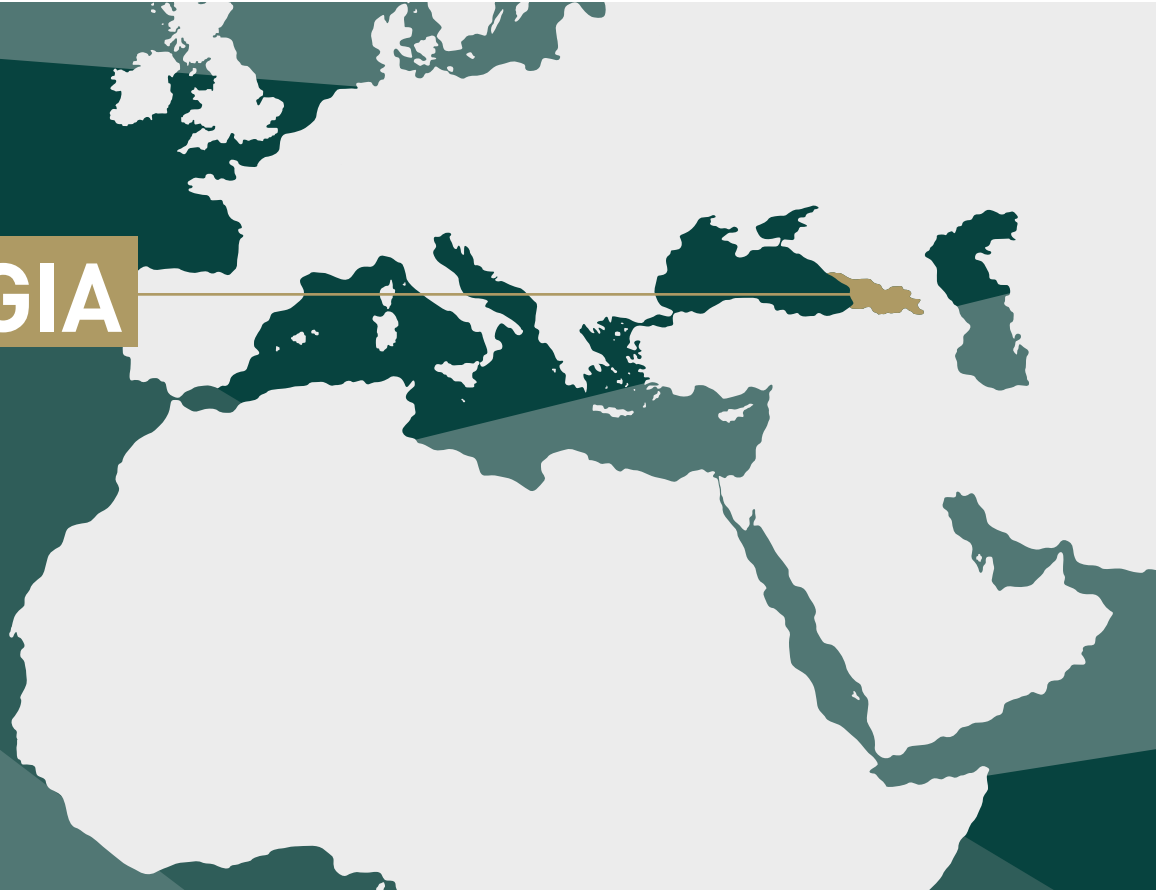


GEORGIA



PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

For 2015

For 2014

Problem understood	5	4
Target date for completion of mine clearance	4	4
Targeted clearance	4	4
Efficient clearance	4	4
National funding of programme	4	4
Timely clearance	4	4
Land release system in place	5	5
National mine action standards	5	5
Reporting on progress	5	5
Improving performance	5	4
PERFORMANCE SCORE: POOR	4.5	4.3

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

In 2015, Georgia commenced technical survey of the Red Bridge minefield, after prioritisation of battle area clearance (BAC) of former military sites and of cluster munition remnants (CMR) in previous years.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Georgia should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Georgia should continue to engage in political dialogue with Azerbaijan, to enable full clearance of the Red Bridge border minefield.

