

AZERBAIJAN

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

	2017	2016
Problem understood	7	7
Target date for completion of mine clearance	5	5
Targeted clearance	5	6
Efficient clearance	5	4
National funding of programme	8	8
Timely clearance	7	5
Land-release system in place	4	4
National mine action standards	5	5
Reporting on progress	7	7
Improving performance	6	5
PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE	5.8	5.6

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

There was a dramatic increase in the amount of land released by clearance and survey in 2017 compared to previous years. This was due to the fact that clearance of the Jojuq Marjanli village was prioritised in order to facilitate the return of internally displaced people (IDPs) following the regaining of this land in 2016 from Armenian occupation. However, more than 3.6km² of land

in Jojuq Marjanli was cleared by two national demining non-governmental organisations without any mines being found. As this also occurred in 2016 it suggests an urgent need for enhanced use of evidence-based technical survey to confirm areas as mined, before undertaking full clearance.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Azerbaijan should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Azerbaijan should report on its plans and timelines for clearance of all known or suspected mined areas under its effective control.
- Azerbaijan should ensure that clearance is only conducted in areas where there is firm evidence of contamination.

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 area suspected to contain anti-personnel mines in Azerbaijan as at the end of 2017 has not been publicly reported. At the end of 2015, 69.9km² of area was suspected to contain anti-personnel mines.¹

The Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) has reported that additional contamination has been found, mainly in former soviet army firing ranges and training polygons. However, they are unable to give a precise figure for the extent of the contamination saying this will only be known after a country-wide resurvey, which will be carried out once resources are available.²

The extent of contamination in areas occupied by Armenia is unknown, although the ANAMA has suggested that contamination may cover between 350km² and 830km², and contain between 50,000 and 100,000 mines.³

Since 2001, survey and clearance have been reducing and better defining the extent of contamination within areas under the control of Azerbaijan. In 2003, the Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) identified 970 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) covering 736km².⁴ In 2006, re-survey reduced the estimate of contamination to 306km².⁵ Further re-survey by ANAMA in 2008–09 combined with clearance operations reduced total SHA to 184km² across 280 areas, of which 89 were believed to contain mines and 191 only UXO.⁶

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 Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* 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 mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO).⁷

According to ANAMA all clearance operations are carried out in line with an annual plan approved by the Government of Azerbaijan and based on the requests from land owners such as local executive authorities, farmers, and different state organizations involved in reconstruction and rehabilitation activities in ERW affected regions.⁸

In 2017, ANAMA recorded seven mine incidents that killed two people and injured eight others.⁹

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

A 1998 presidential decree established ANAMA, which reports to the Deputy Prime Minister as head of the State Commission for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation.¹⁰ In April 1999, ANAMA established the Azerbaijan Mine Action Programme, a joint project of the Government of Azerbaijan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).¹¹ A joint working group, established in December 1999 and consisting of representatives from various ministries, provides regular guidance to ANAMA.¹²

ANAMA is tasked with planning, coordinating, managing, and monitoring 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).¹³ No commercial company is active in mine action in Azerbaijan.

ANAMA manages the mine action programme via its headquarters based in Baku, a regional office in Fizuli, a regional training centre in Goygol, and three operational centres, located in Aghjabedi, Agstafa, and Terter.¹⁴

UNDP provides support to ANAMA, and will continue to do so until 2019, as part of a project to support the institutional capacity of ANAMA for mine/UXO clearance, risk education, victim assistance, international networking, and support to other mine-affected countries.¹⁵

Strategic Planning

ANAMA is integrated into the State Social and Economic Development programme. The current mine action strategy is for 2013–18.¹⁶ A new strategic plan is currently in development. Its main aims are said to be to continue ERW clearance in support of government development projects, and to provide safe conditions for the local population in affected regions.¹⁷

ANAMA's long-term strategy is to clear the occupied territories as and when it is possible to do so.¹⁸

