

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Azerbaijan should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Despite not yet being a State Party to the APMBC, Azerbaijan has obligations under international human rights law to clear anti-personnel mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.
- Azerbaijan should complete its countrywide re-survey of anti-personnel mine contamination as soon as the situation allows.
- Azerbaijan should ensure that clearance is only conducted in areas where there is firm evidence of contamination.

### UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of contamination from anti-personnel mines in Azerbaijan is unknown, as Armenian forces currently occupy a significant area of the country where considerable contamination exists. The Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) has suggested that contamination in areas occupied by Armenia may cover between 350km<sup>2</sup> and 830km<sup>2</sup>, and contain between 50,000 and 100,000 mines.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of 2019, Azerbaijan reported 59 mined areas in regions under its control totalling 9.4km<sup>2</sup> (see Table 1). A more precise estimate of contamination will only be known after completion of a countrywide re-survey which, as at July 2020, had been delayed due to the outbreak of COVID-19.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1: Mined area by type (at end 2019)<sup>3</sup>**

Contamination	CHAs	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	SHAs	Estimated area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Total SHAs/CHAs	Total area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Anti-personnel mines	8	1,012,469	14	3,000,000	22	4,012,469
Anti-vehicle mines	17	1,430,226	20	4,000,000	37	5,430,226
<b>Totals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2,442,695</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>7,000,000</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>9,442,695</b>

CHAs = Confirmed hazardous areas SHAs = Suspected hazardous areas

As at the end of 2019, Azerbaijan estimated that it had 8 confirmed anti-personnel mined areas covering a total of more than 1km<sup>2</sup> (see Table 2).<sup>4</sup>

**Table 2: Anti-personnel mined area by region (at end 2019)<sup>5</sup>**

Region	CHAs	Area(m <sup>2</sup> )	SHAs	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Garadagh	1	17,744	1	-
Jabrail	3	833,907	2	-
Fizuli	2	147,694	3	-
Aghdam	2	11,574	0	-
Aghstafa	0	550	0	-
Ganja	0	600	0	-
Gazakh	0	400	0	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1,012,469</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>est. 1,000,000</b>

Mine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination in Azerbaijan is the consequence of the 1988–94 armed conflict with Armenia – which saw landmines laid by both sides – and ammunition abandoned by the Soviet army in 1991. The most heavily contaminated areas are along the borders and confrontation lines between Armenia and Azerbaijan, including the area in and around Nagorno-Karabakh (see the Mine Action Review report on Nagorno-Karabakh for further information). The adjoining districts of Gubadly, Jabrayil, Kelbajar, Lachin, and Zangilan, as well as parts of Aghdam, Fizuli, and Tartar, are under the control of Armenian forces, and are suspected to contain both mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO).<sup>6</sup>

Azerbaijan is also suspected to be contaminated with cluster munition remnants and other ERW: both UXO and abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO), the extent of which is not known (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2020* report on Azerbaijan for further information).

## NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

ANAMA, the national mine action authority and mine action centre, was established by Presidential Decree No. 854 to plan, coordinate, manage, and monitor mine action in the country. It also conducts demining operations, along with two national operators it contracts: Dayag-Relief Azerbaijan (RA) and the International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF). No commercial company is active in mine action in Azerbaijan.<sup>7</sup> In March 2020, the mine action programme was restructured and RA's field personnel were incorporated within ANAMA while RA as an organisation will continue to provide logistical support to ANAMA.<sup>8</sup>

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provides capacity development to ANAMA and was planning to so until December 2020. The five main project activities were: maximising the socio-economic impact of clearance; supporting the institutional capacity of ANAMA for mine/UXO clearance according to international and national mine action standards; promoting ANAMA as an international mine action centre; procurement and upgrading of equipment; and introducing a gender-sensitive approach to mine action to Azerbaijan.<sup>9</sup> According to ANAMA, as at June 2020, project outputs included improvements to ANAMA's regional structure, enhanced international training services, better training equipment, and support for the training centre.<sup>10</sup> As at July 2020, ANAMA and UNDP were discussing the possibility of extending the project until 2023.<sup>11</sup>

As at June 2020, Azerbaijan was still in the process of adopting a national mine action law, with draft legislation under review by the Cabinet of Ministers.<sup>12</sup> The process has been ongoing for six years already. Once adopted, it will regulate mine action in Azerbaijan, governing issues such as licensing, accreditation, quality assurance (QA), and tender procedures.<sup>13</sup>

