

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Serbia should comply with its obligations under international human rights law to clear cluster munition remnants (CMR) on territory under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.
- Serbia should consider using its armed forces to conduct clearance of CMR as they are already clearing other unexploded ordnance (UXO).
- The Serbian Mine Action Centre (SMAC) should conduct non-technical and technical survey, rather than full clearance, in instances where survey represents the most efficient means to release part or all of areas suspected or confirmed to contain CMR.
- Serbia should accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a matter of priority.

### UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION

At the end of 2020, Serbia had seven areas confirmed to contain CMR covering more than 0.71km<sup>2</sup>, while a further three areas covering over 1.38km<sup>2</sup> were suspected to contain CMR (see Table 1).<sup>1</sup> This was a decrease compared to the 10 areas confirmed to contain CMR covering almost 1km and three areas suspected to contain CMR covering almost 1.4km<sup>2</sup> as at end of 2019,<sup>2</sup> which is the result of clearance of CMR-contaminated area in 2020. SMAC does not possess data on explosive ordnance contamination of military areas in Serbia.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, and not included in Table 1 below, SMAC has added to the database three cluster munition-contaminated areas in the municipality of Niš, totalling over 0.16km<sup>2</sup>, which were previously owned by the Ministry of Defence (nearby to Niš civilian airport), and which were transferred to civilian ownership, under the Airports of Serbia Niš. SMAC has developed clearance projects and planned to complete clearance of these three CMR projects in 2021 (please see section on Planning and Tasking).<sup>4</sup>

CMR resulted from North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air strikes in 1999. According to Serbia, cluster munitions struck 16 municipalities: Brus, Bujanovac, Čačak, Gadžin Han, Knić, Kraljevo, Kuršumlija, Niš City-municipality of Crveni Krst, Niš City-municipality of Medijana, Preševo, Raška, Sjenica, Sopot, Stara Pazova, Tutin, and Vladimirci.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1: Cluster munition-contaminated area by municipality (at end 2020)<sup>6</sup>**

Municipality	Village	CHAs	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	SHAs	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Bujanovac	Borovac	2	210,881	1	281,169
Sjenica	Čedovo	4	163,924	0	0
Sjenica	Vapa	1	338,416	0	0
Tutin	Istočni Mojstir	0	0	1	515,000
Užice	Bioska	0	0	1	585,268
<b>Totals</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>713,221</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1,381,437</b>

CHAs = confirmed hazardous areas

SHAs = suspected hazardous areas

### OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND LANDMINES

Serbia is also contaminated by other explosive remnants of war (ERW), including unexploded aircraft bombs, both on land and in its internal waterways, and by anti-personnel mines<sup>7</sup> (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Serbia for further information).

## NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

According to a Government Decree on Protection against Unexploded Ordnance, the Sector for Emergency Management, under the Ministry of Interior, acts as the national mine action authority (NMAA).<sup>8</sup> The NMAA is responsible for developing standard operating procedures (SOPs); accrediting demining operators; and supervising the work of SMAC.<sup>9</sup>

SMAC was established on 7 March 2002, with a 2004 law making it responsible for coordinating survey and clearance; collecting and managing mine action information (including casualty data); and surveying SHAs. It also has a mandate to plan demining projects, conduct quality control (QC) and monitor operations, ensure implementation of international standards, and conduct risk education.<sup>10</sup> As from 1 January 2014, according to a Government Decree on Protection against Unexploded Ordnance, the Sector for Emergency Management, under the Ministry of Interior, is responsible for accrediting demining operators. Previously, SMAC was responsible for doing so.<sup>11</sup>

A new director of SMAC was appointed by the Serbian government in July 2019.<sup>12</sup> There are seven other people employed at SMAC: two assistant directors and five other SMAC employees.<sup>13</sup>

SMAC is fully funded by Serbia, including salaries and running costs, as well as for survey activities, development of project tasks for demining and clearance of contaminated areas, follow-up on implementation of project tasks, and quality assurance (QA) and QC of demining. In 2021, Serbia reported that around €300,000 per annum is allocated from the national state budget for the work of SMAC,<sup>14</sup> an increase on the €270,000 provided in 2020.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the UXO disposal work of the Sector for Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Interior is also State funded.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, in 2019, Serbia contributed national funding towards the establishment of an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) training centre,<sup>17</sup> which is now operational.

