

# NAGORNO-KARABAKH

MINE ACTION REVIEW

CLEARING CLUSTER MUNITION REMNANTS 2023

## KEY DATA

### CLUSTER MUNITION CONTAMINATION:

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

**2** KM<sup>2</sup>

SUBMUNITION CLEARANCE IN 2022

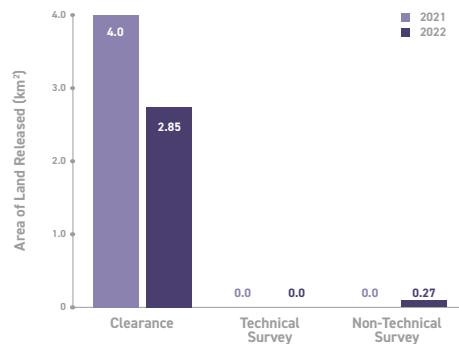
**2.85** KM<sup>2</sup>

SUBMUNITIONS DESTROYED IN 2022

**388**

(INCLUDING 339 SUBMUNITIONS DESTROYED DURING SPOT TASKS)

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2022, there were periodic violations of the 10 November 2020 ceasefire that ended the six-week conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. On 12 December 2022, the Lachin Corridor, which links Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and the outside world, was blocked by Azeri nationals claiming to be "eco-activists". On 23 April 2023, Azerbaijani forces set up a checkpoint on the Lachin corridor near the border with Armenia, reinforcing the blockade. The blockade has severely limited the supply of essential goods to Nagorno-Karabakh, including those needed for CMR survey and clearance.

A new baseline survey of CMR and other unexploded ordnance (UXO) was completed in 2022 in Nagorno-Karabakh in villages in three CMR-contaminated districts of Askeran, Martakert, and Martuni. Efforts have since turned to surveying uninhabited areas in these districts. An additional 3.7km<sup>2</sup> of cluster munition-contaminated area was confirmed through survey and resurvey in 2022 in the same three districts, including 0.4km<sup>2</sup> from the 2020 conflict that was discovered during resurvey and partially cleared in Martuni district.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The Nagorno-Karabakh authorities should formally commit to respect and implement the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and never to use cluster munitions.
- Nagorno-Karabakh should comply with its obligations under international human rights law to clear cluster munition remnants (CMR) on territory under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.
- The Nagorno-Karabakh authorities should set up a mine action centre to coordinate survey and clearance, introduce mine action standards, and work on mobilising resources.
- The Nagorno-Karabakh authorities should provide funding for CMR survey and clearance.

# CLUSTER MUNITION SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

## MANAGEMENT

- The Nagorno-Karabakh de facto Authorities

## NATIONAL OPERATORS

- The Nagorno-Karabakh Emergency Service
- The Nagorno-Karabakh Armed Forces
- Centre for Humanitarian Demining (CHD) FUND (previously The Humanitarian Demining Centre (HAK))

## INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust (HALO)

## OTHER ACTORS

- Russian peacekeeping forces

## UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION

Under the ceasefire agreement that took effect on 10 November 2020 Azerbaijan regained control over most of its internationally recognised territories,<sup>1</sup> including the seven districts around Nagorno-Karabakh that it had lost in the first war between 1991 and 1993, and about one third of Nagorno-Karabakh itself.<sup>2</sup> In the course of the fighting, both Armenia and Azerbaijan are reported to have used cluster munitions, killing and injuring civilians<sup>3</sup> and adding to existing contamination from CMR. The de facto Nagorno-Karabakh authorities retained control over the remainder of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is patrolled by a Russian peacekeeping force, including along a new Line of Contact (LOC).<sup>4</sup>

