and emails from Mairi Cunningham, HALO, 7 and 17 June 2021; and UNMAS, 30 June 2021.

28 Emails from Akram Alsaedi, MAG, 24 March 2023; Najat El Hamri, MAG, 3 July 2023; and Kevin Starker, DCA, 28 June 2023.

29 Email from Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 30 April 2023.

30 Email from Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 31 March 2022.

31 Email from UNMAS, 30 June 2021.

32 Emails from Fabrice Martin, MAG, 9 March 2022, and Akram Alsaedi, MAG, 24 March 2023.

33 Email from Kevin Straker, DCA, 28 June 2023.

34 iMMAP, "Northeast Syria: Progress, Challenges, and Forecast of Humanitarian Mine Action", September 2021–April 2022, p. 15.

35 Ibid., p. 4.

MAG is providing capacity-building support both to NESMAO and to other organisations present in the north-east, such as the Syria Justice and Accountability Centre (SJAC). In collaboration with NESMAO, MAG has constructed two explosives' storehouses and was planning for the construction of one more, to help operators store recovered explosives until their demolition.³⁶ DCA also reported a cooperative relationship with NESMAO. In April 2023, NESMAO representatives took part in DCA's NTS training course as part of the NTS project in the north-east of Syria. DCA intends to continue capacity building support the NESMAO. The main challenges reported by DCA were the absence of national standards, the lack of formal tasking and prioritisation, and the need to align mine action with humanitarian needs and development projects.³⁷

In the north-west, mine action was coordinated by the MASC cross-border response from Gaziantep (the Türkiye-based response), a body co-chaired for a time by HALO and UNMAS. In May 2022, HALO started chairing the meetings from Amman,³⁸ and UNMAS stopped co-chairing the MASC due to lack of personnel and funding. Some 15 partners attend the MASC monthly meetings, with SCD attending as observers.³⁹ HALO and its partners coordinate and receive approvals from the local Turkish authorities for its work across the border with Türkiye.⁴⁰ HALO reported generally good coordination with the local authorities when it comes to access and security, but the range of mine action activities has been

limited by the complexities of the operating context.⁴¹ For example, the Turkish authorities do not permit the export of some EOD materials such as T-jets, nor will it authorise operators to conduct NTS or EOD in northern Aleppo.⁴²

According to HALO, coordination of mine action in the aftermath of the earthquake has been challenging. The immediate needs of the affected population were very high with priority given to the provision of food and shelter. Mine action operators redirected activities to respond. For example, HALO had bought a tracked excavator in January 2023 and had begun modifying it for mine clearance when the earthquake struck. In coordination with local authorities, the excavator was temporarily deployed on rubble removal in earthquake-impacted communities.⁴³

UNMAS was seeking US\$25 million for its mine action programme in Syria through to the end of 2023.⁴⁴ UNMAS expects a further drop in mine action funding, particularly in the aftermath of the February 2023 earthquake, as most of the humanitarian response is focused on shelter and health. A progressive inclusion of mine action in damage assessment and rubble removal work is, though, expected.⁴⁵ SCD was able to secure funding for 2022 and early 2023, and, at the time of writing, was in the process of negotiating funding until the end of 2024. However, other organisations have limited options for importing equipment and there is a continued decrease in available funding due to donor fatigue.⁴⁶

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

DCA's global strategy seeks to advance its climate and sustainability work in fragile contexts and crisis. DCA is exploring greener approaches to its activities across all of its mine action country programmes.⁴⁷ HALO's environmental policy has been established by executive management at its headquarters. In line with this policy, HALO's activities seek to minimise negative environmental impacts wherever possible and enhance positive impacts in pursuit of improved lives and livelihoods. HALO has also established an Environment and Conservation Cross-Cutting Network to provide continued guidance on how environmental impacts can be reduced.⁴⁸ MAG's community liaison standing operating procedures (SOPs) include consultations with

affected communities about the use of mechanical assets and the timing of clearance, with consultations concerning water use, rubbish disposal, land erosion, and burning of vegetation.⁴⁹ MAG conducts demolitions in remote areas of Al-Hassakeh governorate, far from animal movement or farming.⁵⁰

UNMAS takes into consideration the impacts of removing explosive ordnance on the landscape, for instance, when vegetation removal is necessary. UNMAS's partnership with implementing partners is governed by guidelines that refer to environmental requirements for task implementation.⁵¹

36 Email from Akram Alsaeedi, MAG, 24 March 2023.

37 Emails from Kevin Straker, DCA, 15 March and 28 June 2023.

38 Email from Damian O'Brien, HALO, 10 April 2023.

39 Email from Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 30 April 2023.

40 Emails from Mairi Cunningham, HALO, 7 and 17 June 2021; and Damian O'Brien, HALO, 1 March 2022.

41 Emails from Damian O'Brien, HALO, 1 March 2022 and 10 April 2023.

42 Email from Damian O'Brien, HALO, 10 April 2023.

43 Ibid.

44 UNMAS website, Syria programme, accessed on 19 May 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3uCiB0N>.

45 Email from Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 30 April 2023.

46 Emails from Michael Edwards, SCD, 5 March 2022 and 27 March 2023.

47 Email from Kevin Straker, DCA, 28 June 2023.

48 Email from Damian O'Brien, HALO, 1 March 2022.

49 Email from Fabrice Martin, MAG, 9 March 2022.

50 Email from Akram Alsaeedi, MAG, 24 March 2023.

51 Emails from Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 31 March 2022 and 30 April 2023.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

There is no national gender and diversity policy for the mine action programme.

DCA has a country-specific gender and diversity policy and implementation plan. All national staff recruitment is done through candidate lists put forward by NESMAO as specified in the MoU. Although DCA asks for gender-balanced candidate lists for all positions, such conditions are seldom met. In 2022, 20% of DCA's employees were women, with 19% and 36% of operational positions and managerial positions, respectively, filled by women.⁵²

In Syria, access to female beneficiaries has long been challenging because of the lack of women in the workforce. Employing women not only allows HALO to empower them, but also to ensure their interventions are inclusive and gender sensitive. HALO field teams include at least two women each for better access to women and girls. Women staff have access to female-friendly spaces in the office as per local cultural norms. HALO provides women with opportunities to be trained in technical field roles to recognised international standards, offering transferable and skills and qualifications that enhance their earning potential. By doing so, HALO empowers women and contributes to shifting gender norms in the north-west. In 2022, 43% of HALO's employees were women, with 38% of operational positions and 54% of managerial positions filled by women.⁵³

MAG has an institutional gender and diversity policy and implementation plan. MAG's community liaison, survey, and clearance activities take gender into account during the planning and implementation phases. These activities are guided by MAG's own SOPs and those of IMAS, and are implemented by gender- and language-balanced community liaison teams. All mine action data are disaggregated by sex and age.⁵⁴ In 2022, 18% of MAG's employees were women,

with 17% of operational positions and 22% of managerial positions filled by women.⁵⁵ MAG is using mine action as a tool to advocate gender importance and encourage the employment of women in mine action. While still very low, the number of female staff members has increased compared to previous years.⁵⁶

Women made up 45% of the total NPA Syria programme workforce in 2023.⁵⁷

SCD has a gender and a diversity strategy in place. In 2022, SCD successfully trained and deployed 12 female survey operators, with two volunteers joining one of each of the six SCD NTS teams. In 2023, SCD was planning to train and deploy at least six women deminers in three of SCD's six clearance teams. In 2022, about 11% of SCD's total employees were female, and 11% of managerial and operational positions were filled by women.⁵⁸ The names, gender, and age of each community interviewee are recorded as part of survey reporting and are reviewed by the management team to ensure the process remains as inclusive as possible. SCD volunteers are recruited from the communities they serve and thus reflect the various ethnic minority groups in their area of operations.⁵⁹

UNMAS has a gender and diversity strategy, and gender and diversity considerations are addressed in implementation of activities. During survey and liaison activities, UNMAS teams usually consult with community focal points or representatives from communities and interact with women and children living in close vicinity to the working sites.⁶⁰ In 2022, women made up 57% of all UNMAS Syria staff, with 57% of operational and 33% of managerial positions.⁶¹ UNMAS has deployed to communities with ethnic and minority groups (Druze in Sweida for instance), and engaged with all community members to gather feedback.⁶²

Table 1: Gender composition of mine action operators in 2022⁶³

Operator	Proportion of women of total employees	Proportion of women in operational positions	Proportion of women in managerial positions
DCA	20%	19%	36%
HALO	43%	38%	54%
MAG	18%	17%	22%

⁵² Email from Kevin Straker, DCA, 15 March and 28 June 2023.

⁵³ Email from Damian O'Brien, HALO, 10 April 2023.

⁵⁴ Email from MAG, 24 May 2021.

⁵⁵ Email from Akram Alsaeedi, MAG, 24 March 2023.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Email from Claus Nielsen, Programme Manager, NPA, 30 June 2023.

⁵⁸ Email from Michael Edwards, SCD, 27 March 2023.

⁵⁹ Emails from Michael Edwards, SCD, 5 March and 15 June 2022.

⁶⁰ Email from Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 31 March 2022.

⁶¹ Email from Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 30 April 2023.

⁶² Email from Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 31 March 2022.

⁶³ Emails from Kevin Straker, DCA, 28 June 2023; Damian O'Brien, HALO, 10 April 2023; Akram Alsaeedi, MAG, 24 March 2023; Claus Nielsen, NPA, 30 June 2023; Michael Edwards, SCD, 27 March 2023; and Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 30 April 2023.

Table 1 Continued

Operator	Proportion of women of total employees	Proportion of women in operational positions	Proportion of women in managerial positions
NPA	45%	N/R	N/R
SCD	11%	11%	11%
UNMAS	57%	5%	33%

UNMAS's context analysis appeared to indicate that ethnic minority groups are not affected by explosive contamination differently, but rather that all population groups are vulnerable regardless of ethnicity.⁶⁴ But Mine Action Review believes that minority groups loyal to the Syrian government are significantly less affected by mine and other explosive ordnance contamination by virtue of their lesser exposure to the attacks by Syrian and Russian armed forces.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

DCA employs an information management (IM GIS coordinator and an officer, using Aeronautical Reconnaissance Coverage Geographic Information (ArcGis), Environmental Systems Research Institutions (ESRI), and Survey123 for its information management. Survey and clearance data is collected using Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) data collection forms and shared monthly with iMMAP, which helps build a clear and accurate contamination mapping across the north-east of Syria. The ongoing iMMAP NTS project is expected to improve the accuracy of existing explosive ordnance contamination data, enabling better prioritisation of subsequent clearance activities.⁶⁵

HALO uses the IMSMA data collection forms and regularly reports to the north-west MASC and the Office of the UNHCR-led Gaziantep coordination response. HALO uses Kobo to collect NTS data and from 2023, Kobo forms will be used for pre- and post-clearance survey to measure the impact of mechanical clearance. Data collection tools are reviewed regularly by HALO's Syria IM staff and the HALO global monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEAL) team. At the MASC level, HALO collects data from operators through forward planning and the 4W tools,⁶⁶ using protection cluster templates. In 2023, the 4Ws data collection tool became the 5Ws⁶⁷ tool as more data and details have been added to the template.⁶⁸

MAG continues to use the online server, SharePoint, to preserve and archive its mine action data. In October 2022, MAG established the Global MAG Operational Management Information System (OMIS). Data is collected from the field through the Survey123 mobile data application, using the IMSMA form then verified by technical managers through

the online OMIS portal, which is linked to the ArcGis maps, and then validated by the IM department. MAG continues to develop and improve OMIS, and started to use the satellite imagery for more accurate coordinates of the identified hazardous areas in 2023. MAG shares its data with the iMMAP on monthly basis, which is part of the protection working group coordination tools. MAG also shares its operations plans with road maps with NESMAO on a weekly basis.⁶⁹

SCD uses Survey123 for data collection IMSMA Core for data keeping and management. At the end of each month, data for all tasks is compiled and a final check carried out to ensure no errors are present.⁷⁰ Despite concerted efforts to establish a centralised database representing the whole of Syria, SCD reported its survey and clearance data continue not to be accepted in the north-west MASC mine action database and the 4W reporting mechanism. This is reportedly because SCD's application to join the protection coordination cluster had not yet been granted, with membership of the cluster a pre-condition for active membership in the MASC. SCD remains ready to provide data to the MASC, which it was unable to do under its observer status.⁷¹

UNMAS completed the installation of IMSMA Core as the national mine action information management system in Damascus in 2021, although it continues to have another IMSMA database outside Damascus for reasons of data confidentiality.⁷² UNMAS manages the database, collating explosive ordnance data from partners across Syria. UNMAS also collects mine action data through the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)-led humanitarian response tracking.⁷³ Clearance by Syrian and Russian forces goes largely unreported.

64 Email from Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 31 March 2022.
65 Emails from Kevin Straker, DCA, 15 March and 28 June 2023.
66 The 4W is an excel-based reporting matrix that feeds into the UN HRP. The term 4W stands for Who (which operator) is doing What, Where, and When. It is used as both a coordination and planning tool.
67 The 5W is the same as the 4W with an additional dimension of information (by whom).
68 Email from Damian O'Brien, HALO, 10 April 2023.
69 Emails from Akram Alsaeedi, MAG, 24 March 2023; and Najat El Hamri, MAG, 3 July 2023.
70 Ibid.
71 Emails from Michael Edwards, SCD, 5 March 2022 and 27 March 2023.
72 Email from Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 31 March 2022.
73 Email from Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 30 April 2023.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Syria does not have a national mine action strategic plan and mine action remains fragmented across the country.

In the north-east, there is neither a central tasking and prioritisation body to issue tasks nor a strategic mine action plan, so operators develop and apply their own plans.⁷⁴ DCA has a five-year global and country office strategy, which is reviewed annually.⁷⁵ In 2022, following the capacity building provided by MAG, NESMAO started to follow MAG's prioritisation criteria: persons or animals injured or killed by the detonation of mines or unexploded ordnance (UXO) during the past 24 months; IEDs, landmines, or UXO found; blocked irrigated agricultural fields, pasture lands, non-agricultural areas, housing, roads, or infrastructure; the number of the population using the land; and the presence of persons with disabilities among the population who use the land.⁷⁶

The north-west of Syria has no central tasking or prioritisation body. HALO uses data collected from its previous community assessments and NTS to identify high-priority communities for EOD, focusing on removing contamination from agricultural areas to support economic activities, sustainable livelihoods, and mitigate food insecurity. Incident data shows that a large percentage

of detonations affect men and that two of the highest risk occupations are farming and herding. HALO engages with communities where it conducts EOD to obtain their informed consent and considers requests from the local authorities for future interventions.⁷⁷

SCD prioritises tasks based upon a number of risk factors such as the type of item, its location (whether close to inhabited buildings or blocking vital infrastructure), the number of items, as well as logistical information, such as the location of the task relative to the clearance team, and whether there are multiple tasks within the same area. Since the number of tasks identified through survey does not yet exceed operational capacity, once items are identified they are cleared within one or two days.⁷⁸

UNMAS continued its survey and clearance in 2022 in high-priority areas in Rural Damascus based on the list of priority locations agreed with partners and the Government of Syria. Tasks are prioritised and selected based on a set of criteria, including severity of humanitarian need, the presence of humanitarian partners, the delivery of humanitarian activities, flows of displaced persons, and historic data on explosive incidents.⁷⁹

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

There are no formal national mine action standards (NMAS) in Syria, but in 2020, UNMAS drafted NMAS and associated guidelines and submitted them to the Syrian government for its approval. Despite positive feedback, no official response had been received as at July 2023.⁸⁰ In its statement as an observer to the APMBT Twentieth Meeting of State Party (20MSP) in 2022, Syria stated that: "Technical standards and guidelines have been developed that will define the operational framework for all mine action activities in Syria, in line with the International Mine Action Standards."⁸¹

In the non-government-controlled north-east and north-west of Syria, local authorities do not endorse the Damascus-developed NMAS. As a result, most of the operators work to their own SOPs. For example, DCA works in accordance with its global SOPs which derive from IMAS, and applies best practice guidelines from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining

(GICHD).⁸² In the absence of a formal land release policy, a signing of a handover land-release certificate happens between DCA, the landowner, and NESMAO in a process introduced to NESMAO by DCA.⁸³

MAG Syria continues to work to its own established SOPs, which were last updated in December 2021 and were developed in line with MAG's Global Technical Standards. MAG said its SOPs are reviewed and amended as and when necessary, but that no amendments were made in 2022.⁸⁴ MAG started a capacity-building plan on NMAS development for NESMAO and plans to elaborate NMAS in the long-term.⁸⁵ HALO increased its efforts to refine its quality assurance (QA) mechanisms through stronger integration of field teams using Kobo software for mobile data collection.⁸⁶ SCD teams also operate according to IMAS for clearance, survey, and risk education.⁸⁷

⁷⁴ Emails from Akram Alsaedi, MAG, 24 March 2023; and Kevin Straker, DCA, 15 March 2023.

