

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- While formal accession to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) is not currently possible for Kosovo, as it is not yet recognised as a State by the depositary of the Convention, Kosovo should submit a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) stating that it intends to fully comply, on a voluntary basis, with the CCM.
- Kosovo should reconsider its decision not to submit a voluntary CCM Article 7 report on an annual basis, and instead act in line with its Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024.
- The Kosovo Mine Action Centre (KMAC) should seek to complete clearance of cluster munition remnants (CMR) at the latest by the end of 2024, in line with the objectives in its latest mine action strategy.
- KMAC should promote the implementation of its mine action strategy and mine action programme across the Kosovo government.
- KMAC and international mine action operators should increase their collaboration to seek additional funding and greater financial stability for mine action.

UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION

At the end of 2020, contamination from CMR in Kosovo was estimated to cover a total of almost 11.44km² across 45 areas, according to KMAC.¹ This is a significant decrease from the estimated 14.36m² as at the end of 2019.²

Kosovo has a reasonably accurate assessment of CMR contamination remaining on its territory as a result of two decades of mine action, including surveys in 2013 and 2015. In 2019, the location of most of the contamination was well known across Kosovo's seven districts with the exception of the northern district of Mitrovica, where operator Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) was in the process of conducting technical survey of all tasks to convert suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) to confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs), all based on evidence points. In 2020, NPA worked on 11 technical survey tasks in four municipalities (Mitrovica, Podujevo, Zubin Potok, and Zvecan) and two districts (Mitrovica and Pristina). The technical survey identified 4.23km² of CHA.³ NPA will continue technical surveys on the remaining 17 tasks in the northern municipalities in order to establish a more accurate contamination baseline.⁴

During non-technical survey in Bare, Mitrovica, NPA gathered information about a previously unidentified SHA of 139,439m² in Bajgora school. Local informants confirmed that the school was one of the main targets of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) air force strikes. NPA assessed that the area consists of at least two zones of strikes. As at May 2021, non-technical survey of these two zones were still pending.⁵

The HALO Trust believes Kosovo's current baseline reflects a relatively accurate picture of the remaining contamination but suggests that it would benefit from a critical review and further assessment of the existing 2013 survey data. This would inform future targeting of survey and clearance of remaining contamination, in order to achieve completion by the target date of 2024. To conduct the review, HALO Trust

was planning to deploy two non-technical survey teams throughout 2021 and re-survey 57 planned future tasks. The total number of new surveys is as yet unknown, but HALO will be investigating 72 explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) call-outs reported by KMAC. The HALO Trust also believes that access to NATO bombing data is critical to the sector as a means of verifying clearance, without the requirement for costly, extensive re-survey, but has experienced challenges in obtaining it.⁶

The baseline of CMR contamination at the end of 2019 cannot be reconciled with the baseline, survey, and clearance data reported by the KMAC at the end of 2020. The discrepancy could be attributed to differences in non-technical survey reported figures.⁷

Contamination is primarily a result of conflict between the FRY and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in the late 1990s; and between the FRY and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1999.⁸ During Operation Allied Force, NATO aircraft bombed 333 locations between 24 March and 10 June 1999, dropping 1,392 bombs that released more than 295,700 submunitions.⁹ FRY forces also used cluster munitions during the 1998–99 conflict in Kosovo.¹⁰ The failure rate of submunitions was typically between 10% and 15%, resulting in tens of thousands of unexploded submunitions lying on and under the ground. A large clearance programme followed in 1999 under a UN mandate, but this ended prematurely in 2001, leaving many CMR-contaminated areas still needing to be cleared.¹¹

In 2013, HALO Trust and KMAC conducted a joint non-technical survey of cluster munition strikes and minefields across Kosovo, with the exception of four municipalities in the north. The survey identified 130 CHAs: 51 cluster munition strikes, covering 7.63km², and 79 mined areas over 2.76km².¹² In 2015, NPA, in coordination with KMAC

and local municipality authorities, conducted non-technical survey of the four northern municipalities.¹³ The NPA survey confirmed 8.9km² of CMR contamination in three of the four municipalities surveyed (Leosavic, Zubin Potok, and Zvecan). No CMR contamination was found in the fourth (Mitrovica North).¹⁴ On the basis of available evidence, NPA believed that 83 cluster bombs were dropped in this region, dispersing a total of 17,041 submunitions.¹⁵

OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND LANDMINES

Kosovo is also contaminated with anti-personnel mines (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Kosovo for further information). It remains affected by explosive remnants of war (ERW) other than CMR. Most ERW consists of unexploded aircraft bombs and items of abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO). However, EOD teams continue to encounter items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) dating back to World War II.¹⁶ Kosovo Protection Force (KFOR) and Kosovo Security Force (KSF) EOD teams regularly dispose of ERW in response to information provided by the public and demining organisations.¹⁷

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

KMAC is responsible for managing survey and clearance of mines and ERW throughout Kosovo. The Centre prepares an annual work plan in cooperation with international demining non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and coordinates their operations along with the national demining teams of the KSF. It also coordinates survey, quality assurance (QA), risk education, public information, and victim assistance activities.¹⁸ KMAC's role and responsibilities as head of the national mine action programme under the auspices of the Ministry of Defence were established and institutionalised by Kosovo's 2012 Law on Humanitarian Demining.¹⁹

Kosovo's mine action programme is fully nationally owned, with a strong, longstanding commitment from the national government, and benefits from a dedicated team of permanent national staff.²⁰ In 2020, KMAC had five staff: a Director, a Senior QA Officer, a QA Inspector, a Mine Risk Education (MRE) Officer, and a Public Information Officer.²¹

NGO operators in Kosovo report having a constructive and proactive working relationship with KMAC. HALO Trust staff meet with the director of KMAC for monthly coordination meetings,²² and, in addition, KMAC's QA officers visit HALO

Trust on a quarterly basis to discuss operations planning, along with conducting unannounced weekly field visits to tasks and regular field visits for clearance and non-technical survey teams.²³ NPA held monthly coordination meetings with KMAC in 2020 at a senior management level to coordinate mine action.²⁴

In 2020, the Kosovo government provided €990,000 in financial support to KMAC and to the KSF for mine and CMR clearance.²⁵ Kosovo's current Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 sets out an objective of intensifying fundraising in order to assure greater financial stability.²⁶ While a specific resource mobilisation strategy does not exist, operators reported that coordinated approaches with KMAC were made to potential donors such as the United States (US) and the European Union (EU).²⁷ In 2020, KMAC supported NPA's resource mobilisation efforts, including the development of proposals to the US State Department Office of Weapon Removal and Abatement (WRA) and the EU.²⁸ HALO Trust was also able to leverage further funding from the US Government with support from KMAC.²⁹

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Kosovo's mine action strategy for 2019–24 reflects the commitment of the mine action programme to ensure that gender is taken into consideration in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of all mine action projects, with a view to promoting equality and quality.³⁰ The Strategy stipulates that all mine action activities and assistance must reflect the needs of different ages and gender in a targeted and non-discriminatory manner, and that mine action and community liaison data are also to be collected and systematically disaggregated according to sex and age.³¹

Both KMAC and KSF have gender policies in place. KMAC reported that the KSF's gender policy aims to facilitate the consultation of all groups affected by mines and ERW, expressly women and children. Within KMAC, one of its five staff (the Risk Education Officer) is a woman. A total of 5% of KSF staff employed in operational mine action roles were women, but none is in a managerial or supervisory position.³²

Kosovo's mine action strategy recognises the barriers that exist against equal employment in Kosovo society, including significant differences in employment levels between men and women, despite the number of men and women of working age being broadly similar. The Strategy notes that, as at 2019, more than four-fifths of women of working age were not employed in Kosovo's labour market, and less than one in eight has been employed annually over the past five years. The primary reasons given for female unemployment are child- and family-care obligations, which traditionally in Kosovo society fall on women.

The Strategy notes the efforts of mine action operators to overcome these challenges and barriers to employment, such as through the provision of childcare and parental leave, and gender-sensitive recruitment practices that encourage women to apply for positions traditionally seen as jobs for men. It further recalls the importance of employment of not only multi-gender, but also multi-ethnic survey and clearance teams and the particular benefits of recruitment in areas affected by high unemployment and poor socio-economic conditions.³³

In 2018, The HALO Trust developed a gender policy in consultation with the Kosovo Women's Network, an advocacy network of more than 140 member organisations, including women's organisations of all ethnic backgrounds from throughout Kosovo, which was adopted in February. The policy aims at both increasing the recruitment of women and at retaining existing female employees. In 2019, HALO further developed this policy to include provision for increased family leave and child-care allowances for those taking care of children, in order to remove barriers to women's employment. Through the Dutch Government, HALO Trust contracted the Gender and Mine Action Programme (GMAP, a part of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, GICHD) to conduct gender sensitivity and leadership training in July 2019 to more than 20 operation and support management staff in the Kosovo programme, to address issues of unconscious bias and inclusion.³⁴

