

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

There were positive developments in mine action in Myanmar during 2019 and in early 2020, including preliminary steps by the government towards establishing a national mine action authority (NMAA) and approval of Myanmar's first national mine action standard on the marking of hazardous areas. But although non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are permitted to conduct non-technical survey, which was ongoing as of writing, they are not yet authorised to conduct mine clearance, an activity that remains under the sole remit of the Myanmar army (Tatmadaw).

The Government of Myanmar has recognised the importance of mine action in helping ensure the safe return or resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs), as part of its National Strategy on Resettlement of IDPs and Closure of IDP Camps, which was launched in November 2019. The planned return of IDPs imposes upon the Myanmar authorities the need to accelerate mine action coordination and activities to help ensure that areas of return are safe or that at a minimum mined areas have been clearly delineated and marked and risk education conducted.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Myanmar 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, Myanmar has obligations under international human rights law to clear anti-personnel mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.
- The Myanmar army (Tatmadaw) and armed groups should stop all use of anti-personnel mines.
- Myanmar should accelerate non-technical survey, marking of hazardous areas, and permit accredited operators to conduct clearance and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD).
- Myanmar should accelerate efforts to establish a NMAA to plan and coordinate comprehensive mine action to meet humanitarian needs.
- Myanmar should ensure that areas planned for IDP returns are safe or that at a minimum, mined areas have been clearly delineated, perimeter-marked and fenced, and risk education conducted.
- The authorities, NGOs, and other implementing partners, should continue to develop and approve National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), particularly for non-technical survey, technical survey, and clearance.
- A centralised information management database should be established, into which data collected on mined areas should be entered.
- Myanmar should support the mobilisation of technical capacity by ensuring that no taxes are imposed on mine action equipment (such as personal protective equipment (PPE) and detectors) and vehicles that are imported by international operators.

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Myanmar is heavily mine-affected as a result of conflicts between the Myanmar army and numerous non-state armed groups affiliated with ethnic minorities. The violence in Myanmar started after the country's independence in 1948 and is ongoing, with anti-personnel mine continuing to be laid.¹ Mined areas are in areas of the country close to Myanmar's borders with Bangladesh, China, and Thailand, and pose a particular threat in the north and east of the country.

There is no accurate estimate of the extent of mine contamination. The government of Myanmar has said that while it is very difficult to have a complete picture of contamination, data shows that 9 out of the 14 states and regions are contaminated with landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW).² Although landmine casualty data is not systematically collected in Myanmar, of the recorded incidents in recent years, Kachin and Shan states have seen the highest number of casualties.³

The Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, established by the United Nations 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 continue to lay landmines and use improvised explosive devices (IEDs).⁴

In September 2018, the Fact-Finding Mission had reported that mines had been laid by the Tatmadaw soldiers along the border with Bangladesh in the lead-up to and following operations targeting fleeing Rohingya civilians and seeking to prevent those who had already left from returning. In April 2017, it was reported that the Myanmar and Bangladesh governments had agreed to remove mines and IEDs from the border area. By August, however, the Tatmadaw was laying mines along the border, not removing them, and in September, Bangladesh formally complained to Myanmar about the latter’s emplacement of mines.⁵

Continued use of mines has occurred despite the signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in October 2015 between the Government of Myanmar and eight ethnic armed groups (with a further two signing the agreement in 2018), which committed all parties to end the use of landmines and cooperate on mine-clearance operations.⁶

Non-technical survey conducted by international NGOs and their partner organisations in recent years is starting to provide a better idea of the extent of anti-personnel mine contamination in areas in which they operate, but due to sensitivity on the part of ethnic groups and the authorities, data are not always openly accessible or centrally reported.

