



GEORGIA

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

→ Georgia should accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as soon as possible.

CONTAMINATION

Georgia, including Abkhazia, is now believed to be free of contamination from cluster munition remnants (CMR), with the possible exception of South Ossetia, which is occupied by Russia and inaccessible to both the Georgian authorities and international non-governmental organisation (NGO) clearance operators.¹

CMR contamination resulted from the conflict over South Ossetia in August 2008, in which Georgian and Russian forces both used cluster munitions. After the conflict, by December 2009, HALO Trust had cleared some 37km² in Georgian-controlled territory contaminated with submunitions and other explosive remnants of war (ERW).² In May 2010, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) completed clearance of its tasked areas.³

HALO Trust believes that the August 2008 conflict was likely to have resulted in some CMR contamination in South Ossetia, but it has no way of determining the level of possible contamination, or what, if any, clearance may have been conducted.⁴

Other ERW and Landmines

Georgia remains contaminated by other unexploded ordnance (UXO) and anti-personnel mines. Following the 2008 conflict with Russia, there was evidence of a problem with UXO in South Ossetia, although the precise extent of this remains unclear. In addition, UXO contamination in Georgia persists in former firing ranges.⁵

1 Email from Andrew Moore, Caucasus & Balkans Desk Officer, HALO Trust, 11 March 2016; and email from Oleg Gochashvili, Head of Division, DELTA, 23 May 2016.

2 Explosive Remnants of War Coordination Centre, "Explosive Remnants of War Coordination Centre (ERWCC) in Facts and Figures", November 2009, p. 17.

3 Email from Jonathon "Gus" Guthrie, Programme Manager, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), 27 May 2010.

4 Email from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 11 March 2016.

5 Email from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 23 June 2015; and interview with Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, in Geneva, 19 February 2016.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

In 2008, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Georgian Ministry of Defence and international NGO Information Management and Mine Action Programs (iMMAP) to establish the Explosive Remnants of War Coordination Center (ERWCC).⁶ On 30 December 2010, the Ministry of Defence issued a decree instructing that mine action be included as part of the State Military Scientific Technical Center – known as “DELTA” – an entity within the ministry. The agreement with iMMAP ended on 31 March 2012 and the ERWCC took ownership of the mine action programme.⁷

Through the iMMAP project, ERWCC became the Georgian Mine Action Authority, under DELTA, tasked to coordinate and execute action to address the ERW threat.⁸ The primary task of the ERWCC is to coordinate mine action in Georgia, including quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC), and to facilitate the creation and implementation of Georgian National Mine Action Standards, in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).⁹

Standards

Georgian National Mine Action Standards and National Technical Standards and Guidelines (NTSG) have been drafted in accordance with IMAS and are awaiting completion in coordination with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).¹⁰ Once finalised, the NTSG will be translated and sent to Parliament for approval.¹¹

Operators

HALO Trust conducts clearance operations in Georgia, but no CMR clearance was undertaken in 2015 as Georgia, including Abkhazia, is now believed to be free of contamination from CMR, with the possible exception of South Ossetia.¹²

At the request of the Government of Georgia, the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) Trust Fund has supported Georgia in addressing its ERW problem from the August 2008 conflict. In 2010, a NATO Trust Fund project planned to provide support to establish long-term local capability and capacity for the ERWCC in clearance and

victim assistance.¹³ As part of the project, 66 members of the Georgian Army Engineers Brigade were trained in demining, battle area clearance (BAC), and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD).¹⁴ As from March 2015, these deminers have been conducting EOD of abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO) and UXO at the former ammunition storage facility at Skra.¹⁵

Quality Management

Under the control of DELTA, the ERWCC now conducts QA/QC.¹⁶ iMMAP has also conducted training on QA/QC for the QA/QC section of the ERWCC, the Joint Staff of the Georgian Armed Forces, and DELTA.

LAND RELEASE

Georgia, including Abkhazia, is now believed to be free of contamination from CMR, with the possible exception of South Ossetia. No new cluster munition contamination was identified in 2015, and therefore no survey or clearance was required.¹⁷

Previously, in 2014, HALO Trust cleared 1.3km² of CMR-contaminated area, which had been discovered as a result of improved security along the administrative borderline (ABL) with South Ossetia, enabling farmers to use previously inaccessible areas within Georgian-controlled territory.¹⁸

ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

Georgia is not a signatory or party to the CCM, but nonetheless has human rights obligations to protect life, which demand clearance of CMR. With the possible exception of South Ossetia, Georgia is now believed to be free from CMR contamination, and very limited clearance of CMR took place in the five years prior to 2014 as contamination was thought to be only residual.

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- 6 iMMAP, “Establishing the New Georgian Explosive Remnants of War Coordination Centre (ERWCC)”, Press release, 25 February 2009; and E. M. Hasanov and P. Nevalainen, “Mine-action Challenges and Responses in Georgia”, *Journal of ERW and Mine Action*, Issue 15.3, Fall 2011.
- 7 Ibid.; Decree #897 issued by the Minister of Defense, 30 December 2010; and email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 20 June 2016.
- 8 NATO, “NATO/PfP Trust Fund Project in Georgia”, January 2012, at: http://www.mzv.cz/file/786123/Georgia_ERW_Fact_Sheet_3___230112.pdf; and email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 6 July 2015.
- 9 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 6 July 2015.
- 10 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 3 June and 6 July 2015.
- 11 Interview with Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, in Geneva, 19 February 2016; and email, 15 June 2016.
- 12 Email from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 11 March 2016.
- 13 NATO, “NATO/PfP Trust Fund Project in Georgia”, January 2012; and emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 6 July 2015 and 20 June 2016.
- 14 Estonia Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V Article 10 Report, 2 April 2012; NATO/PfP Trust Fund Project in Georgia Fact Sheet, January 2012; and email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 6 July 2015.
- 15 Interview with Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, in Geneva, 19 February 2016; and email 20 June 2016.
- 16 Response to Cluster Munition Monitor questionnaire by Tom Meredith, Desk Officer, HALO Trust, 21 August 2012.
- 17 Emails from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 11 March 2016; and Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 23 May 2016.
- 18 Email from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 9 July 2015.