

ARTICLE 4 DEADLINE: 1 NOVEMBER 2023
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

CLUSTER MUNITION CONTAMINATION: HEAVY

OFFICIAL ESTIMATE FOR FEDERAL IRAQ ONLY

178 KM²

SUBMUNITION CLEARANCE IN 2021

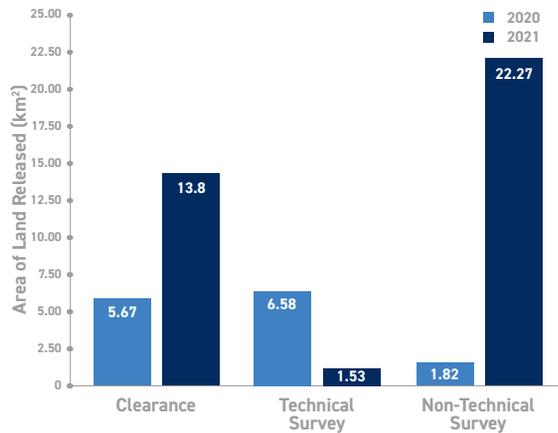
13.8 KM²

(FEDERAL IRAQ ONLY)
MINE ACTION REVIEW CALCULATION

SUBMUNITIONS DESTROYED IN 2021

8,533

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Clearance of cluster munition remnants (CMR) recovered momentum after the disruption experienced in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Survey operations identified significant amounts of previously unrecorded CMR contamination resulting in an increase in the total estimated area affected by CMR. Iraq released a national mine action strategy for 2022–2028, which for the first time was prepared in consultation between the two authorities – Federal Iraq’s Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) and the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Authority (IKMAA).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Iraq should provide data on results of CMR survey and clearance for Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) disaggregated by operator and district.
- The DMA and implementing partners should address and resolve persistent data inconsistencies in reported results of survey and clearance.
- Iraq should provide an annual work plan setting out goals for survey and clearance of cluster munitions remnants.
- Iraq should develop a resource mobilisation strategy to attract support from international donors for survey and clearance of cluster munition-contaminated areas in the south and should commit more national funding to this work.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2021)	Score (2020)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	6	6	Survey continued to build Iraq's understanding of its CMR challenge but the amount of previously unrecorded CMR hazardous areas discovered in 2021 exceeded the area of land release so that the estimate of CMR contamination increased.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	7	6	Iraq released a new mine action strategy for 2022–2028, the first produced in consultation between the mine action authorities for the Kurdish Region and Federal Iraq, underscoring a commitment to increase national ownership and to seek increased national funding for the sector. CMR contamination and operations are heavily concentrated in southern governorates overseen by the DMA Regional Mine Action Centre-South (RMAC-S), which has continued its constructive engagement with operators on land release methodologies and priorities.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	7	6	Iraq's mine action strategy for 2022–2028 acknowledges the importance of gender and diversity to the sector. Conservative social attitudes to women's employment hamper recruitment in what has been a male-dominated sector but an increasing number of women work for demining organisations, including in supervisory positions and in survey, community liaison and clearance teams as well as in office roles.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	6	5	Iraq's mine action authorities operate Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) data management systems. The DMA is in the process of upgrading to IMSMA Core while IKMAA is replacing its IMSMA database with one based on open source technology. The DMA also moved to digital reporting, which should streamline hitherto cumbersome procedures and reduce delays uploading survey and clearance results. Significant discrepancies between official and operator data point to continuing difficulties in data management. Iraq, meanwhile, submits comprehensive annual updates in improved and promptly submitted Article 7 reports.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	7	6	Planning and tasking for survey and clearance of cluster munition-contaminated areas have benefitted from good coordination between the RMAC-S, operators, and local authorities. Operators say RMAC-S' task order system works efficiently prioritising tasks according to local recommendations, DMA priorities, and operator requests.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	7	7	Federal Iraq adopted the Cluster Munition Remnant Survey (CMRS) methodology for CMR survey and clearance as a national standard in 2019 and has reported benefits for accurate mapping, planning, and land release. Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) deployed drones to assess the effectiveness of thermal imagery technology in locating CMR. Initial results revealed significant limitations but NPA was continuing trials in 2022.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	6	5	Without the disruptions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic the previous year, Iraq reported roughly doubling the amount of CMR land cleared in 2021. Operator data suggests significantly larger amounts of land released through survey and clearance than the official data. The size of Iraq's CMR contamination, however, ensures that it will not meet its 2023 Article 4 deadline and Iraq says it will request an extension.
Average Score	6.5	5.9	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