Anti-personnel mines laid by the Tatmadaw are mostly produced in state-owned factories.⁷ Ethnic armed groups acknowledge use of anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature as well as of a number of anti-vehicle mines, but unconfirmed reports have suggested groups in the north have also obtained Chinese factory-made Type 72 anti-vehicle mines.⁸

In a statement delivered at the Fourth Review Conference of the APMBC in Oslo in November 2019, the Government of Myanmar said, “Myanmar will continue to promote the full stop in the use of anti-personnel mines by all parties to the conflict” and that it was “working hard to strengthen the knowledge of and the respect towards international humanitarian law among all parties to the conflict.”⁹

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The government 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 reports to the head of government, State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi.¹⁰

In 2019 and early 2020, Myanmar was making welcome 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.”¹¹

An initial workshop on how Myanmar can establish an NMAA to lead and manage a humanitarian mine action programme was hosted by Myanmar 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.¹² Discussions focused on which ministries would form part of a future NMAA and the mechanisms for establishing the Authority. The Attorney General’s Office reportedly advised that establishment of a NMAA, including its mandate, terms of reference, and budget would need to follow the national legal process, which could take time, especially in the absence of sufficient political will and pressure to fast-track the process.¹³ On 3 January 2020, an interministerial meeting took place, attended by 14

different ministries, including the Ministry of Defence, during which it was agreed in principle to establish an NMAA and for a governmental task force/working committee to be established to begin the process.¹⁴

A second international workshop in January 2020 discussed how Myanmar can establish an NMAA in Myanmar. It was attended by the GICHD and the Norwegian Presidency to the APMBC, but NGO clearance operators were not invited.¹⁵

The need to accelerate the establishment of an NMAA is all the more pressing in light of the government’s plan to close IDP camps. There are reported to be more than 140 camps, with a total population of more than 160,000 in 15 townships in four states.¹⁶ The government of Myanmar launched the “National Strategy on Resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Closure of IDP Camps” in November 2019.¹⁷ The plan identifies the need for landmine clearance to enable IDPs to return to their villages of origin, but does not provide any further details of how and when such clearance will take place. At the Fourth APMBC Review Conference in November 2019, Myanmar said publicly that “that mine action is a precondition for safe return and resettlement of IDPs, and sustainable and durable solutions”; that the government is “now currently finding practical ways to move forward to closing the IDP camps using this national strategy”; and that it “has an aim to start humanitarian demining in non-conflict areas as a part of this camp closure strategy.”¹⁸ Several senior government officials have similarly reportedly expressed support for the need for mine clearance and other mine action activities in areas identified for IDP returns.¹⁹

International NGO operators are advocating for camp closures to be conducted in a safe, voluntary and dignified manner, and for mine action to form an essential part of the planning and activity implementation process of IDP returns. In particular, non-technical survey and hazard marking conducted to international standards are urgently needed in potential resettlement areas, to define and demarcate hazardous areas and to verify safe areas; and should be a pre-requisite step prior to IDPs returning to suspected mined areas.²⁰ According to Mines Advisory Group (MAG), there have already been reported accidents involving recent IDPs that had recently returned to their village of origin in Kachin state.²¹

Many parts of Myanmar are still in armed conflict and part of the timeline for the return of IDPs, depends on progress in the peace process with the ethnic armed groups.²² According to a briefing by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in March 2020, in western Myanmar, the return of IDPs is "hindered by ongoing fighting" and "newly laid anti-personnel mines and improvised explosive devices pose additional risks."²³ Kachin is a priority state in the IDP camp closure strategy, but the KIA has not yet signed the ceasefire agreement with the government. However, in negotiation with the government, a mandate has been given to Kachin church leaders to act on behalf of non-state armed groups with regard to IDP resettlement.²⁴ MAG (through joint deployments with Kachin humanitarian organisations) has conducted baseline and remote baseline survey in Kachin state, targeting 59 villages identified for IDP return or resettlement. The resulting report published in 2020, revealed that 90% of the villages surveyed had reported some evidence of contamination by landmines or unexploded ordnance (UXO), with 70% of the villages reporting direct evidence of contamination. The report highlights the need for the Myanmar government to make humanitarian mine action a prerequisite for any IDP return.²⁵

Discussions continued in early 2020 between humanitarian operators and the national authorities regarding possible survey and clearance in relation to the IDP camp closure strategy,²⁶ but had been suspended as at March 2020, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁷ According to online sources, some mine clearance has been undertaken by the military as part of an initiative to facilitate the return of IDPs, but there are serious doubts as to the standard to which this mine clearance has been conducted.²⁸ Similarly, the Independent International Fact Finding Mission expressed concerns "about reports that some demining operations conducted by the Tatmadaw may have failed to meet relevant quality standards and did not include agricultural land surrounding residential areas."²⁹ The Tatmadaw has historically seen mine clearance as solely its own task.

The Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement between the Government and 10 ethnic armed groups also included a dedicated provision on demining, and the government of Myanmar highlights that mine action is a precondition for lasting peace.³⁰ That said, armed conflict is ongoing in many parts of the country and a number of armed groups have not yet signed the ceasefire agreement.³¹

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MSWRR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) co-chair the Mine Risks Working Group (MRWG), which was set up in 2012 and comprises 10 ministries, 41 international and national organisations, and 4 state-level coordination agencies (in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, and Shan states).³² In 2018–19, the MRWG was guided by a strategic work plan whose six main priorities are: inter-ministerial and inter-agency coordination mechanisms; mine risk education (MRE); victim assistance; data collection and information management; advocacy; and land release operations, including non-technical survey.³³ The MRWG is said to convene regularly (on a quarterly basis) and the meetings are well attended, with active participation from state and union level government representatives, and mine action NGOs.³⁴ Along with UNICEF, Humanity and Inclusion (HI) co-chairs the Victim Assistance Technical Group (VATG), a subgroup of the MRWG.³⁵

There is also an informal Non-Technical Survey Working Group (NTSWG), which was an ad-hoc group established in late 2018 as an offshoot of the MSWG. The working group was initially held in Yangon and comprised only humanitarian actors, but was subsequently moved to Nay Pyi Taw and expanded to include the Department of Rehabilitation, the Tatmadaw, and additional mine action organisations.³⁶ Since October 2019, the NTSWG has met quarterly, chaired by the Department of Rehabilitation, with the second meeting in January 2020.³⁷ Through the NTSWG, mine action NGOs and their partners were able to successfully advocate for permission to mark and fencing of hazardous areas, and jointly review and approve the national standards on marking in early 2020.³⁸

Myanmar is also working closely with the ASEAN and the ARMAC, enhancing technical cooperation in mine action.³⁹ In addition, Danish Demining Group (DDG) is helping to develop the capacity of both the national and the regional authorities by conducting humanitarian mine action sensitisation workshops with them.⁴⁰

In 2018, operators facilitated workshops and cooperative visits between government delegates from Myanmar and neighbouring countries. This included a study tour to Cambodia in collaboration with the ARMAC and the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) where delegates learned about land release, national standards, Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs), and information management, as well as about Cambodia's experience in adhering to the APMBBC.⁴¹ A similar trip to Thailand took place in 2019.⁴²

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

DDG reported having a gender and diversity policy and implementation plan. It also disaggregates relevant mine action data by sex and age, and has gender-balanced survey and community liaison teams to help ensure women and children in affected communities are consulted as part of its survey and community liaison activities in Myanmar. There is equal access to employment for women and men at DDG, and in Kayah state in 2019, DDG's two most senior staff managing non-technical survey were women. Overall, approximately 40% of DDG managerial/supervisory level positions in Myanmar are held by women.⁴³

The HALO Trust has a gender and diversity policy and implementation plan specific to its work in Myanmar. HALO consults all gender and age groups, including women and children, during non-technical survey and community liaison, and its survey and community liaison teams are gender-balanced as far as possible. HALO disaggregates relevant mine action data by gender and age.⁴⁴

There is equal access to employment for qualified women and men in HALO survey and community liaison teams in Myanmar. Of HALO Trust's 26 operational staff in Myanmar, 10 are women; and of the 16 managerial/supervisory roles, 5 are women.⁴⁵

HI rolled out a newly released gender/age/disability policy in 2019, in which specific markers are assessed and followed up on throughout the duration of HI projects, helping to improve inclusion of vulnerable persons. HI disaggregates relevant mine action data by gender and age and has an equal employment opportunity policy, which includes giving persons with disabilities an equal chance to apply for HI positions. Of HI's employees in Myanmar, 3.7% are persons with disabilities. HI did not conduct non-technical survey in 2019, but of its overall programme in Myanmar, 11 out of 18 managerial positions (61%) are held by women.⁴⁶