LAR-160 rockets containing M095 submunitions and 9M55K Smerch rockets containing 9N235 submunitions were both used in Nagorno-Karabakh in the 2020 conflict.<sup>5</sup> The HALO Trust (HALO) also identified Russian-made ShOAB and PTAB submunitions.<sup>6</sup> In March 2023, HALO was planning to continue work on priority areas in Askeran, Martakert, and Martuni regions but, in response to the blockade of the Lachin Corridor, had decreased its areas of operation with survey,

clearance, and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams deployed close to the capital, Stepanakert, in order to reduce fuel usage.<sup>7</sup>

Nagorno-Karabakh already had extensive CMR contamination prior to the 2020 conflict, with pre-existing CMR-contaminated area estimated to total 71.3km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>8</sup> Extensive use of cluster munitions in the 2020 conflict added considerable CMR contamination to territory that continues to be controlled by the Nagorno-Karabakh authorities.<sup>9</sup> A rapid assessment by HALO had found that contamination affected nearly three-quarters of all Nagorno-Karabakh settlements, including 20% of Stepanakert, 21% of Martuni, and 34% of Martakert.<sup>10</sup> However, overall cluster munition-contaminated area in Nagorno-Karabakh has decreased significantly since the 2020 conflict, as Azerbaijan regained control of much of the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh which had pre-existing CMR contamination. By the end of 2022, recorded cluster munition-contaminated area in Nagorno-Karabakh was just under 2.4km<sup>2</sup> (see Table 1).<sup>11</sup>

1 T. De Waal, "Unfinished Business in the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict", Carnegie Europe, 11 February 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3PFvARz>.

2 Ibid.

3 Amnesty International, "In the Line of Fire", 14 January 2021; Human Rights Watch, "Technical Briefing Note: Cluster Munition Use in the Karabakh Conflict", July 2021.

4 International Crisis Group (ICG), "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: A Visual Explainer", Last updated 28 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/44oubp5>.

5 Human Rights Watch, "Technical Briefing: Note Cluster Munition Use in the Karabakh Conflict", 21 July 2021.

6 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, Programme Manager, 18 April 2021.

7 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, Head of Region – Europe (South Caucasus), HALO, 16 March 2023.

8 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 18 April 2021.

9 Amnesty International, "In the Line of Fire", 14 January 2021; Human Rights Watch, "Technical Briefing Note: Cluster Munition Use in the Karabakh Conflict", July 2021.

10 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 18 April 2021.

11 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

**Table 1: Cluster munition-contaminated area (in areas of Nagorno-Karabakh not under Azeri control) (at December 2022)<sup>12</sup>**

| District      | CHAs*     | Area (m <sup>2</sup> ) |
|---------------|-----------|------------------------|
| Askeran       | 11        | 1,525,988              |
| Martakert     | 4         | 635,375                |
| Martuni       | 11        | 192,989                |
| <b>Totals</b> | <b>26</b> | <b>2,354,352</b>       |

CHAs = Confirmed hazardous areas \* Contamination data based on CHAs, in contrast to the previous year when reported data was based on "evidence points".<sup>13</sup>

In 2022, HALO confirmed a total of 3,732,848m<sup>2</sup> of CHA containing CMR through survey and resurvey.<sup>14</sup> This included 403,065m<sup>2</sup> of CMR contamination (including both legacy contamination and contamination from the 2020 conflict),<sup>15</sup> which was discovered during resurvey of two tasks in Martuni District,<sup>16</sup> of which 317,735m<sup>2</sup> was cleared during the year.<sup>17</sup> HALO is the main organisation conducting land release in Nagorno-Karabakh; it does not have access to baseline data for survey conducted by other actors. Following the 2020 war, HALO initially prioritised survey of areas within populated villages and towns. Non-technical survey (NTS) teams have now started surveying uninhabited areas and HALO acknowledges that re-survey may be needed where the area to be cleared or cancelled is extended due to new evidence provided by other actors.<sup>18</sup>

CMR contamination as at April 2022, had previously been reported by HALO as 11.27km<sup>2</sup>, but this was based on evidence points, and not on CHAs.<sup>19</sup>

## OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND LANDMINES

Nagorno-Karabakh is also contaminated by other explosive remnants of war (ERW) and by anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Nagorno-Karabakh for further information).

## NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Nagorno-Karabakh does not have a national mine action centre. Nagorno-Karabakh's security chief, Major-General Vitaly Balasanyan, set up a working group in early 2021 to coordinate clearance of ERW. In 2021 the working group met weekly with participation from the Rescue Service and humanitarian mine clearance organisations, the military, and Russian peacekeepers.<sup>20</sup>

In August 2021, by presidential decree, the group became the "Mine Action Coordination Council" (commonly known as the Mine Action Council), with high-level representation from the authorities, the Centre for Humanitarian Demining (CHD FUND), and HALO.<sup>21</sup> This is the only coordination body for mine action in Nagorno-Karabakh. Council meetings continued throughout 2022, with the participation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), but only met once a month. By mid-March 2023, the first meeting of 2023 had yet to take place.<sup>22</sup>

The Nagorno-Karabakh authorities do not provide HALO with funding to clear affected areas.<sup>23</sup>

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

HALO does not have a programme-level environmental management standard operating procedures (SOPs) for Nagorno-Karabakh but does adhere to its organisational SOP and guidelines set at its headquarters and adheres to local legislation.

There was a new "Global Environment and Nature Conservation" lead in post at HALO and a local SOP was anticipated in 2022, but this did not materialise.<sup>24</sup> In line with its commitment to protecting the environment, when conducting EOD, survey, and clearance, HALO installs latrines, ensures that safe land is not contaminated by explosive kick-outs, removes only vegetation necessary to conduct clearance, and clears all scrap metal and other clearance residues and disposes of them appropriately.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Email from David Crawford, Programme Manager, Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia, HALO, 20 April 2023.

<sup>14</sup> Email from David Crawford, HALO, 3 May 2023.

<sup>15</sup> Email from David Crawford, HALO, 7 June 2023.

<sup>16</sup> Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

<sup>17</sup> Email from David Crawford, HALO, 20 April 2023.

<sup>18</sup> Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

<sup>19</sup> Email from David Crawford, HALO, 20 April 2023.

<sup>20</sup> Emails from Miles Hawthorn, 20 May 2021; and Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 6 May 2022.

<sup>22</sup> Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

<sup>23</sup> Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 5 May 2022.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.; and email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

## GENDER AND DIVERSITY

HALO's Nagorno-Karabakh programme reports that it complies strictly with HALO's global gender and diversity policy, providing equal access to employment for women and engaging them in management and operational roles.<sup>26</sup> Elements of the policy are integrated into HALO's Nagorno-Karabakh programme SOPs and policies, including battle area clearance (BAC), NTS, explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), task management SOPs, and safeguarding and whistleblowing policies. Through private funding, the programme is providing monthly childcare stipends to female employees who have children to support and encourage their engagement in mine action work.<sup>27</sup>

Overall, 12% (14 women) of HALO staff in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2022 were women. This comprised 10% of supervisory positions (1 woman) and 7% (10 women) working in field operations.<sup>28</sup> HALO's most senior national staff member, the Deputy Programme Manager, is a woman.<sup>29</sup> HALO's staff include internally displaced persons (IDPs), displaced by the conflict with Azerbaijan in 2020; 19% of programme of staff (16 individuals including 4 women) were IDPs at mid-March 2023.<sup>30</sup>

All groups affected by CMR and anti-personnel mines, including women and children, are said to be consulted during survey and community liaison activities, and HALO prioritises survey and clearance activities in areas where children play and women go to forage.<sup>31</sup> Relevant mine action data are disaggregated by age, gender, disability, and by whether individuals are internally displaced, and HALO takes steps to ensure that everyone benefits from clearance.<sup>32</sup>

