



# GEORGIA

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## PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

It was determined by survey and clearance in 2017 that submunitions found by the local community in the Shida Kartli region in 2016 were residual contamination. With the possible exception of South Ossetia, which is inaccessible to the Georgian authorities due to Russian occupation, it is believed that Georgia may now be clear of cluster munition remnants (CMR).

## RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

→ Georgia should accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a matter of priority.

## CONTAMINATION

Following clearance of a CMR-contaminated area in 2014, Georgia, including Abkhazia, was believed to be free of CMR contamination, 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) demining operators.

In 2016, however, Georgia reported the discovery of two submunitions, which were destroyed by the State Security Agency, as part of explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) call-outs in the Shida Kartli region.<sup>1</sup> In April and July 2016, local communities in this region of Georgia reported finding several submunitions since clearance was completed.<sup>2</sup>

During 2017, The HALO Trust conducted non-technical and technical survey in the Shida Kartli region to investigate each of the call-outs.<sup>3</sup> During survey, a total of three submunitions were found, which were identified as residual contamination and destroyed.<sup>4</sup> Two of the submunitions were found in the village of Kvemo Khviti. After investigation, it was determined that they had been moved from the nearby village of Zemo Nikozi, which was affected by CMR contamination in 2008.<sup>5</sup> The third submunition, an AO-2.5, was uncovered by a villager in Variani while he was cultivating his field.<sup>6</sup> Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) had conducted subsurface clearance of this area and upon further investigation by The HALO Trust it was found that the submunition was below the effective clearance depth achieved by its detectors.<sup>7</sup>

Prior to those recently identified submunitions, the last CMR was discovered and cleared in 2014, during HALO Trust operations along the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL), also in the Shida Kartli region.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Georgia has reported that its National Mine Action Authority has not been able to conduct quality assurance (QA)/quality control (QC) in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali (in South Ossetia), and that a conclusion as to whether these regions are indeed free of CMR depends on the quality of earlier clearance.<sup>9</sup>

CMR resulted from the conflict over South Ossetia in August 2008, in which both Georgian and Russian forces used cluster munitions. After the end of the conflict and through December 2009, The HALO Trust cleared some 37km<sup>2</sup> in Georgian-controlled territory of submunitions and other explosive remnants of war (ERW).<sup>10</sup> In May 2010, NPA completed clearance of its tasked areas.<sup>11</sup>

The HALO Trust believes that the August 2008 conflict was likely to have resulted in some CMR in South Ossetia, but it has no way of determining the level of possible contamination, or what, if any, clearance may have been conducted.<sup>12</sup>

## Other Explosive Remnants of War and Landmines

Georgia remains contaminated by other unexploded ordnance (UXO) and anti-personnel mines (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Georgia for further information). Following the 2008 conflict with Russia, there was evidence of a problem with UXO in South Ossetia, although its extent remains unclear. In addition, UXO contamination in Georgia persists in former firing ranges.<sup>13</sup>

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## 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).<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> In 2013, ERWCC became the Humanitarian Demining Division (HDD) under DELTA.<sup>16</sup>

The primary task of the ERWCC/HDD is to coordinate mine action in Georgia, including QA/QC, and to facilitate the creation and implementation of Georgian National Mine Action Standards, in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).<sup>17</sup>

### Strategic Planning

In respect of the gender mainstreaming in mine action policy, the HALO Trust had two fully female deminer teams conducting BAC on an ex-military firing range near the village of Udabno in Kakheti region in 2017.<sup>18</sup>

### Legislation and Standards

Georgian National Mine Action Standards and National Technical Standards and Guidelines (NTSG) have been drafted in accordance with IMAS. Georgia does not currently have a timeframe for the establishment of these standards.<sup>19</sup> Once finalised, the NTSG will be translated and sent to Parliament for approval.<sup>20</sup>

### Quality Management

Under the control of DELTA, the HDD now conducts QA/QC. iMMAP has also conducted training on QA/QC for the Quality Management section of the ERWCC, the Joint Staff of the Georgian Armed Forces, and DELTA. The HDD QA/QC team provided support to The HALO Trust during the 2017 survey of the 36 villages in the Shida Kartli and Imereti regions, which are adjacent to the ABL with the Tskhinvali region.<sup>21</sup>

### Operators

The HALO Trust conducts BAC and mine clearance in Georgia.<sup>22</sup> In 2017, The HALO Trust conducted CMR survey (both technical and non-technical) and clearance in the Shida Kartli region using two manual teams and one mechanical team.<sup>23</sup>

