

KEY DATA

CLUSTER MUNITION CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM

ACCORDING TO NATIONAL
AUTHORITY DATA IN 2021

0.65KM²

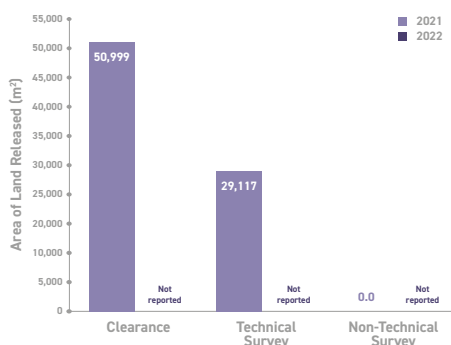
SUBMUNITION
CLEARANCE IN 2022

NOT REPORTED

SUBMUNITIONS
DESTROYED IN 2022

NOT REPORTED

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2022, there were periodic violations of the 10 November 2020 ceasefire that ended the six-week conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. The most significant of these involved hostilities on 13–14 September 2022 after Azerbaijan accused Armenia of “large-scale provocations”, including laying mines in its territory,¹ allegations that Armenia denied. There were no reports of either Armenia or Azerbaijan using cluster munitions in 2022. Comprehensive cluster munition remnants (CMR) contamination and land release data were not disclosed by Armenia for 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Armenia should commit to never again use cluster munitions and should accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a matter of priority. In the meantime, Armenia should comply with its obligations under international human rights law to clear CMR on territory under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.
- Armenia should expedite the adoption of national mine action legislation.
- Armenia should finalise the strategic plan for mine action, including for CMR survey and clearance.

CLUSTER MUNITION SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT

- Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise (CHDE)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- In addition to serving as the national mine action authority, the CHDE also conducts survey and clearance

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust (HALO)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- United Nations Development Project (UNDP)

1 “Explainer: What happened in Armenia and Azerbaijan on 13-14 September”, Open Caucasus Media (OC Media), 15 September 2022 at: <https://bit.ly/3z0P9Na>.

UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION

Prior to the 2020 conflict with Azerbaijan, Armenia had just one confirmed hazardous area (CHA) containing CMR: in Kornidzor, Syunik province.² The six-week armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region that broke out in September 2020 ended with Azerbaijan regaining control over most of its internationally recognised territories except for a part of Nagorno-Karabakh.³ In the course of the fighting, both Armenia and Azerbaijan are reported to have used cluster munitions and new cluster munition-contaminated area was recorded in Armenia in 2021.⁴

Armenia's Center for Humanitarian Mining and Expertise (CHDE) reported direct evidence of new explosive ordnance contamination from the 2020 conflict, including unexploded M095 submunitions, in Gegharkunik, Syunik, and Tavush provinces bordering Azerbaijan. According to the CHDE, artillery, including BM-21 rocket launchers, were used to bomb Armenian settlements bordering Azerbaijan.⁵ In November 2020, Amnesty International reported a strike by Azerbaijan, possibly from a Grad rocket, which landed in the Armenian village of Davit Bek in Syunik province. Azerbaijan

also used cluster munitions in attacks on Nagorno-Karabakh during the 2020 conflict. (See Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants* report on Nagorno-Karabakh for further information).

As at the end of 2021, the CHDE reported a total of almost 0.65km² of cluster munition-contaminated area (including contamination in Kornidzor that pre-dated the 2020 conflict). This comprised nearly 0.36km² of CHA and 0.29km² of suspected hazardous area (SHA) (see Table 1).⁶ Of these totals, 16,341m² of CHA and 290,982m² of SHA in Davit Bek resulted from the 2020 conflict, contamination that was added to the national Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database. Another 35,109m² was discovered and released in Davit Bek in 2021 following technical survey (TS), 5,992m² was cleared and 29,117m² was reduced. In 2022, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided financial and technical support to the CHDE, including the provision of equipment, to conduct TS and clearance for another 11,052m² in Davit Bek. Detailed CMR contamination data were not available for 2022.

