KOSOVO

MINE ACTION REVIEW

CLEARING THE MINES 2026

KEY DATA

NO APMBC ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE:

Not party to the APMBC

AP MINE CONTAMINATION: 0.63KM^2

Light
(National estimate)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS

Release of AP mined area	Release in 2025 (km^2)	Release in 2024 (km^2)
Clearance	0.08	0.05
Technical Survey	0	0.06
Non-Technical Survey	0	0

Destruction of AP mines during clearance, survey, and spot tasks	2025	2024
AP Mines destroyed	34	8

MAIN AP MINE SURVEY AND CLEARANCE OPERATOR IN 2025:

- The HALO Trust (HALO)

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2025, Kosovo began implementing the Mine Action Strategy for 2025–30, which it had launched a year earlier. Clearance output rose by 76% in 2025 compared with the previous year, exceeding the annual clearance target, but no land was released through survey. Kosovo continued to plan for completion of high- and medium-priority tasks by 2030, while seeking to mobilise international support. However, reductions in funding and the resulting decline in operational clearance capacity put the achievement of this goal at risk.

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 depositary, 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 and submit voluntary Article 7 reports annually.**
- **Kosovo should complete the database migration and provide the necessary training to its national staff as soon as possible.**
- **Kosovo should develop a resource mobilisation strategy to secure international funding in keeping with its Mine Action Strategy.**

AP MINE SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Kosovo Mine Action Centre (KMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Kosovo Security Force (KSF)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust (HALO)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

As at the end of 2025, Kosovo Mine Action Centre (KMAC) reported that 21 anti-personnel (AP) mined areas remained, covering more than 0.63km^2 (see Table 1). This includes two areas that also contain cluster munition remnants (CMR).[1] This is a decrease from the 24 mined areas covering almost 1.12km^2 reported for the end of 2024.[2] The baseline of mine contamination at the end of 2025 cannot be reconciled with the baseline at the end of 2024 and the area released. KMAC attributes the discrepancy to the ongoing database reconciliation, including the verification and reclassification of contaminated areas, and the review and validation of historical records.[3]

Table 1: AP mined area (at end 2025) (KMAC data)[4]

District	Contamination type	CHAs	Area (m^2)	SHAs	Area (m^2)	Total areas	Total area (m^2)
South	AP mine	0	0	4	60,971	4	60,971
North	AP mine	0	0	0	0	0	0
Centre	AP mine	0	0	0	0	0	0
East	AP mine	1	9,516	4	68,832	5	78,348
West	AP mine	4	165,000	6	230,000	10	395,000
N/K*	Mixed AP mine and CMR	2	100,000	0	0	2	100,000
Totals		**7**	**274,516**	**14**	**359,803**	**21**	**634,319**

CHA = Confirmed hazardous area. SHA = Suspected hazardous area. N/K = Not known. * Mixed AP mine and CMR contamination was not disaggregated by district or type of hazardous area.

The last detailed survey of contamination in Kosovo was in 2013, during which HALO and KMAC systematically conducted community surveys across most of the districts in Kosovo, with the exception of four municipalities in the north, confirming a total of 130 hazardous areas: 79 mined areas covering an estimated 2.76km^2 and 51 cluster munition strikes covering an estimated 7.63km^2.[5] The northern municipalities have since been surveyed and KMAC has confirmed that no mined areas remained.[6]

HALO conducted non-technical survey (NTS) in 2021–22 with a view to creating confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and suspected hazardous areas (SHAs), as this was not done during the 2013 survey (prior to the recent survey there was no classification of CHAs and SHAs in Kosovo). HALO says the project significantly contributed to ensuring Kosovo's current baseline was as accurate as possible given available resources.[7] No previously unrecorded AP mined areas were discovered in 2025.[8]

Kosovo is contaminated by mines, 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.[9]

1 Email from Ahmet Sallova, Head, KMAC, 14 April 2026.
2 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 5 May 2025.
3 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 25 August 2026.
4 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 14 April 2026.
5 HALO, "Action on cluster munitions in Kosovo", Side event, First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), Dubrovnik, 10 September 2015.
6 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 23 August 2022.
7 Email from Michael Montañ, Programme Manager, HALO, 18 April 2023.
8 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 14 April 2026.
9 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, https://bit.ly/331PWfQ, pp. 6 and 15.