In HALO Trust's Kosovo programme, 17% of employees are women, including in 14% of operational roles in survey and clearance teams, although there were no women in operational management positions in 2020.³⁵ HALO also ensures that community liaison teams are gender balanced and include senior personnel fluent in relevant languages, to ensure that community liaison activities are inclusive of ethnic minorities.³⁶

Although HALO Trust is committed to increasing the number of women in the organisation generally and specifically in management roles, without recruitment or expansion opportunities this has proved difficult. In May 2019, however, HALO trained and promoted four women to operate Handheld Stand-off Mine Detection System (HSTAMIDS) detectors – a first for the programme. In September 2020, HALO conducted a training to promote Assistant Team Leaders, the training led to the appointment of two female assistance Team Leaders for the first time in 2020. HALO Trust plans to conduct a similar training in 2021 and sees this as an opportunity to recruit additional female staff in operational management.³⁷ Relevant mine action data are disaggregated by gender and

age, and data collected post-clearance is also disaggregated to ensure the understanding and analysis of impact of mine action activities takes gender into consideration.³⁸

HALO is committed to increasing the number of women in the organisation and in management roles. While this proved difficult in 2020 as there were no job openings, HALO was committed to extending recruitment opportunities in 2021 thanks to newly secured funding. HALO was seeking to employ women in both senior support roles and in operational management.³⁹

NPA reported that a target of 25% female staff was in place, and in 2019, 21% of its staff were women, including one of four team leaders, two of six medics, and one of four staff in the management team.⁴⁰ The proportion of women subsequently increased to 24% in 2020 with two women promoted to positions of leadership within the clearance teams.⁴¹ Women were especially encouraged to apply for staff positions, and given priority over male applicants with equivalent skills and experience.

NPA confirmed its survey and community liaison teams were gender balanced and ensured that the participation of all relevant social groups is always taken into account when conducting activities in local communities.⁴² In 2020, 12% of NPA employees in managerial or supervisory positions were women as were 21% of operational positions.⁴³ NPA's efforts to recruit and train multi-ethnic survey and clearance teams have also been a critical factor in allowing the deployment of teams in areas of particular ethnic and political sensitivities, extending the reach of mine action operations in north Kosovo, while also building bridges and friendships between the individual staff members and through their community liaison activities.⁴⁴

According to KMAC, Kosovo's baseline of CMR contamination has been established through inclusive consultation with women, girls, boys, and men, including, where relevant, from minority groups.⁴⁵

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

KMAC uses the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) New Generation version for its national mine action database. Data are disaggregated between mines, CMR, and other ERW.⁴⁶ Operators were positive in their assessments of the quality and accessibility of data contained in the database and of KMAC's information management systems in general. Operators report to KMAC on a weekly basis.⁴⁷ The land release data reported to Mine Action Review by clearance operators and the KMAC were largely aligned. This is an improvement compared to previous years' reports, which typically contained numerous discrepancies.

According to its most recent mine action strategy, KMAC intended, as a means to show its commitment to the CCM, to submit voluntary Article 7 transparency reports on an annual basis.⁴⁸ In disappointing news, KMAC subsequently advised Mine Action Review that Kosovo would only start submitting Article 7 reports when it becomes a member of the UN.⁴⁹

PLANNING AND TASKING

The GICHD supported the development of Kosovo's new Mine Action Strategy for 2019–24. The strategy, formally approved in January 2019 and launched by the Ministry of Kosovo Security Services on 4 April 2019, has three "goals":

- Mine/ERW threats managed and reduced
- Communication and awareness raising
- Management of residual contamination.