CLUSTER MUNITION SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT

- Higher Council of Mine Action
- Directorate of Mine Action (DMA)
- Iraq Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Ministry of Defence
- Ministry of Interior (Civil Defence)
- Al Khebra Company for Demining
- Ta'az Demining Company

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Danish Refugee Council Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding (DRC) (formerly Danish Demining Group (DDG))
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD)

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION

Iraq ranks as one of the nations most heavily contaminated by cluster munitions. Federal Iraq reported CMR contamination of nearly 178km² at the end of 2021 (see Table 1). CMR affected 10 of Federal Iraq's 15 governorates but close to 90% of it was concentrated in the three southern governorates of Basrah, Muthanna, and Thi Qar.¹ The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) in the north of the country, which covers four governorates (Duhok, Erbil, Halabja, and Sulaymaniyah), is also believed to have a small amount of CMR contamination, but no estimate of the area affected is available.

Table 1: Cluster munition-contaminated area in Federal Iraq by province (at end 2021)²

Province	Area (m ²)
Anbar	6,192,126
Babylon	633,031
Basrah	42,838,415
Karbala	1,331,881
Missan	990,312
Muthanna	68,954,722
Najaf	5,010,038
Ninewa	4,157,090
Thi Qar	44,893,607
Qadisiya	3,137,824
Total	178,139,046

Iraq is still building up a comprehensive understanding of CMR contamination. Despite the release of more CMR-affected land in 2021, the amount of previously unrecorded CMR contamination added to the database in 2021 pushed Iraq's estimate of total CMR contamination up by 23.17km² or more than 9% over the previous year.³ Operators report that most CMR casualties in Basrah governorate occur in areas that have not been surveyed,⁴ underscoring the need for more evidence-based survey to establish a comprehensive baseline.

The DMA said survey added a little over 30km² of previously unrecorded CMR contamination to the database in 2021 (see Table 2). Information generated by population movements and taking over land for cultivation generated information leading to identification of new CMR hazardous areas. Initial survey of an area in Basrah governorate earmarked for preservation as an environmental sanctuary revealed more than 10km² of CMR contamination and non-technical survey teams also found significant areas of previously unrecorded CMR hazards in western Anbar province.⁵

Table 2: Cluster munition-contaminated area added to the database in 2021⁶

Governorate	Activity	New CHAs	Area (m ²)	New SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
Kerbala	NTS	2	1,297,359	0	0	1,297,359
Anbar	NTS	3	5,300,583	2	875,817	6,176,400
Basrah	NTS	33	10,002,075	0	0	10,002,075
	TS	3	316,778	0	0	316,778
Missan	TS	1	194,487	0	0	194,487
Muthanna	NTS	30	11,283,445	0	0	11,283,445
	TS	2	924,955	0	0	924,955
Totals		74	29,319,682	2	875,817	30,195,499

NTS = Non-technical survey TS = Technical survey

1 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2021), p. 5 and Form F.

2 Ibid.

3 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2021), p. 5 and Form F.

4 Email from Marie-Josée Hamel, Regional Coordinator – Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding, DRC, 30 March 2022.

5 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F; email from Haitham Fattah Lafta, Head of Operations, RMAC-South, DMA, 5 March 2022.

6 Email from Ahmed Aljasim, Head of Planning and Information, DMA, 15 April 2022. Iraq's Article 7 Report covering 2021 recorded a slightly lower figure of 29,317,361m² for previously unrecorded contamination added to the database in 2021.

Federal Iraq's contamination dates back to the Gulf War of 1991 and the United States (US)-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, and follows the path of allied forces' advance from the south to Baghdad. Coalition aircraft also struck Iraqi army positions in the northern governorate of Kirkuk but DMA data in the last two years has not identified any CMR contamination in the governorate.⁷ The most commonly found items are BLU-63 and BLU-97 submunitions. Other CMR found in the affected areas include BLU-61, M42, M77, and M118 submunitions.⁸

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The mine action programme in Iraq is managed along regional lines. The DMA has represented Iraq internationally and oversees mine action for humanitarian purposes in Federal Iraq, covering 15 of the country's 19 governorates. Mine action in the KRI's four governorates is overseen by IKMAA, which reports to the Council of Ministers and is led by a director general who has ministerial rank. The two organisations have functioned largely autonomously though contacts appear to have improved in 2021 after years in which relations were overshadowed by tensions over funding and territorial demarcation issues.