Both AP and anti-vehicle (AV) mines were used during the conflict – in fixed-pattern minefields as well as more randomly in "nuisance" minefields.[10] 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",[11] but further investigation revealed considerably more contamination than thought.[12]

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

In addition to contamination from mines, Kosovo is contaminated with CMR (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2026* report on Kosovo for further information) as well as other ERW. The Kosovo Force (KFOR) and Kosovo Security Forces (KSF) explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams regularly dispose of ERW in response to information from the public or demining organisations.[13]

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

KMAC is responsible for managing survey and clearance of mines and ERW throughout Kosovo. The Centre prepares an annual work plan in cooperation with the international demining organisations and coordinates their operations along with the national demining teams of the KSF. It also coordinates survey, quality assurance (QA), risk education, public information, and victim assistance.[14] 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, which was amended in 2022.[15]

HALO reports a constructive working relationship with KMAC and says there is an enabling environment for mine action in Kosovo with clear administrative processes in place for obtaining visas and annual accreditation.[16]

FUNDING FOR AP MINE SURVEY AND CLEARANCE

In 2025, Kosovo's government provided €1.1 million in financial support to KMAC and the KSF for both mine and CMR clearance, as in previous years.[17] The European Union (EU) funded mine operations in 2025, but its funding ended in December of the same year. Japan and Switzerland are funding the sector in 2026.[18]

It has been estimated that €3.5 million will be required on an annual basis to meet Kosovo's mine action strategy's objectives, totalling €21 million between 2025 and 2030. Of the €21 million, only 8% had been confirmed by the middle of 2024.[19] It is not known what proportion of requested funding was secured in 2025 or has been secured in 2026 to date, but KMAC says that donor support remains far short of the needs.[20]

For more information on funding, please see the profile of Kosovo on the *Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor* website.[21]

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Gender is mainstreamed into the first strategic objective "Land Release" of Kosovo's mine action strategy 2025–2030, which aims to maintain female participation in the national workforce at 26%.[22] The strategy directs that mine action activities be sensitive to gender and inclusive of ethnic and disability considerations and that gender and diversity considerations are integrated into all phases of planning, implementation, and follow-up.

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 – and explicitly women and children. KMAC has had a Gender and Safeguarding focal point since 2023.[23]

10 ICRC, *Explosive Remnants of War, Cluster Bombs and Landmines in Kosovo*, June 2001, p. 15.
11 "UNMIK Mine Action Programme Annual Report – 2001", Mine Action Coordination Cell, Pristina, undated but 2002, p. 1.
12 HALO, "Failing the Kosovars: The Hidden Impact and Threat from ERW", Report, 15 December 2006, p. 1.
13 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 1 August 2012.
14 Ibid.
15 Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 16 June and 3 July 2017; Ministry of Defence, "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 3; and Kosovo Mine Action Strategy 2025–2030, 18 June 2024, p. 4.
16 Emails from Claus Nielsen, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), 8 April 2026; and Atholl Stewart, Programme Manager, HALO, 13 May 2026.
17 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 30 June 2026.
18 Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 14 April 2026; and Atholl Stewart, HALO, 13 May 2026.
19 Kosovo Mine Action Strategy 2025–2030, 18 June 2024, p. 16.
20 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 30 June 2026.
21 https://the-monitor.org.
22 Kosovo Mine Action Strategy 2025–2030, 18 June 2024, pp. 11 and 18.
23 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 14 April 2026.