The strategy declares that all known mined and CMR-contaminated areas will be addressed by the end of 2024, leaving only residual contamination to be managed accordingly. It contains annual projections for CMR clearance, including:

- all high-priority CMR tasks (four as at October 2018) would be cleared by 2020;
- all medium-priority CMR tasks (30 as at October 2018) will be cleared by 2022; and
- all low-priority CMR tasks (16 as at October 2018) will be completed by 2024.⁵⁰

Updates on clearance progress of high and medium priority areas were not made available, but NPA reported that it had changed its approach in 2020 to focus on technical survey of all tasks and therefore it did not clear any high-impact CMR tasks in 2020.⁵¹

The strategy is explicitly based on a number of assumptions, including that the necessary funding will be secured and that no new mined or CMR-contaminated areas are identified. It notes, however, that "so far each year 3–4 different affected areas have been reported" and that should this trend continue, capacity and progress will need to be reassessed with regards to the 2024 deadline.⁵²

As per the strategy, KMAC will develop annual operational work plans to implement the strategy's goals.⁵³ KMAC will also request an external mid-term review of the strategy in 2022 to evaluate progress and make any adaptations according to contextual changes if required.⁵⁴

In 2019, KMAC confirmed that it had developed annual operational work plans to target anti-personnel mined areas, according to impact-based criteria, including risk reduction, development priorities, and poverty reduction, along with the findings of a nationwide baseline socio-economic impact assessment carried out in 2018 by KMAC, with the support of The HALO Trust.⁵⁵ KMAC's national operational work plan for 2021 aims to ensure battle area clearance (BAC) is conducted on 10 tasks clearing a total of 650,000m².⁵⁶ The mine action strategy for 2019–24 is in alignment with the objectives of Kosovo's National Development Strategy 2016–2021.⁵⁷

In 2019, The HALO Trust developed a new prioritisation system that considers the "community profile" for a task. This system draws on several factors, such as socio-economic status, planned land use, government development plans, and demographics. All information is collected from government and public data as well as from extensive community survey.⁵⁸

While NPA confirmed that its operations in northern Kosovo continued to focus on high-impacted areas, it noted that it was also important for NPA to ensure both ethnic Serbian- and Albanian-populated areas are prioritised equally, with sensitivity towards political, cultural, and ethnic affiliations.⁵⁹ KMAC reported that it planned to conduct technical survey with NPA in 2020 of 21 tasks in the northern municipalities, in addition to clearance of eight CMR-contaminated areas. As at the end of 2020, eleven technical survey tasks were completed.⁶⁰ Technical surveys were continuing into 2021.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

National mine action standards for land release are in place in Kosovo, which according to KMAC reflect the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).⁶¹

Kosovo's national mine action standards set the standard clearance depth for BAC at 50cm.⁶² There has been a discussion over whether this standard clearance depth could be reduced to 30cm in certain forested and stony areas, which would enable detectors to be set to a medium- rather than high-sensitivity setting and potentially result in fewer false indicators needing to be investigated.⁶³ In 2019, however, KMAC informed Mine Action Review that the depth of 50cm is necessary as many of the areas targeted with cluster munitions were especially wet and muddy, and because the bombing campaign took place during a period of heavy rain, making it possible for submunitions to penetrate to greater than normally expected depths.⁶⁴ It did, though, state that on certain tasks where the ground was entirely stony, a reduction in search depth could be considered.⁶⁵

Data from operators tend, overall, to support KMAC's caution. The HALO Trust's analysis of devices found by depth in 2008–18 show that 22% of all items found by HALO Trust teams were at a depth of 30cm or more. This included buried

cluster bomb units with submunitions still inside.⁶⁶ When removing full containers from the analysis, HALO found that 96% of items were found 30cm deep or less with the average depth of items found through clearance at 12.4cm.⁶⁷ NPA's clearance statistics show that 12% of all submunitions found in its operations were found at depths greater than 30cm. At the same time, NPA raised the issue of the potential threat that explosive items located deeper than 30cm below the surface might pose and whether the expected future ground use could be considered when setting the search depth.⁶⁸ HALO, which agrees with this approach, has collected data on planned post-clearance land use, including the depth needed for crop cultivation.⁶⁹

A 2014 evaluation of Kosovo's mine action programme, conducted on behalf of the International Trust Fund (ITF) Enhancing Human Security, concluded that an increase in capacity and improvements to land release methodology and equipment deployed would be necessary if Kosovo were indeed to complete clearance by 2024. Since the 2014 evaluation, significant improvements have been introduced to the mine action programme, including the introduction of HSTAMIDS detectors by The HALO Trust, which have

advanced operational productivity.⁷⁰ Both The HALO Trust and NPA were also using large-loop detectors on certain CMR tasks, which further increased productivity.⁷¹

