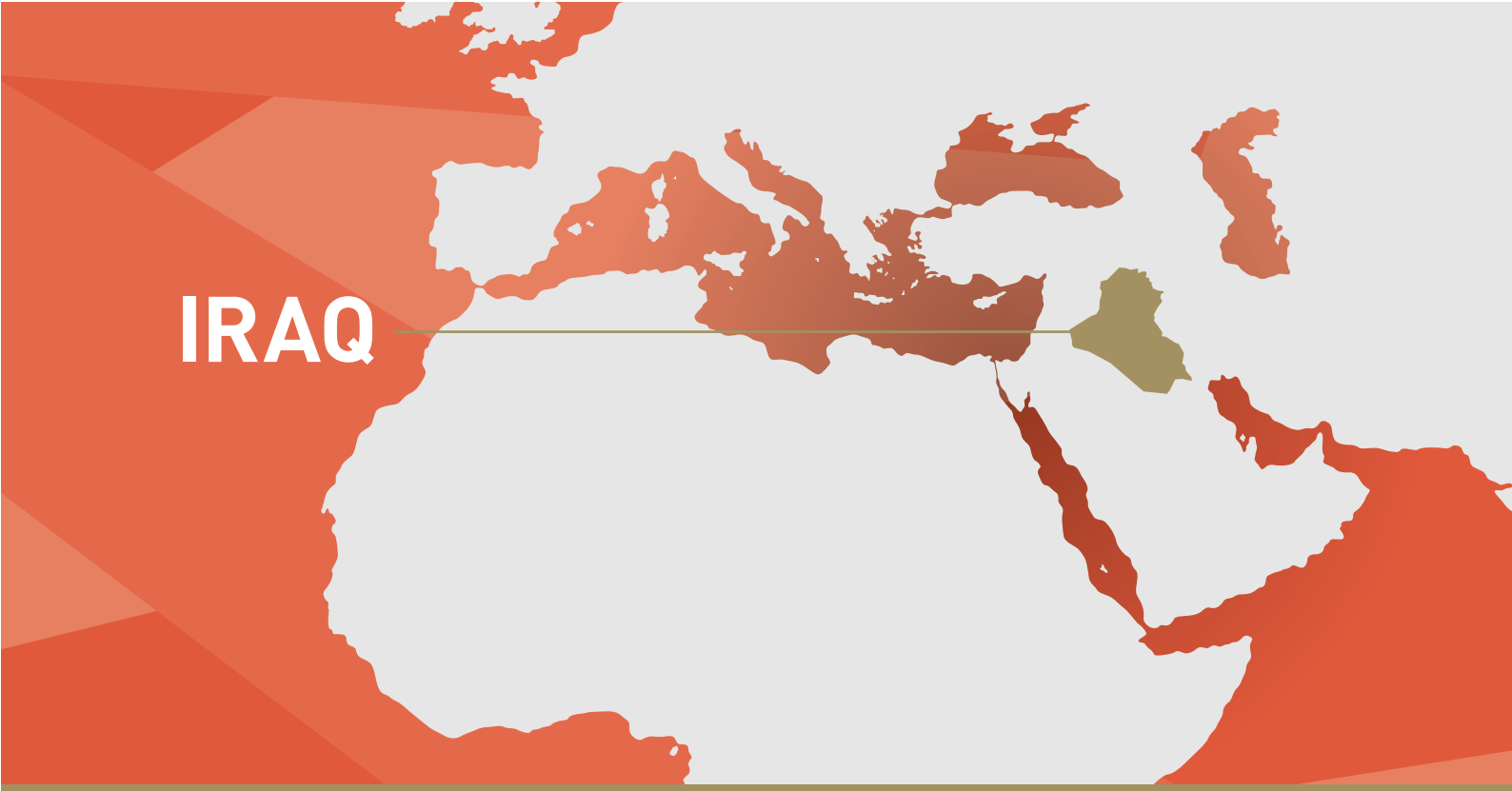

ARTICLE 4 DEADLINE: 1 NOVEMBER 2023 (NOT ON TARGET TO MEET DEADLINE)

