

## KEY DATA

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

(BUT NOT BELIEVED TO BE HEAVY)

AP MINE  
CLEARANCE IN 2021

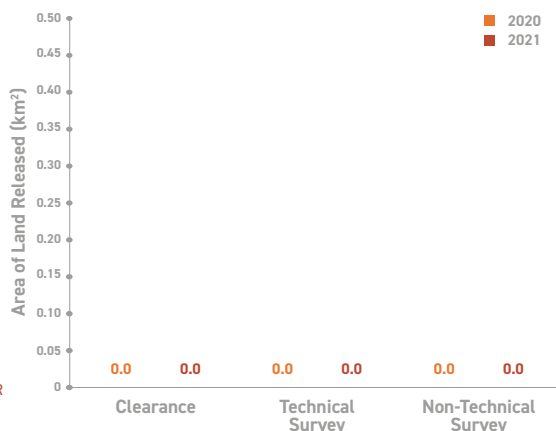
**0**<sub>M<sup>2</sup></sub>

AP MINES  
DESTROYED IN 2021

**121**

(BASED ON QTMAC AND OPERATOR  
DATA, INCLUDES 116 DESTROYED  
DURING EOD CALL-OUTS)

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2021, the Vietnam National Mine Action Centre (VNMAC) continued its efforts to strengthen coordination of humanitarian mine action in Vietnam. The Prime Minister office presented a progress report on the first ten years of the 15 year (2010–25) Program 504 national strategy in February 2022. In addition to the forward planning section laid out in the progress report, a five-year National Mine Action Plan (2021–25) has also been drafted but not yet promulgated. In 2021, for the first time, VNMAC also produced an annual operations report outlining the results of the international organisation's survey and clearance operations.

Circular 129 was approved in 2021 establishing the structure and systems for quality management (QM). In July 2022, VNMAC approved new regulations for a national information management system, setting up the framework for establishing information management structures to include all 63 provinces and 7 military regions of Vietnam. The National Technical Regulations (QCVNs), which have been revised, were approved in September 2022.

These are significant steps forward in VNMAC assuming the coordination role delegated to it in Decree 18 and Guiding Circular 195, which came into force in early 2020.

VNMAC's main focus remains on survey and clearance of explosive ordnance contamination (mainly explosive remnants of war, ERW), and not on releasing mined areas which are prevalent along Vietnam's borders.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Vietnam should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Vietnam should clear anti-personnel mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- Vietnam should approve VNMAC's five-year work plan (2021–25), which corresponds to implementation of the National Mine Action Plan for 2010–25 (Program 504).
- Vietnam should publish a detailed assessment of remaining mined areas.
- Vietnam should publish annual reports on its progress in survey and clearance of mined areas, including on the results of demining by all operators.

- The revision of National Mine Action Standards (TCVNs), in line with IMAS, should be completed as soon as possible and should address action to tackle anti-personnel mine contamination distinct from battle area clearance (BAC).
- Items of explosive ordnance discovered and destroyed, should be clearly and accurately recorded, including distinguishing anti-personnel mines from anti-vehicle mines.

## DEMINING CAPACITY

### MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Vietnam National Mine Action Centre (VNMAC)
- Quang Tri Mine Action Centre (QTMAC)

### NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Ministry of Defence

### INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- PeaceTrees Vietnam (PTVN)

### OTHER ACTORS

- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC)
- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- Golden West Humanitarian Foundation (Golden West)
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

## UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The full extent of mined area in Vietnam is unknown. A Landmine Impact Survey published in 2018 reported the presence of anti-personnel mines in 26 of 63 cities and provinces but gave no further details.<sup>1</sup> According to VNMAC, the total area still contaminated with bombs, mines, and explosive ordnance in Vietnam in 2021 is more than 57,000km<sup>2</sup>, which accounts for more than 17% of Vietnam's land surface.<sup>2</sup> Mine contamination, however, only makes up a small proportion of the total explosive ordnance (EO) contamination, with cluster munition remnants (CMR) and other ERW making up the vast majority.

