

## KEY DATA

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

NATIONAL ESTIMATE

**1.19** km<sup>2</sup>

AP MINE CLEARANCE IN 2021

**0.10** km<sup>2</sup>

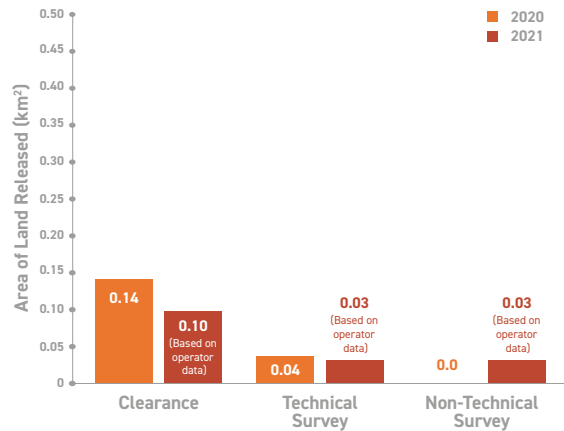
(OPERATOR DATA)

AP MINES DESTROYED IN 2021

**72**

(INCLUDING 69 DESTROYED IN SPOT TASKS)

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- While formal accession to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) is not currently possible for Kosovo, as it is not yet recognised as a State by the depository to the Convention, Kosovo should submit a letter to the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General stating that it intends to fully comply, on a voluntary basis, with the APMBC.
- Kosovo should review its decision not to submit a voluntary Article 7 report on an annual basis, and should report accurately on progress in line with its Mine Action Strategy for 2019–24.
- The Kosovo Mine Action Centre (KMAC) should seek to complete clearance by the end of 2024, in line with the objectives in its latest five-year strategy.
- National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) need to be updated in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), in particular on land release, to enhance the efficiency of demining operations.
- Data in the national Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) should be reviewed regularly against operator data to ensure it is accurate and up to date.
- A specific resource mobilisation strategy should be developed as a matter of urgency.

## DEMINEING CAPACITY

### MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Kosovo Mine Action Centre (KMAC)

### NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Kosovo Security Force (KSF)

### INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Kosovo Force (KFOR), a NATO-led International Peace Keeping Force

### OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

## UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Kosovo is contaminated by mines, cluster munition remnants (CMR), and other 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 Yugoslavia and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) member states in 1999.<sup>1</sup>

As at the end of 2021, the Kosovo Mine Action Centre (KMAC) reported that 30 confirmed mined areas remained, covering almost 1.19km<sup>2</sup> (see Table 1). This is a slight decrease on the 32 confirmed mined areas covering almost 1.25km<sup>2</sup> in 2020 (including four confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) totalling 425,000m<sup>2</sup>, which contain a mix of mines and cluster munitions remnants (CMR), according to KMAC).<sup>2</sup> In The HALO Trust database, three CHAs totalling 360,000m<sup>2</sup> contain a mix of mines and CMR: two within Gjakove district and one

in Prizren district. These cover 160,000m<sup>2</sup> and 200,000m<sup>2</sup>, respectively. HALO has also identified a suspected hazardous area (SHA) in Prizren district covering 20,000m<sup>2</sup> that KMAC does not include in its reporting.<sup>3</sup>

In total, four CHAs of previously unknown anti-personnel mine contamination were identified in 2021. One covering 10,000m<sup>2</sup> was reported by KMAC and was added to the database.<sup>4</sup> The other three were reported by The HALO Trust, whose teams recorded them while conducting non-technical survey. Covering a total of 16,577m<sup>2</sup>, they are located in the district of Gjakove (in Rastavicë village), and the district of Ferizaj (in Biqec and Caralevë villages).<sup>5</sup> According to HALO Trust, the reports on the three new CHAs were submitted to KMAC to be added to the database.<sup>6</sup> It is not, however, clear whether these are included in KMAC's reporting for 2021.