Table 1: Cluster munition-contaminated area by province (at end 2021*)⁷

Province	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs that may contain CMR	Area (m ²)
Syunik (Kornidzor)	1	339,881	0	0
Syunik (Davit Bek)	1	16,341	3	290,982
Totals	2	356,222	3	290,982

* No contamination data were available for 2022

** 11,052m² of hazardous area was released in Davit Bek in 2022 with UNDP support,⁸ but Mine Action Review has not deducted this from the contaminated area in Table 1, as it was unclear whether the released land was cluster munition-contaminated area or other battle area.

Between April and September 2022, with UNDP support, the CHDE conducted non-technical survey (NTS) in the Ararat, Gegharkunik, Syunik, Tavush, and Vayots Dzor provinces of Armenia. Following the hostilities of mid-September 2022, again with UNDP support, the CHDE conducted "refreshed" NTS in Syunik, Gegharkunik and Vayots Dzor provinces, to assess new contamination.⁹ A baseline NTS launched in 2022 had been expected to determine more precisely the extent of contamination before year end,¹⁰ and by the middle of 2022, the baseline had been completed in Syunik province.¹¹ It is unclear whether the baseline survey was completed elsewhere by the end of 2022. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) supported the CHDE in conducting a Baseline Capacity Assessment of the Armenia programme in 2022.¹²

OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND LANDMINES

Armenia is also contaminated with anti-personnel mines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW). (See Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Armenia for further information).

2 Email from Margaret Lazyan, Head of Mine Risk Education and Victim Assistance, Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise (CHDE), 26 July 2021.

3 T. De Waal, "Unfinished Business in the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict", Carnegie Europe, 11 February 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3PFvARZ>.

4 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, SNCO Director, CHDE, 11 May 2022.

5 Emails from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 26 April and 26 July 2021.

6 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022.

7 Ibid.

8 Email from Karinée Khojayan, Project Coordinator, UNDP, 15 March 2023.

9 Emails from Karinée Khojayan, UNDP, 15 March and 16 June 2023.

10 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 13 June 2022.

11 Ibid.; and emails from Karinée Khojayan, UNDP, 15 March and 16 June 2023.

12 Email from Stanislav Damjanovic, Country Focal Point, GICHD, 25 May 2023.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The CHDE was established by the Armenian government in 2011 as a non-commercial State body responsible for conducting survey and clearance and identifying contaminated areas. In 2014, the CHDE was designated Armenia's national mine action authority (NMAA).¹³ An Advisory Board oversees the CHDE at the Deputy Minister level, with representation from the Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Emergency Situations; Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure; Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports; the Ministry of Justice; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁴ In 2013, in conformity with a government decree, the CHDE began developing national mine action legislation. But as at May 2022, the draft mine action law was reported to still be under development, with the hope it might be finalised by the end of 2022.¹⁵ At the time of writing, there was no indication that the legislation had been adopted.

Key decisions on mine action are taken centrally by the CHDE, although in December 2022, other stakeholders were invited to a strategy stakeholder workshop and to participate in future work.¹⁶ In 2021, the government allocated AMD317.6 million (approx. US\$695,000) to cover the costs of the CHDE and AMD6.3 million (approx. US\$14,000) for survey and clearance operations.¹⁷ The level of funding provided in 2022 is not known. The national authorities do not provide direct funding to The HALO Trust (HALO), the only international clearance operator present in Armenia. HALO did not conduct CMR land release activities in 2022.¹⁸

Obtaining visas for Armenia is straightforward for HALO employees and HALO has not faced any significant difficulties in importing demining equipment when it has needed to do so. However, Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) undergo approval from relevant ministries and the CHDE and the process can be lengthy.