Most mines were left by conflicts in the 1970s with neighbouring Cambodia and China, and affect areas close to its borders with those countries.<sup>3</sup> Clearance had been reported by Vietnam along its northern border with China

in the 1990s and since 2004, but mined areas further inland are believed to persist.<sup>4</sup> It was reported in 2013 by Vietnam's Military Engineering Command that clearance had been completed in areas bordering Cambodia.<sup>5</sup> Many ports and river deltas were mined extensively during the armed conflict with the United States and were not completely cleared when it ended. A number of sea mines have been found on the coast.<sup>6</sup> Some mines have also been found around former US military installations.<sup>7</sup>

Vietnam has one of the world's most extensive remaining contamination from cluster munition remnants (CMR) and other ERW (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants* report on Vietnam for further information).

## NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

VNMAC was established in 2014 by Prime Ministerial decree to strengthen the direction of mine action and provide a focal point for mine action operations,<sup>8</sup> although management and operations continued to depend largely on the Armed Forces.

Vietnam's mine action programme has undergone significant restructuring, following the Decree on the Management and Implementation of Mine Action Activities (Decree No. 18), which entered into effect on 20 March 2019 and subsequent approval of a Guiding Circular (Guiding Circular No. 195) which came into effect in February 2020.<sup>9</sup> Under Decree 18, the Ministry of National Defence (MoD) continues to be the lead authority for the national mine action programme, in coordination with other relevant ministries and sectors.<sup>10</sup> VNMAC will, under the direction of the Prime Minister and management of the MoD, "monitor, coordinate and implement mine action tasks".<sup>11</sup>

1 VNMAC, "Report on Explosive Remnants of War Contamination in Vietnam, Based on the Explosive Remnants of War Contamination Survey and Mapping - Phase 1", provided by Vietnam National Mine Action Centre (VNMAC) 19 April 2018, p. 38.

2 Email from Tim Horner, Senior Technical Advisor, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), on behalf of Mr Phuc, Director, VNMAC, 6 April 2021.

3 Interview with Sr. Col. Phan Duc Tuan, Deputy Commander, Military Engineering Command, People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN), in Geneva, 30 June 2011.

4 Information provided by Sr. Col. Phan Duc Tuan, PAVN, in email from Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFA), Hanoi, 24 September 2012; and in interview in Geneva, 30 June 2011.

5 Interview with Sr. Col. Nguyen Thanh Ban, Head of Bomb and Mine

Department, Engineering Command, Hanoi, 18 June 2013.

6 Landmine Action, *Explosive Remnants of War and Mines Other than Anti-personnel Mines*, London, March 2005, p. 181.

7 Ibid.

8 Prime Ministerial Decree (No. 738 of 2013) on the management and implementation of mine action activities, Hanoi, April 2018.

9 Emails from Jan Erik Støa, Country Director, NPA, 6 April 2020; and Tim Horner on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 6 April 2021.

10 Decree on Implementation and Management of Mine Action, No.18/2019/ND-CP, 1 February 2019.

11 Draft Decree on the management and implementation of mine action activities, Hanoi, April 2018.

The Decree and Guiding Circular has, since 2020, given VNMAC a clear mandate, roles, and responsibilities as the national coordinating entity for mine action operations, and this has further established the legal basis for revision and updating of the national regulations (QCVNs) and standards (TCVNs). The QCVN's were approved in September 2022. The TCVNs had yet to be approved as at time of writing.<sup>12</sup> VNMAC now has authority over mine action data, which it is beginning to exercise by requiring all provinces to collect and report data to the VNMAC Information Management Unit (IMU) on a quarterly basis,<sup>13</sup> which is a legal requirement following approval of the IM regulation in July 2022.<sup>14</sup> The adoption of the legal framework also paves the way for provincial authorities to be recognised as having a key role in the reporting system between operators and VNMAC.<sup>15</sup>

VNMAC is nationally funded, and implementation of the National Mine Action Programme (Programme 504) is funded by both state and international funding.<sup>16</sup> According to VNMAC, the government has provided support for mine action, including i) establishment of coordinating agencies and associations to support all levels of mine action activities; ii) completion of a legal system, mechanism and policies, which create a legal basis for post-war demining activities (the MoD cooperates with other ministries to develop Circulars guiding QCVNs, TCVNs, and standing operating procedure (SOP) on quality management (QM), survey, and clearance and related issues); iii) facilitation of activities to develop the management and administration capacity, and the survey and clearance capacity, of demining organisations; iv) formation of a national QM system for survey and clearance in accordance international standards; and v) formation of an information management system.<sup>17</sup>

