PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE	For 2015	For 2014
Problem understood	5	5
Target date for completion of mine clearance	5	5
Targeted clearance	6	6
Efficient clearance	5	5
National funding of programme	5	4
Timely clearance	4	4
Land release system in place	6	6
National mine action standards	7	7
Reporting on progress	6	6
Improving performance	6	6
PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE	5.5	5.4

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Armenia has now developed an independent national clearance capacity, following training and support by HALO Trust under a United States (US) government grant. This raises the prospect of increased clearance output.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- **Armenia should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.**
- **Armenia should clarify the extent of remaining mine contamination, including in military restricted zones, and mobilise the necessary resources to finish clearance.**
- **Armenia should develop a national mine action strategy and set a deadline for completion of mine clearance operations.**

CONTAMINATION

Armenia has almost 6.7km^2 of confirmed mined area and a further 17.3km^2 of suspected mined area, as set out in Table 1. The confirmed and suspected areas contain anti-personnel mines, anti-vehicle mines, or a combination of anti-personnel mines, anti-vehicle mines, and unexploded ordnance (UXO).[1]

Of 99 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs), 57 contain anti-personnel mines, totalling just under 3.9km^2. Five of the eight suspected hazardous (SHAs), totalling just over 13.5km^2, may also be mined. The breakdown of contamination by type is detailed in Table 1.[2]

Table 1: Contamination as at end 2015[3]

Type of contamination	CHAs	Area (m^2)	SHAs	Area (m^2)
AP mines	42	2,572,808	2	105,123
AV mines	42	2,812,018	3	3,728,442
AP and AV mines	12	1,275,775	2	13,470,000
AP mines and UXO	2	12,828	1	377
AP and AV mines and UXO	1	4,842	0	0
Totals	**99**	**6,678,271**	**8**	**17,303,942**

AP = Anti-personnel AV = Anti-vehicle

Four of Armenia's eleven provinces still contain CHAs or SHAs. Three provinces are contaminated with both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines, while the fourth is contaminated solely with anti-vehicle mines, as set out in Table 2.[4]

1 Email from Varsine Miskaryan, Operations Officer, Armenian Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise (ACHDE), 8 August 2016.

2 Email from Varsine Miskaryan, ACHDE, 8 August 2016.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

Table 2: Contamination by province as at end 2015[5]

Province	Type of contamination	CHAs	Area (m²)	SHAs	Area (m²)
Gegharqunik	AP mines	3	584,022	2	105,123
	AV mines	5	2,428,953	3	3,728,442
Syunik	AP mines	33	1,820,835	0	0
	AV mines	24	300,010	0	0
	AP and AV mines	9	1,246,346	0	0
	AP mines and UXO	2	12,828	1	377
	AP and AV mines and UXO	1	4,842	0	0
Vayots Dzor	AVMs	3	67,452	0	0
Tavush	AP mines	6	167,551	0	0
	AV mines	10	15,603	0	0
	AP and AV mines	3	29,429	2	13,470,000
Totals		**99**	**6,677,871***	**8**	**17,303,942**

*There is a small, as yet unexplained discrepancy of 400m² between the total area of CHA in Tables 1 and 2.

In addition, 14 CHAs and six SHAs contain only UXO. These areas, which total 1.4km² and 6.4km², respectively, are located in the provinces of Gegharqunik, Syunik, and Tavush.[6]

The Armenian Centre for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise (ACHDE) reports that 34,523 people are impacted by remaining mine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination.[7] Priority for clearance is given to agricultural land.[8]

Mine and ERW contamination in Armenia is primarily the consequence of armed conflict with Azerbaijan in 1988–94, which saw both sides use mines. The heaviest contamination is along the borders and confrontation lines with Azerbaijan, including the area in and around Nagorno-Karabakh and other territories controlled by the Nagorno-Karabakh Defence Forces. Armenia's border with Georgia has been cleared of mines, whereas the border with Turkey, also mined during the Soviet era, is still contaminated.[9] While non-technical survey (NTS) in 2012–13 by the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD) did not find evidence of mines outside the buffer zones in Ararat province, which borders Turkey, certain areas on the border with Turkey remain unsurveyed because they are controlled by Russian border troops.[10]