**Table 1: Anti-personnel mined area by district (at end 2021) (KMAC data)<sup>7</sup>**

District	CHAs	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	SHAs that may contain anti-personnel mines	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
N/R	26	764,616	0	0
N/R	4	425,000	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1,189,616</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

N/R = Not reported

The last detailed survey of contamination in Kosovo was in 2013, in the course of which The HALO Trust and KMAC systematically conducted community surveys across most of the districts and 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> As of August 2022, NPA did not have information on the presence of anti-personnel mine contamination in ethnic Serb areas in the district of Mitrovica in the north of Kosovo: Leposavic, Mitrovica North Zubin Potok, and Zvečan municipalities.<sup>9</sup> KMAC confirmed that there are no mined areas in the northern municipalities of Kosovo.<sup>10</sup>

KMAC believes the current baseline of contamination to be reasonably accurate, evidence-based, and complete, but said there may still be reports by locals in the future of previously unknown areas suspected to be contaminated by mines.<sup>11</sup> The baseline of mine contamination at the end of 2020 cannot be reconciled with the baseline, survey, and clearance data reported by KMAC at the end of 2021. The discrepancy could be reported figures for contamination, cancellation through non-technical survey, and clearance for The HALO Trust in KMAC's database differing from those reported by the operator to Mine Action Review.<sup>12</sup>

The HALO Trust also believed that Kosovo's current baseline reflects a relatively accurate picture of the remaining contamination but suggested that it would benefit from a critical review and further assessment of the 2013 survey data. This would inform future targeting of survey and clearance, with a view to completing land release by the target date of 2024.<sup>13</sup>

- 1 See UN 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, at: <https://bit.ly/331PWfG>, pp. 6 and 15.
- 2 Email from Ahmet Sallova, Head, KMAC, 29 April 2021.
- 3 Email from Wilko Dirks, Acting Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 19 July 2022.
- 4 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.
- 5 Email from Wilko Dirks, HALO Trust, 19 July 2022.
- 6 Email from Megan Dwyer, then Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 2 June 2022.
- 7 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.
- 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 Vanja Sikirica, Country Director, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) Kosovo, 6 August 2022.
- 10 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 23 August 2022.
- 11 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.
- 12 Emails from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 2 June 2022; and Wilko Dirks, HALO Trust, 19 July 2022.
- 13 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021.

To conduct the review, The HALO Trust, through the 2021–22 non-technical mines survey project expected to reduce land no longer considered dangerous, allowing scarce resources to focus on clearing CHAs. In April 2021, HALO deployed two non-technical survey teams, which conducted 47 of 57 resurveys of minefields and cluster munition strike areas in their area of operations and 49 out of 81 explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) call-outs (nine additional EOD tasks were conducted by KMAC during the year). The 10 remaining resurveys and 32 surveys were due to be completed by the end of September 2022.<sup>14</sup>

In HALO Trust's area of operations, 27 CHAs containing anti-personnel mines and 3 containing a mixture of anti-personnel mines and CMR have been identified covering 1,196,454m<sup>2</sup>, along with 1 SHA covering 20,000m<sup>2</sup> (see Table 2).<sup>15</sup>

**Table 2: Anti-personnel mined area by district (at end 2021) (HALO Trust data)**

District	CHAs with anti-personnel mines only	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	CHAs with anti-personnel mines and CMR	Area of CHA (m <sup>2</sup> )	SHAs that may contain anti-personnel mines	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Ferizaj	5	94,318	0	0	0	0
Gjakove	17	602,213	2	160,000	0	0
Gjilan	2	59,616	0	0	0	0
Prizren	3	80,307	1	200,000	1	20,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>836,454</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>360,000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20,000</b>

