

# AFGHANISTAN

**ARTICLE 4 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2022**  
(UNCLEAR WHETHER ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE)

<b>PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE</b>	2016	2015
Problem understood	7	7
Target date for completion of cluster munition clearance	6	6
Targeted clearance	7	7
Efficient clearance	7	7
National funding of programme	5	5
Timely clearance	6	5
Land-release system in place	7	7
National mine action standards	7	7
Reporting on progress	6	6
Improving performance	5	5
<b>PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>6.2</b>

## PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Deteriorating security and problems of access in Afghanistan adds to uncertainty about prospects for completing the plans to clear sites contaminated by cluster munition remnants (CMR) in time to meet Afghanistan's Article 4 deadline under the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM).

## RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

→ The Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC) should provide an update on which CMR-affected areas are too insecure to be cleared and set out a detailed schedule and timelines for clearing those that are accessible.

## CONTAMINATION

The UN Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (UNMACA) reported that as at May 2017 Afghanistan had 17 CMR-contaminated areas in four provinces covering a total area of 5,572,573m<sup>2</sup> reflecting significant clearance. Until late December 2016, the area of contamination stood at 6,855,393m<sup>2</sup>, a level unchanged since April 2015. Nearly half of the contamination was in one district of north-eastern Takhar province. "UNMAS in support of DMAC" (UNMAS/DMAC) explained that a national demining operator had started clearance on one site in late December 2016.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 1: CMR contamination (as at November 2016)<sup>2</sup>**

Province	Area affected (m <sup>2</sup> )
Wardak	658,124
Nangahar	1,717,200
Takhar	3,280,069
Paktia	1,200,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,855,393</b>

All sites are affected by remnants of the 1,228 cluster munitions containing some 248,056 BLU-97B submunitions dropped by the United States between October 2001 and early 2002.<sup>3</sup> CMR are said to block access to grazing and agricultural land.<sup>4</sup>

CMR contamination, however, is more widespread than the clearly defined US cluster strike sites, as clearance in 2016 clearly shows. Soviet forces used cluster munitions during the decade-long war of resistance to the Soviet-backed government and demining operators continue to find unexploded submunitions on demining and battle area clearance tasks.<sup>5</sup>

## Other Explosive Remnants of War and Landmines

Afghanistan contends with a total of nearly 600km<sup>2</sup> of other hazardous area, including 225km<sup>2</sup> of mined area containing anti-personnel mines, 277km<sup>2</sup> of mined area containing anti-vehicle mines, and nearly 84km<sup>2</sup> of other explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination, which includes North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) firing ranges.<sup>6</sup>

## PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) is led by DMAC, which comes under the Afghan National Disaster Management Authority. It received operational support in planning, prioritising and information management from UNMACA, which changed its name to "UNMAS in support of DMAC" (UNMAS/DMAC) in November 2016.<sup>7</sup>

By the end of 2016, DMAC had 16 staff, but was preparing to expand to 35 in 2017. The staff of the former UNMACA, now UNMAS/DMAC, increased in 2016 to 201, including six internationals. As at July 2017, all former UNMACA operational personnel except department heads were due to transfer to contracts bringing them under DMAC management and reporting directly to DMAC. Department heads were due to continue as UNMAS advisers to DMAC until also coming under DMAC management by the end of 2018.<sup>8</sup>

Clearance of explosive contamination is conducted by five long-established national and two international NGOs. The Afghan NGOs are: Afghan Technical Consultants (ATC), Demining Agency for Afghanistan (DAFA), Mine Clearance Planning Agency (MCPA), Mine Detection and Dog Centre (MDC), and the Organization for Mine Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation (OMAR). AREA,

a national non-governmental organisation (NGO) accredited in 2014, became operational at the end of 2016.