Iraq's National Mine Action Strategy 2022–2028, the first produced jointly by the two authorities, sets increasing national ownership as a key objective and says this will be achieved by strengthening both authorities and “ensuring these national entities are empowered, appropriately structured and sufficiently equipped and resourced to allow them to fulfil their responsibilities.”⁹

The two authorities will also seek to increase both international and national funding. Iraq is to ensure its national survey and clearance capacities are strengthened, including through increased national funding to develop and sustain national non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and through formalised capacity development partnerships

between national and international partners. It sets as a strategic objective of the plan that “all relevant ministries, directorates, and governorates will dedicate specific funding for technical survey, clearance, and QM.”¹⁰

To promote cooperation between the DMA and IKMAA and achieve a unified programme the new national strategy states that:¹¹

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) formalising the partnership between DMA and IKMAA should be developed and signed before the end of 2022.
- Regular and structured coordination meetings between the two will be formalised.
- The DMA and IKMAA will jointly promote Iraqi mine action internationally.
- The DMA, working closely with IKMAA, will take the lead in organising bi-annual coordination meetings involving Iraqi ministries, international donors, and national and international operators to strengthen coordination and information sharing.
- The DMA and IKMAA will collaborate with the Ministry of Planning and advocate for inclusion of mine action in broader national programmes, including the National Development Plan and Poverty Reduction Strategy.

FEDERAL IRAQ

The inter-ministerial Higher Council of Mine Action,¹² which reports to the Prime Minister, oversees and approves mine action strategy, policies, and plans. The DMA “plans, coordinates, supervises, monitors and follows up all the activities of mine action”. It draws up the national strategy and is responsible for setting national standards, accrediting, and approving the standing operating procedures (SOPs) of demining organisations and certifying completion of clearance tasks.¹³

The DMA oversees three Regional Mine Action Centres (RMACs):

1. North: covering the governorates of Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Nineveh, and Salah ad-Din.
2. Middle Euphrates (MEU): Babylon, Baghdad, Karbala, Najaf, Qadisiya, and Wassit.
3. South: Basrah, Missan, Muthanna, and Thi-Qar.

RMAC South, located in Basra City, is the focal point for Federal Iraq's response to cluster munition contamination. It maintains its own database and is responsible for tasking operators in its area of operations. RMAC North and MEU were located in Baghdad but RMAC North also opened a satellite office in Mosul in August 2019.¹⁴

DMA coordination of mine action remains a challenge in a sector in which its formal status as a department of the Ministry of Health has less authority than the powerful ministries of Defence, Interior, and Oil, which are also major actors in the sector. Rapid turnover of directors has also affected management and policy continuity. The present Director General, Dhafir Mahmood Khalaf, appointed on an acting basis in September 2020 and confirmed in 2021, was at least the 12th director since 2003.

7 Article 7 Reports (covering 2020 and 2021), Form F; and email from Haitham Lafta, DMA/RMAC-S, 21 April 2021.

8 Interview with Nibras Fakhir Matrood, Director, RMAC-S, and Haitham Fattah Lafta, RMAC-S, Basrah, 29 April 2019; and with Mats Hektor, Project Manager, NPA South Iraq, Basrah, 28 April 2019; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F.

9 Iraq National Mine Action Strategy 2022–2028, p. 36.

10 Ibid., pp. 18, 22, and 37.

11 Ibid., pp. 36–38.

12 The Council, which is led by the Prime Minister, includes representatives of the ministries of defence, interior, oil, and environment, as well as the National Security Adviser and the head of IKMAA.

13 “Document of roles and responsibilities”, undated but 2019, received by email from the DMA, 13 May 2019.

14 Interview with Gus Guthrie, NPA, in Geneva, 12 February 2020.

Iraq's new national strategic plan for 2022–2028 acknowledges the institutional issues, citing “widespread belief” that the DMA should be strengthened to give it the authority commensurate with its mandate. The plan calls for an external assessment of the DMA's mandate and position that will result in recommendations to the Higher Council for Mine Action but does not indicate any timeline for this review.¹⁵

KRI

IKMAA functions as both the regulator and an operator in the KRI. It reports directly to the Kurdish Regional Government's Council of Ministers and coordinates four directorates in Dohuk, Erbil, Garmian, and Sulaymaniyah (Sleman). IKMAA had a total staff of 822, including 445 personnel in operations, but a budgetary crisis in the KRI in 2020 and 2021 imposed severe constraints on the mine action sector. IKMAA received no international donor support in 2021 but reported that the ITF Enhancing International Security had expressed willingness to provide funding in 2022 and 2023.¹⁶

