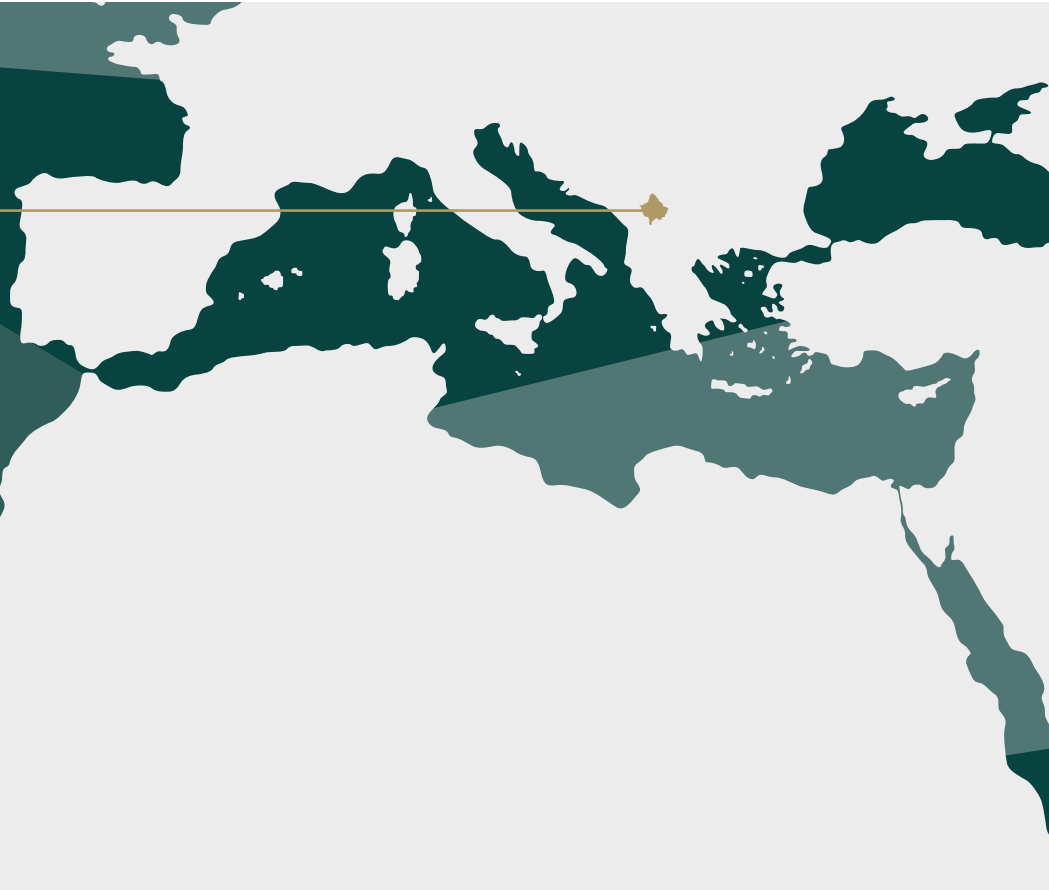


KOSOVO



PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

For 2015

For 2014

Problem understood	7	7
Target date for completion of mine clearance	5	6
Targeted clearance	6	7
Efficient clearance	7	7
National funding of programme	4	3
Timely clearance	6	6
Land release system in place	7	7
National mine action standards	7	7
Reporting on progress	5	4
Improving performance	6	6
PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE	6	6

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Kosovo's mine action programme performance was mixed in 2015. Improved reporting on mine action, including disaggregation of data between mine clearance and battle area clearance (BAC), was offset by lower clearance output and clearance of several mined areas that proved not to be contaminated.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Kosovo should make a formal commitment to respect and implement the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) and to clear all mined areas as soon as possible.

CONTAMINATION

Kosovo is contaminated by mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW), primarily as a result of the conflict between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in the late 1990s, and between FRY and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member states in 1999.¹ At the end of 2015, 69 confirmed mined areas remained covering 2.5km².² This is down from 77, covering 2.75km², as at the end of 2014.³

Both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines were used during the conflict, in fixed-pattern minefields as well as more randomly in 'nuisance' minefields. Many anti-personnel mines had minimum-metal content, making detection more difficult.⁴ Although the total number of landmines used in the conflict is not known, the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre (UNMACC) reported, as at 31 May 2000, a total of 7,232 mines cleared in the preceding year (3,448 anti-personnel mines and 3,784 anti-vehicle mines).⁵

The UN reported in 2002 that "the problems associated with landmines, cluster munitions and other items of unexploded ordnance [UXO] in Kosovo have been virtually eliminated",⁶ but further investigation revealed considerably more contamination.⁷