⁷⁵ Email from Kevin Straker, DCA, 15 March 2023.

⁷⁶ Email from Akram Alsaedi, MAG, 24 March 2023.

⁷⁷ Emails from Mairi Cunningham, HALO, 7 June 2021; and Damian O'Brien, HALO, 1 March 2022 and 10 April 2023.

⁷⁸ Emails from Michael Edwards, SCD, 5 March 2022 and 27 March 2023.

⁷⁹ Emails from Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 31 March 2022 and 30 April 2023.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Statement of Syria, APMBT Twentieth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

⁸² Email from Lene Rasmussen, DCA, 13 April 2021.

⁸³ Email from Kevin Straker, DCA, 15 March 2023.

⁸⁴ Email from Greg Crowther, MAG, 4 October 2023.

⁸⁵ Emails from Fabrice Martin, MAG, 9 March 2022; and Akram Alsaedi, MAG, 24 March 2023.

⁸⁶ Email from Damian O'Brien, HALO, 1 March 2022.

⁸⁷ Email from Michael Edwards, SCD, 5 March 2022.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Mine action in Syria has been conducted by a wide range of organisations, largely determined by the circumstances and forces controlling the region at a given time. In areas under government control these have included mainly Russian and Syrian military engineers and civil defence organisations.⁸⁸

DCA has been present in Syria since 2015. Due to the frequent shifts and outbreaks of violence, its Syria country offices have closed and reopened several times. Its staff were relocated to Türkiye, Iraq, and then back to Syria in 2020.⁸⁹ In January 2022, DCA consolidated its mine action capacity in Raqqa governorate and continues survey and clearance operations from its established Forward Operating Base in Raqqa city, but did not report any land release of AP contaminated areas through TS or area clearance in 2022. In 2023, DCA has tentatively extended its outreach to Deir Ezzor where previous humanitarian interventions have been hindered by security and other political, social, and economic obstacles. DCA's manual teams cover both TS and NTS, supported by a mechanical team. Between February and September 2022, the number of clearance teams was reduced to two due to a drop in funding.⁹⁰

DCA continues its localisation efforts, extending the agreement with its local partner, Roj Mine Control Organisation (RMC), a partnership that has enabled access to sensitive locations. In 2022, the partnership was centred on risk education but in mid 2023, focus shifted to implementing the iMMAP NTS project in hard-to-access areas of Deir Ezzor and Kobani. Much of DCA's work in 2022 was limited to conducting spot tasks due to a period of gap funding between February and September 2022.⁹¹

Operating in the north-east, ITF, which started Phase I of its explosive hazards clearance and risk education programme with agricultural recovery in the north-east in 2021, completed the second phase of the programme in August 2022. Clearance was conducted in the north-east, particularly in contaminated agricultural land that was no longer being used due to contamination.⁹²

HAMAP Humanitaire has been operating in Raqqa governorate in the north-east conducting NTS, clearance, risk education, assistance, and capacity building of local organisations since 2017. The programme closed down in August 2022.⁹³

HALO, which has been present in Syria since 2016, is operational in the north-west of Syria in the opposition-controlled territories of Idlib and Aleppo. HALO conducts NTS, EOD, risk education, and victim assistance.

In July 2022, after receiving permission to conduct NTS and EOD for the first time in Idlib and western Aleppo in areas controlled by the Syria Salvation Government, HALO trained and deployed two teams composed of four members, including two women, for NTS and EOD spot tasks in July 2022. In February 2023, HALO's EOD teams received authorisation to use explosives for demolitions. This is a major step forward in operational capacity as previously HALO had to rely on burning techniques, which limited the types and quantity of devices that could be tackled.

HALO did not conduct TS or clearance activities in the north-west in 2022, but is planning to conduct mechanical clearance using an excavator in the north-west. As at August 2023, HALO had completed armouring an excavator and a team of six was starting mechanical clearance of an AP minefield in Idlib. HALO did not conduct TS or clearance activities in the north-west in 2022.⁹⁴

HI operates through implementing partners in the north-west of Syria, providing rehabilitative psychosocial support to persons with disabilities and those injured by violence. An HI implementing partner also conducts clearance and risk education,⁹⁵ but did not report any land release of AP contaminated areas through TS or clearance in 2022.

MAG has been operational in the north-east since 2016. Following a forced suspension of its activities in October 2019, it resumed activities in late 2020.⁹⁶ In 2022, MAG operated in Al-Hassakeh (north-east) and Raqqa governorates, conducting general survey, NTS, TS, risk education, training of community focal points, and clearance. MAG operated with six mine action teams, four multi-task teams, twenty community liaison teams, and two mechanical teams with seven machines in 2022. MAG demining capacity remained unchanged for 2023.⁹⁷

Following the signature of an MoU with the Syrian government in 21 December 2021,⁹⁸ NPA completed its inception phase in 2022 and received accreditation in 2023. Operational training took place in Damascus and Rural Damascus governorates, and as at April 2023, NPA was deploying four multi-skilled clearance teams and NTS teams in these governorates.⁹⁹ In July 2023, NPA was deploying two multi-skilled operational teams and two NTS teams within the Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmouk (in the outskirts of Damascus), and two multi-skilled operational teams and three NTS teams in the subdistrict of Al-Nashrabiyyeh (Rural Damascus).¹⁰⁰

88 "Russian military boosts qualified Syrian sappers to demine war-ravaged country", *Tass*, 9 January 2018, at: <https://bit.ly/3QcRKvA>.

89 Email from Lene Rasmussen, DCA, 13 April 2021.

90 Emails from Kevin Straker, DCA, 15 March and 28 June 2023.

91 Email from Kevin Straker, DCA, 28 June 2023.

92 ITF, "Annual Report 2022", at: <https://bit.ly/3o5uIM0>, p. 134.

93 HAMAP Humanitaire website, accessed on 5 August 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/45dzqse>.

94 Emails from Damian O'Brien, HALO, 1 March 2022 and 10 April and 13 August 2023.

95 HI website, accessed on 13 August 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3Yxt0C8>.

96 Email from MAG, 24 May 2021.

97 Emails from Akram Alsaedi, MAG, 24 March 2023; and Najat El Hamri, MAG, 3 July 2023.

98 NPA, New Humanitarian Mine Action in Syria, at: <https://bit.ly/3MHNTXF>.

99 Email from Claus Nielsen, NPA, 12 April 2023.

100 Emails from Claus Nielsen, NPA, 12 April and 30 June 2023.

A local organisation, RMC0, established in 2016, and was conducting clearance in the north-east but is said to have sustained heavy casualties when its deminers were clearing improvised devices.¹⁰¹ In 2022, RMC0 partnered with DCA for the provision of risk education. As noted above, the two organisations extended their partnership in 2023 with the focus on NTS activities in hard-to-reach areas.¹⁰²

SCD was operational in Aleppo and Idlib governorates in the north and north-west of the country, continuing to conduct surface battle area clearance (BAC), NTS, and EOD spot tasks. SCD encounters mostly CMR, but its teams also dispose of AP mines on occasion. SCD maintained its operational capacity of six NTS and six clearance teams in 2022.¹⁰³ SCD mine action activities were temporarily suspended in the aftermath of the earthquake as SCD staff assisted in the wider response. SCD teams participated in urban search and rescue operations, provided medical care and specialist support when hazardous items were discovered or suspected to be present.¹⁰⁴

To facilitate access for clearance operators in government-controlled areas, UNMAS conducted a global pre-qualification exercise for Syria. Ten mine clearance operators from a wide range of countries were pre-qualified to participate in UNMAS procurement for clearance operations.¹⁰⁵ As at April 2023, two operators—the Armenian Centre for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise (ACHDE) and NPA—had been accredited by UNMAS for mine action in government-controlled areas. Another three organisations (DRC, SHIELD, and Global Clearance Solutions) were undergoing desk accreditation as at May 2023.¹⁰⁶

UNMAS's operational capacity for the first half of 2022 was two explosive ordnance assessment teams, which consisted of seven TS personnel, and two NTS personnel. Following the completion of project funding in June 2022, the teams' work was discontinued. UNMAS did not expect changes in its operational capacity in 2023. UNMAS opened a sub-office in Aleppo in 2021, which closed in May 2022 due to lack of funding. The ACHDE deployed two clearance teams with a total of eighteen deminers.¹⁰⁷

DEMINER SAFETY

None of the operators reported demining related incidents in 2022. Media reported a Syrian army demining specialist being killed while attempting to dispose of a mine in Deir Ezzor city in April 2023.¹⁰⁸

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Syria's continuing instability and the dwindling funds for mine action prevented progress towards a coordinated national programme of mine action. Comprehensive country-wide information on outcomes of survey and clearance in any area was unavailable. Only MAG conducted and reported release of AP mined area through TS and area clearance in 2022.

MAG released a total of 3.64km² of AP mined area in north-east Syria in 2022 in Al-Hassakeh and Raqqah governorates. Of this, 2.49km² was reduced through TS (see Table 2) and 1.15km² was cleared (see Table 3). A total of 78 AP mines, 3 AV mines, and 180 items of UXO were destroyed in the process. In addition, MAG destroyed 25 AP mines in spot tasks.

DCA, which only conducted spot tasks in 2022 due to shortages in funding, destroyed 7 AP mines and 144 items of UXO during spot tasks. Of the total 110 AP mines found and disposed of in 2022, 105 were of an improvised nature. None of the operators reported cancelling AP mined area through NTS.¹⁰⁹

101 S. Kajjo, "Landmine removal crucial in post-IS Syria", *Voice of America*, 3 April 2019; and interview with operators, Erbil, Iraq, May 2019.

102 Emails from Kevin Straker, DCA, 15 March and 28 June 2023.

103 Emails from Michael Edwards, SCD, 5 March 2022 and 27 March 2023.

104 Email from Michael Edwards, SCD, 27 March 2023.

105 The ten operators are from Afghanistan, Croatia, Denmark, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, Ukraine, and the United Arab Emirates.

106 Email from Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 30 April 2023.

107 Emails from Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 31 March 2022 and 30 April and 30 June 2023.

108 SOHR, "Attempting to dismantle landmines | Regime soldier killed in Deir Ezzor city", 14 April 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3Ks3Zm5>.

109 Emails from Akram Alsaedi, MAG, 24 March 2023; and Kevin Straker, DCA, 15 March 2023.

Table 2: Release of mined area through TS in 2022¹¹⁰

Province	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
Al-Hassakeh	MAG	2,256,498
Ragga	MAG	233,358
Total		2,489,856

MAG cleared 0.12km² of areas suspected of contamination which proved to contain no AP mines (compared to 0.68km² in the previous year). MAG's TS outputs increased fivefold in 2022 compared with 2021 when MAG reduced 0.5km² of AP mined area through TS. MAG's clearance outputs have decreased in 2022, down from the 2.91km² it cleared in 2021.¹¹¹

Neither HALO nor SCD encountered AP mines during EOD tasks in the north-west in 2022, and neither undertook technical survey or area clearance activities during the year.

Table 3: Mine clearance in 2022¹¹²

Governate	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Al-Hassakeh	MAG	991,503	71	1	146
Ragga	MAG	160,168	7	2	34
Spot Tasks	MAG	N/A	25	N/A	N/A
Spot Tasks	DCA	N/A	7	N/A	N/A
Total		1,151,671	110	3	180

N/A = not applicable

110 Email from Akram Alsaedi, MAG, 24 March 2023.

111 Ibid.

112 Emails from Akram Alsaedi, MAG, 24 March 2023; and Kevin Straker, DCA, 15 March 2023.

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: UNKNOWN

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

UNKNOWN

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

UNKNOWN

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Uzbekistan should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Uzbekistan should clear anti-personnel (AP) mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- Uzbekistan should detail the extent of its mine contamination and clearance operations.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT*

- Uzbekistan has no functioning mine action programme.

NATIONAL OPERATORS*

- Army Engineers

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- None

* This is based on information from earlier years. It is not known if the information remains accurate.

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Uzbek forces have laid mines along Uzbekistan's international borders at various times, including on its border with Afghanistan in 1998, with Kyrgyzstan in 1999, and with Tajikistan in 2000. While Tajikistan and Uzbekistan settled most of their 1,283km-long border dispute following the collapse of the Soviet Union, certain areas have not yet been delineated and therefore the exact location of mined areas is not known.¹ In 2010, the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), Ban Ki-moon, criticised as "unacceptable" Uzbekistan's emplacing of mines along parts of its border that have not been delineated.²

1 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, Director, Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre (TNMAC), 25 April 2018.

2 "Ban calls Uzbekistan land mines 'unacceptable'", *The Hindu*, 6 April 2010, at: <http://bit.ly/2Z3WYgN>.

Soviet troops also laid mines on the Uzbek-Afghan border. Uzbekistan had reportedly cleared 95% of the minefields along the Tajik border by the end of 2007 in demining operations conducted by Uzbek army deminers in cooperation with Tajik border troops.³ The clearance, however, has not been verified by independent organisations, and, as at 2018, civilian casualties were still being reported on the Uzbek-Tajik border.⁴

In 2018, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan agreed to set up a joint commission to investigate mined areas along the Uzbek-Tajik border.⁵ As at July 2023, Uzbekistan had not made any information on progress public. Tajikistan also had still to report on any follow-up action but reiterated in 2022 that it "will continue to provide updates on the development of cooperation with regard to land release along the Tajik-Uzbek border in Article 7 reports and to the Meetings of the States Parties".⁶

The first State visit of the President of Uzbekistan to Tajikistan in March 2018 saw several agreements signed between the two countries, including one on demarcation of the separate regions of the Tajik-Uzbek border. According to online media, during the visit the leaders of the two States agreed that their common border would be cleared of landmines by the end of 2019.⁷ Online media sources reported that by October 2018 demining along the border had started,⁸ and that the Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre (TNMAC) and the Tajik Ministry of Defence (MoD) "got acquainted" with mine maps before starting clearance. The size of the mined areas was not publicly shared, but unofficial reports indicated it was 9.5km².⁹ Mine clearance along the border, conducted by Uzbekistan, was reportedly completed by January 2020,¹⁰ following which the Uzbek and Tajik authorities progressed from delimiting their border to demarcating it.¹¹

Online sources from 2021 indicated that a "joint Tajik-Uzbek commission for delimitation and demarcation of the mutual border" was still active and that working groups met in August 2021 in Dushanbe and in the Uzbek city of Namangan

in November 2021,¹² following discussions in May of the same year.¹³ Mine Action Review has not been able to source further information about any progress made by this joint commission.

In 2005, media reports cited Kyrgyz officials in Batken province as saying Kyrgyz border guards had checked previously mined areas of the border around the settlements of Ak-Turpak, Chonkara, and Otukchu, which had been cleared by Uzbek deminers, and confirmed that they were free of contamination.¹⁴ In March 2021, the prime ministers of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan reached an agreement to end all territorial disputes between the two countries. The agreement entails land swaps and facilitation of movement between the two countries.