In 2018, in another significant advance in land release efficiency, KMAC formally approved the implementation of Cluster Munition Remnants Survey (CMRS) methodology by NPA to carry out technical survey activities on CMR-contaminated areas in Kosovo. According to this methodology, which NPA has modified to reflect the specific conditions in Kosovo (and in line with the IMAS), operators are permitted to enter a cluster munition strike area and to walk on ground with subsurface contamination, increasing the efficiency of the survey process and offering the ability to accurately define confirmed hazardous areas.⁷²

HALO Trust, which was reluctant to implement a CMRS approach in 2017, reported in 2019 that it was interested in defining evidence-based clearance standards and felt there could be scope to explore and improve survey and clearance standards for addressing CMR, especially in regard to recent developments with the implementation of CMRS methodology in South-East Asia.⁷³ It believed, however, that as general survey has already been conducted in HALO Trust's areas of operations, implementing CMRS would duplicate work already carried out to define confirmed hazardous areas.⁷⁴

In 2020, HALO Trust introduced new BAC Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs), which were formally accredited by KMAC in September 2020, and subsequently rolled out in November 2020 at a task in Komogllavë, a village in Ferizaj municipality. The main changes to practice in BAC include the ability for operators to walk on uncleared area to conduct activities such as vegetation clearance, and to enable clearance to begin at an evidence point and expand outwards, rather than

spending time breaching towards the contamination from the outer boundary of the polygon. The systematic deployment of vegetation clearance will enable wider and more extensive use of the large-loop detectors, which HALO anticipates will increase productivity, especially on tasks where heavy vegetation is present.⁷⁵

HALO reported notable productivity gains since the implementation of the new SOPs. The team cleared 66% more area in November than in previous months when operating under the former SOPs. During the roll-out, some minor issues were identified and the SOPs accordingly amended in preparation for programme-wide rollout in 2021. The final SOPs were used as part of the February 2021 refresher training course are now applied on all BAC clearing tasks.⁷⁶

The HALO Kosovo Programme continues to conduct its research and development activities to increase safety and operational efficiency and share innovative technological means. In 2019, the programme was used as a testing ground for the Scorpion detection system from US Night Vision and Electronic Sensors Directorate (NVESD), which was bound for Afghanistan. The success of the trial allowed the system to be used in the Kosovo programme, which is now deployed to support BAC tasks. The Scorpion detector integrates a large-loop electromagnetic induction (EMI) sensor and caesium vapour total-field magnetometer and applies differential global positioning system (DGPS) for centimetre accuracy in targeting. It is essentially two integrated detectors mounted on a trolley, which can be deployed over an open task to identify desired magnetic anomalies in the ground. The Scorpion system has the potential to significantly improve BAC productivity in areas where its deployment is possible.⁷⁷

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2020, Kosovo's national mine action programme's capacity consisted of two international operators, The HALO Trust and NPA, and a national operator, the KSF. HALO Trust continued to conduct BAC and CMR clearance in 2020, along with the KSF, which also provided a round-the-clock EOD emergency response.⁷⁸ KFOR also supports the KSF and Kosovo Police with EOD response tasks and organising mine and ERW demolitions in Mitrovica and the north of Kosovo, including NPA's areas of operations.⁷⁹ The demining season is from the end of March to the end of November, due to weather conditions.⁸⁰ NPA's focus in 2020 was on technical survey in the north of the province.⁸¹

HALO Trust's operational personnel are cross-trained for mine clearance and BAC and can move readily between activities. On average, in 2020, HALO Trust deployed five clearance teams totalling 40 deminers to CMR clearance tasks – an overall decrease of two teams compared to the previous year when HALO deployed three nine-person teams. The increase is a result of the continuation of funding from a US State department grants which started at the end of 2019. In April 2021, HALO deployed additional two non-technical survey teams and was planning to train four clearance/BAC teams in preparation for their deployment by September 2021.⁸²

NPA's area of operations in Kosovo cover the five northern municipalities of Leposavic, Mitrovica, Podujevo, Zubin Potok, and Zvečan.⁸³ In 2020, NPA deployed eight teams: one two-person team dedicated to non-technical survey and seven teams each seven-strong dedicated to both technical survey and clearance.⁸⁴ This represented a doubling of the number of teams and the overall operational capacity in 2020 compared to the previous year. NPA planned to establish two additional clearance teams in 2021 thanks to funding by WRA.⁸⁵ NPA deploys local teams of mixed ethnicities, making it possible for NPA to work in previously inaccessible areas in north Kosovo and deploy teams to both ethnic Serbian and ethnic Albanian areas through the multi-ethnic composition of the teams.⁸⁶

KSF operated one manual clearance team in 2020, totalling 12 deminers.⁸⁷ KFOR supports the KSF and Kosovo Police with EOD response tasks and organising mine and ERW demolitions in Mitrovica and the north of Kosovo.⁸⁸

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2020

A total of 4.71km² of CMR-contaminated area was released in 2020, of which 0.34km² was released through clearance and 4.37km² through technical survey. No land was cancelled through non-technical survey.