VNMAC's involvement in coordination meetings, such as the Landmine Working Group (LWG, renamed in 2022 the Mine Action Working Group (MAWG)), has increased in recent years. The LWG, which is currently co-chaired by Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is a platform for all mine action stakeholders in Vietnam to meet regularly to share and discuss updates that impact the sector. Due to restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, only one LWG meeting took place in 2021, although several other technical meetings requested by VNMAC did also take place. The focus of the

LWG in 2021 was on following up on the revision of the QCVNs and TCVNs, and on the Information Management System regulation.<sup>18</sup>

Despite constraints posed by COVID-19, VNMAC has shown an increased understanding of their role, including a greater willingness to discuss ideas and challenges with international operators.<sup>19</sup> However, VNMAC still operates within the limits of the MoD which is very regulated, so there is still room for improved transparency and efficiency.<sup>20</sup> There is a well-established process for granting work permits and visas to international mine action staff and for procurement of demining equipment, although the importation of equipment can be lengthy, depending on the nature of the items.<sup>21</sup>

VNMAC now produces a twice-yearly mine action calendar and operations report covering the activities and results of all NGOs and the UNDP in Vietnam.<sup>22</sup> In 2021, a biannual report was produced for the first half of the year, followed by an annual report covering the whole of 2021. This is the first time an annual operations report has been published by VNMAC. While the report included data from NGOs, it did not include military clearance data or commercial clearance.<sup>23</sup> The IM regulations approved in July 2022 stipulate that all provinces must report to VNMAC quarterly and VNMAC must produce an annual report in the first quarter of each year.

MAG, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), PeaceTrees Vietnam (PTVN), the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), Golden West Humanitarian Foundation (Golden West), and UNDP all provide capacity development support in Vietnam (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2022* report on Vietnam for more details).

Vietnam has shown increasing engagement with the international mine action sector over recent years. It was a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2020–21, during which it played an active role in emphasising the importance of mine action being an integral part of the UN peace and security agenda.<sup>24</sup> In April 2021, Vietnam convened and chaired the Security Council open debate on "Mine Action and Sustaining Peace".<sup>25</sup>

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12 Email from Tim Horner, NPA, 7 September 2022.

13 Email from Kimberley McCosker, Project Manager, NPA, 13 May 2021.

14 Email from Tim Horner, NPA, 7 September 2022.

15 Email from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 13 May 2021.

16 Email from Tim Horner on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 6 April 2021.

17 Email from Tim Horner on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 6 April 2021.

18 Emails from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 21 April 2022; Valentina Stivanello, Country Director, MAG, 29 April 2022; and Phạm Hoàng Hà, Country Director, PTVN, 9 May 2022.

19 Email from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 21 April 2022.

20 Ibid.

21 Email from Jan Erik Støa, NPA, 6 April 2020.

22 Emails from Jan Erik Støa, NPA, 6 April 2020; and Helene Kuperman, Country Director, MAG, 23 June 2020.

23 Emails from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 21 April 2022; Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 29 April 2022; and Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 9 May 2022.

24 Email from Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 9 May 2022.

25 Ibid.

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Currently VNMAC does not have a TCVN or policy on environmental management. However, VNMAC reportedly planned to develop a TCVN on environmental management in 2022 and to discuss it within the LWG.<sup>26</sup> As a precursor to this, the UNDP Senior Technical Advisor had prepared two expert lectures to deliver to VNMAC in 2022, one on IMAS 07.13 and a second on climate change and mine action.<sup>27</sup>

MAG reported having an environmental SOP in place, which is followed throughout the survey and clearance process, in the absence of national guidelines.<sup>28</sup>

NPA has a comprehensive environmental management system in place in Vietnam, including a policy, local implementation plan, and SOP. NPA also reported having an emissions monitoring dashboard that it expected to be finalised and implemented in 2023.<sup>29</sup> Tasking of NPA operations is the responsibility of provincial authorities, so site selection is out of NPA's responsibility. However, NPA is developing an operational environment assessment globally, which seeks to identify environmental impacts of its operations at task

level. NPA Vietnam is currently trialling this, but it is a work in progress and will not be fully implemented by NPA's teams until it undergoes further revision and testing during 2022. NPA provided environmental training to all operational personnel in May 2022, including considerations they can make at task level to protect the environment. NPA's SOP is in line with IMAS, which provides basic recommendations on environmental protection.

