

IRAQ

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

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

	2017	2016
Problem understood	6	5
Target date for completion of cluster munition clearance	3	3
Targeted clearance	5	4
Efficient clearance	6	6
National funding of programme	5	5
Timely clearance	4	3
Land-release system in place	6	6
National mine action standards	5	5
Reporting on progress	5	5
Improving performance	5	4
PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE	5.0	4.6

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

The mine action priority for authorities in Kurdish areas and the centre/south of Iraq is clearance of areas recaptured from Islamic State, but planning, survey, and clearance of cluster munition remnant (CMR)-affected areas in southern Iraq started to gain momentum in 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Iraq should draw up a strategic plan setting priorities and milestones for tackling CMR contamination and fulfilling its treaty obligations.
- Iraq should work with operators to develop national standards for CMR survey and clearance.
- Iraq should publish regular comprehensive reports on mine action undertaken by state, commercial, and non-governmental organisations.
- Mine action authorities should work to ensure their information management capacities are capable of accurately recording contamination and clearance.
- The Department of Mine Action (DMA) should expedite accreditation for mine action organisations and visas for personnel to avoid delays and loss of working time.

CONTAMINATION

CMR contaminate significant areas of central and southern Iraq, a legacy of the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. It reports confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) containing CMR at the end of 2017 as covering a total of 131km² in eight governorates, an area that was one-third less than at the end of the previous year. Three governorates, Basra, Muthanna, and Najaf accounted for 98% of the total.¹

Iraq's Kurdish region authorities do not report the presence of any CHAs containing CMR but say some contamination remains in Kirkuk and Ninawa governorates, believed to be a legacy of US-led coalition air strikes, and operators continue to report clearance of some CMR tasks. Operators have reported these still need to be surveyed to determine the extent of contamination.²

Table 1: CMR contamination (as at end 2017)³

Province	CHAs	CHA area (m ²)	SHAs	SHA area (m ²)
Anbar	1	15,726	0	0
Basrah	50	7,695,422	0	0
Kerbala	5	1,855,267	3	33,470
Missan	15	481,048	0	0
Muthanna	29	116,779,320	0	0
Najaf	2	3,829,017	0	0
Thi Qar	4	121,394	0	0
Wassit	2	299,143	0	0
Totals	108	131,076,337	3	33,470

SHA = Suspected hazardous area

Other Explosive Remnants of War and Landmines

Iraq also has very heavy ERW contamination across the north, centre, and south, including more than a thousand

square kilometres of confirmed anti-personnel mine contamination and dense contamination by improvised mines in areas liberated from Islamic State (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Iraq for further information).⁴

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The mine action programme in Iraq is managed along regional lines. The DMA represents Iraq internationally and manages mine action for humanitarian purposes in the centre and the south, implementing policies set by an inter-ministerial Higher Council of Mine Action which reports to the Prime Minister. Commercial companies undertaking oilfield clearance operations report to the Ministry of Oil.⁵

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" (Middle Euphrates: Babylon, Karbala, Najaf, and al-Qadisiyah), and the south (Basra, Missan, Muthanna, and Thi-Qar).⁶ 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, Garmiyani, and Sulimaniya (Sleman).⁶

Between September 2015 and October 2017, the DMA and IKMAA shared operations in a so-called Grey Zone, an area of about 69,000km² controlled or contested by Islamic State forces after 2014 and overlapping their respective operating areas. The line separating DMA and IKMAA areas of responsibility in the Grey Zone was determined by which forces had liberated areas from Islamic State and taken control of the territory. A Joint Operations Centre in Erbil managed by iMMAP coordinated operations in the zone. The arrangement ended after the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) conducted a referendum on independence in September 2017 and Iraqi authorities took control of the area.⁷

Strategic Planning

Iraq does not have a strategic plan for clearance of CMR. Its vision for mine action is "Iraq free from the impact of mines and explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions."⁸ In the south, RMAC-S and NPA have developed a long-term operating plan and system of prioritising tasks taking account of accidents, land use and beneficiaries.⁹

Legislation and Standards

In 2018, the DMA was seeking support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) for the development of new mine action legislation for Iraq. There are no CMR-specific standards in Iraq.

