

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JUNE 2028
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM**
MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE
PROBABLY LESS THAN 5KM²

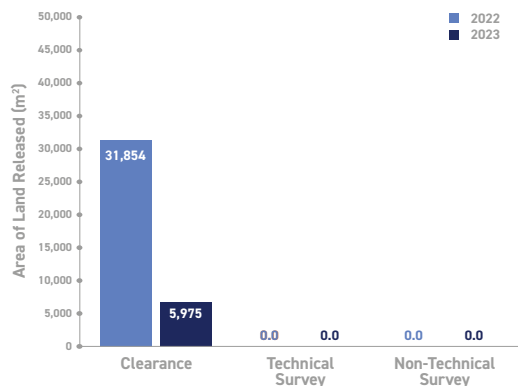
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2023

5,975M²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2023

32

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): NONE

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2023, The HALO Trust completed Phase 1 of its operations in the West Bank, clearing the two remaining high-priority mixed anti-personnel (AP) mine and anti-vehicle (AV) mined areas at Qabatiya and Yabad in Jenin. HALO also cleared two AV minefields in the Jordan Valley, completing clearance at Taysir in 2023 and at Sokot in early 2024. Since the events of 7 October 2023, there have been unconfirmed reports of new use of AP and AV mines in the Gaza Strip, which was not previously known to be mined.

FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW

The precise extent of AP mined area in Palestine is not known. All mined areas are in territory under Israeli control;¹ Israel has not to date authorised the Palestinian Mine Action Centre (PMAC) to conduct demining, and Israel must approve all demining operations in the West Bank.² HALO has conducted mine clearance under the auspices of PMAC and the Israel Mine Action Authority (INMAA) since 2014, and by the middle of 2023, had cleared nine high-priority minefields under Phase 1 of its operations in the West Bank, including three mixed AP and AV sites in Jenin and another in Tul Kareem since July 2019.³ Work in Phase 1 was affected by a lack of funding, and operations paused completely in 2021 for this reason.⁴ Between 2018 and 2020, HALO also completed clearance of a mixed AP and AV mine site at Qaser al-Yahud (the Baptism Site project) in the Jordan Valley.⁵

1 Initial Article 7 Report, dated 26 November 2018, Form D and Annex 2.

2 Ibid.

3 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, Programme Manager, HALO, 10 April and 21 August 2019.

4 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 17 May 2022.

5 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly of INMAA, 26 May 2018.

INMAA has also overseen demining activities in the West Bank, undertaken by private companies,⁶ and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) conducts their own clearance operations, as reported in Israel's annual Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II Article 13 reports.⁷ However, Israel has not generally disaggregated mines from other explosive remnants of war (ERW), or indicated if any clearance is conducted in the West Bank, so progress is unclear.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Israel should allow clearance of all mined areas on Palestinian territory to proceed as a matter of urgency.
- Palestine should ensure passage and implementation of the national mine action law without further delay.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Higher Committee for Mine Action
- Palestine Mine Action Centre (PMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust (HALO)

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

In its initial Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 7 transparency report, submitted in November 2018, Palestine reported 69 areas suspected to contain AP mines on the border with Jordan, covering a total area of 18.51km². All mined areas were said to be under Israeli control.⁸ In its most recent APMBC Article 7 report covering 2023, PMAC reported that 16 areas were previously known to contain AP mines covering 604,634m² and another 65 areas covering 18,510,899m² on the border with Jordan were suspected to contain AP mines.⁹ Palestine did not know whether mined areas are located in East Jerusalem or in other areas of Palestine under Israeli control, including in the region of Israeli settlements or closed military zones.¹⁰

The IDF informed HALO in 2012 about the presence of 90 minefields in the West Bank, 13 of which were laid by the Jordanian military in 1948–67, while the remaining 77 were laid by the Israeli military along the Jordan River after the 1967 war. The minefields are located east of the security fence, inside a military buffer zone, and do not immediately threaten civilians. All the minefields, including those laid by the Jordanian military, are under Israeli military control.¹¹ There were no known mined areas in the Gaza Strip at this time (but see the information below on this issue).¹²

Israel does not authorise PMAC to conduct demining operations in the West Bank. In September 2013, however, INMAA gave HALO formal authorisation to clear two minefields in the West Bank deemed high priority by PMAC (in Qalqiliya governorate). Following INMAA authorisation, HALO began clearance on 2 April 2014, and under Phase 1 of its activities, continued to clear nine high priority Jordanian-laid minefields in the West Bank,¹³ working under the auspices of the INMAA and PMAC.

