



YEMEN

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE	2017	2016
Problem understood	4	4
Target date for completion of cluster munition clearance	3	4
Targeted clearance	4	4
Efficient clearance	4	3
National funding of programme	3	3
Timely clearance	5	4
Land-release system in place	3	2
National mine action standards	5	5
Reporting on progress	3	4
Improving performance	5	4
PERFORMANCE SCORE: VERY POOR	3.9	3.7

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Continued use of cluster munitions by the Saudi Arabia-led coalition added new contamination but the Yemen Mine Action Centre (YEMAC) reportedly increased administrative and operational capacity and productivity.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Yemen should accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a matter of priority.
- Yemen should report on the threat from cluster munition remnants (CMR) and prepare a plan for their clearance and destruction.
- YEMAC should allow and facilitate survey and clearance by international operators.
- YEMAC should report on its activities and, at a minimum, publish annual reports on programme capacity, the progress of survey and clearance operations, and funding.

CONTAMINATION

Yemen was contaminated with explosive remnants of war (ERW), including CMR, before 2015, but the escalation of armed conflict since 26 March 2015 has significantly increased both its extent and the threat to the civilian population, mainly as a result of airstrikes by the Saudi Arabia-led coalition.¹ Human Rights Watch has documented Saudi air strikes using cluster munitions dating back to 2009.² In March 2017, it said it had documented 18 coalition attacks using cluster munitions since the upsurge in conflict in 2015 that killed at least 18 civilians and injured 74 more.³

YEMAC reported in 2014 it had identified some 18km² of suspected CMR hazards in the northern Saada governorate bordering Saudi Arabia. It also knew of other areas of contamination in north-western Hajjah governorate that it had not been able to survey.⁴ Since the start of the latest round of hostilities in March 2015, international observers and researchers reported that Saudi coalition land and aerial bombardments using a variety of cluster munitions had struck many areas of north-western and central Yemen. YEMAC has identified heavy CMR contamination in Saada and

al-Jawf governorates, as well as new CMR contamination in Amran, Hodeida, Mawit, and Sana'a governorates, including in Sana'a City.⁵

In 2015, after reviewing photographs and citing witness accounts, Human Rights Watch reported finding air-dropped BLU-97 and CBU-105 sensor-fuzed cluster munitions as well as artillery-fired ZP-39 dual-purpose improved conventional munition (DPICM) submunitions in Saada governorate. It also reported finds of CBU-105 submunitions in Amran and Sana'a governorates. In 2016, it documented the presence of BLU-63 submunitions in Sanaa city after an air strike on the capital in January, and CBU-105 submunitions after an attack on the port town of Hodeida.⁶

Amnesty International also reported coalition attacks using Brazilian Astros II munitions in Saada city and governorate, and British-made BL-755 submunitions in Hayran in Hajjah governorate.⁷ In December 2016, Saudi Arabia confirmed it had used BL-755 munitions and said it had decided to stop using them⁸ but the United Nations said it had documented use of cluster munitions in Saada governorate in December 2016 and May 2017.⁹

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Yemen established a National Mine Action Committee (NMAC) by prime ministerial decree in June 1998 to formulate policy, allocate resources, and develop a national mine action strategy.¹⁰ NMAC, chaired by the Minister of State (a member of the cabinet), brings together representatives of seven concerned ministries and a number of non-governmental organisations.

YEMAC was established in Sana'a in January 1999 as NMAC's implementing body with responsibility for coordinating mine action in the country.¹¹ It works through two Regional Executive Mine Action Branches (REMABs) in Sana'a and Aden, a national training centre in Aden also set up in 1999, and another REMAB in al-Mukalla (Hadramout governorate) added in March 2004. REMABs are responsible for field implementation of the national mine action plan. YEMAC is also responsible for information management and quality control.¹²

The United Nations supported mine action in Yemen from 1999 to 2003 through a programme implemented by the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS). From 2003, the programme came under full national management. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) deployed an international adviser to YEMAC at the end of 2014 to support planning and programme management. In 2017, its international staff included a planning and reporting specialist in Sana'a and a technical advisor based in Aden. National staff included two posts in Sana'a and one in Aden.¹³

Escalating political turmoil and conflict in Yemen since 2015, together with lack of funding, severely limited mine action planning and implementation.¹⁴ Communication and coordination between YEMAC headquarters and its Aden branch have been hampered by Yemen's de facto division between the Saudi-led coalition that controls Aden and operates in much of the south in support of the internationally recognised but exiled government, and Houthi rebels who control

the capital Sana'a and operate in much of the north.¹⁵ In 2017, UNDP reported that YEMAC administrative and operational capacity and productivity improved in 2017, helped by training courses for new recruits in ERW clearance, training for a survey leadership group, and Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) training in Jordan for database staff.¹⁶

Total funding for mine action reached \$5.8 million in 2017.¹⁷ By January 2018, funding received or pledged for mine action in 2018 amounted to \$4.1 million provided by the United States (\$1.5 million), the Netherlands (\$1.4 million), Germany (\$0.6 million), and the United Kingdom (\$0.5 million).¹⁸