According to online media reports, the Kyrgyz head of security services, Kamchybek Tashiyev, announced that "issues around the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border have been resolved 100 percent" and that "there is not a single patch of disputed territory left".¹⁵ However, other sources suggested that, in April 2021, just a month later, Mr Tashiyev had told residents of some disputed areas in Kyrgyzstan's southern provinces that the agreement was "not completely a done deal".¹⁶ It has also been reported that the March 2021 agreement was not ratified after Kyrgyz citizens voiced dissatisfaction over terms concerning use of a reservoir.¹⁷ Subsequently, it was reported that Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan signed an agreement on 3 November 2022, covering disputed sections of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border, particularly around Andijan reservoir (also known as the Kempir-Abad reservoir). The agreement includes a land swap between the two countries and stipulates that Uzbekistan will supply water to Kyrgyz villages.¹⁸

In January 2023, an online media source indicated that an agreement signed in December 2022, resolving the border dispute between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, could serve as a model for resolving Uzbekistan's border issues with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.¹⁹

- 3 Email from Jonmahmad Rajabov, Director, Tajikistan Mine Action Centre (TMAC), 16 February 2009; Tajikistan Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Article 7 Report, "General situation", 3 February 2008, p. 3; and "Uzbekistan started demining on Tajik border", *Spy.kz*, 23 October 2007.
- 4 "Demining the Tajik-Uzbek Border: What have we learned from the Tajik experience?", *The Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction*, November 2018, at: <https://bit.ly/3q7lixw>.
- 5 Tajikistan's 2019 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 16.
- 6 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.
- 7 "Uzbekistan reportedly completes demining work on Tajik border", *The Diplomat*, 10 January 2020; and "Uzbekistan completes demining of its border with Tajikistan", *Asia Plus*, 3 January 2020 at: <https://bit.ly/3Bpu0Pd>.
- 8 "Putting an end to 20 years of death along the Tajik-Uzbek Border", *RFERL*, 13 October 2018; and "Report: Tajik-Uzbek Border Cleared of Mines", *RFERL*, 6 January 2020.
- 9 "Demining of Tajik-Uzbek border began", *Regnum*, 9 October 2018, at: <https://bit.ly/3vx2WXP>; "Tajikistan and Uzbekistan start demining their common border", *Sputnik Tajikistan*, 9 October 2018, at: <https://bit.ly/3gAJm8l>; and "Dushanbe and Tashkent begin demining Tajik-Uzbek border", *Radio Ozodi*, 8 October 2018, at: <https://bit.ly/3xAPzHv>.
- 10 "Uzbekistan reportedly completes demining work on Tajik border", *The Diplomat*, 10 January 2020; "Uzbekistan, Tajikistan to finalise border demarcation", *Azernews*, 7 January 2020; and "Uzbekistan completes demining of border with Tajikistan, say officials", *Central Asia News*, 4 February 2020.
- 11 "Uzbekistan reportedly completes demining work on Tajik border", *The Diplomat*, 10 January 2020; and "Uzbekistan, Tajikistan to finalise border demarcation", *Azernews*, 7 January 2020.
- 12 Tajik-Uzbek border delimitation and demarcation commission meets in Uzbekistan", *Asia Plus*, 30 November 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3zDDNzJ>.
- 13 "Uzbekistan and Tajikistan discuss demarcation of state border", *KUN.UZ News*, 22 May 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3iSbky7>.
- 14 "Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan: Landmine threat along Uzbek border removed", *IRIN*, originally published at 31 October 2005, available at: <https://bit.ly/sezaey>.
- 15 "Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan sign deal to end border disputes", *Eurasianet*, 26 March 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3vD5QKA>.
- 16 "No Issues Remain? Not So Fast. Kyrgyz-Uzbek Border Disputes Don't Appear To Be Decided", *Radio Free Europe*, 2 April 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3zFrEK>.
- 17 "Kyrgyzstan reports deaths after Uzbek border troops open fire", *Aljazeera*, 6 May 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3zuh4pT>.
- 18 "Resolution of Uzbek border disputes heralds increasingly united Central Asia", *Central Asia News*, 12 January 2023, accessed at: <https://bit.ly/3r0lp4z>.
- 19 Ibid.

Uzbekistan has not reported plans to clear mines laid on its 150km border with Afghanistan.

It is not known whether contamination data is disaggregated by weapon type in Uzbekistan's national database, or if contamination is classified into suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) and confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

There is no functioning mine action programme in Uzbekistan.

In March 2021, Russia and Uzbekistan were reportedly considering bilateral cooperation in mine action clearance and training of Uzbek military personnel at the Russian Mine Action Centre.²⁰

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), of which Uzbekistan is a member, reported that on 24 June 2022, following a meeting of the Council of Defence Ministers of the CIS countries, that Russian Defence Minister, Sergei Shoigu, had said that a joint unit of humanitarian demining would be created in the CIS.²¹ No timeline for this was given and Mine Action Review has not been able to source any further updates on the matter.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in Uzbekistan in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The extent to which gender and diversity are mainstreamed into mine action in Uzbekistan is not known.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Mine Action Review has been unable to source any information on any efforts in Uzbekistan to implement or maintain a national mine action database.

²⁰ "Uzbekistan, Russia looking at joint training of bomb disposal specialists", *Tass* (Russian News Agency), 30 March 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3gDKjfn>.

²¹ "Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said that a joint unit of humanitarian demining will be created in the CIS", *Commonwealth of Independent States*, 27 June 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3b1ulgn>.

PLANNING AND TASKING

It is not known whether Uzbekistan has a national mine action strategy in place. Nor is it known if Uzbekistan has annual work plans for the survey and clearance of AP mines or criteria for the prioritisation of clearance tasks.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

It is not known whether Uzbekistan has national mine action standards in place.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Mine Action Review has been unable to source any recent information on Uzbekistan's national operational capacity for AP mine survey and clearance.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

There are no detailed reports of survey or clearance output in 2022. According to online media sources in January 2020, mine clearance on the Uzbek side of the border with Tajikistan was completed.²² Mine clearance was said to have been carried out exclusively by Uzbekistan and assistance from Tajikistan was refused, as the clearance conducted was exclusively on Uzbek territory.²³

²² "Uzbekistan reportedly completes demining work on Tajik border", *The Diplomat*, 10 January 2020.

²³ Ibid.

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: UNKNOWN,
BUT NOT BELIEVED TO BE HEAVY**

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

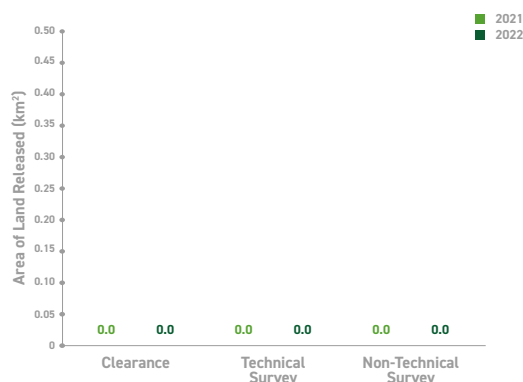
0 km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

9

(BASED ON INGO AND QTMAC
DATA, INCLUDING 7 DESTROYED
DURING CALL-OUTS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2022, the Vietnam National Mine Action Centre (VNMAC) continued its efforts to strengthen coordination of humanitarian mine action in Vietnam. All data sets have now been standardised and combined into one consolidated Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database. In another positive development, in April 2022, the Mine Action Working Group (MAWG) established sub-task forces focused on capacity development, gender, and the environment, among others. VNMAC's main focus remains on survey and clearance of explosive ordnance contamination (mainly explosive remnants of war, ERW), and not on releasing mined areas, which are prevalent along Vietnam's borders.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Vietnam should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Vietnam should clear anti-personnel (AP) mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- Vietnam should publish a detailed assessment of remaining mined areas.
- The revision of National Mine Action Standards (TCVNs), in line with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), should be completed as soon as possible and should address action to tackle AP mine contamination, as distinct from battle area clearance (BAC).
- Items of explosive ordnance discovered and destroyed, should be clearly and accurately recorded, including distinguishing AP mines from anti-vehicle (AV) mines.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Vietnam National Mine Action Centre (VNMAC)
- Provincial mine action centres and authorities (such as the Quang Tri Mine Action Centre (QTMAC), Quang Binh database and coordination unit (DBC), and Thua Thien Hue database unit (DBU), among others)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Ministry of Defence

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- PeaceTrees Vietnam (PTVN)

OTHER ACTORS

- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC)
- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- Golden West Humanitarian Foundation (Golden West)
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The full extent of mined area in Vietnam is unknown. A Landmine Impact Survey published in 2018 reported the presence of AP mines in 26 of 63 cities and provinces but gave no further details.¹ According to VNMAC, the total area still contaminated with bombs, mines, and explosive ordnance in Vietnam was 56,000km², which accounts for approximately 17% of Vietnam's land surface. Contamination is mainly concentrated in central provinces including Quang Tri, Quang Binh, Ha Tinh, Nghe An, and Quang Ngai.² Mine contamination, however, only makes up a small proportion of the total explosive ordnance contamination, with cluster munition remnants (CMR) and other ERW making up the vast majority.

Most mines were left by conflicts in the 1970s with neighbouring Cambodia and China, and affect areas close to its borders with those countries.³ Clearance had been reported by Vietnam along its northern border with China in the 1990s and since 2004, but mined areas further inland are believed to persist.⁴ It was reported in 2013 by Vietnam's Military Engineering Command that clearance had been completed in areas bordering Cambodia.⁵ Many ports and river deltas were extensively mined during the armed conflict with the United States and were not completely cleared when it ended. A number of sea mines have been found on the coast. Some mines have also been found around former US military installations.⁶

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Vietnam has one of the world's most extensive remaining contamination from CMR and other ERW (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report for Vietnam for further information).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

VNMAC was established in 2014 by Prime Ministerial decree to strengthen the direction of mine action and provide a focal point for mine action operations.⁷ VNMAC is under the direct direction of the Prime Minister and the direct management of the Ministry of National Defence (MoD).⁸

Vietnam's mine action programme continues to undergo significant restructuring and strengthening, following the Decree on the Management and Implementation of Mine Action Activities (Decree No. 18), and entered into effect on 20 March 2019, and subsequent approval of a guiding Circular (Circular No. 195) which came into effect in February 2020.⁹

1 VNMAC, "Report on Explosive Remnants of War Contamination in Vietnam, Based on the Explosive Remnants of War Contamination Survey and Mapping – Phase 1", provided by Vietnam National Mine Action Centre (VNMAC) 19 April 2018, p. 38.

2 Email from VNMAC, 14 July 2023.

3 Interview with Sr. Col. Phan Duc Tuan, Deputy Commander, Military Engineering Command, People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN), in Geneva, 30 June 2011.

4 Information provided by Sr. Col. Phan Duc Tuan, PAVN, in email from Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFA), Hanoi, 24 September 2012; and in interview in Geneva, 30 June 2011.

5 Interview with Sr. Col. Nguyen Thanh Ban, Head of Bomb and Mine Department, Engineering Command, Hanoi, 18 June 2013.

6 Landmine Action, *Explosive Remnants of War and Mines Other than Anti-personnel Mines*, London, March 2005, p. 181.

7 Prime Ministerial Decree (No. 738 of 2013) on the management and implementation of mine action activities, Hanoi.

8 STA Capacity Development Project (NPA), 'Vietnamese legal framework in mine action', January 2023.

9 Emails from Jan Erik Støa, Country Director, NPA, 6 April 2020; and Tim Horner, Senior Technical Advisor, NPA, on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 6 April 2021.

Decree 18 is currently the highest-level legal document governing mine action activities in Vietnam and is applicable to all domestic and foreign organisations operating in mine action in Vietnam.¹⁰ Circular 195 provides detailed guidance on the implementation of the provisions of the Decree. Under Decree 18, the MoD continues to be the lead authority for the national mine action programme, in coordination with other relevant ministries and sectors;¹¹ while VNMAC will, under the direction of the Prime Minister and management of the MoD, “monitor, coordinate and implement mine action tasks”.¹² In 2022, VNMAC took a seat on the global IMAS Review Board for the first time.¹³

The Decree and the guiding Circular has, since 2020, given VNMAC a clear mandate, roles, and responsibilities as the national coordinating entity for mine action operations, and this has further established the legal basis for revision and updating of the national regulations (QCVNs) and standards (TCVNs) (please see section below, Land Release System, for more information on the current status of the QCVNs and TCVNs) and for the adoption of regulations on information management.

Vietnam is preparing to draft an Ordinance for mine action in Vietnam,¹⁴ following the direction of the Prime Minister at the high-level meeting on mine action in February 2022. The planned Ordinance, which is of greater regulatory status than Degree 18,¹⁵ will be issued by the Standing Committee of the National Assembly of Vietnam. It is expected to be approved in 2024 and will be applicable to all domestic and foreign organisations and individuals involved in explosive ordnance clearance in Vietnam.¹⁶

VNMAC is entirely nationally funded, and implementation of the National Mine Action Programme (Program 504) is funded by both state and international funding.¹⁷ According to VNMAC, the government has provided support for mine action, including i) establishment of coordinating agencies and associations to support all levels of mine action activities; ii) completion of a legal system, mechanism and policies, which create a legal basis for post-war demining activities (the MoD cooperates with other ministries to develop Circulars guiding QCVNs, TCVNs, and standard operating procedure (SOP) on quality management (QM), survey, and clearance and related issues); iii) facilitation of activities to develop the management and administration

capacity, and the survey and clearance capacity, of demining organisations; iv) formation of a national QM system for survey and clearance in accordance international standards; and v) formation of an information management system.¹⁸

VNMAC's involvement in coordination meetings, such as the Mine Action Working Group (MAWG, previously named the Landmine Working Group (LWG)), has increased in recent years. The MAWG, which is co-chaired by Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),¹⁹ is a platform for all mine action stakeholders in Vietnam to meet quarterly to share and discuss on-going issues and plan for the next quarter.²⁰ In April 2022, MAWG members established sub-task forces, focused on different areas including capacity development, gender, the environment, victim assistance, and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE).²¹ VNMAC participates in all sub-task force and MAWG meetings.²² The MAWG met three times in 2022: two full meetings in April and October, and an additional meeting of sub-task force chairs. In 2023, the MAWG was focusing on updating the terms of reference (ToR) for the MAWG; enhancing the functionality of the sub-task forces; and supporting development of the mine action ordinance and the TCVNs.²³

International non-governmental organisations (INGOs) reported good cooperation and coordination with VNMAC, with VNMAC continuing to demonstrate a willingness to discuss ideas and challenges with international operators.²⁴ However, VNMAC will always have to operate within the confines of the MoD.²⁵ There is a well-established process for granting work permits and visas to international mine action staff and for procurement of demining equipment, although the importation of equipment can be lengthy, depending on the nature of the items.²⁶

MAG, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), PeaceTrees Vietnam (PTVN), the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), Golden West Humanitarian Foundation (Golden West), and UNDP all provide capacity development support in Vietnam. Capacity development partners are also supporting VNMAC to establish regional mine action structures. (See Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Vietnam for more details).

10 Email from Sarah Goring, Country Director, MAG, 5 April 2023.

11 Decree on Implementation and Management of Mine Action, No.18/2019/ND-CP, 1 February 2019.

12 Draft Decree on the management and implementation of mine action activities, Hanoi, April 2018.

13 Email from NPA Vietnam, 16 June 2023.

14 Interview with Mr Hop, Permanent Deputy Director General, VNMAC, Geneva, 22 June 2023.

15 Ibid.

16 STA Capacity Development Project (NPA), 'Vietnamese legal framework in mine action', January 2023.

17 Email from Tim Horner, VNMAC, on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 6 April 2021.

18 Ibid.

19 Email from Sarah Goring, MAG, 5 April 2023.

20 Email from VNMAC, 14 July 2023.

21 Email from Sarah Goring, MAG, 5 April 2023.

22 Email from Phạm Hoàng Hà, Country Director, PTVN, 3 May 2023.

23 Email from NPA Vietnam, 16 June 2023.

24 Emails from NPA Vietnam, 16 June 2023; and Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 3 May 2023.

25 Emails from Kimberley McCosker, Project Manager, NPA, 21 April 2022.

26 Email from Jan Erik Støa, NPA, 6 April 2020.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Currently VNMAC does not have a TCVN or policy on environmental management. In 2022, however, in a positive development, a sub-task force on the environment was created under the MAWG.²⁷ VNMAC is considering how and when to incorporate environmental management into the TCVNs.

