



CAMBODIA

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE	2016	2015
Problem understood	5	7
Target date for completion of cluster munition clearance	5	4
Targeted clearance	6	7
Efficient clearance	5	6
National funding of programme	3	3
Timely clearance	6	5
Land release system in place	6	5
National mine action standards	4	5
Reporting on progress	5	5
Improving performance	5	5
PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE	5.0	5.2

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Operators' growing experience of tackling Cambodia's cluster munitions contamination has increasingly revealed weaknesses in available survey data and underscored the need for survey, operating standards, and a strategy appropriate to the specific challenge of cluster munition remnants (CMR).

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 CMR.
- The CMAA should establish a technical working group to develop a common response to cluster munitions contamination.
- The Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) should demonstrate greater transparency in its reporting on survey and clearance, ensuring that clearance of unexploded submunitions is disaggregated from other unexploded ordnance.

CONTAMINATION

Cambodia has extensive contamination from CMR but the full 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 the Lao People's Democratic Republic 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

The CMAA estimated the area affected by CMR as at May 2017 at almost 365km², 30km² more than at the end of 2015 and representing more than three-quarters of total ERW contamination. The estimate was based on a Baseline Survey (BLS) conducted in eight eastern provinces between 2012 and 2015 and continuing survey by operators. Two provinces, Kratie and Stung Treng, accounted for more than half the total (see Table 1).²

Table 1: ERW Survey of Eight Eastern Provinces³

Province	CMR (m ²)	Other UXO (m ²)
Kampong Cham	22,978,978	12,782,696
Kratie	96,733,733	15,906,744
Mondolkiri	18,648,563	10,375,597
Prey Veng	31,560,602	19,123,571
Rattanakiri	39,284,290	1,275,231
Stung Treng	107,021,757	26,363,551
Svay Rieng	32,923,833	12,287,556
Tboung Khmum	15,798,656	6,749,549
Totals	364,950,412	104,864,495

However, the accuracy of the estimate is a matter of debate. The BLS employed a landmine survey methodology, resulting in hugely exaggerated and inaccurate polygons. Operators continue to learn of contamination in areas already covered by the BLS and find contamination outside BLS polygons. CMAA reporting forms are formatted to record mine clearance and do not capture the results of CMR survey.⁴ A draft National Mine Action Strategy circulating in May 2017 further underscored the weakness of understanding of the extent of the problem, reporting that Cambodia has 645km² of area contaminated by CMR.⁵

Much of Cambodia's CMR contamination lies in areas that are heavily forested and which have been sparsely populated. CMAA data identifies five submunition casualties since the start of 2013, one of which was a fatality, but did not record any CMR incidents in 2016. However, demand for land and the large numbers of people moving into the northern provinces raise the threat of casualties while also generating more evidence of the scale of contamination.⁶

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 CMAC.⁷ 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.⁸

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 Ly Thuch, a senior minister formerly responsible for rural development but with no background in mine action.⁹ In October 2016, Hun Sen also appointed Lieutenant-General Sem Sovanny, Director General of the National Centre for Peacekeeping Forces, Mines and ERW Clearance (NPMEC), as a second vice-president of the CMAA.

Strategic Planning

Cambodia has no strategy for survey and clearance of CMR. In 2016, the CMAA pledged to incorporate the Cluster Munition Remnants Survey (CMRS) methodology used by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) into Cambodia's national mine action standards (NMAS Chapter 15), but as at May 2017, this had still to occur.¹⁰

A draft National Mine Action Strategy for 2017–25, which has been under discussion for more than a year, was due to be released before the end of 2017. Operators had backed the inclusion of a distinct strategy to address survey, clearance, prioritisation, and tasking of

hazardous areas containing CMR and other ERW, but as it stood at May 2017 the draft only set out general goals and objectives.¹¹ These included to:

- Review planning and prioritisation relating to CMR contamination
- Release priority areas
- Review, and by 2021 put in place, institutional arrangements to address residual contamination.

Operators

Survey and clearance of CMR in eastern Cambodia are undertaken mainly by CMAC, the biggest operator with more than 1,200 personnel; Mines Advisory Group (MAG) with 226 staff (of whom 78 work in the east); and NPA with 36.¹² The Royal Cambodian Armed Forces and the NPMEC have conducted clearance in CMR-affected areas, but the extent and results of their operations has not been made public.

LAND RELEASE

Cambodia greatly increased the release of land contaminated with CMR in 2016 compared to the previous year, with clearance output exceeding 22km².

