

### KEY DATA

#### ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: MASSIVE

(MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE)

AP MINE  
CLEARANCE IN 2021

**18.38** km<sup>2</sup>

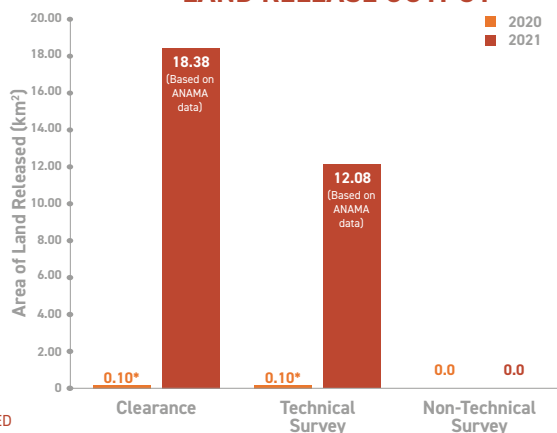
(BASED ON ANAMA DATA)

AP MINES  
DESTROYED IN 2021

**4,388**

(INCLUDING 1,909 DESTROYED  
IN SPOT TASKS)

### LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



\* This figure includes land released through both technical survey and clearance combined in 2020.

### KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The six-week armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020 ended with Azerbaijan regaining control over seven districts of its internationally recognised territory formerly controlled by Armenia, along with part of Nagorno-Karabakh. The area along the former Line of Contact (LOC) between Armenia and Azerbaijan is heavily mined, leading to a huge area of anti-personnel mine contamination falling under Azerbaijan's control. A massive effort to survey and clear areas containing mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) is underway and the Mine Action Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (ANAMA, formerly the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action), with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is making progress to put in place the required systems and processes to support implementation. ANAMA, reported clearing 18.38km<sup>2</sup> of land in which anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines were found and destroyed in 2021. It is thought that this is based on the total size of area for task polygons in which mines were found during land release, rather than targeted clearance of confirmed mine fields.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Azerbaijan should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Azerbaijan should continue to clear anti-personnel mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- ANAMA, which is the national mine action coordination body by Presidential Decree, should continue and prioritise efforts to conduct an evidence-based survey of the regained territories to better define the location and extent of the contamination and enhance planning and prioritisation of clearance.
- ANAMA should continue to strive to ensure that the revised National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), known as the Azerbaijan National Mine Action Requirements (ANMAR), are formally adopted and are fully understood and routinely implemented by all entities conducting clearance.
- ANAMA should finalise and publish its new mine action strategy, to replace the one that expired in 2018, reflecting the significant increase in explosive ordnance (EO) contamination now under Azerbaijan's control.
- Azerbaijan should systematically collect and report publicly on data on contaminated areas as well as progress in survey and clearance.

- ANAMA should complete the transition to Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core as soon as possible. Data on anti-personnel mine clearance should be disaggregated from clearance of areas containing anti-vehicle mines or EO other than anti-personnel mines.
- ANAMA should consider the creation of regular technical working groups, as an inclusive platform to share developments; exchange lessons learned; and promote best practice.
- ANAMA should elaborate a gender and diversity policy for mine action and an associated implementation plan.

## DEMINING CAPACITY

### MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Mine Action Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (ANAMA, formerly the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action)

### NATIONAL OPERATORS

- ANAMA
- Ministry of Defence (MoD, engineering unit of Azerbaijani Armed Forces)
- Ministry of Emergency Situations (MoES)
- Border Services Command
- Four national commercial demining companies, each with an international commercial sub-contractor:
  - Qaya partnering with SafeLane Global
  - Safe Point partnering with RPS
  - Alpha Demining partnering with Altay Group
  - Azerbaijan Demining Company partnering with Piper
- One national demining NGO: International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF)

### INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- ALTAY Group (Turkish company) – ceased operations in Azerbaijan in 2022
- Turkish Armed Forces

### OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

### EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE RISK EDUCATION

- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNDP, and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as well as national NGOs DAYAG/Relief Azerbaijan, are supporting ANAMA to implement EORE projects.

## UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of contamination from anti-personnel mines in Azerbaijan is currently unknown but is certainly massive, especially along the 254km-long LOC that previously existed between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces. The defensive belts of berms, anti-tank ditches, and barbed wire, along the LOC, which are calculated to vary between 3km and 7km in depth, contain massive quantities of both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines, and the zone is now recognised as one of the largest mined areas in the world.<sup>1</sup> The areas along the LOC were heavily mined over the three decades after 1990 by all parties to the conflict.<sup>2</sup> Further minefields and other EO contamination, including abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO), are found in areas previously occupied by Armenia outside the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Since the Russian-brokered ceasefire agreement came into effect on 10 November 2020, Azerbaijan has regained full control of the seven districts adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh: the four districts (Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Qubadli, and Zangilan) over which it took back control from Armenia, and the three districts (Aghdam, Kalbajar, and Lachin) from which Armenia

agreed to withdraw its forces and return the districts to Azerbaijani control.<sup>3</sup> Azerbaijan also regained control of a substantial part of Nagorno-Karabakh, the rest of which is patrolled by a Russian peacekeeping force but still governed by the de-facto Nagorno-Karabakh authorities.<sup>4</sup> (See the Mine Action Review Clearing the Mines report on Nagorno-Karabakh for further information).