For more details on measures being taken by MAG, NPA, and PTVN in Vietnam, to take the environment into consideration during the planning and tasking process for survey and clearance of explosive ordnance, see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Vietnam.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

In 2013, Vietnam amended Article 26 of the Constitution so that "male and female citizens are equal in all aspects" and prohibit gender discrimination. State policy is to guarantee equal gender rights and opportunities. In terms of national implementation, women participate more in victim assistance and EORE, while national survey/clearance and information management are still male-dominated and managed by the Vietnam Army.²⁸ A MAWG sub-task force on gender was established in 2022 and in December of that year MAG co-hosted a workshop in Hanoi on gender mainstreaming with UNDP.²⁹

MAG, NPA, and PTVN all have policies and strategies on gender, diversity and inclusion to ensure the equal participation, and their respective operations data are disaggregated by sex and age. For more details on measures being taken by MAG, NPA, and PTVN to mainstream gender and diversity in their respective mine action programmes in Vietnam, see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Vietnam.

In 2023, VNMAC requested assistance from MAG and the VNMAC Senior Technical Advisor in the development of a gender policy.³⁰

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Information management is a top priority for VNMAC,³¹ and in 2022 VNMAC put significant efforts into improving information management and data collection capacity nationwide. Decree 18 and Guiding Circular 195 make VNMAC responsible for the national information management system and give it a clear mandate and legal authority. All provinces and international organisations nationwide are now required to send operational reports to VNMAC.³²

With support from NPA capacity development personnel, VNMAC developed regulations for a national Information Management System. The regulations were subsequently issued by VNMAC on 25 July 2022, following a consultative review process. The regulations establish a national information management system for standardised reporting of all mine action data from across Vietnam's provinces into the national IMSMA database held by VNMAC. The regulations also include the responsibilities of each stakeholder, including the collection, reporting, and provision of data on mines and ERW.

VNMAC now has authority over mine action data, which it is beginning to exercise by requiring all Provincial Military Commands or provincial mine action authorities (if any) to collect and report data to the VNMAC Information Management Unit (IMU) on a quarterly basis,³³ which is a legal requirement of the IM regulations.³⁴ The adoption of the legal framework also paves the way for provincial authorities to be recognised as having a key role in the reporting system between operators and VNMAC.³⁵

Consolidation of data from five different IMSMA databases into one national IMSMA database was finished in December 2022. The consolidated IMSMA system is now operational and well-managed in VNMAC. VNMAC said that it was working to collect and consolidate previous data into the national database.³⁶ The national database process continues to be supported by NPA's capacity development project, funded by the US State Department Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM/WRA).

27 Email from Sarah Goring, MAG, 5 April 2023.

28 Email from the GICHD, 5 May 2023.

29 Emails from Sarah Goring, MAG, 5 April and 19 May 2023.

30 Email from Sean Moorhouse, Senior Technical Advisor to VNMAC, NPA, 10 August 2023.

31 Interview with Mr Hop, VNMAC, Geneva, 22 June 2023.

32 Email from VNMAC, 14 July 2023.

33 Emails from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 13 May 2021; and VNMAC, 14 July 2023.

34 Email from Tim Horner, NPA, 7 September 2022.

35 Email from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 13 May 2021.

36 Email from VNMAC, 14 July 2023.

In recent years significant effort has been made to collect and migrate historic data (including paper records from Provincial Military Commands and Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) data), and all known data is now part of the new consolidated national IMSMA database.³⁷ Representatives from each of Vietnam's 63 provinces and 7 regions, including provincial and regional military commands, have now been trained on how to use the new national information management system, and have been given hardware containing IMSMA with all provincial data. This enables each of the provinces to fulfil their obligation to report mine action data into the national database.³⁸

VNMAC personnel are now capable of conducting IM training without the assistance of US-funded advisors – a significant indicator of VNMAC's desire to have ownership over the national information management system and related trainings, and of their continually increasing capacity for information management.³⁹ All INGOs/operators can access the provincial IMSMA database through the approval of the provincial authorities where they work, or they can make a request to VNMAC for the information.⁴⁰

VNMAC has now standardised the IMSMA reporting forms and all operators use the same forms, having developed the templates through a series of workshops, including consultation with international and national experts. The

templates were also piloted by experienced provincial authorities such as the Quang Tri Mine Action Centre (QTMAC) and the Hue database unit (DBU).⁴¹ The standardised forms help enable VNMAC to routinely collect and input new mine action information into the centrally-owned standardised database.⁴² Operators report to the database units in the province where they operate, and the provincial database units then report to VNMAC.⁴³ In addition, operators also send annual reports to VNMAC directly, as requested by VNMAC.⁴⁴ As at May 2023, 12 of the 63 provinces had reported mine action data to VNMAC – a number which VNMAC expects to rise, as it continues to provide direction for reporting to the remaining provinces.⁴⁵

A Circular adopted in October 2021, relating to the QM procedure in survey and clearance, includes articles regulating the information QM process.⁴⁶ The provinces are responsible for quality assurance (QA) of data, typically by the respective DBU or Provincial Military Commands. VNMAC quality checks data for consistency and completeness. VNMAC is also responsible for the QA of the data received by the commercial operators.⁴⁷

For details on information management and reporting at the provincial level, see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Vietnam.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Decision on Programme 504, approved by the Prime Minister in April 2010, set out a National Mine Action Plan for 2010–25. The plan, which covers mines, CMR, and other ERW, aimed to “mobilize domestic and international resources in making efforts to minimize and finally create impact-free environment for social economic development.” The programme foresees completing an impact survey to map contamination nationwide, developing national standards, and establishing a database management centre.⁴⁸ It called for clearance of 8,000km² of ERW between 2016 and 2025.⁴⁹ Vietnam does not yet have a strategy specifically targeting mines and plans to address all explosive ordnance comprehensively. VNMAC would benefit from elaborating a national mine action strategy and annual work plans for mines, with clear targets for survey and clearance.

During the national conference to review the achievement of Programme 504 in February 2022 in Hanoi, VNMAC shared the 10-year report on the progress and achievements of Vietnam on mine action (i.e. survey, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), clearance, risk education and victim assistance).⁵⁰ VNMAC also shared the five-year National Mine Action Plan (2021–25), which has been developed to implement the final period of the current National Mine Action plan. The plan, which was elaborated by the government without input from INGOs or other members of the then LWG (now the MAWG), also seeks to develop and implement TS of “zoning areas” confirmed as contaminated by mines and ERW, as the basis for strategic planning.⁵¹

37 Emails from NPA Vietnam, NPA, 16 June 2023; and VNMAC, 14 July 2023.

38 Emails from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 21 April 2022; Tim Horner, NPA, 7 September 2022; and NPA Vietnam, 16 June 2023.

39 Email from NPA Vietnam, 16 June 2023.

40 Ibid.

41 Email from VNMAC, 14 July 2023.

42 Emails from Sarah Goring, MAG, 5 April 2023; NPA Vietnam, 16 June 2023; and Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 3 May 2023.

43 Email from Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 3 May 2023.

44 Email from NPA Vietnam, 16 June 2023.

45 Interview with Mr Hop, VNMAC, Geneva, 22 June 2023.

46 Email from VNMAC, 14 July 2023.

47 Email from NPA Vietnam, 16 June 2023.

48 STA Capacity Development Project (NPA), “Vietnamese legal framework in mine action”, January 2023.

49 Prime Minister, “Decision on Approval of the National Mine Action Plan Period 2010–2025”, Hanoi, 21 April 2010.

50 Emails from Valentina Stivanello, Country Director, MAG, 29 April 2022; and Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 9 May 2022.

51 Emails from Tim Horner on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 6 April 2021; Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 29 April and 20 June 2022; and Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 22 June 2022.

In June 2022, VNMAC said the five-year plan was still undergoing Prime Ministerial review regarding two final issues concerning the budget and capacity for implementation of the plan.⁵² On 22 June 2023, the National Action Plan in Mine Action 2023–25 (now a three-year plan), submitted by the MoD, was approved by the Prime Minister.⁵³ VNMAC had an annual work plan for 2022⁵⁴ and for 2023,⁵⁵ but neither report had been shared externally at the time of writing.⁵⁶

VNMAC has said that its mission for the period 2021–25 includes objectives to complete the organisational structure and legal framework and policies; ensure effective mine action management; foster international cooperation to

mobilise necessary resources; complete the information management system for mine action nationwide; and implement survey and clearance activities over 5,000km², with priority in heavily contaminated areas.⁵⁷

There is currently no national prioritisation system in place for clearance of CMR, other ERW, and mines, and at present there is insufficient data in the national IMSMA database to prioritise on a task-by-task basis. Prioritisation at the task or lower administrative levels is currently the responsibility of provinces.⁵⁸ For details on explosive ordnance prioritisation at the provincial level, see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Vietnam.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Vietnam has both National Technical Regulations (QCVNs), which are mandatory and similar in content to SOPs, and National Mine Action Standards (TCVNs), which, despite being standards, are considered optional by VNMAC.⁵⁹

VNMAC made significant progress in recent years to review and update the QCVNs to help bring them into line with IMAS.⁶⁰ The former QCVNs and existing TCVNs were drafted more with the MoD in mind, used terminology inconsistently, and chapters contradicted themselves.⁶¹ INGOs welcomed the inclusiveness of the revision process,⁶² which involved the establishment of four working groups, co-chaired by VNMAC, and extensive consultation with operators and international organisations, including the GICHD.⁶³

A guiding Circular (No. 59)⁶⁴ was issued by the MoD on 30 August 2022 to promulgate the QCVNs, which include general provisions, technical regulations, regulations on

safety and on management, responsibilities of organisations and individuals, and organisation and implementation.⁶⁵ The revised QCVNs were approved in September 2022,⁶⁶ and rolled out across operators. VNMAC announced in a MAWG meeting that training would be given on the new QCVNs, but as at April 2023 this had yet to take place.⁶⁷ In Quang Tri, QTMAC coordinated among operators to provide a consolidated report to VNMAC on any discrepancies between the QCVNs and operator SOPs.⁶⁸

Revision of the TCVNs was still ongoing at time of writing. As at August 2023, fourteen TCVNs had been completed and were awaiting approval and the first draft of the TCVN on risk management had been produced, which the GICHD was helping VNMAC to finalise.⁶⁹ VNMAC expected the review of the TCVNs to be completed in the last quarter of 2023.⁷⁰ A further TCVN on environmental protection in mine action is also expected to be developed.⁷¹

52 Interview with Mr Phuc, VNMAC, Geneva, 23 June 2022.

53 Email from NPA Vietnam, 7 July 2023.

54 Email from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 21 April 2022.

55 Email from VNMAC, 14 July 2023.

56 Email from NPA Vietnam, 16 June 2023.

57 Email from Doan Thi Hong Hai, Capacity Development Project Officer, NPA, on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 3 June 2022.

58 Email from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 21 April 2022.

59 Email from Resad Junuzagic, NPA, 6 May 2019.

60 Emails from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 8 April 2021; and Helene Kuperman, MAG, 31 March 2021.

61 Emails from Resad Junuzagic, NPA, 6 May 2019; Jan Erik Støa, NPA, 6 April 2020; and Helene Kuperman, MAG, 10 April 2020.

62 Email from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 8 April 2021.

63 Emails from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 8 April 2021 and 21 April 2022; Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 29 April 2022; GICHD, 24 April 2022; and Tim Horner on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 6 April 2021.

64 Circular No. 59/2022 on promulgation of the National Technical Regulations (QCVN) in mine action.

65 STA Capacity Development Project (NPA), "Vietnamese legal framework in mine action", January 2023.

66 Email from Tim Horner, NPA, 7 September 2022.

67 Email from Sarah Goring, MAG, 5 April 2023.

68 Ibid.

69 Interview with Mr Hop, VNMAC, Geneva, 22 June 2023; and email from Sean Moorhouse, NPA, 5 July 2023.

70 Email from VNMAC, 14 July 2023.

71 Emails from Sarah Goring, MAG, 5 April 2023; NPA Vietnam, 16 June 2023; and Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 3 May 2023.

A corresponding Circular (Circular 121) related to the revised non-technical survey (NTS), technical survey (TS), and clearance procedures was issued in September 2021, in addition to Circular 122 on guidelines for determining the rate per shift of demining machines and equipment and Circular 122 on guidelines for determining estimated norm and managing costs in the explosive ordnance clearance estimates.⁷²

Circular 195 covers the whole QM system. In addition, QTMAC developed a field-orientated QM SOP which was approved by the Provincial Authority in July 2022, for use in Quang Tri province.⁷³ A corresponding Circular relating to the QM procedure in survey and clearance, was adopted in October 2021.⁷⁴

The QCVNs and TCVNs cover AP mine operations under the heading mines/ERW clearance, but both documents lack clarity with respect to addressing mined areas, as distinct from battle areas.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Most clearance in Vietnam is conducted by the Army Engineering Corps and military-owned commercial companies. Outside the central provinces, the current strength and deployment of military-related demining is unknown.

Vietnamese officials have previously reported that it had 250 mine clearance and BAC teams nationally. Vietnam reportedly has more than 70 military-owned companies undertaking clearance related to infrastructure and commercial and development projects.⁷⁵

International operators active in 2022 included: MAG, working in Quang Binh and Quang Tri provinces; NPA, working in Quang Binh, Quang Tri, and Thua Thien Hue provinces, and most recently also in Kon Tum province since late 2022; and PTVN, who have been working in Quang Tri province since 1995 and now also in Quang Binh.⁷⁶

INGO clearance operators are not currently operating in the areas close to Vietnam's borders, where many of the mined areas are located. Survey and clearance by the INGO operators are currently addressing contamination from CMR and other ERW, and not AP mines. For further details on survey and clearance capacity of humanitarian operators, see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Vietnam.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

No survey or clearance of mined areas was conducted by INGOs in 2022. However, two AP mines were discovered by INGOs during CMR clearance and a further seven were destroyed during EOD spot tasks following call-outs (six by NGOs and one by the provincial military). With the exception of the single mine reported by QTMAC as having been destroyed by the military in Quang Tri province in 2022, no other data has been made available on survey or clearance by the Army Engineering Corps or military-owned commercial companies. No survey or clearance was conducted under the KV-MAP project, for which operations ended in 2021 and the next phase of the project had yet to begin.

SURVEY IN 2022

MAG, NPA, and PTVN did not survey any mined area in 2022.⁷⁷

CLEARANCE IN 2022

MAG, NPA, and PTVN did not clear any mined area in 2022, but a small number of mines (eight in total) were discovered by INGOs during CMR clearance and EOD spot tasks in 2022.⁷⁸ In addition, one M14 mine was found and destroyed by the provincial military during a spot task in Quang Tri province.⁷⁹ This is a decrease compared to the equivalent 20 AP mines destroyed by INGOs in 2021 (in addition to a further 101 landmines reported by QTMAC as having been destroyed by Provincial Military Commands in 2021, during EOD spot-tasks in Quang Tri province).

72 "Vietnamese legal framework in mine action", January 2023; and email from Sarah Goring, MAG, 5 April 2023.

73 Emails from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 8 April 2021; and Tim Horner, NPA, 7 September 2022.

74 "Vietnamese legal framework in mine action, January 2023; and emails from Sarah Goring, MAG, 5 April 2023; and VNMAC, 14 July 2023.

75 Interview with Sr. Col. Nguyen Thanh Ban, Engineering Command, Hanoi, 18 June 2013; email from Executive Office of the National Steering Committee, 6 August 2012; and interviews with mine action stakeholders, Hanoi, 16–20 April 2018; and email from Lee Moroney, Golden West Humanitarian Foundation, 22 June 2019.

76 Emails from Sarah Goring, MAG, 5 April 2023; NPA Vietnam, 16 June 2023; and Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 3 May 2023.

77 Emails from Sarah Goring, MAG, 5 April 2023; NPA Vietnam, 16 June 2023; and Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 3 May 2023.