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

	2015	2014
Problem understood	6	4
Target date for completion of cluster munition clearance	3	3
Targeted clearance	4	4
Efficient clearance	6	5
National funding of programme	6	5
Timely clearance	3	3
Land-release system in place	6	5
National mine action standards	5	5
Reporting on progress	5	4
Improving performance	5	5
PERFORMANCE SCORE: POOR	**4.9**	**4.3**

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Despite the armed conflict in Iraq, substantive progress in clearing cluster munition remnants (CMR) was recorded in 2015, with clearance by Civil Defence units of more than three times the amount reported in 2014.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Iraq should draw up a strategic plan for the clearance of CMR, setting out operational priorities, clarifying institutional responsibilities, identifying and allocating available resources, and setting timelines for implementation.
- Iraq should introduce national standards for CMR survey and clearance, and develop the capacity of national operators to meet them.
- The Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) should draw on international assistance to enable it to discharge its management responsibilities effectively and transparently.

CONTAMINATION

CMR contaminate significant areas of central and southern Iraq, a legacy of the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Iraq reports that CMR in confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) cover a total of 200km^2 across nine central and southern governorates: 95% is in just the three governorates of Basra, Muthanna, and Thi-Qar.[1] A small amount of CMR contamination also remains in northern Iraq's Kurdish region, the result of air strikes conducted under former President Saddam Hussein.

The highway between Kuwait and Basrah was heavily targeted by cluster bomb strikes in the 1991 Gulf War[2] and cluster munitions were also used extensively during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, particularly around Basra, Nasiriyah, and the approaches to Baghdad. CMR are a feature of many of the clearance tasks being undertaken to open up access to oilfields and develop infrastructure as well as for humanitarian clearance.[3]

The Kurdistan Regional Government reported confirmed CMR contamination totalling 1.18km^2 in two areas: the northern district of Dohuk close to the border with Turkey and the Garmiyan area south of Sulimaniya.[5]

Other ERW and Landmines

Iraq also has very heavy explosive remnants of war (ERW) and mine contamination across all three regions.

Table 1: **CMR contamination in central and southern Iraq as at May 2016**[4]

Governorate	CHAs	Area (m²)	SHAs	Area (m²)
Babylon	1	89,500	0	0
Basra	104	16,614,715	0	0
Karbala	4	1,595,474	1	218,708
Missan	5	668,090	0	0
Muthanna	30	128,646,307	0	0
Najaf	4	4,012,033	1	1,309,596
Al-Qadisiyah	4	3,740,034	1	226,303
Thi-Qar	14	45,157,988	0	0
Wassit	2	299,143	0	0
Totals	**168**	**200,823,284**	**3**	**1,754,607**

Table 2: **CMR contamination in the KRG as at May 2016**[6]

Governorate	CHAs	Area (m²)	SHAs	Area (m²)
Dohuk	3	486,628	11	672,158
Garmiyan	7	689,500	0	0
Totals	**10**	**1,176,128**	**11**	**672,158**

1 Email from Ahmed Al-Jasim, Head of Information Management Department, DMA, 30 May 2016.

2 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UN Development Programme (UNDP), "Overview of Landmines and Explosive Remnants of War in Iraq", June 2009, p. 10.

3 Telephone interview with Kent Paulusson, Senior Mine Action Advisor for Iraq, UNDP, 28 July 2011.

4 Email from Ahmed Al-Jasim, DMA, 30 May 2016.

5 Email from Khatab Omer Ahmed, Planning Manager, Directorate General of Technical Affairs, Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA), 20 May 2016.

6 Email from Khatab Omer Ahmed, IKMAA, 20 May 2016.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The mine action programme in Iraq is managed along regional lines. Clearance of ERW, including CMR, was conducted in 2014 by a small number of international humanitarian operators and a larger group of national and international commercial operators.