The most active international NGOs are Danish Demining Group (DDG) and The HALO Trust. Since 2012, the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD) has had a small operation near the border with Tajikistan. Janus Demining Afghanistan (previously Sterling International) has been contracted to undertake clearance of firing ranges used by militaries serving with the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force.<sup>9</sup>

## Strategic Planning

Afghanistan has prepared a number of plans for clearing part or all of its CMR hazards but each time, implementation was overtaken by other priorities. At the end of 2016, the government circulated a proposal to donors to complete clearance of all 17 identified sites of CMR contamination, at a cost of \$1.85 million.<sup>10</sup>

## LAND RELEASE

None of the 17 sites UNMAS/DMAC identify as CMR contaminated was released in 2016 reflecting insecurity in many of the areas and competing priorities at a time when the mine action programme is dealing with a sharp downturn in funding.<sup>11</sup> AREA started work on one CMR task on 24 December 2016, and by May 2017 UNMAS/DMAC reported 1,282,820m<sup>2</sup> had been released.<sup>12</sup> Data from UNMAS/DMAC also did not record destruction of any submunitions in 2016.<sup>13</sup>

The HALO Trust destroyed a total of 359 submunitions in the course of conducting a number of different operations in 2016. This included 65 CMR destroyed in clearance of two battle areas covering 1.88km<sup>2</sup> and three CMR destroyed in mine clearance operations. Explosive ordnance and conventional weapons disposal teams located and destroyed 291 submunitions during 152 call-outs. The submunitions found, with a few exceptions, were from the former Soviet Union.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 2: Clearance of CMR-contaminated areas in 2016<sup>15</sup>**

Operator	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m <sup>2</sup> )	Submunitions destroyed	Other UXO destroyed
The HALO Trust	2	1,883,850	65	78

## ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

Under Article 4 of the CCM, Afghanistan is required to destroy all CMR in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 March 2022.

Afghanistan has the knowledge, capacity, and intent to meet this deadline, but achieving it is not a foregone conclusion. Afghanistan's Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Article 5 extension request provided for clearance of all ERW, including unexploded submunitions, by 2020.<sup>16</sup> UNMAS/DMAC has issued a call to donors to finance clearance of all remaining sites. However, clearance of CMR hazards had stalled in 2015 because they are located in areas that were too insecure for operators to access and it is still not clear whether all locations are sufficiently secure to permit clearance.<sup>17</sup>

1 Emails from Abdul Qudos Ziaee, Operations R&D Manager, UNMAS/DMAC, 10 and 15 May 2017.

2 "Proposal for Complete Removal of the Known Cluster Sub-munitions Contamination in Afghanistan", undated but 2016, Document received from DMAC by email, 19 February 2017, p. 18.

3 Human Rights Watch and Landmine Action, *Banning Cluster Munitions: Government Policy and Practice*, Mines Action Canada, Ottawa, May 2009, p. 27.

4 Statement of Afghanistan, CCM intersessional meetings (Clearance and Risk Education Session), Geneva, 15 April 2013.

5 Interviews with MACCA implementing partners, Kabul, May 2013.

6 Email from Abdul Qudos Ziaee, UNMAS/DMAC, 10 May 2017.

7 Email from Mohammad Wakil Jamshidi, Chief of Staff, UNMAS/DMAC, 16 May 2017.

8 Email from Abdul Qudos Ziaee, UNMAS/DMAC, 10 May 2017.

9 Email from MACCA, 10 May 2011.

10 "Proposal for Complete Removal of the Known Cluster Sub-munitions Contamination in Afghanistan".

11 Email from Mohammed Wakil, Chief of Staff, MACCA, 1 May 2016.

12 Email from Abdul Qudos Ziaee, UNMAS/DMAC, 15 May 2017.

13 Email from Abdul Qudos Ziaee, UNMAS/DMAC, 10 May 2017.

14 Email from Camille Wallen, Head of Policy and Evaluation, HALO Trust, 19 July 2017.

15 Ibid.

16 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2012, p. 194.

17 Email from Mohammed Wakil, MACCA, 1 May 2016; CCM Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form F.