PTVN has an environmental policy which it applies to its all its operations, including during planning, clearance, and post-clearance community development programme and projects. Furthermore, PTVN supports best practices and methodology to minimise potential harm to the environment from demining operations, including by implementing processes for reducing environmental impact across the organisation by applying various solutions for prevention of pollution, waste reduction, and recycling to minimise one-time use of supplies in field operations (for example, by using rechargeable batteries in operations).<sup>30</sup>

## GENDER AND DIVERSITY

According to VNMAC, the goal of gender equality has been recognised in the Constitution of Vietnam since 1946, and is clearly stipulated in subsequent amendments and supplements to the Constitution. Most recently, the 2013 Constitution stipulated that "male and female citizens are equal in all aspects". The policy is to ensure the rights and opportunities for gender equality and that gender discrimination is prohibited.<sup>31</sup>

In 2006, the Law on Gender Equality was enacted to achieve the goal of eliminating gender discrimination. Other legislation related to gender policy includes Decision No. 2351/QĐ-TTg dated 24 December 2010 of the Prime Minister approving the National Strategy on gender equality for the period 2011–2020 with seven goals and 22 specific targets in areas of governance, economics, labour/employment, education and training, health care, culture, information, family, and state management capacity building on gender equality; and Decision No. 515/QĐ-TTg dated 31 March 2016 of the Prime Minister approving the project to implement measures to ensure gender equality for female civil servants

in the 2016–2020 period.<sup>32</sup> It was not known if there is a replacement to the strategy for 2021 onwards.

At VNMAC, 22% of employees are female, with women in more than 20% of management, supervisory, and executive positions.<sup>33</sup> VNMAC said that women's participation in survey and clearance activities is limited due to the nature of the work and due to the fact that the majority of participants are from the military forces. For other activities, projects have encouraged the participation of civil society agencies and organisations to help ensure a higher proportion of women. Local partners such as the Provincial Military Commission, the Department of Education and Training, and the Red Cross are required to take gender into account in their training events and activities, to ensure increased female participation.<sup>34</sup>

In the international non-governmental organisation (INGO) operational report for 2021, an annual report produced for the first time, VNMAC provided INGO data on their staff, explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) beneficiaries, and victim assistance disaggregated by sex and age.<sup>35</sup>

26 Emails from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 21 April 2022; Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 29 April 2022; Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 9 May 2022.

27 Email from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 21 April 2022.

28 Email from Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 29 April 2022.

29 Emails from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 21 April 2022; and Jan Erik Støa, NPA, 29 September 2022.

30 Email from Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 9 May 2022.

31 Email from Tim Horner on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 6 April 2021 (Clauses 1 and 3, Article 26 of the 2013 Constitution).

32 Email from Tim Horner on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 6 April 2021.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 VNMAC, Annual 2021 INGO Operations Report, March 2022.

International operators MAG, NPA, and PTVN all report having organisational gender and diversity policies and state that they consult both women and children during community liaison activities with male and female members of community liaison/survey teams. They say they provide equal opportunities during the recruitment process and are working towards gender-balanced employment. For more information see Mine Action Review's latest *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants* report for Vietnam.

