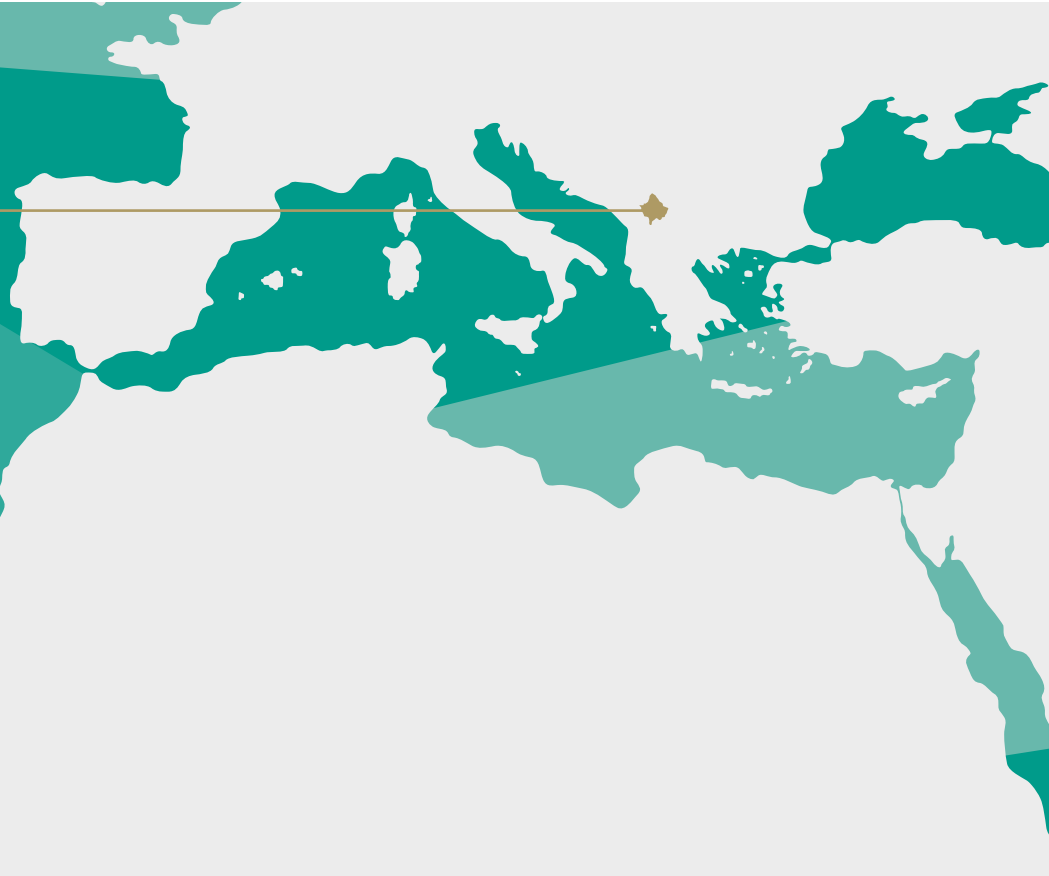


# KOSOVO



## MINE ACTION PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

For 2016

For 2015

Problem understood	7	7
Target date for completion of mine clearance	5	5
Targeted clearance	5	6
Efficient clearance	7	7
National funding of programme	4	4
Timely clearance	5	6
Land release system in place	7	7
National mine action standards	7	7
Reporting on progress	5	5
Improving performance	5	6
<b>PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>6.0</b>

## PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Kosovo's mine action programme performance declined in 2016, due to a continued decrease in clearance output while clearing several areas that proved not to be mined.

It is hoped that the annual downward trend in clearance output is starting to be reversed, and will be reflected in 2017 land release data, in part due to the increased use of HSTAMIDS (Handheld Standoff Mine Detection System), increased funding, and a willingness of the Kosovo Mine Action Centre (KMAC) to explore the use of new land release methods, including the planned introduction of mine detection dogs (MDDs).

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- **Kosovo cannot accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) due to its political status, but its government should nevertheless commit to respect and implement the Convention and to clear all mined areas as soon as possible. This could be done through submission of a voluntary Article 7 transparency report, as the authorities in Western Sahara have done.**
- **Kosovo should report more accurately and consistently on land release and contamination data, which will allow for satisfactory explanation of variance in baseline contamination between reporting periods.**
- **Kosovo should ensure implementation of efficient land release operations, including optimum use of high quality survey, to accurately identify the location of mined areas and avoid clearing areas not contaminated.**

## CONTAMINATION

Kosovo is contaminated by mines, cluster munition remnants (CMR), 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.<sup>1</sup> At the end of 2016, 58 areas confirmed to contain mines remained covering a total of 1.9km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>2</sup> This is down from 69 areas, covering 2.5km<sup>2</sup>, as at the end of 2015.<sup>3</sup> The difference in total mine contamination between the end of 2015 and end of 2016, both in terms of the number of confirmed mined areas and the overall area of contamination, cannot be explained or reconciled by area released by clearance.