UNDP provides a range of capacity development activities to the CHDE. This includes support with NTS, TS, and other land release activities, as mentioned above. In addition, UNDP has assisted the CHDE with renewing explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and information technology (IT) equipment; drafting operational plans; reviewing national mine action standards (NMAS), and strengthening risk education and coordination capacities.¹⁹ UNDP and the GICHD also supported the CHDE in installing IMSMA Core and training staff on its use.²⁰

Furthermore, UNDP and the GICHD supported the CHDE to review and draft the national mine action strategy.²¹ The GICHD facilitated a strategy stakeholder workshop in Yerevan in December 2022 which presented the strategic planning process on strategy development which included international good practice and lessons learnt on strategic planning.²² In addition, as indicated above, the GICHD supported the CHDE in conducting a baseline assessment of the Armenia programme in 2022.²³

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

The CHDE has previously reported that it deploys methods and tools to avoid damaging the environment where possible.²⁴ In May 2022, the CHDE reported that Armenia did not yet have a national mine action standard on environmental management, but planned to develop one.²⁵ No update was available as at June 2023.

HALO seeks to minimise the environmental impact when it conducts survey and clearance in Armenia. It minimises fuel consumption by sharing vehicles; it does not burn vegetation during the clearance process and does not remove vegetation unnecessarily; it takes care not to contaminate water sources with fuels, lubricants, and paints; it takes rubbish away when it leaves a task; and removes any metal contamination. HALO also plans clearance operations around agricultural planting and harvesting cycles.²⁶

13 Emails from Ruben Arakelyan, Director, CHDE, 8 June 2015; and Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 10 August 2020.

14 Emails from Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 13 July 2022; and Ani Zakaryan, Head of Information Management, CHDE, 21 July 2022.

15 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022.

16 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, Head of Region – Europe (South Caucasus), HALO, 16 March 2023.

17 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022.

18 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

19 Emails from Karinée Khojayan, UNDP, 15 March 2023.

20 Emails from Karinée Khojayan, UNDP, 15 March 2023; and Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May 2023.

21 Ibid.

22 Email from Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May 2023.

23 Ibid.

24 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022.

25 Ibid.

26 Emails from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 18 May 2022 and 16 March 2023.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

In May 2022, the CHDE reported that it did not have a gender policy or associated implementation plan but that gender had been mainstreamed in Armenia's draft national mine action strategy. No update was available as of June 2023. The CHDE reported in 2022 that during survey and community liaison activities, all groups affected by contamination were consulted, including women and children, and ethnic or minority groups. Furthermore, according to the CHDE the needs of women and children in affected communities are taken into account in prioritisation, planning, and tasking of survey and clearance operations. However, as of May 2022, the CHDE did not disaggregate mine action data by sex.²⁷

The CHDE is said to offer equal employment opportunities for both men and women. In 2021, seventeen of the fifty CHDE employees were women (32%, down from 36% in 2020), while women held six of sixteen managerial positions. Two of six staff in the Operations Department were women, as were two staff in the training centre and five of six staff in

the Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) Group. As of May 2022, survey teams did not include representatives from different ethnic or minority groups.²⁸ No update was available as at June 2023.

HALO, in its limited recent activities in Armenia, disaggregates mine action data by age and sex. It only employed one staff member in Armenia in 2022, a female administrator.²⁹ While HALO is an equal opportunities employer, due to the local cultural context and nature of the work, the majority of staff it deploys in Armenia are men.³⁰ NTS and risk education training of trainer teams that worked in Armenia in 2022 comprised men only.³¹ HALO's teams adhere to a gender-sensitive approach and relevant policies, and consider the needs of the minority groups, such as internally displaced persons (IDPs). All tasks, however, are allocated by the CHDE, and HALO is not involved in task prioritization.³²

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

The CHDE manages the national IMSMA database.³³ In 2022, with UNDP and GICHD support, the CHDE completed the installation of IMSMA Core, which had been delayed by COVID-19 since 2019.³⁴ By May 2023, an in-country server had been set up and configured. Basic IMSMA CORE training was provided to CHDE staff in the summer of 2022, and two CHDE staff members attended the GICHD's advanced administrator training in Spiez, Switzerland, in May 2023.³⁵

PLANNING AND TASKING

The draft National Strategic Plan on Mine Action was originally presented to the Armenian Government for approval in 2018. However, since early 2021, the plan had been under reconsideration primarily due to the emergence of new challenges in the aftermath of the 2020 conflict.³⁶ The strategy, along with the operational plans, were finalised in 2023 and adopted by the CHDE Board in May 2023.³⁷ The main objectives of the original draft plan were to address, as a priority, anti-personnel mines in CHAs that have a humanitarian impact, and increasing community safety in support of the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).³⁸ No information is available on the contents of the reviewed strategy.