Legislation and Standards

As at May 2018, Azerbaijan was still in the process of adopting a national mine action law, with draft legislation under review by the Cabinet of Ministers.¹⁹ Once adopted, it will regulate mine action in Azerbaijan, governing issues such as licensing, accreditation, quality assurance (QA), and tender procedures.²⁰

Azerbaijan also has its own National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), which were adopted in 2001 and subsequently revised in 2003, 2004, and 2010.²¹

Quality Management

ANAMA established a National Training Quality Assurance Team in 2004. In 2011, this transitioned into ANAMA's training, survey, and QA division (TSQAD), which is responsible for training and QA. The TSQAD also conducts quality control (QC).²²

In 2017, 95 QA monitoring visits were undertaken.²³ In addition, external QC inspections were conducted at 38 sites in 2017, with more than 2.9km² of land physically checked.²⁴

Information Management

ANAMA uses an old version of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database.²⁵

Operators

At the end of 2017, ANAMA employed 632 operational and administrative staff and had 49 mine detection dogs (MDDs) and 6 demining machines.²⁶ Included in this capacity are the two national demining NGOs, IEPF and Dayag, which are contracted for mine clearance. Together, the two organisations employ 156 operational and administrative staff.²⁷ ANAMA also has an MDD breeding and training centre, which was built in 2011.²⁸

LAND RELEASE

The total mined area released by clearance and survey in 2017 was 9.06km², a huge increase from the 2.3km² released the previous year.²⁹

Survey in 2017

In 2017, 0.25km² of land was cancelled by non-technical survey and 1.12km² of land was reduced by technical survey, of which 0.25km² was reduced by MDDs.³⁰

Machines were used for ground preparation before technical survey, in total 2.5km² of land was prepared by machines in 2017.³¹

Clearance in 2017

Azerbaijan reported clearing 7.69km² of land in 2017³², a significant increase from the 0.83km² cleared in 2016.³³ Of the 2017 total, however, 3.6km² contained no mines and is not included in Mine Action Review's calculation of the global clearance total for the year. This clearance was conducted by IEPF and RA in the village of Jojuq Marjanli, which had been liberated following the April 2016 conflict and to which IDPs had begun to return. In order to facilitate their safe return, the two demining organisations were rapidly deployed for clearance. Although ANAMA has suggested that this rapid deployment explains the low amount of contamination in the areas that have been cleared it does not explain why significant areas of land were fully cleared without confirming whether contamination was present. Clearance of Jojuq Marjanli continued into 2018 to support infrastructure building works.³⁴

Table 1: Mine clearance in 2017³⁵

Operator	Mined areas cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed*	AV mines destroyed*	UXO destroyed*
ANAMA CT	22	4,027,245	28	140	52
IEPF	11	1,943,268	0	0	33
Dayag-RA	13	1,723,383	0	0	2
Totals	46	7,693,896	28	140	87

AP = Anti-Personnel AV = Anti-Vehicle

* Table 1 includes the items destroyed only during mine clearance and not technical survey.

In addition, ANAMA tasks its Special Mobile Emergency Response Team or the national NGOs – depending on the location of the call-out – to respond to explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) requests from the local community, government bodies, and international humanitarian organisations.³⁶ ANAMA, IEPF, and RA responded to a total of 157 requests in 2017, during which they found 7,528 explosive items, 7 of which were anti-personnel mines, in 31 regions of Azerbaijan.³⁷

Furthermore, in January 2017 ANAMA began the final phase of the three phase Azerbaijan National Action Plan (NAP)/NATO Partnership for Peace Trust fund project, at the former artillery shooting range in Jeyranchel, in the Agstafa region, on the Azerbaijan Georgian border. The third phase was projected to finish in June 2018 and will result in the clearance of nearly 22km² of land contaminated with UXO.³⁸