Both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines were used during the conflict, in fixed-pattern minefields as well as more randomly in "nuisance" minefields.<sup>16</sup> The UN claimed in 2002 that "the problems associated with landmines, cluster munitions and other items of unexploded ordnance [UXO] in Kosovo have been virtually eliminated",<sup>17</sup> but further investigation revealed that considerably more contamination remained to be addressed than had been indicated.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to contamination from mines, Kosovo is contaminated with CMR (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants* report on Kosovo for further information) as well as other ERW. Kosovo Force (KFOR) and Kosovo Security Force (KSF) EOD teams regularly dispose of ERW in response to information provided by the public and demining organisations.<sup>19</sup>

## PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

In January 2011, the EOD Coordination Management Section became KMAC, responsible for managing survey and clearance of mines and ERW throughout Kosovo. KMAC prepares an annual work plan in cooperation with international demining non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and coordinates their operations along with the national demining teams of the KSF. It also coordinates survey, quality assurance, risk education, public information, and victim assistance activities.<sup>20</sup> KMAC's role and responsibilities as head of the national mine action programme under the auspices of the Ministry of Defence were established and institutionalised by Kosovo's 2012 Law on Humanitarian Demining.<sup>21</sup>

Kosovo's mine action programme is fully nationally owned, with a strong, longstanding commitment from the government, and benefits from a dedicated team of permanent national staff.<sup>22</sup> In 2021, KMAC had five staff: a Director, a Senior Quality Assurance (QA) Officer, a QA Inspector, a Mine Risk Education (MRE) Officer, and a Public Information Officer.<sup>23</sup> NGO operators in Kosovo report a constructive and proactive working relationship with KMAC.

In 2021, the Kosovo government provided €995,000 in financial support to KMAC, and to the KSF for mine and CMR clearance.<sup>24</sup> Kosovo's mine action strategy for 2019–24 sets out the objective of intensifying resource mobilisation efforts in order to gain greater financial stability.<sup>25</sup> In 2019, KMAC had identified funding and logistical support as the two primary areas where it could most benefit from assistance from international donors and mine action operators.<sup>26</sup> While a specific resource mobilisation

14 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 2 June 2022.

15 Email from Wilko Dirks, HALO Trust, 19 July 2022.

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

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

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

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

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

21 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 3; and email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

22 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, pp. 5–6.

23 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 28 April 2021.

24 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

25 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 14.

26 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 30 April 2019.

strategy does not exist, operators have reported that coordinated approaches with KMAC were made to potential donors such as the United States and the European Union (EU).<sup>27</sup>

The HALO Trust reported that the funding provided by the Swiss Government in 2020 finalised in 2021. A three-year grant from the EU specifically for mine clearance which would support four teams<sup>28</sup> was awaiting approval from the Kosovo Assembly, a new requirement in HALO's understanding. As of July 2022, no further funding had been secured for mine clearance in 2022 or beyond.<sup>29</sup>

Although there is no in-country platform for dialogue among all mine action stakeholders, in September 2022, a mid-term review of the latest five-year strategy was due to take place, supported by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).<sup>30</sup>

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

According to KMAC, the environment is always taken into consideration in the planning and tasking of survey or clearance of anti-personnel mines. In addition, the existing national mine action standards (NMA) were to be updated in accordance with IMAS 07.13 at some point during 2022.<sup>31</sup>

There are no specific standing operating procedures (SOPs) for environmental management, but HALO's head office is working on creating policies and environmental SOPs which will be implemented across all HALO programmes when they are ready. HALO Trust in Kosovo was working on developing local SOPs.<sup>32</sup>

## GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Kosovo's Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 reflects the commitment of the mine action programme to ensure that gender is considered in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of all mine action projects, with a view to promoting equality and quality.<sup>33</sup> The Strategy stipulates that all mine action activities and assistance must reflect the needs of different ages and gender in a targeted and non-discriminatory manner, and that mine action and community liaison data are also to be collected and systematically disaggregated according to sex and age.<sup>34</sup>

Both KMAC and KSF have gender policies in place. KMAC reported that the KSF's gender policy aims to facilitate the consultation of all groups affected by mines and ERW, expressly women and children. Within KMAC, one of its five staff (the Risk Education Officer) is a woman. A total of 5% of KSF staff employed in operational mine action roles were women, but none is in a managerial or supervisory position.<sup>35</sup>