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## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Nagorno-Karabakh does not have a mine action information management system. HALO operates its own database.<sup>33</sup> In 2020, HALO switched to an online server termed the "Global Operations Information Management System" (GO-IMS). By using GO-IMS and Survey123 (a data collection tool by ArcGIS that applies location-based analytics), HALO continues to strengthen its information management system. In 2022, PowerBI (a platform that infuses visuals into applications) was introduced and rolled out across HALO programmes to improve data visualisation and presentation processes in the organisation.<sup>34</sup>

There is still no central mechanism or database for systematic sharing of data on mine clearance, underscoring the value of a mine action authority. The Mine Action Council (described above) facilitates some sharing of information and data, coordination of activities, and discussion of security and other safety issues. But more detail is required to conform to recognised international standards.<sup>35</sup>

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## PLANNING AND TASKING

Prior to the outbreak of the conflict in September 2020, HALO focused on survey and clearance of mined areas in line with donor wishes, giving priority to areas where confirmed accidents indicated the greatest humanitarian threat and where cleared areas were most likely to be put to use.

Starting in 2019, HALO embarked on a survey of mine contamination throughout Nagorno-Karabakh. After the 2020 conflict, HALO's focus switched from mines to CMR,<sup>36</sup> mine survey was put on hold until 2022, and priority was given to a baseline survey of CMR and other UXO resulting from the war and to conducting surface BAC and EOD. HALO had aimed to complete the survey of all villages in Askeran, Martakert and Martuni regions by the end of September 2021,<sup>37</sup> but by the end of 2021 it had completed survey of 105 out of 128 inhabited settlements.

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26 Emails from Asqanaz Hambardzumyan, HALO, 10 April 2019; and Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

27 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

28 Ibid.

29 Emails from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 5 May 2022; and David Crawford, HALO, 20 April 2023.

30 Email from David Crawford, HALO, 20 April 2023.

31 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 5 May 2022.

32 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

33 Email from Rob Syfret, Programme Manager, HALO, 7 May 2020.

34 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

35 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 5 May 2022.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

HALO selects clearance tasks according to its internal prioritisation matrix based on data collected during survey, including direct and indirect beneficiaries, current and future land use, and accidents data.<sup>38</sup> In 2022, HALO's clearance efforts focused on villages across the three regions of Askeran, Martakert, and Martuni, according to its prioritisation matrix. A remote base was established in Martakert to increase clearance efficiency. HALO completed survey of all villages and started survey of uninhabited areas in the three regions, completing about 40% by mid-March 2023.<sup>39</sup>

In 2023, HALO had planned to continue its work on prioritised areas, but due to the blockade in the Lachin corridor (starting in December 2022 with protests by "eco-activists" and reinforced by the installation of an Azerbaijani checkpoint on the Lachin corridor in April 2023<sup>40</sup>), HALO has reduced its area of operation to reduce fuel usage. This has resulted in survey, clearance, and EOD teams being deployed only in tasks close to Stepanakert.

## LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

### STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Nagorno-Karabakh has no local mine action standards. HALO follows its internal SOPs developed for the programme in line with HALO's global SOPs and guidelines. This includes SOPs for task management, NTS, BAC, manual clearance, mechanical clearance, EOD, medical support, and risk education. SOPs are reviewed periodically and updated where new methods or procedures need to be included.<sup>41</sup>

### OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Since it started working in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2000, HALO has been and remains the main organisation conducting land release. Clearance is conducted mostly in the summer months between May and October.

**Table 2: HALO operational NTS, mine, and CMR clearance capacities (at January 2022)<sup>42</sup>**

|               | NTS teams | NTS personnel* | Manual teams | Total deminers |
|---------------|-----------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
|               | 6         | 18             | 8            | 56             |
| <b>Totals</b> | <b>6</b>  | <b>18</b>      | <b>8</b>     | <b>56</b>      |

\* Excluding team leaders, medics, and drivers.

