

### KEY DATA

**CLUSTER MUNITION  
CONTAMINATION:**

**BELIEVED TO BE  
ONLY RESIDUAL**

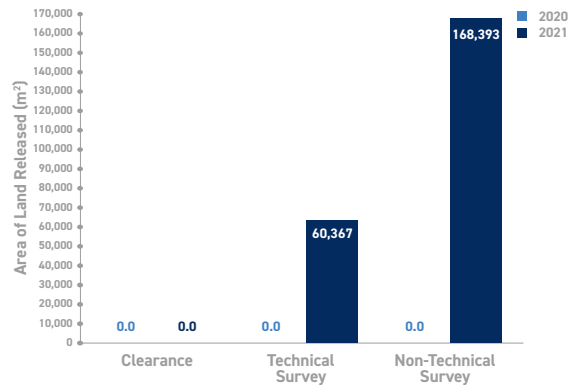
SUBMUNITION  
CLEARANCE IN 2021

**0**  
**M<sup>2</sup>**

SUBMUNITIONS  
DESTROYED IN 2021

**2**

### LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

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

## CLUSTER MUNITION SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

### MANAGEMENT

- State Military Scientific Technical Centre (DELTA)
- Humanitarian Demining Control Division (HDCD)

### NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Engineering Brigade of the Ministry of Defence (MoD)
- Georgian State Security Service (SSS) EOD team

### INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust

### OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

## UNDERSTANDING OF CMR 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.<sup>1</sup>

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 37km<sup>2</sup> of submunitions and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) in Georgian-controlled territory.<sup>2</sup> This included more than 13,000 M095 submunitions in the Upper Kodori Gorge on the Abkhaz side of the Administrative Boundary Line and 1,800

<sup>1</sup> Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, Head of Division, DELTA, 12 May 2020 and 31 May 2022; and Michael Montafi, Partnerships and Programme Support Manager, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Explosive Remnants of War Coordination Centre, "Explosive Remnants of War Coordination Centre (ERWCC) in Facts and Figures", November 2009, p. 17.

submunitions in Tbilisi Administered Territory (TAT). HALO also found and destroyed almost 600 ShOAB-0.5 submunitions in the aftermath of the 1992–93 conflict in Abkhazia.<sup>3</sup> In May 2010, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) completed clearance of its tasked areas.<sup>4</sup>

In 2019–20, a total of six submunitions were found and destroyed during spot tasks.<sup>5</sup> Between September 2021 and March 2022, a State Security Service explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team destroyed two submunitions during call-outs. These were located in TAT, in the region of Shida Kartli, at v. Brotsleti, and v. Megvrekisi – an area affected by ERW from the August 2008 Russia-Georgia conflict. The area where the two submunitions were found was originally cleared between 2008 and 2010. As such, DELTA considers their discovery to be part of a residual threat.<sup>6</sup>

Due to the extent of previous contamination, it is possible that a wider residual CMR threat remains. However, The HALO Trust reports that it has found no items in the TAT since 2017 or in Abkhazia since 2018<sup>7</sup> and DELTA agrees that the TAT may be considered free of CMR.<sup>8</sup>

## 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

Georgia's national mine action centre is the Humanitarian Demining Control Division (HDCD), renamed after a reorganisation in January 2019. The HDCD sits under the State Military Scientific Technical Centre, known as DELTA, within the Ministry of Defence (MoD).<sup>9</sup> The primary task of the HDCD is to coordinate mine action in Georgia. The Georgian Government funds the running costs of the HDCD as well as the Engineering Brigade, which conducts some survey and battle area clearance (BAC).<sup>10</sup>

The national authority has received capacity development support from HALO Trust and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). The HALO Trust has provided training on international mine action standards (IMAS), geographic information systems (GIS), clearance and survey techniques, and, in 2018, donated a mine action vehicle to the HDCD.<sup>11</sup> HALO continues to liaise on a quarterly basis and share all relevant information with the HDCD.<sup>12</sup>

The GICHD has provided training for HDCD staff on the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core database, ammunition storage, and technical survey.<sup>13</sup> In 2020, one HDCD staff member conducted an online course on IMAS and Compliance organised by the GICHD.<sup>14</sup> In 2021, two members of DELTA/HDCD staff attended three trainings organised by the GICHD, which covered the management of mine action programmes, operational efficiency, quality management, and operations analysis.<sup>15</sup>