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Iraq does not have a policy on environmental management in mine action. Individual operators, such as Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and HALO Trust, have institutional policies in place at headquarters level.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The Iraq National Strategic Mine Action Plan for 2017–2021 referred to gender equality and gender mainstreaming within mine action activities as objectives of an effective programmatic response.¹⁷ Iraq's 2022–2028 strategic plan recognizes the different impact of contamination shaped by gender, age, and ethnic or religious affiliations and requires specific activities targeting those needs, for which disaggregated data is a prerequisite.¹⁸

The DMA, which first created a gender unit in 2017, adopted its first Gender Unit Action Plan in early 2021 and the DMA's director, who has advocated for employment of more women in mine action,¹⁹ approved the concept of a Gender Task Force in early 2021.²⁰ The DMA reported members of its gender unit participated in non-technical surveys conducted by international implementing partners, including the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD) and MAG.²¹ Female staff members also joined quality assurance team monitoring to clearance conducted by Civil Defence Muthanna governorate, as well conducting explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) and collecting victim data. It also requested support from international IPs in organising seminars on gender issues in rural areas and suggested they help prepare a register of all women working in mine action.²²

IKMAA reported that it offered equal employment opportunities to women who accounted for about 30% of its more than 800 employees and it encouraged them to seek advancement in their careers. IKMAA had appointed a woman for the first time as director of one of its four provincial mine

action centres in Duhok in 2021 and in 2022 had appointed a female as IKMAA's legal affairs director. IKMAA has had a female public affairs director for some years and women also held managerial positions in planning, information management and EORE departments. In 2022, IKMAA was seeking to create female explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams in all four provinces and appealed for international support to help achieve it.²³

Women's participation in mine action, a male-dominated sector, still faces some resistance from socially conservative attitudes, particularly in rural areas. Efforts to recruit women can encounter attitudes questioning the point of female employment when there are not enough jobs for men.²⁴ It can be problematic to deploy women outside the areas they live and some candidates have dropped out of training that required overseas travel.²⁵ Women make up well below 20% of the personnel in most international implementing partners (IPs). Some IPs report that non-technical survey and community liaison teams are gender mixed rather than gender balanced, but the number of female staff has risen across office and operational roles and most IPs said they intended to employ more women in the future.²⁶

DRC recruited six female deminers in Basrah in March 2022 who will work in mixed clearance teams. The same month it hired a female medic to address the needs of female staff and it has taken other steps to attract women staff, including offering 18 weeks of paid maternity leave and five days of paid leave to deal with child sickness in line with global DRC

15 Iraq National Mine Action Strategy 2022–2028, pp. 37–38.

16 Email from Niyazi Khalid Qusaim, Deputy Head, IKMAA, 22 April 2022.

17 National Strategic Mine Action Plan, pp. 12, 18, 20, and 30.

18 Iraq National Mine Action Strategy 2022–2028, p. 15.

19 Email from Chris Tierney, Programme Manager, NPA, 17 April 2022.

20 Email from Hannane Boulmaoui, Head of Programme Section, UNMAS Iraq, 16 April 2021.

21 Email from Ahmad Aljasim, DMA, 15 April 2022.

22 Email from Tim Marsella, HALO Trust, 17 March 2022.

23 Email from Niyazi Khalid Qusaim, IKMAA, 22 April 2022.

24 Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022.

25 Email from Tim Marsella, HALO Trust, 17 March 2022.

26 Emails from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022; Peter Smethers, FSD, 22 February 2022; Tim Marsella, HALO Trust, 17 March 2022; Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022.

Minimum Standards for employment of national staff.²⁷ It set improving gender representation as one of its priorities in 2022 drawing on the findings of two gender assessments conducted in 2021. The first focused on identifying barriers to employment and retention in the mine action sector in Ninewa, and provided recommendations for recruitment, training, and sustainable deployment of female or mixed clearance teams. The second assessment, conducted by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), reviewed DRC's staff perception, knowledge and practices in relation to gender equality and inclusion and led to an action plan which DRC is now implementing.²⁸

FSD employed 21 female staff out of a total of 164 personnel, including 17 women in risk education and demining, of whom two were team leaders.²⁹ Women made up just under 15% of HALO Trust's 204 staff and 10% of operations staff at the end of 2021 but they include women in managerial positions in the office and two team leaders in the field. It emphasises

equal opportunity in recruitment and has addressed practical measures to improve conditions for women for better design of women's uniforms and separate facilities for field ablutions.³⁰

