

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The national estimate of cluster munition remnants (CMR) contamination increased significantly in 2019. The Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre (TNMAC) has approved a pilot project by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) to introduce the Cluster Munition Remnant Survey (CMRS)/technical survey methodology and subsequently approved NPA's procedures for use by all operators.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Tajikistan should accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a matter of priority.
- Tajikistan should comply with its obligations under international human rights law to clear CMR on territory under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.
- The TNMAC should conduct survey to clarify the extent of remaining CMR and ensure timely clearance and release of the contaminated areas.

UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION

Tajikistan does not have a comprehensive baseline estimate of the extent of CMR contamination but reported more than 1.5km² affected by CMR at the end of 2019 (see Table 1), an increase of two-thirds on the estimate a year earlier. TNMAC said this followed the addition of three confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) totalling 616,191m².¹ NPA, the main operator addressing CMR, identified one CHA in 2019 in Darvoz's Sagirdasht municipality covering 288,191m². The Union of Sappers of Tajikistan (UST) confirmed two other hazards covering a total of 528,000m², also in Sagirdasht.²

CMR are concentrated in central provinces used as summer pasture by local communities and for that reason are considered high impact. Initial surveys identified hazardous areas largely on the basis of recorded accidents and local community reports that did not specify the types of contamination, underscoring the need for resurvey.³

Tajikistan traces its CMR contamination back to the civil war of 1992-97 but has not clarified who was responsible for using cluster munitions.⁴ Most of the submunitions cleared are from the Russian RBK 500 series, model AO 2.5RT/RTM.⁵

Table 1: CMR contamination (at end 2019)⁶

Province	CHAs	Area (m ²)
Rasht	3	531,000
Darvoz	6	762,231
Sh. Shohin	1	60,000
Sangvor	1	200,000
Totals	11	1,553,231

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Commission for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law (CIIHL), chaired by the first deputy of the Prime Minister, and containing key representatives from relevant line ministries, acts as Tajikistan's national mine action authority, responsible for mainstreaming mine action in the government's socio-economic development policies.⁷

TNMAC is the executive arm of CIIHL and the body coordinating mine action, responsible for issuing task orders, information management and quality assurance (QA)/quality control (QC).⁸ It was set up by government decree in January 2014 replacing the Tajikistan Mine Action Centre and taking over the process of managing transition to a fully nationally-owned programme.⁹ In 2016, Tajikistan's Parliament

adopted a Law on Humanitarian Mine Action, which covers all aspects of mine action, and in 2017 it approved a national mine action strategy for 2017-20.¹⁰

With transition in place, UNDP formally concluded its Support to Tajikistan Mine Action Programme (STMAP) project in September 2019.¹¹ Any future support will be provided remotely from UNDP's regional hub in Istanbul.¹² The end of the programme resulted in loss of trained capacity for TNMAC as most STMAP staff were on UN salaries and left when the programme ended rather than continue on lower national salaries. It also raised questions as to whether TNMAC had sufficient staff capacity to fulfil its roles, notably in relation to planning and developing strategy.¹³

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) plays a major role in Tajikistan's mine action sector, in particular by conducting demining directly,¹⁴ but is not engaged in CMR clearance. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Programme Office in Dushanbe (OSCE POiD) has supported the MoD to update its multiyear plan, entitled "Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Tajikistan Co-operation Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2018–2023."¹⁵

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

TNMAC adopted a gender programme in October 2018 that was prepared by the Geneva Mine Action Programme (GMAP, now a programme of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, GICHD) and is committed to improving the situation of women in the mine action sector.¹⁶ A UNDP evaluation concluded TNMAC had made progress mainstreaming gender and diversity in mine action but the strategy has not yet been systematically implemented. Areas for further action included ensuring that training of trainers for risk education was gender balanced, introducing women QA/QC officers and developing a code of conduct and complaints mechanisms.¹⁷

Women account for around one fifth of personnel in survey and clearance teams in Tajikistan, and around one quarter of managerial/supervisory level positions. TNMAC plans to diversify survey teams to help reach a wider audience and more sources of information. Relevant mine action data are disaggregated by sex and age.¹⁸

TNMAC acknowledged it would be a challenge to achieve gender balance in view of the predominance of men in the military, where service is compulsory for men and voluntary

for women. TNMAC said where it could identify key positions that can be filled by female candidates, such as paramedics and/or QA/QC officers, this will be discussed and prioritised. In addition, TNMAC will seek to increase female civilian capacity in coordination with other implementing partners.¹⁹ The OSCE, which funds three demining teams, also seeks to promote gender awareness by collecting comprehensive relevant information.²⁰ Meantime, the Ministry of Defence's Humanitarian Demining Company (HDC) multi-task teams report to consult with all groups, including women and children, during survey and community liaison.²¹

NPA has a gender and diversity policy integrated into its Tajikistan project proposals and operations. Three of its six support staff are women but its 59 operational staff include only 13 women (22%) with more men than women in its survey and community liaison teams. NPA ensures that all groups are included during community consultation activities, and says it has a gender balanced community liaison team to help ensure this. NPA disaggregates mine action data by sex and age.²²

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

TNMAC completed an upgrade of its national mine action database from Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) version 6.0 to IMSMA Core, which became fully operational in May 2019 making it easier to input, edit, and retrieve data. TNMAC also introduced new data collection forms intended to simplify data entry and improve data quality.²³ The closure of UNDP's support programme led to loss of trained staff and raised concerns it would be difficult to maintain information management standards.²⁴