In 2021, one DELTA/HDCD specialist participated in EOD training provided by the Combat Engineer Battalion of the Georgia Ministry of Defence and the US company, Golden West.<sup>16</sup>

Georgia continues to promote mine action through international and regional co-operation. In November 2021, a regional conference "Towards a Landmine Free South Caucasus", organised by LINKS Europe in cooperation with DELTA, took place in Tbilisi. The event was attended by government officials, diplomats, and members of civil society organisations from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.<sup>17</sup> A further meeting was planned for the middle of 2022 to promote further regional progress in mine action.<sup>18</sup>

3 Email from Michael Montañ, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

4 Email from Jonathon Guthrie, Programme Manager, NPA, 27 May 2010.

5 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 12 May 2020 and 28 May 2021.

6 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May and 13 and 22 June 2022.

7 Email from Michael Montañ, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

8 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.

9 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 20 June 2016, 28 March 2019, and 10 June 2019; and Matthew Walker, Programme Officer, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019; Decree 897 issued by the Minister of Defence, 30 December 2010; and Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 21 March 2017 to 31 March 2018), Form A.

10 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 12 May 2020 and 31 May 2022.

11 Emails from Matthew Walker, 8 April 2019; Michael Montañ, HALO Trust, 8 May 2020; and Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 10 June 2019.

12 Email from Michael Montañ, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

13 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 12 May 2020.

14 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 April 2021.

15 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.

16 CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2021), Form A.

17 "Georgia supports efforts to clear the South Caucasus from all landmines and unexploded ordnance", *commonsplace.eu*, 7 November 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3zDRWxn>.

18 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

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Georgia's draft National Mine Action Standards contain a standard on environmental management and policy.<sup>19</sup>

HALO Trust has strict environmental Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which aim to leave the environment in a state similar to or, where possible, better than it was before demining operations, and in a state that permits intended land use once operations are complete.<sup>20</sup>

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## GENDER AND DIVERSITY

DELTA and The HALO Trust each have gender and diversity policies in place. 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. Among the HDCD's staff in 2020 and 2021, one of seven members—the GIS/IMSMA specialist—was a woman. While no women were employed by HDCD in operational roles or in managerial/supervisory positions in this period, 1% of military personnel within the EOD Company of Combat Engineer Battalion were women in 2021.<sup>21</sup>

HALO Trust supports use of mixed-gender teams to conduct survey, which allows for greater engagement with women and children.<sup>22</sup> In 2021, HALO continued to collaborate with local women's organisations to increase the visibility of its work to women. The HALO Abkhazia programme was able to partner with UN Women in Abkhazia to distribute information about ending violence against women, including how to access UN Women-supported local shelter hotlines.<sup>23</sup>

HALO Trust's EOD teams in Abkhazia are mixed ethnic Georgian and ethnic Abkhaz and comprise both men and women.<sup>24</sup> As at May 2022, women made up 28% of HALO Trust staff in Abkhazia, with 15% of managerial and supervisory positions occupied by women and 28% of operational positions occupied by women. There is also a female member of staff based in Tbilisi, dedicated to the administration of the Georgia programme (HALO's only member of staff outside of Abkhazia). This slight decrease, from 36% of staff in the Abkhazia programme being women in 2020 to 28% in 2022, reflects a downsizing of the programme in 2021, when HALO reduced the number of BAC teams deployed to Primorsky, following completion of a large grant from the European Union.<sup>25</sup>

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## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

The HDCD uses the IMSMA database and, according to The HALO Trust, the data are accurate and systematically updated. The database is administered by a certified specialist, trained by the GICHD, who receives regular refresher training in the latest procedures.<sup>26</sup> The data in the national information management system are accessible to the HALO Trust.<sup>27</sup> HALO uses its own IMSMA-compatible data collection forms that DELTA has approved, while the HDCD quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) team also has its own forms.<sup>28</sup>

Georgia outlines how various government agencies, in particular the Defence Forces and the EOD team of the Georgian State Security Service, assist in reporting contamination discovered through their established networks and in response to information from local residents. The HDCD regularly collects, analyses, documents, and stores information on areas contaminated by mines or ERW. The HDCD compiles and regularly updates digital and printed maps of contaminated and cleared areas within and through the national IMSMA database. Finally, Georgia reports that cooperation on data exchange between all relevant ministries, national agencies, and foreign organisations is ongoing and is successful.<sup>29</sup>

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19 Ibid.