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) has traditionally found it easier to recruit women in Federal Iraq, particularly in the Sinjar area where it has employed female deminers since 2016, but hired additional women staff in Mosul in February 2021 and planned to recruit more female staff in Sulaymaniyah later in the year.³¹ By the middle of 2021, four women had progressed to become deputy team leaders and three women were team leaders.³² NPA also plans to hire more women who made up a little over 17% of its total staff of 274 people, varying between more than a quarter of management personnel but close to 14% of its operations staff. NPA's survey and community liaison teams are mixed gender and it actively encourages women to apply but also encounters attitudes questioning the point of female employment when there are not enough jobs for men.³³

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Iraq's National Mine Action Strategy 2022–2028 underscores the importance of comprehensive information management processes to effective planning, tasking, implementation, and reporting. It also says Iraq will seek to increase understanding of its remaining landmine and CMR contamination through continuous updating of its baseline data by means of a database clean-up, desktop analysis, and contact with communities.³⁴

The DMA and IKMAA have operated databases using Information Management System for Mine Action New Generation (IMSMA NG) with technical support from iMMAP, a commercial service provider based in Erbil and working under contract to the US Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (WRA).

IKMAA is planning to replace its IMSMA database with one based on open source technology and licencing. IKMAA said in April 2022 that work had started on design of the new system and it expected to complete the work by the end of the year.³⁵

Federal Iraq's mine action database is located at the DMA's Baghdad headquarters. RMAC-S, the focal point for CMR survey and clearance, maintains a database in Basrah, which receives reports from demining organisations in its area of operations. The database is synchronised with Baghdad's at intervals determined by the volume of data to be uploaded.³⁶ The DMA started upgrading its database from IMSMA New Generation to IMSMA Core in 2021 and was working closely with the GICHD on migrating data to the new server but

commented the process would take time in view of the large volume of data to be transferred.³⁷ The DMA also operates an Online Task Management System (OTMS) developed by iMMAP and an online dashboard providing operators with access to data on operational developments.

Information management has been plagued by cumbersome procedures requiring hard copy reports and slow uploading of data. Operators say information available from the OTMS and dashboard is incomplete, not up to date on survey and clearance results and insufficient for the purposes of planning and informed decision-making. The DMA is moving towards streamlining procedures, requiring operators to submit reports in digital as well as hard copy, which is expected to accelerate data processing and facilitate access to information. It issued updated IMSMA reporting forms and also conducted a workshop on IMSMA reporting in 2021. It also required operators to submit weekly plans for all teams to RMACs enabling unannounced site visits.³⁸

NPA quality control (QC) teams set up in Anbar in 2021 to monitor site set-up, progress, and completion by open-area clearance teams work with Leica GG04 differential GPS (DGPS) for completion reports with probability of error of less than 10cm. NPA also updated Survey123 software on tablets and other smart devices so that GPS data is automatically logged on NPA forms to avoid possible manual data-entry errors. NPA's external QC teams use the same model of Leica DGPS units to mark sampling boxes.³⁹

27 Email from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022; and Lasse Marinus Joergensen, Operations Manager, DRC, 21 April 2022.

28 Email from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022.

29 Email from Peter Smethers, Country Director, FSD, 22 February 2022.

30 Email from Tim Marsella, HALO Trust, 17 March 2022.

31 Email from Jack Morgan, MAG, 19 April 2021.

32 Email from Katie Shaw, Programme Manager, MAG, 29 June 2021.

33 Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022.

34 Iraq National Mine Action Strategy 2022–2028, pp. 20–21.

35 Email from Niyazi Khalid Qusaim, IKMAA, 22 April 2022.

36 Interview with Nibras Fakhir Matrood, RMAC-S, Basrah, 29 April 2019.

37 Email from Ahmad Aljasim, DMA, 15 April 2022.

38 Emails from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022; Peter Smethers, FSD, 22 February 2022; Tim Marsella, HALO Trust, 17 March 2022; and Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022.

39 Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Iraq's National Mine Action Strategy 2022–2028, released in April 2022, sets broad goals for both the DMA and IKMAA, the first time the two authorities have cooperated in drawing up a national plan.⁴⁰ These include as a strategic priority the development of “a prioritisation system based on clear and transparent criteria” to inform all planning and tasking decisions.

