

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2025
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

10km²

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2023

1.73km²

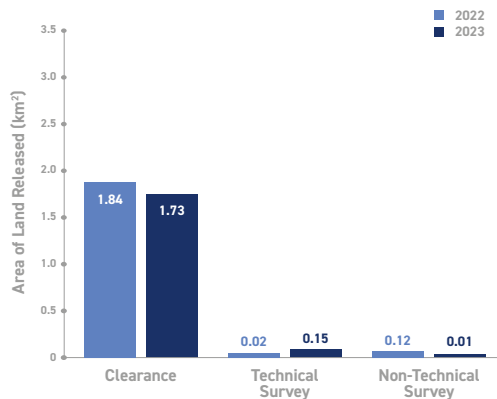
(OFFICIAL DATA, AS REVISED)

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2023

148

(INCLUDING 19 DESTROYED
DURING SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Clearance output in 2023 dropped slightly compared to the previous year and Colombia will certainly not meet its extended clearance deadline under Article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) of end-December 2025. Moreover, almost two thirds of the total mine clearance in 2023 found no explosive ordnance, underscoring the problems with survey in Colombia. An updated and revised Operational Plan for Mine Action 2023–2025 was presented to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation in May 2023. A total of 1.89km² was released in 2023, exceeding the planned land release for the year of 1.78km². Fulfilment of Article 5 will be contingent on the Colombian national authorities having access to all mined areas—which is currently not the case due to the security situation in many municipalities—and also on the complete cessation of use of anti-personnel (AP) mines by non-state armed groups (NSAGs).

FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW

Colombia has made solid but not spectacular progress in identifying and releasing mined area since 2019. A nationwide survey is not feasible while the ongoing conflict involving NSAGs continues to prevent full and safe access to many of the remaining mined areas and is resulting in new mine contamination, sometimes of areas previously released through survey and clearance. Nonetheless, Colombia is endeavouring to conduct survey and clearance of mined areas that can be safely accessed—something which has been enhanced by adoption of a new national mine action standard which aims to facilitate access to areas of instability to enable humanitarian mine action interventions in some of the most impacted communities. Recent efforts by national authorities to strengthen coordination within the Mine Action sector are long overdue and welcome, but with annual clearance output of below 2km² in recent years, many years of demining beckon even if safe access to all mined areas becomes possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- It is impossible for Colombia to establish a comprehensive baseline of mined area, due to the ongoing conflict involving multiple NSAGs which severely hinders access to mined areas and adds new contamination. However, Colombia should nonetheless strive to analyse and clean “events” data in the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database, in order to improve operational efficiency once operators are able to physically access mined areas.
- Colombia should continue to build on positive new initiatives by the national mine action authority, such as the Knowledge Management Platform, to convene and unify the sector. It should consider establishing a National Mine Action Platform to provide a forum for collective dialogue biannually among all stakeholders, including donors. This would also support sustained donor engagement.
- A National Mine Action Platform should also serve to exchange lessons learned, including on the role of demining in peacebuilding – an issue of international interest.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2023)	Score (2022)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	6	6	The precise extent of AP mined area remains unknown. Multiple NSAGs continue to prevent safe and predictable access to many mined areas, and are responsible for new contamination through their ongoing use of AP mines of an improvised nature both in conflicts with each other and/or against the Colombian government. A nationwide baseline survey has yet to be conducted and is believed to be impossible under the current circumstances due to the dynamics of the Colombian conflict and the size, location, and terrain of the country. However, Colombia is taking steps to present a more evidence-based estimate of remaining contamination that is at least partially based on non-technical survey (NTS), where this has been possible and areas have been accessible. Colombia developed a baseline for its operations for 2023–25. For 2023, it planned to conduct NTS of 4,283 areas, but only 63% of these were completed during the year.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	8	8	There is strong national ownership in Colombia with overall responsibility for the mine action programme sitting with the new Counselling Office Commissioned for Peace (Oficina Consejería Comisionada de Paz (OCCP) which replaced the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP). Decision-making on demining is the responsibility of a body within the Ministry of Defence. Roles and responsibilities at a national level are generally clear. Mine action has become a key component in the peace process under a law adopted in 2022. Colombia is working to build and strengthen coordination initiatives, such as through the Knowledge Management Platform. In 2022 and the first half of 2023, Colombia elaborated the Operational Plan in compliance with the Article 5 deadline extension granted to it.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	8	7	Colombia has Gender Guidelines for Mine Action in place and gender and diversity are included within the framework of the new 2023–25 Plan. The needs of different groups are considered during community liaison with gender-balanced teams and gender and diversity provisions reflected in land release standards. The proportion of female personnel varies widely between operators, especially for the military demining groups. According to official data, the participation of women in humanitarian demining activities has increased, reaching 353 (12%) women out of a total of 2,878 people working in NTS and clearance nationwide. Based on operator data, the five civilian operators have reported 1,077 staff members of whom 434 (40%) are women. This is one of the highest percentages of female participation in mine action in the world.
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION* (10% of overall score)	6	Not Scored	Colombia has not produced a specific national mine action standard for environmental management although Presidential Decree 1195 of 2017 outlines measures that must be applied by operators when demining in national parks and other areas of ecological value. According to the OCCP – AICMA Group, however, there have been inconsistencies in the application of the decree at regional and local levels. Roles and responsibilities at local, regional, and national levels of environmental authorities have been clarified and individual operators are taking measures to protect the environment during demining.

Criterion	Score (2023)	Score (2022)	Performance Commentary
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	6	6	Improvements have been made to information management in Colombia following a review of the IMSMA database. However, Colombia continues to rely on "events" where more recent survey data are unavailable as the main indicator of contamination, even though these are beset with errors, don't always relate to possible evidence of contamination, and are often cancelled or discarded once investigated. Discrepancies between operator data reported to Mine Action Review and figures reported by the national authority are largely unavoidable due to the fact that the OCCP only reports on land release after completion of tasks and the External Monitoring Component (CEM) has certified the process. Meanwhile, delays in information processing, by both operators and the CEM, continued to be reported and likely point to systemic challenges in information management rather than solely a reflection of organisational performance. Article 7 reports are submitted on a timely basis and the latest report also included information in relation to the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	6	6	Colombia's three-year operational plan through to 2025 includes land release targets by municipality and defined outputs for NTS, technical survey (TS), and clearance. A micro focus on "safe" areas within difficult-to-access municipalities continued to be implemented in 2023, and as of 2024, there was also a new framework and accompanying national standard for "humanitarian demining in areas with instability factors". This new standard was established in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, and OCCP – AICMA group and operators believe it represents a significant positive development by creating the conditions to allow for mine action interventions. It overcomes the structural barrier posed by the previous interpretation of the law, and provides a simpler and more transparent system of task allocation.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM** (10% of overall score)	7	7	In 2021, Colombia formally issued a new set of 17 national mine action standards (NMAS) but the NMAS on TS is yet to be used by almost all civilian demining operators given debates on how to operationalise it, in particular regarding whether areas reduced through TS can be considered free of contamination, as improvised AP mine laying does not follow any kind of pattern. Further discussions are still needed on the suitability and potential for the use of TS in the Colombia context. The SOP on mechanical demining was updated in 2023 in accordance with IMAS. In 2024, Colombia finalised a new national standard on "Humanitarian demining in areas with security instability factors and response to specific events". Furthermore, there are challenges regarding cancellation through NTS, including potential differences in methodology between operators with respect to "cancelling" mined area after investigating IMSMA events versus only cancelling mined area previously identified through NTS and which is already recorded in the information management system. This further adds to ongoing information management challenges. Colombia has a large operational clearance capacity at its disposal with a total of seven operators accredited to carry out demining: two military operators and five NGOs.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	7	7	While overall land release output in 2023 is reported to have remained steady, the extent of clearance dropped slightly based on revised data from Colombia. But almost two thirds of total mine clearance in 2023 found no explosive ordnance. Colombia will certainly not meet its extended Article 5 clearance deadline of end 2025 and will be seeking a further extension to its clearance deadline. Fulfilling Colombia's Article 5 obligations is contingent on access to all affected communities, which in turn demands peace. Both appear a long way off as things stand, with lack of access to many mined areas due to insecurity and with reports of new use of AP mines by NSAGs.
Average Score	6.7	6.7	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

* New criterion introduced in 2024 to assess performance.

** The weighting of this criterion was previously 20% of overall performance score, but is now given a 10% weighting.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Counselling Office Commissioned for Peace (Oficina Consejería Comisionada de Paz (OCCP) – AICMA Group) and prior to April 2024 mine action sat at the now defunct Office of the High Commissioner or Peace (OACP – AICMA Group)"

- Intercollegiate Humanitarian Demining Body (Instancia Interinstitucional de Desminado Humanitario (IIDH)
- Intersectorial National Mine Action Commission (Comisión Intersectorial Nacional para la Acción contra las minas Antipersonal (CINAMAP)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Humanitarian Demining Brigade (Brigada de Desminado Humanitario (BRDEH))
- Batallón de Desminado e Ingenieros Anfíbios (BDIAN)
- Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas (CCCM)
- Corporación HUMANICEMOS DH (HUMANICEMOS DH)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Danish Refugee Council's Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding Sector (DRC)

- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- Humanity & Inclusion (HI)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- Organization of American States (OAS) Comprehensive Mine Action Program (AICMA Program – OAS)
- Fondation Suisse de Déminage (FSD) (ended its mine action support in 2023)
- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of AP mined area in Colombia remains unknown and current estimates based on survey data are only partial. At the end of 2023, survey had identified a total of more than 4.47km² of AP mined area (up from almost 3.82km² in 2022), of which almost 2.27km² was in confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and nearly 2.21km² in suspected hazardous areas (SHAs). Contamination was spread across 14 departments and 71 municipalities¹ according to Colombia's latest Article 7 report (see Table 1). But the departments of Arauca, Boyacá, Casanare, Chocó, Córdoba, Guainía, Guaviare, La Guajira, Norte de Santander, Risaralda, and Vaupes were also considered mine-affected during 2022,² although no survey data were available for these departments at the time of writing, nor were these departments included in Colombia's Article 7 report covering 2023.