In 2013, HALO Trust and the Kosovo Mine Action Centre (KMAC) conducted a joint non-technical survey (NTS) of minefields and cluster munition strikes across Kosovo, with the exception of four districts in the north. The survey confirmed 130 hazardous areas: 79 mined areas covering 2.76km² and 51 cluster munition strikes covering 7.63km².⁸ The 79 mined areas was a considerable increase on the total of 48 mined areas that had been identified at the end of 2012.⁹ By the end of 2014, KMAC reported the number of confirmed mined areas had fallen slightly to 77 over 2.75km².¹⁰

Mines are found mainly on Kosovo's borders with Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, but also in the area of Dulie Pass in south-central Kosovo.¹¹ Mines in Kosovo prevent people from using land for agriculture, pasture, tourism, infrastructure, and collecting firewood, and most directly affect the rural poor.¹²

1 See United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), "UNMIK OKPCC EOD Management Section Annual Report 2005", Pristina, 18 January 2006, p. 2; and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *Explosive Remnants of War, Cluster Bombs and Landmines in Kosovo*, Rev'd Edn, Geneva, June 2001, pp. 6 and 15, at: https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrc_002_0780.pdf.

2 Email from Ahmet Sallova, Head, Kosovo Mine Action Centre (KMAC), 12 April 2016.

3 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 18 March 2015.

4 ICRC, *Explosive Remnants of War, Cluster Bombs and Landmines in Kosovo*, June 2001, p. 15.

5 Ibid.

6 "UNMIK Mine Action Programme Annual Report – 2001", Mine Action Coordination Cell, Pristina, undated but 2002, p. 1.

7 HALO Trust, *Failing the Kosovars: The Hidden Impact and Threat from ERW*, 15 December 2006, p. 1.

8 HALO Trust, "Action on cluster munitions in Kosovo", Side event, First Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Review Conference, Dubrovnik, 10 September 2015.

9 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 20 February 2014.

10 Ibid., 18 March 2015.

11 Ibid., 30 July 2013.

12 Ibid., 12 April 2016; and email from Andrew Moore, Caucasus and Balkans Desk Officer, HALO Trust, 1 October 2016.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

In January 2011, the EOD [explosive ordnance disposal] Coordination Management Section became KMAC, under the Ministry of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF). KMAC is responsible for managing clearance of mines and ERW. It prepares an annual work plan in cooperation with demining non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and coordinates operations of both NGOs and the Kosovo Protection Force (KFOR). It also coordinates survey, quality assurance (QA), risk education, public information, and victim assistance.¹³

Strategic Planning

A 2015–18 multi-year strategic plan for the Kosovo mine action programme aims to reduce the social, economic, and environmental impact of mines, cluster munition remnants (CMR), and UXO in Kosovo.¹⁴

Legislation and Standards

Kosovo has its own mine action standards in place, which reportedly conform to International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).¹⁵

Operators

The KSF provide clearance capacity in Kosovo, including around-the-clock EOD emergency response.¹⁶ NGOs have also been conducting land release in Kosovo: HALO Trust, the Bosnia-based Mine Detection Dog Centre (MDDC), and Mines Awareness Trust (MAT). MDDC received US funding in 2015, for mine clearance; and MAT was not funded to operate in either 2014 or 2015.¹⁷

In December 2014, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) received accreditation to conduct NTS for BAC, and subsequently conducted NTS for CMR contamination in July 2015.¹⁸ NPA subsequently received accreditation for

TS, clearance, and risk education for BAC in July 2016, and planned to start BAC at the beginning of November.¹⁹ As at September 2016, NPA had not sought accreditation for mine survey or clearance.²⁰

Capacity in 2015 remained the same as in 2014.²¹ HALO Trust deployed 50 demining personnel,²² and KSF operated three platoons with 75 deminers also trained for BAC, and a fourth platoon with 25 deminers also trained solely to conduct EOD rapid response tasks.²³

Quality Management

KMAC has two QA officers, who conduct site visits to ensure all work is conducted in accordance to IMAS and the approved Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs).²⁴

LAND RELEASE

A total of almost 0.22km² of mined area was released by clearance in 2015. No area was reported as reduced by technical survey, and 25,000m² was cancelled by NTS.

Survey in 2015

In 2015, the HALO Trust cancelled one SHA, totalling 25,000m².²⁵

Clearance in 2015

KSF and the HALO Trust cleared a total of just under 0.22km² in 2015,²⁶ compared to 0.84km² containing mines and/or CMR in 2014,²⁷ when BAC and mine clearance was not disaggregated in KMAC's reporting.

In 2015, KSF cleared two mined areas totalling 43,389m², destroying in the process five anti-personnel mines. Mine detection dogs (MDDs) were used in one of the clearance operations.²⁸

Table 1: Mine clearance in Kosovo in 2015²⁹

Operator	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
KSF	2	43,386	5	0	0
HALO	11	173,623	36	2	37
Totals	13	217,009	41	2	37

13 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 1 August 2012.