Iraq does not have a specific strategic plan for CMR which, like clearance of legacy mines in the south, has been overshadowed by the priority given to tackling dense improvised mine contamination in areas liberated from Islamic State. The new national strategy says Iraq will seek to attract more funding to address the extensive CMR and mine contamination in the south, particularly in Basrah governorate.⁴¹

Tasking, previously a major source of friction between the DMA, operators and UNMAS, is reported to have improved significantly since 2019, although operators observe the process can be slow. The DMA issues tasks requested by operators after consultation with DMA operations and RMAC staff and taking account of requests from government, local authorities, development plans and prioritisation criteria that include a non-technical survey scoring system.⁴² Planning and tasking for survey and clearance of cluster munition-contaminated areas have benefitted from good coordination between the RMAC-S, operators, and local authorities. RMAC-S's task order system prioritises tasks according to local recommendations, DMA priorities, and operator requests, and is said to be working well.⁴³

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Federal Iraq has national mine action standards for mine and battle area clearance (BAC), non-technical survey, and technical survey but they were written in 2004–05, exist in Arabic only, and do not specifically address cluster munitions.

The DMA and UNMAS started conducting a review and update of 13 chapters of Iraq's national mine action standards (NMA) in 2021 to bring them into line with international standards.⁴⁴ The DMA said in April 2022 that it had updated many of the standards although they had yet to be translated into English. They included standards for non-technical and technical survey and mine clearance, battle area clearance, EOD, marking, personal protective equipment, and operational accreditation.⁴⁵ It was unclear how many of the revised standards had been officially approved. The new mine action strategy for 2022–2028 called for standards on land release to be finalised and approved by the middle of 2022.⁴⁶

The DMA has applied the Cluster Munition Remnants Survey (CMRS) methodology to CMR operations since 2018, and in 2019 adopted CMRS as a national standard, citing the benefits it has delivered for survey, planning, and clearance.⁴⁷ In August 2021, after a review of NMA 09.11 for battle area clearance, Iraq increased the national standard for depth of CMR clearance from 20cm to 30cm because in areas with moving sand or soft ground some CMR, most commonly BLU-97 submunitions, had been found to penetrate deeper than 20cm. NPA said the new standard did not affect operations because 30cm was within the range of its existing detectors and NPA's SOPs provide for investigating signals below 20cm until the object is identified.⁴⁸

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

CMR clearance in Federal Iraq is conducted by three national organisations, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Interior's Civil Defence units, and commercial operator Ta'az, which is believed to work under contract to the Ministry of Oil. Two international humanitarian organisations, NPA and DRC, conduct most CMR survey and land release.⁴⁹

DRC had a total staff of 41 based in Basrah and working on CMR survey and clearance at the start of 2022, including two battle area clearance teams with 22 staff. The team also included two teams with eight staff accredited by the DMA in August 2021 to conduct QC in the four governorates in the RMAC-S area of operations. DRC expected to add another manual clearance team in 2022.⁵⁰

40 Email from Ahmed Aljasim, DMA, 15 April 2022.

41 Iraq National Mine Action Strategy 2022–2028, pp. 21–22 and 24.

42 Emails from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022; Peter Smethers, FSD, 22 February 2022; Tim Marsella, HALO Trust, 17 March 2022; and Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022.

43 Email from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022.

44 Emails from Ahmed Aljasim, DMA, 15 April 2021; and Hannane Boulmaoui, UNMAS Iraq, 16 April 2021.

45 Email from Ahmed Aljasim, DMA, 15 April 2022.

46 Iraq National Mine Action Strategy 2022–2028, p. 24.

47 Email from Haitham Fattah Lafta, RMAC-S, 12 August 2020.

48 Emails from Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April and 2 May 2022.

49 Email from Haitham Fattah Lafta, RMAC-S, 15 March 2022; CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F.

50 Emails from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022; Iraq National Mine Action Strategy 2022–2028, p. 12.

NPA, with 96 staff working on CMR survey and clearance from an office in Basrah, operated two dedicated non-technical survey teams, one in Basrah and the second in Muthanna. It also had seven multi-task teams (four in Basrah and three in Muthanna), focused mainly on clearance but also capable of conducting survey and risk education. In 2022, it expected to raise total staff numbers in the south to 129 by adding two multi-task teams in Muthanna along with support staff.⁵¹ In 2021, NPA assessed the utility of drone-carried thermal imagery in locating CMR contamination, but with mixed results. From a height of four metres the technology could detect larger BLU 97 and BLU63 in sand at a depth of one to two centimetres but not smaller CMR. The results were too limited to make it a useful tool for survey though NPA planned further trials for 2022.⁵²

IKMAA is the dominant operator in the KRI, reporting that at the end of 2021 it had 8 non-technical survey teams with 23 personnel, 36 ten-strong manual demining teams, 4 three-person EOD teams, 10 mechanical teams with 33 staff, and 9 EORE/community liaison teams employing 17 people. Two international organisations, MAG and FSD, were accredited to operate in the KRI in 2021. However, IKMAA reported no survey or clearance of cluster munition-contaminated area occurred in the KRI in 2021.⁵³