MAG has a gender and diversity policy and its implementation plan in Myanmar is focused on gender balanced community liaison teams, equal participation by women in all MAG activities, and gender and age disaggregated data.⁴⁷ MAG does not discriminate anyone based on gender, sex, age, ethnicity or religion, and there are equal employment opportunities for women and men. A total of 43% of personnel in MAG's Community Liaison Field Teams are female (50% of community liaison officers; 67% of community liaison team leaders; and 25% of community liaison supervisors); and a total of 44% of all MAG staff employed at managerial level or supervisory positions in Myanmar are female.⁴⁸ Women are always consulted during baseline survey (BLS) and non-technical survey by MAG, and to help ensure this, the organisation asks village leaders to gather a mixed group of local women and men to avoid the tendency for village leaders to only recommend local men for consultation.⁴⁹ All MAG's community liaison teams are gender balanced and consist of one male and one female community liaison officer.⁵⁰

NPA has a gender and diversity policy and implementation plan, and relevant mine action data is disaggregated by sex and age. NPA consults with women and children during its non-technical survey and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) operations in Myanmar. All non-technical survey teams are at least 50% female, and teams are fluent in the local languages of the area of operations.⁵¹ There is equal access to employment for qualified women and men in NPA survey teams in Myanmar, with women making up 50% of the NPA and partner organisation survey staff, and 20% of leadership roles.⁵²

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

As at April 2020, there was no centralised mine action information management database in Myanmar,⁵³ but it is hoped that this will be set up once an NMAA has been established.⁵⁴ Issues around conflict sensitivity pose potential challenges for such a database, which would require input from the joint parties to the ceasefire.

DDG uses the Fulcrum information management system.⁵⁵

MAG is working closely with other mine action stakeholders on the development of a data sharing platform in Myanmar, in which findings from the baseline survey and non-technical survey could be shared among all humanitarian mine action organisations. It is hoped that this will serve as a centralised database to assist coordination and tasking by the national authorities.⁵⁶

The HALO Trust's information management system is Fulcrum, with data recorded in Microsoft Access.⁵⁷ MAG is using 'Survey123' for data collection and ArcMAP for mapping and GPS services, both provided by ArcGIS. In 2020, MAG planned to upgrade its information management systems by switching to MAG's new global IM system which is on the ESRI platform and is called Operations Management Information Systems.⁵⁸

NPA Myanmar and its partner organisations also use "Survey123" in the collection of non-technical survey information and all survey data is recorded digitally, including polygon mapping directly via "survey123", with hard copy sketch maps drawn as a backup. This enabled "live" quality control (QC) checking by NPA Myanmar's information management officer.⁵⁹

PLANNING AND TASKING

Currently there is no national mine action legislation in Myanmar, but the government has reported that it plans to elaborate and adopt the required national legislation to establish an NMAA, "as soon as feasible".⁶⁰

HALO Trust follows a systematic work plan for its non-technical survey, while also prioritising credible reports received of local contamination.⁶¹

The first stage of MAG's task prioritisation is based on desk research using the "Village Situation Analysis" tool, through which data is gathered on all villages within MAG's operational areas, including information on conflict, accidents, victims, and access. This information is used alongside MAG's operational database to target activities.⁶²

MAG conducts two types of survey in Myanmar: the BLS and non-technical survey. The BLS is a basic preliminary assessment that offers a rapid snapshot of contamination in a particular area, based on focus group discussions and data from community members. On completion of a local BLS, villages are assigned one of three colour categories: red, which represents a high confidence of contamination (direct evidence of contamination is reported); amber, which represents low confidence of contamination (indirect evidence of contamination is reported); and grey, which indicates there was no evidence of contamination at the time of the survey. This categorisation forms the basis for MAG's prioritisation of non-technical survey.⁶³

In 2019, MAG also undertook "remote BLS" within the IDP camps and villages with a large proportion of displaced people, in the states of Kachin and northern Shan.⁶⁴ Remote BLS is a similar process to regular BLS, but involves focus discussion groups and interviews with IDPs about

the mine contamination situation in their place of origin. This is a helpful tool in the Myanmar context, where many IDPs frequently return to their village to check on their agricultural lands and to scavenge and hunt for food. Whenever possible, MAG triangulates information by doing multiple remote baseline surveys in different IDP camps to gain more information about contamination in villages of origin. However, due to the conflict situation and political complexity in Myanmar, it is often not possible to follow up with non-technical survey, in which case MAG relies on the results from the remote BLS. In addition, MAG prioritises baseline survey based on villages identified for IDP returns, in order to gather information about safety threats before IDP returns begin to these villages.⁶⁵