Table 1: AP mined area by department (at end 2023) (Article 7 report data)³

Department	Affected municipalities	CHAs	CHA (m ²)*	SHAs	SHA (m ²)*	Total area (m ²)*
Antioquia	21	51	320,160	25	216,921	537,081
Bolívar	3	7	26,030	18	104,900	130,930
Caldas	2	3	23,284	11	66,328	89,612
Caquetá	7	39	262,485	58	684,768	947,253
Cauca	6	23	65,988	5	7,562	73,550
Cesar	1	1	51,985	0	0	51,985
Huila	1	3	225,463	6	127,319	352,782
Meta	9	84	934,727	21	161,366	1,096,093
Nariño	1	0	0	1	1,890	1,890
Putumayo	7	47	98,949	135	324,662	423,611
Santander	5	2	27,839	14	196,258	224,097
Tolima	3	6	155,383	11	208,708	364,091
Valle del Cauca	4	5	71,454	7	102,565	174,019
Vichada	1	3	1,902	5	4,474	6,376
Totals	71	274	2,265,649	317	2,207,721	4,473,370

* Figures are rounded to the nearest square metre.

In September 2024, the new entity, the Counselling Office Commissioned for Peace (OCCP) – AICMA Group, provided Mine Action Review confirmed figures for the extent of contamination as at the end of 2023. These were exactly the same as the Article 7 data.⁴

1 At the end of 2023, Colombia had 1,121 municipalities in total across 32 departments, and not 1,122, as two municipalities merged in 2023 in the department of Vaupes: Barrancominas with SHAs and Mapiripana without any suspected contamination. They are now legally recognised as the municipality of Barrancominas. Article 7 Report (covering 2023), p. 24.

2 Email from Mariany Monroy Torres, Coordinator, Office of the High Commissioner for Peace – Integrated Action on Anti-Personnel Mines (OACP – AICMA Group), 31 July 2023.

3 APMBC Article 7 Report (covering 2023), pp. 27–29.

4 Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, Coordinator, OCCP – AICMA Group, 6 September 2024.

The OCCP, the Organization of American States (OAS)'s Comprehensive Mine Action Program (AICMA Program – OAS), The HALO Trust, and Humanity & Inclusion (HI) all believe that the dynamics of the Colombian conflict, the size of the country, and remoteness of many of the mined areas, effectively preclude the possibility of a nationwide baseline survey.⁵ The new national mine action standard (NMAS) on land release, the increase in operator capacity for non-technical survey (NTS), and the improved security conditions in some mine-affected municipalities as a result of the Final Peace Agreement with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) in 2016, made it possible to determine the extent of contamination more accurately in some areas of the country, based on evidence from the communities themselves.⁶ The easy to access mined areas have subsequently largely been addressed, and the majority of the remaining contamination is now predominantly focused in areas of insecurity due to the presence of NSAGs. In many instances NSAGs are laying mines to defend their geographical positions and as part of fighting between NSAGs, and not solely fighting against the government. Given the unstable humanitarian space in Colombia, the OCCP – AIMCA Group stresses that separation of NTS and clearance is not efficient and operators must capitalise on access to affected communities, by conducting required survey and clearance interventions at the same time when possible.⁷

One of the primary sources of information for tasking of demining operators continues to be the “events” in the IMSMA database, which continue to be a generally unreliable source.⁸ “Events” are often found to be erroneous, and in some cases events don't even relate to information relevant to mine action/to possible evidence of contamination. Desk-based analysis and cleaning up of “events” data in the database, would almost certainly support more efficient NTS, given that operators are required to investigate 100% of events in IMSMA. AICMA Program – OAS believe a desktop evaluation of existing areas in the database is required as the first step to help clarify contamination. Newly recorded areas identified by operators while conducting NTS are more accurate and can be included as mined areas. NTS found 1.06km² of mined area in 2023.⁹ But significant cancellation of areas recorded earlier, especially unconfirmed “events”, is likely.¹⁰

The Operational Plan 2023–2025 presents the new baseline on suspected contamination and operational projections for the three years of the plan.¹¹ The Plan was approved by the Intersectoral National Mine Action Commission

(CINAMAP) on 4 May 2023. The baseline uses a range of data including statistical analysis of demining operations concluded and certified by the External Monitoring Component (CEM) between 2016 and December 2022; information provided by the demining operators during the National Dialogues on Mine Action as a contribution to the Total Peace Policy; data from the Armed Forces and the Police gathered while conducting military operations; reports from former FARC-EP combatants; and finally community and local authorities reports.¹²

For 2023, Colombia planned to conduct NTS of 4,283 areas. In fact, 2,697 were conducted and another 517 started but not completed, amounting to a completion rate of 63%.¹³ In previous years, and as part of the Final Peace Agreement (2016) with FARC-EP, a tripartite mechanism (OACP/ FARC-EP/United Nations Verification Mission (UNVMC), with technical support from the United Nations Mine Action Service – UNMAS) was established with a view to collecting all available information on areas that may have been contaminated by explosive ordnance in Colombia by former FARC-EP combatants. The data, which started to be collected in 2021,¹⁴ concluded in 2023, with more than 4,000 data points relating to the emplacement of explosive devices. Whether or not this project will help to create a more accurate baseline remained to be seen.

Comprehensive action against AP mines has been included as part of the discussions in the current active negotiation processes in Colombia with NSAGs, seeking an end to mine use.¹⁵ According to Colombia's statement at the APMBC Intersessional meetings in June 2024, humanitarian demining is underway in 87 of the 1,121 municipalities, with tasks assigned to seven accredited operators. However, there are 119 municipalities where there is instability due to the presence of NSAGs and their use of AP mines and other improvised explosive devices (IEDs). This has hindered Colombia's efforts to deploy and assign humanitarian demining operations to these areas. For this reason, in 2024, Colombia is focusing its efforts on making humanitarian demining possible in areas with unstable security factors, corresponding to 11% of the national territory where NSAGs are present and where civilian mine victims have been concentrated over the past eight years.

Colombia is seeking to devise alternative solutions for interventions in these high-risk areas, which is where ethnic populations, historically excluded from development efforts, reside. As a result, Colombia has created its own standard for

5 Emails from Aderito Ismael, Demining Operations Manager /Senior Project Manager on Land Release & EOD, Humanity & Inclusion, 22 August 2023; Oliver Ford, Programme Manager Colombia, HALO, 16 June 2023; telephone interview with Mariany Monroy Torres, OACP – AICMA Group, 18 June 2023; and Tammy Hall, OAS, 13 March 2023; and emails from Yessika Morales, Coordinator, OACP – AICMA Group, 20 July 2022; Mariany Monroy Torres, and Diana Marisol Peñalosa, OACP – AICMA Group, 30 September 2022; Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 20 September 2022.

6 Emails from Yessika Morales, OACP – AICMA Group, 20 July 2022; Diana Marisol Peñalosa, OACP – AICMA Group, 23 and 26 August 2022; and Mariany Monroy Torres and Diana Marisol Peñalosa, OACP – AICMA Group, 30 September 2022.

7 Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OACP – AICMA Group, 11 October 2024.

8 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Tom Griffiths, HALO Regional Director for Latin America, 20 June 2022; Arturo Bureo, HI, 7 May 2021 and 30 June 2022; and Maria Sanz, Resources Mobilisation Manager, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

9 Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OCCP – AICMA Group, 6 September 2024.

10 Telephone interview with Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 9 April 2023; and email, 20 September 2022.

11 Operational Plan for Mine Action 2023 – 2025, 8 May 2023, pp. 15–18.

12 Ibid., pp. 16–18; email from Mariany Monroy Torres, OACP – AICMA Group, 22 April 2023; and OACP – AICMA Group Presentations, Roundtable on Cooperation and Donors Assistance, 11 May 2023.

13 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), p. 32.