Tasking for clearance is based on CHDE criteria. Priority is given first to contaminated areas that are up to 1km away from a population centre, then to those near agricultural land, and finally to contaminated areas that negatively affect the environment. These are mostly located in mountainous areas. To optimise efficient deployment of resources, clearance plans are typically drawn up on a community-by-community basis.³⁹

In 2022, the CHDE started a baseline non-technical survey to determine the extent of new explosive ordnance contamination arising from the 2020 conflict, and planned to clear 50,000m² of explosive ordnance-contaminated area and to reduce a further 60,000m².⁴⁰ Priorities for clearance were to be defined when the NTS results were analysed.⁴¹ In June 2022 the CHDE reported

27 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022.

28 Ibid.

29 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

30 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 18 May 2022.

31 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

32 Ibid.

33 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, CHDE, 19 March 2014.

34 Email from Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May 2023.

35 Emails from Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May and 23 June 2023.

36 Emails from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 10 August 2020 and 26 April 2021.

37 Emails from Karinée Khojayan, UNDP, 15 March and 10 July 2023.

38 Email from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 19 April 2019.

39 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, CHDE, 28 April 2017.

40 Emails from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022; and Ani Zakaryan, CHDE, 21 July 2022.

41 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022.

that it had finalised NTS for all of Syunik province.⁴² In March 2022, the CHDE issued an NTS task to HALO for nine areas in Gegharkunik province which was completed in June 2022; no CMR tasks were identified by the survey.⁴³ There is no available information on whether the land release targets were achieved in 2022.

At the strategy stakeholder workshop in December 2022, the CHDE indicated it would like HALO to provide support with clearance arising from the September 2022 incursion.⁴⁴

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

The CHDE developed the Armenian NMAS, which were approved by the government in 2014.⁴⁵ The CHDE has reported that these have been reviewed to ensure they are consistent with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and international best practice⁴⁶ and in 2022, UNDP supported a review of the NMAS.⁴⁷ The overall quality of Armenia's NMAS on land release varies. While some chapters provide sufficient and good-quality information on national requirements, others tend to be overly prescriptive with sections that are more procedural. There are sections on "All Reasonable Effort" (ARE), evidence of criteria, liability, and residual risk. Some are taken directly from the IMAS although the text has been adapted to the local context.⁴⁸ The CHDE has initiated a review of the NMAS which could be completed by the end of 2023, and intends to develop a NMAS on accreditation.⁴⁹

The CHDE has been developing standing operating procedures (SOPs) for several years.⁵⁰ SOPs on manual mine clearance, battle area clearance (BAC), marking of hazardous areas, and medical support were all elaborated by 2018.⁵¹ In 2020, the CHDE prepared SOPs on Information Management (IM), NTS, TS, EOD and quality management (QM).⁵² No update was available for 2022.

When conducting occasional deployments in Armenia, HALO operates under SOPs that were updated in line with those in Nagorno-Karabakh, which are accredited by the CHDE.⁵³ In terms of residual contamination, Armenia has a limited but sustainable capacity to conduct survey and clearance. In addition to its own staff, the CHDE can also recruit additional staff from a roster of trained people.⁵⁴

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

The CHDE was planning to deploy two more clearance teams in 2022,⁵⁵ but it is not known whether this was achieved. In 2021, the CHDE deployed three NTS teams, each comprising a team leader and three surveyors, and two TS teams. This constituted an increase in the number of operational teams from the previous year with the addition of two NTS teams and two TS teams.