MAG's non-technical survey is a more detailed survey that more accurately identifies the location of suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) and confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs), enabling MAG to create polygons, identify EOD spot tasks, and generate hazardous area reports which can be shared with local communities and key stakeholders. Non-technical survey is prioritised in villages categorised as red through the BLS, followed by those classed as amber.⁶⁶

NPA prioritises areas for survey using joint input from local stakeholders and communities along with NPA's local partner organisations. Non-technical survey teams conduct both risk education and village baseline assessments involving members of the communities. Risk education sessions are interactive and facilitate a two-way conversation between local communities and NPA/partner team members. Based on community responses, a conflict, accident, and contamination overview of the village is determined through community mapping, after which CHAs and SHAs are identified.⁶⁷

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Historically, Myanmar has not had national standards and therefore operators have followed the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and their own SOPs. However, progress is now being made, with Myanmar's first national standard on marking, which was approved by the government in January 2020. Progress is being made to elaborate and get approval for a national standard on non-technical survey.

In 2018, operators successfully advocated for the Government of Myanmar to include physical marking (with warning signs) and fencing of SHAs and CHAs as part of the non-technical survey process. The central government now approves marking of polygons, though local authorities are also involved in the approval process.⁶⁸

DDG was not able to mark the hazardous areas it identified in 2019, but many were identified along electricity cable base structures, which were already fenced off to prevent people from entering. DDG also donated fencing material for hazardous areas identified to the Ministry of Electricity and Energy in Kayah state.⁶⁹

The HALO Trust reported that permission had been granted for marking of hazardous areas by authorities in both north Shan and Kayin states, provided that the village chief is in

agreement. In 2019, HALO marked 17 hazardous areas with warning signs in the local languages in both states.⁷⁰

As at April 2020, MAG had not commenced "fencing/markings" operations in Myanmar, but expected to do so during the year. Unfortunately, as at the time of writing, the COVID-19 pandemic had brought efforts to a standstill for the immediate future. As and when MAG does commence marking, it plans to do so in accordance with IMAS and so will require PPE and technical equipment. Deployment of teams will be dependent on the importing the necessary PPE.⁷¹

NPA was unable to conduct any marking due to the sensitivity of the areas in which it conducted non-technical survey in 2019.⁷²

A standard for non-technical survey is also being elaborated by the NTSWG, and it was hoped the working group would approve the standard soon.⁷³

There has, however, yet to be progress in elaboration of national standards for technical survey or for clearance; activities that humanitarian mine action organisations were not yet permitted to conduct in Myanmar, as at April 2020.⁷⁴

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Six international demining organisations have offices in Yangon and some provincial locations: DanChurchAid (DCA), DDG, The HALO Trust, HI, MAG, and NPA. None of the humanitarian demining organisations in Myanmar is yet permitted to conduct clearance, EOD, or technical survey; as at May 2020 they were only permitted to conduct non-technical survey, risk education, and community liaison.

Tatmadaw engineers have reportedly conducted some military mine clearance but operations are neither systematic nor have they been formally recorded, and there is concern regarding quality and standard to which clearance is conducted.⁷⁵

In 2019, DDG deployed two non-technical survey teams in Kayah state, as well as community liaison and community mapping in Kachin and north Shan states. DDG's non-technical survey and community liaison capacity remained constant in 2019 compared to the previous year, and DDG also worked with civil society partners, but only in risk education. DDG planned to expand its non-technical survey operations into Kachin and north Shan states in 2020.⁷⁶

In 2019, the HALO Trust continued to conduct non-technical survey in north Shan and Kayin states, although the intensity of fighting prevented some survey work in north Shan.⁷⁷ HALO employed seven teams in 2019, all capable of conducting non-technical survey and MRE. In addition, HALO Trust continued to operate with two local partners in north Shan state, which increases access to ethnic Kachin and Shan communities.⁷⁸ From April 2020, the number of HALO Trust teams had been reduced by two and there was ongoing uncertainty regarding capacity for the remainder of the year, due to the impact of COVID-19.⁷⁹