78 Emails from Sarah Goring, MAG, 5 April 2023; and Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 3 May 2023.

79 Email from Vu Dinh Ngoc, Vice Director, QTMAC, 21 August 2023.

MAG found an M16 AP mine in Dong Son village, Hai Son commune, Hai Lang district, Quang Tri province, during BAC activities in August 2022. Discovery of the AP mine resulted in the suspension of the clearance site. A Community Liaison Team was deployed to reconfirm information with the local community regarding the former military base and mined area, and MAG returned the confirmed hazardous area (CHA) back to QTMAC.⁸⁰

PTVN destroyed one AP mine during BAC and 6 AP mines during EOD spot tasks in 2022. The AP mine discovered during BAC was found during clearance of a CHA in Quang Binh province. Upon discovery of the mine, PTVN conducted risk evaluation to determine whether or not there was any further evidence of mines or of a minefield before continuing clearance.⁸¹ As mentioned, PTVN destroyed a further 6 AP mines during EOD spot tasks in Quang Tri province.⁸² As a result of PTVN continuing to discover mines during its operations, it conducted technical training on mine clearance

in 2022 and added operating procedures, including on the risk from mines found during BAC.⁸³

NPA Vietnam did not encounter any AP mines during its operations in Vietnam in 2022.⁸⁴

According to VNMAC, INGOs destroyed a total of 28 bombs, 15,625 submunitions, and 26,060 landmines and other unexploded ordnance (UXO) were destroyed in 2022. The number of landmines was not disaggregated from items of UXO.⁸⁵

No data has been made available on clearance by the Army Engineering Corps or military-owned commercial companies. As at July 2023, VNMAC was still consolidating 2022 clearance data reported by the provinces, into the national database,⁸⁶ which is presumed to include clearance by commercial operators and the military.⁸⁷

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Vietnam has not set a deadline for completion of anti-personnel mine clearance. In its national mine action plan for 2010 to 2025 it called for the clearance of 8,000km² of explosive ordnance from 2016 to 2025⁸⁸ but did not specify how much of this, if any, should be mined area.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

The GICHD has been supporting VNMAC, NPA, and UNDP in the review of the current legislative and normative framework, with a focus on residual risk management. As a preparatory step, the GICHD and the VNMAC, with the support of UNDP and NPA, have worked on an assessment of the current residual risk management capacity and the required or desired capacities that VNMAC needs to manage residual contamination.⁸⁹ The GICHD and VNMAC co-organised a regional workshop on risk management and liability in land release and the management of residual contamination for Southeast Asia, in Hanoi from 22 to 26 May 2023.⁹⁰

80 Email from Sarah Goring, MAG, 5 April 2023.

81 Email from Vu Dinh Ngoc, QTMAC, 21 August 2023.

82 Emails from Vu Dinh Ngoc, QTMAC, 21 and 31 August 2023.

83 Email from Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 3 May 2023.

84 Email from NPA Vietnam, 16 June 2023.

85 Email from VNMAC, 14 July 2023.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid.

88 Prime Minister, "Decision on Approval of the National Mine Action Plan Period 2010–2025", Hanoi, 21 April 2010.

89 Email from the GICHD, 24 April 2022.

90 Email from Sean Moorhouse, NPA, 5 July 2023.

OTHER AREAS

The background of the slide is composed of several overlapping geometric shapes in two shades of green: a medium green and a darker forest green. These shapes create a dynamic, layered effect. A prominent diagonal band of medium green runs from the bottom left towards the top right. Other angular shapes in both colors fill the remaining space, creating a sense of depth and movement.

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION:

1 km²

(NATIONAL ESTIMATE)

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

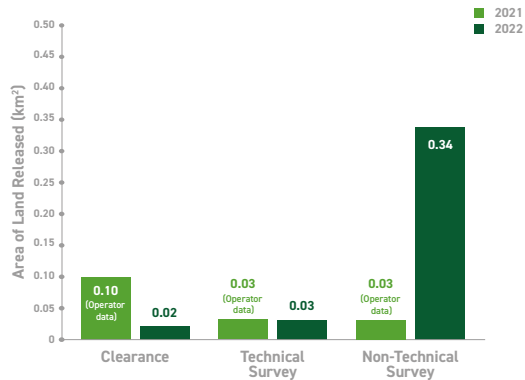
0.02 km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

12

(ALL DESTROYED IN
SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- While formal accession to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) is not currently possible for Kosovo, as it is not yet recognised as a State by the depository, Kosovo should submit a letter to the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General stating that it intends to fully comply, on a voluntary basis, with the APMBC and submit voluntary Article 7 reports annually.
- The Kosovo Mine Action Centre (KMAC) should seek to complete clearance of anti-personnel (AP) mines as soon as possible and should elaborate a new mine action strategy with realistic annual targets and a timeline for completion.
- The Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) should be updated to the latest version, to have accurate and up-to-date information for the new mine action strategy.
- In addition to survey of suspected hazardous areas (SHAs), Kosovo should also review the basis on which confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) are established. In particular, it should conduct survey to confirm evidence of CMR contamination before embarking on full clearance.
- A specific resource mobilisation strategy should be developed as a matter of urgency.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT

- Kosovo Mine Action Centre (KMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Kosovo Security Force (KSF)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust (HALO)

- Kosovo Force (KFOR), a NATO-led International Peace Keeping Force

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Kosovo is contaminated by mines, cluster munition remnants (CMR), and other explosive remnants of war (ERW), primarily as a result of the conflict between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in the late 1990s, and between Yugoslavia and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) member States in 1999.¹

As at the end of 2022, KMAC reported that 25 AP mined areas remained, covering almost 0.59km² (see Table 1).

In addition, there are four areas that are contaminated with both AP mines and CMR totalling 425,000m², bringing the total to 1.01km².² This is a decrease from the 30 mined areas covering almost 1.19km² reported as at the end of 2021.³ The baseline of mine contamination at the end of 2022 cannot be reconciled with the baseline reported by KMAC at the end of 2021.

Table 1: AP mined area by district (at end 2022) (KMAC data)⁴

District	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total areas	Total area (m ²)
South	1	20,000	5	72,021	6	92,021
East	2	14,645	4	68,832	6	83,477
West	6	177,274	7	236,054	13	413,328
Total	9	211,919	16	376,907	25	588,826

The last detailed survey of contamination in Kosovo was in 2013, during which The HALO Trust (HALO) and KMAC systematically conducted community surveys across most of the districts in Kosovo, with the exception of four municipalities in the north, and confirmed 130 hazardous areas: 79 mined areas covering an estimated 2.76km² and 51 cluster munition strikes covering an estimated 7.63km².⁵ The northern municipalities have since been surveyed and KMAC has confirmed that no mined areas remain.⁶

KMAC believes the current baseline of contamination to be reasonably accurate, evidence-based, and complete, but said there may still be reports by locals in the future of previously unknown areas suspected to be contaminated by mines.⁷

HALO conducted a non-technical survey (NTS) project from 2021 to 2022 that was designed to create CHAs and SHAs, as this was not done during the 2013 survey; prior to the

recent survey there was no classification of CHAs and SHAs in Kosovo. HALO reports that the project has significantly contributed to ensuring Kosovo's current baseline is as accurate as possible given available resources. In 2022, 77,506m² of previously unrecorded AP mined area was discovered by HALO through NTS and added to the database. The areas consist of eight mined areas in the villages of Batushë, Belincë, Kabash, Kuklibeg, Morinë, Neçavc, and Rapqë.⁸

Both AP and anti-vehicle (AV) mines were used during the conflict, in fixed-pattern minefields as well as more randomly in "nuisance" minefields.⁹ The UN claimed in 2002 that "the problems associated with landmines, cluster munitions and other items of unexploded ordnance [UXO] in Kosovo have been virtually eliminated",¹⁰ but further investigation revealed considerably more contamination than indicated.¹¹

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

In addition to contamination from mines, Kosovo is contaminated with CMR (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Kosovo for further information) as well as other ERW. Kosovo Force (KFOR) and Kosovo Security Force (KSF) explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams regularly dispose of ERW in response to information from the public or demining organisations.¹²

1 See UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), "UNMIK OKPCC EOD Management Section Annual Report 2005", Pristina, 18 January 2006, p. 2; and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Explosive Remnants of War, Cluster Bombs and Landmines in Kosovo*, Rev'd Edn, Geneva, June 2001, at: <https://bit.ly/331PWfQ>, pp. 6 and 15.

2 Email from Ahmet Sallova, Head, KMAC, 24 April 2023.

3 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

4 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 April 2023.

5 HALO, "Action on cluster munitions in Kosovo", Side event, First Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Review Conference, Dubrovnik, 10 September 2015.

6 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 23 August 2022.

7 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

8 Email from Michael Montafi, Programme Manager, HALO, 18 April 2023.

9 ICRC, *Explosive Remnants of War, Cluster Bombs and Landmines in Kosovo*, June 2001, p. 15.

10 "UNMIK Mine Action Programme Annual Report – 2001", Mine Action Coordination Cell, Pristina, undated but 2002, p. 1.

11 HALO, "Failing the Kosovars: The Hidden Impact and Threat from ERW", Report, 15 December 2006, p. 1.

12 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 1 August 2012.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Kosovo's mine action programme is fully nationally owned, with a strong, longstanding commitment from the government, and benefits from a dedicated team of permanent national staff.¹³ KMAC is responsible for managing survey and clearance of mines and ERW throughout Kosovo. KMAC prepares an annual work plan in cooperation with international demining non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and coordinates their operations along with the national demining teams of the KSF. It also coordinates survey, quality assurance, risk education, public information, and victim assistance activities.¹⁴ KMAC's role and responsibilities as head of the national mine action programme under the auspices of the Ministry of Defence were established and institutionalised by Kosovo's 2012 Law on Humanitarian Demining.¹⁵

NGO operators in Kosovo report a constructive working relationship with KMAC and say there is an enabling environment for mine action in Kosovo with clear administrative processes in place for obtaining visas and annual accreditation.¹⁶

In 2022, the Kosovo Government provided €1.1 million in financial support to KMAC and to the KSF for mine and CMR clearance.¹⁷ Kosovo's current Mine Action Strategy, for 2019–24 sets an objective of ensuring greater financial stability through intensified fundraising efforts.¹⁸ HALO was able to secure three years' funding in 2021 from the US Government, with support from KMAC.¹⁹ In December 2022, the European Union (EU) committed to funding a joint project from Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and HALO, which will run for 34 months, with €2 million assigned to NPA for CMR clearance and €1.9 million assigned to HALO for mine clearance.²⁰

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Kosovo has a national mine action standard on the environment which was updated in line with International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) 07.13 on environmental management in mine action during 2022.²¹

HALO's Kosovo programme has no specific environmental standing operating procedure (SOP) but an organisational environmental policy and global SOP were under review at the time of writing.²²

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Kosovo's mine action strategy 2019–24 stipulates that all mine action activities and assistance must reflect the needs of different ages and gender in a targeted and non-discriminatory manner, and that mine action and community liaison data are to be collected and systematically disaggregated according to sex and age.²³ Both KMAC and KSF have gender policies in place. KMAC reported that the KSF's gender policy aims to facilitate the consultation of all groups affected by mines and ERW, expressly women and children.

Table 2: Gender composition of mine action operators in 2022²⁴

Operator	Total staff	Women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Women in operational positions
KMAC	4	1	3	0	1	1
KSF	115	6	8	1	95	4
HALO	102	28	15	5	71	20

13 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, pp. 5–6.

14 ICRC, *Explosive Remnants of War, Cluster Bombs and Landmines in Kosovo*, June 2001, p. 15.

15 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 3; and email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

16 Emails from Vanja Sikirica, NPA, 30 March 2023; and Michael Montafi, HALO, 18 April 2023.

17 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 April 2023.

18 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 14.

19 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO, 11 May 2022.

20 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 18 April 2023.

21 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 April 2023.

22 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 18 April 2023.

23 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 8; and email from Megan Dwyer, HALO, 11 May 2022.

24 Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 April 2023; and Michael Montafi, HALO, 18 April 2023.

Kosovo's mine action strategy recognises the local barriers to equal employment society, with significant differences in employment levels between men and women. The Strategy notes that, as at 2019, more than four-fifths of women of working age were not employed in Kosovo's labour market, and less than one in eight had been employed annually over the past five years. The primary reasons given for female unemployment are child- and family-care obligations, which traditionally in Kosovo society fall on women.

The Strategy notes the efforts of mine action operators to overcome these challenges and barriers to employment, such as through childcare and parental leave, and gender-sensitive recruitment practices that encourage women to apply for positions traditionally seen as jobs for men. It further recalls the importance of employment of not only multi-gender, but also multi-ethnic survey and clearance teams, and the particular benefits of recruitment in areas affected by high unemployment and poverty.²⁵

KMAC recognises that explosive ordnance affects women, girls, men and boys differently and that gender-specific mobility patterns, roles, and responsibilities mean that women and men of different ages and ethnic backgrounds will have distinct information on contaminated areas in their

communities as well as different priorities for clearance and post-release land use.²⁶

HALO has a gender policy in place which was developed in consultation with the Kosovo Women's Network. The policy aims at both increasing the recruitment of women and at retaining existing female employees and includes provision for increased family leave and child-care allowances for those taking care of children, in order to remove barriers to women's employment.²⁷ HALO continues to explore options for attracting more female applicants to clearance operator vacancies, such as creating a video showcasing female HALO employees and liaising with women's networks in Kosovo.²⁸

HALO continues to ensure that as many household members as possible are consulted during pre- and post-clearance surveys. It continues to ensure inclusion of women, children, and ethnic minorities in community liaison (CL) activities; there is always a female CL Officer supporting the NTS teams, and senior management staff who are fluent in relevant languages are deployed for CL activities.²⁹

According to KMAC, Kosovo's baseline of AP mined area has been established through inclusive consultation.³⁰

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

KMAC uses the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) New Generation version for its national mine action database. Data are disaggregated between mines, CMR, and other ERW.³¹ Operators were positive in their assessments of the quality and accessibility of data contained in the database and of KMAC's information management systems in general.

HALO reported that all data collection forms are consistent and enable collection of the necessary data and added that the database is checked in comparison to HALO's quarterly reports; once every task is completed or when KMAC agrees

and signs off on a re-survey or survey conducted by an NTS team, the data is fed into IMSMA.³²

The land release data reported to Mine Action Review by clearance operators and the KMAC were more or less aligned. This is an improvement compared to previous years' reports, which typically contained greater discrepancies.

KMAC reported to Mine Action Review that voluntary submission of Article 7 reports was again under consideration.³³

PLANNING AND TASKING

Kosovo's Mine Action Strategy for 2019–24 predicted that all known mined and CMR-contaminated areas would be addressed by the end of 2024, leaving only residual contamination to be managed thereafter. It contains annual projections for AP mine clearance, including:

- all high-priority AP mine tasks (8 as at October 2018) to be cleared by the end of 2020
- all medium-priority AP mine tasks (25 as at October 2018) to be cleared by 2022
- all low-priority AP mine tasks (15 as at October 2018) to be completed by 2024.³⁴

25 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, pp. 8–9.

26 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 April 2023.

27 Email from Olivia Meader, HALO, 22 May 2020.

28 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 18 April 2023.

29 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO, 11 May 2022.

30 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 April 2020.

31 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 30 April 2019.

32 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO, 11 May 2022.

33 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 8 June 2023.

34 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 12.

