

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION:**

UNKNOWN

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2023

UNKNOWN

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2023

UNKNOWN

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- India should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- India should clear anti-personnel (AP) mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- India should report publicly on the extent and location of AP mines and prepare a plan for their clearance and destruction.

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Director-General of Military Operations

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Army Corps of Engineers
- Indian Police Service

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The extent of AP mine contamination is not known. India used mines in three wars with Pakistan in 1947, 1965, and 1971, and in its war with China in 1962.¹ Large-scale mine-laying was conducted by government forces on and near the Line of Control (LoC) separating India and Pakistan during the 1971 war and the 2001–02 stand-off between the two states. Both AP and anti-vehicle (AV) mines were laid on cultivated land and pasture, as well as around infrastructure and a number of villages. In 2002, media resources reported that India was in the process of laying mines along virtually the entire length of its 2,897km border with Pakistan. One army commander said the mined area extended roughly two kilometres deep.²

1 Human Rights Watch, Recent Landmine Use by India and Pakistan, Background, May 2002, at: <http://bit.ly/3srXtQz>, p. 3.

2 "India's Minefields Mean Bitter Harvest for Farmers", *The New York Times*, 4 January 2002, at: <http://nyti.ms/3mTiBhp>.

Despite repeated official claims that all the mines laid were subsequently cleared, reports of contamination and casualties have persisted. A media report in 2013 cited a government statement that about 20km² of irrigated land was still mined in the Akhnoor sector of the LoC alone.³ In June 2016, India's *NDTV* news reported that the Indian army was demining areas of the LoC in Rajouri district, Kashmir, in order to return land to communities for agricultural use as it vacated fields near the border that were reportedly taken over and mined during the Kargil Conflict in 1999 and Operation Parakram in 2001.⁴

It has been reported, however, that the Indian army continues to use AP mines. India has acknowledged that it would only completely stop using mines when alternative technologies can perform their defensive role, though it has reported having ceased the production of "non-detectable" AP mines (in accordance with the Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)).⁵ In January 2021 a former Director-General of India's Defence Intelligence Agency was quoted as saying that India only emplaces mines when there is "a threat from an enemy state or possibility of an imminent war",⁶ while a 2023 media source reported that the Indian army continues to use AP mines as part of its counter-infiltration strategy, to seal possible infiltration routes into Jammu and Kashmir across the LoC.⁷ In May 2024, several landmines, reported to be part of the "anti-infiltration" system, were reported to have exploded during a forest fire along the LoC in Poonch district.⁸

Landmine Monitor continues to identify India as one of only a handful of countries that it believes to be actively producing mines.⁹ In 2019, according to an online media report, the Indian Army was planning to procure one million AP mines over a five-year period to be used along the LoC.¹⁰ In 2021,

the Indian Army's Corps of Engineers received delivery of the first of 700,000 domestically manufactured Nipun AP mines and were also carrying out trials on new AV mines which it planned to deploy along the LoC.¹¹

Incidents involving Indian army personnel who step on mines during patrols of the LoC continue to be reported, as well as among Kashmir rebels who try to cross the LoC. Civilians, often children, are killed or injured when grazing cattle or collecting firewood near the LoC.¹² As recently as 14 August 2024, a soldier and two porters were reported injured in another mine blast along the LoC in the in Mandi area of Poonch district in Jammu and Kashmir.¹³

India asserts that the Indian Armed Forces have never used landmines in internal armed conflicts in its northern and north-eastern states.¹⁴ The security forces have, however, reported extensive use of mines and improvised explosive devices by Maoist fighters in the north-eastern states of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand causing civilian and military casualties. Landmine Monitor has reported several incidents involving the use of pressure-plate AP mines by the Communist Party of India-Maoist, or its People's Liberation Guerrilla Army.¹⁵ Data from international databases support this finding, with both civilian and security force (police and paramilitary) casualties recorded in 2022 and 2023.¹⁶ There are also reports that AP mines have been found in various other states, including Telanga and Kerala states, where their use has been attributed to Maoist groups.¹⁷ In July 2024, an AP mine was found by a shepherd in Jaisalmer in Rajasthan, reportedly dating from Operation Parakram.¹⁸ The following month, a number of AP mine explosions were reported in Manipur along the Myanmar border. The mines had reportedly been emplaced by militants from Myanmar.¹⁹

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

India has no civilian mine action programme. The Director-General of Military Operations decides on mine clearance after receiving assessment reports from the command headquarters of the respective districts where clearance is needed.

3 "Heavy rainfall worsening landmine peril for Kashmiri farmers", *Thomson Reuters Foundation*, 5 November 2013, at: <http://tmsnrts/33xqBun>.

4 "Farmers Hope to Return to Fields as Army Clears Landmines on Line of Control", *NDTV*, 27 June 2016, at: <http://bit.ly/2Z1AJIL>.

5 "A Ghost that haunts: Living with landmines in Kashmir", *Aljazeera*, 27 January 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/4ecXBLx>.

6 Ibid.

7 "Army soldier injured in landmine explosion in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district", *The Indian Express*, 15 October 2023, at: <https://tinyurl.com/49w7w72j>.