14 Email from Yessika Morales, OACP – AICMA Group, 20 July 2022.

15 Statement of Colombia on Article 5, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18–20 June 2024.

such areas with a view to ensuring humanitarian access that would also allow mine action to take place.¹⁶ The new NMAS on "Humanitarian Demining in Zones with Instability Factors" provides a framework for demining as a confidence-building exercise to support the peace dialogues.¹⁷ According to OCCP – AICMA Group, the new standard enables "an innovative approach to intervention in highly complex areas, prioritising risk reduction and humanitarian relief over land release".¹⁸

All the mines remaining in Colombia are said to have been laid by NSAGs and all are of an improvised nature. According to The HALO Trust, mined areas in Colombia are low-density, nuisance minefields.¹⁹ Mines were planted in isolated rural areas to protect strategic positions; often coca cultivations

and illegal gold mining sites. In other cases, they were laid by the side of communal paths, which were used also by the military, as well as around hamlets, schools, on hills, and in riverbanks. The depth to which the mines were laid can vary between 10 and 13 centimetres.²⁰ HUMANICEMOS DH has reported that, in their area of operations in Antioquia and Caquetá, mined areas coincided with NSAG camps.²¹ It also said there is no pattern to mine laying in Colombia and that the form of use varies in each department.²² The Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines (CCCM) has found that the patterns of minelaying correspond to illicit cultivation areas as well as areas where the military stop and rest.²³ The intended victims were the military or paramilitaries.²⁴

NEW CONTAMINATION

New minelaying by NSAGs continues to occur in Colombia. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in its Annual Reports for 2023 and 2022, referred to more improvised AP mines being used, with armed groups seeking greater territorial and social control.²⁵ According to UNMAS, new AP mines are laid to control the transit of communities and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has recorded more displacements and blockages as a result.²⁶

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Colombia is also contaminated with explosive remnants of war (ERW), although the threat posed to communities is significantly less than that from landmines.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

A new national government took office in August 2022 with the goal of achieving "Total Peace" in Colombia and a new High Commissioner for Peace came into office as well as a new AICMA – Group Coordinator. Mine Action was included as a key element of the new public policy of Total Peace, reflected in Law 2272 of 4 November 2022.²⁷ In 2023, the Colombian Constitutional Court, in a ruling on November 29, upheld the constitutionality of the Total Peace Law (2022), advancing ongoing peace processes. This is significant because humanitarian demining was included in the law under Article 16, which mandates the National Government to prioritise national and territorial plans focused on demining throughout the country, ensuring cooperation from all illegal groups in identifying mined areas and facilitating subsequent demining operations. Additionally, the law extended Article 9 of Law 1421 of 2010, allowing civilian organisations to continue demining operations in Colombia for four more

years. According to the OCCP – AICMA Group, the promotion of the government's Total Peace policy has led to a first agreement with a guerrilla group (Comuneros del Sur/ former ELN members) to advance humanitarian demining in the Abades region of Nariño, as the first effective measure agreed upon for humanitarian relief from the conflict in this area. This expands the relationship between mine action and peacebuilding and grants the mine action sector operational access to previously restricted areas.²⁸

On 30 December 2022, Presidential Decree 2647 modified the structure of the Administrative Department of the Presidential Office and clarified the structure and functions of the OACP, making it responsible for elaborating a national mine action strategy and concluding national standards.²⁹ It became Grupo AICMA (Integrated Action on Anti-Personnel Mines), one of the OACP's three working groups. In March 2024, Nathalie Ochoa Niño was appointed the new head

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Emails from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024; and Paula Ximena Cadena, DRC, 12 June 2024.

¹⁸ Email from Diana Marisol Peñalosa, Advisor, OCCP – AICMA Group, 17 September 2024.

¹⁹ Email from Tom Griffiths, HALO Latin America, 20 June 2022.

²⁰ Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form E.

²¹ Emails from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 19 July 2022 and 8 June 2023.

²² Emails from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June and 8 September 2023.

²³ Emails from Francisco Moreno, then Projects and Monitoring Director, CCCM, 6 June 2023 and 15 June 2022.

²⁴ Email from Oliver Ford, HALO, 6 August 2020; and Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D.

²⁵ ICRC, Annual Report 2023, p. 219; and Annual Report 2022, p. 232.

²⁶ UNMAS Colombia Annual Report 2023, April 2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/34mxhm9v>, p. 5.

²⁷ Law 2272, Article 16, 4 November 2022.

²⁸ Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OCCP – AICMA Group, 6 September 2024.

²⁹ Presidential decree 2647, 30 December 2022, Arts. 17–18, at: <https://tinyurl.com/24v4f94s>.

of OACP – AICMA Group. She has extensive experience in mine action both nationally and internationally, and has the distinction of having been Colombia's first female deminer.³⁰ In April 2024, the Counselling Office Commissioned for Peace (Oficina Consejería Comisionada de Paz (OCCP) – AICMA Group) assumed responsibility for mine action from the now defunct OACP.³¹

The Instancia Interinstitucional de Desminado Humanitario (IIDH: Intercollegiate Body for Humanitarian Demining) was created in 2011, bringing together representatives from the Ministry of National Defence, the General Inspectorate of the Military Forces, and OACP (now OCCP) – AICMA Group. It is responsible for recommending or suspending the certification of humanitarian demining organisations to the Ministry of National Defence as well as for prioritising, at national level, areas, zones, and municipalities to be demined and assigning specific demining tasks. Responsibility for drafting and adopting NMAS, their dissemination, implementation, and compliance had been already reassigned to the OACP under Presidential Decree 1784 of 2019.³²

Operators have reported a largely enabling environment for mine action in Colombia, although the approval and decision-making process can be slow. For some operators, the change of government and pivot towards the Total Peace Policy is a key milestone in efforts to address mine contamination as it directs efforts towards peace negotiations with all NSAGs. This, it is hoped, will expand the humanitarian space available for demining.³³ HUMANICEMOS DH has raised the issue of a lack of balance in the composition of the IIDH: two military organisations and one organisation from the civilian part of the Government and no representation from civilian demining operators.³⁴ Moreover, operators have been confronted with more bureaucracy in seeking to obtain visas for international staff and tax exemptions.³⁵

On 12 December 2023, the IIDH approved Annex G, which later became the National Mine Action Standard for Demining in Emergency Situations during the summer of 2024.³⁶ In terms of consultations during 2023, some clearance operators considered that the level of consultation with operators was limited, except for discussions regarding the process to elaborate Annex G, and that while multilateral

meetings do take place, there was no participatory process for adjusting the Strategic Plan 2023–2025 or the Operational Mine Action Plan 2023–2025.³⁷ Nonetheless, according to the OCCP, all operators participated in the discussions during the round tables for the Paz Total National Dialogue at the end of 2022 and the documents produced during this process of national dialogue formed the basis for the adjustment of the Strategic Plan 2023–2025 and the Operational Plan 2023–2025.³⁸ The basis for the 2023–2025 plans was presented during a seminar funded by the European Union and supported by the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) of the APMBC.³⁹ Colombia has committed to a more consultative approach in 2024, including for elaboration of the planned Article 5 deadline extension request for 2026–30.⁴⁰

The OCCP – AICMA Group also adopted a "Knowledge Management Platform" approach, which was launched in August 2024, and for which the following priority topics have been identified: Operational Efficiency Indicators; Recognition of Explosive Devices; Impact Measurement Methodology; Development of Local Capacity and Localization; Methodology for Measuring Community Impact by Explosive Devices; Cross-Cutting Approaches in AICMA; and Technology and Innovation.⁴¹ For each priority topic, a Working Group was formed, of which most of them are led by sector operators. The different groups' mandates are to coordinate, convene, monitor, produce documents, and lead the technical discussions on the topic for which they are responsible. All Working Groups have one or more OCCP focal points whose role is to accompany the discussions and then facilitate the final decision-making process.⁴²

The OAS provides technical and capacity support to the OCCP – AICMA Group for mine action through its AICMA Program – OAS, in particular for humanitarian demining. The OAS is now responsible for external monitoring of all accredited humanitarian demining organisations in Colombia.⁴³ In previous years, UNMAS conducted external monitoring of HUMANICEMOS DH, but since April 2023, this is the task of the OAS,⁴⁴ which is a significant and positive development. The OAS also assesses demining personnel for accreditation, with additional support provided by the Group of Interamerican Monitors (GMI) of the Interamerican

30 Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OCCP – AICMA Group, 6 September 2024.

31 Presidential decree 438 transformed the OACP into the OCCP, 5 April 2024, Arts. 4 and 5, at: <https://tinyurl.com/2pcf88zh>; and for the OACP Presidential decree 2647, 30 December 2022, Arts. 17–18, at: <https://tinyurl.com/24v4f94s>.

32 OACP – AICMA Group "Instancia Interinstitucional de Desminado Humanitario – IIDH", undated, last accessed 19 July 2022.

33 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

34 Email from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 September 2023.

35 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

36 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Oslo Action Plan Report, Action 5, p. 19; Colombian Technical Norm (NTC) "Desminado Humanitario en Zonas con Factores de Inestabilidad en Materia de Seguridad y Atención a Eventos Puntuales", (Versión 1), 6 May 2024, p. 6.

37 Emails from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024; and Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024.

38 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), pp. 16, 30, and 38.

39 "Diálogo Nacional de Partes Interesadas Acción Integral contra Minas Antipersonal y la Política para la Paz Total Resumen de la Presidencia", Bogotá, 6–7 December 2022, pp. 4–14.

40 Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, National Coordinator, AICMA Group – OACP, 25 July 2024.

41 AICMA Program – OAS, Knowledge Management Platform, 2024, p. 2.

42 Ibid., p. 3.

43 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form H, p. 96; Operational Plan for Mine Action 2023 – 2025, 8 May 2023, p. 20; and emails from Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 21 July 2022; and Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OACP – AICMA Group, 6 September 2024.

