

# AZERBAIJAN

## MINE ACTION PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

For 2016

For 2015

Problem understood	7	7
Target date for completion of mine clearance	5	5
Targeted clearance	6	6
Efficient clearance	4	5
National funding of programme	8	8
Timely clearance	5	5
Land release system in place	4	6
National mine action standards	5	5
Reporting on progress	7	7
Improving performance	5	6
PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE	5.6	6.0

## PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

There was a further decrease in the amount of land released by clearance and survey in 2016, compared to previous years. This was due to the fact that an increased proportion of clearance tasks in 2016 were of battle area clearance (BAC) of unexploded ordnance (UXO) contamination, rather than of mined area. These included the Jeyranchel clearance project, under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Partnership for Peace

(PfP) project, and clearance of UXO from former military testing ranges in Ganja and Kirdagh. Furthermore, during the 0.8km<sup>2</sup> of manual mine clearance in 2016, only two anti-vehicle mines were destroyed, and two of the three operators did not find any mines on the land they cleared. This 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.

## 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 mine contamination in Azerbaijan as at the end of 2016 has not been publicly reported. At the end of 2015, 69.9km<sup>2</sup> of area was suspected to contain anti-personnel mines.<sup>1</sup> The extent of contamination in areas occupied by Armenia is unknown, although the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) has suggested that contamination may cover between 350km<sup>2</sup> and 830km<sup>2</sup>, and contain between 50,000 and 100,000 mines.<sup>2</sup>

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 751km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>3</sup> In 2006, re-survey reduced the estimate of contamination to 306km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>4</sup>

Further re-survey by ANAMA in 2008–09 combined with clearance operations reduced total SHA to 184km<sup>2</sup> across 280 areas, of which 89 were believed to contain mines and 191 only UXO.<sup>5</sup>

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 separate report on Nagorno-Karabakh). 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 UXO.<sup>6</sup>

In 2016, ANAMA recorded five mine incidents that killed two people and injured four others.<sup>7</sup>

## 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.<sup>8</sup> 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).<sup>9</sup> A joint working group, established in December 1999 and consisting of representatives from various ministries, provides regular guidance to ANAMA.<sup>10</sup>

ANAMA is tasked with planning, coordinating, managing, and monitoring mine action in the country. It also conducts demining along with two national operators it contracts: Dayag-Relief Azerbaijan (RA) and the International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF).<sup>11</sup> No commercial company is active in mine action in Azerbaijan.

ANAMA manages the mine action programme via its headquarters based in Baku, the regional office in Fizuli, and regional training centre in Goygol, and three operational centres located in Aghjabedi, Agstafa, and Terter.<sup>12</sup>

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, and victim assistance.<sup>13</sup>

### Strategic Planning

ANAMA is integrated into the State Social and Economic Development programme.<sup>14</sup> The current mine action strategy is for 2013–18.<sup>15</sup> ANAMA's long-term strategy is to clear the occupied territories as and when they become released.<sup>16</sup>

## Legislation and Standards

As at June 2017, Azerbaijan was still in the process of adopting a mine action law, with draft legislation under review by the Cabinet of Ministers.<sup>17</sup> Once adopted, it will regulate mine action in Azerbaijan, governing issues such as licensing, accreditation, quality assurance (QA), and tender procedures.<sup>18</sup>

Azerbaijan also has its own National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), which were adopted in 2001 and subsequently revised in 2003, 2004, and 2010.<sup>19</sup>

## 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).<sup>20</sup>

In 2016, 90 QA monitoring visits were undertaken.<sup>21</sup> In addition, external QC inspections were conducted at 89 sites in 2016, with more than 3.46km<sup>2</sup> of land physically checked. One battle area site required re-clearance (83,125m<sup>2</sup>), with 29 items of UXO and 87 related components found to have been missed by the original clearance.<sup>22</sup>

## Information Management

ANAMA uses an older version of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database.<sup>23</sup>

## Operators

As at the end of 2016, ANAMA employed 619 operational and administrative staff and had 44 mine detection dogs (MDDs) and 6 demining machines.<sup>24</sup> Included in this capacity are two national demining non-governmental organisations (NGOs), IEPF and RA, which are contracted for mine clearance. Together they employ 172 operational and administrative staff. ANAMA also has an MDD breeding and training centre, which was built in 2011.<sup>25</sup>

## LAND RELEASE

The total mined area released by clearance and technical survey in 2016 was almost 2.3km<sup>2</sup>,<sup>26</sup> a huge reduction compared to the almost 5.36km<sup>2</sup> of clearance and technical survey in 2015.<sup>27</sup>

### Survey in 2016

A total of almost 1.47km<sup>2</sup> was reduced by technical survey in 2016, of which 0.93km<sup>2</sup> was reduced by technical survey using mechanical assets,<sup>28</sup> and 0.54km<sup>2</sup> by technical survey using MDDs.<sup>29</sup>

### Clearance in 2016

Azerbaijan cleared almost 0.83km<sup>2</sup> of mined area in 2016, comprising 0.65km<sup>2</sup> of manual clearance and 0.18km<sup>2</sup> of mine clearance with the support of MDDs. During clearance only two anti-vehicle mines were destroyed (see Table 1).<sup>30</sup> This is a significant decrease in area cleared compared to 2015, when ANAMA cleared almost 1.5km<sup>2</sup> of mined land; 1.04km<sup>2</sup> through manual clearance and 0.45km<sup>2</sup> with MDD support.<sup>31</sup>