8 "Forest fire triggers landmine explosions along LoC in J&K's Poonch", *Deccan Herald*, 19 May 2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/mr4czspa>.

9 Landmine Monitor Report 2023, pp. 2, 23, and 25, at: <https://tinyurl.com/2838baj8>.

10 "Army wants 1 million mines from private sector", *The Economic Times*, 3 October 2019, at: <https://bit.ly/3L22U1Q>.

11 "Nipun anti-personnel mines: Army gets weapons boost for Pakistan, China borders", *Hindustan Times*, 21 December 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3P6SnaJ>.

12 ACLED, "Filters: 01/01/2022-12/08/2023, Remote explosive/landmine/IED, India", accessed: 12 August 2023 at: www.acleddata.com; and Fenix Insight database, at: <https://fenix-insight.online/>.

13 "Soldier, Two Porters Injured In Mine Blast Along LoC In Poonch", *Kashmir Observer*, 14 August 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3Mb4q4L>.

14 Recent Landmine Use by India and Pakistan, Human Rights Watch Backgrounder, May 2002, p. 3.

15 *Landmine Monitor Report 2023*, p. 18, at: <https://tinyurl.com/2838baj8>.

16 ACLED, "Filters: 01/01/2022-31/12/2023, Remote explosive/landmine/IED, India", accessed on 12 August 2023 at: www.acleddata.com; and Fenix Insight database, at: <https://fenix-insight.online/>.

17 "Woman pilgrim injured in Mulugu land mine blast", *The Times of India*, 14 June 2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/bdetdstw>; and "Landmine and other explosives found buried in Thalappuzha in Wayanad", *Kaumudi Online*, 24 June 2024, at: <https://tinyurl.com/mus97m66>.

18 "Landmine recovered in Jaisalmer", *The Times of India*, 29 July 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3MjVTw9>.

19 "India-Myanmar border saw surge in landmine blasts, MLA tells House", *The Times of India*, 3 August 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3XbzQk>.

In its Article 13 report under CCW Amended Protocol II, covering 2023, India reported various bilateral exercises and training undertaken by the Indian military in 2023 that included demining. Two Indian army officers participated in an online Demining Training at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Defence Ministers' meeting in February 2023. Another five Indian army personnel participated in training for ASEAN defence ministries on mine action in Cambodia in September 2023.²⁰

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in India in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

India has not provided information on land release in its recent Article 13 reports under Amended Protocol II of the CCW, as it has done previously. It provided no survey or clearance information in its reports covering 2023 and 2021, and it did not submit a report covering 2022. In the report covering 2023, India stated under Form B, on mine clearance and rehabilitation programmes: "No update since 2006."²¹

Various media reports have, however, attested to mine clearance in recent years. These include the Indian army clearing mines attributed to Maoist rebels in Kathagudem district in Telangana state in 2022 following livestock injuries.²² The military cleared another 175 landmines in three villages in Ladakh, bordering the line of actual control (LAC) between India and China in October 2023.²³ In February 2023, the army is reported to have destroyed a mine in a controlled explosion near the LoC in Poonch district, in Jammu and Kashmir;²⁴ and in January 2024, the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh tendered for clearance of unexploded ordnance (UXO) and mines following the deaths of at least five people from explosive ordnance in 2023.²⁵

The Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for clearing mines placed by non-State armed groups (NSAGs).²⁶ According to media reports, the Army's bomb disposal squad is responsible for destroying mines near the LoC that have drifted due to seasonal rainfall and been reported during Army patrols.²⁷

No target date has been set for the completion of mine clearance. In a statement delivered at the Fourth APMBC Review Conference in November 2019, India said: "Mines that are used for defensive military operations are laid within fenced perimeters and marked, in accordance with the requirements specified in AP [Amended Protocol] II. Post operations, these mines are cleared by trained troops".²⁸ During the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties of the APMBC, India affirmed its commitment to the "eventual elimination" of AP mines. However, India also noted that the achievement of this objective hinges on the "availability of militarily effective technologies that can perform cost effectively the legitimate defensive role of anti-personnel landmines."²⁹

20 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form E.

21 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2023), Form B.

22 *Landmine Monitor Report 2023*, p. 18.

23 "In Ladakh, Army removes landmines from 3 border villages", 12 October 2023 at: <https://tinyurl.com/2n5wm9zb>.

24 "Army destroys landmine found near LoC in J-K's Poonch", *The Indian Express*, 23 February 2024, <https://tinyurl.com/yjhraekd>.

25 "LG Mishra orders tendering for clearing Kurbathang of unexploded ordnance", *The Earth News*, 23 January 2024, <https://tinyurl.com/2jmhe2tt>.

26 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2006), Form B.

27 "Six land mines destroyed along LoC in Balakote", *Northlines*, 5 May 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3qQG6hj>; and "Rusted landmine found in J-K's Poonch; destroyed", *The Print*, 31 July 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/44jlhrC>.

28 Statement of India, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 26 November 2019.

29 Statement of India, Twentieth Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC, Geneva, 21 November 2022.