Table 2: Gender composition of operators in 2025[24]

Operator	Total staff	Women staff	Total managerial or supervisory staff	Women managerial or supervisory staff	Total operational staff	Women operational staff
HALO	43	10 (23%)	7	2 (29%)	39	7 (18%)
KMAC*	5	1 (20%)	4	1 (25%)	1	0 (0%)
KSF*	112	27 (24%)	N/R	14	60	9 (15%)
Totals	**160**	**38 (24%)**	**11**	**3 (27%)****	**100**	**16 (16%)**

* KMAC and KSF data may contain inaccuracies from the source. ** Excluding KSF data. N/R = Not reported.

Kosovo's mine action strategy recognises the lack of economic opportunities in Kosovo, with women and youth particularly impacted by limited employment prospects. This leads many to move abroad, posing both a challenge and an opportunity for the mine action sector. It poses a threat of losing valuable talent and human capital, although it provides an opportunity to recruit new talent within Kosovo.[25]

HALO's gender policy, developed with the Kosovo Women's Network, aims to improve recruitment and retention of women by addressing barriers such as childcare responsibilities.[26] HALO continued efforts to increase women's participation in operational roles and to strengthen inclusive employment practices in Kosovo. These included childcare stipends for female staff, introduced to help remove practical barriers to women entering mine action work, and continued promotion of mixed-gender teams and inclusive recruitment. Financial and operational pressures, however, led to redundancy processes in March and November 2025. The resulting staff cuts reduced the programme's overall capacity and led to the departure of several female employees, undermining progress made over the previous three years.[27]

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Kosovo has a national mine action standard (NMAS) on the environment although it has not yet been updated in line with the revised International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) 07.13 (second edition, 3 July 2024).[28] KMAC reported that it has an environmental policy in place in accordance with its NMAS on environmental management, and that environmental assessments are integrated into the planning and delivery of survey and clearance.[29]

KMAC prioritises clearance based on risk reduction, development, environmental protection, and poverty reduction, with contaminated land whose clearance would reduce emissions by enabling better land management or support climate adaptation given the highest priority.[30] The Law on Climate Change, adopted in December 2023, seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure.[31] Kosovo's Mine Action Strategy 2025–2030 requires that at least two initiatives on environmental protection or restoration are explored by 2030, particularly as tasks expand into forested and natural heritage areas.[32] The demining season is from the end of March to the end of November due to weather conditions.[33]

Table 3: Environmental policies and action[34]

Operator	Environmental policy in place	Environmental assessments conducted to support survey and clearance	Environmental focal point at country-programme level
KMAC	Yes	Yes	No
HALO	No (but SOPs are in place)	Yes (HALO conducts recce on tasks before clearance)	No

SOP = Standard operating procedure.

24 Ibid.; and emails from Claus Nielsen, NPA, 8 April 2026; and Atholl Stewart, HALO, 13 May 2026.
25 Kosovo Mine Action Strategy 2025–2030, 18 June 2024, p. 5.
26 Email from Olivia Meader, HALO, 22 May 2020.
27 Email from Atholl Stewart, HALO, 13 May 2026.
28 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 24 April 2023.
29 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 14 May 2024.
30 Mine Action and the Resilience of Communities to Climate Change, GICHD, December 2023, p. 40.
31 Kosovo Mine Action Strategy 2025–2030, 18 June 2024, p. 5.
32 Ibid., pp. 5 and 11.
33 "Mine Action Strategy 2019–2024 in Republic of Kosovo", 4 April 2019, p. 3.
34 Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 14 April 2026; Atholl Stewart, HALO, 13 May 2026; and Claus Nielsen, NPA, 8 April 2026.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

KMAC uses the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) New Generation version for its national mine action database. Data are disaggregated between mines, CMR, and other ERW.[35] Operators were positive in their assessments of the quality and accessibility of data contained in the database and of KMAC's information management systems in general. Objective two of the national mine action strategy, "National Capacities", aimed to upgrade to IMSMA Core by the beginning of 2025 and to train at least two KMAC and KSF staff members as administrators by the middle of 2025.[36] As at August 2026, migration to IMSMA Core was ongoing with the help of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). KMAC had incorporated completion reports and hazardous area records, and was awaiting completion of the technical migration by GICHD experts before updating the remaining forms. KMAC also worked with GICHD experts to improve data quality in the database.[37]