In 2022, KMAC, with support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), conducted a mid-term review of the strategy through a stakeholder workshop with active participation from KMAC, the KSF, HALO, and NPA. The greatest impediments to implementation of the strategy identified during the mid-term review included:

- COVID-19 related lockdowns and restrictions.
- The discovery of previously unrecorded contaminated areas, which significantly increased the contamination baseline.
- Substantial delays in the multi-year EU grant that fund HALO and NPA activities until 2025.
- Operational assets, including survey and clearance equipment and vehicles, are old and need to be repaired or replaced.
- Seasonal factors mean that some areas can be accessed for only up to six months a year. Also, the geographic locations of some hazardous areas make them difficult to access at times.³⁵

In light of these challenges and the fact that Kosovo is not on track to meet the objectives in its current strategy, KMAC,

in consultation with operators, will elaborate a new strategy in partnership with the GICHD that will include an updated contamination baseline, clearance objectives, and completion timeline.³⁶

In 2022, the work plan prioritised the clearance of high-priority AP mined areas, but this was a challenge for KMAC as they only had two KSF teams dedicated to the task.³⁷ As at July 2023, four high-priority AP mine tasks identified in 2018 had been cleared and four were suspended. Nine of the medium-priority tasks have been cleared and four are currently suspended. None of the low-priority tasks has yet been cleared but all remaining tasks will be addressed in the new strategy.³⁸

In 2019, HALO developed a new prioritisation system that considers the “community profile” for a task. This system draws on several factors, such as socio-economic status, planned land use, government development plans, and demographics. All information is collected from government and public data as well as from extensive community survey. New prioritisation information was added during 2021 and early 2022 through the NTS project by providing an individual rank for prioritisation based on set parameters.³⁹

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

In 2022, the national mine action standard for land release in Kosovo was updated in accordance with IMAS and made available to operators in March 2023.⁴⁰ The terms “mine/ERW” were replaced by “explosive ordnance” throughout. The definition of “clearance” was updated, along with the addition of a section on improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and booby-traps.⁴¹

At the beginning of 2023, HALO Kosovo reviewed and updated its SOPs on manual mine clearance, battle area clearance (BAC), and task management to reflect HALO’s best practice globally.⁴²

A 2014 evaluation of Kosovo’s mine action programme, conducted on behalf of the International Trust Fund (ITF) Enhancing Human Security, concluded that increased capacity and improvements to land release methodology and equipment would be necessary for Kosovo to complete clearance by 2024. Since the 2014 evaluation, significant improvements have been made to the mine action programme, including the introduction by HALO of Handheld Standoff Mine Detection System (HSTAMID) detectors, which have enhanced operational productivity.⁴³

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2022, Kosovo’s national mine action programme’s capacity consisted of two international operators—HALO and NPA—and a national operator: the KSF. NPA, however, did not conduct survey or clearance of AP mined area in 2022, focusing solely on tackling CMR.⁴⁴ The KSF also provided a round-the-clock EOD emergency response. KFOR, a NATO-led international peacekeeping force, also supports the KSF and Kosovo Police with EOD response and organises mine and ERW demolitions in Mitrovica and the north of Kosovo.⁴⁵ The demining season is from the end of March to the end of November due to weather conditions.⁴⁶

35 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 April 2023.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 July 2023.

39 Emails from Olivia Meader, HALO, 22 May 2020; and Megan Dwyer, HALO, 11 May 2022.

40 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

41 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 April 2023.

42 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 18 April 2023.

43 Emails from Olivia Meader, HALO, 1 May 2019; and Terje Eldøen, NPA, 25 April 2019.

44 Email from Vanja Sikirica, NPA Kosovo, 20 May 2022; and telephone interview, 1 July 2022.

45 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 28 April 2021.

46 “Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo”, 4 April 2019, p. 3.

Table 3: Operational NTS, TS, and clearance capacities deployed in 2022⁴⁷

Operator	NTS teams	Total NTS personnel	Manual TS/clearance teams	Total TS/clearance personnel
KSF	0	0	2	10
HALO	2	8	0	0
Totals	2	8	2	10

HALO's operational personnel are cross-trained for both mine clearance and BAC and can move readily between the two. In 2022, HALO deployed two teams with eight personnel in total for the NTS project, which concluded in September 2022. HALO did not deploy any personnel for mine clearance in 2022 due to the programme's mine clearance funding ceasing in November 2021. The mine clearance team that had been deployed in November 2021 switched to CMR clearance

for the remainder of 2021 and the entirety of 2022. In 2023, HALO expected to have fewer NTS personnel following the conclusion of the NTS project. These personnel will be retrained and deployed for mine clearance in 2023 due to the commencement of the EU IPA III mine clearance grant. HALO was planning to train and deploy four mine clearance teams in 2023.⁴⁸ KSF deployed half the number of deminers in 2022 compared to 2021 due to a drop in funding.⁴⁹

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

KMAC reported a total of nearly 0.40km² of AP mined area released in 2022, of which 0.34km² was cancelled, 0.03km² was reduced and 0.02km² was cleared.

SURVEY IN 2022

In 2022, a total of 343,093m² was cancelled through non-technical survey by HALO in the districts of Gjakove and Gjilan and 34,729m² was reduced through technical survey (TS) by KSF in the west of the country. This is an increase from the 30,086m² cancelled and the 33,100m² reduced in 2021 due to an increased number of areas assessed by HALO NTS teams and the number of NTS reports approved by KMAC.⁵⁰

Table 4: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022⁵¹

District	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Gjakove	HALO	322,763
Gjilan	HALO	20,330
Total		343,093

Table 5: Release of mined area through TS in 2022⁵²

District	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
West	KSF	34,729
Total		34,729

CLEARANCE IN 2022

In 2022, a total of 20,650m² was released through clearance without any AP mines being found, only fragments of AP mines and one item of UXO (see Table 6).⁵³ This is a decrease from the 166,869m² reported as cleared in 2021 with seven AP mines destroyed.⁵⁴ The drop in output is largely due to HALO not being funded for mine clearance in 2022.⁵⁵

47 Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 8 June 2023; and Michael Montafi, HALO, 18 April 2023.

48 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 18 April 2023.

49 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 April 2023.

50 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 18 April 2023.

51 Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 April 2023; and Michael Montafi, HALO, 18 April 2023.

52 Ibid.

53 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 April 2023.

54 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

55 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO, 18 April 2023.

Table 6: Mine clearance in 2022 (KMAC data)⁵⁶

District	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
West	KSF	16,770	0	1
East	KSF	3,880	0	0
Total		20,650	0	1

In addition, 12 AP mines were found and destroyed by KSF during EOD spot tasks.⁵⁷

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Kosovo cannot formally adhere to the APMBC as it is not recognised as a State by the depository of the Convention and therefore does not have a specific clearance deadline under Article 5. Nonetheless, it has obligations under international human rights law to clear AP mines as soon as possible.

Kosovo's Mine Action Strategy 2019–24 aims to complete mine and cluster munition clearance by the end of 2024.⁵⁸ It is now understood by KMAC and operators that meeting this clearance deadline will not be possible, and a new mine action strategy is in development which will include an updated deadline for completion.⁵⁹ The completion of the NTS project means that Kosovo has its most accurate estimate ever of remaining AP mined area. Recently secured EU funding has enabled HALO to resume mine clearance. A new mine action strategy was due to be elaborated in 2023 with an updated completion timeline.

Nearly 25 years have passed since the conflict between the FRY forces and NATO ended, and it is high time that Kosovo sets a clearance deadline that is realistic and met. While some of the challenges identified in the mid-term strategic review remain, Kosovo should ensure that efficient land release methodologies are applied so that resources are not wasted on untargeted clearance.

Table 7: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	0.02
2021	0.10
2020	0.14
2019	0.27
2018	0.22
Total	0.75

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

KMAC has reported that a strategy for the management of residual contamination will be developed in conjunction with the new mine action strategy.⁶⁰

56 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 April 2023.

57 Ibid.

58 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 6.

59 Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 April 2023; Vanja Sikirica, NPA, 30 March 2023; and Michael Montafi, HALO, 18 April 2023.

60 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 April 2023.

NAGORNO-KARABAKH

MINE
ACTION
REVIEW

CLEARING THE MINES 2023

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: N/K

11,035_{M²}*

(OF NEW CONTAMINATION WAS
DISCOVERED IN 2021)

*MINED AREA CONTAINING BOTH ANTI-PERSONNEL
MINES AND ANTI-VEHICLE MINES

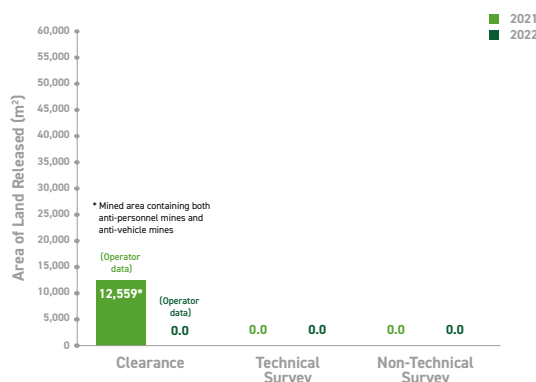
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

0_{M²}

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

1 (DESTROYED AS A SPOT
TASK) (OPERATOR DATA)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2022, there were periodic violations of the 10 November 2020 ceasefire that ended the six-week conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan has accused Armenia of laying thousands of landmines in Nagorno-Karabakh since the end of 2020, claims that Armenia has denied. A blockade in the Lachin corridor, which links Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and the outside world, started in December 2022 with protests by “eco-activists”. In response, The HALO Trust (HALO) limited its area of operation to reduce fuel usage. On 23 April 2023, Azerbaijani forces set up a checkpoint on the Lachin corridor near the border with Armenia, reinforcing the blockade. On 19 September 2023, Azerbaijan launched a 24-hour large-scale military offensive which resulted in it regaining control of the rest of Nagorno-Karabakh.¹ Nagorno-Karabakh is now fully under Azerbaijan’s jurisdiction and control. The leader of the de facto Nagorno-Karabakh authorities, Samvel Shahramanyan, signed a decree to dissolve all governmental institutions by 1 January 2024.²

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

As a result of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020, territory under the control of the de facto authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh decreased by about one third³ and most mined areas transferred back to Azerbaijan’s control. In 2021, HALO reported the discovery of just one confirmed hazardous area (CHA) of 11,035m²⁴ then under the control of the *de facto* authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh in Martakert District.⁵

Following the conflict at the end of 2020, HALO’s priorities switched from mine survey and clearance to addressing the threat posed by cluster munition remnants (CMR) resulting from the conflict. HALO, the main organisation conducting land release in Nagorno-Karabakh, was not aware of any change to the overall extent of AP mined area in 2022 and did not discover any new mine contamination or release any hazardous area.⁶

1 “Azerbaijan halts Karabakh offensive after ceasefire deal with Armenian separatists”, BBC, 21 September 2023, at: <https://bbc.in/3rCVK0e>.

2 “Nagorno-Karabakh’s breakaway government says it will dissolve itself”, *The Guardian*, 28 September 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/45ozvJ7>.

3 T. de Waal, “Unfinished Business in the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict”, Carnegie Europe, 11 February 2021.

4 Email from Miles Hawthorn, Programme Manager, HALO, 5 May 2022.

5 Ibid.

6 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, Head of Region – Europe (South Caucasus), HALO, 16 March 2023.

Table 1: Mined area in Nagorno-Karabakh not under Azerbaijani control (at end 2022)*⁷

District	CHAs containing AP/AV mines	Area (m ²)
Martakert	1	**11,035
Totals	1	11,035

AV = anti-vehicle

*In September 2023, Azerbaijan regained full control of all remaining areas of Nagorno-Karabakh. **11,035m² refers to new contaminated area discovered in 2021; a total estimate of AP mine contamination is not available given that a significant amount of CHA transferred to Azerbaijani control at the end of 2020, with no baseline assessment completed since then.⁸

Armenia has consistently denied Azerbaijan's contention that it has sent thousands of landmines to Nagorno-Karabakh,⁹ and Azerbaijan's allegations that Armenia has laid new mines in Nagorno-Karabakh¹⁰ have not been independently verified.¹¹ Armenia contends that it has "carried out minelaying exclusively within the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia for self-defence purposes only".¹² In addition, Armenia has insisted that the presence of Armenian mines in three districts now under the control of Azerbaijan (Kalbajar, Agdam and Lachin), if established, can be explained by the fact that, at the end the 2020 conflict, a "contact line" continued to exist in and around Nagorno-Karabakh and the Trilateral Statement (signed by Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia on 9 November 2020 and effective from 10 November 2020) did not preclude armed forces from taking steps to secure their positions.¹³

Historically, all regions of Nagorno-Karabakh were affected by mines and unexploded submunitions as a result of the 1988–94 conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and subsequent hostilities. Mines were laid by both the Azeri and pro-Karabakh forces during the war in the 1990s, with a relatively high proportion of anti-vehicle mines (AV mines) being used in some regions.¹⁴ The mines were of Soviet design and manufacture, and due to the nature of the conflict certain areas were mined several times.¹⁵ Nagorno-Karabakh's armed forces said they laid AP mines along the Armenian-Azerbaijani Line of Contact in 2013, both east and north of disputed territory.¹⁶ Unconfirmed reports suggest more mines were laid after the so-called "four-day war" in April 2016. In September 2023, Azerbaijan regained full control of all remaining areas of Nagorno-Karabakh.¹⁷

The baseline survey of legacy minefields that restarted in 2022 has been completed in populated areas but was ongoing in uninhabited areas of Nagorno-Karabakh as at March 2023.¹⁸ HALO did not identify any new AP mined area during 2022. However, re-survey may be needed if evidence of new contamination is discovered or new accidents reported. HALO did not conduct any AP mine clearance in 2022, but did identify one degraded AP blast mine in November 2022 in Aygetsan, Askeran district, which was disposed of as an explosive ordnance (EOD) task.¹⁹ In addition, demining detachments from engineering units from the Russian armed forces are reported to have conducted demining in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2022.²⁰

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Nagorno-Karabakh did not have a national mine action centre. Nagorno-Karabakh's security chief, Major-General Vitaly Balasanyan, set up a working group in early 2021 to coordinate clearance of ERW. In 2021 the working group met weekly with participation from the Rescue Service and humanitarian mine clearance organisations, the military, and Russian peacekeepers.²¹

In August 2021, by presidential decree, the group became the "Mine Action Coordination Council" (commonly known as the Mine Action Council), with high-level representation from the authorities, the Centre for Humanitarian Demining (CHD FUND), and HALO.²² This is the only coordination body for mine action in Nagorno-Karabakh. Council meetings continued throughout 2022, with the participation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), but only met once a month. There were no meetings in the first quarter of 2023, but by June 2023, meetings had resumed.²³

7 Emails from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 18 April 2021; and Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

8 Email from David Crawford, Programme Manager, HALO Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia, 19 June 2023.

9 G. Gavin, "Azerbaijan demands UN action as Nagorno-Karabakh landmine row escalates", *Eurasianet*, 12 December 2022 at: <https://bit.ly/3yYS09L>.

10 "Armenia releases map of territories 'seized by Azerbaijan' since 2020", *Open Caucasus Media* (OC Media), 1 February 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3luuq0R>.

11 Ibid.; and Gavin, Azerbaijan demands UN action as Nagorno-Karabakh landmine row escalates".

12 International Court of Justice, *Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (Azerbaijan v. Armenia), Order, 23 February 2023, at <https://bit.ly/3NwBKEG>, para. 19.

13 Ibid., para. 20.

14 United States Agency for International Development (USAID), "De-mining Needs Assessment in Nagorno-Karabakh", September 2013, p. 2.

15 HALO, "Our role in Nagorno-Karabakh: History", accessed 20 July 2019 at: <http://bit.ly/2Zyu1KZ>.

16 L. Musayelian, "Karabakh Enhances Defense Capabilities", *Asbarez*, Stepanakert, 26 July 2013, at: <https://bit.ly/30lO3ew>.

17 "Azerbaijan halts Karabakh offensive after ceasefire deal with Armenian separatists", *BBC*, 21 September 2023.

18 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

19 Ibid.

20 Russia CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Forms E and F.

21 Emails from Miles Hawthorn, 20 May 2021; and Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

22 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 6 May 2022.

23 Emails from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023; and David Crawford, HALO, 19 June 2023.

The Nagorno-Karabakh authorities do not provide HALO with funding to clear affected areas.²⁴

In September 2023, Azerbaijan regained full control of all remaining areas of Nagorno-Karabakh.²⁵ The leader of the *de facto* Nagorno-Karabakh authorities, Samvel Shahramanyan, signed a decree to dissolve all governmental institutions by 1 January 2024.²⁶

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

HALO does not have a programme-level environmental management standard operating procedures (SOPs) for Nagorno-Karabakh but does adhere to its organisational SOP and guidelines set at its headquarters and it complies with local laws.

