

AZERBAIJAN

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

2015

Problem understood	4
Target date for completion of cluster munition clearance	3
Targeted clearance	6
Efficient clearance	5
National funding of programme	8
Timely clearance	5
Land-release system in place	6
National mine action standards	5
Reporting on progress	4
Improving performance	4
PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE	5.0

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

→ Azerbaijan should accede to, and abide by, the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a matter of priority.

CONTAMINATION

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

On 1 April 2016, intense fighting broke out in Nagorno-Karabakh along the front line pitting Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh forces against those of Azerbaijan. While ground fighting was confined to areas close to the Line of Contact (LOC), artillery fire penetrated more than 10km into Nagorno-Karabakh, and included the use of cluster munitions, which resulted in an estimated 2km² of new CMR contamination in Nagorno-Karabakh.² No CMR contamination has been reported on the Azerbaijan-controlled side of the LOC. A ceasefire was agreed on 5 April 2016 (see the separate report on Nagorno-Karabakh).

In 1988, a decision by the parliament of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Province to secede from Azerbaijan and join Armenia resulted in armed conflict from 1988 to 1994 between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Large quantities of cluster munitions were dropped

from the air during the conflict, which led to Armenia occupying around one-fifth of Azerbaijani territory.

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.³ In addition, significant CMR have been identified in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.⁴ In 2006 and 2007, remnants were found in and around warehouses at a former Soviet ammunition storage area located at Saloglu in Agstafa district, where clearance was completed in July 2011.⁵

Other ERW and Landmines

Other areas are confirmed or suspected to contain explosive remnants of war (ERW), which include both unexploded ordnance (UXO) and abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO). These include former soviet military testing areas, including Khandjan, in the Absheron peninsula, where land is being used by locals for pasture; the Jeyranchel area of the Agstafa region; and also areas in the vicinity of Baku city and a former internal troops shooting range in Ganja city.⁶



UXO clearance operations, Azerbaijan. © ANAMA

- 1 Email from Samir Poladov, Operations Manager, Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA), 17 June 2015.
- 2 Email from Andrew Moore, Caucasus and Balkans Desk Officer, HALO Trust, 26 May 2016; and HALO Trust, "HALO Trust begins emergency clearance in Karabakh", 19 April 2016, at: <https://www.halostrust.org/media-centre/news/halo-begins-emergency-clearance-in-karabakh/>.
- 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, "Saloglu Project", undated, www.anama.gov.az.
- 6 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2016", pp. 17 and 18.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

A 1998 presidential decree established the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA), which reports to the Deputy Prime Minister as head of the State Commission for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation.⁷ 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).⁸ A joint working group, established in December 1999 and consisting of representatives from various ministries, provides regular guidance to ANAMA.⁹

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).¹⁰ No commercial company is active in mine action in Azerbaijan.



UXO contamination, Azerbaijan. © ANAMA

ANAMA manages the mine action programme via its headquarters based in Baku, the regional office in Fizuli, regional training centre in Goygol, and three operational centres located in Aghjabedi, Agstafa, and Terter.¹¹

Strategic Planning

ANAMA is integrated into the national social and economic development programme. The current mine action strategy is for 2014–18.¹² ANAMA's long-term strategy is to clear the occupied territories as and when they become released.¹³

Legislation and Standards

Azerbaijan is in the process of adopting a mine action law, with draft legislation currently under revision by other state institutions. Once adopted, it will regulate and determine the conditions of mine action in Azerbaijan, such as licensing, accreditation, quality assurance (QA), and tender procedures.¹⁴

Operators

As at the end of 2015, ANAMA employed 463 operational and administrative staff and had 44 mine detection dogs (MDDs) and six demining machines.¹⁵ ANAMA also has a MDD breeding and training centre, which was built in 2011.¹⁶

In addition, two national demining non-governmental organisations (NGOs), IEPF and RA, are contracted for mine clearance. These two operators jointly employ 169 operational and administrative staff.¹⁷

Quality Management

Established in 2011, ANAMA's training, survey, and QA division is responsible for training and QA and also conducts quality control (QC).¹⁸

In 2015, 111 QA monitoring visits were undertaken.¹⁹ In addition, external quality control inspections were conducted at 81 sites in 2015, with more than 2.5km² of land physically checked. Five battlefields (surface) were rejected and slated for re-clearance, and 57 items were missed.²⁰

Information Management

ANAMA uses the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database.²¹

7 Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Azerbaijan", March 2012, Executive Summary.

8 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2016", p. 12.

9 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2014".

10 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2016", p. 12.

11 Ibid.

12 Email from Parviz Gidayev, Planning & Development Manager, ANAMA, 20 May 2015.

13 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2014", p. 5; and GICHD, "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Azerbaijan", March 2012, Executive Summary.

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

15 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2016", pp. 9 and 12.

16 Ibid., p. 14.

17 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2016", Ibid., p. 13.

18 Ibid., pp. 28 and 30.

19 Ibid., p. 27.

20 Ibid., p. 28.

21 Ibid., p. 35.

LAND RELEASE

No land containing CMR was reported to have been released by clearance or survey in territory under government control in 2015.

Battle Area Clearance in 2015

In February–September 2015, ANAMA conducted battle area clearance (BAC) at Khandjan, a former soviet military testing range in the Absheron peninsula. Just over 1.5km² of contaminated land was cleared, in the course of which 155 items of UXO were discovered.²²

In addition, in March 2015 ANAMA was tasked with commencing BAC operations in Ganja city in a former firing range of internal security forces. Survey of the area resulted in an estimated 13.27km² recorded as UXO contaminated. Of this, 11km² was cleared in 2015, and the remainder was planned to be cleared in 2016.²³

The second phase of the Azerbaijan National Action Plan (NAP)/NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) Trust fund project was undertaken in 2015, at the former soviet artillery shooting range in Jeyranchel, in the Agstafa region, along the Azerbaijani-Georgian border. BAC in 2015 resulted in release of over 12.2km², and destruction of 612 items of UXO.²⁴ As at April 2016, total BAC in the second stage was 18.3km² released, with the destruction of 1,212 items of UXO. The second phase was expected to be completed in July 2016.²⁵

ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

Azerbaijan is not a state party or signatory to the CCM, but nonetheless has obligations under international human rights law to protect life, which require clearance of CMR as soon as possible.²⁶

Currently, 90% of mine action in Azerbaijan is state funded.²⁷ ANAMA's long-term strategy is to be ready to start clearance of the occupied territories as and when this is possible.²⁸



UXO contamination, Azerbaijan. © ANAMA



UXO contamination, Azerbaijan. © ANAMA

22 Ibid., p. 17.

23 Ibid., p. 18.

24 Ibid.

25 ANAMA, "ANAMA Director's Interview", 8 April 2015, at: <http://news.day.az/society/765802.html#sthash.6kReSM3N.dpuf>.

26 Azerbaijan is a state party to the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 6(1) of which stipulates that: "Every human being has the inherent right to life". It is also a state party to the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights, Article 2 of which protects the right to life.

27 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>.

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