20 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

21 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 April 2021 and 31 May 2022.

22 Email from Matthew Walker, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019.

23 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

24 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 8 May 2020.

25 Emails from Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 30 May 2021, 17 May 2022, and 7 and 10 June 2022.

26 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

27 Email from Matthew Walker, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019.

28 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019; and Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 8 May 2020.

29 CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2021), Form B.

## PLANNING AND TASKING

Georgia has a national mine action strategy. Its main aims and targets are focused on clearing the remaining mined areas (unless they are deemed to have military utility) and other areas contaminated with ERW.<sup>30</sup> Implementation of Georgia's 2021 annual mine action plan was compromised by COVID-19 restrictions, poor funding of humanitarian demining operators, and national staffing challenges. However, Georgia has a mine action plan in place for 2022. DELTA prioritises clearance in areas of high risk to the population, as well as land used for livestock and other agriculture, along with roads, border security, and other key infrastructure. In addition, Georgia has long-term plans for survey and clearance of mines and UXOs at commercial sites to support the country's socio-economic development.<sup>31</sup>

HALO uses an internal prioritisation matrix to grade tasks and collaborates with the national mine action authorities to determine annual operational planning and task priority.<sup>32</sup>

Due to shortfalls of funding, The HALO Trust did not conduct any survey or clearance activities in the TAT in 2021 or the previous year, and maintained only a residual presence in the TAT, with one Programme Administrator in place to support procurement and transfer of supplies and equipment required by the HALO programme in Abkhazia. HALO also maintains an International Donor Liaison Officer, attached to the programmes in both the TAT and Abkhazia. This arrangement is anticipated to continue regardless of whether HALO has active projects in TAT, as long as operations continue in Abkhazia.<sup>33</sup>

In 2020, HALO secured three-year funding for its EOD work in Abkhazia and will maintain this capacity until at least 2023.<sup>34</sup> In Abkhazia, HALO's BAC operations continued in Primorsky alongside responding to EOD call-outs. During 2021, HALO responded to 162 civilian call-outs and 9 call-outs from the *de facto* Abkhaz military, resulting in the destruction of 372 items of UXO. In addition, HALO EOD teams conducted 83 village visits in the conflict-affected regions of Abkhazia, resulting in an additional 31 items of UXO being destroyed.<sup>35</sup>

## LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

### STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

As at June 2022, Georgia's National Mine Action Standards and National Technical Standards Guidelines were drafted and awaiting approval by the GICHD IMAS department. Once approved they were due to be translated into Georgian and then sent to Parliament for approval.<sup>36</sup>

The International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) have been translated to Georgian but the translation of the IMAS remains ongoing.<sup>37</sup> HALO expected Georgia's non-technical survey guidelines to be finalised in the course of 2021.<sup>38</sup> However, as at May 2022, HALO reported they were not aware of any further progress or planned finalisation date.<sup>39</sup>

In 2020, HALO was in the process of updating its SOPs for clearance of four minefield tasks in Abkhazia, stated to take place in June–December 2021.<sup>40</sup> In 2021, HALO added a new SOP for conducting subsurface BAC at Primorsky in Abkhazia.<sup>41</sup>

### OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

DELTA retains a small demining and EOD capacity in the TAT. In 2020, all clearance activities were suspended there due to the COVID-19 pandemic but the Georgian State Security Service EOD team continued to respond to call-outs.<sup>42</sup> In 2021, DELTA reported that operational capacity improved, as the impact of COVID-19 decreased.<sup>43</sup> 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.<sup>44</sup>

30 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019.

31 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.

32 Emails from Michael Montañ, HALO Trust, 30 April 2021 and 17 May 2022.

33 Email from Michael Montañ, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

34 Email from Michael Montañ, HALO Trust, 30 April 2021.

35 Email from Michael Montañ, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

36 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.