The Azerbaijani government funds 90% of ANAMA's operating costs and 90% of all survey and clearance in Azerbaijan.<sup>14</sup>

## GENDER AND DIVERSITY

ANAMA does not have a gender policy. No women are working in any operational roles in survey and clearance in Azerbaijan. In 2019, however, women made up 11% of mine action programme staff, mainly through administrative roles in ANAMA. They also participate in mine risk education sessions and are consulted during survey.<sup>15</sup>

One of the goals of the UNDP-ANAMA capacity strengthening project is to introduce a gender-sensitive approach to mine action to Azerbaijan.<sup>16</sup> This is defined as delivering train-the-trainer sessions to mine action staff on a gender-sensitive approach to working with affected populations and the development of an accompanying training manual. No information on progress towards this goal has been provided by ANAMA or UNDP.

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

ANAMA uses an old version of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database, and has been working with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to upgrade this to the latest IMSMA Core in 2019–20.<sup>17</sup>

## PLANNING AND TASKING

The existing mine action strategy was for 2013–18.<sup>18</sup> Its main aims were said to be to continue mine and ERW clearance in support of government development projects and to provide safe conditions for the local population in affected regions.<sup>19</sup> The strategy expired at the end of 2018 and has not yet been replaced. As at June 2020, ANAMA reported that a new strategy was in the process of being developed.<sup>20</sup>

ANAMA is integrated into the State Social and Economic Development programme and mine action is reported to be an integral part of the new state socio-economic development plan developed for 2019–22.<sup>21</sup> ANAMA had annual work plans for 2019 and 2020. In 2019, ANAMA was intending to continue mine clearance in Aghdam and Aghjabedi, Fizuli, Heybet, Jabrayil, and Terter regions. In the absence of a new multiyear strategic plan, tasks are prioritised according to the state development plan and instructions from the government.<sup>22</sup>

## LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

### STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Azerbaijan has its own National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), which were adopted in 2001 and subsequently revised in 2003, 2004, and 2010 in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and best practice.<sup>23</sup> No major modifications to the standards were made in 2019.<sup>24</sup>

ANAMA periodically conducts meetings with stakeholders to discuss and make relevant changes to NMAS and standing operating procedures (SOPs).<sup>25</sup>

## OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2019, the Azerbaijan mine action programme had more than 300 deminers/explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) personnel (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2019<sup>26</sup>**

Operator	Manual teams	Deminers*	Dogs and handlers	Machines**
ANAMA	2 (ACT-1; ACT-2)	115	32 dogs and 34 handlers	18-strong team with 6 machines
	EOD Team	79		
	Special Mobile Operation Team (SMOT)	37		
IEPF	1	40		
RA	1	40		
<b>Totals</b>		<b>311</b>	<b>32/34</b>	<b>18/6</b>

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

In addition, to its clearance capacities ANAMA deployed five technical survey teams in 2019 totalling 45 personnel.<sup>27</sup> Mine detection dogs (MDDs) and mechanical assets are used to support reduction through technical survey and manual clearance operations.<sup>28</sup>

The Training, Survey and Quality Assurance Division continued its quality management (QM)-related activities during 2019. There were both quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) sampling inspections. QA and QC were carried out on both ANAMA's operations and the operations by the two national non-governmental organisations (NGOs).<sup>29</sup>

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

### LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2019

A total of 2.01km<sup>2</sup> of mined area was released in 2019, of which 1.01km<sup>2</sup> was cleared and 0.99km<sup>2</sup> was reduced through technical survey.

### SURVEY IN 2019

In 2019, nearly 1km<sup>2</sup> of anti-personnel mined area was reduced through technical survey across three regions (see Table 4). There was no cancellation through non-technical survey.<sup>30</sup> This is an increase from 2018 when no anti-personnel mined area was cancelled or reduced through survey.<sup>31</sup>

**Table 4: Reduction through technical survey in 2019<sup>32</sup>**

Region	Operator	Area reduced (m <sup>2</sup> )
Garadagh	ANAMA (SMOT)	17,744
Jabrail	ANAMA (ACT-1)	833,907
Fizuli	ANAMA (ACT-1)	147,694
<b>Total</b>		<b>999,345</b>

### CLEARANCE IN 2019

More than 1km<sup>2</sup> of anti-personnel mine contaminated area was cleared in 2019 with 32 anti-personnel mines found and destroyed (see Table 5).<sup>33</sup> This is an increase from the 353,258m<sup>2</sup> of mined area that was cleared in 2018 when 29 anti-personnel mines were found and destroyed.<sup>34</sup> The reason for the increased output was additional tasks assigned by the government.<sup>35</sup>

