

AZERBAIJAN

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

	2017	2016
Problem understood	4	4
Target date for completion of cluster munition clearance	3	3
Targeted clearance	6	6
Efficient clearance	5	5
National funding of programme	8	8
Timely clearance	5	5
Land-release system in place	6	6
National mine action standards	5	5
Reporting on progress	4	4
Improving performance	4	4
PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE	5.0	5.0

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

No land containing cluster munition contamination was reported to have been released by clearance or survey in territory under government control in 2017. The Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) is focused on the clearance of landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW).

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

→ Azerbaijan should accede to, and abide by, the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a matter of priority.

CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of contamination from cluster munition remnants (CMR) in Azerbaijan is unknown, as Armenian forces currently occupy a significant area of the country, where the contamination exists. There may also be some residual contamination in territory under government control.¹

On 1 April 2016, intense fighting broke out in Nagorno-Karabakh along the front line pitting Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh forces against those of Azerbaijan. While ground fighting was confined to areas close to the Line of Contact (LOC), artillery fire penetrated more than 10km into Nagorno-Karabakh, and included the use of cluster munitions, which resulted in 2.4km² of new CMR contamination in Nagorno-Karabakh.²

No CMR contamination has been reported on the Azerbaijan-controlled side of the LOC. A ceasefire was agreed on 5 April 2016 (see the separate Mine Action Review *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants* report on Nagorno-Karabakh for further information).

In 1988, a decision by the parliament of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Province to secede from Azerbaijan and join Armenia led to hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan from 1988 to 1994. Large quantities of cluster munitions were dropped from the air during the conflict. Armenia continues to occupy around one fifth of Azerbaijani territory.

In 2007, the Azerbaijan Campaign to Ban Landmines (AzCBL) surveyed CMR contamination in the non-occupied border regions of Azerbaijan. It concluded that cluster munitions (among other ordnance) had been used in the Aghdam and Fizuli regions.³ In addition, significant CMR have been identified in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.⁴ In 2006 and 2007, remnants were found in and around warehouses at a former Soviet ammunition storage area located at Saloglu in Agstafa district, where clearance was completed in July 2011.⁵

Other Explosive Remnants of War and Landmines

Other areas are confirmed or suspected to contain ERW: both unexploded ordnance (UXO) and abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO). These include former military testing areas, including the former Soviet firing and training ranges at Jeyranchel in the Agstafa region and in Kirdagh; and a former shooting range in Ganja.⁶ On 27 August 2017, an explosion occurred at the Khizi ammunition depot and, as at December 2017, 114 items of UXO had been found during emergency clearance of the surrounding area.⁷

Azerbaijan is also contaminated with landmines, which were reported to contaminate almost 70km² as at the end of 2015 (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Azerbaijan for further information).⁸

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

A 1998 presidential decree established ANAMA, which reports to the Deputy Prime Minister as head of the State Commission for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation.⁹ In April 1999, ANAMA established the Azerbaijan Mine Action Programme, a joint project of the Government of Azerbaijan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).¹⁰ A joint working group, established in December 1999 and consisting of representatives from various ministries, provides regular guidance to ANAMA.¹¹

ANAMA is tasked with planning, coordinating, managing, and monitoring mine action in the country. It also conducts demining operations, along with two national operators it contracts: Dayag-Relief Azerbaijan (RA) and the International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF).¹² No commercial company is active in mine action in Azerbaijan.

ANAMA manages the mine action programme via its headquarters based in Baku, a regional office in Fizuli, a regional training centre in Goygol, and three operational centres, located in Aghjabedi, Agstafa, and Terter.¹³

UNDP provides support to ANAMA, and will continue to do so until 2019, as part of a project to support the institutional capacity of ANAMA for mine/UXO clearance, risk education, victim assistance, international networking, and support to other mine-affected countries.¹⁴

Strategic Planning

ANAMA is integrated into the State Social and Economic Development programme. The current mine action strategy is for 2013–18.¹⁵ A new strategic plan is currently in development. Its main aims are said to be to continue ERW clearance in support of government development projects, and to provide safe conditions for the local population in affected regions.¹⁶

ANAMA's long-term strategy is to clear the occupied territories as and when it is possible to do so.¹⁷

Legislation and Standards

As at May 2018, Azerbaijan was still in the process of adopting a national mine action law, with draft legislation under review by the Cabinet of Ministers.¹⁸ Once adopted, it will regulate mine action in Azerbaijan, governing issues such as licensing, accreditation, quality assurance (QA), and tender procedures.¹⁹

Azerbaijan also has its own National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), which were adopted in 2001 and subsequently revised in 2003, 2004, and 2010.²⁰

Quality Management

ANAMA established a National Training Quality Assurance Team in 2004. In 2011, this transitioned into ANAMA's training, survey, and QA division (TSQAD), which is responsible for training and QA. The TSQAD also conducts quality control (QC).²¹

In 2017, 95 QA monitoring visits were undertaken.²² In addition, external QC inspections were conducted at 38 sites in 2017, with more than 2.9km² of land physically checked.²³

Information Management

ANAMA uses an old version of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database.²⁴