HALO's overall staff numbers have fluctuated in recent years though there was a steady decrease in personnel in 2021 and 2022. At the beginning of 2022, HALO had a total of 96 field staff (88 survey and clearance personnel, including team leaders,<sup>43</sup> plus 8 EOD staff members) but by the end of the year the number had fallen to 64 (across six BAC teams and three survey teams). In contrast in 2021, HALO had 120 field staff including clearance, survey, EOD, and mechanical teams.<sup>44</sup> The decrease was due to a considerable drop in the value of the US dollar, with staff leaving for better paid positions. Whether there is a further decrease in the number of survey and clearance staff in 2023 will depend on whether the blockade of the Lachin Corridor continues, inflation, and the US Dollar exchange rate.<sup>45</sup>

The Nagorno-Karabakh Emergency Service (formerly known as the Rescue Service) conducts EOD spot tasks and has reportedly conducted some BAC. HALO works very closely with the Emergency Service and has provided many of its staff with EOD and area clearance training.<sup>46</sup> One Nagorno-Karabakh army unit conducts limited demining.<sup>47</sup> Russian peacekeepers have conducted area clearance and spot EOD since the conflict. The units have not shared details of clearance operations with HALO but do share details with the Emergency Service, and have coordinated with HALO on demolitions.<sup>48</sup>

CHD FUND (previously known as HAK), a local mine clearance organisation, was established in 2020, initially with one clearance team. In 2022, CHD FUND was mostly focused on BAC operations. HALO did not provide any information, equipment, or training to CHD FUND in 2022.<sup>49</sup>

38 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

39 Ibid.

40 "Azerbaijan sets up checkpoints on the Lachin corridor", *Economic Intelligence*, 27 April 2023, at <https://bit.ly/3WRhSIE>.

41 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

42 Ibid.

43 Email from Sergio Mahecha, Operations Manager, HALO, Nagorno-Karabakh, 3 May 2023.

44 Email from David Crawford, HALO, 20 April 2023.

45 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

46 Emails from Asqanaz Hambardzumyan, HALO, 26 April 2019; and Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

47 Ibid.

48 Emails from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 18 April 2021; and Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

49 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

Unlike in 2021, when COVID-19 had a significant impact on survey and clearance operations (vaccine hesitancy in Nagorno-Karabakh, including among HALO staff was widespread), and a considerable number of team days were lost in both survey and clearance,<sup>50</sup> COVID-19 did not affect clearance operations in 2022.<sup>51</sup> A training event in 2022 was cancelled as one participant tested positive for COVID-19.<sup>52</sup>

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

### LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

In 2022, HALO continued to focus on CMR clearance as it has done since the end of the armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in November 2020. HALO released a total of 3,123,634m<sup>2</sup> of cluster munition-contaminated area in 2022, of which 2,850,855m<sup>2</sup> was cleared and 272,779m<sup>2</sup> was cancelled through NTS. In the process, HALO destroyed 388 submunitions: 49 during clearance and 339 in spot tasks. No land was reduced through technical survey (TS).<sup>53</sup>

### SURVEY IN 2022

In 2022, HALO cancelled a total of 272,779m<sup>2</sup> of hazardous area: 99,978m<sup>2</sup> through NTS in Askeran district and another 172,801m<sup>2</sup> in Martuni district. This contrasts with 2021 when HALO did not cancel any hazardous area through NTS.<sup>54</sup> As in 2021, no land was reduced through TS.

In addition, HALO added 3,732,848m<sup>2</sup> of new CHA containing CMR to the database in 2022, which it discovered during survey and resurvey.<sup>55</sup> This included 403,065m<sup>2</sup> of CMR contamination resulting from the 2020 conflict,<sup>56</sup> which was partially cleared.<sup>57</sup>

### CLEARANCE IN 2022

In 2022, HALO cleared a total of 2,850,855m<sup>2</sup> of hazardous area,<sup>58</sup> a decrease of more than 33% from the 4,001,259m<sup>2</sup> of CHA it cleared in 2021.<sup>59</sup> This is reported to be largely due to a reduction in the number of available clearance personnel.<sup>60</sup>