Operators report to KMAC on a weekly basis. HALO reported that all data collection forms are consistent and enable collection of the necessary data, and the database is checked against HALO's quarterly reports. Once a task is completed or when KMAC agrees and signs off on a resurvey or survey conducted by an NTS team, the data is fed into IMSMA.[38] The land release data reported to Mine Action Review by clearance operators and KMAC were aligned in 2024 and 2025, showing a steady improvement from previous years when data frequently contained discrepancies. Baseline inconsistencies in KMAC reports, however, persisted.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Kosovo's Mine Action Strategy for 2025–2030, developed by KMAC in consultation with operators and with the support of the GICHD, declares that the risk of explosive ordnance contamination will be considered tolerable once all high- and medium-priority tasks have been completed by 2030, and provided that there are no incidents for five years thereafter. A mid-term review of the strategy is due in mid-2027. The general expectation set out in the strategy is that any remaining contamination after 2030 would be considered as residual.[39] Strategic objective 1 on land release is supported by four strategic outcomes:

- Greater clarity on the remaining contamination in Northern municipalities will be established;
- Mine action organisations will continue clearance operations to fulfil task completion, prioritising high and medium-priority tasks and concluding with low-priority tasks;
- In light of current efficiency challenges and anticipated obstacles posed by difficult terrain such as dense vegetation and steep slopes, KMAC will reassess clearance requirements to enhance efficiency and effectiveness; and
- Recognising that 2030 marks the conclusion of the international mine action organisations' presence in Kosovo, the mine action programme will implement staff transition plans.[40]

An annual mine clearance target of 45,000m^2 has been set in Kosovo's National Mine Action Strategy, along with zero high- and medium- priority tasks remaining by 2030 and as few low-priority tasks remaining as possible. In the strategy, it was planned that of the 38 municipalities that were contaminated with landmines and CMR when it was drafted, 35 will be declared free from risks of landmines or CMR by 2030.[41] However, reductions in funding and the resulting decline in operational clearance capacity put the achievement of this goal at risk. KMAC says it elaborates annual survey and clearance work plans.[42]

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

In 2024, the NMAS for land release in Kosovo was updated in accordance with IMAS and in consultation with clearance operators, although the changes were related to CMR clearance rather than mines.[43] No further updates to the NMAS have been introduced since then.[44]

35 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 30 April 2019.
36 Kosovo Mine Action Strategy 2025–2030, 18 June 2024, p. 12.
37 Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 22 April 2025 and 25 August 2026.
38 Emails from Olivia Meader, HALO, 1 May 2019; and Atholl Stewart, HALO, 13 May 2026.
39 Kosovo Mine Action Strategy 2025–2030, 18 June 2024, pp. 8 and 19.
40 Ibid., p. 10.
41 Ibid., p. 11.
42 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 14 April 2026.
43 Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 22 April 2025; and Fred Wellesley, HALO, 5 September 2025.
44 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 14 April 2026.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2025, one international operator, HALO, conducted mine clearance in Kosovo.

Table 4: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2025[45]

Operator	Manual clearance teams	Total clearance personnel
HALO	5	30

HALO's operational personnel are cross-trained for mine clearance and battle area clearance (BAC) and can move readily between the two.[46] Major funding cuts led to a progressive reduction in HALO's operational capacity, from a total of 15 mine clearance and BAC teams in 2024 to eight during 2025, and then to four by the end of 2025, a level maintained into 2026. HALO faced the prospect of closing its programme in Kosovo by the end of 2026.[47]

HALO's clearance operations during 2025 and 2026 faced challenges of dense vegetation, highly contaminated urban tasks, and soil mineralisation. The deployment of experienced staff and the use of suitable equipment in highly contaminated tasks, particularly Scorpion detectors, have helped mitigate some of these constraints.[48]