The 2005 Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) identified 102 SHAs in five districts bordering Azerbaijan. The LIS estimated the extent of contamination at more than 321km², affecting 60 communities.[11] In August 2012, HALO Trust conducted partial survey of 17 sites, cancelling 80% of the area identified by the LIS there. However, HALO Trust activities were suspended following a grant awarded by the US Department of State to FSD to re-survey Armenia.[12]

FSD conducted NTS from November 2012 to May 2013.[13] The survey found 131 "dangerous areas" totalling 47km², in four districts bordering Azerbaijan. Thirteen of these areas, totalling 1.8km², were found to contain only UXO and not mines.[14] Of the 131 "dangerous areas", 17 were SHAs that covered 26km² and 114 were CHAs that covered 21km².[15]

5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, 19 March 2014, and interview in Geneva, 1 April 2014; and email from Varsine Miskaryan, ACHDE, 8 August 2016.
10 ACHDE, "FSD non-technical mine action survey", ACHDE, Yerevan, 2013, p. 9; and email from Varsine Miskaryan, ACHDE, 8 August 2016.
11 UNDP Armenia Humanitarian Demining Project, "Landmine Impact Survey in Armenia 2005", Yerevan, August 2005.
12 Emails from Andrew Moore, Caucasus and Balkans Desk Officer, HALO Trust, 17 February 2014; and Valeria Fabbroni, Head of Operations, FSD, 26 February 2014.
13 ACHDE, "FSD non-technical mine action survey", Yerevan, 2013, p. 12.
14 Ibid.
15 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, 21 February 2014.

FSD was mandated by the Government of Armenia to survey impacted communities outside the military restricted zone. Therefore, 50 SHAs that fall inside the military perimeter were not included in the survey, which was conducted only within the internationally recognised boundaries of Armenia.[16]

During the 2012–13 survey, FSD teams collected data on 271 non-recent mine victims. These records were submitted to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which maintains a mine victim database in Armenia.[17] In addition, the ACHDE is the coordination body to which all casualty data is submitted for inclusion into the national Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database.[18]

Territory seized from Azerbaijan during the conflict is believed to be significantly contaminated by mines and ERW, including unexploded submunitions.[19] However, the precise extent of contamination in those districts is unknown.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

In 2002, the ACHDE was established under the Ministry of Defence as a state agency for mine action activities.[20] On 17 February 2011, the Government of Armenia adopted Decree 143, which changed the legal status of the ACHDE to a civilian, non-commercial state organisation responsible for conducting survey and clearance, and identifying contaminated areas. Under its new status, the ACHDE can negotiate with international demining organisations, accept international funding, sign contracts, and receive international assistance.[21] The ACHDE has an advisory board, composed of representatives from the Ministries of Defence, Emergency Situations, Territorial Administration, and Justice.[22] In 2013, a government decree made the ACHDE Armenia's National Mine Action Centre (see below section, legislation and standards).[23]

Strategic Planning

Armenia does not yet have a formally constituted national mine action programme or strategy.[24] In March 2013, a discussion was held at the Ministry of Defence on the 2012–13 survey.[25] The chair of ACHDE's council, Ara Nazaryan, stated that "the drafting of a national mine action programme, its approval and subsequent implementation are priority tasks for comprehensive demining activities in the territory of the Republic of Armenia."[26]

Based on the survey findings, ACHDE was to develop a national mine action plan that it would implement following government approval.[27] Alongside development of the draft mine action law (see below), and with the support of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Yerevan, ACHDE has been setting up a national mine action programme, which will benefit from national funding, guided by a national strategy for mine action and mine action plan.[28]

In 2014, ACHDE launched an initiative to help improve efficiency in coordinating and directing mine action operations, and ensure a "realistic" land release policy.[29] Criteria used to prioritise clearance tasks include the distance of hazardous areas from local communities, the intended use of land post-clearance, and the potential for development projects on cleared land. To optimise efficient deployment of resources, clearance plans are typically drawn up on a community-by-community basis.[30]