A new SHA of 139,439m² of at least two zones of strikes was identified by NPA and reported to KMAC in 2020.⁸⁹

SURVEY IN 2020

A total of 4.37km² of CMR-contaminated area was released in 2020 through technical survey. Of this, HALO reduced 7,139m² while the remainder was reduced by NPA. No land was cancelled through non-technical survey in 2020.

The total area of CMR-contaminated land released through survey in 2020 is almost five times the size of 2019, when 911,795m² of land was reduced through technical survey. The increase is attributed to NPA's intensification of technical-survey efforts in the northern municipalities as well as the increased funding that allowed the establishment of three additional survey teams in 2020.⁹⁰

As noted above, NPA identified an SHA of 139,439m² and reported to KMAC in 2020.⁹¹

CLEARANCE IN 2020

The HALO Trust and KSF cleared a total area of 0.34km² of CMR contamination in 2020, destroying 18 submunitions in the process. NPA destroyed 16 submunitions during its technical survey activities (See Table 1). KMAC reported that a further six submunitions were destroyed by KSF in EOD response tasks.⁹²

Five items of UXO were also destroyed during clearance and technical survey by KSF in 2020.⁹³

According to HALO Trust, one area cleared in 2020, at Devë in Gjakova district, was found not to contain CMR.⁹⁴

The clearance outputs of 2020 saw a significant decrease compared to 2019, where a total of 1.26km² of CMR-contaminated land was cleared and 155 submunitions were destroyed. The area cleared by HALO Trust shrunk by 49% as a result of COVID-19 crisis and the impact it had on deployment of teams. Additionally, HALO faced challenges in the tasks it carried out in 2020 including difficult terrain and poor access during the winter months.⁹⁵ NPA did not clear any area in 2020 as it prioritised technical survey operations.⁹⁶

As Kosovo has robust national procedures for the management of explosives, the KSF, with support from KFOR in northern Kosovo, carries out the demolition of CMR and items of UXO found by both The HALO Trust and NPA.⁹⁷

Table 1: CMR clearance in 2020⁹⁸

District	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	Submunitions destroyed*	Other UXO destroyed*
Ferizaj	HALO	83,515	0	0
Gjakova	HALO	108,133	0	0
Peja	HALO	101,942	5	0
Mitrovica	NPA	0	11	3
Zubin Potok	NPA	0	0	0
Zvecan	NPA	0	5	0
Podujevo	NPA	0	0	0
Ferizaj	KSF	46,455	13	2
Totals		340,045	34	5

* Figures include items destroyed during technical survey but not EOD.

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Kosovo cannot formally adhere to the CCM and therefore does not have a specific clearance deadline under Article 4. Nonetheless, it has obligations under international human rights law to clear CMR as soon as possible.

As stated in Kosovo's Mine Action Strategy 2019–24, which aims to complete mine and cluster munition clearance by the end of 2024, this target will only be achievable if sustained funding is secured.⁹⁹ Specific concerns are mentioned in the strategy about the need to upgrade old equipment, including vehicles to proceed without unnecessary stand-downs or costly repairs.¹⁰⁰

The HALO Trust highlighted the need for a review of the current data on CMR-contaminated areas, including an evaluation of survey polygons, and application of efficient land release methodologies, in order to ensure coordinated and cost-effective targeting of clearance.¹⁰¹

As at April 2021, HALO Trust, KMAC and NPA all believed that the target date of 2024 can be met but cautioned that the question of residual contamination needs to be addressed.¹⁰² However, only 4.19km² of CMR contamination has been cleared in the last five years (see Table 2). HALO Trust reports that meeting the target date will depend on the extent of remaining contamination; it expected to have a better idea of this by the end of 2021 once its non-technical surveys are concluded. Only then will HALO be able to predict the expected completion date with a sufficient degree of certainty.¹⁰³