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 low metal content, making detection more difficult.<sup>4</sup> Although the total number of mines emplaced during 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).<sup>5</sup>

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",<sup>6</sup> but further investigation revealed considerably more contamination.<sup>7</sup> In 2013, The HALO Trust and the KMAC conducted a joint non-technical survey of mined areas 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 an estimated 2.76km<sup>2</sup> and 51 cluster munition strikes covering an estimated 7.63km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>8</sup> The total of 79 mined areas was a considerable increase on the 48 mined areas that had been identified at the end of 2012.<sup>9</sup> By the end of 2014, KMAC reported the number of confirmed mined areas had fallen slightly, to 77 covering 2.75km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>10</sup>

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.<sup>11</sup> Mines in Kosovo impede use of land for agriculture, pasture, tourism, the building of infrastructure, and firewood collection, and most directly affect the rural poor.<sup>12</sup> Many of the minefields cleared by HALO Trust in Kosovo are only a few metres from occupied houses.<sup>13</sup>

## 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 the clearance of mines and ERW. It prepares an annual workplan 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.<sup>14</sup>

### 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, CMR, and UXO in Kosovo.<sup>15</sup>

## Legislation and Standards

Kosovo has a law on humanitarian demining, which was adopted on 11 April 2012, in addition to a number of other relevant regulations.<sup>16</sup> Kosovo has mine action standards in place, which are said to conform to the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).<sup>17</sup>

## Quality Management

KMAC has two QA officers who conduct site visits to ensure work is conducted in accordance with IMAS and the approved Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs).<sup>18</sup>

## Operators

The KSF provide clearance capacity in Kosovo, including around-the-clock EOD emergency response.<sup>19</sup> NGOs have also been conducting land release of mined area in Kosovo, including The HALO Trust, the Bosnia-based Mine Detection Dog Centre (MDDC), and Mines Awareness Trust (MAT). However, neither MDDC nor MAT was operational in 2016, and no MDDs or mechanical assets were used in Kosovo during the year.<sup>20</sup>

KSF reported that its capacity in 2016 remained the same as in 2015: it operated three platoons with a total of 75 deminers who are also trained for battle area clearance (BAC), and a fourth, with 25 clearance personnel trained solely to conduct EOD rapid-response tasks.<sup>21</sup>

The HALO Trust expanded its mine clearance capacity in 2016 to 100 operational staff, of whom 80 were conducting mine clearance and the remaining 20 carried out BAC.<sup>22</sup>

In December 2014, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) received accreditation to conduct non-technical survey for BAC, and subsequently conducted non-technical survey for CMR contaminated areas in July 2015.<sup>23</sup> NPA subsequently received accreditation for technical survey, BAC, and risk education in July 2016. It started technical survey for CMR in November 2016, with follow-on clearance beginning in February 2017.<sup>24</sup> As at September 2017, NPA was seeking accreditation for mine clearance and technical survey operations in Kosovo, including accreditation for two MDDs. Although it will be accredited for clearance, NPA planned to focus its demining operations on technical survey, and to use MDDs for this purpose, in cooperation with the Kosovo Security Force (KSF).<sup>25</sup>

## LAND RELEASE

A total of just over 0.15km<sup>2</sup> of mined area was released by clearance in 2016. No area was reported as reduced by technical survey or cancelled by non-technical survey.

## Clearance in 2016

KSF and the HALO Trust cleared a total of more than 0.15km<sup>2</sup> in 2016, down from almost 0.22km<sup>2</sup> in 2015.<sup>27</sup>

## Survey in 2016

No anti-personnel mine survey was conducted in 2016.<sup>26</sup>

**Table 1: Mine clearance in Kosovo in 2016<sup>28</sup>**

Operator	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m <sup>2</sup> )	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
KSF	1 suspended	4,935	2	0	0
HALO	10 cleared and 5 suspended	147,039	38	0	24
<b>Totals</b>		<b>151,974</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>24</b>

AP = Anti-personnel

AV = Anti-vehicle

KSF cleared one mined area in 2016, totalling 4,935m<sup>2</sup>, destroying in the process two anti-personnel mines. Clearance of the mined area was suspended at the end of the year due to the onset of winter and the consequent end of the demining season.<sup>29</sup>

While the area of land cleared by HALO Trust in 2016 (147,039m<sup>2</sup>) was the same as reported by both KMAC and The HALO Trust, HALO Trust reported it had cleared 10 areas, and suspended 4, and that it had destroyed 37 anti-personnel mines and 25 items of UXO during clearance operations in 2016.<sup>30</sup> Despite focusing on confirmed mined areas, six of the fourteen areas of land cleared by The HALO Trust were found to have no anti-

personnel mines, though clearance was continuing in two of the suspended tasks in 2017.<sup>31</sup> The HALO Trust reported that a degree of evidence is always found from prior incidents, or mines found during survey of mined areas, and that while no complete mines were found during clearance, the teams generally encounter craters or component parts of detonated mines during clearance.<sup>32</sup>