37 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 April 2021 and 31 May 2022.

38 Email from Michael Montañ, HALO Trust, 30 April 2021.

39 Email from Michael Montañ, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

40 Email from Michael Montañ, HALO Trust, 30 April 2021.

41 Email from Michael Montañ, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

42 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 April 2021.

43 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.

44 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019 and 12 May 2020; and Matthew Walker, HALO Trust, 8 April 2019.

The HALO Trust, which is the only international operator working in the country, conducts survey and both BAC and mine clearance in Abkhazia.<sup>45</sup> In 2020, HALO deployed two four-strong EOD teams and two four-strong mechanical and mechanical support teams, along with 53 personnel across 6 teams for BAC.<sup>46</sup>

In 2021, The HALO Trust deployed one mine clearance team in the region of Abkhazia and two mechanical assets to assist with UXO clearance at Primorsky.<sup>47</sup> HALO secured three-year funding for its EOD work in Abkhazia and will maintain this capacity until at least 2023.<sup>48</sup>

HALO's operations in TAT remained suspended in 2021 due to lack of donor funding. However, new donors have been engaged and the programme anticipates funding for non-technical survey of mined areas (in Kadoeti and Khojali) in 2022.<sup>49</sup>

In the TAT, quality management (QM) is conducted by DELTA. In Abkhazia, The HALO Trust is responsible for its own QM.<sup>50</sup>

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## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

No area clearance of CMR took place in Georgia in 2021 or in the two years previously.<sup>51</sup> Between September 2021 and March 2022, the State Security Service EOD team destroyed two submunitions during call-outs.<sup>52</sup> In 2020, they destroyed five submunitions during EOD spot tasks, which were found to be residual contamination and not evidence of a broader problem.<sup>53</sup>

In 2021, the HDCD and the E.O.D. Company conducted survey in two areas of the Samegrelo Zemo-Svaneti region: at v. Kulevi in March to April 2021, and at a former Coast Guard Base (MIA of Georgia), near Poti harbour, in October 2021 to March 2022. At v. Kulevi, survey showed no mines were present and technical survey was conducted to establish the possible presence of UXO/AXO. None was recovered and the area has been recognised as clear. At the former Coast Guard Base, near Poti harbour, survey and QA/QC were conducted to identify the possible presence of UXO/AXO. There too, none was recovered and the area has also been recognised as clear.<sup>54</sup>

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.<sup>55</sup>

Georgia has also highlighted that funding and resources continue to be a significant challenge for national mine action, with only one international humanitarian organisation operating in-country (The HALO Trust), and limited resources available to the State's EOD Company, which conducts humanitarian operations, under the Ministry of Defence.<sup>56</sup>

In particular, Georgia describes how the HDCD lacks certain equipment and requires expert subject matter assistance regarding the creation and implementation of national mine action standards and national technical standards and guidelines, the elaboration of standard operating procedures (SOPs) as well as staff training on EOD Levels 1, 2, and 3; technical and non-technical survey; the management of mine action; and IMSMA database management. Additionally, HDCD requires further technical and financial support to conduct the planned general mine action assessment, including support of QA/QC on cleared areas.<sup>57</sup>

## PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

The engineering brigade of the MoD has been trained to conduct EOD, demining, and BAC by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Partnership for Peace and has the capacity to deal with any residual contamination.<sup>58</sup> However, Georgia expresses concern that capacity to tackle any residual contamination is limited.<sup>59</sup>

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45 Email from Irakli Chitanava, HALO Trust, 2 May 2017.

46 Email from Sian McGee, Field Officer, HALO Trust, 19 May 2021; HALO deployed four BAC teams from January to May 2021 then increased to six teams from June to December.

47 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

48 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 30 April 2021.

49 Email from Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

50 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 March 2019.

51 Emails from Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022; and Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 May 2021 and 31 May 2022.

52 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.

53 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 May 2021.

54 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 13 June 2022.

55 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 May 2021 and 31 May 2022.

56 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.

57 CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2021), Form E.

58 Emails from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 28 April 2021; and Michael Montafi, HALO Trust, 30 April 2021.

59 Email from Oleg Gochashvili, DELTA, 31 May 2022.