Strategic Planning

Yemen has no strategic plan for tackling CMR. In late 2015, UNDP said it was giving priority to reducing the emergency threat of explosive weapons and providing relief to heavily-affected communities. This approach had three basic aims: prevent the situation from deteriorating, provide relief from existing threats, and address the longer-term Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention obligations.¹⁹

From July 2017, UNDP and YEMAC embarked on a plan for the fifth phase of cooperation covering 2017–20. The plan's "overarching principles" included aiding restoration of basic services, enabling access to infrastructure, and reducing casualties.²⁰

Operators

YEMAC is the only organisation authorised to conduct survey and clearance of ERW. YEMAC provided no information on its activities in 2017. UNDP reported it employed some 800 staff in 2017 and clearance teams were active in 14 of Yemen's 21 governorates. The number and size of operational teams reportedly varied according to operational needs.²¹ The Danish Demining Group (DDG) provided risk education through an office in Aden.²²

LAND RELEASE

YEMAC conducts survey and clearance on an emergency basis. UNDP reported its teams completed a mixture of desk-top, non-technical, and technical survey of ERW-affected areas covering a total of more than 3km² in 2017.

YEMAC teams also released 8,540,313m² and destroying 349,919 items, including 3,245 cluster munition remnants. Teams conducted clearance in 55 districts of 14 provinces.²³ Operations included response to requests for emergency clearance of Hodeida port, the main entry point for international humanitarian assistance to Yemen, and Amran cement factory, an important contributor to economic activity.²⁴

UNDP acquired thermite torches in 2017 to aid demolitions of cluster munitions but did not receive authorisation to bring them into the country. Plans were drawn up with The HALO Trust to train YEMAC personnel in Jordan in use of the torches.²⁵

ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

Yemen is not a state party to the CCM and therefore does not have a specific clearance deadline under Article 4. Nonetheless, Yemen has obligations under international human rights law to clear CMR as soon as possible.

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- 1 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Grant Progress Report for 1 October–31 December 2015, 25 January 2016.
- 2 Human Rights Watch, “Yemen: Cluster munitions harm civilians”, 31 May 2015.
- 3 Human Rights Watch, “Brazilian cluster munitions wound children”, 17 March 2017.
- 4 Email from Ali al-Kadri, General Director, YEMAC, 20 March 2014.
- 5 Interviews with Ahmed Alawi, YEMAC, 17 February 2016; and Stephen Bryant, Chief Technical Adviser, UNDP, in Geneva, 6 February 2017.
- 6 Human Rights Watch, “Yemen: Saudi-Led Airstrikes Used Cluster Munitions”, 3 May 2015; “Yemen: Cluster munitions harm civilians”, 31 May 2015; and “Yemen: Coalition Drops Cluster Bombs in the Capital”, 7 January 2016.
- 7 Amnesty International, “Yemen: children among civilians killed and maimed in cluster bomb ‘minefields’”, 23 May 2016.
- 8 “Coalition Forces supporting legitimacy in Yemen confirm that all Coalition countries aren’t members to the Convention on Cluster Munitions”, Saudi Press Agency, 19 December 2016; Human Rights Watch, “Saudi Arabia-led coalition uses banned Brazilian cluster munitions on residential areas”, 9 March 2017.
- 9 Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, “The situation of human rights in Yemen, including violations and abuses since September 2014”, UN doc. A/HRC/36/33, 5 September 2017, p. 10.
- 10 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 7 Report, Form I, 31 March 2009.
- 11 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2008, p. 2.
- 12 UNDP, “Emergency Mine Action Project, Annual Report 2017”, January 2018, p. 8.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Interviews with mine action stakeholders who declined to be identified, February–June 2015.
- 15 Interview with Ahmed Alawi, YEMAC, and Stephen Bryant, Chief Technical Adviser, UNDP, both in Geneva, 17 February 2016.
- 16 UNDP, “Emergency Mine Action Project, Annual Report 2017”, January 2018, pp. 10–12.
- 17 UNDP, “YEMAC clearance activities, 2016–17”, provided by email from Stephen Bryant, UNDP, 3 April 2018.
- 18 UNDP, “Emergency Mine Action Project, Annual Report 2017”, January 2018, p. 9.
- 19 Ibid., p. 6.
- 20 Ibid., p. 12.
- 21 UNDP, “Emergency Mine Action Project, Annual Progress Report 2017”, January 2018, p. 12.
- 22 Email from Maria Ersvaer, Programme and Operations Coordinator, DDG, 19 April 2018.
- 23 UNDP, “Emergency Mine Action Project, Annual Report 2017”, January 2018, p. 12. The provinces included Abyan, Aden, Al-Dhalee, Al-Jawf, Al Asimah, Amanat, Amran, Dhamar, Hadramout, Hajjah, Lahej, Saada, Sana’a, Shabwar, and Taiz.
- 24 UNDP, “Emergency Mine Action Project, Annual Progress Report 2017”, January 2018, pp. 12, 20.
- 25 Ibid., p. 22.