According to KMAC, confirmed mined areas with high impact are prioritised for clearance.<sup>33</sup> Clearance tasks are selected from the high priority areas where people are prevented access to land for cultivation and grazing, but also where communities are prevented from safely accessing wooded areas to gather firewood.<sup>34</sup>

## ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Kosovo is not a state party to the APMB. Nonetheless, Kosovo has obligations under customary international human rights law to protect life, which requires the clearance of mines as soon as possible. KMAC expects to complete clearance of anti-personnel mines in Kosovo by 2021, but it reported in 2017 that funding for NGOs may pose an obstacle to this completion date.<sup>35</sup>

**Table 2: Mine clearance in 2015–16 and mine clearance/BAC in 2012–14<sup>36</sup>**

Year	Area cleared (km <sup>2</sup> )
2016	0.15
2015	0.22
2014	0.84*
2013	0.40*
2012	0.69*
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.3</b>

\* Includes mine and battle area clearance.

The Kosovo government provides approximately €125,000 in annual financial support to KMAC and €960,000 to the KSF for mine and CMR clearance.<sup>37</sup> KMAC expected that level of funding to increase in 2017.<sup>38</sup>

In 2015, HALO Trust reported securing a commitment from an anonymous donor, who pledged to fund mine clearance in Kosovo, and to offer matching funds for clearance of all remaining mined areas provided HALO Trust can raise the other half.<sup>39</sup> HALO Trust secured funding in 2016 that allowed it to increase the number of clearance teams. HSTAMIDS (Handheld Standoff Mine Detection System) was introduced to its programme in 2015,<sup>40</sup> which HALO Trust finds has increased clearance speed in almost all the minefields in which they have been deployed.<sup>41</sup>

Unfortunately, misinformation persists that mine and CMR clearance was 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.<sup>42</sup>

- 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](https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrc_002_0780.pdf).
- Email from Ahmet Sallova, Head, Kosovo Mine Action Centre (KMAC), 16 March 2017.
- Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 12 April 2016.
- ICRC, *Explosive Remnants of War, Cluster Bombs and Landmines in Kosovo*, June 2001, p. 15.
- Ibid.
- "UNMIK Mine Action Programme Annual Report – 2001", Mine Action Coordination Cell, Pristina, undated but 2002, p. 1.
- HALO Trust, "Failing the Kosovars: The Hidden Impact and Threat from ERW", 15 December 2006, p. 1.
- HALO Trust, "Action on cluster munitions in Kosovo", Side event, First Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Review Conference, Dubrovnik, 10 September 2015.
- Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 20 February 2014.
- Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 18 March 2015.
- Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 30 July 2013.
- Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 12 April 2016; and Andrew Moore, Caucasus and Balkans Desk Officer, HALO Trust, 1 October 2016.
- Email from Ash Boddy, Regional Director, HALO Trust, 29 April 2017.
- Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 1 August 2012.
- Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 12 April 2016; and Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 2 June 2016.
- Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 June and 3 July 2017.
- Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 12 April 2016; and Andrew Moore, 2 June 2016.
- Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 12 April 2016.
- HALO Trust, "Action on cluster munitions in Kosovo", Side event, First CCM Review Conference, Dubrovnik, 10 September 2015.
- Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 March 2017.
- Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 7 June 2016 and 16 March 2017.
- Email from Ash Boddy, HALO Trust, 29 April 2017.
- NPA, "Cluster Munition Remnants in Northern Kosovo: non-technical survey of contamination and impact", September 2015.
- Emails from Terje Eldøen, NPA, 4 May and 5 May 2017.
- Email from Terje Eldøen, NPA, 14 September 2017.
- Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 March 2017; and Ash Boddy, HALO Trust, 29 April 2017.
- Emails from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 1 October 2016; and Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 12 April 2016.
- Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 March 2017. There is a slight discrepancy in the reported data, as HALO Trust reported that it conducted clearance on 14 minefields (10 cleared and 4 suspended), destroying 37 anti-personnel mines and 25 items of UXO. Email from Ash Boddy, HALO Trust, 29 April 2017.
- Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 March and 18 September 2017.
- Emails from Ash Boddy, HALO Trust, 29 April and 30 July 2017.
- Ibid.
- Email from Ash Boddy, HALO Trust, 30 July 2017.
- Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 March 2017.
- Email from Ash Boddy, HALO Trust, 29 April 2017.
- Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 March and 18 October 2017.
- See Landmine Monitor and Mine Action Review reports on Kosovo covering 2011–14.
- Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 20 February 2017.
- Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 March 2017.
- HALO Trust, "Kosovo" webpage, accessed 12 May 2016, at: <https://www.halostrust.org/where-we-work/europe-and-caucasus/kosovo/>; and email from Ash Boddy, HALO Trust, 29 September 2017.
- Email from Andrew Moore, HALO Trust, 1 October 2016.
- Email from Ash Boddy, HALO Trust, 29 April 2017.
- HALO Trust, "Action on cluster munitions in Kosovo", Side event, First CCM Review Conference, Dubrovnik, 10 September 2015.