Since 2015, Serbia has also been allocating national funds for survey and clearance, with roughly €100,000 allocated per year.<sup>18</sup> In 2018, the Serbian Government allocated double the amount of national funds previously dedicated to demining operations to €200,000 (which were matched with United States and South Korean funding and tendered through ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF)). Serbia continues to seek additional international funding.<sup>19</sup> At the request of the national authorities, national funding was increased to €350,000 for 2019 demining operations.<sup>20</sup> The same amount had been allocated by the Serbian government for demining operations in 2020, but was subsequently reduced by 20%

to €260,000 due to the COVID-19 crisis and efforts by the Serbian government to tackle it.<sup>21</sup> None of the national funding for survey and clearance was allocated to CMR operations in 2020, as SMAC will continue to prioritise its national funding to mine survey and clearance, rather than CMR, to contribute towards meeting its obligations under Article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC).<sup>22</sup> National funding for survey and clearance remained at €260,000 for 2021.<sup>23</sup> The funds will be matched with donor funds through the ITF.<sup>24</sup>

In March 2020, SMAC and the Serbian Ministry of Defence, signed an Agreement on Cooperation in the field of demining and UXO/ERW removal. The Agreement is reported to envisage, among others, the joint participation in training of personnel to conduct of demining and ERW demolition operations, training certification, joint participation in survey, collection of data on ERW suspected and contaminated areas, as well as implementation of ERW removal projects, with monitoring and implementation of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and regulations in the field of demining. The initial focus will reportedly be on the training of personnel in ERW demolition operations, including in CMR clearance operations.<sup>25</sup>

In late 2019, the Serbian government approved funds for the establishment of a training centre within SMAC. Together with experts from the Ministry of Interior, SMAC will provide different training modules, including on ERW recognition, international mine action standards, medical aspects, and risk reduction.<sup>26</sup>

SMAC organised an EOD Level 1 training course from 21 September to 10 October 2020, which was supported by the French Embassy in Belgrade and conducted by a French demining company, "EOD-EX", in accordance with IMAS. The course, said to be the first of its kind to take place in Serbia, was attended by a member of the Sector for Emergency Management of the Ministry of Interior, as well as representatives of demining companies from Serbia and the Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>27</sup> The training was aimed at strengthening human resources in the field of humanitarian demining in Serbia and also to standardise the level of national competencies in accordance with IMAS.<sup>28</sup> Prior to the opening of the new training centre, SMAC had been recognising certificates from organisations from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia that had been accredited respectively by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BHMIC) and the Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) to conduct training courses in mine action and humanitarian demining.<sup>29</sup>

## GENDER AND DIVERSITY

SMAC does not have a gender policy in place and does not disaggregate relevant mine action data by sex and age. However, it does ensure women and children are consulted during survey and community liaison activities, and SMAC cooperates closely with the local authorities and other relevant stakeholders in this regard. SMAC also ensures ethnic or minority groups are consulted.<sup>30</sup>

Serbia reports there is equal access to employment for qualified women and men in survey and clearance operations.<sup>31</sup>

At SMAC, 50% of employees are women, with 25% of managerial/supervisory level positions held by women along with 25% of operations positions.<sup>32</sup>

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

SMAC uses its own information management system. Following on from initial discussions several years ago, in early 2020, SMAC informally discussed the possibility of the installation of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).<sup>33</sup> Subsequently, Serbia has been added to the GICHD's list of countries to be supported and an initial online meeting between the GICHD and SMAC took place in March 2021. The next step will be for GICHD to conduct an assessment mission to Serbia.<sup>34</sup>

## PLANNING AND TASKING

The Government of Serbia adopts SMAC's annual work plans.<sup>35</sup> SMAC's 2021 work plan included three CMR clearance projects: two in Bujanovac (village of Borovac) totalling 210,881m<sup>2</sup> (funded by the United States through ITF) and the other in Niš totalling 84,750m<sup>2</sup> (funded through the International Civil Defence Organization (ICDO), with a donation from Russia).<sup>36</sup>

In addition, two CMR clearance projects in Niš in 2021 (one totalling 10,176m<sup>2</sup> and the other 69,540m<sup>2</sup>), are being funded by the Airports of Serbia.<sup>37</sup>

SMAC also expected to resume the four CMR clearance operations that started in 2020 with funding from the United States via the ITF, but which had to be suspended due to

lack of available deminers due to the impact of COVID-19.