Kosovo's mine action strategy recognises the barriers that exist against equal employment in Kosovo society, including significant differences in employment levels between men and women, despite the number of men and women of working age being broadly similar. The Strategy notes that, as at 2019, more than four-fifths of women of working age were not employed in Kosovo's labour market, and less than one in eight has been employed annually over the past five years. The primary reasons given for female unemployment

are child- and family-care obligations, which traditionally in Kosovo society fall on women.

The Strategy notes the efforts of mine action operators to overcome these challenges and barriers to employment, such as through childcare and parental leave, and gender-sensitive recruitment practices that encourage women to apply for positions traditionally seen as jobs for men. It further recalls the importance of employment of not only multi-gender, but also multi-ethnic survey and clearance teams, and the particular benefits of recruitment in areas affected by high unemployment and poverty.<sup>36</sup>

In 2018, The HALO Trust developed a gender policy in consultation with the Kosovo Women's Network, an advocacy network of more than 140 member organisations, including women's organisations of all ethnic backgrounds from throughout Kosovo. The policy aims both at increasing the recruitment of women, as well as retention of existing female employees.<sup>37</sup> In 2019, HALO further developed this policy to include provision for increased family leave and child-care allowances for those taking care of children, in order to remove barriers to women's employment. Through the Dutch government, HALO Trust contracted the Gender and Mine Action Programme (GMAP, a part of the GICHD) to conduct gender sensitivity and leadership training in July 2019 to more than 20 managers across HALO globally, with a view to addressing issues of unconscious bias and lack of inclusion.<sup>38</sup>

27 Email from Terje Eldøen, NPA, 25 April 2019.

28 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 2 June 2022.

29 Email from Wilko Dirks, HALO Trust, 19 July 2022.

30 Emails from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 11 May 2022; and Vanja Sikirica, NPA Kosovo, 1 June 2022.

31 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

32 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 11 May 2022.

33 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 8.

34 Ibid.

35 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

36 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, pp. 8–9.

37 Email from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 22 May 2020.

38 Ibid.

In 2021, HALO Trust continued to implement their Gender and Diversity Policy and conducted an annual refresher training for management, support and operational staff. HALO continues to ensure that as many as possible of household members are consulted during pre- and post-clearance surveys. It stated that it continues to ensure inclusion of women, children, and ethnic minorities in community liaison (CL) activities; there is always a female CL Officer supporting the non-technical survey teams, and senior management staff who are fluent in relevant languages are deployed for CL activities.<sup>39</sup>

New funding in 2021 provided new job opportunities. By the end of 2021, women's employment in the organisation increased from 17% (in 2020) to 24%, with three women in operational management roles and two in support management roles. HALO Trust expected to promote more women to assistant team leader and team leader roles. In 2021, 4% of managerial/supervisory positions were filled by women; in operations 20% of the positions were held by women.<sup>40</sup> If funding for mine clearance is not approved by Kosovo's Assembly, it will affect promotional opportunities for staff, in particular for women to move into senior management roles.<sup>41</sup>

According to KMAC, Kosovo's baseline of anti-personnel mine contamination has been established through inclusive consultation with women, girls, boys, and men, including, where relevant, from minority groups.<sup>42</sup>

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## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

KMAC uses the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) New Generation version for its national mine action database. Data disaggregate between mines, CMR, and other ERW.<sup>43</sup> The HALO Trust was positive in their assessment of the quality and accessibility of data in the database and of KMAC's information management system in general. HALO reports that data collection forms are consistent and enable collection of the necessary data which is added to the database. The database, which is held and maintained by KMAC, is checked in comparison to HALO's about once every quarter. Once a task is completed, or when KMAC agrees and signs off on a re-survey or survey conducted by a non-technical survey team, the data is fed into IMSMA.<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, the land release data reported to Mine Action Review by the clearance operator and by KMAC in 2021 contained numerous discrepancies.