Previously, in 2018, ANAMA had estimated that mine contamination in areas occupied by Armenia covered between 350km<sup>2</sup> and 830km<sup>2</sup>, and contained between 50,000 and 100,000 mines.<sup>5</sup> The figure, however, is now believed to be a significant underestimate. According to a mine map of Aghdam provided by Armenia in June 2021, that district alone contains 97,000 anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines.<sup>6</sup> That is only one of the total seven districts reclaimed by Azerbaijan in 2020.

The full extent of contamination across Azerbaijan will only be better known after completion of a countrywide survey that includes the areas it has newly regained.

1 Online interview with Steiner Essen, Senior Mine Action Consultant, UNDP, and Guy Rhodes, Chief Technical Advisor, UNDP, 29 April 2021; and email from Guy Rhodes, UNDP, 23 June 2021.

2 Statement of Armenia, APMBIC Intersessional Meetings (online), 22–24 June 2021.

3 See, e.g., International Crisis Group (ICG), "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: A Visual Explainer", last updated 7 May 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3uiOou2>.

4 ICG, "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: A Visual Explainer", last updated 7 May 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3uiOou2>.

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

6 Statement of Azerbaijan, APMBIC Intersessional Meetings (online), 22–24 June 2021; and "Armenia and Azerbaijan exchange detainees for mine maps", Euroasianet, 23 June 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3gXYWdx>.

Mine contamination in Azerbaijan is predominantly the consequence of the 1988–94 armed conflict with Armenia, which saw landmines laid by both sides. During the most recent conflict in 2020, media reported that the retreating Armenian forces planted mines in civilian infrastructure, lamp posts, canals, road junctions, rural and urban paths, courtyard entrances, cemeteries, and riverbanks.<sup>7</sup> The most heavily contaminated areas are along the previous borders and confrontation lines between Armenia and Azerbaijan, including the area in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.

Areas of highest mine contamination include a mix of anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines. ANAMA has found several cases of anti-personnel mines improvised with anti-vehicle mines, or OZM-type Armenian-produced mines

with booby traps. Some of the cases of improvised mines were found in areas beyond the former LOC, including in cemeteries, along river banks, in destroyed settlements, springs, etc. Improvised mine contamination is believed to cover approximately 5% of the total mined area.<sup>8</sup>

Azerbaijan began large-scale clearance of mines and ERW in December 2020 in the territory it had regained. The Azeri Prosecutor General and Ministry of Interior (MoI) issued a joint warning to citizens to avoid "travelling to the recently de-occupied territories without proper permission and until the areas are cleared of mines and unexploded ordnance".<sup>9</sup> Military personnel, deminers, and many civilian returnees have been killed or wounded by different forms of explosive ordnance.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 1: Mine contamination by type (at end 2021)<sup>11</sup>**

Location	Type of mine contamination	CHAs	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
Former LOC	Anti-personnel mines	800	1,600
	Anti-vehicle mines	200	
Other regained territories	Mixed anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines	350	300
<b>Totals</b>		<b>1,350</b>	<b>1,900</b>

CHAs = Confirmed hazardous areas

**Table 2: Anti-personnel mined area only by district (excluding anti-vehicle and mixed anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mined areas) (at end 2021)<sup>12</sup>**

Districts	CHAs
Aghdam	272
Fuzuli	157
Jabrayil	6
Kalbajar	114
Khojavend	55
Qubadli	1
Tartar	194
Zangilan	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>

7 "Mines, Karabakh and Armenia's Crisis", *New Eastern Europe*, 16 April 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3vezeaC>.

8 Email from Ramil Azizov, Operations Manager, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

9 Improving Prospects for Peace after the Nagorno-Karabakh War, International Crisis Group, 22 December 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/2Sqvpkg>, p. 7.

10 "Two Azerbaijani Citizens Injured by Leftover Mine in Liberated Fuzuli District - Prosecutor General's Office", *Azernews*, 15 November 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/3bLiC2s>; "Armenian Land Mine Kills 4 Azerbaijani Civilians in Newly Liberated Fuzuli", *Dailybash*, 28 November 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/3bP1hpf>; "Dying To Go Home: Displaced Azerbaijanis Risk Mines, Munitions To See Homeland", *RadioFreeEurope*, 18 February 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/3vgaKh5>; "Information on the special emergency clearance operations executed along the frontline territory by ANAMA November 2, 2020", ANAMA website, accessed on 23 May 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/347Lwph>; Baku accuses Yerevan of shelling frontline villages with phosphorus shells", *RIA news*, 4 November 2020, (Russian) at: <https://bit.ly/3faQyYs>; and "ANAMA Director Gazanfar Ahmadov gave an interview to the Russian news agencies ITAR-TASS and RIA Novosti", ANAMA website, accessed on 23 May 2021, (Russian), at: <https://bit.ly/3ucsAAM>.