With a new "Global Environment and Nature Conservation" lead in post at HALO, a local SOP was expected in 2022, but this did not materialise.²⁷ In line with its commitment to protect the environment, when conducting EOD, survey, and clearance, HALO installs latrines, ensures that safe land is not contaminated by explosive kick-outs, removes only vegetation necessary to conduct clearance, and clears all scrap metal and other clearance residues and disposes of them appropriately.²⁸

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

HALO's Nagorno-Karabakh programme reports that it complies strictly with HALO's global gender and diversity policy, providing equal access to employment for women and engaging them in management and operational roles.²⁹ Elements of the policy are integrated into HALO's Nagorno-Karabakh programme SOPs and policies, including non-technical survey (NTS), explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), task management SOPs, and safeguarding and whistleblowing policies. Through private funding, the programme is providing monthly childcare stipends to female employees who have children to support and encourage their engagement in mine action work.³⁰

Overall, 12% (14 women) of HALO staff in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2022 were women. This comprised 10% of supervisory positions (1 woman) and 7% (10 women) working in field

operations.³¹ HALO's most senior national staff member, the Deputy Programme Manager, is a woman.³² HALO's staff include internally displaced persons (IDPs), displaced by the conflict with Azerbaijan in 2020; 19% of programme staff (16 individuals of whom 4 were women) were IDPs at mid-March 2023.³³

All groups affected by CMR and AP mines, including women and children, are said to be consulted during survey and community liaison activities, and HALO prioritises survey and clearance activities in areas where children play and women go to forage.³⁴ Relevant mine action data are disaggregated by age, gender, disability, and by whether individuals are internally displaced, and HALO takes steps to ensure that everyone benefits from clearance.³⁵

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Nagorno-Karabakh does not have a mine action information management system. HALO operates its own database.³⁶ In 2020, HALO switched to an online server termed the "Global Operations Information Management System" (GO-IMS). By using GO-IMS and Survey123 (a data collection tool by ArcGIS that applies location-based analytics), HALO continues to strengthen its information management system. In 2022, PowerBI (a platform that infuses visuals into applications) was introduced and rolled out across HALO programmes to improve data visualisation and presentation processes in the organisation.³⁷

²⁴ Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 5 May 2022.

²⁵ "Azerbaijan halts Karabakh offensive after ceasefire deal with Armenian separatists", *BBC*, 21 September 2023.

²⁶ "Nagorno-Karabakh's breakaway government says it will dissolve itself", *The Guardian*, 28 September 2023.

²⁷ *Ibid.*; and email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Emails from Asqanaz Hambardzumyan, Field Officer, HALO, 10 April 2019, and Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

³⁰ Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Emails from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 5 May 2022; and David Crawford, HALO, 20 April 2023.

³³ Email from David Crawford, HALO, 20 April 2023.

³⁴ Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 5 May 2022.

³⁵ Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

³⁶ Email from Rob Syfret, Programme Manager, HALO, 7 May 2020.

³⁷ Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

There is still no central mechanism or database for systematic sharing of data on mine clearance, underscoring the value of a mine action authority.³⁸ The Mine Action Council (described above) facilitates some sharing of information and data, coordination of activities, and discussion of security and other safety issues. But more detail is required to conform to recognised international standards.³⁹

PLANNING AND TASKING

There is no national mine action strategy in place in Nagorno-Karabakh.⁴⁰ Prior to the outbreak of the conflict in September 2020, HALO focused activities on survey and clearance of mined areas in line with donor wishes. Starting in 2019, HALO embarked on a countrywide survey of mine contamination.⁴¹ After the 2020 conflict, HALO put the mine survey on hold and has given priority to survey and clearance of CMR and other unexploded ordnance (UXO) resulting from the war as well as conducting spot-task EOD.⁴²

As indicated, a baseline survey of legacy minefields that started in 2019, suspended after the six-week war in 2020, was restarted in 2022. The baseline survey was ongoing in

unpopulated areas in March 2023.⁴³ Due to the blockade in the Lachin corridor (starting in December 2022 with protests by "eco-activists" and reinforced by the installation of an Azerbaijani checkpoint on the Lachin corridor in April 2023⁴⁴), HALO has limited its area of operation to reduce fuel usage. This has resulted in survey and EOD teams being deployed only in tasks close to Stepanakert.⁴⁵

Generally, HALO selected clearance tasks according to its internal prioritisation matrix based on data collected during survey, including direct and indirect beneficiaries, current and future land use, and accidents data.⁴⁶

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Nagorno-Karabakh has no local mine action standards. HALO follows its internal SOPs developed for the programme in line with HALO's global SOPs and guidelines. This includes SOPs for task management, NTS, manual clearance, mechanical clearance, EOD, medical support and risk education. SOPs are reviewed periodically and updated where new methods or procedures need to be included.⁴⁷

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Since it started working in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2000, HALO had been the main organisation conducting land release. Clearance activities were conducted mostly in the summer months between May and October. In September 2023, Azerbaijan regained full control of the rest of Nagorno-Karabakh.⁴⁸ The leader of the *de facto* Nagorno-Karabakh authorities, Samvel Shahramanyan, signed a decree to dissolve all governmental institutions by 1 January 2024.⁴⁹

Table 2: HALO operational NTS mine and CMR clearance capacities (at January 2022)*⁵⁰

	NTS teams	NTS personnel	Manual Teams	Total deminers
No.	6	18	10	70
Totals	6	18	10	70

* Excluding team leaders, medics, and drivers. HALO did not undertake any AP mine survey or clearance in 2022.

38 Ibid.

39 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 5 May 2022.

40 Email from Asqanaz Hambardzumyan, HALO, 10 April 2019.

41 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 18 April 2021.

42 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 5 May 2022.

43 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

44 "Azerbaijan sets up checkpoints on the Lachin corridor", *Economic Intelligence*, 27 April 2023, at <https://bit.ly/3WRhSiE>.

45 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 "Azerbaijan halts Karabakh offensive after ceasefire deal with Armenian separatists", *BBC*, 21 September 2023.

49 "Nagorno-Karabakh's breakaway government says it will dissolve itself", *The Guardian*, 28 September 2023.

50 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

HALOs overall staff numbers have fluctuated in recent years though there was a steady decrease in personnel in 2021 and 2022. At the beginning of 2022, HALO had a total of 96 field staff (88 survey and clearance personnel including team leaders, plus 8 EOD staff members) but by the end of the year the number had fallen to 64 (including six battle area clearance (BAC) teams and three survey teams).⁵¹ In 2021, HALO had 120 field staff.⁵² The decrease was due to a considerable drop in the value of the US dollar, with staff leaving for better paid positions.⁵³

The Nagorno-Karabakh Emergency Service (formerly known as the Rescue Service) conducts EOD spot tasks and has reportedly conducted some BAC. HALO works very closely with the Emergency Service and has provided many of its staff with EOD and area clearance training.⁵⁴ One Nagorno-Karabakh army unit conducts limited demining.⁵⁵ Russian peacekeepers have conducted area clearance and

spot EOD since the 2020 conflict. The units have not shared details of clearance operations with HALO but do share details with the Emergency Service, and have coordinated with HALO on demolitions.⁵⁶

CHD FUND (previously known as HAK), a local mine clearance organisation, was established in 2020, initially with one clearance team. In 2022, CHD FUND was mostly focused on BAC operations. HALO did not provide any information, equipment, or training to CHD FUND in 2022.⁵⁷

Unlike in 2021, when COVID-19 had a significant impact on survey and clearance operations (vaccine hesitancy in Nagorno-Karabakh, including among HALO staff, was widespread), and a considerable number of team days were lost in both survey and clearance,⁵⁸ COVID-19 did not affect clearance operations in 2022.⁵⁹ A training event in 2022 was cancelled as one participant tested positive for COVID-19.⁶⁰

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

HALO did not conduct survey or clear any AP mined area in 2022.⁶¹ In 2021, it cleared one confirmed mined area, covering 12,559m² containing both AP and AV mines.⁶² This is consistent with HALO's change in priorities in 2021 from AP mine survey and clearance to surveying CMR contamination and clearing ERW, focusing on the destruction of unexploded submunitions.⁶³

Limited information is available on survey or clearance of AP mines by other actors in 2022. Russia reported in its CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022) that engineering units from the Russian armed forces were involved in demining in Nagorno-Karabakh.⁶⁴ No further details were available. In 2021, the Russian Ministry of Defence reported, implausibly, that its peacekeepers had cleared approximately 26km² in Nagorno-Karabakh in the year to November 2021, including farmland. Specialists from its engineering units are reported to have discovered and neutralised more than 26,000 items of explosive ordnance and to have checked 2,000 buildings and social infrastructure, including gas pipelines, communication lines, roads to schools, hospitals, and religious sites. The types of devices destroyed and the locations of clearance were not specified.⁶⁵

51 Email from Sergio Mahecha, Operations Manager, HALO, Nagorno-Karabakh, 3 May 2023.

52 Email from David Crawford, HALO, 20 April 2023.

53 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

54 Emails from Asqanaz Hambardzumyan, HALO, 26 April 2019; and Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

55 Ibid.

56 Emails from Miles Hawthorn, 18 April 2021; and Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

57 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

58 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 5 May 2022.

59 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 5 May 2022.

63 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 18 April 2021.

64 Russia Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Forms E and F.

65 Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, "Russian sappers clear about 2,600 hectares of Nagorno Karabakh territory", 10 November 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3o14at4>.

SURVEY IN 2022

HALO did not reduce or cancel any mined areas through survey in 2022⁶⁶ or 2021. However, in 2021 HALO did confirm 11,035m² of mined area containing both AP and AV mines, following a tractor accident in January 2021 caused by an AV mine which resulted in the death of the driver.

CLEARANCE IN 2022

As noted above, HALO did not clear any mined area in 2022. HALO did identify and dispose of a degraded AP blast mine in November 2022 in Aygetsan as an EOD task.⁶⁷ In 2021, HALO cleared 12,559m² of mined area in Martakert with the destruction of one AP mine and one AV mine, one item of UXO, and two items of abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO). A further three AP mines and two AV mines were destroyed by HALO during EOD spot tasks in 2021. Russian forces were reported to have undertaken demining in 2022, as they had in 2021, but no details were available.⁶⁸

CMR and AP mine survey and clearance activities in Nagorno-Karabakh was limited by funding constraints. This also prevented HALO from offering competitive salaries, with the consequent loss of staff to organisations offering better salaries.⁶⁹ Until September 2023, the blockade of the Lachin Corridor, which had been in place since mid-December 2022, had been another potential obstacle to survey and clearance of remaining AP mined area. On 19 September 2023, Azerbaijan launched a 24-hour large-scale military offensive which resulted in it regaining control of the rest of Nagorno-Karabakh.⁷⁰ Nagorno-Karabakh is now fully under Azerbaijan's jurisdiction and control. The leader of the *de facto* Nagorno-Karabakh authorities, Samvel Shahramanyan, signed a decree to dissolve all governmental institutions by 1 January 2024.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Russia Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Forms E and F.

⁶⁹ Email from David Crawford, HALO, 20 April 2023.

⁷⁰ "Azerbaijan halts Karabakh offensive after ceasefire deal with Armenian separatists", *BBC*, 21 September 2023, at: <https://bbc.in/3rCVK0e>.

⁷¹ "Nagorno-Karabakh's breakaway government says it will dissolve itself", *The Guardian*, 28 September 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/45ozvJ7>.

WESTERN SAHARA

MINE
ACTION
REVIEW

CLEARING THE MINES 2023

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: HEAVY**

50_{KM²}

(MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE)

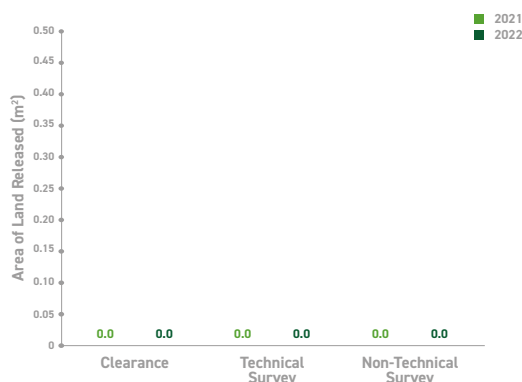
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

0_{M²}

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

0

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic should reaffirm its written commitment to respect and implement the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), including clearance of all anti-personnel mines east of the Berm, consonant with its international human rights obligations. This commitment should include the annual submission of a voluntary Article 7 report.
- The Saharawi Mine Action Coordination Office (SMACO) should draft a new strategy, including a new deadline for completion of clearance of anti-personnel (AP) mines with annual survey and clearance targets, along with a detailed budget.
- Greater support should be provided to SMACO to enable it to continue to coordinate mine action east of the Berm, and to ensure that capacity development efforts are not wasted.
- Mine action in Western Sahara must not become forgotten or overlooked by the international community. Support must still be given to address the remaining mine, cluster munition, and other explosive ordnance contamination.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Saharawi Mine Action Coordination Office (SMACO) [Western Sahara, east of the Berm]
- Royal Moroccan Army [Western Sahara, west of the Berm]

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Royal Moroccan Army

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- SafeLane Global
- Danish Refugee Council Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding sector (DRC)

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) Western Sahara

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The exact extent of mine contamination across Western Sahara is not known, although the areas along the Berm¹ contain some of the densest mine contamination in the world. The contamination is a result of fighting in previous decades between the Royal Moroccan Army and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro (Polisario Front) forces.

According to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), the primary mine threat in Western Sahara east of the Berm, excluding both the Berm itself, restricted areas, and the buffer strip, is from anti-vehicle (AV) mines rather than AP mines; cluster munition remnants (CMR) are also a major hazard.² No areas suspected or confirmed to contain *solely* AP mines remain to the east of the Berm. Most mine contamination identified during ongoing and historical clearance efforts was from AV mines though some areas

previously thought to contain only AV mines were found to also contain AP mines following non-technical survey (NTS) conducted in the Agwanit Area of Responsibility.³ In 2022, the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) identified a renewed threat of landmines in the area to the east of the Berm, including in areas previously deemed safe since 2020, but did not confirm any new contamination. MINURSO called on the parties to the conflict to share detailed information on where renewed fighting had taken place and the types of munitions used so that it could update the mine action database.⁴

At the end of 2022, land in Western Sahara to the east of the Berm contained a total of 25 areas confirmed or suspected to contain mixed AP and AV mine contamination covering a total of 212km² (see Table 1).⁵ This is unchanged from the previous year.

Table 1: Mined area east of the Berm (at end 2022)⁶

Types of contamination	CHAs	Area (km ²)	SHAs	Area (km ²)	Total CHAs and SHAs	Total area (km ²)
AP/AV mines	15	86.06	10	125.66	25	211.72
Totals	15	86.06	10	125.66	25	211.72

CHA = Confirmed hazardous area SHA = Suspected hazardous area

Both the north and south of Western Sahara are known or suspected to contain AP mines, with the 25 areas covering an estimated total size of 212km² remaining at the end of 2022, as set out in Table 2.⁷

Table 2: Mined area containing AP mines by province east of the Berm (at end 2022)⁸

Province	CHAs	Area (km ²)	SHAs	Area (km ²)	Total CHAs and SHAs	Total area (km ²)
North Region	5	0.27	3	4.11	8	4.38
South Region	10	85.79	7	121.55	17	207.34
Totals	15	86.06	10	125.66	25	211.72

In September 2018, UNMAS reported that following NTS efforts, east of the Berm, 10 of the then 27 mined areas remained, covering an estimated total of almost 120km². These areas, which are located within the 5km-wide buffer strip, are not accessible for clearance.⁹ Clearance of the buffer strip of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) is not foreseen in the UN Mission for the Referendum in

Western Sahara (MINURSO) Military Agreements No. 2 (with the Polisario Front) and No. 3 (with the Royal Moroccan Army). This, according to the UN, considerably limits the ability of MINURSO military observers to patrol and verify developments.¹⁰ No survey or clearance of the buffer strip was conducted during 2022.¹¹

1 A 2,700km-long defensive wall, the Berm was built during the conflict, dividing control of the territory between Morocco on the west and the Polisario Front on the east. The Berm is 12 times the length of the erstwhile Berlin Wall and second in length today only to the Great Wall of China.

2 Email from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March 2018.

3 Emails from Leon Louw, Programme Manager, UNMAS, 30 March 2021; Edwin Faigmane, Programme Officer, UNMAS, 18 June 2020; Robert Thompson, Chief of Operations, UNMAS, 31 July 2019; Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March 2018; and Virginie Auger, UNMAS, 29 March 2017.