ANAMA also continued implementation of the Ganja and Kirdagh UXO clearance projects of former military testing ranges. During ERW clearance in 2017, ANAMA cleared 62 sites, totalling 33.3km², during which it destroyed 25,102 items of ERW as well as 5 anti-personnel mines and 60 anti-vehicle mines; IEPF cleared 15 sites, totalling 27.4km², during which it destroyed 2,616 items of ERW; and RA cleared 20 sites, totalling 24.5km² during which it destroyed 7,332 items of ERW as well as 2 anti-personnel mines and 4 anti-vehicle mines.³⁹

Progress in 2018

In 2018, most of ANAMA's clearance assets were being deployed for emergency clearance after an explosion at the Khizi ammunition storage area, continuing clearance of the former shooting range in Jeyranchel in Agstafa as well as continuing clearance of the Jojuq Marjanli village to support infrastructure construction.⁴⁰

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Azerbaijan is not a state party to the APMBC, but nonetheless has obligations under international human rights law to protect life, which requires the clearance of mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.

Azerbaijan submitted voluntary APMBC Article 7 transparency reports in 2008 and 2009 but has not submitted an Article 7 report in the last eight years.

Over the last five years, 15.75km² of mined area has been cleared in Azerbaijan. Mine clearance output increased dramatically in 2017 (see Table 2).

Table 2: Mine clearance in 2013-2017⁴¹

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2017	*4.00
2016	0.83
2015	1.49
2014	4.80
2013	4.63
Total	15.75

* A further 3.7km² was cleared but was found not to contain mines.

Currently, 90% of mine action in Azerbaijan is state funded.⁴² ANAMA's long-term strategy is to be ready to start clearance of the occupied territories as and when this is possible.⁴³

- 1 Email from Tural Mammadov, Operations Officer, Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA), 19 October 2016.
- 2 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, Public Relations Officer, ANAMA, 21 May 2018.
- 3 ANAMA "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018" p. 5.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid; and Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Azerbaijan", March 2012, p. 13.
- 6 GICHD, "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Azerbaijan", March 2012, p. 13.
- 7 ANAMA "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018" p. 5.
- 8 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 May 2018.
- 9 ANAMA "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018" p. 5.
- 10 GICHD, "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Azerbaijan", March 2012, Executive Summary.
- 11 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018", p. 12.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018", p. 12.
- 15 UNDP, "UNDP Mine Action Programme: Azerbaijan", April 2016.
- 16 Email from Parviz Gidayev, Planning & Development Manager, ANAMA, 20 May 2015; and ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 10.
- 17 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 May 2018.
- 18 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2014", p. 5; and GICHD, "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Azerbaijan", March 2012, Executive Summary.
- 19 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 May 2018.
- 20 Email from Parviz Gidayev, ANAMA, 20 May 2015; and ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2014".
- 21 Email from Tural Mammadov, ANAMA, 19 October 2016.
- 22 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2016", pp. 28 and 30.
- 23 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018", p. 24.
- 24 Ibid., p. 25.
- 25 Ibid., p. 32.
- 26 Ibid., p. 12.
- 27 Ibid., p. 13.
- 28 Ibid., p. 14.
- 29 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", pp. 13, 14, and 16.
- 30 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 May 2018; and ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018", p. 15.
- 31 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018", p. 16.
- 32 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 May 2018.
- 33 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 13; and ANAMA, "ANAMA Monthly Report for January 2017".
- 34 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 May 2018.
- 35 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018", p. 14.
- 36 Ibid., pp. 9 and 16.
- 37 Ibid., p. 19; and email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 May 2018.
- 38 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018", p. 20.
- 39 Ibid., p. 9.
- 40 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 May 2018.
- 41 See Landmine Monitor and Mine Action Review reports on clearance in Azerbaijan covering clearance in 2013–16.
- 42 G. Ahmadov, "Advocating Mine Action to Government of Azerbaijan", Geneva, 19 February 2016, at: <http://www.mineaction.org/sites/default/files/documents/Gazanfar%20Ahmadov%20Azerbaijan.pdf>; and email from Tural Mammadov, ANAMA, 19 October 2016.
- 43 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2014"; and GICHD, "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Azerbaijan", March 2012, Executive Summary.