11 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

12 Ibid.

ANAMA said that ongoing general and technical survey conducted in the liberated territories (8,725.5km<sup>2</sup>) reveals mined areas both along the former LOC and beyond it, including agricultural fields, graveyards, gardens, and other areas of social and economic value. According to preliminary data, 1,605km<sup>2</sup> are confirmed as having the highest level of contamination, while 7,120.5km<sup>2</sup> are believed to have medium or low-level contamination. In total, some 6,071km<sup>2</sup> are identified as priority areas for humanitarian demining.<sup>13</sup> According to ANAMA, Armenia laid mines in haste, including while retreating, which have been found in recently cultivated land, with mine ploughs abandoned nearby. According to incident reports, 210 villages beyond the former LOC have been found to be contaminated by mines.<sup>14</sup> Armenia denied the claims, stating that the retreating Armenian forces had had scarcely enough time to evacuate the bodies of the 1,500 Armenian soldiers who had been killed during the fighting.<sup>15</sup> Between the trilateral statement of November 2020 and the end of 2021, 199 people have become mine victims (36 killed and 163 wounded). According to the data and information from prosecutor office, 125 people became victims as a result of mine explosions beyond the former LOC.<sup>16</sup> This potentially indicates the presence of significant contamination beyond the LOC.

Azerbaijan has requested “the immediate release of information by Armenia on the location of the remaining minefields”.<sup>17</sup> Armenia maintains that most of the mines were emplaced by Azerbaijan since the early years of the conflict to deter the Nagorno-Karabakh forces.<sup>18</sup> Following extensive international mediation, Armenia released some minefield records providing information on 263,067 anti-personnel

mines and 127,427 anti-vehicle mines as well as other explosive devices. According to ANAMA, these records constitute only 5% of the regained areas and less than a third of the high-threat areas of the LOC reflected in United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)/UNDP’s mine action assessment report of Azerbaijan in December 2020. Maps of 71km<sup>2</sup> of the LOC have not been released. The accuracy of the maps has yet to be fully determined, but Azerbaijan said only some 25% of the data had proven to be accurate/reliable.<sup>19</sup>

A more accurate picture of the extent of mined area in areas under the control and jurisdiction of Azerbaijan, will only be determined once survey of suspected and confirmed mined areas has been completed. Remote Aerial Minefield Survey (RAMS) multispectral data analysis methodology is being used to help identify suspected hazardous areas (SHA) as part of the baseline survey. In August 2022, ANAMA reported that a systematic non-technical survey programme was currently being established, and that ECHO funding started in April/May 2022. According to ANAMA, evidence-based technical survey is conducted prior to clearance, according to the national work plan. Due to the fact that there are no inhabitants in the regained areas, determination of the baseline of contamination is currently not through inclusive consultation with women, girls, boys, and men. However, ANAMA plans for survey teams to be gender balanced.<sup>20</sup>

Azerbaijan is also suspected to be contaminated with cluster munition remnants and other ERW: both unexploded ordnance (UXO) and AXO, the extent of which is not known (see Mine Action Review’s *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants* report on Azerbaijan for further information).

## NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

ANAMA, the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action, was established by Presidential Decree 854 in 1999 to plan, coordinate, manage, and monitor mine action in the country. In mid-January 2021, by Presidential decree, ANAMA was restructured and elevated to the status of a public legal entity as the Mine Action Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan.<sup>21</sup> As at July 2022, a draft national mine action law was expected to be approved by the end of the year.<sup>22</sup>

Prior to the 2020 conflict, ANAMA had been conducting demining operations with two national operators it was contracting – Dayag-Relief Azerbaijan (RA) and the International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF). In March 2020,

the mine action programme was restructured and RA’s field personnel were incorporated within ANAMA while RA as an organisation continued to provide logistical support to ANAMA.<sup>23</sup> Following the 2020 conflict, the size of ANAMA and the extent of clearance operations in Azerbaijan have been rapidly scaled up to address the significant mine and ERW contamination newly under Azerbaijan’s control. An interministerial mine action working group, chaired by ANAMA, meets twice monthly and includes Azerbaijan’s most significant ministries, including the Ministry of Defence (MoD), Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Emergency Situations (MoES), and the State Border Service.<sup>24</sup>

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Statement of Armenia, APMBC Intersessional Meetings (online), 22–24 June 2021.

16 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

17 Statement of Azerbaijan, APMBC Intersessional Meetings (online), 22–24 July 2021.

18 Statement of Armenia, APMBC Intersessional Meetings (online), 22–24 July 2021.

19 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022; and ANAMA, “Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs”, Baku, May 2022.

20 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

21 “Azerbaijan establishes Mine Action Agency”, *APA news*, 15 January 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/35MhtEu>.

22 Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 7 July 2022.

23 Email from Nijat Karimov, ANAMA, 28 July 2020.

24 Interview with Vugar Suleymanov, Chairman of the Board, ANAMA; and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, Baku, 29 March 2022; and presentation by ANAMA, International Conference on Humanitarian Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals, Baku, 31 March–1 April 2022.

Since February 2021, ANAMA has been responsible for coordinating the various activities of several State implementing agencies, NGOs, and commercial contractors in order to execute a work plan elaborated with the involvement of relevant stakeholders and approved by the Government.<sup>25</sup> It has endeavoured to start putting in place the necessary structures and procedures to allow systematic survey and clearance of vast areas of territory contaminated with anti-personnel mines and ERW which Azerbaijan regained during the 2020 conflict. Progress is being made, such as in elaboration of the national mine action law and national mine action standards, and is ongoing. On 31 March–1 April 2022, ANAMA and UNDP organised an international conference in Baku on Mine Action and the SDGs. The conference brought together key actors from the international mine action community to share best practices and lessons learned in mine action, including in the use of advanced technologies. Among the recommendations made at the conference were the establishment of an in-country donor coordination mechanism, such as a Mine Action Forum, and of technical working groups (TWGs) to address key challenges (such as land release, information management, explosive ordnance risk education, and victim assistance).<sup>26</sup>

