

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Israel 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, Israel has obligations under international human rights law to clear anti-personnel mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The exact extent of mine contamination 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 2017,¹ but did not report the amount of mined area as at the end of 2018 or 2019. The combined 90km² as at end 2017, represents only the area affected by mines that are not deemed essential to Israel's security. The size of other mined areas is not made public. The total figure includes 18.38km² of mined area in the Jordan Valley (11.84km² of anti-personnel mined area, 6.19km² of anti-vehicle mined area, and 0.35km² of mixed mined area) and in the West Bank² (see the *Clearing the Mines* report on Palestine in this work for further information).

Table 1: Mined area (at end 2017)³

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

AP = Anti-personnel AV = Anti-vehicle CHA = Confirmed hazardous area SHA = Suspected hazardous area

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.⁴

In the Golan Heights the mines laid by Syrian forces remain largely unknown and areas have been fenced off by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). However, according to an online media report, fencing is not always properly maintained with warning signs, and civilians occasionally cross into minefields looking for edible plants.⁵

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

A March 2011 law on minefield clearance established the Israeli National Mine Action Authority (the INMAA) to undertake a "comprehensive programme of mine clearing projects inside Israel".⁶ 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."⁷

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. It 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 which will receive, manage, and allocate donations.⁸

In February 2019, the Director of INMAA reported that new legislation had been passed, in the form of a regional law, giving INMAA responsibility for clearing former military bases and for addressing abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO), unexploded ordnance (UXO), and anti-vehicle mines. Prior to this, the INMAA had only had responsibility for addressing anti-personnel mines, and for mixed mined areas.⁹

INMAA was established within the Ministry of Defence, with ministry staff responsible for planning mine action.¹⁰ As a result of the new law, staffing at the INMAA was expected to expand by at least 50%, but as at February 2019 it was unclear if the budget would be increased to enable this to occur.¹¹

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.¹² The size of the 2018 or 2019 budget is not known.

INMAA provided funding to support mandatory quality assurance (QA) covering the last two months of HALO Trust clearance operations at the Arraba minefield in the West Bank and for the full cost of QA at the Baptism Site Project in 2018 and 2019. In addition, since November 2019, the Israeli Ministry of Defence (MoD) funded HALO's full clearance costs at the Baptism Site (see the *Clearing the Mines* report on Palestine for further information).¹³

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

According to Israel, in 2019, the IDF's Engineering Corps continued its activities to promote an improved minefield GPS recording and GIS capacity "building an accurate archive of manually-emplaced minefields".¹⁴ In addition, INMAA manages a "minefield information bank" that is open for public queries concerning demining plans and programmes.¹⁵

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 demining procedures and instructions, as compatible as possible with International Mine Action Standards".¹⁶ INMAA approves annual mine clearance plans and "keeps mapping existing minefields and sets priorities, creating a work plan for mine clearance in coordination with the relevant agencies", which is implemented by local civilian operators.¹⁷ INMAA also has a multi-year clearance plan for 2017–20 that focuses on technical survey and clearance in the Golan Heights in the spring/summer/autumn, and in the Jordan Valley and Arava Plain in the winter.¹⁸

At the start of 2017, INMAA began surveying the Jordan Valley minefields in the West Bank, operating through Israeli companies funded from the national budget. INMAA sees significant potential for cancellation and reduction of mined areas in the Jordan Valley, and is using a range of technologies and scientific tools to assess incidence of mine drift. The INMAA planned to invest around NIS 900,000 (approximately US\$250,000) in this project in 2017–19.¹⁹

In addition, the INMAA continues to oversee HALO Trust clearance projects in Area C of the West Bank.²⁰

INMAA "defines clearance policies, sets the national priorities and implements them in coordination with other relevant governmental ministries, the IDF, and local authorities".²¹ Clearance tasks are assigned according to a classification formula laid down by INMAA, and prioritisation is set nationally every three years. The criteria used for the formula are largely based on the risk level and development potential of the affected areas.²² INMAA has been studying the social and economic impacts of land released over the last four years, as well as on the potential impact for future clearance sites.²³

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

National mine action standards, which concern rules and regulations covering clearance methods, quality management, legislation, and insurance, are contained on the INMAA website.²⁴ 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.²⁵

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Commercial companies are contracted to conduct clearance as well as QA and quality control (QC).