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## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Decree 18 and Guiding Circular 195 make VNMAC responsible for the national information management system. The IM regulations approved in July 2022 elaborate details of the responsibilities of each stakeholder, including the reporting, collection, and provision of data on mines and ERW. VNMAC uses the IMSMA, however the full IMSMA database is not yet accessible to mine action operators. VNMAC still operates a request-based process and data distribution requires approval in accordance with the IM regulations. Operators received a biannual report from VNMAC, containing summary data for Q1 and Q2 2021 and a completed annual report, which included NGO, but not military or commercial company data.<sup>36</sup>

VNMAC has made significant improvements in the system for collection of data and information management capacity nationwide, but sought continued international assistance.<sup>37</sup> The national database process is being implemented as part of the information management project, overseen by the US State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM/WRA) Information Management Advisor to VNMAC. The national database structure now exists and the inputting of available data is ongoing. Two representatives from each of the 63 provinces and 7 regions were trained and given a laptop with IMSMA during the last quarter of 2021 and first quarter of 2022. The provinces shall now report to VNMAC, following approval of the IM regulations in July 2022. There were several different data sets and systems that evolved in the past. All data sets have now been standardised and combined into one IMSMA system which is operational and well managed in VNMAC. This was completed in August 2022 after many months of work and now the focus is on sending each province all their relevant data followed by regular synchronisation in accordance with the IM regulations.<sup>38</sup>

NPA is working with the VNMAC IMU at national level to collect and collate information from across Vietnam and give transparent access to available data. Throughout 2019 and 2020, VNMAC's IMU worked to input historical data stored on other databases, including available data from the provinces. However, it is still unclear what data the provinces are holding that have not yet been delivered to VNMAC.<sup>39</sup> In Q1 2021, significant effort was made to continue to collect and migrate all historic data into the national IMSMA database. As at August 2022, VNMAC have entered all paper records shared by the Provincial Military Commands – approximately 70% of all historic data. Furthermore, VNMAC (with the support of the IM advisory team) have entered Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) data for 42 provinces (66% of all provinces) and have digitised maps of 42 provinces (74%) for use in ArcGIS.<sup>40</sup>

In 2021, NPA capacity development personnel supported VNMAC to develop regulations for a national Information Management System. Following a consultative review process using the LWG, these regulations were finalised by VNMAC and approved in August 2022. The IM regulations have now established a system for reporting all provincial mine action data into the national IMSMA database held by VNMAC, using standardised IMSMA forms. NPA also supported VNMAC to provide training to provincial and regional military commands on the use of the national Information Management System, including standardised forms, and provided 70 laptops to ensure every province and region is adequately equipped to report mine action data.<sup>41</sup>

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## PLANNING AND TASKING

Decision 504, approved by the Prime Minister in April 2010, set out a National Mine Action Plan for 2010–25. The plan, which covers mines, CMR, and other ERW, aimed to “mobilize domestic and international resources in making efforts to minimize and finally create impact-free environment for social economic development.” It called for clearance of 8,000km<sup>2</sup> of ERW between 2016 and 2025.<sup>42</sup>

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36 Emails from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 21 May 2022; Jan Erik Støa, NPA, 29 September 2022; and Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 29 April 2022.

37 Email from Tim Horner on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 6 April 2021.

38 Email from Tim Horner, NPA, 7 September 2022.

39 Emails from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 8 April 2021; and Helene Kuperman, MAG, 31 March 2021.

40 Email from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 21 April 2022.

41 Email from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 21 April 2022.

42 Prime Minister, “Decision on Approval of the National Mine Action Plan Period 2010–2025”, Hanoi, 21 April 2010.

During the national conference to review the achievement of Program 504 in February 2022 in Hanoi, VNMAC shared the 10-year report on the progress and achievements of Vietnam on mine action (i.e. survey, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), clearance, risk education and victim assistance).<sup>43</sup> VNMAC also shared the five-year National Mine Action Plan (2021–25), which has been developed to implement the final period of the current National Mine Action plan. The plan, which was elaborated by the government without input from NGOs or other members of the LWG, also seeks to develop and implement the technical survey of “zoning areas” confirmed as contaminated by mines and ERW, as the basis for strategic planning.<sup>44</sup> As at June 2022, the five-year plan had yet to be formally released and was still undergoing Prime Ministerial review regarding two final issues concerning the budget and capacity for implementation of the plan.<sup>45</sup> There was an annual work plan in place for 2022.<sup>46</sup>

VNMAC has said that its mission for the period 2021–25 includes objectives to complete the organisational structure and legal framework and policies; ensure effective mine action management; foster international cooperation to mobilise necessary resources; complete the information management system for mine action nationwide; and implement survey and clearance activities over 5,000km<sup>2</sup>, with priority in heavily contaminated areas.<sup>47</sup>

There is currently no national prioritisation system in place for clearance of CMR, other ERW, and mines. For details on explosive ordnance prioritisation at the provincial level, please see Mine Action Review *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants* report for Vietnam.

## LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

### STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Vietnam has both QCVNs, which use the formulation “shall” and are legally binding regulations similar in content to SOPs, and the standards (TCVNs), which use the formulation “should” and are considered optional by VNMAC.<sup>48</sup>

VNMAC made significant progress in recent years to review and update the QCVNs to help bring them into line with IMAS.<sup>49</sup> The former QCVNs and existing TCVNs were drafted more with the MoD in mind, used terminology inconsistently, and chapters contradicted themselves.<sup>50</sup> INGOs welcomed the inclusiveness of the revision process,<sup>51</sup> which involved the establishment of four working groups, co-chaired by VNMAC, and extensive consultation with operators and international organisations, including the GICHD.<sup>52</sup> The revised QCVNs were approved in September 2022.<sup>53</sup> Revision of the TCVNs has been completed after significant input from the LWG and other stakeholders. As at writing, the revised TCVNs were awaiting approval by the relevant authorities.<sup>54</sup>

Circular 195 was approved and promulgated in October 2021 and covers the whole QM system. In addition, the Quang Tri Mine Action Centre (QTMAC) developed a field-orientated QM SOP which was approved by the Provincial Authority in July 2022, for use in Quang Tri province.<sup>55</sup> Corresponding legal documents (Circulars) related to the QM SOPs, and to the revised non-technical survey, technical survey, and clearance SOP, were approved in October 2021.<sup>56</sup>

The QCVNs and TCVNs cover anti-personnel mine operations under the heading mines/ERW clearance, but both documents lack clarity with respect to addressing mined areas, as distinct from battle areas.

43 Emails from Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 29 April 2022; and Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 9 May 2022.

44 Emails from Tim Horner on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 6 April 2021; Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 29 April and 20 June 2022; and Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 22 June 2022.

45 Interview with Mr Phuc, VNMAC, Geneva, 23 June 2022.

46 Email from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 21 April 2022.

47 Email from Doan Thi Hong Hai, Capacity Development Project Officer, NPA, on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 3 June 2022.

48 Email from Resad Junuzagic, NPA, 6 May 2019.

49 Email from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 8 April 2021; and Helene Kuperman, MAG, 31 March 2021.

50 Emails from Resad Junuzagic, NPA, 6 May 2019; Jan Erik Støa, NPA, 6 April 2020; and Helene Kuperman, MAG, 10 April 2020.

51 Email from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 8 April 2021.

52 Emails from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 8 April 2021 and 21 April 2022; Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 29 April 2022; GICHD, 24 April 2022; and Tim Horner on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 6 April 2021.

53 Email from Tim Horner, NPA, 7 September 2022.

54 Email from Tim Horner, NPA, 12 September 2022.

55 Emails from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 8 April 2021; and Tim Horner, NPA, 7 September 2022.

56 Email from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 21 April 2022.

## OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Most clearance in Vietnam is conducted by the Army Engineering Corps and military-owned commercial companies. Outside the central provinces, the current strength and deployment of military-related demining is unknown.

Vietnamese officials have previously reported that it had 250 BAC and mine clearance teams nationally. Vietnam reportedly has more than 70 military-owned companies undertaking clearance related to infrastructure and commercial and development projects.<sup>57</sup> Survey and clearance by the Engineering Commands in 2020 increased compared to the previous year. VNMAC expected a further increase in survey and clearance capacity for socio-economic projects in 2021.<sup>58</sup> Under the KV-MAP project, 36 clearance teams were deployed in 2021 to conduct ERW clearance (including CMR) in Quang Binh province.<sup>59</sup>

Beginning in 2016, Golden West began a programme training Provincial Military Commands in Ha Tinh, Quang Binh and Quang Tri provinces to conduct EOD operations to an IMAS standard.<sup>60</sup> In 2021, this programme still continued in Quang Tri province.

