SOMALIA

ARTICLE 4 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2026
(TOO SOON TO ASSESS LIKELIHOOD OF COMPLIANCE)

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

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PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Somalia has made little progress so far in implementing its obligations under Article 4 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). No survey specific to CMR was conducted in 2016 and no cluster munition remnants (CMR) clearance occurred in Somalia during the year. There is a need for much greater support for the Somalia Explosive Management Authority (SEMA) and greater priority on the implementation of mine action operations, with less time spent on coordination and bureaucracy between stakeholders.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

→ Somalia should ensure the timely survey and clearance of CMR in accordance with its CCM obligations, alongside efforts to address wider explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination.

→ Somalia should commit more resources for SEMA and mine action operations.

→ SEMA should be supported to secure parliamentary approval for its legislative framework and to gain recognition as a salaried civil service government entity.

→ SEMA should simultaneously clarify its structure, organigram, and staffing and ensure greater cohesion between its five Federal State offices and state-level consortiums.

→ SEMA should ensure a greater focus on output, with less time tied up in coordination and liaison between stakeholders. Bureaucratic blockages should be lifted and permissions and authorisation to carry out mine action activities facilitated.

→ The Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database should be transferred to full national ownership under SEMA, an undertaking that requires additional training and resources for its management.

→ Continued efforts should be made to make certain recording of and reporting on mine action is according to International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) terminology.

→ SEMA’s national mine action policy should be translated and disseminated to mine action stakeholders, with the opportunity for consultation and input.

→ Somalia’s National Technical Standards and Guidelines (NTSG) should be reviewed and revised to ensure their relevance for the Somali-specific country context and present best practices for tackling the nature of the mine and CMR threat in Somalia.

→ Somalia should develop a resource mobilisation strategy and initiate dialogue with development partners on long-term support for mine action, including to address CMR.

CONTAMINATION

The extent of CMR contamination in Somalia is unknown. In 2013, dozens of PTAB-2.5M submunitions and several AO-15Sch submunitions were found within a 30km radius of the town of Dolow on the Somali-Ethiopian border, in the southern Gedo region of southern Somalia. CMR were also identified around the town of Galdogob in the north-central Mudug province of Puntland, further north on the border with Ethiopia. More contamination was expected to be found in southern Somalia’s Lower and Upper Juba regions.

According to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), eight reports were submitted in September 2015 from Rabdhure, in Bakool region of South West state showing empty RBK-250-275 cluster bomb containers, which can contain both AO-15Sch and PTAB-2.5M submunitions. Three additional reports of the identification of CMR were made in 2016. All reports remained to be verified as at July 2017. In January 2016, several BL755 submunitions were reportedly found near Bu’ale, Middle Juba region, which were claimed by Somali media to have been recently used. In March 2016, a modified BL755 submunition was found in Bardera (Baardheere), Gedo region, and in September 2016, one PTAB-2.5M submunition was reportedly found in Dinsoor, Bay region.

The Ethiopian National Defence Forces and the Somali National Armed Forces are thought to have used cluster munitions in clashes along the Somali-Ethiopian border during the 1977–78 Ogaden War. The Soviet Union supplied both Ethiopia and Somalia with weapons during the conflict. PTAB-2.5 and AO-15Sch submunitions were produced by the Soviet Union on a large scale.

On 24 January 2016, Somali media reports circulated photos alleging that cluster munitions had been used by the Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF) during an intensive bombing campaign in Gedo region, in response to an attack on 15 January on KDF forces at an African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) base in El Adde, in which the UN later reported that 150 Kenyan soldiers were killed. The photos published appear to show unexploded United Kingdom (UK)-manufactured BL755 submunitions in the area of Bu’ale. There were subsequent reports by local residents that al-Shabaab had discovered unexploded submunitions near Bu’ale around the same time. A UN Monitoring Group investigation later determined that unexploded submunitions of the same BL755 type were used in the manufacture of components of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) found in a cache of materials seized by anti-al-Shabaab forces in Bardera, reported on 7 March 2016.