CONTAMINATION

Georgia has almost 2km² of mined area across seven minefields, as set out in Table 1.¹ This includes Osiauri village, in Kashuri district, which is in a military zone and Khojali mountain, in Mestia district, on the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL) with the Abkhazia Region, where the size of mined and battle areas is not known. Contamination comprises both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines. Georgia is also contaminated by CMR and other explosive remnants of war (ERW).

Table 1: Contamination as at end 2015²

Region	District	Village	Contamination	Mined areas	Area (m ²)
Kvemo Kartli	Marneuli	Kachagani (Red Bridge)	AP and AV mines	1	1,863,813
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	Dusheti	Barisakho 1, Barisakho 2	AP mines	2	4,275
Mtskheta-Mtianeti	Dusheti	Kadoeti*	AP and AV mines	1	23,783
Imereti	Terjola	Chognari (Military restricted area)	AP and AV mines and UXO	1	96,582
Shida Kartli	Kashuri	Osiauri (Military zone)	AP mines	1	N/K
Samegrelo Zemo Svaneti	Mestia	Khojali**	AP mines	1	N/K
Totals				7	1,988,453

AP = Anti-personnel AV = Anti-vehicle N/K = Not known

* Located at the Administrative Boundary Line with South Ossetia. As at October 2016, HALO did not have access to the minefield.

**New information provided by HALO Abkhazia programme. Khojali minefield is located on a mountain at the ABL with Abkhazia. As at October 2016, HALO did not have access to the minefield

1 Emails from Andrew Moore, Caucasus & Balkans Desk Officer, HALO Trust, 1 and 18 October 2016; and Irakli Chitanava, Programme Manager, HALO Trust 19 October 2016. There are differences between contamination data reported by HALO for the end of 2014 and the end of 2015, which cannot be explained by survey and clearance alone. In addition, DELTA reports differing contamination data: 2,738,730m² of mined area at Kirach Mughanlo (Red Bridge); 1,642,062m² at Chognari; 1,960m² at Barisakho, and 4,500m² at Kadoeti. This data is thought to include UXO only contamination as well. Email from Oleg Gochashvili, Head of Division, State Military Scientific Technical Centre – DELTA, 15 June 2016.

2 Emails from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 1 and 18 October 2016; Irakli Chitanava, Programme Manager, HALO Trust 19 October 2016; and Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 19 October 2015.

Georgia has mined areas around former Soviet military bases, along its international borders, and as a result of conflict with the breakaway region of South Ossetia. Historically, the bulk of the mine problem in Georgia resulted from mines placed around former Russian military bases. The precise extent of the threat has not been reported publicly. According to the Georgian Ministry of Defence, in 2009 mined areas were suspected at Akhalqalaqi, Gonio Firing Range, Kopitnari, Mtskheta, Osiauri, Sagarejo, Telavi, and Vaziani.³

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) conducted a General Mine Action Assessment (GMAA) for Georgia from October 2009 to January 2010, which identified eight suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) and seven confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) in 13 districts, the latter of which totalled more than 4.5km² in estimated area.⁴ Of the 15 SHAs and CHAs in total, ten contained mines and five were contaminated with unexploded ordnance (UXO).⁵ Between 2009 and the end of 2012, HALO Trust cleared five of the minefields that had a humanitarian impact and identified one additional small minefield in a military restricted area.⁶

At the end of 2015, Georgia had some 1.46km² of mined area across nine minefields.⁷ This includes an unfenced 7km-long minefield at the 'Red Bridge' border crossing between Azerbaijan and Georgia.⁸ In 1993–2013 there were 17 reported accidents at the Red Bridge border, resulting in 13 fatalities.⁹

There may also be mined areas in South Ossetia. Since the 1990–92 Georgian-Ossetian war, and more recently the 2008 conflict with Russia, HALO has planned to conduct non-technical survey (NTS) in South Ossetia, but, to date, has not been granted access. South Ossetia is occupied by Russia and is inaccessible to both the Georgian authorities and international non-governmental organisation (NGO) clearance operators.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