44 Telephone interviews with Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 13 March and 18 May 2023; and emails, 14 April 2023 and 21 July 2022; and email from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

Defense Board.⁴⁵ In addition, the AICMA Program – OAS monitors compliance with NMAS and operator standard operating procedures (SOPs) and inspects released land before handover to local authorities and communities.⁴⁶ In 2024, AICMA Program – OAS took the lead in providing international technical assistance to the OCCP – AICMA Group, including for strategic planning.⁴⁷

During 2023, the national authorities received technical support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian (GICHD) through various activities, including workshops on information management, quality management (QM), and risk education, including an operational data analyst workshop in Bogota in October 2023 which facilitated the training of 30 sector technicians.⁴⁸ The October workshop was organised by the OAS through an agreement with the GICHD, and funded by US PM/WRA.⁴⁹ UNMAS enhanced the methodology of Post-Clearance Impact Assessment (PCIA) by incorporating “new artificial intelligence models to monitor changes in land use, such as the emergence of buildings and roads, changes in vegetation cover and installation of new human settlements”.⁵⁰

Initially, Colombia had estimated the total cost of the mine action programme for 2020–25 would be almost US\$250 million, of which the government would fund 30% and the remainder would come from the international community.⁵¹ Of this, the projected cost of demining was estimated at US\$183 million, of which the government would fund \$55 million.⁵² For demining, Colombia was seeking almost \$128 million from the international community to build the QM capacity within the national authority, to fund civilian operators, and for equipment servicing and replacement for the military.⁵³

In 2023, national funding to the OACP (now OCCP) – AICMA Group totalled over US\$1.45 million, which was a 3.4 fold increase on 2022. The resources were primarily allocated to risk prevention and victim assistance, and to strengthening operational capacities in information management (IM). Colombia also makes a significant budgetary contribution to finance the tasks carried out by the State’s Humanitarian Demining Capacity, represented by the Humanitarian Demining Engineers Brigade (BRDEH) of the National Army and the Demining and Amphibious Engineers Battalion

(BDIAN) of the Marine Infantry, both attached to the Ministry of National Defence. In 2023, Colombia contributed almost US\$33.40 million to cover personnel expenses and operational costs of the BRDEH and US\$8,896 to the costs of the BDIAN.⁵⁴

While Colombia does not yet have a regular, institutionalised national mine action platform in place which brings all stakeholders together, including donors, to discuss the strengths and challenges of Article 5 implementation, as recommended by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation,⁵⁵ significant progress has nonetheless been made in 2023 and to-date in 2024 and the sector now meets more frequently than it has in years.⁵⁶ The HALO Trust continues to advocate for a more effective strategic-level dialogue between the OACP (now OCCP) – AICMA Group and its partners.⁵⁷ In May 2023, a Cooperation and Technical Assistance Roundtable was held as a coordination platform to discuss progress and plan actions to meet the global goals of the 2023–2025 Operational Plan. In December 2023, there was a multilateral session promoted by the Swiss Cooperation in Colombia, known as COSUDE (Cooperación Suiza al Desarrollo), with the aim of improving the coordination of intervention strategies between donors and operators in the most affected areas.⁵⁸ However, this was only attended by COSUDE implementing partners.⁵⁹ In addition, the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Peace Building (MPTF), which has reintroduced mine action as a result of UNMAS’s advocacy, has become a “proxy” for the coordination platform where the Colombian Government, the UN, donors, and civil society meet and discuss projects.⁶⁰

Colombia has published a schedule for several strategic and technical sectoral workshops and forums in 2024, including national dialogues, to organise and strengthen the sector. During the first half of 2024 the national authorities convened five technical meetings with the mine action sector to update the operations plan, make adjustments to the new national standard for areas with instability factors, and for new interventions under this standard in the departments of Cauca and Nariño. These meetings concluded in a meeting with mine action donors in Colombia, during which the operators and the international community participated

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- 45 Email from Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 31 August 2023; “Grupo de Monitores Interamericanos de Desminado Humanitario en Colombia Apoya Certificación para Operaciones Desminado Humanitario”, Inter American Defense Board, 26 April 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3qs896K>; and “Evaluación de nuevos operadores en el manejo, identificación y destrucción de artefactos explosivos (EOD)”, at: <https://bit.ly/3dzdzFIP>.
- 46 “Programa de Acción Integral contra Minas Antipersonal de la OEA (AICMA – OEA)”, at: <https://bit.ly/3RDT3TD>; Informe a la Comisión de Seguridad Hemisférica, Programa de Acción Integral contra Minas Antipersonal de la OEA en Colombia, 30 March 2023; AICMA – OEA Infographic 2022; Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form H, p. 104; and email from Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 20 September 2022.
- 47 Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OACP – AICMA Group, 6 September 2024.
- 48 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), pp. 77–78; and email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OACP – AICMA Group, 6 September 2024.
- 49 Email from Steven Griner, Director, Department of Public Security (DPS), OAS, 4 October 2024.
- 50 UNMAS Annual Report Colombia 2023, pp. 47–49.
- 51 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 86–87.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Ibid.; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form H, pp. 94–95.
- 54 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), p. 74.
- 55 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, “Preliminary Observations”, Intersessional Meetings, 19–21 June 2023, p. 4.
- 56 Email from Steven Griner, OAS, 4 October 2024.
- 57 Emails from Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; and Tom Griffiths, HALO Latin America, 20 June 2022.
- 58 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), p. 84; and email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OACP – AICMA Group, 6 September 2024.
- 59 Email from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024.
- 60 Email from Pablo Parra, UNMAS Colombia, 22 August 2023.

and the AICMA 2024–2026 strategy was presented.⁶¹ OCCP – AICMA Group noted the creation in 2024 of a Knowledge Management Platform “as a concrete measure for the meeting of the sector’s stakeholders to allow discussion of the challenges and strengths for the implementation of Article 5”.⁶² The aim of the platform is to foster the

exchange of knowledge and best practices among sectoral actors, potentially driving future innovation.⁶³ The national authorities envisage that these will provide inputs for updates to AICMA policy, the definition of the new Strategic Plan 2026–2030, and the request for an Article 5 deadline extension for 2026–2030.⁶⁴

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Colombia’s diversity and gender policy is included in the Operations Plan 2023–2025, in line with the National Development Plan 2022–2026, which refers to the essential need to transform the gender relationships embedded in cultural, economic, and social structures so as to overcome gender-based violence, discrimination, and inequality. The National Development Plan highlights the role of mine action and calls for gender and diversity to be incorporated in humanitarian demining.⁶⁵ The NMAS on Land release recognises that different groups require tailored attention and protection needs. Those include responses related to gender, ethnicity, age, disability condition, socio-economic condition, and cultural identities, in order to ensure that mine action interventions promote equal opportunities and respect for their differences.⁶⁶ The Government recognises the challenges in the participation of women in the sector and

say they are committed to empowering women as agents of change and for sustainable development.⁶⁷

According to information in Colombia’s Article 7 report, the participation of women in humanitarian demining activities has increased, reaching 353 women out of a total of 2,878 people working in NTS and clearance, representing 12% of the total personnel working in these activities nationwide. Colombia said that although this figure is lower overall compared to the 423 women reported in humanitarian demining the previous year, in percentage terms, it represents an increase from 9% to 12% of the total deminers nationwide.⁶⁸

The five civilian operators have reported 1,077 staff members of whom 434 (40%) are women (see Table 2 for details). This is one of the highest percentages of female participation in mine action in the world.

Table 2: Gender composition of operators in 2023⁶⁹

Operator	Total staff	Women staff	Total managerial and supervisory staff	Women in managerial and supervisory positions	Total operational staff	Women in operational positions
CCCM	355	167 (47%)	105	55 (52%)	174	76 (44%)
DRC	118	43 (36%)	32	8 (25%)	86	30 (35%)
HALO	338	128 (38%)	115	39 (34%)	224	90 (40%)
HI	156	65 (42%)	21	8 (38%)	135	57 (42%)
HUMANICEMOS	110	31 (28%)	33	10 (30%)	77	21 (27%)
Totals	1,077	434 (40%)	306	120 (39%)	696	274 (39%)

Colombia has a significant indigenous and ethnic minority group population (13.7% of the total population), who are afforded constitutional protections and therefore require a specific approach during demining. Indigenous communities are said to have been disproportionately affected by AP

mines. According to OACP – AICMA Group, since the Final Agreement between the Colombian government and FARC in November 2016, the impact on the civilian population has increased and made up 61.3% of those affected, registering a total of 615 victims between 2017 and August 2024.

61 Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OACP – AICMA Group, 11 October 2024.
62 Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OACP – AICMA Group, 6 September 2024.
63 Email from Diana Marisol Peñalosa, Advisor, OACP – AICMA Group, 17 September 2024.
64 OACP – AICMA Group, “2024 Event Calendar”, July 2024.
65 National Development Plan 2022–2026, Law 2294, 19 May 2023.
66 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 30 June 2022.
67 Presentation of Colombia, Intersessional Meetings, 19 June 2023, pp. 2–3.
68 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), p. 17.
69 Emails from John Abril, Quality Manager, HUMANICEMOS DH, 15 July 2024; Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024; Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024; Katherine Otálora, Project and Monitoring Coordinator, CCCM, 14 June 2024; and Paula Ximena Cadena, Programme Officer, DRC, 12 June 2024.