The UN Monitoring Group investigation was unable to conclude whether the KDF dropped the BL-755 munitions during airstrikes in Gedo in January 2016. It reported that, according to the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, Kenya was not known to have ever used, produced, or stockpiled cluster munitions. It noted, however, that the F-5 type aircraft used by the KDF in Somalia can be modified to deliver BL-755 munitions.
Likewise, it was unable to determine whether the BL755 submunitions used as part of the IEDs recovered in Bardera were harvested from previously imported or deployed weapons stocks. It noted that the majority of CMR contamination recorded from the 1977–78 Somali-Ethiopian Ogaden war was submunitions of the types PTAB-2.5M and AO-15Ch, and that there were no reports of BL-755 submunitions discovered among legacy UXO contamination in Somalia. However, it observed that BL755 cluster munitions were developed in the early 1970s and known to have been used by Ethiopia at least once, in an attack on Eritrea, in the 1990s.

The Government of Kenya denied using cluster munitions in the January air campaign, calling the UN Monitoring Group’s report “at best, a fabricated, wild and sensationalist allegation.”

While the extent of CMR contamination along the Somali border with Ethiopia is not known, in 2014, Somalia claimed it posed an ongoing threat to the lives of nomadic people and their animals.

Other Explosive Remnants of War and Landmines

Somalia is heavily contaminated with ERW other than CMR, a result of conflict in 1990–2012. Contamination exists across its three major regions: south-central Somalia (including the capital Mogadishu), Puntland (a semi-autonomous administration in the north-east), and Somaliland (a self-proclaimed, though unrecognised, state that operates autonomously in the north-west). Landmines along the border with Ethiopia, mainly as a result of legacy minefields, also continued to affect civilians in south-central Somalia.

Insecure and poorly managed stockpiles of weapons and ammunition, as well as use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by non-state armed groups have a serious humanitarian impact. The extent of the threat is not well known, except in Puntland and Somaliland where a range of surveys have been carried out over the past decade.

In 2017, UNMAS reported that ERW and landmine contamination in Somalia continued to restrict community access to basic services and economic opportunities and remained an impediment to stability, security, and ultimately, recovery and development. The ongoing conflict also resulted in new contamination from ERW, which presents a source, along with large quantities of abandoned ammunition, for al-Shabaab and other opposition armed groups to harvest explosives and items to be used in the manufacturing of IEDs.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

According to SEMA, as at October 2016, mine action management in Somalia was “temporarily” divided into two geographical regions: Somalia and Somaliland. The respective centres responsible for mine action in each of these areas are SEMA and the Somaliland Mine Action Centre (SMAC). SEMA reported that it maintains a presence across Somalia through its five Federal State members, the SEMA Puntland State Office, SEMA Galmudug State Office, SEMA Hirshabelle State Office, SEMA South West State Office, and SEMA Jubaland Office. Under each of the five Federal State members is an independent consortium of national NGOs.

SEMA was established in 2013 as the mine action centre for southern Somalia, replacing the Somalia National Mine Action Authority (SNMMA) created two years earlier. SEMA’s goal was to assume full responsibility for all explosive hazard coordination, regulation, and management by December 2015. UNMAS reported that “significant steps” were made in late 2015 towards “the transfer of responsibilities to a national authority” with Somalia’s Council of Ministers endorsing of SEMA’s legislative framework, policy, and budget, making it responsible for managing and coordinating all explosive hazards in Somalia.

In June 2016, SEMA reported that its legislative framework was still awaiting the approval of the Federal Parliament. However, elections held in February 2017 resulted in a period of government paralysis and the legislative framework was not adopted. Due to the lack of parliamentary approval, SEMA did not receive funding from the government in 2016, nor had it received any financial assistance from UNMAS since December 2015. A seven-month grant from UNMAS expired in December 2015, under which SEMA was expected to have established itself as a sustainable national mine action institution.

Puntland

The SEMA Puntland State Office, formerly known as PMAC, was established in Garowe with UN Development Programme (UNDP) support in 1999. Since then, on behalf of the regional government, PMAC has coordinated mine action with local and international partners, including Danish Demining Group (DDG) and Mines Advisory Group (MAG). It runs the only police explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team in Puntland, which is responsible for collecting and destroying explosive ordnance. In June 2015, it requested assistance to increase its capacity and deploy three EOD teams in Bosasso, Galkayo, and Garowe.
Somaliland

In 1997, UNDP assisted the government of Somaliland to establish SMAC, which is responsible for coordinating and managing demining in Somaliland. Officially, SMAC is under the authority of the Vice-President of Somaliland, who heads the interministerial Mine Action Steering Committee. The HALO Trust reported that meetings with SMAC were convened on a monthly basis in 2016.