Survey in 2016

NPA, the only operator in Cambodia conducting survey tailored to cluster munitions, completed its non-technical survey of Rattanakiri province in 2016, confirming 20 hazardous areas (CHAs) covering 1.8km² and in the process knocking off nearly 3km² from the baseline survey of contamination. NPA was prepared to continue non-technical survey in 2017 if it became necessary as a result of population movements and community requests, but it preferred to concentrate operations on technical survey and clearance.¹³

Table 2: NPA CMR survey¹⁴

Year	Area surveyed (m ²)	CHAs identified	Area confirmed (m ²)	Area reduced from BLS (m ²)
2015	4,796,761	20	1,459,261	3,337,500
2016	4,687,500	20	1,840,521	2,846,979

CMAC said its survey of suspected hazardous areas in eastern provinces in 2016 confirmed CMR contamination in 455 areas covering 84.73km². Although north-eastern provinces are believed to be among the most heavily affected by CMR, CMAC said it confirmed 145 areas and 34km² in south-eastern Svay Rieng and 115 covering 21.29km² in the neighbouring province of Prey Veng. The Svay Rieng estimate exceeded the total for the province identified in the BLS (see Table 1). CMAC reported reducing 3.19km² through technical survey.¹⁵

Clearance in 2016

Operators reported clearing a total of 22.38km² of CMR-contaminated areas in 2016, a huge increase on the previous year. According to the data available, CMAC accounted for more than 90% of the area cleared in 2016, most of it in Kampong Cham (9.1km²) and Kratie (6.4km²).¹⁶

MAG increased the number of its battle area clearance (BAC) teams from three to four, and tripled the amount of CMR-affected area it cleared in 2016 compared with the previous year, destroying four times the number of submunitions. MAG said use of advanced Scorpion detectors and better use of historical data in selecting tasks had contributed to higher productivity. MAG also nearly doubled the number of roving tasks undertaken in 2016, although this resulted in a sharp increase in the number of items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) destroyed, this included fewer submunitions than in 2015.¹⁷

Table 3: Clearance of CMR-contaminated areas in 2016¹⁸

Operator	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	Submunitions destroyed	Other UXO destroyed
CMAC	147	20,381,947	3,471	1,171
MAG	N/R	1,724,547	868	79
NPA ¹⁹	5	276,430	583	26
Totals	152	22,382,924	4,922	1,276

N/R = Not recorded

NPA, focused mainly on survey, cleared slightly more area than it did in 2015 although the number of submunitions destroyed more than doubled, but the number of spot tasks and items destroyed in the course of them dropped sharply as NPA conducted more technical survey and fewer village visits.²⁰

Table 4: Spot/roving clearance and EOD in 2016

Operator	Roving tasks	Submunitions destroyed	UXO destroyed
CMAC	2,618	974	18,445
MAG	2,170	2,892	6,772
NPA	82	64	20
Totals	4,870	3,930	25,237

EOD = Explosive ordnance disposal

ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

Cambodia is neither a state party nor a signatory to the CCM and therefore does not have a specific clearance deadline under Article 4. Nonetheless, Cambodia has obligations under international human rights law to clear CMR as soon as possible.

Cambodia's attitude to the CCM appears to be shifting. In the past, Cambodia said it would not join the treaty before Thailand, with which it has had border disputes, did so. Officials now say that is no longer an issue; that Cambodia is not waiting for Thailand; and that the government only wanted assurance that certain munitions in the Cambodian armed forces' arsenal were not banned by the treaty.²¹ Cambodia's draft NMA for 2017–25 says it will promote regional and international disarmament and cooperation.

- South East Asia Air Sortie Database, cited in D. McCracken, "National Explosive Remnants of War Study, Cambodia", 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 (HI), *Fatal Footprint: The Global Human Impact of Cluster Munitions*, HI, Brussels, November 2006, p. 11.
- Data received from CMAA, 2 May 2017.
- Email from Prom Serey Audom, Assistant to the Secretary General, CMAA, 2 May 2017.
- Interviews with Aksel Steen-Nilsen, Country Director, NPA; and Greg Crowther, Regional Director, South and South East Asia, MAG, in Phnom Penh, 1 May 2017.
- Figure 3, National Mine Action Strategy 2017–2025 (Draft), undated but 2017, p. 17.
- Casualty data received by email from Nguon Monoketya, Deputy Director, Socio-Economic Planning and Database Management Department, CMAA, 17 February 2017.
- 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.
- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), "A Study of the Development of National Mine Action Legislation", November 2004, pp. 64–66.
- Interviews with Prum Sophakmonkol, Secretary General, CMAA, Phnom Penh, 11 May 2016; and with operators, Phnom Penh, 9–11 May 2016.
- Email from Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 31 March 2017.
- Draft National Mine Action Strategy, 2017–2025, received from Prom Serey Audom, CMAA, 2 May 2017.
- Emails from Rath Pottana, Information Officer, CMAC, 9 May 2017; Greg Crowther, MAG, 4 April 2017; and Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 31 March 2017.
- Interview with Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, Phnom Penh, 1 May 2017.
- Emails from Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 27 April 2016; and Zlatko Vezilic, NPA, 7 July 2017. Submunitions cleared during the course of technical survey are reported in Table 3.
- Email from Rath Pottana, CMAC, 9 May 2017.
- Ibid.; and email from CMAA, 30 May 2016.
- Email from Greg Crowther, MAG, 4 April 2017, and interview, Phnom Penh, 1 May 2017.
- Emails from Rath Pottana, CMAC, 9 May 2017; Greg Crowther, MAG, 10 May 2016; and Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 27 April 2016.
- The total of 583 submunitions destroyed includes 349 destroyed in clearance and 234 destroyed during technical survey. Emails from Zlatko Vezilic, NPA, 18 and 19 July 2017.
- Email from Aksel Steen-Nilsen, NPA, 31 March 2017, and interview, 1 May 2017.
- Interview with Ly Thuch, CMAA, and Heng Rattana, Director General, CMAC, Phnom Penh, 2 May 2017.