In 2019, HI's efforts in Myanmar were focused on leading the development of Victim Assistance in Myanmar and HI did not conduct non-technical survey. In 2020, however, it deployed a team to conduct risk education in schools in Kachin State and was planning to start non-technical survey in Kachin State once access to villages allows. As at May 2020, access was restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁸⁰

In 2019, MAG's non-technical survey and community liaison capacity consisted of nine community liaison teams and three implementing partner teams, with a total of 26 community liaison staff as at the end of 2019. This was roughly the same capacity as the previous year, but with a slight decrease in MAG's own teams and an increase in partner organisation teams. The three civil society implementing partners were contracted to conduct risk education and BLS in Kayah, Kachin, and northern Shan state.⁸¹

In 2019, NPA was focusing on three areas of work: national ownership and capacity development, non-technical survey and risk education with civil society partners, and emergency response by local and national partners.⁸² NPA conducted non-technical survey with two local civil society partners in the Bago, Tanintharyi region, and Mon state, during which NPA provided training and technical support to the partner organisations and experienced NPA team leaders accompanied partner teams during non-technical survey operations. Together with its civil society partners, NPA deployed three non-technical survey teams and three EOP/conflict preparedness and protection (CPP) teams in 2019.⁸³ NPA expected to increase capacity to four non-technical survey teams in 2020.⁸⁴

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

As in previous year, no land release took place in 2019 as humanitarian mine action operators are not permitted to conduct clearance or technical survey by either the government or ethnic minority authorities. Since 2018, operators have been authorised to conduct non-technical survey to identify mined areas, in addition to conducting risk education and community liaison activities which they were already undertaking. NGO operators are not permitted to conduct EOD of any explosive ordnance discovered during survey operations.

SURVEY IN 2019

In 2019, DDG identified two SHAs totalling 68,959m² and one CHA totalling 15,806m², all in Kayah state.⁸⁵

In 2019, HALO Trust identified a total of 1,282,515m² of mined area in north Shan and Kayin states, including 17 CHAs totalling 811,946m².⁸⁶ This is an increase in mined area identified on the year before, due to an increased number of non-technical survey teams deployed to north Shan state, where hazardous areas tend to be larger.⁸⁷

In 2019, MAG conducted 88 non-technical surveys in Myanmar, comprising 40 hazardous area reports and 48 EOD spot task reports, mainly in Kayah state (see Table 1).⁸⁸

Table 1: MAG non-technical survey in 2019⁸⁹

State	Operator	Hazardous area reports	EOD spot task reports
Kayah	MAG	35	37
Southern Shan	MAG	2	5
Kayin	MAG	0	2
Tanintharyi region	MAG	3	4
Totals		40	48

In 2019, MAG identified 39 SHAs totalling 622,524m² in Kayah and southern Shan states, and the Tanintharyi region; and 3 CHAs totalling 2,387m² in Kayah state (see Table 2). As at April 2020, none of these areas has yet been marked.⁹⁰

Table 2: Anti-personnel mined area by state (identified by MAG, as at end 2019)⁹¹

State	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)
Kayah	3	2,387	34	532,771
Shan	0	0	2	567
Tanintharyi Region	0	0	3	89,177
Totals	3	2,387	39	622,515

In 2019, NPA identified a total of eight SHAs across Bago, Tanintharyi, and Mon, totalling 213,659m², and one CHA of 16,614m² in size, in Bago region.⁹²

CLEARANCE IN 2019

No clearance of anti-personnel mines or other ordnance by international NGOs was permitted by the authorities in 2019.⁹³