Quality Management

Both the DMA and IKMAA have quality management personnel.

Information Management

The DMA and IKMAA maintain IMSMA databases at their headquarters in Baghdad and Erbil, respectively. In southern Iraq, RMAC-S receives operator data which it uploads to the DMA database. Both the DMA and IKMAA depend heavily on information management support from iMMAP for recording survey, clearance, and victim data. Major discrepancies between results recorded by operators and those released by the DMA reflect delays in uploading data and procedural delays. Clearance of oilfields conducted by commercial operators under contract to the Ministry of Oil is not reported to the DMA.

Operators

The DMA identified nine organisations involved in survey and/or clearance of CMR in central and southern Iraq. National organisations included the Ministry of Defence, Civil Defence, Iraq Mine, and UXO Clearance Company. International humanitarian organisations were Norwegian People's Aid and the Danish Demining Group. The DMA also reported activities by two commercial companies, Al-Safafah Mine Action Company and previously unidentified Akad International Company for Mine and UXO Clearance.¹⁰

In the KRI, only Humanity and Inclusion (HI, formerly Handicap International) and Mines Advisory Group (MAG) reported conducting survey and/or clearance of CMR-affected areas in 2017.¹¹

LAND RELEASE

Iraq's response to CMR contamination has been eclipsed at a national level by the priority given to tackling densely mine-contaminated areas liberated from Islamic State to permit the return of displaced populations.¹² However, RMAC-S, covering the area most affected by CMRs, has continued to develop plans for CMR survey and clearance.¹³ Assessing the extent of progress is hampered by major inconsistencies between results reported by the DMA and operators.

Survey in 2017

The DMA did not report any SHAs cancelled by non-technical survey in 2017 but said operators confirmed 86 CHAs with CMR affecting 22.45km² (see Table 2), more than double the areas confirmed in 2016.¹⁴

NPA, however, reported that in three southern governorates it cancelled 35 SHAs totalling 73km² while confirming 79 other areas totalling 36km². In the process of non-technical survey, it also cleared 2,344 submunitions and 1,496 other UXO items. Only Iraq's military is authorised to conduct demolitions. HI also reported confirming three CMR-affected areas totalling 149,511m² in and around Kirkuk, which was not reflected in official data.¹⁵

In January 2018, NPA convened a workshop with RMAC-S, iMMAP, and DDG on the Cluster Munition Remnant Survey (CMRS) methodology that it applies in Lebanon and south-east Asia and the same month it started a CMRS survey in Muthanna governorate.¹⁶ By May 2018, teams had identified more than 2,500 items, mainly BLU 63 and M77 devices.¹⁷

Table 2: Survey of CMR-contaminated areas in 2017¹⁸

Operator	CHAs confirmed	Area confirmed (m ²)
Al-Safafah	1	44,061
Civil Defence	15	8,038,369
DDG	3	68,184
IMCO	4	3,495,999
Army	3	119,264
NPA	58	10,575,377
RMAC South	2	110,406
Totals	86	22,451,660

Clearance in 2017

Iraq reported clearing at least 4.73km² of CMR-contaminated land in 2017, 50% more than the previous year, and this may have understated the result (see Table 3). Clearance in the KRI conducted only by MAG was fractionally less than the previous year, although it destroyed more than three times the number of submunitions. The increase in area clearance occurred in central and southern Iraq where the DMA recorded clearance of 4.38km², compared with 2.89km² in 2016, although the number of items destroyed was less than half the number in 2016.

NPA, operating with five survey and six clearance teams accounted for most of the CMR clearance in Iraq. It reported clearing 3.91km² along with 1,087 submunitions and 1,002 other UXO items, a smaller area than in 2016 but more than double the number of submunitions.¹⁹ DDG, which was not active in southern Iraq in 2016, operated with six survey and two EOD/BAC teams in Basra governorate in 2017, clearing 0.67km² and 183 submunitions.²⁰

The lower figure recorded by DMA (see Table 3) appeared to reflect delays in official sign-off of tasks or uploading clearance reports.