Azerbaijan has developed a three-phase redevelopment and resettlement plan in which mine action is recognised as a precursor at the highest levels and as a national priority. The government of Azerbaijan currently funds 95% of all mine action activities and has linked mine action with the National Redevelopment and Resettlement plan as part of its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>27</sup> ANAMA is also proposing that Azerbaijan include mine action as a new Sustainable Development Goal (SDG).<sup>28</sup>

UNDP provides capacity development to ANAMA. In 2020, the capacity development project was extended to 2023.<sup>29</sup> In March 2021, the UNDP crisis response and UN's Central Emergency Response Fund provided US\$1 million to ANAMA to train, equip, and deploy emergency response teams to clear mines and UXO. UNDP planned to further scale up its financial and technical support to ANAMA.<sup>30</sup> UNDP is providing ANAMA with a strategic advisor, a non-technical survey advisor, and an information management advisor, and furnished operational support in the form of equipment and vehicles.<sup>31</sup> UNDP supported ANAMA in the drafting of the demining law, Azerbaijan's national mine action requirements (ANMAR), and environmental management tools on mine action; in mobilisation of three pilot non-technical survey

and EOD teams under European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO); and in conducting two needs assessment that are being used in the ANAMA Donor Strategy which is endorsed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). With funding from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), UNDP will undertake projects to enhance ANAMA's quality management system and to provide support in the creation of a gender strategy and policy.<sup>32</sup>

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) also supported ANAMA in 2021, in particular with respect to information management. In March 2021, the GICHD visited Azerbaijan at the request of ANAMA to conduct a needs assessment. Information management support was later conducted remotely. In addition, three ANAMA staff also attended an online regional quality management (QM) training in June 2021 and a staff member attended a non-technical survey regional training in Croatia in November 2021, both of which were conducted under the umbrella of the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia Regional Cooperation Programme (EECCA RCP).<sup>33</sup>

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with ANAMA in December 2021, and is operating with funding from the United States (US) and Canada. MAG, which has a country director and two technical advisors deployed in Azerbaijan, is providing management training for 20 ANAMA demining team supervisors. The training, which began in mid-February 2022, covers survey and clearance of explosive ordnance; operational planning, reporting, accident investigation, internal quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC); and the deployment of demining assets, including machinery and mine detection dogs (MDDs). MAG had previously been present in Azerbaijan in 2000–02, training deminers, section and team leaders, and personnel from the training department, of the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Dayag-Relief Azerbaijan (RA).<sup>34</sup>

ANAMA is also receiving capacity development support from the European Union (EU), France, United Kingdom (UK), and the US Department of State; the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF); and the Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI).<sup>35</sup> MLI has been operational in Azerbaijan since 2005, with an MDD partnership programme. It has provided 60 MDDs to ANAMA to date and it agreed a new two-year partnership in 2021, funded by Azerbaijan and the private sector in the United States.<sup>36</sup> UNICEF, ICRC, UNDP, and the Office of the UN High

25 ANAMA, "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", Baku, May 2022.

26 Statement of the International Conference on Humanitarian Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals, Baku, 31 March–1 April 2022.

27 Email from Mark Buswell, Strategic Advisory, UNDP, 13 September 2022.

28 Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 7 July 2022.

29 Email from Nijat Karimov, ANAMA, 21 May 2021.

30 "ANAMA and UNDP join forces to support mine action in Azerbaijan", Press release, UNDP website, 17 March 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3hPXtrB>.

31 Emails from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022; and Mark Buswell, UNDP, 6 September 2022.

32 Email from Mark Buswell, UNDP, 6 September 2022.

33 Email from GICHD, 19 April 2022.

34 Presentation by MAG, International Conference on Humanitarian Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals, Baku, 31 March–1 April 2022; and email from Olivier David, Country Director, MAG, 25 April 2022.

35 Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022.

36 Presentation by MLI, International Conference on Humanitarian Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals, Baku, 31 March–1 April 2022.

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are also supporting ANAMA to implement explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) projects. EORE is deemed a major component of the risk management for returnees and the EORE working group, led by ANAMA, is coordinating the wider strategy and programming for 2023.<sup>37</sup>

In January 2022, ANAMA established a new mobile field camp for deminers in Aghdam district, which it plans to use to expand mine clearance operations and increase personnel. The mobile container-type camp can be moved to other areas, depending on the location of demining activities.<sup>38</sup>

In its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 7 report covering 2021, Türkiye (formerly known as Turkey) reported the provision of training to Azerbaijan Armed Forces personnel in mine action, mine clearance, and mine detection, as well as mine/improvised explosive device (IED) awareness, in addition to deploying Turkish military demining teams and machines (see section below on Operators and Operational Tools).<sup>39</sup>

In 2021, the Azerbaijani government funded over 95% of the mine action programme's operating costs, with the remaining 4.3% of the total budget funded by donors.<sup>40</sup> In May 2022, a donor strategy was drafted and endorsed by MoFA.<sup>41</sup> The strategy, which is reviewed quarterly, identified the key priorities for assistance (see section below, "Progress Towards Completion" for further details).<sup>42</sup>

Azerbaijan is not party to the APMBC, but a senior representative from MoFA attended the intersessional meetings in June 2022 as an observer, during which Azerbaijan delivered a statement.<sup>43</sup>

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Azerbaijan's newly revised national standards (ANMAR), which cover all demining activities, include a dedicated chapter on Environmental Protection in its national standards.<sup>44</sup>

According to the ANMAR, "it is the intent of the National Mine Action Programme (MAP) of the Republic of Azerbaijan that these requirements shall be complied with to ensure that the environment is not degraded by mine action work and land is returned in a state that is similar to, or where possible better than, before mine action operations commenced, and that permits its intended use." The Environmental Protection chapter includes information on Azerbaijan's mine action environmental management system (EMS); requirements for mine action organisations; requirements for the identification, assessment, and mitigation of environmental aspects

(including waste disposal, water supplies, burning and removal of vegetation, animals, open burning and demolition, environmental aspects of mechanical mine action operations, emergency preparedness, monitoring, cultural and historical sites, and completion and remediation).