16 ACHDE, "FSD non-technical mine action survey", Yerevan, 2013, p. 7.
17 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, 19 March 2014.
18 ACHDE, "FSD non-technical mine action survey", Yerevan, 2013, p. 10.
19 Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action, "Scope of the Problem", 6 February 2014.
20 J. Keane, "Armenia", *Journal of Mine Action*, Issue 11.1 (2007).
21 Armenian Ministry of Defence, "The New Legal Status of the Humanitarian De-Mining Center", 13 February 2014.
22 ACHDE, "About us", accessed 24 July 2016, at: http://www.chde.am/index_en.htm
23 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, 8 June 2015.
24 Response to Mine Action Monitor questionnaire by Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, 30 March 2015.
25 ACHDE, "Systematic Approach to Humanitarian Demining in the Territory of Armenia", 10 February 2014.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Email from Varsine Miskaryan, ACHDE, 8 August 2016.
29 Response to Mine Action Monitor questionnaire by Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, 30 March 2015.
30 Email from Varsine Miskaryan, ACHDE, 8 August 2016.

Legislation and Standards

In 2013, in conformity with a government decree, ACHDE began developing national mine action legislation. According to the decree, ACHDE will draft the law and a mine action strategy for discussion among the government in the first half of 2016, in addition to proposing possible amendments to national mine action standards covering explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and the use of mine detection dogs (MDDs).[31] ACHDE reported that with support from the OSCE office in Yerevan, it actually began drafting the law in 2015.[32] ACHDE expected the draft law to be submitted for government approval by the end of 2016.[33]

In 2013, with the assistance of FSD, ACHDE developed the Armenian National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) and submitted them for government approval. The NMAS were approved by the government in April 2014.[34] With FSD's support, ACHDE set up and manages the national IMSMA database.[35]

Operators

FSD had been present in Armenia since 2012,[36] but withdrew at the end of January 2015 due to lack of funding.[37] From August 2013 to January 2015, FSD implemented a capacity development programme, covering: basic EOD training; mentoring ACHDE in tasking, planning, quality assurance (QA)/quality control (QC); IMSMA; reporting systems and mechanisms; data collection; and support for the elaboration of standing operating procedures (SOPs) and policy.[38]

In mid-2012, HALO Trust briefly operated in Armenia, mainly undertaking NTS. At the end of 2013, it deployed staff to one of Armenia's affected regions with a view to starting technical survey and clearance.[39] In September 2013, HALO opened an office in the Kapan region in order to initiate its new demining activities under a US$600,000 grant awarded by the US Department of State for a two-year period (August 2013–July 2015).[40] HALO began clearance in April 2014 and continued in 2015, with funding secured until July.[41] In addition to its clearance operations, HALO also worked to build national capacity in Armenia through a training programme, and supervised deminers from the Armenian Peacekeeping Engineering Brigade (PKEB) to international standards, so that they could manage demining operations by the end of 2015.[42] As part of the capacity-building project, HALO conducted training courses for the PKEB in manual demining techniques, battle area clearance (BAC), team leader training, and IMAS EOD Level II.[43]

HALO Trust's US funding was subsequently extended to October 2015, but HALO took the decision to make its own manual and mechanical teams redundant at the end of July, in order to provide adequate resources for the continuation of PKEB's operations until October. This decision supported the project's end goal of enabling Armenia to have a sustainable mine clearance capacity.[44] At the completion of HALO's US grant the PKEB teams successfully operated from August to October 2015 as an independent national clearance capacity. HALO will continue to provide advice and refresher training in 2016, as required by ACHDE, to ensure the national capacity's long-term success.[45]

Clearance assets deployed in Armenia in 2015 consisted of HALO clearance teams and HALO-led teams from the PKEB. HALO deployed two six-strong manual clearance teams and one three-person mechanical team, operating an armoured Volvo frontloader. HALO's manual and mechanical teams worked from January to the end of July 2015.[46]

31 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, 30 March 2015; and email from Varsine Miskaryan, ACHDE, 3 September 2015.