International operators active in 2021 included: MAG, working in Quang Binh and Quang Tri provinces; NPA, working in Quang Binh, Quang Tri, and Thua Thien Hue provinces; and PTVN, who have been working in Quang Tri province since 1995 and now also in Quang Binh.<sup>61</sup> The NGO then known as Danish Demining Group (DDG) ceased its survey and clearance operations in Vietnam (Quang Nam province) in January 2020, due to lack of funding.<sup>62</sup> Survey and clearance by the NGO operators are currently addressing contamination from CMR and other ERW, and not anti-personnel mines. For further details on survey and clearance capacity of humanitarian operators, please see Mine Action Review *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants* report for Vietnam.

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

### SURVEY IN 2021

MAG, NPA, and PTVN did not survey any mined area in 2021.<sup>63</sup>

For the first time, VNMAC produced an annual INGO operational report for 2021. The data were broadly consistent with data provided by INGOs to Mine Action Review. According to the annual report, non-technical survey was completed in 169 villages in 2021, with 57.87km<sup>2</sup> technically surveyed; 81.82km<sup>2</sup> of confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) established; nearly 37.25km<sup>2</sup> of agricultural and development land cleared (in addition to over 34.84km<sup>2</sup> of "other" land); and a total of 68 bombs, 14,962 submunitions, and 25,930 other items of UXO (and mines) were destroyed.<sup>64</sup> The survey and clearance in 2021 was, however, focused on areas with CMR and other ERW, rather than on suspected mined areas.

### CLEARANCE IN 2021

VNMAC reported clearing 59.17km<sup>2</sup> of land contaminated by all explosive ordnance (not only CMR-contaminated area) in 2021, with the destruction of 7,997 submunitions, 22,867 other items of ERW, 11 anti-personnel mines, and 67 bombs.<sup>65</sup> It is not known what proportion of the total area cleared was mined area, as the amount of area cleared of anti-personnel mines was not disaggregated from area cleared of CMR and other ERW, but it is likely to be very small.

INGO clearance operators are not currently operating in the areas close to Vietnam's borders, where many of the mined areas are located. MAG, NPA, and PTVN did not clear any mined area in 2021, and of the three organisations only PTVN encountered mines during its CMR operations, during which it destroyed three anti-personnel mines in Quang Tri province.<sup>66</sup> MAG and NPA did, however, destroy anti-personnel mines during EOD call-outs in 2021, during which MAG destroyed five anti-personnel mines in Quang Binh province<sup>67</sup> and NPA destroyed twelve anti-personnel mines in Quang Tri province.<sup>68</sup>

57 Interview with Sr. Col. Nguyen Thanh Ban, Engineering Command, Hanoi, 18 June 2013; email from Executive Office of the National Steering Committee, 6 August 2012; and interviews with mine action stakeholders, Hanoi, 16–20 April 2018; and email from Lee Moroney, Golden West Humanitarian Foundation, 22 June 2019.

58 Email from Tim Horner on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 6 April 2021.

59 Email from Havard Bach, Consultant, UNDP, 27 May 2022.

60 Email from Mark Lasley, Golden West Humanitarian Foundation, 16 June 2021.

61 Emails from Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 21 April 2022; Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 29 April 2022; and Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 9 May 2022.

62 Email from Søren Adser Sørensen, Programme Specialist, DDG, 5 May 2020.

63 Emails from Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 29 April 2022; Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 21 April 2022; and Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 11 May 2021.

64 VNMAC, Annual 2021 INGO Operations Report, March 2022.

65 Email from Doan Thi Hong Hai, NPA, on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 3 June 2022.

66 Email from Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 17 September 2022.

67 Email from Valentina Stivanello, MAG, 29 April 2022; and VNMAC, "Summary of humanitarian mine action activities in Quang Binh, Quang Tri, Thua Thien Hue, Da Nang and Quang Nam provinces (reporting period: January 1 to December 31, 2021)", undated.

68 Emails from Dinh Ngoc Vu, Vice Director, Quang Tri Mine Action Centre (QTMAC), 13 September 2022; and Kimberley McCosker, NPA, 13 September 2022.