Of the civilian population affected during this period, one third were indigenous or Afro descended persons.⁷⁰ The OACP (now OCCP) and the demining operators have developed annexes to the NMAS on NTS and territorial management in order to facilitate negotiation with ethnic communities on demining interventions. The NTS Technical Note has a specific methodology for interacting and negotiating with ethnic communities, so as to guarantee direct participation throughout the land release cycle.⁷¹

Operators involve local ethnic minority communities in the liaison process ahead of any operations, working with them to map contamination and prioritise tasks.⁷² The involvement of local indigenous communities gives operators an understanding of the preparations that must take place before survey or clearance can be conducted on sacred land.⁷³ The CCCM has indicators for showing the evolution of gender and diversity mainstreaming within the organisation, including a minimum of 30% women in operational teams. The CCCM is looking at other indicators to include such as on ethnicity and disability. There is currently no mechanism that would allow identification of the needs of women, girls, and boys directly within the national process of task prioritisation.⁷⁴

During 2023, The HALO Trust appointed a gender focal point to lead the implementation of its gender policy

across the programme and to mainstream gender in all policies. Preparations have been made to start a gender empowerment project with women in HALO from June 2024 onwards, focusing on leadership skills and sexual and reproductive health and rights. In 2023, HALO worked closely with the indigenous communities of Mesetas municipality in Meta department in order to restart demining operations suspended due to lack of security. This effort paid off in 2024, with the deployment of three demining teams comprised only of local indigenous community members.⁷⁵

HUMANICEMOS DH has been actively seeking to recruit more women. It achieved its target of 31 women staff in early 2023 and obtained a national seal of approval on non-discrimination for their best practices concerning gender, diversity, and inclusion.⁷⁶ Its staff come from different regions of the country and identify themselves belonging to diverse ethnic groups. Thirty per cent of its managerial and supervisory positions are now staffed by women. In the course of 2023, HUMANICEMOS DH organised a number of workshops for its staff on gender and diversity issues.⁷⁷

Colombia has a female head of its national mine action authority, one of the few women who hold this position in the world.⁷⁸ Between 2002 and 2024, the NMAA has been led by six women and four men.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Colombia has not produced a specific NMAS for environmental management although Presidential Decree 1195 of 2017 outlines environmental assessments required, as well as mitigation and correction measures that must be applied by operators when demining in national parks and other areas of ecological value. According to the OACP (now OCCP) – AICMA Group, however, there have been inconsistencies in the application of Decree 1195 at regional and local levels. In response, the OACP (now OCCP) – AICMA Group, with support from the Fondation Suisse de Déminage (FSD), created a set of tools that clarify the obligations of demining operators and the process they must follow. The roles and responsibilities at local, regional, and national levels of environmental authorities have also been clarified.⁷⁹

OCCP – AICMA Group said it expects significant progress will be made in the coming years towards a more detailed and specific regulation on the environment, to enable a more comprehensive and sustainable environmental management,

contributing to the recovery of ecosystems affected by antipersonnel mines. At the request of the sector, one of the working groups within the Knowledge Management Platform, established in 2024, is responsible for addressing environmental issues.⁸⁰

All civilian operators have SOPs in line with Decree 1195 of 2017, which they apply when working in environmentally protected areas.⁸¹ The CCCM's policy on environment for within the organisation and while implementing operations is committed to "Do No Harm" ("Acción sin daño") and focuses on reducing risk and/or impact in relation to environmental degradation, climate change, and natural disasters. An SOP on the environment provides instruction and guidance for all demining phases, camps, medical support, and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD).⁸² In 2023, an update was made to the environmental policy and an Ecological Team (ET) established, composed of focal points whose purpose is to promote collaboration and identify opportunities to improve

⁷⁰ Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OACP – AICMA Group, 11 October 2024.

⁷¹ Email from Yessika Morales, OACP – AICMA Group, 20 July 2022.

⁷² Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023 and 15 June 2022; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023 and Caterina Weller, DRC, 9 June 2022; Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023; Tom Griffiths, HALO Latin America, 20 June 2022; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023 and 30 June 2022; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023 and 19 July 2022.

⁷³ Email from Alejandro Perez, CCCM, 18 July 2020.

⁷⁴ Email from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023.

⁷⁵ Email from Francisco Moreno, Donor and Partnerships Officer, HALO, 28 June 2024.

⁷⁶ The Instituto Colombiano de Normas Técnicas (ICONTEC) is affiliated to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

⁷⁷ Email from John Abril, HUMANICEMOS DH, 15 July 2024.

⁷⁸ Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form A, p. 20.

⁷⁹ Email from Yessika Morales, OACP – AICMA Group, 20 July 2022.

⁸⁰ Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OCCP – AICMA Group, 6 September 2024.

⁸¹ Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August and 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

⁸² Email from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023.

environmental performance. The ET was launched in June 2023, initially comprising a small group of volunteers from directors and managers.⁸³ The CCCM conducts a “rapid environmental evaluation” of hazardous areas, to identify the sensitivity of the environment, prior to clearance interventions, so that where necessary decisions can be made to adapt appropriate mitigation measures.⁸⁴

Danish Refugee Council (DRC) has been seeking to mitigate the impact of demining in local communities for several years. Deminer camps have all functioned with 100% energy generated from solar panels since 2021.⁸⁵ In addition, the organisation’s environmental management SOP reflects best practices for environmental management in land release operations, including the possible effects on soil, water, air, and flora and fauna.⁸⁶ Small-scale mitigation measures are conducted, such as reforestation with 250 native tree species after demining operations in an indigenous reserve in San José del Fragua, Caquetá, in June 2023. For DRC, “it was one of the most meaningful experiences in this regard since we merge both our environmental commitment and our ethnic and diversity responsibility with the communities.”⁸⁷

HALO’s management system includes SOPs on interaction with the environment during clearance, from waste management in camps and location bases, to minimising cutting trees over 10cm in diameter and only cutting if it blocks an evacuation route. HALO includes in its SOPs

guidance on the location of septic tanks and mitigation measures on use of plastics and action to reduce the risk of fires, explosions, or pipeline spills.⁸⁸ In 2023, HALO appointed a Global Environmental Manager who visited the Colombia programme and met with several stakeholders working on environmental issues in country with the purpose of securing future partnerships. These included the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the Department of National Parks of Colombia, the Humboldt Institute, and other academic organisations.⁸⁹

HI has an environmental management policy, called “HI Environmental Agenda”. It has a standing environmental expert consultant dedicated to support land release and ensure compliance with norms while advising on environmental good practices and compensation. A budget is included in all operations for this purpose.⁹⁰ HI seeks to protect the environment in natural parks, in several of which HI has had demining operations. This includes the planting of trees in coordination with the local communities and environmental authorities.⁹¹ HI has the goal of reducing its carbon footprint by 50% by 2030. In 2024, it was taking measures to optimise flights and to modify the daily menu for its deminers so it can contribute to reducing the carbon footprint.⁹²

HUMANICEMOS DH is in the process of updating its environmental policy.⁹³

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Colombia’s national information management system is managed by the OCCP – AICMA Group. The Information Management System uses both Periferico, where weekly reports are uploaded using Survey123, and IMSMA (once the data uploaded through Periferico have been verified and validated). Once data on each individual task have been uploaded to IMSMA they are released to the general public.⁹⁴ According to DRC, the information management system is accurate enough to cover mine action operations at the administrative level of municipalities (1:100,000) but not to the hazardous areas scale (usually ranging between 1:500 to 1:200).⁹⁵

Due to the nature of the contamination, the baseline of AP mine contamination is still largely dependent on accident/incident data, including military demining. These records can be unreliable and there can be major differences between database records and the evidence found in the field by NTS and confirming the accuracy of the information.⁹⁶ This often results in wasted time and resources investigating IMSMA events that were misplaced or recorded in the nearest population centre rather than the place of the accident itself,⁹⁷ and most of the investigated IMSMA events are cancelled or discarded.⁹⁸

83 Email from Katherine Otálora, CCCM, 14 June 2024.

84 Ibid.

85 Email from Paula Ximena Cadena, DRC, 16 August 2023.

86 Email from Paula Ximena Cadena, DRC, 23 September 2022.

87 Email from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023.

88 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO, 16 June 2023.

89 Email from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024.

90 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024.

91 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

92 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024.

93 Email from John Abril, HUMANICEMOS DH, 15 July 2024.

94 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form A, p. 29; and telephone interview with Mariany Monroy, OACP – AICMA Group, 11 August 2023.

95 Email from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023.

96 Emails from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024; Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024; and Paula Ximena Cadena, DRC, 12 June 2024.

97 Emails from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024; and Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024.

98 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024.

HI reported that during 2023, the NMAA has, as in 2022, been filtering the database, cleaning duplicated records, and better siting reports. This has resulted in some IMSMA events being “transferred” from or to HI assigned territories.⁹⁹

There were some reports of delays in handover of municipalities free from the suspicion of explosive ordnance.¹⁰⁰

Article 7 reports are submitted on a timely basis and Colombia’s latest Article 7 report (covering 2023) includes detailed information on its implementation of the Oslo Action Plan.

