

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Georgia should accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a matter of priority.

UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION

Georgia is believed to be free of cluster munition remnants (CMR), with the possible exception of South Ossetia, which is occupied by Russia and inaccessible to both the Georgian authorities and international non-governmental organisation (NGO) demining operators.¹

CMR contamination in Georgia resulted from the conflict over South Ossetia in August 2008, in which both Georgian and Russian forces used cluster munitions. After the end of the conflict and through to December 2009, The HALO Trust cleared some 37km² of submunitions and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) in Georgian-controlled territory.²

In May 2010, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) completed clearance of its tasked areas.³ In 2016, two submunitions were reported in the Shida Kartli region and then destroyed by the State Security Agency, as part of explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) call-outs.⁴ In 2017, The HALO Trust conducted survey in the Shida Kartli region to investigate each of the call-outs.⁵ During survey, three submunitions were found, which were identified as residual contamination and destroyed.⁶ In 2019–20, a total of six submunitions were found and destroyed during spot tasks.⁷

OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND LANDMINES

Georgia remains contaminated by other unexploded ordnance (UXO), likely in South Ossetia and also within Georgia in former firing ranges, and by anti-vehicle and anti-personnel mines (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Georgia for further information).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Humanitarian Demining Control Division (HDCD), renamed after a reorganisation in January 2019, sits under the State Military Scientific Technical Centre, known as DELTA, within the Ministry of Defence (MoD).⁸ The primary task of the HDCD is to coordinate mine action in Georgia. The Georgian government funds the running costs of the HDCD as well as the Engineering Brigade, which carries out some survey and battle area clearance (BAC).⁹

The national authority has received capacity development support from HALO Trust and the Geneva International

Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). The HALO Trust has provided training on international mine action standards (IMAS), geographic information systems (GIS), clearance and survey techniques, and, in 2018, donated a mine action vehicle to the HDCD.¹⁰ The GICHD has provided training for HDCD staff on the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core database, ammunition storage, and technical survey.¹¹ In 2020, one HDCD staff member conducted an online course on IMAS and Compliance organised by the GICHD.¹²

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

DELTA and The HALO Trust each have gender and diversity policies in place. There is equal access to employment for qualified women and men in survey and clearance teams in Georgia, including for managerial level/supervisory positions although proportionately the number of women remains low. Among the HDCD's 2020 staff, one of seven members—the GIS/IMSMA specialist—was a woman. No women were employed in operational roles or in managerial/supervisory positions.¹³

HALO Trust supports use of mixed-gender teams to conduct survey, which allows for greater engagement with women and children.¹⁴ HALO Trust's EOD teams in Abkhazia are mixed ethnic Georgian and ethnic Abkhaz and comprise both men and women.¹⁵ As at May 2020, HALO had increased the percentage of women in the Abkhazia programme to 36%. A total of 43% of HALO's administrative/managerial staff and 42% of its operational staff in Abkhazia were women.¹⁶

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

The HDCD uses the IMSMA database and, according to The HALO Trust, the data are accurate. Data archives go back to 2009 and are regularly updated, based on HALO Trust's operations reports and on work by the Engineering Brigade.¹⁷ The data in the national information management system are accessible to the HALO Trust.¹⁸ HALO Trust uses its own IMSMA-compatible data collection forms that DELTA has approved while the HDCD quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) team also has its own forms.¹⁹

PLANNING AND TASKING

Georgia has a national mine action strategy. Its main aims and targets are focused on clearing the remaining mined areas (unless they are deemed to have military utility) and other areas contaminated with ERW.²⁰ With respect to the 2020 annual operational mine action plan, DELTA prioritised clearance in areas of high risk to the population.²¹ HALO uses an internal prioritisation matrix to grade tasks and collaborates with the national mine action authorities to determine annual operational planning and task priority.²²

Due to shortfalls of funding, The HALO Trust did not carry out any activities in 2020, only maintaining a residual presence in The Tbilisi Administered Territory (TAT). In Abkhazia, HALO's BAC operations continued in Primorsky alongside responding to EOD call-outs. HALO secured three-year funding for its EOD work in Abkhazia and will maintain this capacity until at least 2023.²³