Operators

At the end of 2017, ANAMA employed 632 operational and administrative staff and had 49 mine detection dogs (MDDs) and 6 demining machines.²⁵ Included in this capacity are two national demining non-governmental organisations, IEPF and Dayag, which are contracted for mine clearance. Together, the two organisations employ 156 operational and administrative staff.²⁶ ANAMA also has an MDD breeding and training centre, which was built in 2011.²⁷

LAND RELEASE

Survey in 2017

No CMR survey took place in territory under government control in 2017.²⁸

Clearance in 2017

No CMR clearance took place in territory under government control in 2017.²⁹

Battle Area Clearance in 2017

In January 2017, ANAMA began the third phase of the three-phase Azerbaijan National Action Plan (NAP)/NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) Trust fund project, at the former Soviet artillery shooting range in Jeyranchel, in the Agstafa region, on the border with Georgia. The third phase was projected to finish in June 2018 and would result in release of nearly 22km² of land contaminated with UXO.³⁰ In addition, ANAMA continued to implement the Ganja UXO clearance project.³¹

As at August 2017, the majority of ANAMA's battle area clearance teams were deployed to clear the results of the explosion at the Khizi ammunition storage area.³²

During ERW clearance in 2017, ANAMA cleared 62 sites, totalling 33.3km², during which it destroyed 25,102 items of ERW as well as 5 anti-personnel mines and 60 anti-vehicle mines; IEPF cleared 15 sites, totalling 27.4km², during which it destroyed 2,616 items of ERW; and RA cleared 20 sites, totalling 24.5km², during which it destroyed 7,332 items of ERW as well as 2 anti-personnel mines and 4 anti-vehicle mines.³³

Progress in 2018

In 2018, the majority of ANAMA's clearance assets have been deployed for emergency clearance of the Khizi ammunition depot explosion, clearance of the Jeyranchel shooting range in the Agstafa region, and the clearance of the Jojuq Marjanli village following liberation from Armenian occupation.³⁴

ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

Azerbaijan is neither a state party nor a signatory to the CCM and therefore does not have a specific clearance deadline under Article 4. Nonetheless, it has obligations under international human rights law to clear CMR as soon as possible.

Currently, 90% of mine action in Azerbaijan is nationally funded.³⁵ ANAMA's long-term strategy is to be ready to start clearance of the occupied territories as and when this is possible.³⁶

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- 2 Email from Andrew Moore, Caucasus and Balkans Desk Officer, HALO Trust, 26 May 2016; The HALO Trust, "HALO Trust begins emergency clearance in Karabakh", 19 April 2016, at: <https://www.halotrust.org/media-centre/news/halo-begins-emergency-clearance-in-karabakh/>; and email from Amasia Zargarian, Programme Support Officer, HALO Trust, 4 May 2018.
- 3 AzCBL, "Information Bulletin", January 2008.
- 4 Interview with Nazim Ismayilov, Director, ANAMA, Baku, 2 April 2010; see also Human Rights Watch and Landmine Action, *Banning Cluster Munitions: Government Policy and Practice*, Mines Action Canada, Ottawa, 2009, p. 188.
- 5 ANAMA, "Saloglu Project", undated, at: www.anama.gov.az.
- 6 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018", p. 17.
- 7 Ibid.; and "ANAMA conducts demining operations in Khizi district", *News.Az*, 5 December 2017, at: <https://news.az/articles/society/127332>.
- 8 Email from Tural Mammadov, Operations Officer, ANAMA, 19 October 2016.
- 9 Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Azerbaijan", March 2012, Executive Summary.
- 10 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018", p. 12.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 UNDP, "UNDP Mine Action Programme: Azerbaijan", April 2016.
- 15 Email from Parviz Gidayev, Planning & Development Manager, ANAMA, 20 May 2015; and ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2017", p. 10.
- 16 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA 2 May 2018.
- 17 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2014", p. 5; and GICHD, "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Azerbaijan", March 2012, Executive Summary.
- 18 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 May 2018.
- 19 Email from Parviz Gidayev, ANAMA, 20 May 2015; and ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2014".
- 20 Email from Tural Mammadov, ANAMA, 19 October 2016.
- 21 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2016", pp. 28 and 30.
- 22 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018", p. 24.
- 23 Ibid., p. 25.
- 24 Ibid., p. 32.
- 25 Ibid., p. 12.
- 26 Ibid., p. 13.
- 27 Ibid., p. 14.
- 28 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 21 May 2018.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018", p. 9.
- 31 Ibid., p. 17.
- 32 Email from Samir Poladov, Operations Manager, ANAMA, 4 June 2018.
- 33 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2018", p. 18.
- 34 Email from Sabina Sarkarova, ANAMA, 2 May 2018.
- 35 G. Ahmadov, "Advocating Mine Action to Government of Azerbaijan", Geneva, 19 February 2016, at: <http://www.mineaction.org/sites/default/files/documents/Gazanfar%20Ahmadov%20Azerbaijan.pdf>.
- 36 ANAMA, "Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action 2014"; and GICHD, "Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership: Azerbaijan", March 2012, Executive Summary.