PLANNING AND TASKING

As of end-May 2024, the plan was to build on the 915 municipalities where release of all mined areas had occurred by releasing 87 municipalities in 2024–25 and a further 120 municipalities in 2025–30.¹⁰¹ OACP (now OCCP) – AICMA Group noted that 48% of planned clearance for 2023–25 had been achieved by August 2024, with 16 months remaining. It also hailed the support for strategic planning being provided by the OAS, beginning from 2024.¹⁰²

Operators are not involved in the priority-setting for municipalities to be opened for assignment and are not consulted to provide feedback on this matter. HALO observes that Colombia continues to treat all areas as mined until proven otherwise. This means that developmental action is blocked until mine action has taken place, which in turn is obstructed by strict security protocols.¹⁰³

According to HI, operators have been advocating for the national authorities to avoid opening only a few municipalities for assignment at the time and to prioritise geographical blocks to enhance efficiencies¹⁰⁴ and also to have more deployment flexibility in territories with difficult security situations. There was reported to have been an improvement in the clustering of task assignments, to ensure efficient use of resources, although it is not always followed. There have also been initiatives to discuss and coordinate on assignments between clearance operators, based on geographic strengths and other humanitarian interventions of some organisations. Operators have also advocated for a longer-term view of future assignments to be published.¹⁰⁵

In line with the NMAS, local authorities and community leaders are consulted prior to the start of intervention and their priorities are considered in planning NTS. An impact matrix is used to establish the level of impact of each CHA or SHA, resulting in high, medium, or low impact classification. As of 2024, the micro-focalisation approach was being

replaced by the new framework of “humanitarian demining in area with instability factors”, supported by a new NMAS, which allows operators to plan interventions based on their own assessment of security conditions, and which could not previously be conducted due to the lack of certified security conditions by the General Inspection of the Armed Forces. This framework incorporates a differential approach: operators may decide what parts of the zone of assignment are fit for applying full land release process; where this is not feasible—due to ongoing hostilities—operators may opt for only conducting emergency response and/or risk education.¹⁰⁶ According to OCCP – AICMA Group, this standard introduces an innovative approach to intervention in highly complex areas, prioritising risk reduction and humanitarian relief over land release.¹⁰⁷ OCCP – AICMA Group underlined that this new rapid-response approach to humanitarian demining is “a milestone for the sector, of equal relevance to the arrival of civil operators in 2013”. It “addresses Mine Action Review’s recommendations for action by shifting the focus of security risk assessment from a military perspective to an assessment of knowledge about humanitarian spaces by directly affected local communities”.¹⁰⁸ This new approach has been proposed to meet the need for intervention in 120 prioritised municipalities to reduce the risk from explosive devices. It also meets the need for intervention to address the humanitarian needs of these areas, which are some of the most affected areas in Colombia and where many of the more recent civilian victims live, especially since 2016.¹⁰⁹ By end of August 2024, 89 of the 120 municipalities new intervention areas in the most affected parts of the country had already been addressed.

The OCCP – AICMA Group has already elaborated a strategy for preparation of its next Article 5 deadline extension request, which Colombia plans to submit in early 2025.¹¹⁰

99 Ibid.

100 Email from Paula Ximena Cadena, DRC, 12 June 2024.

101 Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OCCP – AICMA Group, 6 September 2024.

102 Ibid.

103 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO 16 June 2023.

104 Emails from Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024; and Paula Ximena Cadena, DRC, 12 June 2024.

105 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024.

106 Email from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024.

107 Email from Diana Marisol Peñalosa, Advisor, OCCP – AICMA Group, 17 September 2024.

108 Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OCCP – AICMA Group, 6 September 2024.

109 Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OACP – AICMA Group, 11 October 2024.

110 AICMA Program – OAS, “Methodology for drafting the Extension”, July 2024.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

The set of 17 NMAS (NTC)¹¹¹ were formally issued in 2021 but have not yet been fully operationalised, in particular due to continuing debate on the technical survey (TS) standard. The key issue is whether areas reduced through TS can be considered free of contamination, as improvised AP mine laying does not follow any kind of pattern. The absence of patterns in Colombia's mined areas is agreed upon by all operators.¹¹² HALO also notes the concern that more than 60% of all CHAs/SHAs cleared in Colombia do not contain any mines. By granting NTS teams greater flexibility in assessing and identifying hazardous areas, HALO believes it may be possible to enhance the efficiency and success rate of demining. Other topics that could usefully be considered are a greater focus on TS and more flexible clearance approaches that adapt to the actual threat posed by devices as they rapidly degrade over time and their potential lethality decreases.¹¹³ The national authority was planning to conduct a general revision of the NMAS in 2024 with the objective of improving efficiency and addressing new challenges.¹¹⁴

According to the OCCP – AICMA Group, the review of NMAS and SOPs in Colombia is an ongoing process that is conducted to adapt to new challenges and ensure the implementation of international best practices. Colombia

strives to keep its standards updated and aligned with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).¹¹⁵

In 2023, the SOP on mechanical demining techniques was updated to include two new brush-cutting machines acquired by the BDIAN.¹¹⁶ In addition, with the participation and consultation of the AICMA sector, including NGOs, Colombia elaborated Annex G on Area Assignment, providing the framework for demining in zones with poor security.¹¹⁷ This was approved in 2023 and subsequently issued as an NMAS in 2024. The new standard has been welcomed by clearance operators as it represents a significant change in approach to zone assignment. It enables flexible task orders and grants clearance operators greater independence in evaluating security conditions, giving them the option to access certain areas that were previously off-limits.¹¹⁸

In 2023, talks led by AICMA Program – OAS and the OACP (now OCCP) – AICMA Group began on improving and simplifying the “non-conformity” matrix for operators. This is expected to result in amendments to the NMAS and improve operational efficiency. As at June 2024, discussions on this topic were ongoing.¹¹⁹

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Colombia has a large operational clearance capacity at its disposal with a total of seven operators accredited to carry out demining: two military operators and five NGOs. By far the largest clearance operator is the National Army's Humanitarian Demining Brigade (BRDEH). BDIAN (previously known as the Marine Corps Explosives and Demining Association, AEDIM), a smaller military operator, conducts clearance and destruction of AP mines and ERW in areas under the jurisdiction of the National Navy. Demining is also conducted by civilian organisations: two national NGOs (the CCCM and HUMANICEMOS DH), and three international NGOs (DRC, The HALO Trust, and HI).

A successful experience arising from the 2016 Peace Agreement with the FARC-EP is the national Demining and Risk Education organisation, HUMANICEMOS DH. Comprising personnel that signed the 2016 Peace Agreement with the government, and who are in the process of being

reintegrated economically and socially into civilian life, HUMANICEMOS DH was first accredited in August 2017.¹²⁰ In 2020, HUMANICEMOS DH began survey and clearance in La Montañita, Caquetá.¹²¹

UNMAS was designated the agency responsible for external QM and monitoring of HUMANICEMOS DH, as in previous years US funding policies did not allow the OAS to work directly with HUMANICEMOS DH.¹²² The OAS external monitoring (CEM) component took over this function in April 2023 in order to integrate the organisation into overall national monitoring framework, using funding from the Swiss Government for one year, which was extended to 2024.¹²³ HUMANICEMOS DH said the long delay in having the CEM component certify their demining operations resulted in planning problems.¹²⁴ Thanks to an improvement plan, since November 2023 external QM by CEM has seen a welcome and positive transformation into a process which encourages

111 The Normas Técnicas Colombianas (NTC) are equated to NMAS, but with a higher level of obligation.

112 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023; Oliver Ford, HALO 16 June 2023; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023; and Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023.

113 Email from Oliver Ford, HALO 16 June 2023.

114 Email from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024.

115 Email from Diana Marisol Peñalosa, OCCP – AICMA Group, 17 September 2024.

116 Ibid.

117 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), p. 19; and email from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024.

118 Emails from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024; and Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024.

119 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024.

120 Email from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 September 2023.

121 Emails from Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023 and 19 July 2022; and HUMANICEMOS DH, *Boletín Externo No. 2*, 14 February 2023.

122 Email from Pablo Parra, UNMAS Colombia, 22 August 2023.

123 Email from Tammy Hall, OAS Mine Action Program, 31 August 2023; Article 7 Report (covering 2023) p. 77.

124 Emails from Matia Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June and 8 September 2023.

operational efficiency across different organisations and entities, providing clarity on what's expected and required; rather than searching out problems and imposing unnecessary delays on operations as had been reported to be the case previously.

Civilian operators are moving towards using multitask teams (MTTs), which can conduct both NTS and clearance. The operators recorded a significant drop in capacity compared to 2022, down from 293 survey personnel to 179 (see Table 3).

Table 3: Survey capacities in 2023 (as reported by demining operators and BDIAN and BRDEH capacity as reported by OCCP – AICMA Group)¹²⁵

Operator	NTS teams	NTS personnel	TS teams	TS personnel
BDIAN	4	18	N/A	N/A
BRDEH	76	304	N/A	N/A
CCCM	18	67	0	0
DRC	9	31	0	0
HALO	6	21	0	0
HI	13	40	0	0
HUMANICEMOS DH	5	20	0	0
Totals	33	179	0	0

N/A = Not applicable

With regard to clearance capacities during 2023, civilian operators reported a total of 243 manual deminers, a drop of more than 70 from the total of 314 in 2022 (see Table 4).

