

CAMBODIA

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

2015

Problem understood	7
Target date for completion of cluster munition clearance	4
Targeted clearance	7
Efficient clearance	6
National funding of programme	3
Timely clearance	5
Land-release system in place	5
National mine action standards	5
Reporting on progress	5
Improving performance	5
PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE	5.2

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Cambodia should accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a matter of priority.
- The Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) should adopt standards for survey and clearance appropriate for dealing with cluster munitions.
- The CMAA should set strategic goals for clearance of explosive remnants of war (ERW), giving priority to cluster munition remnants (CMR) in the most affected provinces.

CONTAMINATION

Cambodia has extensive contamination from CMR but the extent is not known. Contamination resulted from intensive bombing by the United States (US) during the Vietnam War, concentrated in north-eastern provinces along the borders with Lao PDR and Vietnam. The US air force dropped at least 26 million explosive submunitions, between 1.9 million and 5.8 million of which are estimated to have not exploded.¹

On the basis of a baseline survey (BLS) of eight eastern provinces conducted between 2012 and 2015, the CMAA estimated the area affected by CMR as at May 2016 at 334km², almost 70% of total ERW contamination

amounting to more than 482km². It also showed 60% of the CMR problem is located in the provinces of Kratie and Stung Treng (see Table 1).²

Much of Cambodia's CMR contamination lies in areas that are heavily forested and have been sparsely populated. CMAA data identifies five CMR casualties since the start of 2013, including one fatality. Population growth and demand for land, however, have resulted in large numbers of people moving into these areas generating increasing evidence of the scale of contamination and increasing the threat posed.⁴

Table 1: ERW survey of eight eastern provinces³

Province	CMR-contaminated area (m ²)	Total ERW contaminated (m ²)
Kampong Cham	27,295,691	54,169,282
Kratie	102,216,147	152,370,918
Mondolkiri	18,648,581	37,223,450
Prey Veng	16,585,017	18,217,222
Rattanakiri	35,689,634	38,104,182
Stung Treng	98,503,248	124,866,799
Svay Rieng	17,044,341	32,809,678
Tboung Khmum	18,247,617	24,997,166
Totals	334,230,276	482,758,697

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The CMAA, set up in September 2000, regulates and coordinates all activities relating to survey and clearance of ERW, including CMR, responsibilities previously assigned to the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC).⁵ The CMAA's responsibilities include regulation and accreditation of all operators, preparing strategic plans, managing data, conducting quality control, and coordinating risk education and victim assistance.⁶

Prime Minister Hun Sen is the CMAA President, and in April 2016 he appointed a senior official, Serei Kosal, as first vice president, replacing a senior government minister, Prak Sokhonn, who became foreign minister. In May 2016, he also replaced the CMAA's secretary general, Prum Sophakmonkol, with another senior minister, Ly Thuch.⁷

- 1 South East Asia Air Sortie Database, cited in D. McCracken, "National Explosive Remnants of War Study, Cambodia", Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) in collaboration with CMAA, Phnom Penh, March 2006, p. 15; Human Rights Watch, "Cluster Munitions in the Asia-Pacific Region", April 2008; and Handicap International, *Fatal Footprint: The Global Human Impact of Cluster Munitions*, HI, Brussels, November 2006, p. 11.
- 2 Data received from CMAA, 30 May 2016.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Data as of 3 March 2016, received by email from CMAA, 18 May 2016.
- 5 CMAC is the leading national demining operator, but does not exercise the wider responsibilities associated with the term "centre." Set up in 1992, CMAC was assigned the role of coordinator in the mid-1990s. It surrendered this function in a restructuring of mine action in 2000 that separated the roles of regulator and implementing agency and led to the creation of the CMAA.
- 6 Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), "A Study of the Development of National Mine Action Legislation", November 2004, pp. 64-6.
- 7 Interview with Prum Sophakmonkol, Secretary General, CMAA, Phnom Penh, 11 May 2016; interviews with operators, Phnom Penh, 9-11 May 2016.

Strategic Planning

Cambodia does not have a strategic plan for tackling cluster munition clearance, but survey and clearance over the past two years has drawn attention to the issue and the need for operating standards. CMAA's outgoing Secretary-General had agreed to incorporate Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)'s Cluster Munition Remnant Survey (CMRS) procedures as the standard survey methodology and had concluded ERW clearance operations in eastern Cambodia should focus on CMR, recognising other types of UXO as a long-term explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) challenge. It was unclear if CMAA's incoming management would adopt the same approach.⁸

Operators

Survey and clearance of CMR in eastern Cambodia are undertaken mainly by CMAC, NPA, and the Mines Advisory Group (MAG). The Royal Cambodian Armed Forces and its National Centre for Peace Keeping Forces, Mine and ERW Clearance (NPMEC) have conducted clearance in cluster munition-affected areas but they have not reported the extent and results of their operations.⁹



NPA deminer searching for CMR. © Ruth Goodwin

LAND RELEASE

Cambodia released 0.77km² of CMR-contaminated area by clearance and reduced a further 3.34km² by technical survey in 2015.