The Government of Azerbaijan may also require the conduct of a formal environmental impact assessment (EIA) in relation to large or publicly significant mine action projects, or ones that will take place in areas of known environmental vulnerability.<sup>45</sup>

UNDP also supported development of environmental tools and delivered a workshop on the purpose, use, and application of the tools in May 2022.<sup>46</sup>

## GENDER AND DIVERSITY

ANAMA does not have a gender and diversity policy in place. While women made up around 30% of ANAMA's total workforce, including 25% of managerial and supervisory positions at ANAMA, no women were working in an operational role as at June 2022.<sup>47</sup> ANAMA said that it encourages women to engage in a variety of roles and planned to implement a capacity building project in 2022 for female demining teams.<sup>48</sup>

37 Email from Mark Buswell, UNDP, 6 September 2022.

38 "Azerbaijan Plans to Clear 40,000 Hectares of Liberated Land from Armenian Landmines", *Caspian News*, 30 January 2022.

39 Turkey (now renamed Türkiye) Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Forms D and I.

40 Emails from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June and 7 July 2022.

41 Email from Mark Buswell, UNDP, 6 September 2022.

42 ANAMA, "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", Baku, May 2022.

43 Statement of Azerbaijan, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, 20–22 June 2022.

44 Emails from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022; and Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

45 ANMAR, Section IV Management Systems, Chapter 9 Environmental Protection.

46 Email from Mark Buswell, UNDP, 6 September 2022.

47 Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022.

48 Ibid.

The rapid upscaling of ANAMA's mine action operations taking place provides a valuable opportunity for ANAMA to improve the proportion of women in operational roles and to mainstream gender and diversity throughout its programme. One of the goals of the UNDP-ANAMA capacity strengthening project is to introduce a gender-sensitive approach to mine action to Azerbaijan.<sup>49</sup> ANAMA, with support from UNDP, have contracted a gender consultant to help develop a policy and strategy on gender by the first quarter of 2023, including the deployment of female deminers.<sup>50</sup> Relevant risk education and victim data are disaggregated by gender and age.<sup>51</sup>

According to ANAMA, survey and community liaison personnel are mostly from affected communities and there are no restrictions on the basis of ethnic groups or religious affiliation. Risk education teams create a network of affected communities, which include women and children. The government's reconstruction and rehabilitation programme is aimed at returning internally displaced persons (IDPs), including women and children, to their homelands and ensuring sustainable development of repatriated communities in a safe environment.<sup>52</sup>

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Azerbaijan's newly revised national mine action standards include the establishment of a single, unified, information management system, which ANAMA is implementing.<sup>53</sup> As at June 2022, ANAMA was in the process of transitioning to IMSMA Core and had already established an Online ArcGIS Portal. Draft forms to record daily progress, non-technical survey, and hazardous areas, and for external QC were already in place. ANAMA intended to launch the new IMSMA Core system in 2022. Information management approaches will also be used by other ministries to support evidence-based decision making.<sup>54</sup>

Both ANAMA and UNDP report that efforts are ongoing to improve the quality of data in the mine action database, including with respect to disaggregation of data by land release method and contamination type. Verification of data occurs initially at the regional level and then at headquarters. With the significant upscaling of operations and area of responsibilities since 2020, the progress reporting period was reduced from two weeks to one.<sup>55</sup> ANAMA plans to upgrade the information management system and have started to migrate to IMSMA Core.<sup>56</sup>

All data on clearance operations, including those of the military, are reported centrally to ANAMA.<sup>57</sup>

## PLANNING AND TASKING

The existing national mine action strategy was for 2013–18. Its main aims were said to be to continue mine and ERW clearance in support of government development projects and to provide safe conditions for the local population in affected regions.<sup>58</sup> The strategy expired at the end of 2018 and had not been replaced as of writing. In May 2021, ANAMA reported that a new strategy was being developed with a UNDP Chief Technical Advisor contracted and deployed to Azerbaijan to contribute to and speed up the process.<sup>59</sup> As at June 2022, elaboration of the new strategy was ongoing.<sup>60</sup>

ANAMA develops annual work plans which are approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. Priority setting comes from the Cabinet of Ministers, as the highest level executive body in the country. Priorities are set in accordance with national rehabilitation, repatriation, and reconstruction plans in the regained territories.<sup>61</sup>

49 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.

50 Emails from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022; and Mark Buswell, UNDP, 6 and 13 September 2022.

51 Emails from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022; and Mark Buswell, UNDP, 6 September 2022.

52 Ibid.

53 Presentation by ANAMA, International Conference on Humanitarian Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals, Baku, 31 March–1 April 2022; and email from Mark Buswell, UNDP, 13 September 2022.