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 capacity for the ERWCC in clearance and victim assistance.<sup>24</sup> As part of the project, 66 members of the Georgian Army Engineers Brigade were trained in demining, battle area clearance (BAC), and EOD.<sup>25</sup> Since March 2015, these engineers have been conducting EOD of ERW at the former ammunition storage facility at Skra.<sup>26</sup> In August 2017, this project was successfully completed.<sup>27</sup>

## LAND RELEASE

### Survey in 2017

In 2017, The HALO Trust reduced 0.8km<sup>2</sup> by technical survey in the Shida Kartli region.<sup>28</sup> During the survey, three submunitions were destroyed as spot tasks by the Georgian State Security Service EOD Team.<sup>29</sup>

### Clearance in 2017

In 2017, The HALO Trust cleared 877m<sup>2</sup> in the Shida Kartli region.<sup>30</sup> During clearance no submunitions were found but five items of other UXO were destroyed.<sup>31</sup>

### Progress in 2018

The survey of the Shida Kartli region revealed that several areas were contaminated with other types of ERW, such as hand grenades and signal mines.<sup>32</sup> There are plans to conduct clearance of this contamination in the villages of Dvani and Dzevera.<sup>33</sup> Clearance is also planned in the village of Chonto where 24 aircraft bombs were found by a survey team in August 2017.<sup>34</sup> The HALO Trust will also undertake one EOD task in the Samegrelo Zemo-Svaneti region to remove an unexploded aircraft bomb, believed to be from a 2008 aircraft attack on the village of Anaklia.<sup>35</sup>

## ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

Georgia 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.

It is believed that, with the possible exception of South Ossetia, Georgia is now free from CMR contamination following the investigation of contamination in the Shida Kartli region. Georgia has reported that, in the areas outside of its control, it cannot confirm whether or not earlier clearance in these areas was conducted to international humanitarian standards, and with the required QA/QC.<sup>36</sup>

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| <p>1 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, Head of Division, DELTA, 20 June 2017.</p> <p>2 Ibid.</p> <p>3 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 25 April 2018; and Irakli Chitanava, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 25 May 2018.</p> <p>4 Ibid.</p> <p>5 Ibid.</p> <p>6 Ibid.</p> <p>7 Ibid.</p> <p>8 Email from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust 9 July, 2015.</p> <p>9 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 3 April 2017.</p> <p>10 Explosive Remnants of War Coordination Centre, "Explosive Remnants of War Coordination Centre (ERWCC) in Facts and Figures", November 2009, p. 17.</p> <p>11 Email from Jonathon "Gus" Guthrie, Programme Manager, NPA, 27 May 2010.</p> <p>12 Email from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 11 March 2016.</p> <p>13 Email from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 23 June 2015; and interview with Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, in Geneva, 19 February 2016.</p> <p>14 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.</p> <p>15 Ibid.; Decree #897 issued by the Minister of Defense, 30 December 2010; and email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 20 June 2016.</p> <p>16 CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (for 21 March 2017 to 31 March 2018), Form A.</p> <p>17 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 6 July 2015.</p> <p>18 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 25 April 2018.</p> | <p>19 Ibid.</p> <p>20 Interview with Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, in Geneva, 19 February 2016; and email, 3 April 2017.</p> <p>21 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 25 April 2018.</p> <p>22 Email from Irakli Chitanava, HALO Trust, 2 May 2017.</p> <p>23 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 25 April 2018; and Irakli Chitanava, HALO Trust, 25 May 2018.</p> <p>24 NATO, "NATO/PfP Trust Fund Project in Georgia", January 2012; and emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 6 July 2015 and 20 June 2016.</p> <p>25 Estonia Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V Article 10 Report (for 11 February to 31 December 2010); NATO/PfP Trust Fund Project in Georgia Fact Sheet, January 2012; and email from Oleg Gochashvili, Head of Division, DELTA, 6 July 2015.</p> <p>26 Interview with Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, in Geneva, 19 February 2016; and email, 3 April 2017.</p> <p>27 CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (for 21 March 2017 to 31 March 2018), Form F.</p> <p>28 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 25 April 2018.</p> <p>29 Ibid.</p> <p>30 Ibid.</p> <p>31 Ibid.</p> <p>32 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 25 April 2018; and Irakli Chitanava, HALO Trust, 25 May 2018.</p> <p>33 Ibid.</p> <p>34 Ibid.</p> <p>35 Ibid.</p> <p>36 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 3 April 2017.</p> |
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