Strategic Planning

SEMA developed a national mine action policy, which as at May 2017, had received one reading in the Somali Parliament but had yet to be ratified. The document only existed in Somali and no translations were available, nor had any versions been disseminated to national or international mine action operators. Operators raised concerns that the policy was drafted with little to no input from international mine action stakeholders or the international donor community. NPA reported, however, that it was intended that the policy would be translated and shared with mine action operators in 2017 as part of a UK Department for International Development (DFID)-funded capacity building project.

In 2017, the recently elected Somali Government approved The Somalia National Development Plan 2017–2019, outlining priorities for recovery and development. Mine and ERW contamination is recognised as a hindrance to socio-economic development and a security concern for sustainable development initiatives, and identifies mine and ERW clearance as a crucial part of stabilisation efforts in the national development process.

In 2015, the Federal Government of Somalia’s Ministry of Internal Security and SEMA developed a national strategy document, the “Badbaado Plan for Multi-Year Explosive Hazard Management”, in coordination with Federal State members, the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSMOM), and UNMAS. The plan’s overarching objective is to support the Federal Government in fulfilling its obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the CCM, with a focus on national ownership through the institutional development of SEMA federal state entities, the training of national police EOD teams, and the creation of employment opportunities for local Somalis, including from at-risk groups such as youths and former combatants, to undertake clearance operations in their own communities. According to SEMA, the Badbaado Plan’s objectives for nationwide mine and ERW clearance in south-central Somalia include areas “reported with cluster munition presence.” A separate plan was developed for explosive hazard management by the police.

Somaliland’s latest strategic mine action plan expired in 2014. In May 2017, The HALO Trust reported that it intended to work with SMAC to develop a mine action strategy in 2017–18.

Standards

UNMAS developed NTSGs for Somalia in 2012–13. The NTSGs do not include specific guidance for CMR survey or clearance and SEMA stated in June 2016 that it did not have the capacity to revise the existing NTSGs to include provisions specific to CMR. The NTSGs are also not specific to the Somali context, and in 2017, there were calls for the NTSGs to be reviewed and revised to ensure they represent best practices for tackling the particular mine and CMR threat in Somalia.

Mine action standards remained in place in Somaliland and no changes were reported in 2016.

Operators

DDG began operations in the country in 1999 with mine and ERW clearance in Somaliland and has since undertaken programmes in Mogadishu, Puntland, and Somaliland. In 2016, DDG continued to focus its activities on EOD and risk education and did not conduct any mine or battle area clearance (BAC).

While The HALO Trust’s mine clearance programme in Somaliland has been ongoing since 1999, in the first half of 2015, the organisation opened a new programme in southern Somalia but no CMR-related operations were carried out during 2016. Its capacity increased from 38 staff at the start of the year to 185 in December 2016, due to a planned increase in mine clearance operations. It reported significant gains in training and technical competence, and correspondingly in clearance output, during the year.

In 2016, MAG continued its arms management and destruction (AMD) programme across south-central Somalia, Puntland, and Somaliland. MAG previously conducted non-technical survey and EOD in Puntland, along with training and support to police EOD teams, but halted its mine action programme in August 2013. In 2016, MAG sought further funding to support the Puntland police EOD teams but was not successful.

In 2016, NPA continued a programme initiated in 2014 in southern Somalia for survey, BAC, and capacity-building assistance to SEMA. It operated three BAC teams conducting surface clearance of ERW in Mogadishu and its outskirts.

From 1 September 2015 to 31 May 2016, UNMAS continued to contract the Ukrainian commercial operator Ukroboronservice to undertake mine action-related tasks in south-central Somalia. It deployed four MTTs along with nine community liaison officers in support of AMISOM projects to conduct survey and clearance of ERW, main supply route assessments, stockpile and ammunition management, and explosive hazard risk education. Ten government police EOD teams were also deployed in Somalia.
Quality Management

NPA reported that SEMA conducted external quality assurance (QA) of its BAC tasks during 2016. The HALO Trust said that no external QA of its tasks was conducted in 2016 and reported that, as at May 2017, only one visit by a SEMA representative had occurred since the start of the year. No field visits to conduct QA by international managers could be carried out due to security concerns, it said. In June 2017, SEMA confirmed that clearance projects had been initiated without a strong QA/quality control (QC) process in place and called for further capacity building of SEMA to carry out QA/QC before awarding future contracts.