54 Interview with Vugar Suleymanov and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, Baku, 29 March 2022; and email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022.

55 Emails from Nijat Karimov, ANAMA, 21 May 2021; and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022.

56 Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022.

57 Interview with Vugar Suleymanov and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, Baku, 29 March 2022.

58 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA 2 May 2018.

59 Email from Nijat Karimov, ANAMA, 21 May 2021.

60 Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022.

61 Interview with Vugar Suleymanov and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, Baku, 29 March 2022; presentation by ANAMA, International Conference on Humanitarian Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals, Baku, 31 March–1 April 2022; and emails from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022; and Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.



# LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

## STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Azerbaijan has its own National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), known as the Azerbaijan National Mine Action Requirements (ANMAR), which were adopted in 2001 and subsequently revised in 2003, 2004, and 2010.<sup>62</sup> In 2021, all chapters of the ANMAR were fully revised in line with IMAS.<sup>63</sup> The draft of the revised standards has been provided to all operators,<sup>64</sup> and ANAMA expected the revised standards to be formally approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2022.<sup>65</sup> ANAMA plans to train operators on the new standards.<sup>66</sup>

The ANMAR provide the foundation for acceptable standards of operations and management and form the basis on which activities are conducted and measured. The approval and adoption of the ANMAR by the Cabinet of Ministers is critical and will be the driver for ensuring that all entities conducting clearance apply the latest national standards and update their standing operating procedures (SOPs) accordingly, and for ANAMA monitoring to ensure the ANMAR are being implemented across the board.

## OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Since the conflict in 2020, there has been a steady expansion plan of operational capacity, including recruitment, training, and equipment support to help meet ANAMA's clearance requirements. In 2021, mine clearance was conducted by national state entities ANAMA, the MoD, MoES, and the Border Services Command. In addition, national NGO IEPF and the Turkish-based commercial company, ALTAY Group, also conducted clearance in 2021, but the latter ceased operations in Azerbaijan in 2022. Clearance capacity has continued to further increase in 2022, including four national commercial demining companies, each with an international commercial sub-contractor, to assist with operational planning and help build capacity.<sup>67</sup>

**Table 3: Operational resources for mine clearance (at 20 May 2022)<sup>68</sup>**

Operator	Operational staff	MDDs	Machines
ANAMA	654	35	16
MoD	411	4	7
MoES	50	10	0
State Border Service	20	0	0
Alpha Demining*	60	5	2
Qaya Safety Solutions*	25	0	1
Safe Point*	16	0	0
Azerbaijan Demining*	10	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,246</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>26</b>

\* Local private entities

ANAMA continues to undergo significant restructuring following the conflict with Armenia in 2020, with the total number of ANAMA employees having risen from 500 employees in 2020 to between 1,200 and 1,500 employees in 2021.<sup>69</sup> According to UNDP, ANAMA had initially planned to train, equip, and deploy an additional 100 deminers per month in order to respond to the surge in need since the end of the 2020 conflict. This monthly upscaling rate, however, could not be sustained and ANAMA instead has been encouraging the expansion of other operator capacities, including a significant commercial base; and has been envisaging to strengthen its role as the national mine action centre.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Email from Tural Mammadov, ANAMA, 19 October 2016.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Vugar Suleymanov and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, Baku, 29 March 2022.

<sup>64</sup> Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Vugar Suleymanov and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, Baku, 29 March 2022; and email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 7 July 2022.

<sup>66</sup> Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 7 July 2022.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Vugar Suleymanov and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, Baku, 29 March 2022.

<sup>68</sup> ANAMA, "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", Baku, May 2022.

<sup>69</sup> "Dying To Go Home: Displaced Azerbaijanis Risk Mines, Munitions To See Homeland", *Radio Free Europe*, 18 February 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3vgaKh5>; and "Following war, Armenia and Azerbaijan Reckon with Unexploded Ordnance", *EurasiaNet*, 23 December 2020.

<sup>70</sup> Email from Guy Rhodes, UNDP, 23 June 2021.



In 2021, ANAMA had 5 clearance teams totalling 487 deminers; 10 MDDs (with 39 handlers); and 10 mechanical assets (with 40 personnel).<sup>71</sup> As at July 2022, ANAMA's operational capacity had increased to 762 deminers, 30 MDDs, and 24 machines, in addition to deploying other technical tools such as scanners, ground penetrating radar, and drones.<sup>72</sup> Capacity in mid 2022 was a significant increase on 2020, when ANAMA had a total capacity of 300 deminers, 6 machines, and 40 MDDs.<sup>73</sup> ANAMA and the MoD conduct both technical survey and clearance, using MDDs and machines as well as demining personnel.<sup>74</sup> ANAMA had two non-technical survey teams totalling six personnel in 2021, together with five technical survey teams totalling 25 personnel.<sup>75</sup> ANAMA planned to further increase non-technical survey, technical survey, and clearance capacity in 2022.<sup>76</sup>

The MoD established a humanitarian demining battalion, and the MoES and Border Services Command also conduct clearance of explosive ordnance in Azerbaijan.<sup>77</sup> In 2021, the MoD had one clearance team (number of deminers unspecified), 4 MDDs, and 7 mechanical assets; the MoES had one clearance team of 17 deminers; and the Border Services Command had one clearance team of 10 deminers.<sup>78</sup>