**Table 5: Mine clearance in 2019<sup>36</sup>**

Region	Operator	Area cleared (m <sup>2</sup> )	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Garadagh	ANAMA (SMOT)	17,744	12	0	517
Jabrayil	ANAMA (ACT-1)	833,907	4	0	0
Fizuli	ANAMA (ACT-1)	147,694	3	1	1
Aghdam	ANAMA (ACT-2)	11,574	1	0	0
Aghstafa	ANAMA (EOD)	550	1	0	0
Ganja	ANAMA (EOD)	600	3	0	0
Gazakh	ANAMA (EOD)	400	8	0	0
<b>Totals</b>		<b>1,012,469</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>518</b>

ANAMA reported that in 2019 12 mined areas were cleared that proved to contain no anti-personnel mines.<sup>37</sup>

Azerbaijan submitted voluntary APMBC Article 7 transparency reports in 2008 and 2009 but has not submitted an Article 7 report in the last ten years. Over the last five years, 7.68km<sup>2</sup> of mined area has been reported cleared in Azerbaijan. Mine clearance output nearly tripled in 2019 from a five-year low of 0.35km<sup>2</sup> in 2018 (see Table 6). Accuracy of reporting of contamination, survey, and clearance data, though, 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. As at June 2020, no target date had been set for the completion of anti-personnel mine clearance in Azerbaijan. ANAMA has stated that mine clearance can only be completed once it has access to territories currently occupied by Armenia.<sup>38</sup>

**Table 6: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance**

Year	Area cleared (km <sup>2</sup> )
2019	1.01
2018	0.35
2017	*4.00
2016	0.83
2015	1.49
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.68</b>

\* A further 3.7km<sup>2</sup> was cleared but was found not to contain mines.

### PLANNING FOR RESIDUAL RISK AFTER COMPLETION

Azerbaijan has a national capacity which could be deployed to deal with residual risk post-completion but, as at June 2020, no plan in place for the management of residual risk.<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup>

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- 1 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018", p. 5.
  - 2 Emails from Sabina Sarkarova, Public Relations Officer, ANAMA, 8 June 2020; and Nijat Karimov, Senior Planning and Development Officer, 30 July 2020.
  - 3 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, Public Relations Officer, ANAMA, 8 June 2020.
  - 4 Ibid.
  - 5 Ibid.
  - 6 ANAMA "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018", p. 5.
  - 7 Emails from Tural Mammadov, Operations Officer, ANAMA, 19 October 2016; and Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 8 June 2020.
  - 8 Email from Nijat Karimov, Senior Planning and Development Officer, ANAMA, 28 July 2020.
  - 9 UNDP, "Review & Recommendation to Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) in Support of its Transformation into International Centre for Demining assessment 2018", 17 July 2018.
  - 10 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 8 June 2020.
  - 11 Email from Nijat Karimov, ANAMA, 28 July 2020.
  - 12 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 8 June 2020.
  - 13 Email from Parviz Gidayev, ANAMA, 20 May 2015; and ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2014".
  - 14 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 April 2019.
  - 15 Emails from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 April 2019; and 8 June 2020.
  - 16 UNDP, "Review & Recommendation to Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) in Support of its Transformation into International Centre for Demining assessment 2018", 17 July 2018.
  - 17 Email from Maria Gurova, Programme Officer, GICHD, 22 August 2019.
  - 18 Email from Parviz Gidayev, Planning & Development Manager, ANAMA, 20 May 2015; and ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 10.
  - 19 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA 2 May 2018.
  - 20 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 8 June 2020.
  - 21 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 April 2019.
  - 22 Emails from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 April 2019; and 8 June 2020.
  - 23 Email from Tural Mammadov, ANAMA, 19 October 2016.
  - 24 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 8 June 2020.
  - 25 Ibid.
  - 26 Ibid.; and email from Nijat Karimov, ANAMA, 28 July 2020.
  - 27 Ibid.
  - 28 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 April 2019.
  - 29 ANAMA, 2018 report, undated.
  - 30 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 8 June 2020.
  - 31 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 April 2019.
  - 32 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 8 June 2020.
  - 33 Ibid.
  - 34 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 April 2019.
  - 35 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 8 June 2020.
  - 36 Ibid.
  - 37 Ibid.
  - 38 Ibid.
  - 39 Ibid.
  - 40 Email from Nijat Karimov, ANAMA, 30 July 2020.