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2021

Federal Iraq reported releasing a total of more than 16.63km² of CMR-affected land in 2021,⁵⁴ 18% more than it recorded in the previous year when COVID-19 mitigation measures, including a March-to-July countrywide lockdown, interfered significantly with mine action operations. DMA data showed that land released through survey accounted for more than 6.47km² of the 2021 total and, reversing the balance in the previous year, that clearance accounted for the biggest share of land released amounting to 10.16km².⁵⁵

However, big discrepancies between official and operator data suggest Iraq may have significantly underreported total land release. DRC and NPA alone reported releasing a total of 36.02km² through survey and clearance (see Tables 4 and 6). The DMA also reported release of 1.47km² by Civil Defence units and 0.11km² by military engineers⁵⁶ which would bring the total area released in 2021 to 37.6km², of which 23.8km² was through survey and 13.8km² was through clearance.⁵⁷ The discrepancies appear to result from a backlog of operator reports awaiting entry to the database. Operator data represent results recorded in IMSMA forms submitted

to RMAC-S. Official results represent data that have been approved and entered into the database and reflect delays entering IMSMA reports in the database.⁵⁸

Similar uncertainty surrounds the number of CMR destroyed in 2021. Official data reported destruction of a total of 8,202 submunitions in 2021: 8,197 in the RMAC South region and 5 in the RMAC Middle Euphrates region.⁵⁹ The official total does not include 331 submunitions which MAG reported clearing during operations in Ninewa governorate in RMAC North's area of operations.⁶⁰ This would bring the total number of submunitions destroyed in 2021 to 8,533. DMA data, however, do not disaggregate results by operator and the official total far exceeds the total of 5,149 submunitions reported cleared by DRC and NPA, the operators working in the RMAC-S region which conduct most CMR clearance in Iraq (see Table 6).⁶¹ However, only Iraq's army is authorised to destroy explosive ordnance and a possible explanation for the apparent discrepancy between official data and operator results is that the official total of CMR destroyed by the army in 2021 may have included items held over from the previous year.

SURVEY IN 2021

Federal Iraq reported releasing 5.83km² through non-technical survey and 0.64km² through technical survey in 2021, three-quarters of it in the RMAC-S area of operations (see Table 3).⁶² NPA, however, reported releasing more than triple this amount by cancelling 22.27km² in 2022 and reducing an additional 1.5km² through technical survey (see Table 4).⁶³

51 Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022.

52 Ibid.

53 Email from Niyazi Khalid Qusaim, IKMAA, 22 April 2022.

54 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F.

55 Ibid.

56 Email from Ahmed Aljasim, DMA, 15 April 2022.

57 Emails from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022; and Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022.

58 Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 2 May 2022.

59 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F.

60 Email from Katie Shaw, Programme Manager – Grants & Partnerships, MAG, 3 May 2022.

61 Emails from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022; and Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022.

62 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F.

63 Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022.

Table 3: Cluster munition-contaminated area released through survey in Federal Iraq in 2021 (official data)⁶⁴

Region	Area cancelled through NTS (m ²)	Area reduced through TS (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
RMAC-S	3,761,411	642,894	4,404,305
RMAC-M EU	2,072,921	929	2,073,850
Totals	5,834,332	643,823	6,478,155

Table 4: Cluster munition-contaminated area released through survey in Federal Iraq in 2021 (international NGO data)⁶⁵

Operator	Governorate	Area cancelled through NTS (m ²)	Area reduced through TS (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
NPA	Basrah	10,121,344	0	10,121,344
	Muthanna	12,145,535	1,534,011	13,679,546
Totals		22,266,879	1,534,011	23,800,890

Among the most noteworthy results of survey in 2021 was the amount of previously unrecorded CMR contamination added to the database. NPA reported finding 79 new CMR hazardous areas covering 22,540,677m² and DRC said it identified 200,000m² of previously unrecorded contamination in Basrah.⁶⁶

The outcomes reflect the amount of time that has elapsed since the initial survey conducted in 2014-16 which identified significantly more suspected than confirmed hazardous

areas and the new information emerging with the expansion of land under cultivation. Large areas of Muthanna and south-western Basrah governorate are uninhabited and NPA said it is engaging with Bedouin communities to try to map contaminated areas more accurately. Still, from the experience of survey in recent years, NPA believes there may be little area left to cancel and in 2022 planned to shift the emphasis of survey to establishing an evidence-based baseline estimate of the remaining contamination.⁶⁷

CLEARANCE IN 2021

Official data shows Federal Iraq's clearance of cluster munition remnants hit a new peak of 10.16km² in 2021, nearly double the level the DMA reported in 2020 when operations were hit by COVID-19 measures.⁶⁸ But, as in the case of survey results, the data from operators suggest this figure may even understate the amount of clearance.