As at March 2022, there were also four national commercial demining companies, each with an international commercial sub-contractor, to assist with operational planning and help build capacity.<sup>79</sup> In addition, as at June 2022, there was one national NGO conducting demining, IEPF.<sup>80</sup> IEPF had one technical survey team with five personnel in 2021; together with one clearance team of 34 deminers.<sup>81</sup> A second national NGO, Dayag-Relief (RA), was conducting explosive ordnance risk education and was in the process of being trained to also conduct demining.<sup>82</sup> All actors are accredited and trained by ANAMA, in accordance with the Decree, and all data are reported and entered into ANAMA's IMSMA database. ANAMA conducts monitoring and external QA for operators and issues hand-over certificates after QA.<sup>83</sup>

The Turkish ALTAY Group and the Turkish Armed Forces are also conducting mine and ERW clearance in Azerbaijan. According to ANAMA, in 2021, ALTAY Group had 4 clearance teams totalling 40 deminers, 6 MDDs, and one mechanical asset.<sup>84</sup> However, it ceased mine clearance operations in Azerbaijan in 2022. According to Türkiye, eight military demining teams have been conducting demining operations in Azerbaijan since December 2020, to support the mine clearance activities conducted by Azerbaijan. In addition, six demining machines (MEMATT-I) manufactured in Türkiye were sent to Azerbaijan in 2021 and Türkiye plans to complete the deployment of 20 demining machines (MEMATT-II) to Azerbaijan in the coming years.<sup>85</sup> ANAMA expected to have a total of 24 of its own machines by the end of 2022.<sup>86</sup>

Azerbaijan is using the RPS proprietary Remote Aerial Minefield Survey (RAMS) tools, such as drone-based thermal, multispectral, and RGB (red, green, blue) sensor devices to assess suspected areas and collect information on emplaced mines and ordnance, along with other information, such as the location of trenches and military positions. ANAMA uses RAMS to support non-technical and technical survey in non-populated areas.<sup>87</sup>

ANAMA continues to study the best practices being applied in the mine action sector and remains open for proved systems that would serve for more effective and efficient planning of the humanitarian demining in Azerbaijan.<sup>88</sup>

ANAMA now has a QM division, reporting to the Chairman of ANAMA and QM capacity has been increased by around 300%, reflecting the significant upscaling of clearance operations in the reclaimed territories of Azerbaijan. Previously, QC was conducted on 10% of land, but this has been reduced to 5%, while frequent site visits have been maintained.<sup>89</sup>

71 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

72 Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 7 July 2022.

73 Emails from Nijat Karimov, ANAMA, 21 May and 23 July 2021.

74 Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 7 July 2022.

75 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

76 Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 6 June 2022.

77 Emails from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 7 July 2022; and Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022. "Over 700 mines, munitions defused in liberated lands in April", *Azernews*, 15 April 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3xfbg1b>; and "Army's engineer-sapper units demine over 2,300 ha of liberated lands in May", *Azernews*, 1 June 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3xkjmFG>.

78 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

79 Interview with Vugar Suleymanov and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, Baku, 29 March 2022.

80 Interview with Samir Poladov, ANAMA, and Mark Buswell, UNDP, in Geneva, 23 June 2022.

81 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

82 Interview with Samir Poladov, ANAMA, and Mark Buswell, UNDP, in Geneva, 23 June 2022.

83 Email from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 7 July 2022.

84 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

85 Türkiye APMBC Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Forms D and I.

86 Interview with Vugar Suleymanov and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, Baku, 29 March 2022.

87 Interview with Vugar Suleymanov and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, Baku, 29 March 2022; and emails from Samir Poladov, ANAMA, 7 July 2022; Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022; and Mark Buswell, UNDP, 13 September 2022.

88 Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

89 Interview with Vugar Suleymanov and Samir Poladov, ANAMA, Baku, 29 March 2022.

## DEMINER SAFETY

In 2021, three ANAMA personnel were injured during mine clearance operations involving PMN-3 and PMN-2 mines. ANAMA reported that all demining accidents are investigated.<sup>90</sup>

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

### LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2021

In 2021, almost 18.38km<sup>2</sup> of anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mined area was cleared, with the destruction of 4,388 anti-personnel mines (including 240 of an improvised nature), 1,949 anti-vehicle mines, and 2,973 items of UXO. A further 12.08km<sup>2</sup> of mined area was reduced through technical survey.<sup>91</sup>

### SURVEY IN 2021

According to data provided by ANAMA, more than 12.08km<sup>2</sup> of anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mined area was reduced through technical survey in 2021, excluding data from the MoD (see Table 4).<sup>92</sup> This is a huge increase on the previous year, when ANAMA released a total of 100,977m<sup>2</sup> of mined area through combined survey and clearance.<sup>93</sup>

**Table 4: Area reduction through technical survey of all mined area in 2021 (excluding MoD)<sup>94</sup>**

District	Organisation	Area cleared (m <sup>2</sup> )
Aghdam	ANAMA	1,683,246
Fuzuli	ALTAY Group	317,201
	ANAMA	3,710,387
	Russia MES	253,700
Jabrayil	ANAMA	3,308,582
Khojaly	ANAMA	259,431
Khojavend	ANAMA	783,391
Qubadli	ANAMA	215,300
Shusha	ANAMA	303,497
Tartar	IEPF	587,017
Zangilan	ANAMA	660,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>12,081,752</b>