In 2017, 106 demining personnel and 36 machines were deployed for clearance operations.²⁶ The clearance companies contracted in 2018 and 2019, and their demining capacity, is not known.

The IDF also conduct 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.²⁷ 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.²⁸

The HALO Trust works under the auspices of both INMAA and the Palestine Mine Action Centre (PMAC) in the West Bank²⁹ (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.³⁰ Some of these operations are conducted by Israel directly, while others are performed by contractors.³¹

Throughout 2019, INMAA continued to be supported by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) in developing its animal detection system capacity.³² A pilot project using mine detection dogs (MDDs) conducted in 2017³³ had concluded that dogs would not be a valuable tool.³⁴ However, after investigating and conducting further research into animal detection and behaviour, INMAA planned to conduct further trials.³⁵

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2019

In reporting under Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II, Israel stated that INMAA had overseen clearance of approximately 577,000m² in 2019, destroying 1,200 mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). In addition, the IDF's Engineering Corps was reported to have cleared 106,000m², destroying 911 mines and ERW.³⁶ However, there was no disaggregation on what proportion of this land release was of mined area (as opposed to battle area) or whether it also includes land released in Palestinian territory in the West Bank.

In addition, according to Israel, in 2019, "the IDF has made significant progress in re-surveying mine affected areas, and in examining the possibility of area cancellation, following a completion of a full detailed non-technical survey".³⁷

The HALO Trust continued its clearance of minefields in Area C of the West Bank in 2019, working under the auspices of both INMAA and PMAC, with international and Israeli funding for the Baptism Site Project (see the *Clearing the Mines* report on Palestine for further information).

Based on the clearance rates of the past few years, it will take many years to clear remaining anti-personnel mine contamination in Israel.

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| <p>1 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly Director of Technology and Knowledge Management, Israeli National Mine Action Authority (INMAA), 26 May 2018.</p> <p>2 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly INMAA, 26 May 2018.</p> <p>3 Ibid.</p> <p>4 "Israel army plants new mines along Syria border", Associated Press, 13 August 2011.</p> <p>5 "New Golan mine-clearing project to begin this summer", Jerusalem Post, 16 March 2017, at: bit.ly/2MyEKBc.</p> <p>6 Minefield Clearance Law 5771-2011 of March 2011, unofficial translation at: bit.ly/2GDOQgJ; Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2010), Form A. Form A refers to details provided in Form D, but information in Form D has been deleted.</p> <p>7 Minefield Clearance Law 2011 (MCL 5771-2011).</p> <p>8 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report submitted in 2020 (covering 2019), Form D.</p> <p>9 Interview with Marcel Aviv, Director, INMAA, in Geneva, 7 February 2019.</p> <p>10 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly INMAA, 26 May 2018.</p> <p>11 Interview with Marcel Aviv, INMAA, Geneva, 7 February 2019.</p> <p>12 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly INMAA, 26 May 2018.</p> <p>13 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 20 April and 18 June 2020.</p> <p>14 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2019), Form B.</p> <p>15 Ibid., Forms A and B.</p> | <p>16 Ibid., Form D.</p> <p>17 Ibid., Form B.</p> <p>18 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly of INMAA, 26 May 2018.</p> <p>19 Emails from Michael Heiman, INMAA, 23 July and 10 August 2017.</p> <p>20 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2019), Form B.</p> <p>21 Ibid., Form B.</p> <p>22 Email from Michael Heiman, INMAA, 23 July 2017.</p> <p>23 Email from Michael Heiman, INMAA, 19 September 2016.</p> <p>24 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2019), Form B.</p> <p>25 Ibid., Form D.</p> <p>26 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly of INMAA, 26 May 2018.</p> <p>27 Email from Eran Yuvan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 29 April 2014; and CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2019), Form B.</p> <p>28 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2019), Form B.</p> <p>29 HALO Trust, "West Bank", accessed 31 May 2020.</p> <p>30 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2019), Form C.</p> <p>31 Email from Michael Heiman, INMAA, 23 July 2017.</p> <p>32 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2019), Form E.</p> <p>33 Email from Michael Heiman, INMAA, 23 July 2017.</p> <p>34 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly INMAA, 26 May 2018.</p> <p>35 Interview with Marcel Aviv, INMAA, Geneva, 7 February 2019.</p> <p>36 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2019), Form B.</p> <p>37 Ibid.</p> |
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