Survey in 2015

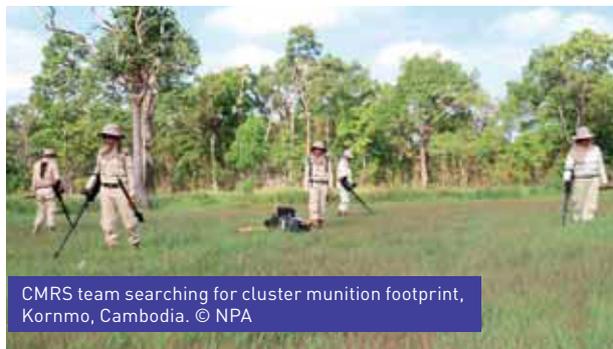
Cambodia is still in the process of scaling up its survey and clearance of CMR. CMAC's survey of ERW identified substantial areas of submunition contamination but was conducted using the mine survey methodology of the BLS and not best suited to capturing cluster munition strikes. Operators report the survey produced some large polygons that have few cluster remnants, and different survey methods and roving tasks have identified confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) outside the ERW survey polygons. Moreover, the influx of new settlers to the province continues to generate additional information on the location of CMR.¹⁰

NPA focused operations on survey using the methodology tailored to cluster munitions that it developed in Lao PDR. In 2015, it surveyed 4.8km² in the north-eastern province of Rattanakiri and identified 20 CHAs covering a total of 1.5km². NPA planned to complete survey of Rattanakiri by the end of 2016 but new information emerging on contamination and its small capacity may prolong operations. In addition to survey, NPA also cleared 0.2km² of area, destroying 220 submunitions.¹¹

Clearance in 2015

CMAC conducted clearance in Kompong Cham and Kratie under a project funded by the US and partnering NPA. CMAC reported clearing 22.86km² of battle area in 2015 but its data does not identify if any of this represented CMR contamination, nor does it disaggregate submunitions from other items destroyed. Data made available by NPA indicated CMAC cleared 2.3km² of Kampong Cham and destroyed 190 submunitions in operations conducted between August and the end of December.

The other operator tackling CMR in 2015 was MAG, which had one team working in 2014 and added capacity in the course of 2015 to finish the year with three clearance teams, two EOD teams, and 60 personnel in Rattanakiri. As in Lao PDR and Vietnam, MAG worked in cooperation with NPA, clearing polygons prioritised by Mine Action Planning Units (MAPUs).¹⁴



CMRS team searching for cluster munition footprint, Kornmo, Cambodia. © NPA

8 Ibid.

9 Interviews with CMAA and operators, Phnom Penh, 9–12 May 2016.

10 Interviews with Greg Crowther, Regional Director, South and South East Asia, MAG, Phnom Penh, 9 May 2016; and Aksel Steen-Nilsen, Country Director, NPA, Phnom Penh, 11 May 2016.

11 Email from Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 27 April 2016, and interview, Phnom Penh, 11 May 2016.

12 Email from Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 27 April 2016.

Table 2: **Technical survey in 2015**¹²

Operator	Area surveyed (m ²)	Area confirmed	Area confirmed (m ²)	Area reduced from BLS (m ²)
NPA	4,796,761	20	1,459,261	3,337,500

Table 3: **Clearance of CMR-contaminated areas in 2015**¹⁵

Operator	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	Submunitions destroyed	UXO destroyed
MAG	5	534,758	213	29
NPA	3	234,332	220	10
Totals	8	769,090	433	39

MAG also continued field evaluation for the US Department of Defense of an advanced detector, known as Scorpion, which allows for sub-surface metal signals to be mapped and identified as clutter or possible UXO/CMR contamination. MAG reported that initial results suggested the system is significantly more productive than a traditional large-loop detector and able to operate in a range of environments similar to Cambodia.¹⁶

MAG and NPA also undertook increasing numbers of spot/roving tasks, partly reflecting growing understanding and confidence in their work on the part of local communities (see Table 4). Both operators reported that many items were found outside the baseline survey polygons.¹⁷



NPA Cluster Munition Remnant Survey (CMRS) in Cambodia.
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Table 4: **Spot/roving clearance and EOD in 2015**¹⁸

Operator	Roving tasks	Submunitions destroyed	UXO destroyed
MAG	1,218	3,699	2,826
NPA	82	512	74
Totals	1,300	4,211	2,900

ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

Cambodia is not a state party or signatory to the CCM. Nonetheless, Cambodia has international human rights law obligations to protect life, which requires that CMR be cleared as soon as possible.¹⁹

Mine action stakeholders say there is better official understanding of the CCM but the Cambodian military has remained opposed to joining it as long as neighbouring Thailand, with which it has longstanding border disputes, remains outside.



NPA deminer searching for CMR. © Ruth Goodwin

13 Email from Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 31 May 2016.

14 Interview with Greg Crowther, MAG, Phnom Penh 9 May 2016, and email, 10 May 2016.

15 Emails from Greg Crowther, MAG, 10 May 2016; and Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 27 April 2016.

16 Email from Greg Crowther, MAG, 10 May 2016.

17 Interviews with Greg Crowther, MAG, Phnom Penh, 9 May 2016; and Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, Phnom Penh, 11 May 2016.

18 Email from Greg Crowther, MAG, 10 May 2016; and Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 27 April 2016.

19 Cambodia is a state party to the 1996 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 6(1) of which stipulates that: "Every human being has the inherent right to life."