

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

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

CLUSTER MUNITION REMNANT CONTAMINATION

Georgia is believed to be free of cluster munition remnants (CMR), with the possible exception of South Ossetia, which is occupied by Russia and inaccessible to both the Georgian authorities and international non-governmental organisation (NGO) demining operators.¹

CMR contamination in Georgia resulted from the conflict over South Ossetia in August 2008, in which both Georgian and Russian forces used cluster munitions. After the end of the conflict and through to December 2009, The HALO Trust cleared some 37km² of submunitions and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) in Georgian-controlled territory.² In May 2010, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) completed clearance of its tasked areas.³ In 2016, two submunitions were reported in the Shida Kartli region and then destroyed by the State Security Agency, as part of explosive

ordnance disposal (EOD) call-outs.⁴ In 2017, The HALO Trust conducted survey in the Shida Kartli region to investigate each of the call-outs.⁵ During survey, a three submunitions were found, which were identified as residual contamination and destroyed.⁶ One submunition was destroyed in 2018 (see Land Release Output section on page 135).

OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND LANDMINES

Georgia remains contaminated by other unexploded ordnance (UXO), likely in South Ossetia and also within Georgia in former firing ranges, and by anti-vehicle and anti-personnel mines (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Georgia for further information).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Humanitarian Demining Control Division (HDCD), renamed after a reorganisation in January 2019, sits under the State Military Scientific Technical Centre, known as DELTA, within the Ministry of Defence (MOD).⁷ The primary task of the HDCD is to coordinate mine action in Georgia, including overseeing the national mine action strategy and quality assurance (QA)/quality control (QC), and facilitating the development and implementation of Georgian National Mine Action Standards, in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).⁸

For all mine action-related issues, The HALO Trust communicates with DELTA, which sits under the MOD.⁹

The Georgian authorities are supportive the granting of visas for international staff and the importation of equipment. HALO Trust submitted several requests to the MOD seeking access to the remaining minefields, the last of which was submitted in April 2018. As at May 2019, The HALO Trust had received permission to begin clearance of two of the five remaining minefields, at Khojali and Kadoeti, respectively.¹⁰

The Georgian government funds the running costs of the HDCD as well as the Engineering Brigade, which carries out some battle area clearance (BAC).¹¹

The national authority has received capacity development support from HALO Trust and the Geneva Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). The HALO Trust has provided training on clearance and survey techniques and, in 2018, donated a mine action vehicle to the HDCD.¹² The GICHD has provided training for HDCD staff on the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database, IMAS, and ammunition storage.¹³

GENDER

DELTA and The HALO Trust both have gender policies. HALO Trust believes it is best practice for mixed-gender teams to conduct survey, which allows for greater engagement with women and children while in the field.¹⁴ For example, HALO currently uses mixed-gender teams in Abkhazia to conduct survey and for EOD call-outs. If HALO Trust is given permission to work in the remaining minefields in Tbilisi Administered Territories (TAT), community liaison, and survey teams will be mixed gender and inclusive of ethnic minorities.¹⁵

There is equal access to employment for qualified women and men in survey and clearance teams in Georgia, including for managerial level/supervisory positions although proportionately the number of women remains low. In Abkhazia, The HALO Trust collaborated with local women's organisations during its July 2018 recruitment drive in an effort to achieve gender parity. As at April 2019, 30% of its operational and management staff were female.¹⁶

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

The HDCD uses the IMSMA database and, according to The HALO Trust, the data is accurate. Data archives go back to 2009 and are regularly updated, based on HALO Trust's operation reports and on work completed by the Engineering Brigade.¹⁷ The IMSMA database is administered by a certified specialist within the HDCD, trained by the GICHD, who receives regular refresher training in the latest procedures.¹⁸ In 2018, to further improve the quality of data in the database, the GICHD delivered the IMSMA A2 training course to HDCD personnel, which usage of the collected data for mapping, statistics and reporting and as input to decision making.¹⁹

The data in the national information management system is accessible to The HALO Trust.²⁰ HALO Trust uses its own IMSMA-compatible data collection forms that DELTA have approved while the HDCD QA/QC team, also have their own forms.²¹

PLANNING AND TASKING

Georgia has a national mine action strategy. Its main aims and targets are focused on the remaining clearance of anti-personnel mines and other areas contaminated with ERW.²² The annual workplans for 2018 and 2019 centred on battle area and mine clearance within the Tbilisi Administered Territory (TAT).²³

As at April 2019, due to access not being granted to the remaining minefields, The HALO Trust has suspended all operations in Georgia, apart from one two-month task clearing abandoned ordnance at Chonto, near the Administrative Boundary Line with South Ossetia. The Abkhazia programme will continue operations at Primorsky and HALO will also respond to EOD callouts.²⁴