HALO indicated that in the vast majority of its operations, it conducts additional clearance to achieve a 50m fadeout from each evidence point, so that most tasks cleared are significantly larger than the original CHA, often twice as large.<sup>61</sup>

HALO has to date continued to conduct surface CMR clearance only.<sup>62</sup> As was the case following the 2016 war, minimal items have been found subsurface since the 2020 war ended, despite numerous areas being ploughed. HALO will conduct subsurface clearance when the number of items found on the surface starts to decrease. In 2021, it purchased two new large-loop detectors with funding from Norway and conducted further tests on soft ground in highly contaminated areas in 2022, the result of which were positive.<sup>63</sup>

Table 3: CMR clearance by HALO in 2022<sup>64</sup>

| District      | Area cleared (m <sup>2</sup> ) | Submunitions destroyed | Other UXO destroyed during CMR clearance |
|---------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| Askeran       | 1,241,340                      | 35                     | 2,061                                    |
| Martakert     | 405,750                        | 2                      | 94                                       |
| Martuni       | 1,203,765                      | 12                     | 29                                       |
| Spot tasks    | N/A                            | 339                    | 0  |
| <b>Totals</b> | <b>2,850,855</b>               | <b>388</b>             | <b>2,184</b>                             |

50 Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 5 May 2022.

51 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Emails from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 5 May 2022; and Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

55 Email from David Crawford, HALO, 3 May 2023.

56 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

57 Email from David Crawford, HALO, 20 April 2023.

58 Ibid.

59 Emails from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 5 May 2022; and Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

60 Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

61 Email from David Crawford, HALO, 3 May 2023.

62 Emails from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 5 May 2022; and Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

63 Email from David Crawford, HALO, 20 April 2023.

64 Emails from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023; and David Crawford, HALO, 7 June 2023. HALO has indicated that clearance figures include a 50-metre fade-out.

In 2022, HALO destroyed a total of 388 submunitions, most through spot tasks.<sup>65</sup> This compares with 1,715 submunitions destroyed by HALO during spot tasks and in 2021.<sup>66</sup>

**Table 4: Five-year summary of CMR clearance**

| Year               | Area cleared (m <sup>2</sup> ) |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2022               | 2.85                           |
| 2021               | 4.00                           |
| 2020 <sup>67</sup> | 0.15                           |
| 2019               | 0.05                           |
| 2018               | 0                              |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>7.05</b>                    |

## PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Until 2021, productivity had dropped sharply in recent years, which HALO ascribed to donor hesitancy. HALO highlighted that in 2021 and 2022 the average area cleared by each team each month remained pretty steady (38,567m<sup>2</sup> per month in 2021 compared with 33,389m<sup>2</sup> in 2022) and the overall decrease in the area cleared in 2022, 160,957m<sup>2</sup>, is mainly due to the gradual reduction in BAC teams in the second half of 2022 (from 10 July).<sup>68</sup> However, the overall outlook for CMR clearance in Nagorno-Karabakh has not significantly changed.

Despite the sharply increased humanitarian threat posed by cluster munitions and other ERW since the 2020 war, prospects for scaling up clearance continue to be limited by funding constraints.<sup>69</sup> This also prevents HALO from offering competitive salaries with the consequent loss of staff to organisations offering better rates of pay.<sup>70</sup> The blockade of the Lachin Corridor since mid-December 2022 is another obstacle to CMR clearance.

<sup>65</sup> Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

<sup>66</sup> Email from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 5 May 2022.

<sup>67</sup> Email from David Crawford, HALO, 7 June 2023. HALO previously reported no CMR clearance for 2020.

<sup>68</sup> Email from Fiona Kilpatrick-Cooper, HALO, 16 March 2023.

<sup>69</sup> Emails from Miles Hawthorn, HALO, 18 April 2021 and 5 May 2022.

<sup>70</sup> Email from David Crawford, HALO, 20 April 2023.