32 Email from Varsine Miskaryan, ACHDE, 8 August 2016.

33 Ibid.

34 Emails from Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, 19 March 2014 and 30 March 2015.

35 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, 19 March 2014.

36 Email from Valeria Fabbroni, FSD, 26 February 2014.

37 Email from Matthew Wilson, Deputy Head of Operations, FSD, 11 May 2015.

38 Ibid.

39 Email from Andrew Moore, HALO, 17 February 2014.

40 Interview with Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, in Geneva, 1 April 2014; and email, 30 March 2015.

41 Emails from Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, 30 March 2015; and Andrew Moore, HALO, 22 May 2015.

42 Interview with Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, in Geneva, 1 April 2014; and email from Andrew Moore, HALO, 22 May 2015.

43 Email from Andrew Moore, HALO, 28 September 2016.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Emails from Varsine Miskaryan, ACHDE, 8 August 2016, and Andrew Moore, HALO, 28 September 2016.

In addition, HALO led and supervised three manual clearance teams, each with six PKEB deminers.[47] While HALO Trust supervised PKEB deminers in the field, their deployment schedule, support, and staff rotations were determined by the Armenian Ministry of Defence.[48] The PKEB teams worked from May to the end of October 2015.[49]

In January 2014, the Foundation for Demining and Demolition (FDD) was established as a national, civilian, and non-commercial demining organisation in Armenia with support from ACHDE, Geowulf LLC, FSD, and the Government of Armenia.[50] Its main tasks are to conduct demining and destroy expired or obsolete arms and ammunition in Armenia.[51] As of writing, however, FDD had not conducted any operations since its creation.[52]

Quality Management

In 2014, with technical support from FSD, a quality management (QM) system was developed to be implemented in accordance with IMAS and the NMAS. QA is conducted by dedicated officers who make regular field visits to inspect cleared land.[53]

HALO deployed a supervisor to train PKEB staff in accordance with IMAS and to provide QA, and a HALO Trust supervisor was present in the field at all times.[54] ACHDE conducted regular QA of HALO Trust's clearance as well as post-clearance QC.[55]

ACHDE will further develop its SOPs once the draft law on mine action has been adopted.[56]

LAND RELEASE

Total mined area released by clearance in 2015 was 0.07km^2, compared with 0.04 km^2 cleared in 2014. No area was cancelled by NTS.[57]

Survey in 2015

Through survey in 2015, ACHDE confirmed 25,201m^2 as mined, and one additional SHA, totalling 377m^2, was recorded in Syunik province.[58]

Clearance in 2015

In 2015, HALO Trust and PKEB teams cleared seven mined areas in Syunik province, totalling 65,636m^2, destroying five anti-personnel mines and three items of UXO.[59]

Of the total 65,636m^2 cleared, 33,385m^2 was cleared by three HALO teams during January to June 2016, and the remainder by PKEB teams, under HALO supervision.[60]

HALO teams deployed throughout the winter months. The PKEB teams were withdrawn on 29 October 2014, as they camped in tents and there was no suitable winter accommodation. The teams returned for training in March for deployment in April 2015.[61]

From August 2015, HALO ceased its clearance operations in Armenia, and instead retained limited capacity in key leadership positions with the PKEB teams to help them to become fully self-sustaining.[62]

Progress in 2016

Since HALO Trust's departure from Armenia in October 2015, only a national capacity for technical survey and clearance remains. No mechanical clearance was forecast in 2016, and the number of manual clearance teams was reduced to two six-strong teams of PKEB deminers.[63] The manual PKEB teams reportedly started clearance in July 2016.[64]

In addition, six MDD teams were also being introduced in Armenia for the first time in 2016, for use in PKEB's technical survey. The MDD project is funded by the US Department of State and private donations from US citizens with support from ITF Enhancing Human Security and the Marshall Legacy Institute.[65] As part of the project, Bosnian Mine Detection Dog Center (MDDC) trainers were leading a dog-handler integration course with PKEB dog handlers.[66] As at August 2016, training was ongoing in Syunik Marz.[67]

