

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

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

UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of contamination from CMR in Azerbaijan is unknown, as Armenian forces currently occupy a significant area of the country, where the contamination exists. There may also be some residual contamination in territory under government control.¹

Large quantities of cluster munitions were dropped during the 1988 conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Following the cease-fire in 1994, tensions flared up again in April 2016 when fighting broke out briefly along the Line of Contact (LOC). While ground fighting was confined to areas close to the LOC, artillery fire penetrated more than 10km into Nagorno-Karabakh, and included use of cluster munitions. The HALO Trust has calculated the four days of hostilities added 2.4km² of CMR contamination, all of which has since been cleared.² However, no CMR contamination has been reported on the Azerbaijan-controlled side of the LOC (see the Mine Action Review *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants* report on Nagorno-Karabakh for further information). In July 2020, fighting broke out between Azerbaijan and Armenia around the Tavush region in north-east Armenia, some 300km (190 miles) from Nagorno-Karabakh. There were, however, no reports of cluster munitions being deployed.³

OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND LANDMINES

Other areas are confirmed or suspected to contain explosive remnants of war (ERW): both unexploded ordnance (UXO) and abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO). These include former military testing areas and a former shooting range.⁴ Azerbaijan is also contaminated with landmines, the extent of which is unknown (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines 2020* report on Azerbaijan for further information).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA), which functions as both the national mine action authority and mine action centre, was established by presidential decree to plan, coordinate, manage, and monitor mine action. It also conducts demining, along with two national operators it contracts: Dayag-Relief Azerbaijan (RA) and the International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF). No commercial company is active in mine action in Azerbaijan.⁵ In March 2020, the mine action programme was restructured and RA's field personnel were incorporated within ANAMA while RA as an organisation will continue to provide logistical support to ANAMA.⁶

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provides capacity development to ANAMA and was planning to do so until December 2020.⁷ As at July 2020, ANAMA and UNDP were discussing the possibility of extending the project until 2023.⁸

As at June 2020, Azerbaijan was still in the process of adopting a national mine action law, with draft legislation under review by the Cabinet of Ministers.⁹ The process has been ongoing for six years already. Once adopted, it will regulate mine action in Azerbaijan, governing issues such as licensing, accreditation, quality assurance (QA), and tender procedures.¹⁰

The Azerbaijani government funds 90% of ANAMA's operating costs and 90% of all survey and clearance in Azerbaijan.¹¹

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

ANAMA does not have a gender policy. No women are working in any operational roles in survey and clearance in Azerbaijan. In 2019, however, women made up 11% of mine action programme staff, mainly through administrative roles in ANAMA. They also participate in mine risk education sessions and are consulted during survey.¹² One of the goals of the UNDP-ANAMA capacity strengthening project is to introduce a gender-sensitive approach to mine action to Azerbaijan.¹³

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

ANAMA uses an old version of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database, and was working with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to upgrade to the latest IMSMA Core in 2019–20.¹⁴

PLANNING AND TASKING

The existing mine action strategy was for 2013–18.¹⁵ Its main aims were said to be to continue mine and ERW clearance in support of government development projects and to provide safe conditions for the local population in affected regions.¹⁶ The strategy has not yet been replaced though in June 2020, ANAMA reported that a new strategy was in the process of being developed.¹⁷ In the absence of a new multiyear strategic plan, tasks are prioritised according to the state development plan and instructions from the government.¹⁸

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Azerbaijan has its own National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), which were adopted in 2001 and subsequently revised in 2003, 2004, and 2010 in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and best practice.¹⁹ No major modifications to the standards were made in 2019.²⁰

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2019, the Azerbaijan mine action programme had more than 300 deminers/explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) personnel as well as mine detection dogs and machines. In addition, to its clearance capacities ANAMA deployed five technical survey teams in 2019 totalling 45 personnel.²¹ Mine detection dogs (MDDs) and mechanical assets are used to support reduction through technical survey and manual clearance operations.²²

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

No CMR survey or clearance took place in 2019. Some battle area clearance (BAC) took place in the region of Garadagh with 17,744m² cleared and 517 items of UXO found and destroyed.

No target date has been set for the completion of CMR clearance in Azerbaijan.²³ ANAMA's long-term strategy is to be ready to start clearance of the occupied territories as and when this is possible.²⁴ In May 2019, Azerbaijan stated that it will only accede to the CCM once all of its territories are liberated from occupation by Armenia and all internally displaced persons and refugees return to their lands.²⁵

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- 1 Emails from Sabina Sarkarova, Public Relations Officer, Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA), 2 April 2019; and Nijat Karimov, Senior Planning and Development Officer, ANAMA, 30 July 2020.
 - 2 Emails from Amasia Zargarian, Programme Support Officer, HALO Trust, 4 May 2018; and Asqanaz Hambardzumyan, HALO Trust, 26 April 2019.
 - 3 Reuters, "Shelling between Azerbaijan and Armenia smashes brief ceasefire", 16 July 2020, at: reut.rs/3ijBoyG; Aljazeera, "Will Armenia and Azerbaijan go to war again?", 16 July 2020.
 - 4 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018", p. 17.
 - 5 Emails from Tural Mammadov, Operations Officer, ANAMA, 19 October 2016; and Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 8 June 2020.
 - 6 Email from Nijat Karimov, Senior Planning and Development Officer, ANAMA, 28 July 2020.
 - 7 UNDP, "Review & Recommendation to Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) in Support of its Transformation into International Centre for Demining assessment 2018", 17 July 2018.
 - 8 Email from Nijat Karimov, ANAMA, 28 July 2020.
 - 9 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 8 June 2020.
 - 10 Email from Parviz Gidayev, ANAMA, 20 May 2015; and ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2014".
 - 11 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 April 2019.
 - 12 Emails from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 April 2019 and 8 June 2020.
 - 13 UNDP, "Review & Recommendation to Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) in Support of its Transformation into International Centre for Demining assessment 2018", 17 July 2018.
 - 14 Email from Maria Gurova, Programme Officer, GICHD, 22 August 2019.
 - 15 Email from Parviz Gidayev, Planning & Development Manager, ANAMA, 20 May 2015; and ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 10.
 - 16 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA 2 May 2018.
 - 17 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 8 June 2020.
 - 18 Emails from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 April 2019 and 8 June 2020.
 - 19 Email from Tural Mammadov, ANAMA, 19 October 2016.
 - 20 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 8 June 2020.
 - 21 Ibid.
 - 22 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 April 2019.
 - 23 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 8 June 2020.
 - 24 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2014"; and GICHD, "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Azerbaijan", March 2012, Executive Summary.
 - 25 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 21 May 2019.