According to data from the QTMAC in Quang Tri province, a total of 116 landmines were destroyed in Quang Tri province in 2021, of which 37 were anti-personnel mines and type/model of the other 79 mines was unknown. Of the total 116 landmines destroyed in Quang Tri, 3 were destroyed by PTVN and 12 by NPA (as already mentioned above), and the remaining 101 landmines were destroyed by Provincial Military Commands during EOD spot-tasks.<sup>69</sup>

Vietnam has not set a deadline for completion of anti-personnel mine clearance. In its national mine action plan for 2010 to 2025 it called for the clearance of 8,000km<sup>2</sup> of explosive ordnance from 2016 to 2025<sup>70</sup> but did not specify how much of this, if any, should be mined area.

The adoption of Decree 18 and Guiding Circular 195 is enabling VNMAC to put in place systems and practices to

coordinate and strengthen mine action in Vietnam, bringing national standards relating to survey and clearance operations in line with IMAS, and establishing a national information management database.

VNMAC reported that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on all aspects of operations, including survey and clearance efforts. Challenges posed by the pandemic include the organisation and deployment of the field personnel according to the regulations of the Government and each locality in implementing the activity/project; the organisation of COVID-19 prevention measures and the work of ensuring personnel, equipment, and logistics for performing tasks; and challenges posed in implementation of mine action projects in partnership with international partners, as only online meetings have been possible.<sup>71</sup>

## PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

The GICHD has been supporting VNMAC, NPA, and UNDP in the review of the current legislative and normative framework, with a focus on residual risk management. In 2021, the support expanded to conduct training course on residual risk management, site safety, and long-term risk management (LTRM) framework (tools and protocols).<sup>72</sup> Implementation of the trial of the LTRM framework to help identify the elements of a residual state and manage residual risk according to best practice, will start once COVID-19 related restrictions enable GICHD staff to travel to Vietnam. As a preparatory step, the GICHD and the VNMAC, with the support of UNDP and NPA, have worked on an assessment of the current residual risk management capacity and the required or desired capacities that VNMAC needs to manage residual contamination. A final report has been compiled jointly by the GICHD and VNMAC, and as at April 2022 was waiting government approval.<sup>73</sup>

Golden West believes that the Provincial Military Commands provide a long-term capacity to respond to residual ERW regardless of external funding or support. Golden West is building a Vietnamese capacity to continue EOD operations in a safe and effective manner as long as the threat to the public exists.<sup>74</sup> Golden West has worked with VNMAC to improve their technical EOD skills and to support formal training by the United States DOD by providing continuity and field mentoring to inculcate trained skills into everyday operations. With US funding, Golden West has provided equipment and training to BOMICEN (Technology Centre for Bomb and Mine Disposal Engineering Command), an advisory agency under the Vietnamese Ministry of Defence and Engineering Command.<sup>75</sup>

Golden West is also training PTVN EOD teams, funded by PTVN, to help develop their training capability, ensuring long-term success. From this process, one IMAS EOD level 2 training course was conducted by a PTNV trainer for PTVN technicians (deminers) in 2021, under supervision from Golden West and followed by mentoring.<sup>76</sup> PTVN instructors regularly work with Golden West and VNMAC, enhancing training skills and building a lasting capability.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Email from Dinh Ngoc Vu, QTMAC, 13 September 2022.

<sup>70</sup> Prime Minister, "Decision on Approval of the National Mine Action Plan Period 2010–2025", Hanoi, 21 April 2010.

<sup>71</sup> Emails from Tim Horner on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 6 April 2021; and Doan Thi Hong Hai, NPA, on behalf of Mr Phuc, VNMAC, 3 June 2022.

<sup>72</sup> Email from GICHD, 16 June 2021.

<sup>73</sup> Email from GICHD, 24 April 2022.

<sup>74</sup> Email from Mark Lasley, Golden West Humanitarian Foundation, 16 June 2021.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Email from Phạm Hoàng Hà, PTVN, 9 May 2022.

<sup>77</sup> Email from Mark Lasley, Golden West Humanitarian Foundation, 16 June 2021.