The coordinated mobilisation efforts in 2020 yielded additional funds and translated into increased capacities of international operators in 2020–21. This capacity needs to be further increased and sustained over the strategy period in order to meet the 2024 target date.¹⁰⁴

In April 2021, HALO deployed additional two non-technical survey teams and was planning to train four clearance/BAC teams in preparation for their deployment by September 2021.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, NPA planned to increase technical survey/clearance capacity from seven teams to nine during 2021, thanks to new funding from the WRA.¹⁰⁶

While increasing and sustaining funding remained the primary obstacle, challenges were also posed by poor weather and

difficult terrain, according to NPA. It also noted that additional CMR-contaminated areas were still being recorded in its areas of operations as a result of ongoing survey.¹⁰⁷

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has substantially affected Kosovo's mine action programme. From mid-March to mid-May 2020, the entire mine action sector was closed at the direction of KMAC, as the government implemented strict lockdown measures across the country, resulting in lost productivity. Operators were able to partially phase back operations in early May and fully by June 2020. HALO had to avoid the use of remote camps due to the COVID-19 pandemic which also affected its original 2020 work plan.¹⁰⁸

Despite operators working at full capacity during the second half of 2020, the pandemic continued to weigh on the operation. Some of the challenges reported by HALO Trust included running on a winter schedule, which meant that teams worked an hour less each day; the increased breaks for handwashing (to prevent the spread of COVID-19), which led to a reduction of working time; the need to isolate teams for up to two weeks when suspected cases occurred; and fleet issues due to social distancing requirements.¹⁰⁹ NPA had to stand down its operation for one week at the end of July due to suspected COVID-19 cases and to partially stand down some teams due to cases of infection.¹¹⁰

Table 2: Five-year summary of CMR clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2020	0.34
2019	1.26
2018	1.24
2017	0.88
2016	0.47
Total	4.19

Assuming the target is met, completion of CMR clearance in 2024 would be 25 years after the end of the conflict between the FRY forces and NATO and more than 20 years after the UN claimed that clearance was largely complete.

PLANNING FOR RESIDUAL RISK AFTER COMPLETION

According to Kosovo's Mine Action Strategy 2019–24, a separate national strategy on the management of residual contamination will be developed by KMAC by 2023, in collaboration with other national actors. This will clarify roles and responsibilities in order to manage what is expected to be a long-term residual contamination problem.¹¹¹ The HALO Trust highlighted the importance of establishing a common definition for residual risk – an existing priority for KMAC in its national strategy.¹¹²