Information Management

No changes were reported to the quality of the national IMSMA database or significant developments with respect to information management in 2016. In July 2017, UNMAS reported that it had made several attempts to hand over the IMSMA database to SEMA, but lack of capacity within SEMA had left the Agency unable to accept the responsibility. UNMAS was continuing to process the data as an interim measure until SEMA has sufficient capacity to administer the database on its own. In Somaliland, The HALO Trust reported continuing regular checks of its information management system to ensure accuracy of reporting and stated that it transfers all data to SMAC, which then inputs it into its IMSMA database.

LAND RELEASE

Survey in 2016

No overview of areas suspected to contain CMR exists in southern Somalia, and, as at May 2017, no national survey had been conducted, mainly due to the security situation. No survey specific to CMR was conducted in 2016.

In 2015–16, The HALO Trust carried out surveys in the Hiran region of Hirshabelle state, along the Ethiopian border in the Galguduud region of Galmudug state, and in the Bakool region of South-West state, surveying a total of 101 minefield and 179 UXO tasks. Of this, only one CMR fragment was found in Hiran. No further evidence of use of cluster munitions or CMR contamination was encountered.

Clearance in 2016


DDG, NPA, and MAG confirmed that they did not encounter any CMR in their operations in southern Somalia in 2016.

Deminer Safety

In September 2016, two HALO Trust staff were killed and one permanently disabled in a shooting incident in Galmudug state. The HALO Trust reported that the incident was due to a conflict between rival sub-clans and was not directly targeted at its operations. Nevertheless, it was forced to withdraw from Galmudug as a result.
ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

Under Article 4 of the CCM, Somalia is required to destroy all CMR in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 March 2026. It is too soon to say whether Somalia is on track to meet its Article 4 deadline although in June 2016, SEMA had claimed to be optimistic that with adequate resources, Somalia would meet the deadline in time.63 It highlighted the need for international assistance; greater transparency on bilaterally funded projects; better coordination and information sharing between operators, SEMA, and its Federal State member offices; and ensuring sufficient capacity to conduct independent QA/QC activities as key areas of concern.64 SEMA continued to be hindered by a lack of federal funding in 2016.65 NPA reported that UNMAS had stopped funding SEMA, in the expectation that its legislative framework was due to be approved by the Federal Parliament and that funding for SEMA would be allocated from the national budget.66 However, due to the lack of parliamentary approval, SEMA did not receive funding from the government in 2016. As noted above, a seven-month grant from UNMAS expired in December 2015 under which SEMA was expected to have established itself as a sustainable government entity.67 SEMA began staffing its office in 2016, but as at May 2017, did not have sufficient capacity to manage the reporting and coordination requirements of a national mine action centre. Operators continued to raise concerns that less time should be directed at political liaison between stakeholders, and that facilitating the implementation of demining operations must be a higher priority.68 Greater clarity on SEMA’s role and cohesion between SEMA and its five Federal State offices, as well as national consortiums, would also facilitate communication between stakeholders and more efficient implementation of mine action activities.69 Security and the safety of demining staff amid political tension and violence remained significant concerns for operations in certain areas.70 There were no plans to conduct a national survey of CMR contamination as at May 2017. However, NPA planned to deploy one survey team to an area suspected to contain CMR contamination in the second half of the year.71 The HALO Trust expected its capacity to decrease slightly at the beginning of 2017 due to a relocation of operations where some staff members could not be deployed. There was a potential for a small increase in funding in September, which would allow for additional hiring and expanded operations.72 In 2017, under a DFID-funded partnership project, NPA was providing capacity development for SEMA on managing the IMSMA database, conducting non-technical and technical survey, and trainings for SEMA management staff.73