In 2008, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Georgian Ministry of Defence and international NGO Information Management and Mine Action Programs (iMMAP) to establish the Explosive Remnants of War Coordination Center (ERWCC).¹⁰ On 30 December 2010, the Ministry of Defence issued a decree instructing that mine action be included as part of the State Military Scientific Technical Center – known as "DELTA" – an entity within the ministry. The agreement with iMMAP ended on 31 March 2012 and the ERWCC took ownership of the mine action programme.¹¹

Through the iMMAP project, ERWCC became the Georgian Mine Action Authority, under DELTA, tasked to coordinate and execute action to address the ERW threat.¹² The primary task of the ERWCC is to coordinate mine action in Georgia, including quality assurance/ quality control (QA/QC), and to facilitate the creation and implementation of Georgian National Mine Action Standards, in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).¹³

3 Email from Irakli Kochashvili, Deputy Head, International Relations and Euro-Atlantic Integration Department, Ministry of Defence, 6 September 2009.

4 Email from Jonathan (Gus) Guthrie, Programme Manager, NPA, 19 March 2010.

5 Email from Andrew Moore, HALO, 4 June 2015.

6 HALO, "Georgia, The Problem", at: <http://www.halotrust.org/where-we-work/georgia>.

7 Emails from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 4 June 2015; and Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 19 October 2015.

8 Interview with George Dolidze, Director, Department of Security Policy and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Geneva, 28 May 2009.

9 Interview with Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, in Geneva, 19 February 2016.

10 iMMAP, "Establishing the New Georgian Explosive Remnants of War Coordination Centre (ERWCC)", Press release, 25 February 2009; and E. M. Hasanov and P. Nevalainen, "Mine-action Challenges and Responses in Georgia", *Journal of ERW and Mine Action*, Issue 15.3 (Fall 2011).

11 Ibid.; Decree #897 issued by the Minister of Defense, 30 December 2010; and email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 20 June 2016.

12 NATO, "NATO/PfP Trust Fund Project in Georgia", January 2012, at: http://www.mzv.cz/file/786123/Georgia_ERW_Fact_Sheet_3____230112.pdf; and email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 6 July 2015.

13 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 6 July 2015.

Strategic Planning

Georgia has identified the Red Bridge and Chognari minefields as the main strategic mine action priorities, in addition to BAC of the Udabno task site and the Skra military base (a storage facility).¹⁴

Standards

Georgian National Mine Action Standards and National Technical Standards and Guidelines (NTSG) have been drafted in accordance with IMAS and are awaiting completion in consultation with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).¹⁵ Once finalised, they will be translated and sent to Parliament for approval.¹⁶

Operators

HALO Trust conducts clearance in Georgia, but NGOs are not permitted to clear land belonging to the military.¹⁷ HALO employed an average of 135 personnel in 2015, of whom 80% were trained only on BAC while the remainder were experienced HALO deminers.¹⁸

At the request of the Georgian government, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Partnership for Peace Trust Fund has supported Georgia in addressing its ERW problem resulting from the August 2008 conflict. In 2010, a NATO Trust Fund project planned to support the development of a long-term local capacity for the ERWCC in clearance and victim assistance.¹⁹ As part of the project, members of the Georgian Army Engineers Brigade were trained in demining, BAC, and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD).²⁰ Since March 2015, these engineers have been conducting EOD of abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO) and UXO at the former ammunition storage facility at Skra.²¹

Quality Management

Under the control of DELTA, the ERWCC now conducts QA/QC.²² iMMAP has also conducted training on quality management for the QA/QC section of ERWCC, the Joint Staff of the Georgian Armed Forces, and DELTA.

14 Ibid., 15 June 2016.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Interview with Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, in Geneva, 19 February 2016.