These comprised three clearance projects in Sjenica (villages Čedovo and Vapa) totalling 502,304m<sup>2</sup> and one technical survey project in Tutin (village Istočni Mojstir) totalling 515,000m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>38</sup>

Serbia prioritises the release of areas which directly affect the local population, such as those close to settlements where local people have abandoned their houses and stopped cultivating land due to fear of landmines and explosive ordnance.<sup>39</sup> SMAC also noted that donors themselves sometimes also influence the choice of the areas which will be demined first, depending on availability and amount of their funds.<sup>40</sup>

## LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

### STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

According to SMAC, survey and clearance operations in Serbia are conducted in accordance with IMAS.<sup>41</sup>

National mine action standards (NMAS) were said to be in the final phase of development as at September 2015.<sup>42</sup> In April 2017, SMAC reported that, along with the relevant national authorities, it was in the process of establishing a commission to develop national standards and SOPs to define methods and techniques for survey and clearance in Serbia.<sup>43</sup> However, this process has subsequently been hindered due to lack of capacity.<sup>44</sup>

As at April 2021, Serbia planned to adopt a new decree on protection against ERW. The decree, developed by SMAC and the Ministry of Interior, includes the need for the development of national standards; introduces the concept of land release, which was not defined in the former decree; aims to improve the accreditation, monitoring, and evaluation process; and prohibit the previous practice of independent ammunition technicians being hired by infrastructure companies, which will instead be done through tasking and coordination from SMAC.<sup>45</sup> As at July 2021, the Decree was close to being finalised.<sup>46</sup>

Under new directorship in late 2015, SMAC reassessed its land release methodology to prioritise full clearance over technical survey of hazardous areas.<sup>47</sup> This does not correspond to international best practice and is an inefficient use of scarce clearance assets. In February 2016, a new director of SMAC reported to Mine Action Review that while SMAC supports the use of high-quality non-technical survey to identify areas suspected of containing CMR, it will fully clear these areas, rather than using technical survey to identify the boundaries of contamination more accurately.<sup>48</sup>

As at March 2021, SMAC's position on its preferred land release methodology remained the same under the current Director, but there was a continued willingness to conduct technical survey in a form "adjusted to the context of Serbia", in response to the stated preference of international donors for technical survey above clearance, where appropriate.<sup>49</sup>

## OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

SMAC does not itself carry out clearance or employ clearance personnel but does conduct survey of areas suspected to contain mines, CMR, or other ERW. Clearance is conducted by commercial companies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which are selected through public tender procedures executed by ITF, supported by international funding.<sup>50</sup>

The Ministry of Interior issues accreditation to mine action operators that is valid for one year. In 2020, 24 companies/organisations were accredited for demining,<sup>51</sup> but only two organisations conducted clearance of CMR (see Table 2). No survey personnel were deployed in Serbia in 2020.<sup>52</sup>

An EOD department within the Sector for Emergency Management, in the Ministry of Interior, responds to call-outs for individual items of ERW, and is also responsible for demolition of items found by SMAC survey teams.<sup>53</sup>

**Table 2: Operational CMR clearance capacities deployed in 2020<sup>54</sup>**

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers*	Dogs and handlers	Machines**
NGO Stop Mines (Pale, BiH)	2	16	0	0
Saturnia Ltd (Belgrade, Serbia)	2	17	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

\* Excluding team leaders, medics, and drivers. \*\* Excluding vegetation cutters and sifters.

Table 2 represents an increase in clearance capacity compared to the previous year. SMAC expected to further increase capacity in 2021 to meet the increased number of planned CMR clearance/technical survey projects.<sup>55</sup>

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

### LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2020

A total of over 0.28km<sup>2</sup> of CMR-contaminated area was released in 2020, all through clearance.<sup>56</sup>

### SURVEY IN 2020

No CMR-contaminated area was reduced through technical survey or cancelled through non-technical survey in 2020<sup>57</sup> or 2019.<sup>58</sup>

### CLEARANCE IN 2020

A total of 284,855m<sup>2</sup> of CMR-contaminated area was cleared in 2020, during which 7 submunitions and 67 items of other UXO were destroyed (see Table 3).<sup>59</sup> Clearance output in 2020 was more than double that of 2019, when 119,334m<sup>2</sup> of CMR-contaminated area was cleared.<sup>60</sup>

All items destroyed were discovered in the village of Lisina, in the municipality of Raška. Completion of this CMR clearance project in 2020 saw completion of overall CMR clearance in the Kopaonik mountain area. Based on available data related to civilian areas, there are no more areas under civilian control suspected to be contaminated by cluster munitions in Raška municipality.<sup>61</sup> SMAC does not possess data on explosive ordnance contamination of military areas in Serbia.<sup>62</sup>

No items of explosive ordnance were discovered during clearance in the village of Vapa, in the municipality of Sjenica.<sup>63</sup>

SMAC did not have available data on the number or type of individual items of ERW destroyed by the EOD department within the Sector for Emergency Management during spot tasks in 2020.<sup>64</sup>

**Table 3: CMR clearance by municipality in 2020<sup>65</sup>**

Municipality	Village	Operator	Area cleared (m <sup>2</sup> )	Submunitions destroyed*	Other UXO destroyed
Sjenica	Vapa	Saturnia Ltd., Belgrade, Serbia	94,496	0	0
Raška	Lisina	NGO Stop Mines, Pale, BiH	190,359	7	67
<b>Totals</b>			<b>284,855</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>67</b>

\* Figures include items destroyed during technical survey.

## PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Less than 1km<sup>2</sup> in total has been cleared in the last five years (see Table 4). However, clearance output in 2020 was double that of the previous year and there were several CMR clearance projects planned for 2021.

In its last APMBC Article 5 deadline extension request, dated 31 March 2018, Serbia had included a work plan for completion of all ERW clearance by 2023, at a predicted total cost of €20 million. CMR were not disaggregated from other ERW.<sup>66</sup> Progress in CMR clearance is said to be contingent on funding. Serbia has said that depending on available funds and the global health situation caused by COVID-19, CMR clearance in the country could be finished within two years.<sup>67</sup>

**Table 4: Five-year summary of CMR clearance**

Year	Area cleared (km <sup>2</sup> )
2020	0.28
2019	0.12
2018	0.00
2017	0.18
2016	0.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.83</b>

## PLANNING FOR RESIDUAL RISK AFTER COMPLETION

SMAC envisages that it will most likely need both national and international capacity to deal with any residual contamination, discovered following completion.<sup>68</sup> Serbia is already dealing with residual ERW contamination and investing significant funds for ERW clearance.<sup>69</sup>

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- 1 Email from Slađana Košutić, Senior Advisor for Planning, International Cooperation and European Integrations, SMAC, 26 March 2021.
- 2 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020.
- 3 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 May 2021.
- 4 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.
- 5 SMAC, "Mine Situation", accessed 12 March 2020, at: <http://bit.ly/1Nom1V7>.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Second Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), P. 10.
- 8 Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 70/13.
- 9 Emails from Darvin Lisica, Regional Programme Manager, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), 6 May and 12 June 2016.
- 10 Law of Alterations and Supplementations of the Law of Ministries, Official Gazette, 84/04, August 2004; interview with Petar Mihajlović and Slađana Košutić, SMAC, Belgrade, 26 April 2010; and 2018 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 17.
- 11 2018 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 17.
- 12 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020.
- 13 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.
- 14 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D.
- 15 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Section 4; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.
- 16 SMAC, "Mine situation", accessed 8 May 2019, at: <http://bit.ly/1Nom1V7>.
- 17 Interview with Bojan Glamočlija, Director, SMAC, in Geneva, 14 February 2020.
- 18 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 6 April 2017; interview with Jovica Simonović, SMAC, Belgrade, 16 May 2017; and 2018 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request.
- 19 2018 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 9; APMBC Article 7 Report (covering 2018), Form C; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2019.
- 20 APMBC Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Section 4; and Statement on Clearance, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 27 November 2019.
- 21 Interview with Bojan Glamočlija, SMAC, in Geneva, 14 February 2020; Statements on Clearance, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 27 November 2019 and APMBC 18th Meeting of States Parties (virtual meeting), 16–20 November 2020; and Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D.
- 22 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.
- 25 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form H; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 May 2021.
- 26 Emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020 and 26 March 2021.
- 27 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D; and emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March and 11 May 2021.
- 28 SMAC, "Completion of explosive ordnance disposal – Level 1 training (EOD - Level 1) arranged by Serbian Mine Action Centre", 14 October 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/32G7BKI>.
- 29 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 May 2021.
- 30 Emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020 and 26 March 2021.
- 31 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020.
- 32 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.
- 33 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020.
- 34 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.
- 35 2018 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 16; email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2019; and interview with Bojan Glamočlija, SMAC, in Geneva, 14 February 2020.
- 36 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2019.
- 40 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 12 April 2018.
- 41 SMAC, "Mine Situation, November 2019", accessed 18 February 2020, at: <http://bit.ly/1Nom1V7>; and APMBC Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Section 4.
- 42 Interview with Branislav Jovanović, SMAC, in Dubrovnik, 10 September 2015.
- 43 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 6 April 2017.
- 44 Interview with Jovica Simonović, SMAC, Belgrade, 16 May 2017; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020.
- 45 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form D; and emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March and 26 July 2021.
- 46 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 July 2021.
- 47 Interview with Jovica Simonović, SMAC, in Geneva, 18 February 2016.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 2018 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 30; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.
- 50 Second APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), p. 18.
- 51 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Interview with Jovica Simonović, SMAC, Belgrade, 16 May 2017; and Second APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), p. 18.
- 54 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020.
- 59 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.
- 60 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 May 2021.
- 63 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.
- 64 Ibid.
- 65 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.
- 66 Second APMBC Article 5 Extension Request (2018), p. 33.
- 67 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.
- 68 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020.
- 69 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 18 June 2020.