1 Emails from Mohamed Abdulkarid Ahmed, Director, SEMA, 14 June 2016; and Mohammad Sediq Rashid, Project Manager, UNMAS Somalia, 8 June 2017. UNMAS reported in June 2017 had these had since been cleared.
2 Response to questionnaire by Mohamed Abdulkarid Ahmed, SEMA, 19 June 2015.
4 Email from Mohammad Sediq Rashid, UNMAS, 8 June 2017.
5 Ibid.
6 Email from Mohamed Abdulkarid Ahmed, SNMMA, 17 April 2013.
7 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 The UN Monitoring Group requested Lockheed Martin Holdings (UK), which acquired Hunting Engineering/INSYS in 2005 that had manufactured the BL755 cluster munition, to provide export authorisation records for the sale of any BL755s to Kenya; however, the requirement to retain export records had since expired and no records were recoverable. UN Security Council, “Letter dated 7 October 2016 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council”, S/2016/919, 31 October 2016, pp. 171-73.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 Statement of Somalia, CCM Fifth Meeting of States Parties, San José, 2–5 September 2014.
16 Ibid.
17 Email from Mohamed Abdulkarid Ahmed, SEMA, 14 October 2016.
18 Ibid.
19 Interview with Mohamed Abdulkarid Ahmed, SEMA, in Geneva, 9 April 2014; and email from Kjell Ivar Breili, UNMAS, 12 July 2015.
20 Response to questionnaire by Mohamed Abdulkarid Ahmed, SEMA, 19 June 2015.
22 Email from Mohamed Abdulkarid Ahmed, SEMA, 14 June 2016.
23 Email from Hilde Jørgensen, NPA, 3 May 2017.
24 Emails from Terje Elden, NPA, 22 October 2016; and Mohamed Abdulkarid Ahmed, SEMA, 14 October 2016.
25 Email from Mohammad Sediq Rashid, UNMAS, 8 June 2017.
29 Ibid.
30 Email from Tom Griffiths, Regional Director North Africa, HALO Trust, 31 May 2017.
31 Emails from Tom Griffiths, HALO Trust, 31 May 2017; and Hilde Jørgensen, NPA, 3 May 2017.
32 Email from Hilde Jørgensen, NPA, 3 May 2017.

Email from Mohamed Abdulkadir Ahmed, SEMA, 14 June 2016.


Email from Tom Griffiths, HALO Trust, 31 May 2017.

Email from Terje Eldeen, Programme Manager, NPA, 5 June 2016; and response to questionnaire by Mohamed Abdulkadir Ahmed, SEMA, 19 June 2015.

Email from Tom Griffiths, HALO Trust, 19 May 2017.

Email from Tom Griffiths, HALO Trust, 31 May 2017.

In 2007, DDG initiated a mine action programme in southern Somalia (in Mogadishu) and in Puntland. DDG’s mine action programme in Somaliland ceased mine clearance in 2006. DDG, “South-Central Somalia and Puntland”, undated, but accessed 30 April 2014.

Email from Roger Fasth, Global Operations Manager, DDG, 10 May 2017.

Email from Tom Griffiths, HALO Trust, 19 May 2017.

Email from Tom Griffiths, HALO Trust, 31 May 2017.

Email from Bill Marsden, Regional Director, East and Southern Africa, MAG, 18 May 2017.

NPA, ”Humanitarian Disarmament in Somalia”, accessed 28 April 2014; and emails from Terje Eldeen, NPA, 29 April 2014; and from Ahmed Siyad, NPA, 1 May 2014.


Email from Mohammad Sediq Rashid, UNMAS, 8 June 2017.

Email from Mohammed Sediq Rashid, UNMAS, 8 June 2017.

Email from Mohammad Sediq Rashid, UNMAS, 8 June 2017.

Email from Tom Griffiths, HALO Trust, 19 May 2017.

Email from Tom Griffiths, HALO Trust, 19 May 2017.

Email from Tom Griffiths, HALO Trust, 31 May 2017.

Email from Tom Griffiths, HALO Trust, 31 May 2017.

Emails from Tom Griffiths, HALO Trust, 19 May 2017; and Mohamed Abdulkadir Ahmed, SEMA, 14 June 2016.

Emails from Terje Eldeen, NPA, 5 June 2016.

Emails from Tom Griffiths, HALO Trust, 19 May 2017; and Mohamed Abdulkadir Ahmed, SEMA, 14 June 2016.

Email from Anna Roughley, DfID Project Co-ordinator, NPA, 23 May 2017.

Email from Anna Roughley, DfID Project Co-ordinator, NPA, 23 May 2017.

Email from Hilde Jørgensen, NPA, 3 May 2017; and Tom Griffiths, HALO Trust, 19 May 2017.

Email from Mohamed Abdulkadir Ahmed, SEMA, 1 June 2017.