According to its most recent mine action strategy, KMAC intended, as a means to show its commitment to the APMBC, to submit voluntary Article 7 transparency reports on an annual basis.<sup>45</sup> In disappointing news, KMAC subsequently advised Mine Action Review that Kosovo would only start submitting Article 7 reports when it becomes a member of the UN.<sup>46</sup>

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## PLANNING AND TASKING

The GICHD supported the development of Kosovo's new Mine Action Strategy for 2019–24, bringing together a wide range of national and international stakeholders in a strategy stakeholder workshop in Pristina in October 2018. The strategy, formally approved in January 2019 and launched by the Ministry of Kosovo Security Services on 4 April 2019, has three goals:

- Mine/ERW threats managed and reduced
- Communication and awareness raising
- Management of residual contamination.

The strategy declares that all known mined and CMR-contaminated areas will be addressed by the end of 2024, leaving only residual contamination to be managed accordingly. It contains annual projections for anti-personnel mine clearance, including:

- All high priority anti-personnel mine tasks (8 as at October 2018) will be cleared by the end of 2020
- All medium-priority anti-personnel mine tasks (25 as at October 2018) will be cleared by 2022
- All low-priority anti-personnel mine tasks (15 as at October 2018) will be completed by 2024.<sup>47</sup>

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39 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

40 Ibid.

41 Email from Wilko Dirks, HALO Trust, 19 July 2022.

42 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 April 2020.

43 Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 30 April 2019; Vanja Sikirica, NPA Kosovo, 30 June 2022; and telephone interview, 1 July 2022; and email from Wilko Dirks, HALO Trust, 19 July 2022.

44 Email from Megan Dwyer, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 11 May 2022.

45 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 13.

46 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

47 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 12.

Updates on clearance progress of high and medium priority areas were not made available, but as of 31 December 2021, KMAC reported that six high-priority tasks had been completed.<sup>48</sup> HALO Trust reported that as a result of the non-technical survey project, four more high-priority tasks have been added. It is expected that further reclassification of priority areas will occur in the future.<sup>49</sup>

The strategy is explicitly based on a number of assumptions, including that the necessary funding will be secured and that no new mined or CMR-contaminated areas are identified. It notes, however, that "so far each year 3–4 different affected areas have been reported" and that should this trend continue, capacity and progress will need to be reassessed with regards to the 2024 deadline.<sup>50</sup>

As per the strategy, KMAC will develop annual operational work plans to implement the strategy's goals.<sup>51</sup> KMAC has already requested an external mid-term review of the strategy in 2022, to evaluate progress and make any adaptations according to contextual changes, if this is required. The GICHD was due to conduct the review in September 2022. Thereafter, new plans will be set to achieve the goals of the Strategy.<sup>52</sup>

In 2019, KMAC confirmed that it had developed annual operational work plans to target anti-personnel mined areas, according to impact-based criteria, including risk reduction, development priorities, and poverty reduction, along with the findings of a nationwide baseline socio-economic impact assessment carried out in 2018 by KMAC, with the support of The HALO Trust.<sup>53</sup> In 2021, KMAC planned for clearance to start on nine mined areas,<sup>54</sup> but this was delayed for three months due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>55</sup> The mine action strategy for 2019–24 is also said to align with the objectives of Kosovo's National Development Strategy 2016–2021.<sup>56</sup>

In 2019, The HALO Trust developed a new prioritisation system that considers the "community profile" for a task. This system draws on several factors, such as accident history, quantity of evidence provided, frequency of current land use, socio-economic status, planned land use, government development plans, and demographics. All information is collected from government and public data as well as from extensive community survey.<sup>57</sup> This prioritisation system continued to be implemented throughout 2021. New prioritisation information was added during 2021 and early 2022 through the non-technical survey project by providing an individual rank for prioritisation based on set parameters.<sup>58</sup>

## LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

### STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

National mine action standards for land release are in place in Kosovo, which, according to KMAC, reflect the IMAS.<sup>59</sup> However, The HALO Trust disputes this, in particular on the basis that the NMAS include outdated land release procedures.