Table 4: NGO clearance capacities deployed in 2023 (monthly averages reported by operators and BDIAN and BRDEH capacity as reported by OCCP – AICMA Group)¹²⁶

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers	Comments
BDIAN	20	98	
BRDEH	396	1,980	In addition, the BRDEH had nine mine detection dogs (MDDs) and handlers, and six mechanical assets.
CCCM	15	60	
DRC	5	30	
HALO	19	82	
HI	10	47	The number of deminers more than doubled in 2023. A ground-preparation machine (GCS-100) was used to assist clearance operations together with a mechanical team (4 operators, 1 team leader and 1 supervisor)
HUMANICEMOS DH	3	24	Increase of 3 deminers on 2022. The teams are multi-task.
Totals	468	2321	

¹²⁵ Emails from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024; John Abril, HUMANICEMOS DH, 15 July 2024; Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024; Katherine Otálora, CCCM, 14 June and 19 September 2024; and Paula Ximena Cadena, DRC, 12 June 2024. OCCP – AICMA Group reported survey capacity for operators, which varied from data reported directly by operators. According to OCCP – AICMA Group there were 15 CCCM NTS teams totalling 62 personnel; 5 DRC NTS teams totalling 22 personnel; 6 HALO NTS teams totalling 26 personnel; 7 HI NTS teams totalling 31 personnel; and 4 HUMANICEMOS DH NTS teams totalling 16 personnel. Email from Diana Marisol Peñalosa, OCCP – AICMA Group, 17 September 2024.

¹²⁶ Emails from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024; John Abril, HUMANICEMOS DH, 15 July 2024; Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024; Katherine Otálora, CCCM, 14 June 2024; and Paula Ximena Cadena, DRC, 12 June 2024. OCCP – AICMA Group reported clearance capacity for operators, which varied from data reported directly by operators. According to OCCP – AICMA Group there were 19 CCCM clearance teams totalling 97 deminers; 8 DRC clearance teams totalling 37 deminers; 23 HALO clearance teams totalling 119 deminers; 8 HI clearance teams totalling 44 deminers, in addition to 3 ground preparation machines; and 5 HUMANICEMOS DH clearance team totalling 25 deminers. Email from Diana Marisol Peñalosa, OCCP – AICMA Group, 17 September 2024.

In 2023, HALO saw a decrease of its survey and clearance personnel in Colombia. This was mainly due to the completion of operations resulting in the closure of a location (Casanare and Boyacá) as well as the protracted suspension of operations due to the lack of security conditions (Meta), both of which led to the termination of local staff contracts. In addition, in 2023 the mine action sector in Colombia saw a drop in international donor funding, a tendency that continued into 2024.¹²⁷

HUMANICEMOS DH increased the number of its deminers by three in 2023 but had hoped to have 32 deminers in total.¹²⁸ HI was planning to add five NTS teams in 2023, later to be changed into multitask teams with four clearance teams of six to eight deminers each. This will allow HI to intervene in 11 new municipalities for demining.¹²⁹

With regard to operational tools, only the CCCM has been working on testing of new tools. It is implementing a pilot project on dual detection, which combines a

Japanese-designed ALIS (Advanced Landmine Detection System) prototype, dual-sensor mine detector. The detector combines electromagnetic induction sensors and ground penetrating radar (GPR) which gives it the capacity to differentiate AP mines from buried metal. ALIS was developed by scientists at Tohoku University in Japan in 2002 and has already been used in Cambodia. Since 2022, the CCCM has been testing the ALIS in areas tasked for demining.¹³⁰

The OCCP – AICMA Group said that humanitarian demining organisations have employed a range of tools, including drones, to support NTS, and that this initiative was in an experimental phase. Results were expected to be gathered to assess the feasibility of including these technologies in their standard procedures.¹³¹ The BRDEH is the only entity with mine detection dog (MDD) capacity and with logistical capability to deploy and use machines across the entire national territory.¹³²

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2023

Colombia reported clearing 1.73km² of mined area in 2023—a slight drop on the 1.84km² achieved the previous year—along with cancellation of 0.01km² through NTS and reduction of 0.15km² through TS. Total land release was thus 1.89km². In 2023, all five civilian operators again reported clearing substantial areas of land without finding AP mines.

According to data from OCCP – AICMA Group, a total of previously unrecorded mined areas 131 areas, covering 1.06km², were identified as a result of NTS conducted in 2023.¹³³ This presumably includes new areas reported to Mine Action Review by three operators in 2023. HALO Trust's NTS teams identified 44 previously unrecorded mined areas covering a total of 57,925m².¹³⁴ The CCCM identified a total of 66 hazardous areas covering 58,028m² all of which were recorded in the national database.¹³⁵ DRC identified 76,592m² of previously unrecorded mined area in 2023 across 12 sites.¹³⁶

SURVEY IN 2023

In 2023, demining operators conducting NTS cancelled a total of 27,717m² according to Colombia's Article 7 report, although the figures provided actually sum 27,268.¹³⁷

Table 5: Release of mined area through NTS in 2023 (Article 7 data)¹³⁸

Department	Area cancelled (m ²)
Boyacá	308
Caldas	6,384
Caquetá	15,040
Casanare	458
Cauca	1,205
Tolima	349
Valle del Cauca	3,524
Total	27,268

¹²⁷ Email from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024.

¹²⁸ Emails from María Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June and 8 September 2023; and John Abril, HUMANICEMOS DH, 15 July 2024.

¹²⁹ Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024.

¹³⁰ Email from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023.

¹³¹ Email from Diana Marisol Peñalosa, OCCP – AICMA Group, 17 September 2024.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OCCP – AICMA Group, 6 September 2024.

¹³⁴ Email from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024.

¹³⁵ Email from Katherine Otálora, CCCM, 14 June 2024.

¹³⁶ Email from Paula Ximena Cadena, DRC, 12 June 2024.

¹³⁷ Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Table 10, pp. 36–38.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

In September 2024, OCCP – AICMA Group provided different figures for cancellation through NTS in 2023. These are replicated in Table 6. These data are then contradicted by the same source, which also refers to 57,006m² of release through NTS occurring in 2023. Mine Action Review takes the figure given in the table below as the official one for Colombia, despite the contradictory Article 7 and OCCP – AICMA Group data.

Table 6: Release of mined area through NTS in 2023 (OCCP – AICMA Group data)¹³⁹

Department	Operator	Areas cancelled	Area cancelled (m ²)
Cauca	HALO	1	5,998
Putumayo	CCCM	1	504
Totals		2	6,502

Different figures for cancellation have been provided to Mine Action Review by international NGO operators, as set out in Table 7. This is a slight increase, compared to cancellation reported by operators directly for 2022 of 116,426m². Moreover, operators have identified challenges regarding cancellation through NTS. There is a potential difference in methodology between operators with respect to “cancelling” mined area after investigating IMSMA events versus only cancelling mined area previously identified through NTS and which is already recorded in the database.¹⁴⁰

Table 7: Release of mined area through NTS in 2023 (operator data)¹⁴¹

Department	Operator	Areas cancelled	Area cancelled (m ²)
Antioquia	HI	63 “events”	72,946
Antioquia	CCCM	1	1,686
Cauca	HALO	1	5,998
Cauca	HI	19 “events”	30,363
Chocó	HI	4 “events”	1,464
Meta	HI	4 “events”	6,498
Putumayo	CCCM	6	4,388
Tolima	HI	2 “events”	3,444
Totals		92 events and 8 areas	126,787

HUMANICEMOS DH did not report cancellation of mined area through NTS in 2023 although it had released area through cancellation the previous year.¹⁴²

Reduced area through TS in 2023 amounted to 0.16km² according to data from Colombia’s Article 7 report (see Table 7). This concerns only the national military operators. That civilian operators are not using TS in Colombia is due to several problems: first, a lack of clarity on the required procedure for TS which they feel would either duplicate efforts or delay the land release process in some cases; and second, the dynamics of the Colombian conflict, which mean that devices do not reflect predictable patterns.¹⁴³

Table 8: Release of mined area through TS in 2023 (Article 7 report data)¹⁴⁴

Department	Area reduced (m ²)
Caquetá	16,152
Huila	60,461
Tolima	7,533
Valle del Cauca	76,243
Total	160,389

139 Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OCCP – AICMA Group, 6 September 2024.

140 Email and telephone interview with Maicol Velázquez, OACP – AICMA Group, 4 and 5 August 2023; and telephone interview with Tammy Hall, OAS, 5 August 2023.

141 Emails from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024; and Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024.

142 Emails from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024; John Abril, HUMANICEMOS DH, 15 July 2024; Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024; Katherine Otálora, CCCM, 14 June 2024; and Paula Ximena Cadena, DRC, 12 June 2024.

143 Emails from Francisco Moreno, CCCM, 6 June 2023 and 13 September 2022; Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 24 May 2023 and Paola Paula Ximena Cadena, DRC Colombia, 3 August 2023; Caterina Weller, DRC, 9 June 2022; Oliver Ford, HALO, 3 August, 16 June 2023 and 15 September 2022; Tom Griffiths, HALO Latin America, 20 June 2022; Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023 and 30 June 2022; Maria Sanz, HUMANICEMOS DH, 8 June 2023 and 19 July 2022.

144 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Table 10, pp. 36–38.

In September 2024, however, OCCP – AICMA Group provided revised data for reduction of mined area through TS. This data only referred to reduction in Meta department—not mentioned in the Article 7 report—all by BRDEH, of 145,335m².¹⁴⁵ Mine Action Review takes this figure as the official one for Colombia, despite the contradictory Article 7 data.