- 1 Email from Ahmet Sallova, Head, KMAC, 28 April 2021.
- 2 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 April 2020.
- 3 Email from Charles Frisby, Acting Country Director, NPA, 27 April 2021.
- 4 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 28 April 2021.
- 5 Email from Charles Frisby, NPA, 19 May 2021.
- 6 Email from Megan Dwyer, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021.
- 7 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 17 June 2021.
- 8 See United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), "UNMIK OKPCC EOD Management Section Annual Report 2005", Pristina, 18 January 2006, p. 2; and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Explosive Remnants of War, Cluster Bombs and Landmines in Kosovo*, Geneva, rev. June 2001, p. 6.
- 9 ICRC, *Explosive Remnants of War, Cluster Bombs and Landmines in Kosovo*, rev. June 2001, pp. 4 and 6; and The HALO Trust, "Action on cluster munitions in Kosovo", 10 September 2015, at: <https://bit.ly/30P1X70>.
- 10 Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Landmine Action, *Banning Cluster Munitions Government Policy and Practice*, Mines Action Canada, Ottawa, 2009, p. 238; and ICRC, *Explosive Remnants of War, Cluster Bombs and Landmines in Kosovo*, rev. June 2001, p. 6.
- 11 A. Moore, The HALO Trust, "Action on cluster munitions in Kosovo", Side event, First CCM Review Conference, Dubrovnik, 10 September 2015.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 NPA, *Cluster Munition Remnants in Northern Kosovo: non-technical survey of contamination and impact*, September 2015; and email from Goran Peršić, NPA Bosnia and Herzegovina, 13 May 2016.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 NPA, *Cluster Munition Remnants in Northern Kosovo: non-technical survey of contamination and impact*, September 2015.
- 16 UNMIK, "OKPCC EOD Management Section Annual Report 2008", Pristina, 12 January 2009, p. 4.
- 17 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 1 August 2012.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 June and 3 July 2017; and Ministry of Defence, "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 3.
- 20 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, pp. 5–6.
- 21 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 28 April 2021.
- 22 Emails from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 22 May 2020; and Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 April 2020.
- 23 Email from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 22 May 2020.
- 24 Email from Charles Frisby, NPA, 27 April 2021.
- 25 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 28 April 2021.
- 26 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 14.
- 27 Email from Terje Eldøen, NPA, 25 April 2019.
- 28 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 28 April 2021.
- 29 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021.
- 30 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 8.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 28 April 2021.
- 33 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, pp. 8–9.
- 34 Email from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 22 May 2020.
- 35 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021.
- 36 Emails from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 1 May 2019 and 22 May 2020.
- 37 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021.
- 38 Email from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 1 May 2019; and "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 8.
- 39 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021.
- 40 Email from Terje Eldøen, NPA, 25 April 2019.
- 41 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021.
- 42 Email from Terje Eldøen, NPA, 25 April 2019.
- 43 Email from Charles Frisby, NPA, 27 April 2021.
- 44 Emails from Terje Eldøen, NPA, 25 April 2019 and 1 September 2020.
- 45 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 April 2020.
- 46 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 30 April 2019.
- 47 Emails from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 1 May 2019; and Terje Eldøen, NPA, 25 April 2019.
- 48 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 13.
- 49 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 28 April 2021.
- 50 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 12.
- 51 Email from Charles Frisby, NPA, 27 April 2021.
- 52 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, pp. 9–10.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Ibid., p. 16.
- 55 Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 30 April 2019; and Tom Welling, HALO Trust, 7 May 2018.
- 56 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 28 April 2021.
- 57 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 1.
- 58 Email from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 22 May 2020.
- 59 Email from Terje Eldøen, NPA, 25 April 2019.
- 60 Emails from Charles Frisby, NPA, 27 April and 18 May 2021; and Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 28 April 2021. The number of technical surveys was reported as four by KMAC but subsequently revised upwards to eleven by NPA.
- 61 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 April 2020.
- 62 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 4 May 2018.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Interview with Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, Pristina, 5 April 2019.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Email from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 21 June 2019.
- 67 Email from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 3 September 2020.
- 68 Emails from Terje Eldøen, NPA, 25 April 2019; and Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 1 May 2019.
- 69 Email from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 3 September 2020.
- 70 Emails from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 1 May 2019; and Terje Eldøen, NPA, 25 April 2019.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 Interview with Terje Eldøen, NPA, Pristina, 5 April 2019; and email, 25 April 2019.
- 73 Emails from Ash Boddy, HALO Trust, 5 May 2017; and Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 1 May 2019.
- 74 Email from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 21 June 2019.
- 75 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 Ibid.
- 78 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 April 2020; and "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 3.
- 79 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 4; and interview with Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, Pristina, 5 April 2019.
- 80 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 3.
- 81 Email from Charles Frisby, NPA, 27 April 2021.
- 82 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021.
- 83 Email from Terje Eldøen, NPA, 26 August 2020.
- 84 Email from Charles Frisby, NPA, 27 April 2021.

-
- 85 Ibid.
- 86 Email from Terje Eldøen, NPA, 25 April 2019; and "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 4.
- 87 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 April 2020.
- 88 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 4; and interview with Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, Pristina, 5 April 2019.
- 89 Email from Charles Frisby, NPA, 27 April 2021.
- 90 Ibid.
- 91 Ibid.
- 92 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021.
- 93 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 28 April 2021.
- 94 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021.
- 95 Ibid.
- 96 Email from Charles Frisby, NPA, 27 April 2021.
- 97 Interview with Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, Pristina, 5 April 2019.
- 98 Ibid.
- 99 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 6.
- 100 Ibid.
- 101 Email from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 22 May 2020.
- 102 Emails from Charles Frisby, NPA, 27 April 2021; Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 28 April 2021; and Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 18 May 2021.
- 103 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021
- 104 Emails from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 1 May 2019; and Terje Eldøen, NPA, 25 April 2019.
- 105 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021.
- 106 Emails from Charles Frisby, NPA, 27 April 2021; and Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 28 April 2021.
- 107 Email from Terje Eldøen, NPA, 25 April 2019.
- 108 Email from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 3 September 2020.
- 109 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021.
- 110 Email from Charles Frisby, NPA, 27 April 2021.
- 111 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 15.
- 112 Email from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 22 May 2020.