18 Email from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 1 October 2016.

19 NATO, "NATO/PfP Trust Fund Project in Georgia", January 2012; and emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 6 July 2015 and 20 June 2016.

20 Estonia Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V Article 10 Report, 2 April 2012; NATO/PfP Trust Fund Project in Georgia Fact Sheet, January 2012; and email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 6 July 2015.

21 Interview with Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, in Geneva, 19 February 2016; and email, 20 June 2016.

22 Response to Cluster Munition Monitor questionnaire by Tom Meredith, Desk Officer, HALO Trust, 21 August 2012.

LAND RELEASE

No mine clearance took place in 2015, but survey resulted in cancellation of more than 0.9km² of area and confirmation as mined of almost 1.3km².²³

Survey in 2015

In 2015, HALO cancelled 913,489m² through NTS, and reduced a further 1,183m² through technical survey. In addition, almost 1.3km² of mined area was confirmed, all during survey of the Red Bridge minefield.²⁴ This is the last major minefield not in the vicinity of a functioning military establishment.

Clearance in 2015

Georgia previously reported plans to start clearance of the Red Bridge minefield in 2015.²⁵ However, while Georgian and Azerbaijani representatives met in 2015 to discuss demining the minefield,²⁶ only survey was permitted. HALO conducted non-technical survey (NTS) between 1 and 3 July, and then began technical survey on 4 July 2015. However, the Azerbaijani military located on the other side of the border subsequently demanded that technical survey operations be halted one month later, on 4 August 2015, and as at October 2016 survey had not been permitted to resume.²⁷

Progress in 2016

HALO started operations at the Chognari minefield in March 2016, initially conducting NTS, and then beginning technical survey in April.²⁸ This minefield is part of a former Soviet military base in the Imereti region. It was previously under military restriction, but has since been handed over by the government for clearance.²⁹ Chognari was also the site of an uncontrolled explosion in the 1990s; in addition to the minefield around the perimeter of the base, the site is also contaminated by UXO.³⁰ The base threatens the lives and livelihoods of more than 4,500 villagers who live nearby and use the area for grazing their livestock. Once cleared, the Georgian government also plans to build a waste processing facility on the site, which is expected to employ more than 130 people.³¹

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Georgia is not a state party or signatory to the APMBBC but nonetheless has obligations under international human rights law to protect life, which requires clearance of mines as soon as possible.³²

ERWCC operates under DELTA within the Ministry of Defence, and is financed from the state budget.³³ HALO does not receive national funding from Georgia for its survey and clearance operations, but expected its international funding (more than US\$840,000) to remain constant in 2016.³⁴

Between 2009 and the end of 2012, using international funding HALO cleared five minefields with humanitarian impact and identified a sixth.³⁵ In 2013 and 2014, HALO focused predominantly on clearance of former firing ranges and CMR. In 2015, HALO focused on technical survey of the Red Bridge minefield and did not undertake any mine clearance. It is not known if any of the restricted military areas have been cleared of mines.

23 Email from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 1 October 2016. There is a discrepancy with survey data reported by DELTA, in which 704,458m² was reported as cancelled and 1,517,926m² as confirmed. Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 15 June 2016.

24 Email from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 1 October 2016.

25 Interview with George Dolidze, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Geneva, 28 May 2009; and response to Mine Action Monitor questionnaire by Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 3 June 2015.

26 Interview with Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, in Geneva, 19 February 2016.

27 Email from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 18 October 2016.

28 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 15 June 2016; and Andrew Moore, HALO, 18 October 2016.

29 Interview with Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, Thornhill, 28 April 2016.

30 HALO Trust, "New funding for clearance in Georgia", 10 March 2016, at: <https://www.halotruster.org/media-centre/news/new-funding-for-clearance-in-georgia>; and email from Andrew Moore, HALO, 18 October 2016.

31 Ibid.

32 Georgia is a state party to the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights, Article 2 of which requires that member states respect and protect the right to life.

33 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 15 June 2016.

34 Email from Andrew Moore, HALO, 1 October 2016.

35 Ibid., 30 August 2012.