4 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation concerning Western Sahara, UN doc. S/2022/733, 3 October 2022.

5 Email from Elhadji Kebe, Chief Mine Action Programme, UNMAS, 25 April 2023.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Emails from Leon Louw, UNMAS, 30 March 2021; and Edwin Faigmane, UNMAS, 24 May 2022.

9 Email from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 14 September 2018. The buffer strip is an area 5km wide east of the Berm. MINURSO, "Ceasefire Monitoring Overview", undated but accessed 1 June 2016, at: <http://bit.ly/2Yxg1nv>.

10 "Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara", UN doc. S/2017/307, 10 April 2017, p. 8; and email from Edwin Faigmane, UNMAS, 6 August 2020.

11 Email from Elhadji Kebe, UNMAS, 25 April 2023.

UNMAS reported that no previously unrecorded AP mine contamination was added to Western Sahara's information management database in 2022.¹²

The Royal Moroccan Army controls territory to the west of the Berm where it has been conducting large-scale demining. According to UNMAS, the Royal Moroccan Army cooperates with the MINURSO mine action component and submits

regular monthly reports of its activities in the Territory, west of the Berm, helping to build a clearer understanding of the mine and ERW threat across Western Sahara.¹³

Western Sahara also has a significant problem from CMR and other ERW (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Western Sahara for further information).¹⁴

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

UNMAS Western Sahara, formerly the MINURSO Mine Action Coordination Centre (MACC), facilitates MINURSO monitoring of the ceasefire and ensures the safe passage of UN personnel. On 27 October 2022, under UN Security Council Resolution 2654, MINURSO's mandate was extended for an additional 12 months until 31 October 2023.

UNMAS Western Sahara serves as the UN focal point for mine action activities within the MINURSO area of operations. Its contracted teams work only in areas east of the Berm. The Royal Moroccan Army conducts its own demining in areas west of the Berm. In 2013–14, the Polisario Front, with UN support, established SMACO, which is responsible for

coordinating mine action activities in Western Sahara east of the Berm, excluding the buffer strip.¹⁵

In 2022, no financial support was provided to SMACO. There was some funding available from Spain but this was dependent on the resumption of demining operations. Spain approved a request from UNMAS to extend the timeframe of the grant should demining operations resume.¹⁶

In 2022, UNMAS Western Sahara was solely funded by MINURSO to support its mandate in Western Sahara by ensuring the safe passage of military observers.¹⁷

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

UNMAS Western Sahara reported that environmental impact is considered as part of the tasking process and implementation plan in order to minimise potential harm from demining activities.¹⁸ This includes waste disposal procedures for rubbish and grey and black water disposal; how and where to set up camps; and how to dismantle camps without leaving an operational footprint.¹⁹

As part of their national standards, SMACO have a policy on environmental management with a requirement that all implementation plans consider environmental impacts.²⁰

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

UNMAS has reported that gender policies are implemented in accordance with UNMAS, the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and MINURSO guidelines, as well as with direction from the Polisario Front.²¹ UNMAS has a gender strategy as part of its overall country strategy.²² UNMAS also reported that gender has been mainstreamed into Western Sahara's

national mine action work plans and the SMACO 2019–23 mine action strategy.²³ During survey, efforts are made to consider the needs of men, women, girls, and boys to ensure more effective and efficient operations, despite challenges presented by conducting survey activities targeting Bedouin populations.²⁴

12 Ibid.

13 Emails from Leon Louw, UNMAS, 4 February 2022; Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 14 September 2018; Edwin Faigmane, UNMAS, 18 June 2020; and UNMAS, "2017 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects: MINURSO".

14 Questionnaire response by Gerhard Zank, HALO, 22 May 2017; and email, 17 May 2016.

15 Response to questionnaire by Sarah Holland, UNMAS, 24 February 2014, and email, 25 February 2014; and email from Edwin Faigmane, UNMAS, 6 August 2020.

16 Email from Elhadji Kebe, UNMAS, 25 April 2023.

17 Ibid.

18 Emails from Leon Louw, UNMAS, 4 February 2022; and Edwin Faigmane, UNMAS, 21 March 2022.

19 Email from Edwin Faigmane, UNMAS, 24 May 2022.

20 Email from Edwin Faigmane, UNMAS, 18 June 2020.

21 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

22 Email from Leon Louw, UNMAS, 30 March 2021.

23 Email from Edwin Faigmane, UNMAS, 18 June 2020.

24 Emails from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), 4 May 2019 and 14 March 2018.

UNMAS reported there is equal access to employment for qualified women and men in survey and clearance teams in Western Sahara, east of the Berm, including for managerial level/supervisory positions. In 2022, there was only one

woman employed by SMACO and two by SafeLane Global (UNMAS's contractor), as illustrated in Table 3.²⁵ Since becoming operational in 2023, however, the number of women employed by SafeLane Global has increased to eight.²⁶

Table 3: Gender composition of SMACO and SafeLane Global²⁷

Entity	Total staff	Total women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Total women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Total women in operational positions
SMACO	4	1	1	0	2	1
Safe Lane Global	47	2	11	0	18	2

Through SMACO, UNMAS also supports the Sahrawi Mine Action Women's Team (SMAWT), an all-female organisation working on explosive ordnance risk education in Rabouni and the five Sahrawi refugee camps. All national deminers, both male and female, are Sahrawi, considered an ethnic minority group.²⁸

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

According to UNMAS, the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database for Western Sahara, east of the Berm, improved as a result of an ongoing data audit initiated at the end of 2015.²⁹ The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) has also provided ongoing support to correct database errors, and an upgrade to the latest database software version, IMSMA Core, was scheduled to take place in August 2019.³⁰ This was further delayed due to the COVID-19 lockdown, and IMSMA Core finally became fully operational in March 2022, with all data successfully migrated.³¹

PLANNING AND TASKING

In 2019, SMACO developed its strategy for mine action in Western Sahara, east of the Berm, covering 2019–23 (in line with the global UN Mine Action Strategy 2019–2023). In order to achieve a Western Sahara free of the impact of mines and ERW, SMACO has established the following timed objectives:

- to implement efficient and effective communication with national and international organisations by 2019
- to establish an effective mechanism for data collection of accidents and victims which will be shared with partners according to the SMACO Data Protection Policy by 2019
- to establish sustainable and constant funding of SMACO by 2020
- to ensure availability of human resources to comprehensively manage mine action by 2020
- to fully implement a professional management structure within SMACO by 2021

- to create a discussion platform (think tank) for a national victim rights protection policy by 2022
- to establish a national employment policy for mine action activities by 2023.³²

In 2022, SMACO developed a form for accident and victim data collection in Western Sahara, east of the Berm and victims, following a series of workshops with stakeholders, which had been approved by the Sahrawi Ministry of Defence. The resultant form is available in both Arabic and English.³³ The other objectives have still to be realised and UNMAS has reported that the UN Mine Action Strategy for 2023–2026 is being developed.³⁴ A mine action work plan was in place for UNMAS in 2022, developed by UNMAS Western Sahara, in support of MINURSO's mandate.³⁵

25 Email from Elhadji Kebe, UNMAS, 25 April 2023.
 26 Email from Elhadji Kebe, UNMAS, 30 May 2023.
 27 Emails from Elhadji Kebe, UNMAS, 25 April 2023 and from Hadi Kodeih, SafeLane Global Limited, 30 May 2023.
 28 Email from Leon Louw, UNMAS, 30 March 2021.
 29 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.
 30 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 31 May 2019.
 31 Emails from Leon Louw, UNMAS, 4 February 2022; and Nadine Husseine, UNMAS, 30 May 2023.
 32 SMACO "Strategic Plan 2019–2023", at: <http://bit.ly/38jaGm?>; and email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 31 July 2019.
 33 Email from Leon Louw, UNMAS, 4 February 2022.
 34 Emails from Elhadji Kebe, UNMAS, 25 April 2023 and 30 May 2023.
 35 Ibid.

UNMAS Western Sahara mine action activities continue to support MINURSO's mandate.³⁶ UNMAS and SMACO identify priorities for clearance of both minefields and cluster munition strikes east of the Berm in conjunction with MINURSO. Priorities are identified based on humanitarian needs for the safety and freedom of movement of local populations, while UNMAS Western Sahara facilitates the ceasefire and ensures the safe passage of UN personnel.³⁷

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Local mine action standards were developed and finalised in 2016 by UNMAS, together with SMACO, and in coordination with mine action partners. A first annual review of the standards was completed in November 2018 with a review board consisting of representatives from UNMAS, SMACO, and implementing partners. No significant changes were made, and UNMAS reported in June 2019 that translation of the standards into Arabic had been completed and shared with SMACO.³⁸ UNMAS reported that the standards are reviewed annually but that no updates were made in 2022.³⁹

An external quality management system was in place from 2018 and implemented by UNMAS and SMACO to the east of the Berm.⁴⁰

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

SafeLane Global (formerly Dynasafe MineTech Limited, DML) was the implementing operator for UNMAS Western Sahara in 2022 (see Table 4). The teams were operating at 50% capacity due to the conflict.⁴¹

Table 4: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2022⁴²

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers*	Dog teams	Mechanical Assets	Comments
SafeLane Global (for UNMAS Western Sahara)	1	10	0	0	No change from 2021
Totals	1	10	0	0	

* Excluding team leaders, medics, and drivers.

UNMAS expected to restart demining operations in 2023, which they believe could see increased capacity.⁴³

Danish Refugee Council (DRC)'s Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding sector was seeking funding to be able to reinitiate NTS in 2022.⁴⁴

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

No survey or clearance of mined area was conducted in 2022 or in 2021. According to UNMAS, the absence of survey and clearance during the two years was due to the partial suspension of clearance operations in accordance with COVID-19

³⁶ Email from Edwin Faigmane, UNMAS, 18 June 2020.

³⁷ Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018; and Edwin Faigmane, UNMAS, 6 August 2020.

³⁸ Emails from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 29 April 2019; and Dandan Xu, UNMAS, 28 June 2019.

³⁹ Email from Elhadji Kebe, UNMAS, 25 April 2023.

⁴⁰ Emails from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 29 April 2019; and Edwin Faigmane, UNMAS, 28 July 2020.

⁴¹ Emails from Leon Louw, UNMAS, 4 February 2022; and Elhadji Kebe, UNMAS, 25 April 2023.

⁴² Email from Elhadji Kebe, UNMAS, 25 April 2023.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Email from Catherine Smith, Regional Coordinator, DRC, 1 February 2022.

protocols as well as the ending of the three-decade-long ceasefire between Morocco and Polisario in November 2020. This led to the suspension of survey and clearance operations due to Polisario's refusal to approve them. This meant that only the explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) response team were on standby for emergency EOD and route verification tasks.⁴⁵

Between 1 September 2021 and 31 July 2022, the Royal Moroccan Army reported that it had released more than 134km² of land west of the berm and destroyed 52 AP and AV mines (not disaggregated), as well as 770 ERW.⁴⁶

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Western Sahara is not a State Party to the APMBC and cannot adhere to the treaty as the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic is not recognised as a State by the UN Secretary-General. In June 2014, however, the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic submitted a voluntary APMBC Article 7 transparency report to the UN "as a sign of the support of the Sahrawi State for the goals of the Treaty".⁴⁷

In SMACO's mine action strategy 2019–23, the vision is for Western Sahara to be free of the impact of mines and ERW by 2023.⁴⁸ No land release took place during 2022 or 2021 as operations were restricted by both COVID-19 and the resurgence of conflict. Western Sahara will not meet its 2023 completion date, which should now be revised along with the elaboration of a new strategic plan.

UNMAS Western Sahara has been advocating for the resumption of demining operations east of the Berm. The Royal Moroccan Army gave its approval in August 2022 with the Polisario Front following suit in January 2023. In April 2023, demining teams were remobilised and retrained with the first teams deployed for battle area clearance (BAC) in May.⁴⁹ To support continued land release, there is an urgent need for increased resources and capacity at SMACO.

⁴⁵ Email from Leon Louw, UNMAS, 30 March 2021; UN Country Level Survey for the Monitoring & Evaluation Mechanism of the United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2019 – 2023; and email from Elhadji Kebe, UNMAS, 25 April 2023.

⁴⁶ Report of the Secretary-General, Situation concerning Western Sahara, UN doc. S/2022/733, 3 October 2022.

⁴⁷ "SADR initiative welcomed by Maputo Conference on Mine Ban", *Sahara Press Service*, 2 July 2014, at: <http://bit.ly/2GE1JqW>.

⁴⁸ SMACO "Strategic Plan 2019–2023", at: <http://bit.ly/38jaGm2>.

⁴⁹ Email from Elhadji Kebe, UNMAS, 30 May 2023.

ANNEX

The background of the page is composed of several overlapping geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in two shades of green: a vibrant lime green and a darker forest green. These shapes are arranged in a dynamic, non-representational pattern that fills the entire page, creating a modern and abstract visual texture.

ANNEX 1: ARTICLE 5 OF THE ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION

ARTICLE 5: DESTRUCTION OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES IN MINED AREAS

1. Each State Party undertakes to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control, as soon as possible but not later than ten years after the entry into force of this Convention for that State Party.
2. Each State Party shall make every effort to identify all areas under its jurisdiction or control in which anti-personnel mines are known or suspected to be emplaced and shall ensure as soon as possible that all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control are perimeter-marked, monitored and protected by fencing or other means, to ensure the effective exclusion of civilians, until all anti-personnel mines contained therein have been destroyed. The marking shall at least be to the standards set out in the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices, as amended on 3 May 1996, annexed to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.
3. If a State Party believes that it will be unable to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines referred to in paragraph 1 within that time period, it may submit a request to a Meeting of the States Parties or a Review Conference for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of such anti-personnel mines, for a period of up to ten years.
4. Each request shall contain:
 - a) The duration of the proposed extension;
 - b) A detailed explanation of the reasons for the proposed extension, including:
 - (i) The preparation and status of work conducted under national demining programmes;
 - (ii) The financial and technical means available to the State Party for the destruction of all the anti-personnel mines; and
 - (iii) Circumstances which impede the ability of the State Party to destroy all the anti-personnel mines in mined areas;
 - c) The humanitarian, social, economic, and environmental implications of the extension; and
 - d) Any other information relevant to the request for the proposed extension.
5. The Meeting of the States Parties or the Review Conference shall, taking into consideration the factors contained in paragraph 4, assess the request and decide by a majority of votes of States Parties present and voting whether to grant the request for an extension period.
6. Such an extension may be renewed upon the submission of a new request in accordance with paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of this Article. In requesting a further extension period a State Party shall submit relevant additional information on what has been undertaken in the previous extension period pursuant to this Article.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIM	Abandoned Improvised Mines (Afghanistan)	LIS	Landmine Impact Survey
AP	Anti-personnel	MAG	Mines Advisory Group
APMBC	1997 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention	MDD	Mine detection dog
AV	Anti-vehicle	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
AXO	Abandoned explosive ordnance	MRE	Mine risk education
BAC	Battle area clearance	NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina	NGO	Non-governmental organisation
CCM	2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions	NMAS	National Mine Action Standards
CHA	Confirmed hazardous area	NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
CMR	Cluster munition remnants	NSAG	Non-State armed group
DCA	DanChurchAid	OAP	Oslo Action Plan
DDG	Danish Demining Group	OAS	Organization of American States
EO	Explosive ordnance	OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
EOD	Explosive ordnance disposal	PPE	Personal protective equipment
EORE	Explosive ordnance risk education	QA	Quality assurance
ERW	Explosive remnants of war	QC	Quality control
EU	European Union	QM	Quality management
FSD	Swiss Foundation for Mine Action	SHA	Suspected hazardous area
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining	SOP	Standing (or standard) operating procedure
GIS	Geographic information system	TWG	Technical working group
HI	Humanity and Inclusion	UN	United Nations
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
IED	Improvised explosive device	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards	UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action	UXO	Unexploded ordnance
IP	Implementing partner	VA	Victim assistance
ITF	International Trust Fund (ITF) Enhancing Human Security	VTF	Voluntary Trust Fund (United Nations)

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