

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Azerbaijan should accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a matter of priority.
- Azerbaijan should comply with its obligations under international human rights law to clear cluster munition remnants (CMR) on territory under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.

## CLUSTER MUNITION REMNANT CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of contamination from CMR in Azerbaijan is unknown, as Armenian forces currently occupy a significant area of the country, where the contamination exists. There may also be some residual contamination in territory under government control.<sup>1</sup>

Large quantities of cluster munitions were dropped during the 1988 conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Following the cease-fire in 1994, tensions flared up again in April 2016 when fighting broke out briefly along the Line of Contact (LOC). While ground fighting was confined to areas close to the LOC, artillery fire penetrated more than 10km into Nagorno-Karabakh, and included use of cluster munitions. The HALO Trust has calculated the four days of hostilities added 2.4km<sup>2</sup> of CMR contamination, all of which has now been cleared.<sup>2</sup> However, no CMR contamination has been reported on the Azerbaijan-controlled side of the LOC (see the Mine Action Review *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants* report on Nagorno-Karabakh for further information).

In 2007, the Azerbaijan Campaign to Ban Landmines (AzCBL) surveyed CMR contamination in the non-occupied border regions of Azerbaijan. It concluded that cluster munitions (among other ordnance) had been used in the Aghdam and Fizuli regions.<sup>3</sup> In addition, significant quantities of CMR have been identified in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>4</sup>

### OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND LANDMINES

Other areas are confirmed or suspected to contain explosive remnants of war (ERW): both unexploded ordnance (UXO) and abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO). These include former military testing areas and a former shooting range.<sup>5</sup> Azerbaijan is also contaminated with landmines, the extent of which is unknown (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Azerbaijan for further information).

## NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA), the de facto mine action authority and mine action centre, 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). No commercial company is active in mine action in Azerbaijan.<sup>6</sup>

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provides capacity development to ANAMA and will continue to do so until 2020. The five core result areas of the project are i) maximizing socio-economic impact, ii) supporting the institutional capacity of ANAMA for mine/UXO clearance according to international and national mine action standards, iii) promoting ANAMA as an international mine action centre, iv) procurement

and upgrading of equipment, and v) introducing a gender sensitive approach to mine action to Azerbaijan.<sup>7</sup> According to ANAMA, as at end April 2019, project outputs include improvements made to ANAMA's regional structure, enhanced international training services, upgraded training equipment, and support for the sustainability of the training centre.<sup>8</sup>

As at April 2019, Azerbaijan was still in the process of adopting a national mine action law, with draft legislation under review by the Cabinet of Ministers.<sup>9</sup> Once adopted, it will regulate mine action in Azerbaijan, governing issues such as licensing, accreditation, quality assurance (QA), and tender procedures.<sup>10</sup>

The Azerbaijani government funds 90% of ANAMA's operating costs and 90% of all survey and clearance activities in Azerbaijan.<sup>11</sup>

## GENDER

ANAMA does not have a gender policy. There are no women working in any operational roles in survey and clearance in Azerbaijan. However, women do participate in mine risk education sessions and are consulted during survey.<sup>12</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>13</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.<sup>14</sup> No further 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.<sup>15</sup> According to ANAMA, no modifications or improvements were made to the database in 2018.<sup>16</sup>

## PLANNING AND TASKING

The current mine action strategy is for 2013–18.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</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>19</sup>

ANAMA has an annual workplan for 2018 and 2019. In 2019, ANAMA was intending to continue mine clearance operations in Agdam and Agjabedi, Fizuli, Heybet, Jabrayil, and Terter regions. Tasks are prioritised according to the state development plan and state orders.<sup>20</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>21</sup> No major modifications to the standards were made in 2018.<sup>22</sup>

ANAMA also has standard operating procedures (SOPs) in place, which were reviewed in 2018.<sup>23</sup>

### OPERATORS

In 2018, ANAMA employed 613 operational and administrative staff across six regional centres (including the Regional Mine Action Resource and Training Centre).<sup>24</sup>

The Training, Survey and Quality Assurance Division continued its quality management (QM)-related activities during 2018 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 NGOs.<sup>25</sup>

### OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Mine detection dogs (MDDs) and mechanical assets are used to support reduction by technical survey and manual clearance operations.<sup>26</sup> In 2018, Azerbaijan had 48 MDDs and 6 machines.

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUT AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

No CMR survey or clearance took place in 2018.

### Battle Area Clearance in 2018

In 2018, clearance operations continued across the country with the majority of ANAMA's clearance assets deployed for emergency clearance of the Khizi ammunition depot explosion; for clearance of the shooting range in Jeyranchel, Agstafa region; and for the clearance of the Jojuq Marjanli village following liberation from Armenian occupation.<sup>27</sup> In 2018, 45.5km<sup>2</sup> was cleared and 11,743 items of UXO, 29 anti-personnel mines, and 17 anti-vehicle mines were found and destroyed.<sup>28</sup>

In June 2018, ANAMA completed the final phase of the three-phase Azerbaijan National Action Plan (NAP)/ NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) Trust fund project, at the former Soviet artillery shooting range in Jeyranchel, in the Agstafa region, on the border with Georgia. Phase III lasted for 18 months and resulted in the clearance of 22km<sup>2</sup> with 2,146 mines and UXO found and destroyed.<sup>29</sup>

No target date has been set for the completion of CMR clearance in Azerbaijan.<sup>30</sup> ANAMA's long-term strategy is to be ready to start clearance of the occupied territories as and when this is possible.<sup>31</sup> In May 2019, Azerbaijan stated that it will only accede to the CCM once all of its territories are liberated from occupation by Armenia and all internally displaced persons and refugees return to their lands.<sup>32</sup>

1 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, Public Relations Officer, Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA), 2 April 2019.

2 Emails from Amasia Zargarian, Programme Support Officer, HALO Trust, 4 May 2018; and Asqanaz Hambardzumyan, HALO Trust, 26 April 2019.

3 AzCBL, "Information Bulletin", January 2008.

4 Interview with Nazim Ismayilov, Director, ANAMA, Baku, 2 April 2010; see also Human Rights Watch and Landmine Action, *Banning Cluster Munitions: Government Policy and Practice*, Mines Action Canada, Ottawa, 2009, p. 188.

5 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018", p. 17.

6 Email from Tural Mammadov, Operations Officer, ANAMA, 19 October 2016.

7 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.

8 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 April 2019.

9 Ibid.

10 Email from Parviz Gidayev, ANAMA, 20 May 2015; and ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2014".

11 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 April 2019.

12 Ibid.

13 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.

14 UNDP, "Project Document: Azerbaijan", undated but for project period 3 November 2017 to 31 December 2020, p. 5.

15 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 32.

16 Ibid.

17 Email from Parviz Gidayev, Planning & Development Manager, ANAMA, 20 May 2015; and ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 10.

18 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA 2 May 2018.

19 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 April 2019.

20 Ibid.

21 Email from Tural Mammadov, ANAMA, 19 October 2016.

22 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 April 2019.

23 Ibid.

24 ANAMA, 2018 report, undated.

25 Ibid.

26 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 April 2019.

27 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 May 2018.

28 ANAMA, 2018 report, undated.

29 Ibid.

30 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 April 2019.

31 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2014"; and GICHD, "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Azerbaijan", March 2012, Executive Summary.

32 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 21 May 2019.