14 Ibid., 12 April 2016; and email from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 2 June 2016.

15 Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 12 April 2016; and Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 2 June 2016.

16 A. Moore, HALO Trust, "Action on cluster munitions in Kosovo", Side event, First CCM Review Conference, Dubrovnik, 10 September 2015.

17 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 7 June 2016.

18 NPA, *Cluster Munition Remnants in Northern Kosovo: non-technical survey of contamination and impact*, September 2015.

19 Email from Goran Peršić, Project Manager, NPA Kosovo, 14 October 2016.

20 Ibid., 15 October 2016.

21 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 12 April 2016.

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

23 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 7 June 2016.

24 Ibid., 12 April 2016.

25 Ibid. HALO clarified that this was actually reduced by technical survey, but that the database in Kosovo is not set up for handling this. Email from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 18 October 2016.

26 Emails from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 1 October 2016; and Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 12 April 2016. There were inconsistencies between HALO and KMAC data, with KMAC reporting that HALO cleared 113,984m² and destroyed 33 anti-personnel mines, 2 anti-vehicle mines, and 9 UXO during which 5 CHAs were released, 3 suspended, and 1 cancelled, as at the end of the 2015 demining season. Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 12 April 2016.

27 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 18 March 2015.

28 Ibid., 12 April 2016.

HALO Trust cleared 0.17km² in 11 mined areas, destroying in the process 36 anti-personnel mines, 2 anti-vehicle mines, and 37 items of UXO.³⁰ This is a marked increase to the 59,456m² cleared in 2014, when HALO mainly focused on CMR clearance.³¹ HALO conducted clearance in the Gjakove, Ferizaj, Prishtine and Prizren regions of Kosovo. Despite focusing on confirmed mined areas, no mines were found in three of HALO's clearance tasks.³² According to HALO, this could have been due to mines having already been cleared by previous clearance operators or removed by locals over the years.³³

In addition, 337,698m² of CMR-contaminated area was cleared by KSF and HALO Trust in 2015.³⁴

According to KMAC, confirmed mined areas with high impact are prioritised for clearance, based on the number, location, and livelihoods of communities at risk, and prospects for development.³⁵

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Kosovo is not a state party to the APMBC. Nonetheless, Kosovo has obligations under customary international human rights law to protect life, which requires the clearance of mines as soon as possible. At current rates of clearance, Kosovo will still be mine-affected a decade from now.

Table 2: Mine clearance and BAC in 2011–15³⁶

Year	Area cleared (km ²)*
2015	0.22
2014	0.84
2013	0.40
2012	0.69
2011	0.98
2010	0.48
Total	3.61

* Includes mine and battle area clearance.

The Kosovar government provides approximately €120,000 in financial support to KMAC and €950,000 to the KSF for mine and CMR clearance.³⁷ KMAC expected to maintain the same level of donor funding in 2016.³⁸

In 2015, HALO Trust reported securing a commitment from an anonymous donor, who pledged to fund mine clearance in Kosovo provided HALO can raise matching funding.³⁹ HALO secured funding in 2016 that allowed it to increase the number of clearance teams. As at October 2016, HALO had almost 100 staff in Kosovo. HSTAMIDS (Handheld Standoff Mine Detection Systems) was introduced to its programme in 2015 to increase clearance rates, and as at October 2016, HALO was on a follow-on project with additional units.⁴⁰

Unfortunately misinformation persists that mine and CMR clearance were completed in 2001, whereas the reality is that significant contamination remains to be cleared. Kosovo is a poor country, and needs economic assistance to help it complete mine clearance in a timely manner, otherwise completion risks being prolonged to decades after the end of the conflict.⁴¹

29 Emails from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 1 October 2016; and Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 12 April 2016. There is a discrepancy in the reported data, as KMAC reported that HALO cleared 113,984m², 33 AP mines, 2 AV mines, and 9 UXO (with five mined areas cleared, three suspended, and one discredited).

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

31 Ibid., 21 May 2015.

32 Emails from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 1 October 2016, and Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 12 April 2016.

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

34 Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 12 April 2016; Admir Berisha, HALO Trust, 24 May 2016; and Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 2 June 2016.

35 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 12 April 2016.

36 See Landmine Monitor and Mine Action Review reports on Kosovo covering 2011–14.

37 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 12 April 2016.

38 Ibid.

39 HALO Trust, "Kosovo" webpage, accessed 12 May 2016, at: <https://www.halotrust.org/where-we-work/europe-and-caucasus/kosovo/>.

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

41 HALO Trust, "Action on cluster munitions in Kosovo", Side event, First CCM Review Conference, Dubrovnik, 10 September 2015.