Besides the mined area along the confrontation line (in the accessible territories of the Nagorno-Karabakh region), ANAMA conducts manual mine clearance operations around former military facilities.<sup>32</sup>

**Table 1: Mine clearance in 2016**<sup>33</sup>

Operator	Mined areas cleared	Area cleared (m <sup>2</sup> )	AP mines destroyed*	AV mines destroyed*	UXO destroyed*
ANAMA CT	3	148,115	0	0	0
IEPT	4	342,134	0	2	2
RA	4	338,009	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>828,258</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

AP = Anti-personnel

AV = Anti-vehicle mine

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

In addition, ANAMA tasks its emergency response team (ERT) 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.<sup>34</sup> ANAMA reported that EOD tasks were conducted daily following the short but intense fighting pitting Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh forces against those of Azerbaijan in April 2016.<sup>35</sup> ANAMA, IEPF, and RA responded to a total of 811 requests in 2016, during which they found 5,404 explosive items in 26 regions of Azerbaijan.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, during 2016 ANAMA completed the second phase of the three-phase Azerbaijan National Action Plan (NAP)/NATO PfP Trust fund project, at the former artillery shooting range in Jeyranchel, in the Agstafa region, along the Azerbaijan-Georgian border.<sup>37</sup> ANAMA also continued implementation of the Ganja and Kirdagh UXO clearance projects of former military testing ranges. During ERW clearance in 2016, ANAMA cleared 100 sites, totalling 50.5km<sup>2</sup>, during which it destroyed 17 anti-personnel mines, 1 anti-vehicle mine, and 30,201 items of ERW; IEPF cleared 22 sites, totalling nearly 12km<sup>2</sup>, during which it destroyed 2,237 items of ERW; and RA cleared 24 sites, totalling nearly 3.2km<sup>2</sup> during which it destroyed 665 items of ERW.<sup>38</sup>

## ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Azerbaijan is neither a state party nor signatory to the APMBC, but nonetheless has obligations under international human rights law to protect life, which requires the clearance of mines 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 seven years.

Over the last five years, 15.4km<sup>2</sup> of mined area has been cleared in Azerbaijan, but mine clearance output has decreased sharply over the last two years (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Mine clearance in 2012–16<sup>39</sup>**

Year	Area cleared (km <sup>2</sup> )
2016	0.83
2015	1.49
2014	4.80
2013	4.63
2012	3.65
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.4</b>

Currently, 90% of mine action in Azerbaijan is state funded.<sup>40</sup> ANAMA's long-term strategy is to be ready to start clearance of the occupied territories as and when this is possible.<sup>41</sup>

1 Email from Tural Mammadov, Operations Officer, ANAMA, 19 October 2016.  
 2 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 5.  
 3 Email from Tural Mammadov, Operations Officer, ANAMA, 19 October 2016.  
 4 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 5; and Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Azerbaijan", March 2012, p. 13.  
 5 GICHD, "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Azerbaijan", March 2012, p. 13.  
 6 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 5.  
 7 Ibid.  
 8 GICHD, "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Azerbaijan", March 2012, Executive Summary.  
 9 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 11.  
 10 Ibid.  
 11 Ibid.  
 12 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 11.  
 13 "UNDP Mine Action Programme: Azerbaijan", April 2016, UNDP.  
 14 Email from Tural Mammadov, ANAMA, 19 October 2016.  
 15 Email from Parviz Gidayev, ANAMA, 20 May 2015; and ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 10.  
 16 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2014", p. 5; and GICHD, "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Azerbaijan", March 2012, Executive Summary.  
 17 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, Public Relations Officer, ANAMA, 5 June 2017.  
 18 Email from Parviz Gidayev, ANAMA, 20 May 2015; and ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2014".  
 19 Email from Tural Mammadov, ANAMA, 19 October 2016.  
 20 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2016", pp. 28 and 30.

21 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 24.  
 22 Ibid., p. 25.  
 23 Ibid., p. 32.  
 24 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 11.  
 25 Ibid., pp. 12 and 14.  
 26 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", pp. 13, 14, and 16.  
 27 "ANAMA Monthly Report for August 2016", ANAMA.  
 28 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 16.  
 29 Ibid., p. 14; and "ANAMA Monthly Report for January 2017", ANAMA.  
 30 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 13; and "ANAMA Monthly Report for January 2017", ANAMA.  
 31 "ANAMA Monthly Report for August 2015" and "ANAMA Monthly Report for August 2016"; and email from Tural Mammadov, ANAMA, 19 October 2016.  
 32 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 13.  
 33 Ibid.  
 34 Ibid., pp. 9 and 16.  
 35 Ibid., p. 17.  
 36 Ibid., p. 18.  
 37 Ibid., p. 16.  
 38 Ibid.  
 39 See Landmine Monitor and Mine Action Review reports on clearance in Azerbaijan covering clearance in 2012–15.  
 40 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.  
 41 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2014"; and GICHD, "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Azerbaijan", March 2012, Executive Summary.