KMAC was planning, at some point during 2022, to update existing NMAS to reflect the new IMAS.<sup>60</sup>

A 2014 evaluation of Kosovo's mine action programme, conducted on behalf of the International Trust Fund (ITF) Enhancing Human Security, concluded that increased capacity and improvements to land release methodology and equipment would be necessary for Kosovo to complete clearance by 2024. Since the 2014 evaluation, significant improvements have been made to the mine action programme, including the introduction of Handheld Standoff Mine Detection System (HSTAMID) detectors by The HALO Trust, which have enhanced operational productivity.<sup>61</sup>

### OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2021, Kosovo's national mine action programme's capacity consisted of two international operators, The HALO Trust and the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), and a national operator, the KSF. However, NPA did not conduct survey or clearance of anti-personnel mined areas in 2021 nor 2020, solely focusing on tackling CMR.<sup>62</sup> The KSF also provided a round-the-clock EOD emergency response. KFOR, a NATO-led international peacekeeping force, also supports the KSF and Kosovo Police with EOD response and organises mine and ERW demolitions in Mitrovica and the north of Kosovo.<sup>63</sup> The demining season is from the end of March to the end of November due to weather conditions.<sup>64</sup>

48 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

49 Emails from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 2 June 2022; and Wilko Dirks, HALO Trust, 19 July 2022.

50 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, pp. 9–10.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid., p. 16; and email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

53 Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 30 April 2019; and Tom Welling, HALO Trust, 7 May 2018.

54 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 April 2020.

55 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 28 April 2021.

56 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 1.

57 Email from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 22 May 2020.

58 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 2 June 2022.

59 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 April 2020.

HALO Trust's operational personnel are cross-trained for mine clearance and battle area clearance (BAC) and can move readily between these activities. In 2021, HALO deployed two teams with eight personnel in total for the new non-technical survey project, which will continue operating through 2022. In addition, HALO deployed one team with fourteen deminers for mine clearance tasks which operated until the end of 2021.<sup>65</sup> In 2020, HALO had deployed, on average, 24 deminers across 3 clearance teams. For 2021, it represents a decrease in capacity of 58% in the number of deminers and 60% in the

number of teams. HALO Trust's clearance capacity decrease coincides with the end of contracts with donors in 2021 and the resultant reduction in funding, after which HALO only had funds available for BAC.<sup>66</sup>

KSF, as in 2020, operated two manual clearance teams in 2021 totalling 20 deminers, and expected capacity to remain the same in 2022.<sup>67</sup> KFOR supports the KSF and Kosovo Police as noted above.<sup>68</sup>

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

### LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2021

KMAC reported a total of 0.17km<sup>2</sup> of anti-personnel mined area released only through clearance in 2021.<sup>69</sup> The land release data from KMAC are inconsistent with the data reported by The HALO Trust with regards to cancellation through non-technical survey, reduction through technical survey, area cleared, and the number of mines found (see Tables 3, 4, and 6). HALO Trust has been unable to explain the discrepancies<sup>70</sup> and KMAC has been unwilling to do so. Mine Action Review has therefore taken the survey and clearance figures reported directly by HALO, along with KSF clearance data reported by KMAC, which together conclude that a total of 0.16km<sup>2</sup> of mined areas was released in 2021: 0.10km<sup>2</sup> cleared (see Table 6), 0.03km<sup>2</sup> reduced (see Table 4), and 0.03km<sup>2</sup> cancelled (see Table 3).<sup>71</sup>

In 2021, one CHA covering 10,000m<sup>2</sup> was reported by KMAC and was added to the database.<sup>72</sup> Three new CHAs were reported by the HALO Trust, with a total estimated area of 16,577m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>73</sup> According to HALO Trust, the reports on the three new CHAs were submitted to KMAC<sup>74</sup> but it is not known whether they are included in KMAC's reporting for 2021.