In 2022, HALO deployed two NTS teams with a total of eight personnel that continued to work on tasks in nine villages previously assigned by the CHDE in 2022.⁵⁶

QM is conducted in accordance with IMAS and the NMAS. Quality assurance (QA) is conducted by dedicated officers who make regular field visits to inspect cleared land.⁵⁷ Quality control (QC) is conducted once clearance of the land has been completed, prior to handover.⁵⁸

There were no demining accidents in 2022 and no attacks on HALO staff.⁵⁹ COVID-19 had no significant impact on operations during the year.⁶⁰

42 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 13 June 2022.

43 Emails from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 13 June 2022; Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 May 2022; and David Crawford, Programme Manager, Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia, HALO, 19 June 2023.

44 Emails from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023; and David Crawford, HALO, 19 June 2023.

45 Email from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 19 April 2019.

46 Emails from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 19 April 2019 and 26 April 2021.

47 Email from Karinée Khojayan, UNDP, 15 March 2023.

48 Email from Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May 2023.

49 Emails from Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May and 23 June 2023.

50 Email from Varsine Miskaryan, Operations Manager, CHDE, 8 August 2016.

51 Email from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 8 August 2018.

52 Email from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 26 April 2021.

53 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 18 May 2022.

54 Email from Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May 2023.

55 Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022.

56 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023; and David Crawford, HALO, 19 June 2023.

57 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, CHDE, 8 June 2015.

58 Email from Margaret Lazyan, CHDE, 8 August 2018.

59 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

60 Emails from Stanislav Damjanovic, GICHD, 25 May 2023 and 24 July 2023; and Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

No comprehensive data on land release were available for 2022. As indicated above, UNDP supported the CHDE in TS, clearance, and land release of 11,052m² in Davit Bek in the Syunik region in 2022.⁶¹ This is the same region where CMR had been cleared in 2021. However, it was unclear whether the land released in 2022 was cluster munition-contaminated area or other battle area.

According to data provided previously by the CHDE, in 2021, 80,116m² of cluster munition-contaminated area was released: 29,117m² reduced through TS, and 50,999m² through clearance with the destruction of 25 submunitions (3 during clearance and 22 during EOD spot tasks). No cluster munition-contaminated area was cancelled through NTS in 2021.

SURVEY IN 2022

No disaggregated data on land release through TS and NTS were available for 2022.

Although no cluster munition-contaminated area was cancelled through NTS in 2021, NTS did result in defining a total of 343,173m² of new hazardous areas in Davit Bek consisting of three CHAs totalling 52,191m², and three SHAs totalling 290,982m². Two of the CHAs were subsequently technically surveyed and released through clearance (5,992m²) and reduction (29,117m²).⁶²

Following the end of the conflict in November 2020, the CHDE conducted TS and EOD tasks in Syunik province and by July 2021 had destroyed more than 30 submunitions. In 2021 alone, the CHDE reduced 29,117m² of cluster munition-contaminated area through TS.⁶³

CLEARANCE IN 2022

No disaggregated data on the clearance of CMR-contaminated land were available for 2022.

The CHDE reported that a total of 50,999m² of CMR contaminated land was cleared in 2021, with three submunitions destroyed.⁶⁴ This included 46,007m² of battle area in Syunik cleared by HALO where no CMR were found.⁶⁵ A further 22 submunitions discovered by the CHDE during EOD spot tasks in 2021 were destroyed by the Armenian army.⁶⁶

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

There is no fixed date for the completion of clearance of remaining CMR contamination in Armenia and NTS continues to determine the extent of new CMR and explosive ordnance contamination. The CHDE has indicated that funding is needed to accelerate progress in clearance.⁶⁷

Table 2: Five-year summary of CMR clearance

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2022	N/K
2021	50,999
2020	3,850
2019	0
2018	0
Total	54,849

N/K= not known

⁶¹ Email from Karinée Khojayan, UNDP, 15 March 2023.

⁶² Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 18 May 2022.

⁶⁶ Emails from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022; and Ani Zakaryan, CHDE, 21 July 2022.

⁶⁷ Email from Vaghinak Sargsyan, CHDE, 11 May 2022.