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

As at April 2021, Georgian national mine action standards (NMAS) and National Technical Standards and Guidelines were still under development. The International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) have been translated to Georgian but the translation of the IMAS was still ongoing.²⁴ HALO expected Georgia's NMAS and non-technical survey guidelines to be finalised in the course of 2021.²⁵

HALO was in the process of updating its standing operating procedures (SOPs) for clearance of four minefield tasks in Abkhazia, slated to take place in June–December 2021.²⁶

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

DELTA retains a small demining and EOD capacity in TAT. In 2020, all clearance activities were suspended in TAT due to the COVID-19 pandemic but the Georgian State Security Service (SSS) EOD team continued to respond to call-outs and EOD spot tasks.²⁷ In Abkhazia, the emergency services (EMERCOM) have a small EOD capacity, though HALO Trust is generally relied upon to deal with all items of UXO.²⁸

The HALO Trust, which is the only international operator working in the country, conducts survey and both BAC and mine clearance.²⁹ In 2020, HALO deployed two four-strong EOD teams and two four-strong mechanical and mechanical support teams, along with 53 personnel across 6 teams for BAC.³⁰ HALO secured three-year funding for its EOD work in Abkhazia and will maintain this capacity until at least 2023.³¹

In TAT, quality management (QM) is conducted by DELTA. In Abkhazia, The HALO Trust is responsible for its own QM.³²

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

No CMR survey or clearance took place in 2020 or in the previous year. The Georgian SSS EOD unit destroyed five submunitions during EOD spot tasks but this was found to be residual contamination not evidence of a broader problem.³³

It is believed that, with the possible exception of South Ossetia, Georgia is now free from CMR. Georgia has reported that, in the areas cleared by The HALO Trust in Abkhazia which are currently outside its control, external QA/QC could not be completed. Georgia, therefore, cannot confirm whether this land is free of contamination.³⁴

PLANNING FOR RESIDUAL RISK AFTER COMPLETION

The engineering brigade of the MoD has been trained to carry out EOD, demining, and BAC by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Partnership for Peace and has the capacity to deal with any residual contamination.³⁵

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- 1 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, Head of Division, DELTA, 12 May 2020.
 - 2 Explosive Remnants of War Coordination Centre, "Explosive Remnants of War Coordination Centre (ERWCC) in Facts and Figures", November 2009, p. 17.
 - 3 Email from Jonathon Guthrie, Programme Manager, NPA, 27 May 2010.
 - 4 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 20 June 2017.
 - 5 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 25 April 2018; and Irakli Chitanava, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 25 May 2018.
 - 6 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 25 April 2018; and Irakli Chitanava, HALO Trust, 25 May 2018.
 - 7 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 12 May 2020 and 28 May 2021.
 - 8 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 20 June 2016, 28 March 2019, and 10 June 2019; and Matthew Walker, Programme Officer, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019; Decree 897 issued by the Minister of Defence, 30 December 2010; and Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V Article 10 Report (for 21 March 2017 to 31 March 2018), Form A.
 - 9 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 12 May 2020.
 - 10 Emails from Matthew Walker, 8 April 2019; Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 8 May 2020; and Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 10 June 2019.
 - 11 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 12 May 2020.
 - 12 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 April 2021.
 - 13 Ibid.
 - 14 Email from Matthew Walker, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019.
 - 15 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 8 May 2020.
 - 16 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 30 May 2021.
 - 17 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 8 May 2020.
 - 18 Email from Matthew Walker, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019.
 - 19 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019; and Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 8 May 2020.
 - 20 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019.
 - 21 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 April 2021.
 - 22 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 30 April 2021.
 - 23 Ibid.
 - 24 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 April 2021.
 - 25 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 30 April 2021.
 - 26 Ibid.
 - 27 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 April 2021.
 - 28 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019 and 12 May 2020; and Matthew Walker, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019.
 - 29 Email from Irakli Chitanava, HALO Trust, 2 May 2017.
 - 30 Email from Sian McGee, Field Officer, HALO Trust, 19 May 2021; HALO deployed four BAC teams from January to May 2021 then increased to six teams from June to December.
 - 31 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 30 April 2021.
 - 32 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019.
 - 33 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 May 2021.
 - 34 Ibid.
 - 35 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 April 2021; and Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 30 April 2021.