### SURVEY IN 2021

According to KMAC there was no land cancellation through non-technical survey or reduction through technical survey by any of the operators in 2021.<sup>75</sup> Nonetheless, for 2021, HALO Trust reported cancelling through non-technical survey 30,086m<sup>2</sup> in Gjakove district through the non-technical survey project (see Table 3).<sup>76</sup> In addition, HALO also reported reduction through technical survey of 33,100m<sup>2</sup>, through the use of breaching lanes in polygons during clearance tasks (see Table 4).<sup>77</sup>

In 2020, a total of 44,751m<sup>2</sup> was reduced through technical survey by HALO Trust.<sup>78</sup> The absence of technical survey by HALO in 2021 is attributed to the decision to concentrate on the non-technical survey project.<sup>79</sup>

**Table 3: Cancellation through non-technical survey in 2021 (HALO Trust data)**

District	Operator	Area cancelled (m <sup>2</sup> )
Gjakove	HALO Trust	30,086
<b>Total</b>		<b>30,086</b>

**Table 4: Reduction through non-technical survey in 2021 (HALO Trust data)**

District	Operator	Area reduced (m <sup>2</sup> )
Gjakove	HALO Trust	33,100
<b>Total</b>		<b>33,100</b>

60 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

61 Emails from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 1 May 2019; and Terje Eldøen, NPA, 25 April 2019.

62 Email from Vanja Sikirica, NPA Kosovo, 20 May 2022; and telephone interview, 1 July 2022.

63 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 28 April 2021.

64 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 3.

65 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 2 June 2022.

66 Ibid.

67 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

68 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 4; and interview with Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, Pristina, 5 April 2019.

69 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

70 Email from Wilko Dirks, HALO Trust, 19 July 2022.

71 Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022; and Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 2 June 2022.

72 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

73 Email from Wilko Dirks, HALO Trust, 19 July 2022.

74 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 2 June 2022.

75 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

76 Emails from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 2 June 2022; and Wilko Dirks, HALO Trust, 19 July 2022.

77 Email from Wilko Dirks, HALO Trust, 19 July 2022.

78 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021.

79 Email from Wilko Dirks, HALO Trust, 19 July 2022.

## CLEARANCE IN 2021

In 2021, according to KMAC, a total area of almost 0.17km<sup>2</sup> of anti-personnel mined area was cleared, with seven anti-personnel mines and three items of UXO destroyed (see Table 4).<sup>80</sup> This was a slight increase in area cleared compared to figures reported for 2020, when almost 0.14km<sup>2</sup> of anti-personnel mined area was cleared, with 7 anti-personnel mines and 2 items of UXO found and destroyed.<sup>81</sup>

**Table 5: Mine clearance in 2021 (KMAC data)<sup>82</sup>**

District	Operator	Area cleared (m <sup>2</sup> )	AP mines destroyed	UXO destroyed during mine clearance
N/R	KSF	61,012	3	2
N/R	HALO Trust	105,857	4	1
<b>Totals</b>		<b>166,869</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>

N/R = Not reported

HALO Trust, however, only reported anti-personnel mine clearance of 69,258m<sup>2</sup> in Gjakove district for 2021, where no anti-personnel mines were found, only one item of UXO. The area was initially expected to contain anti-personnel mines according to the 2013 survey.<sup>83</sup>

**Table 6: Clearance of anti-personnel mines in 2021 (based on KSF data reported by KMAC and HALO Trust data reported by HALO)**

District	Operator	Area cleared (m <sup>2</sup> )	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed during mine clearance
N/R	KSF	61,012	3	0	2
Gjakove	HALO Trust	36,158	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>		<b>97,170</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>