- 1 "UNHCR concerned at mounting civilian casualties and displacement in western Myanmar", Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Press briefing, Geneva, 27 March 2020, at: bit.ly/365w0dF.
- 2 Presentation by U. Myo Set Aung, Director, MSWRR, UN National Mine Action Directors Meeting, Geneva, 7-10 February 2017; and interview with Win Naing Tun, Director-General, Department of Rehabilitation, MSWRR, in Geneva, 14 February 2020.
- 3 "Report of the Detailed Findings of the Independent International Fact Finding Mission on Myanmar", UN doc. A/HRC/42/CRP.5., 16 September 2019, p. 155.
- 4 Ibid., pp. 155-58.
- 5 "Report of the Detailed Findings of the Independent International Fact Finding Mission on Myanmar", UN doc. A/HRC/39/CRP.2, 17 September 2018, pp. 285-86.
- 6 Ibid., p. 94.
- 7 These locally manufactured mines include copies of Russian PMNs (locally designated MM-2), POMZ fragmentation mines (designated MM-1), and United States M14 anti-personnel mines. LTM-76 bounding fragmentation mines, based on British or Indian designs, have been found around electrical pylons.
- 8 Information provided by mine action stakeholders on condition of anonymity, 2018.
- 9 Statement of Myanmar, Fourth APMBBC Review Conference, Oslo, 25-29 November 2019.
- 10 Roger Fasth and Pascal Simon, "Mine Action in Myanmar", *Journal of Mine Action*, Issue 19.2, July 2015.
- 11 Statement of Myanmar, Fourth APMBBC Review Conference, Oslo, 25-29 November 2019.
- 12 Statement of Myanmar, Fourth APMBBC Review Conference, Oslo, 25-29 November 2019; emails from Bekim Shala, Country Director, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), 13 April 2020; Geoff Moynan, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 8 May 2020; and "Multi-stakeholder workshop on establishing a National Mine Action Authority in Myanmar", ARMAC, 30 October 2019, at: bit.ly/2An5L6H.
- 13 Email from Bekim Shala, MAG, 13 April 2020.
- 14 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.
- 15 Statement of Myanmar, Fourth APMBBC Review Conference, Oslo, 25-29 November 2019; and email from Bekim Shala, MAG, 13 April 2020.
- 16 "Workshop on National Strategy for Closure of IDP camps", Ministry of Information, Government of Myanmar, undated, at: bit.ly/2Ww8a7L.
- 17 Statement of Myanmar, Fourth APMBBC Review Conference, Oslo, 25-29 November 2019.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Email from Bekim Shala, MAG, 13 April 2020.
- 20 Emails from Bekim Shala, MAG, 13 April and 26 May 2020; and MAG, Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC), Karuna Mission Social Solidarity (KMSS), and Wunpawng Ninghtoi (WPN), "IDP Return and Resettlement Sites in Kachin State: baseline Survey Results from DPP-MAG Joint Deployments", undated joint report.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Interview with Win Naing Tun, Department of Rehabilitation, MSWRR, in Geneva, 14 February 2020.
- 23 "UNHCR concerned at mounting civilian casualties and displacement in western Myanmar", UNHCR press briefing, Geneva, 27 March 2020, at: bit.ly/365w0dF.
- 24 Interview with Win Naing Tun, Department of Rehabilitation, MSWRR, in Geneva, 14 February 2020.
- 25 Emails from Bekim Shala, MAG, 13 April and 26 May 2020; and joint report by MAG, KBC, KMSS, and WPN, "IDP Return and Resettlement Sites in Kachin State: baseline Survey Results from DPP-MAG Joint Deployments", undated.
- 26 Emails from Bekim Shala, MAG, 13 April 2020; Geoff Moynan, HALO Trust, 8 May 2020; and Liam Harvey, DDG, 22 May 2020.
- 27 Email from Geoff Moynan, HALO Trust, 8 May 2020.
- 28 Fortify Rights, "Myanmar: Ban landmines, lift travel restrictions on Aid Groups", News release, 14 May 2020, at: bit.ly/2AzmcND.
- 29 "Report of the Detailed Findings of the Independent International Fact Finding Mission on Myanmar", UN doc. A/HRC/42/CRP.5, 16 September 2019, p. 158.
- 30 Statement of Myanmar, Fourth APMBBC Review Conference, Oslo, 25-29 November 2019.
- 31 Interview with Win Naing Tun, Department of Rehabilitation, MSWRR, in Geneva, 14 February 2020.
- 32 UNICEF, "Landmines and explosive remnants of war threaten children and communities across Myanmar", 4 April 2018.
- 33 UN Portfolio of Mine Action Projects, "Myanmar 2019".
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