In central and southern Iraq, responsibility for mine action was transferred in 2008 to the Ministry of Environment, which set up the DMA to coordinate and manage the sector.[7] The DMA, however, implements policy set by a Higher Council for Mine Action (HCMA) created by, and reporting to the prime minister, in which the ministries of defence, interior, and oil are major actors. The HCMA is supported by a Technical Committee, which serves as its secretariat.[8]

The DMA oversees four Regional Mine Action Centres (RMACs): for the north (covering the governorates of Anbar, Kirkuk, Mosul, and Saladin); the centre (Baghdad, Diyala, and Wassit); a region identified as "ME" (Babylon, Karbala, Najaf, and al-Qadisiyah); and the south (Basra, Missan, Muthanna, and Thi-Qar).[9] The RMAC South, based in Basra, is active coordinating the activities of non-commercial operators and collecting survey and clearance data but the extent to which other RMACs are functioning is unclear.

Mine action in Iraq's northern governorates under the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) is managed by the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA). It coordinates four directorates in Dohuk, Erbil, Garmiyan, and Sulimaniya (Slemani).

Strategic Planning

Iraq does not have a strategic plan for clearance of CMR.

Operators

DMA data for 2015 shows two humanitarian operators, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and Iraq Mine Clearance Organization (IMCO), engaged in survey and/or clearance of CMR in central and southern Iraq; other operators included civil defence and the army. IMCO ceased operating in the middle of 2015. The activities, if any, of commercial companies were not reported.[10]

In the KRG, IKMAA reported only Mines Advisory Group (MAG) as conducting CMR clearance.[11]

LAND RELEASE

Mine action sector operations were overshadowed by conflict, prevalent insecurity, and the urgent need to address extensive, dense contamination by improvised explosive devices which has emerged as a humanitarian priority. As a result, CMR contamination was not a priority, and survey and clearance slowed in 2015 compared to the previous year, although data deficiencies hinder an accurate determination of progress. Release of cleared land was also held back by lack of capacity to conduct quality control in the DMA and RMAC South.

Survey in 2015

Non-technical survey (NTS) and technical survey in parts of central and southern Iraq continued to define CMR contamination, but national survey standards have yet to be introduced and the quality of survey results is variable. Most of the survey and clearance was attributed to army and civil defence teams whose methodology and standards are unknown.

In central and southern Iraq, the DMA reported that NTS had identified 34 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) totalling 4.5km^2 in three governorates: Basra (3.37km^2), Karbala (0.22km^2), and Missan (0.87km^2).[12] The DMA also reported that operators confirmed 101 hazardous areas affecting 42km^2, nearly three-quarters of which was accounted for by Iraq's Civil Defence. Other data provided by the DMA indicated NTS had identified suspected or confirmed hazardous areas covering 9.5km^2, close to 90% of it in Basra and al-Qadisiyah governorates, but with small SHAs in Missan and Karbala.[13]

Table 3: **Survey CMR-contaminated areas in 2015**[14]

Operator	Areas confirmed	Area confirmed (m^2)
Civil Defence	43	30,882,887
IMCO	10	7,818,484
Iraqi Army	1	54,967
NPA	46	3,245,511
RMAC South	1	169,141
Totals	**101**	**42,170,990**

The DMA's record of activities undertaken by international operators, as in the past, was significantly at variance from the operators' own records, pointing to weaknesses in understanding or record-keeping systems. NPA said it confirmed 10 CMR hazards covering almost 7.4km^2, mostly in Missan governorate. NPA also reported cancelling 301km^2 of battle area by NTS in Missan governorate.[15]

7 Interview with Kent Paulusson, UNDP, in Geneva, 27 May 2009.

8 DMA presentation to 2015 Mine Action Country Planning Workshop for Iraq, Istanbul, 13 May 2015; and Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, "Capacity Development Support to National Mine Action Authorities in Iraq, Phase 1: Initial Assessment Mission," February 2012.