Table 3: Clearance of CMR Contamination in 2017²¹

Operator	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	Submunitions destroyed	UXO destroyed
Centre & South				
Akad	1	52,744	0	0
Civil Defence	8	1,063,824	172	177
DDG	1	117,804	0	0
NPA	23	3,147,345	553	224
Subtotals	33	4,381,717	725	401
KRI				
HI ²²	2	149,511	82	0
MAG ²³	2	198,763	381	0
Subtotals	4	348,274	463	0
Totals	37	4,729,991	1,188	401

ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

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

Iraq's extensive CMR contamination, competing mine action priorities and funding constraints make it improbable it will achieve its CMR clearance deadline in five years.

Table 4: CMR clearance in 2015–17

Year	Central and Southern Iraq (m ²)	KRI (m ²)	Total (m ²)
2017	4,381,717	348,274	4,729,991
2016	2,889,585	209,920	3,099,505
2015	8,235,094	546,371	8,781,465
Totals	15,506,396	1,104,565	16,610,961

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| <p>1 Email from Ahmed Al-Jasim, Head of Information Management Department, DMA, 10 April 2018.</p> <p>2 Email from Khatab Omer Ahmed, Planning Manager, Directorate General of Technical Affairs, Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA), 8 May 2018; email from Steven Warner, Desk Officer, MAG, 10 April 2018.</p> <p>3 Email from Ahmed Al-Jasim, Head of Information Management Department, DMA, 10 April 2018.</p> <p>4 Emails from Ahmed Al-Jasim, DMA, 10 April 2018; and Khatab Omer Ahmad, IKMAA, 8 May 2018.</p> <p>5 DMA presentation to 2015 Mine Action Country Planning Workshop for Iraq, Istanbul, 13 May 2015; Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, "Capacity Development Support to National Mine Action Authorities in Iraq, Phase 1: Initial Assessment Mission", February 2012.</p> <p>6 DMA presentation to 2015 Mine Action Country Planning Workshop for Iraq, Istanbul, 13 May 2015.</p> <p>7 Email from Isam Ghareeb, iMMAP, 1 August 2016; and interview with Obaid Ahmad, General Director of Technical Affairs, IKMAA, Erbil, 22 July 2017.</p> <p>8 DMA presentation to 2015 Mine Action Country Planning Workshop for Iraq, Istanbul, 13 May 2015.</p> <p>9 Email from Email from Jonathon Guthrie, Country Director Iraq, NPA, Craig McInally, Northern Iraq Operations Manager, NPA, and Mats Hektor, Project Manager South Iraq, NPA 2 April 2018.</p> | <p>10 Email from Ahmed Al-Jasim, DMA, 10 April 2018.</p> <p>11 Emails from Steven Warner, Desk Officer, MAG, 10 April 2018; and from Fanny Del, Operations Coordinator – Iraq, HI, 18 May 2018.</p> <p>12 Email from Ahmed Al-Jasim, DMA, 10 April 2018.</p> <p>13 Email from Jonathon Guthrie, Craig McInally, and Mats Hektor, NPA, 2 April 2018.</p> <p>14 Email from Ahmed Al-Jasim, DMA, 10 April 2018.</p> <p>15 Email from Fanny Del, HI, 18 May 2018.</p> <p>16 Email from Jonathon Guthrie, Craig McInally, and Mats Hektor, NPA, 2 April 2018.</p> <p>17 Skype interview with Mats Hektor, NPA, 14 May 2018.</p> <p>18 Email from Ahmed Al-Jasim, DMA, 10 April.</p> <p>19 Email from Jonathon Guthrie, Craig McInally, and Mats Hektor, NPA, 2 April 2018.</p> <p>20 Email from Lene Rasmussen, Regional Manager MENA, DDG, 3 June 2018.</p> <p>21 Except as specified, data provided by emails from Ahmed Al-Jasim, DMA, 10 April 2018.</p> <p>22 Email from Fanny Del, HI, 18 May 2018.</p> <p>23 Email from Steven Warner, MAG, 10 April 2018.</p> |
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