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2025

Table 5: Summary of land release outputs in 2025

Release of AP mined area	Release in 2025 (m²)	Comments
Clearance	83,581	KMAC/HALO data
Technical survey	0	KMAC/HALO data
Non-technical survey	0	KMAC/HALO data
Destruction of AP mines during clearance, survey, and spot tasks	**2025**	
AP mines destroyed	34	KMAC/HALO data

SURVEY IN 2025

No AP mined area was released through survey in 2025.[49] In 2024, HALO reduced 56,822m² through technical survey (TS).[50] HALO did not discover new AP mine contamination in 2025.[51]

CLEARANCE IN 2025

In 2025, a total of 83,581m² was released through clearance with 34 AP mines and 2 AV mines found and destroyed (see Table 6). This is an increase from the 47,605m² cleared in 2024 when 8 AP mines were destroyed.[52] The increase is a result of HALO deploying additional clearance personnel in 2025.[53]

Table 6: Mine clearance in 2025[54]

District	Operator	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed
Ferizaj	HALO	0	61,301	29	0
Gjakove	HALO	1	17,018	5	2
Gjilan	HALO	0	5,262	0	0
Totals		**1**	**83,581**	**34**	**2**

45 Email from Atholl Stewart, HALO, 13 May 2026.
46 Email from Megan Dwyer, HALO, 11 May 2022.
47 Email from Fred Wellesley, HALO, 15 April 2025.
48 Email from Atholl Stewart, HALO, 13 May 2026.
49 Ibid.
50 Email from Fred Wellesley, HALO, 15 April 2025.
51 Email from Atholl Stewart, HALO, 13 May 2026.
52 Email from Fred Wellesley, HALO, 15 April 2025.
53 Email from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 14 April 2026.
54 Email from Fred Wellesley, HALO, 15 April 2025.

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Kosovo cannot formally adhere to the APMBC as it is not recognised as a State by the depositary of the Convention (the UN Secretary-General) and therefore does not have a specific clearance deadline under Article 5. Nonetheless, it has obligations under international human rights law to clear AP mines as soon as possible.

Kosovo's Mine Action Strategy 2025–2030 set a 2030 deadline to complete all medium- and high-priority areas. Operators consider this objective achievable provided that sufficient donor funding is secured to maintain capacity.[55] Clearance output has increased each year since 2022, and in 2025, exceeded the annual clearance target of 45,000m² (see Table 7). The strategy cites political and economic instability, climate change-induced weather conditions, and discovery of previously unknown contamination as risks that could undermine its delivery.[56]

According to KMAC, securing sufficient donor support to clear the remaining mine and CMR contamination in Kosovo will be one of the primary challenges in 2026 and beyond.[57] This effort is seen as a crucial contributor to human security, economic development, and stability in Kosovo and the broader Western Balkans region.[58]

Table 7: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km²)
2025	0.08
2024	0.05
2023	0.03
2022	0.02
2021	0.10
Total	**0.28**

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

The second strategic objective of Kosovo's Mine Action Strategy 2025–2030, which focuses on enhancing national capacities, includes a strategic outcome on the management of residual contamination. As clearance operations conclude in 2030, Kosovo will shift from proactive clearance efforts to the reactive management of residual threats by KMAC with support from KSF units. Recognising the unique requirements of risk management, KMAC will seek to ensure that both KMAC and KSF are equipped, staffed, and resourced to address residual contamination effectively.[59] A comprehensive residual contamination strategy is planned for development and submission to the Government of Kosovo by 2029.[60]

55 Email from Claus Nielsen, NPA, 10 April 2025.
56 Kosovo Mine Action Strategy 2025–2030, 18 June 2024, p. 9.
57 Emails from Ahmet Sallova, KMAC, 22 April 2025 and 14 April 2026.
58 Email from Michael Montañ, HALO, 7 May 2024.
59 Kosovo Mine Action Strategy 2025–2030, 18 June 2024, pp. 8 and 12.
60 Ibid., p. 13.