9 DMA presentation to 2015 Mine Action Country Planning Workshop for Iraq, Istanbul, 13 May 2015.

10 Emails from Ahmed Al-Jasim, DMA, 30 May 2016; and Per Breivik, Chief Operating Officer, IMCO, 5 May and 4 June 2015.

11 Email from Khatab Omer Ahmed, IKMAA, 20 May 2016.

12 Email from Ahmed Al-Jasim, DMA, 21 May 2016.

13 Email from Ahmed Al-Jasim, DMA, 30 May 2016.

14 Ibid.

15 Email from Bjørn Skodvin Hannisdal, Country Programme Director, NPA, 3 June 2016.

Table 4: **NTS and Cluster Munition Remnant Survey in 2015**[16]

Operator	SHAs cancelled	Area cancelled (m²)	Areas confirmed	Area confirmed (m²)	Area reduced by TS (m²)
NPA	9	301,442,478	10	7,388,122	0

IKMAA did not record any survey of CMR-affected areas in the KRG in 2015.[17]

Clearance in 2015

IKMAA reported that CMR clearance in the KRG was conducted only by MAG, which cleared 0.5km².[18] DDG relocated its Basra operation to the KRG in December 2014 and was able to mobilise funding to work in the north but as at April 2016 had still not received accreditation to conduct explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) or area clearance.[19]

In central and southern Iraq, humanitarian clearance slowed in 2015 because of funding problems for national operators who on occasion reportedly had difficulty in meeting payroll commitments. Additionally IMCO, the biggest humanitarian NGO, closed operations at the end of June 2015 after failing to resolve long-running issues with the DMA over registration and accreditation requirements.[20]

Most clearance in central and southern Iraq was undertaken by Civil Defence units which the DMA said cleared more 6.3km² of CMR-affected area in 2015, more than three times the amount reported in 2014 although mine action sources said Civil Defence struggled with financial constraints and equipment shortages.

Following DDG's relocation to KRG, NPA was the only international humanitarian operator outside the KRG, accelerating the pace of clearance with the arrival of long-awaited large-loop detectors and the addition of two battle area clearance (BAC) and two survey teams in October 2015, bringing its operations staff to 52. NPA planned to complete work in Missan in 2016 and focus resources on Basra.[21]

Table 5: **Clearance of CMR-contaminated areas in 2015**[22]

Operator	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m²)	Submunitions destroyed	AVM destroyed	UXO destroyed
Centre & South					
Civil Defence	11	6,387,984	2,017	4	1,514
NPA	6	1,847,110	616	0	162
Subtotals	**17**	**8,235,094**	**2,633**	**4**	**1,676**
KRG					
MAG	12	546,371	234	0	4
TOTALS	**29**	**8,781,465**	**2,867**	**4**	**1,680**

ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

Under Article 4 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Iraq is required to destroy all CMR in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 November 2023.

The likelihood of Iraq meeting its deadline looks remote in view of military conflict, political instability, financial constraints, and competing security and humanitarian priorities. In this already challenging environment, operators also reported obstacles ranging from slow and complex bureaucracy to an overall lack of transparency and corruption on a scale that damages efficiency, raises costs, and calls into question the extent of authorities' commitment to meeting their treaty obligations.

NPA survey in Basra, Iraq. © NPA

16 Ibid.

17 Email from Khatab Omer Ahmed, IKMAA, 20 May 2016.

18 Emails from Ahmed Al-Jasim, DMA, 30 May and 10 June 2016.

19 Email from Bazz Jolly, Programme/Operations Manager, DDG (KRG), 26 April 2016.

20 Emails from Per Breivik, IMCO, 5 May, 4 June, and 22 October 2015.

21 Email from Bjørn Skodvin Hannisdal, NPA, 3 June 2016.

22 Emails from Ahmed Al-Jasim, DMA, 30 May and 10 June 2016; and Khatab Omer Ahmed, IKMAA, 20 May 2016. NPA reported to Mine Action Review that it had actually cleared seven areas containing CMR totalling 2,276,588m², destroying 1,157 submunitions, 79 anti-personnel mines, 22 anti-vehicle mines, and 183 items of UXO. Email from Bjørn Skodvin Hannisdal, NPA, 3 June 2016.

BLU 63 submunition in Basra, Iraq. © NPA