HI noted that given the nature of contamination in Colombia, and based on the evidence found in the field by HI's NTS teams, the average size of areas reported are often up to 4,000m². Most of the time, the polygon is a shape where the safety distance between deminers required by the NTC on TS makes it difficult to deploy more than six deminers and therefore area reduction is almost impossible if procedures and safety are to be fully respected.¹⁴⁶

CLEARANCE IN 2023

Clearance output as reported by the authorities in Colombia's Article 7 report was significantly down in 2023, with a total of almost 0.87km² cleared manually by demining operators along with the destruction of 129 AP mines and 65 other items of explosive ordnance.¹⁴⁷ In September 2024, however, Colombia provided very different figures for mine clearance in 2023 (see Table 9), which resulted from verification of the data. The revised total of 1.73km² was only a slight drop compared to the 1.84km² cleared in 2022. But 143 tasks covering 1.08km² (almost two thirds of the total clearance) found no explosive ordnance, underscoring the problems with survey in Colombia, while only 93 (39%) discovered any explosive ordnance (EO).¹⁴⁸

Table 9: Mine clearance in 2023 (OCCP – AICMA Group data)¹⁴⁹

Department	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed during clearance/TS	AP mines destroyed during spot tasks
Antioquia	BRDEH	353,204	11	0
Antioquia	CCCM	7,047	1	1
Antioquia	HALO	56,738	104	0
Bolívar	BDIAN	12,698	0	9
Boyaca	BRDEH	20,159	0	0
Caldas	BRDEH	72,053	16	6
Caqueta	BRDEH	105,182	3	5
Caqueta	DRC	20,918	1	0
Casanare	HALO	6,883	1	0
Cauca	HALO	8,124	0	0
Cauca	HI	524	0	0
Cesar	BRDEH	125,602	0	0
Choco	HI	3,932	0	0
Huila	BRDEH	60,578	14	0
La Guajira	BRDEH	37,196	0	3
Meta	BRDEH	359,341	7	0
Meta	HI	422	0	0
Norte de Santander	DRC	0	0	0
Putumayo	BRDEH	11,487	2	3
Putumayo	CCCM	59,003	41	0
Putumayo	HALO	0	0	0
Santander	BRDEH	82,797	0	0
Tolima	BRDEH	177,695	3	0

145 Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OCCP – AICMA Group, 6 September 2024.

146 Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 26 May 2023.

147 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Table 10, pp. 36–38.

148 Email from Nathalie Ochoa Niño, OCCP – AICMA Group, 6 September 2024.

149 Ibid.

Table 9 Continued

Department	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed during clearance/TS	AP mines destroyed during spot tasks
Valle Del Cauca	BRDEH	143,308	0	0
Vichada	CCCM	6,716	0	0
Totals		1,731,607	204	27

Clearance figures reported directly to Mine Action Review by civilian demining operators are set out in Table 10. Some of the areas reported as cleared by OCCP – AICMA Group do not figure in the NGO data.

Table 10: Mine clearance in 2023 (civilian demining operator data)¹⁵⁰

Department	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AP mines destroyed in spot tasks
Antioquia	CCCM	10,974	1	1
Putumayo	CCCM	90,152	53	11
Vichada	CCCM	7,385	0	0
Subtotals		108,511	54	12
Bolivar	DRC	20,003	1	0
Caquetá	DRC	2,774	0	0
Subtotals		22,777	1	0
Antioquia	HALO	72,971	76	2
Casanare	HALO	6,883	1	0
Cauca	HALO	23,984	14	1
Subtotals		103,838	91	3
Antioquia	HI	4,619	0	0
Cauca	HI	2,343	0	0
Chocó	HI	3,932	0	0
Meta	HI	949	0	0
Tolima	HI	0	0	0
Subtotals		11,843	0	0
Antioquia	HUMANICEMOS DH	1,483	1	1
Caquetá	HUMANICEMOS DH	47,440	23	2
Subtotals		48,923	24	3
Totals		295,892	170	18

Clearance reported by The HALO Trust halved in 2023 compared to the previous year. This was due to the completion of assigned municipalities in several departments, including Boyacá, Casanare, Putumayo, Tolima, and Valle del Cauca. Overall, the security situation in Colombia worsened, leading to the suspension of operations in Meta in November 2022. HALO was unable to re-enter Meta throughout 2023.¹⁵¹

HALO cleared 20 mined areas that proved not to contain AP mines, covering a total of 20,890m².¹⁵² The CCCM cleared a total of 53 hazardous areas without finding AP mines, with a total of 53,627m² (half of all its clearance for the year).¹⁵³ HI cleared 11,843m² of mined area in 2023, of which 10,894m² had no contamination.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Emails from John Abril, HUMANICEMOS DH, 15 July and 25 September 2024; Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024; Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024; Katherine Otálora, CCCM, 14 June 2024; and Paula Ximena Cadena, Programme Officer, DRC, 12 June 2024.

¹⁵¹ Email from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024.

¹⁵² Email from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024.

¹⁵³ Email from Katherine Otálora, CCCM, 14 June 2024.

¹⁵⁴ Email from Arturo Bureo, HI, 17 June 2024.

DEMINER SAFETY

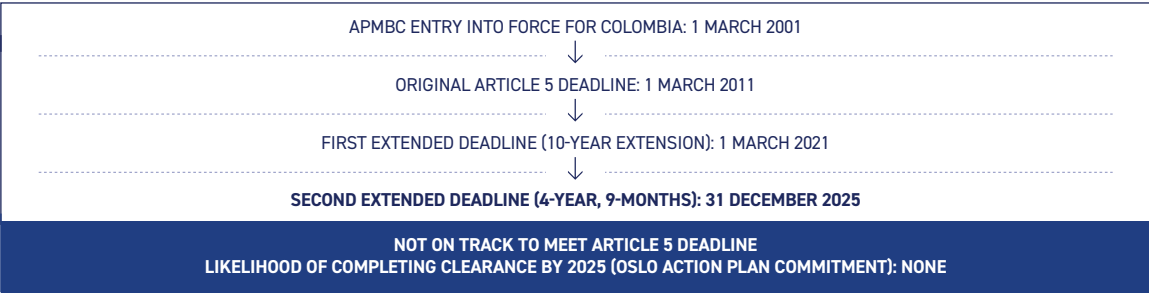
No accidents involving landmines occurred in 2023. However, security incidents were reported for the year in Colombia's Article 7 report and directly to Mine Action Review by The HALO Trust.

Colombia said that illegal armed groups operating in the country continue to manufacture, install, and use AP mines as part of their criminal actions. According to Colombia's Article 7 report, in 2023, 11 humanitarian demining operations had to be temporarily suspended due to security issues in the assigned areas. In May 2023, demining soldiers from Humanitarian Demining Battalion No. 5 were attacked in the municipality of Baraya (Huila); in June, three officials from a demining organization with operations in Vistahermosa (Meta) were detained; and in December, 10 men and 4 vehicles were detained in the municipality of Campamento (Antioquia). These situations were reported to have

generated widespread public outcry and condemnation from regional and national authorities.¹⁵⁵

As also included in official reporting above, in December 2023, HALO was involved in a non-violent security incident in Campamento municipality, in Antioquia department. Three HALO vehicles and one vehicle from the AICMA Program – OAS's external monitoring mission were intercepted by an NSAG while in transit. The vehicles were taken away to an unknown location by the armed group while the staff were ordered to return to the camps and remain there until further notice. The situation was resolved within 24 hours, thanks to the involvement of the OAS Peace Process Support Mission (MAPP-OEA), with all the vehicles returned to HALO and the OACP (now OCCP) – AICMA Group and the staff declared free to move. In February 2024, HALO restarted operations in the location and has been able to sustain them to date without any further security issues.¹⁵⁶

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC, and in accordance with the four-year and nine-month extension granted by States Parties in 2020, Colombia is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2025. Colombia will not be able to meet this deadline given the numerous challenges it faces and has announced that it will be requesting an extension to its current deadline.¹⁵⁷ Its current goal is to declare free of landmines the 102 municipalities currently being cleared by the end of 2025.¹⁵⁸

Since the second half of 2024, the OCCP – AICMA Group has been working on an Article 5 deadline extension request for 2026–30, and has committed to a fully participatory process for the elaboration of the request.¹⁵⁹

Table 11: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km²)
2023	1.73
2022	1.84
2021	1.27
2020	1.08
2019	0.79
Total	6.71

It remains to be seen whether implementation of new technical standards will improve the efficiency of land release in Colombia. A high percentage of mined areas are still being cleared without any mines found. Furthermore, many legacy mines may well be non-functional given that all mines in Colombia are of an improvised nature, but such contamination still prevents local communities from using the land until it has been released through survey or clearance. The challenging terrain and climatic conditions combined with an over-reliance on full clearance means that demining in Colombia is proving to be very expensive. Demining can and should be conducted more efficiently.

155 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), p. 42.
156 Email from Francisco Moreno, HALO, 28 June 2024.
157 Statement of Colombia on Article 5, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18–20 June 2024.
158 Presentation of Colombia, Intersessional Meetings, 19 June 2023, p. 3.
159 AICMA Program – OAS, "Document on the methodology for drafting the 2025–2030 Extension", July 2024.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Colombia does not yet have a plan in place to manage residual contamination after clearance is completed in accordance with Article 5. According to the NMAS, civil humanitarian demining organizations have responsibility to address residual risk for a period of six months, starting from the completion and declaration of the area as free from suspected contamination.¹⁶⁰ In its Article 7 report for 2023, Colombia noted the importance of managing the residual risk and implied that this will be the task of BRDEH and BDIAN.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Article 7 Report (covering 2023), pp. 39–40.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.