47 Ibid.
48 Emails from Andrew Moore, HALO, 22 May 2015; and Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, 30 March 2015.
49 Email from Varsine Miskaryan, ACHDE, 8 August 2016.
50 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, 20 March 2014.
51 Ibid., 19 March 2014.
52 Email from Varsine Miskaryan, ACHDE, 8 August 2016.
53 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, 8 June 2015.
54 Email from Andrew Moore, HALO, 22 May 2015.
55 Ibid.
56 Email from Varsine Miskaryan, ACHDE, 8 August 2016.
57 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, 30 March 2015.
58 Email from Varsine Miskaryan, ACHDE, 8 August 2016.
59 Emails from Varsine Miskaryan, ACHDE, 8 August 2016, and Andrew Moore, HALO, 28 September 2016.
60 Email from Andrew Moore, HALO, 28 September 2016.
61 Ibid., 18 October 2016.
62 Ibid., 28 September 2016.
63 Email from Varsine Miskaryan, ACHDE, 8 August 2016.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Armenia is not a state party or signatory to the APMBC but nonetheless has obligations under international human rights law to protect life, which requires clearance of mines as soon as possible.[68]

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, although Armenia has not acceded to the APMBC, it voluntarily provides information on anti-personnel mines to the United Nations and to the OSCE for transparency and confidence-building.[69] Whatever information is provided, however, is not publicly available.

One of the objectives of the Armenian Mine Action Strategy 2007–11 was release through technical survey and clearance of 2.2% (7km^2) of the SHAs identified by the LIS and 6.8% of the SHAs outside the restricted military zone.[70] Scant progress was, though, made towards these targets.[71] Armenia claims that challenges in its mine and ERW clearance include the low level of contamination and the random distribution of mines it is confronting.[72] One of Armenia's priorities for 2015 was to conduct demining close to populated areas, and to carry out technical survey to better define the borders of mined and UXO-contaminated areas.[73]

Historically, Armenia has not reported systematically on its mine clearance operations, though detailed information was provided for 2014 and 2015. In the past, demining in Armenia has been slow and productivity rates correspondingly low, with the Ministry of Defence reporting only some 2km^2 of mined area cleared from 2002 to the end of 2008.[74] During 2013, only NTS was conducted (by FSD, with the support of ACHDE).[75] In April 2014, clearance operations began again in Armenia, and continued in 2015 and 2016. Humanitarian demining was not carried out prior to this, due to lack of donor funding.[76]

Table 3: Mine clearance in 2011–15[77]

Year	Area cleared (km^2)
2015	0.07
2014	0.04
2013	0
2012	0
2011	0
Total	**0.11**

National funding supports the budget expenses of ACHDE, but Armenia does not fund clearance operations. ACHDE does, however, provide in-kind support to US-funded demining projects, including support staff and fuel, food, and accommodation.[78] Armenia claims to have the necessary expertise and equipment to complete mine and UXO clearance on its territory, but stated that progress is contingent on financial support from the international community.[79] No target data has been set for the completion of mine clearance in Armenia, due to the uncertainty of future funding.[80]

68 Armenia is a state party to the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights, Article 2 of which requires that each state party respect and protect life of everyone under its jurisdiction, including in occupied areas.

69 Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Security and Defence, Armenia in the International System of Conventional Arms Control", accessed 3 March 2014.

70 Armenia, "Armenia Mine Action Strategy 2007–11", Yerevan, 2006, p. 36.

71 See V. Bohle and N. Weigel, EC-Funded Mine Actions in the Caucasus and Central Asia, Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), 2009, pp. 25–31.

72 Ibid.

73 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, 30 March 2015.

74 Mediamax, "Armenian Minister of Defence visited the Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise", 5 April 2011.

75 Email from Valeria Fabbroni, FSD, 26 February 2014.

76 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, 30 March 2015.

77 See Landmine Monitor and Mine Action Review reports on Armenia in 2011–14; and ACHDE, "FSD non-technical mine action survey", Yerevan, 2013, p. 21.

78 Email from Varsine Miskaryan, ACHDE, 8 August 2016.

79 Email from Ruben Arakelyan, ACHDE, 30 March 2015.

80 Email from Varsine Miskaryan, ACHDE, 8 August 2016.