PLANNING AND TASKING

Tajikistan's Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in March 2019 forms the basis of its operational planning, superseding the National Strategy on Humanitarian Mine Action 2017–2020. The request said land release would concentrate on the Central region and the Tajik-Afghan border, especially the Shamsiddin Shohin district as the area most contaminated with anti-personnel mines.²⁵

Tajikistan does not have a strategic plan that addresses cluster munitions but TNMAC said in May 2020 it targeted completion of CMR clearance by 2023.²⁶

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Tajikistan's revised National Mine Action Standards (TNMAS) were approved by Decree No. 162 on 1 April 2017. The revised standards have been translated into Russian and English.²⁷

TNMAC agreed to an NPA proposal to introduce the CMRS/technical survey methodology to Tajikistan and conducted a pilot project in the central region of the country in July 2019.²⁸ It has approved NPA's CMRS standing operating procedures (SOPs) for use by all operators.²⁹

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Tajikistan's overall operational capacity in 2019 consisted of the Ministry of Defence's five HDC multi-task teams employing 50 deminers,³⁰ and NPA's five multi-purpose teams with 38 deminers. Only NPA conducted survey and clearance of CMR in 2019. NPA established a non-technical/targeted technical survey team in 2019 with four surveyors, one paramedic, and one task supervisor, as support to TNMAC's survey of mined and CMR-contaminated areas.³¹ NPA employed CMRS for the first time in Darvoz district confirming a hazard of 288,191m² in 2019 and conducting a second CMRS task in 2020. Central areas affected by cluster munitions are only accessible in summer months between July and September.³²

UST started to conduct CMRS in 2020 working with NPA on a task in Darvoz district's Sagidasht municipality.³³ UST, a national not-for-profit organisation, is accredited to conduct non-technical survey, risk education, and victim assistance, but is not yet accredited to conduct clearance.³⁴

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2019

Tajikistan released 724,420m² of CMR-affected area through a combination of survey and clearance in 2019, 78% more than the previous year when only clearance occurred.³⁵

SURVEY IN 2019

TNMAC reported release through survey of 201,809m² in 2019, all of it in reduction through technical survey by NPA.³⁶

CLEARANCE IN 2019

The only CMR clearance in 2019 was in Darvos district where NPA released a little over half a square kilometre (see Table 2), up from 407,571m² in 2018, and destroying 89 submunitions, compared with 63 the previous year.³⁷

Table 2: CMR clearance in 2019³⁸

Operator	Province	Areas released	Area cleared (m ²)	Submunitions destroyed	UXO destroyed
NPA	Darvos	1	522,611	89	2
Totals		1	522,611	89	2

UXO = unexploded ordnance other than submunitions

TNMAC has given priority to clearance of anti-personnel mines and meeting its APMBC Article 5 clearance obligations and it has not elaborated a detailed plan for CM survey and clearance but said it expects to complete clearance to be completed by 2023.³⁹ Tajikistan's government was reportedly preparing to establish a working group in late 2020 to consider the possibility of acceding to the CCM, bringing greater attention to this sphere of operations.⁴⁰

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- 1 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, Director, Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre (TNMAC), 28 May 2020.
 - 2 Emails from Melissa Andersson, Country Director, NPA, 29 April and 27 and 29 August 2020.
 - 3 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018; and interview with Daler Eshonjonov, TNMAC, and Erkin Huseinov, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Dushanbe, 29 May 2018.
 - 4 Statement of Tajikistan, Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015.
 - 5 Email from Melissa Andersson, Country Director, NPA, 29 April 2020.
 - 6 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 28 May 2020.
 - 7 2019 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 20.
 - 8 Ibid., pp. 20–21.
 - 9 2009 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 1; and TMAC, "About TMAC", 2012, accessed 10 March 2014 at: bit.ly/2LvPub1.
 - 10 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 18 October 2016; 2019 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 20–21.
 - 11 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 18 October 2016.
 - 12 Email from Olaf Juergensen, Regional Development and Mine Action Specialist, UNDP, 27 May 2020.
 - 13 UNDP, "Final Evaluation of Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme", Rebecca Roberts, 30 December 2019, pp. 12-13.
 - 14 MoD, "Strategic Plan on Humanitarian Demining 2013–2016", Dushanbe, 17 July 2013; and Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by Luka Buhin, Mine Action Office, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, 8 April 2014.
 - 15 Email from Luka Buhin, OSCE Tajikistan, 9 October 2017.
 - 16 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 14 June 2019.
 - 17 R. Roberts, "Final Evaluation of Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme", UNDP, 30 December 2019, pp. 17–18.
 - 18 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 25 July 2019.
 - 19 2019 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Additional Information received 3 August 2019.
 - 20 Email from Johan Dahl, Acting Head, Political-Military Department, OSCE Programme Office, Dushanbe, 13 May 2020.
 - 21 Email from Johan Dahl, with information provided by Khurram Maksudzoda, Head of the MoD HDC, 27 August 2019.
 - 22 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 11 April 2019 and 29 April 2020.
 - 23 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 28 May 2020.
 - 24 R. Roberts, "Final Evaluation of Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme", UNDP, 30 December 2019, p. 15.
 - 25 2019 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 35.
 - 26 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 28 May 2020.
 - 27 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; and Second APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (draft), 31 March 2019, p. 21.
 - 28 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 April 2020.
 - 29 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 27 August 2020.
 - 30 2019 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 45.
 - 31 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 27 March 2019.
 - 32 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 28 August 2020.
 - 33 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 April and 27 August 2020.
 - 34 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; and Aubrey Sutherland, NPA, 18 October 2017.
 - 35 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 28 May 2020.
 - 36 Ibid.
 - 37 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 April 2020.
 - 38 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 28 May 2020.
 - 39 Ibid.
 - 40 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 27 August 2020.