ANAMA reported that anti-personnel mined area was confirmed in Tartar district by IEPF; and in Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Qubadli, and Zangilan districts by ANAMA.<sup>95</sup>

### CLEARANCE IN 2021

In 2021, a total of almost 18.38km<sup>2</sup> of mined area was cleared, with the destruction of 4,388 anti-personnel mines (including 240 of an improvised nature), 1,949 anti-vehicle mines, and 2,973 items of UXO (see Table 5). This includes 1,909 anti-personnel mines and 1,143 anti-vehicles mines destroyed by ANAMA and the MoD during spot tasks.<sup>96</sup>

According to data provided by ANAMA, a further 36.67km<sup>2</sup> was cleared in which no anti-personnel mines, anti-vehicle mines, or other EO were reported to have been found (almost 0.32km<sup>2</sup> cleared by Altay Group; more than 36.10km<sup>2</sup> by the MoD; and more than 0.25km<sup>2</sup> by the Russian MoES). Mine Action Review has not included this clearance in the annual total for 2021, as no anti-personnel mines were reported to have been discovered.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Email from Nijat Karimov, ANAMA, 23 July 2021.

<sup>94</sup> Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

According to ANAMA, an area of 519 hectares (5.19km<sup>2</sup>) was cleared that was found not to contain anti-personnel mines, but which was contaminated by other types of ERW.<sup>98</sup> However, it is unclear how this corresponds to the above-mentioned 36.67km<sup>2</sup>.

The area cleared in 2021 is a significant increase on 2020, when ANAMA did not formally clear anti-personnel mined area, and a total of 100,977m<sup>2</sup> of land was released through survey and clearance combined. A total of 5,669 anti-personnel mines, 4,563 anti-vehicle mines, and 3,281 items of UXO were destroyed during spot tasks in 2020.<sup>99</sup>

**Table 5: Clearance of anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines in 2021<sup>100</sup>**

Operators	Area cleared (m <sup>2</sup> )	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
ANAMA	17,994,486	3,109	1,564	1,845
IEPF	380,624	1,279	385	1,128
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18,375,110</b>	<b>4,388</b>	<b>1,949</b>	<b>2,973</b>

In its statement as an observer to the APMBC intersessional meetings in July 2021, Azerbaijan declared that ANAMA has cleared about 30km<sup>2</sup> since the start of the demining operation in its reclaimed territories, destroying in the process 8,256 anti-personnel mines, 3,792 anti-tank mines, and 9,211 items of UXO.<sup>101</sup> The 30km<sup>2</sup> of contaminated area cleared is thought to include clearance of all EO contamination, and not only mined area.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Following the six-week armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan that broke out in September 2020, the size of anti-personnel mine contamination falling under Azerbaijan's control and jurisdiction has magnified exponentially. ANAMA has adapted rapidly to restructure itself and upscale operations to address the increased contamination and workload. It estimates that it will take approximately 10 years to complete anti-personnel clearance in Azerbaijan, provided the necessary expansion takes place.<sup>102</sup> This is exceptionally ambitious given the extent of contamination.

According to ANAMA, some 600,000 internally displaced persons are poised to return to the liberated territories. As at August 2022, new access routes and other infrastructure projects had reached the former LOC, and increased traffic is now supporting reconstruction efforts and resettlement plans. ANAMA has said that due to the extent of the problem it remains severely underfunded to respond to growing needs, redevelopment, and resettlement plans. It is therefore in search of international support and funding to deal with the vast extent of mine contamination especially along the former LOC and in other parts of the regained area.<sup>103</sup> In its statement as an observer at the APMBC Intersessional

meetings in June 2022, ANAMA identified the following needs: data and technology, including for aerial survey; scaling up RAMS capacity as a method for gathering data; increase of demining capacity through national NGOs; support for the institutional capacity building of ANAMA; increasing ANAMA's mechanical demining capacities and MDDs; establishing and supporting female demining teams; and demarcation and permanent fencing.<sup>104</sup>

Azerbaijan submitted voluntary APMBC Article 7 transparency reports in 2008 and 2009 but has not submitted a report in the last ten years. Accuracy of reporting of contamination, survey, and clearance data continues to be an issue in Azerbaijan. So too are the effectiveness and efficiency of land release methodology, with many areas being cleared that prove to have little or no mine contamination.

ANAMA reported that 50% of the workforce had been suspended in 2021 due to COVID-19, but no details were provided on the length of the suspensions or impact on demining efforts.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Email from Nijat Karimov, ANAMA, 23 July 2021.

<sup>100</sup> Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

<sup>101</sup> Statement of Azerbaijan, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, 22–24 June 2021.

<sup>102</sup> Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Statement of Azerbaijan, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, 20–22 June 2022; and ANAMA, "Mine Action in Azerbaijan: Priorities and Needs", Baku, May 2022.

<sup>105</sup> Email from Ramil Azizov, ANAMA, 16 August 2022.

Table 6: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km <sup>2</sup> )
2021	18.38
2020	0.10
2019	1.01
2018	0.35
2017	4.00
Total	23.84

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT  
OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Azerbaijan has a national capacity which could be deployed to deal with residual risk post-completion. In July 2020, ANAMA reported that the elaboration of a plan for the management of residual risk is contingent upon the liberation of contaminated areas that are currently occupied by Armenia.<sup>106</sup> As at August 2022, updated plans for the management of residual risk had yet to be reported.

106 Email from Nijat Karimov, ANAMA, 30 July 2020.