In 2023, HALO cleared the two remaining high-priority sites in the West Bank—Yabad and Qabatiya in Jenin—by early June,¹⁴ thereby completing Phase 1 of HALO's operations in the West Bank.¹⁵ These operations were not funded by either the Palestinian or the Israeli governments and HALO faced significant challenges raising funds for their clearance from donors,¹⁶ including for external quality assurance (QA) which can only be conducted by an Israeli company under Israeli law.¹⁷

In 2022, PMAC gave approval for HALO to clear three of the four minefields in the Jordan Valley: the Taysir and Sokot AV minefields, and the AP minefield at Sokot;¹⁸ INMAA approval was also given. Clearance of these sites in the Jordan

6 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 10 April 2019.

7 See the CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Reports (covering 2019–23), Form B.

8 Palestine Initial Article 7 Report, Form D and Annex 2; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

9 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D and Appendix 1, pp. 16–19.

10 Palestine Initial Article 7 Report, Form D, p. 3.

11 Emails from Tom Meredith, Desk Officer, HALO, 24 June and 23 October 2015; Sonia Pezier, Junior Programme Officer, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), 14 April 2015; and Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 13 June 2021.

12 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 13 June 2021.

13 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 2 August 2023.

14 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March and 27 July 2023.

15 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 2 August 2023.

16 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 23 April 2021.

17 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 17 May 2022.

18 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 5 August 2024; and online interview, 5 August 2024.

Valley form HALO's Phase 2 operation.¹⁹ Operations at the Taysir AV minefield started on 2 July 2023,²⁰ and the area was subsequently cleared in 2023.²¹ The IDF had previously cleared about 300,000m² of the AV minefield at Sokot, but had not released the area.²² HALO cleared the Sokot AV minefield in 2023–24.²³

As at the end of 2023, there was 0.19km² of confirmed mined area (excluding the Jordan Valley) across two minefields in no-man's-land between the West Bank and Israel,²⁴ both of which had been laid by the Jordanian army. In addition, in the Jordan Valley, there was one confirmed AP mined area at Sokot, where clearance was ongoing in 2024, and another thought to contain a mix of AP and AV mines at Shadmot Mehola.²⁵

Table 1: Mined area (at end 2023)²⁶

Governorate	Minefield Task	Contamination	CHA	Area (m ²)
Ramallah	No Man's Land Yalo	AV and AP mines	1	104,226
	No Man's Land - Canada Park	AV and AP mines	1	85,708
Jordan Valley	Sokot	AP mines	*1	227,000
	Shadmot Mehola	AP and AT mines	1	65,000
Totals			4	481,934

* There are 31 polygons and an estimated 19,000 AP mines at the Sokot AP minefield site.²⁷

Mine action is subject to the 1995 Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, commonly known as the Oslo II accord, under which the West Bank is divided into three areas: Area A is under full Palestinian civil and security control; Area B is under full Palestinian civil control and joint Israeli-Palestinian security control; and Area C refers to areas where Israel has full civil and security control.²⁸ Most mined areas are located in Area C of the West Bank, along the border with Jordan. Area C covers approximately 60% of the West Bank.²⁹

Since the Hamas attack on Israel on 7 October 2023, and the subsequent conflict, there have been unconfirmed reports that mines have been used in the Gaza Strip by Hamas, and on the border of Gaza by the IDF. According to online media sources, in the immediate aftermath of the attack, Israel is reported to have used mines to seal the border with Gaza which were breached in the attack.³⁰ However, it is not clear whether the assertion is that AP and/or AV mines were used or if the mines extended into Gazan territory. Some Israeli

security experts have argued that landmines could prevent any future invasion of Israel,³¹ and there were reports in January 2024 that Israel was preparing to create a buffer zone, encroaching on territory in Gaza, using landmines. Demolitions had reportedly already started on the Gazan side of the border in preparation.³² INMAA has denied that Israel has emplaced any mines in Gaza or on the border with Gaza since 7 October 2023.³³

Data accessed on the Fenix Insight database, indicates that Hamas has used AP and AV mines in Gaza, including around Gaza City and Khan Yunis, since October 2023.³⁴ The reports specifying incidents involving AP mine use are infrequent, and involve the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs)/locally manufactured mines, including the Thunder Charge AP mine; "TV shaped" AP mines;³⁵ the Al-Qaffaza bounding AP mine; and the Commando Action Package (a victim-activated Hamas IED),³⁶ but it is not clear when such devices have been victim-activated and when they have been remotely detonated. There are more reports indicating AV use,

19 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Appendix 5, pp. 44–45.

20 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 27 July 2023.

21 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 30 June 2023.