Georgia is said to have a residual risk capacity for CMR with plans in place for dealing with residual risk and liability.²⁵

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

As at April 2019, Georgian National Mine Action Standards and National Technical Standards and Guidelines were still under development. The International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) are in the process of being translated into the Georgian language.²⁶

The HALO Trust has standing operating procedures (SOPs) in place for all its activities, including survey, mine clearance, and EOD. No modifications or enhancements were made to these SOPs in 2018 or early 2019.²⁷

OPERATORS

The HALO Trust, which is the only international operator working in the country, conducts survey and both battle area clearance (BAC) and mine clearance.²⁸ DELTA retains a small demining and EOD capacity in TAT. The Engineering Brigade has been carrying out BAC in Gonio, a former military area in the Adjara region, and also responds to EOD call-outs. The State Security Service of Georgia also carries out EOD spot tasks. In Abkhazia, the emergency services (EMERCOM) have a small EOD capacity, though HALO Trust is generally relied upon to deal with all items of UXO.²⁹

Within The HALO Trust, operational staff deployed in 2018 were responsible for both survey and clearance. In TAT, HALO's operational staff decreased from 38 in 2017 to 18 in 2018. In 2019, HALO made all operational staff in TAT redundant. In Abkhazia, the programme began 2018 with 28 staff, which increased to 77 in July to cope with expanded operations at Primorsky. This was reduced to 35 staff at the beginning of 2019.³⁰

In TAT, quality management (QM) is conducted by DELTA. In Abkhazia, The HALO Trust is responsible for its own QM.³¹

OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2018, The HALO Trust had two mechanical assets deployed in Anaklia region in western Georgia, for UXO clearance. The Abkhazia programme also has two mechanical assets which it used for clearance at the site of the Primorsky ammunition storage area explosion. The HALO Trust also uses a drone to collect aerial footage of a task.³²

Mine detection dogs (MDDs) were used by the Engineering Brigade during BAC operations in the Gonio former military polygon, Adjara region. The State Security Service of Georgia has several MDD teams which it uses for EOD spot tasks.³³

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

No CMR survey or clearance took place in 2018. One submunition was destroyed during an EOD spot task but this was found to be residual contamination not evidence of a broader problem.³⁴

It is believed that, with the possible exception of South Ossetia, Georgia is now free from CMR. Georgia has reported that, in the areas cleared by The HALO Trust in Abkhazia which are currently outside its control, external QA/QC could not be completed. Georgia, therefore, cannot confirm whether this land is free of contamination.³⁵

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| <p>1 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, Head of Division, DELTA, 28 March 2019; and Matthew Walker, Programme Officer, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019.</p> <p>2 Explosive Remnants of War Coordination Centre, "Explosive Remnants of War Coordination Centre (ERWCC) in Facts and Figures", November 2009, p. 17.</p> <p>3 Email from Jonathon "Gus" Guthrie, Programme Manager, NPA, 27 May 2010.</p> <p>4 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 20 June 2017.</p> <p>5 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 25 April 2018; and Irakli Chitanava, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 25 May 2018.</p> <p>6 Ibid.</p> <p>7 Ibid.; Decree #897 issued by the Minister of Defence, 30 December 2010; and emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 20 June 2016 and 10 June 2019; Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V Article 10 Report (for 21 March 2017 to 31 March 2018), Form A.</p> <p>8 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 6 July 2015.</p> <p>9 Email from Michael Montafi, Programme Officer, 21 June 2019.</p> <p>10 Ibid.</p> <p>11 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March and 10 June 2019.</p> <p>12 Emails from Matthew Walker, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019; and Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 10 June 2019.</p> <p>13 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March and 10 June 2019.</p> <p>14 Email from Matthew Walker, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019.</p> <p>15 Ibid.</p> <p>16 Ibid.</p> | <p>17 Ibid.</p> <p>18 Ibid.</p> <p>19 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019.</p> <p>20 Email from Matthew Walker, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019.</p> <p>21 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019; and Matthew Walker, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019.</p> <p>22 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019.</p> <p>23 Ibid and email of 10 June 2019; and email from Matthew Walker, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019.</p> <p>24 Email from Matthew Walker, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019.</p> <p>25 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019.</p> <p>26 Ibid.</p> <p>27 Email from Matthew Walker, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019.</p> <p>28 Email from Irakli Chitanava, HALO Trust, 2 May 2017.</p> <p>29 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019; and Matthew Walker, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019.</p> <p>30 Email from Matthew Walker, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019.</p> <p>31 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019.</p> <p>32 Email from Matthew Walker, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019.</p> <p>33 Ibid.</p> <p>34 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019.</p> <p>35 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 10 June 2019.</p> |
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