The DMA reported results by RMAC, not disaggregated by operator (see Table 5). It reported separately that Civil Defence units had cleared 1,470,597m² in Basrah, Muthanna, Najaf, and Wassit governorates and military engineers cleared 112,622m² in Basrah governorate.⁶⁹

NPA and DRC, operating only in the RMAC-S area, reported clearing 20% more area than the official total (see Table 6). DRC, which hardly conducted any CMR clearance in 2020, said it cleared 2.2km² in 2021 and NPA reported clearing an area of 9.97km², up from 5.5km² in 2020.⁷⁰ Their results,

combined with clearance attributed to Civil Defence and the military, make total clearance of 13.8km² in 2021. MAG, working in northern Federal Iraq and the KRI, did not conduct any clearance of CMR hazardous areas but cleared 331 submunitions during clearance of an improvised minefield and EOD tasks in Sinjar district of Ninewa governorate.⁷¹

Table 5: CMR clearance in 2021 (official data)⁷²

Region	Area cleared (m ²)
RMAC-S	9,711,159
RMAC-M EU	446,318
Total	10,157,477

64 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F.

65 Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022.

66 Emails from Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022; and Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022.

67 Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022.

68 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F.

69 Email from Ahmed Aljasim, DMA, 15 April 2022.

70 Emails from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022; and Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022.

71 Emails from Katie Shaw, MAG, 3 May 2022. MAG assessed the CMR items as copies of the US-made M42 and believed their presence was not the result of a cluster strike but occurred when the vehicle carrying them was blown up, throwing out its cargo.

72 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F.

Table 6: CMR clearance in Federal Iraq in 2021 (operator data)⁷³

Operator	Governorate	Area cleared (m ²)	Submunitions cleared	Other UXO cleared
DRC	Basrah	2,240,234	584	1
NPA	Basrah	4,100,342	1,661	190
	Muthanna	5,873,809	2,904	50
Totals		12,214,385	*5,149	241

* A further 331 submunitions were destroyed by MAG during clearance of a minefield containing improvised mines.

ARTICLE 4 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 4 of the CCM, Iraq is required to destroy all CMR in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 November 2023. Iraq acknowledges in its Article 7 report covering 2021 that the extent of CMR contamination and the limited capacity available for CMR survey and clearance ensure it will not achieve its Article 4 deadline and it will request an extension.⁷⁴

Iraq's request will face two key issues: the amount of previously unrecorded contamination still being located which has pushed up the estimate of the total area affected by CMR, and the tiny resources available for CMR survey clearance in relation to the scale of the task. Iraq and international donors have focused resources almost exclusively on tackling improvised mine contamination in areas liberated from Islamic State. The DMA suggests that on the basis of existing capacity it would need around 17 years to complete clearance of CMR hazardous areas.⁷⁵ Iraq's new national mine action strategy through to 2028 says it

will strengthen survey and clearance capacity and aims for increased localisation of mine action by building capacity of national organisations and increasing national funding of mine action to ensure sustainability.⁷⁶

Table 7: Five-year summary of CMR clearance

Year	Federal Iraq (km ²)	KRI (km ²)	Totals (km ²)
2021	10.2	0	*13.8
2020	5.7	N/R	5.7
2019	4.3	0.4	*4.7
2018	7.2	0	7.2
2017	4.4	0.3	4.7
Totals	31.8	0.7	36.1

N/R = Not reported

* Based on Mine Action Review calculation

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Iraq has not laid out a strategy for tackling residual contamination which is hardly an urgent issue in view of the scale of confirmed CMR contamination and years of clearance that lie ahead. Iraq's 2022–2028 mine action strategy shows awareness of the issue and says Iraq will reinforce its institutional national survey and clearance capacities to facilitate the effective future management of residual explosive ordnance.⁷⁷

⁷³ Emails from Marie-Josée Hamel, DRC, 30 March 2022; and Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 April 2022.

⁷⁴ CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F.

⁷⁵ Email from Haitham Fattah Lafta, RMAC-South, DMA, 5 March 2022.

⁷⁶ Iraq National Mine Action Strategy 2022–2028, p. 22.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 23.