A further 69 anti-personnel mines and 1 anti-vehicle mine were destroyed by the KSF in EOD response tasks in 2021.<sup>84</sup> As Kosovo has strict national procedures for the management of explosives, the KSF, with support from KFOR in northern Kosovo, carries out the destruction of mines, CMR, and other ERW found by The HALO Trust and NPA.<sup>85</sup>

Compared to the previous year, in 2021, The HALO Trust saw a decrease of the overall area cleared as a result of reducing teams and deminers numbers due to a decline in funding. However, HALO considers that in 2021 its productivity increased due to clearance in minefields without the confirmation of a mine threat, where HALO was able to reduce the size of over inflated polygons during targeted clearance by use of breaching lanes.<sup>86</sup>

## PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Kosovo cannot formally adhere to the APMBBC as it is not recognised as a State by the depository of the Convention and therefore does not have a specific clearance deadline under Article 5. Nonetheless, it has obligations under international human rights law to clear anti-personnel mines as soon as possible.

Kosovo's Mine Action Strategy 2019–24, which aims to complete mine and CMR clearance by the end of 2024, states this will only be achievable if sustained funding is secured.<sup>87</sup> Specific concerns are elaborated in the strategy about the need to upgrade old equipment, including vehicles to proceed without unnecessary stand-downs or costly repairs.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, less than 1km<sup>2</sup> of anti-personnel mined area has been cleared in the last five years (see Table 7).

<sup>80</sup> Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

<sup>81</sup> Emails from Olivia Meader, HALO Trust, 22 May and 23 June 2020; and Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 April and 16 July 2020.

<sup>82</sup> Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

<sup>83</sup> Emails from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 2 June 2022; and Wilko Dirks, HALO Trust, 19 July 2022.

<sup>84</sup> Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 May 2022.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, Pristina, 5 April 2019.

<sup>86</sup> Email from Wilko Dirks, HALO Trust, 19 July 2022.

<sup>87</sup> "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 6.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.



**Table 7: Five-year summary of anti-personnel mine clearance**

Year	Area cleared (km <sup>2</sup> )
2021	0.10
2020	0.14
2019	0.27
2018	0.22
2017	0.23
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.96</b>

HALO Trust is currently finalising non-technical survey and resurvey and will have a better idea of remaining contamination by the end of 2022. HALO would require increased capacity to complete mine clearance by the end of 2024. However, the grant by the EU for four clearance teams was still pending approval from the Kosovo Assembly as of writing while funding for mine clearance was non-existent for 2022 and beyond.<sup>89</sup> HALO has also highlighted the importance of applying efficient land release methodologies and updating the NMAS on land release, as well as finalising the resurvey project.<sup>90</sup>

Accurate and up-to-date information from the Kosovo authorities on remaining contamination and land release; updated NMAS and IMSMA; and a revised Mine Action Strategy and annual plans, based on the results of non-technical survey project, as well as coordinated mobilisation efforts, would better inform donors of the mine action situation in Kosovo. Clearance capacity needs to be sustained and further increased over the revised strategy period in order to meet the 2024 target date. According to HALO and based on the current funding situation, the 2024 target will not be reached.<sup>91</sup>

In 2021, while the impact of COVID-19 decreased, several cases occurred among HALO Trust staff, which sometimes required isolation of team members and increased health prevention measures. This led in turn to a reduction of working time, as well as fleet issues due to social distancing requirements, which had minor impact on operations and team outputs.<sup>92</sup>

Assuming the target is met (which Kosovo is not on track to achieve), completion of mine clearance in 2024 would be more than 25 years after the end of the conflict between the FRY forces and NATO and more than 20 years after the UN claimed that clearance was largely complete.

## PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

According to Kosovo's Mine Action Strategy 2019–24, a separate national strategy on the management of residual contamination will be developed by KMAC by 2023, in collaboration with other national actors. This will clarify roles and responsibilities in order to manage what is expected to be a long-term residual contamination problem.<sup>93</sup>

89 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO Trust, 2 June 2022.

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

93 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 15.