22 Interview with Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 2 August 2023.

23 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 30 June 2023 and 5 August 2024; and online interview, 5 August 2024.

24 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 23 April 2021, 17 May 2022, and 26 March 2023.

25 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 30 June 2023 and 5 August 2024.

26 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March and 4 September 2023 and 30 June 2024; and online interview, 5 August 2024.

27 Email from Ronen Shimoni, 30 June 2024; and online interview, 5 August 2024.

28 Email from Celine Francois, Programme Officer, UNMAS Jerusalem, 5 July 2012.

29 Email from Celine Francois, UNMAS Jerusalem, 5 July 2012; and "UNMAS 2013 Annual Report".

30 "IDF says Gaza border finally sealed, bodies of 1,500 terrorists found inside Israel, The Times of Israel, 10 October 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3XYrT08>; and H. Sullivan and M. Belam, "Hamas and Israel at war: what we know on day 4", *The Guardian*, 10 October 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/4cVKIL3>.

31 "Landmines proposed as solution for Israel's border protection", *Globes*, 12 December 2023, at <https://bit.ly/4bKzpzT>.

32 "Hamas blasts Israel's plan to create buffer zone in Gaza as a 'crime'", *Al Jazeera*, 25 January 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3W4Ga8Z>.

33 Email from Shahar Back, Director, INMAA, 15 July 2024.

34 Fenix Insight database, "Filters:01/01/2023-20/082024, mines", accessed 22 August 2024, at: <https://fenix-insight.online/>.

35 Ibid.

36 Fenix Insight, Situation Update, 3 July 2024.

including the small and large Thaqib (a Hamas off-route AV mine),³⁷ and Shawaz AV mines; in total in 7 October 2023–20 August 2024, the Fenix Insight database recorded incidents involving the possible use of AV and AP mines on approximately 40 occasions.³⁸ Humanity & Inclusion (HI) has also indicated the potential use of mines since October 2023, referring to the possibility of Gazans stepping on “a

mine planted by Hamas”.³⁹ Media sources have also reported that Hamas has used AP mines, such as in the dense, urban terrain of Shujaiya in July 2024,⁴⁰ and that it has used unexploded Israeli mines against the IDF.⁴¹ At the start of November 2023, *The Guardian* newspaper published a map suggesting that Hamas had laid mines in Gaza, though did not specify which type of mine.⁴²

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Palestine is also contaminated with ERW. According to the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), PMAC has identified 46 ERW-contaminated areas in the West Bank. These areas are predominantly Israeli military training sites. In 2020, UNMAS conducted an ERW impact survey in some locations close to these areas to better understand the impact of the contamination on the residents.⁴³

Following the 7 October 2023 attack, the situation has significantly changed. At the end of April 2024, the UN estimated that Israeli attacks had left 37 tonnes of rubble and unexploded ordnance (UXO) in Gaza.⁴⁴ The mine action response in Gaza since October 2023 has been hampered by restrictions on importing humanitarian mine action supplies and gaining authority to deploy specialised personnel.⁴⁵

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

PMAC was established in accordance with Palestinian Minister of Interior decision in 2012,⁴⁶ which appointed a director and created a Higher Committee for Mine Action as an interministerial body. The Higher Committee for Mine Action, which serves as the national mine action authority, is tasked with developing mine action legislation and allocating resources for the sector.⁴⁷ PMAC, which is located in the Ministry of Interior in Ramallah, is mandated to coordinate all aspects of mine action in the West Bank. It receives technical advice from UNMAS.⁴⁸ PMAC has established a number of subcommittees to deal with technical issues, risk education, legal affairs, foreign affairs, and health and safety.⁴⁹

In 2016, Palestine announced it was seeking to enact a mine action law. Palestine was hopeful of completing the legal procedures within a year and then presenting the draft law to the legislative council for endorsement, followed by signature by the President.⁵⁰ In March 2023, PMAC reported that the legislation was in its final stages prior to adoption.⁵¹ In April 2024, PMAC expected the legislation would be adopted by

ministers “within a matter of months”,⁵² though as at August 2024 it did not appear to have passed into law. The primacy of the APMBC in domestic law has, however, been established: in 2017, Palestine’s constitutional court ruled that, should there ever be any contradiction, obligations in international treaties, including the APMBC, override national legislation.⁵³

At the start of 2023, PMAC, had 14 employees,⁵⁴ and was staffed with personnel from the Palestinian National Security Forces, Civil Police, and Civil Defence. In 2013, 36 PMAC personnel were trained by UNMAS for demining but were not subsequently authorised by Israel to conduct clearance.⁵⁵ The Civil Police has an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) unit, which had 42 personnel, in Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, Nablus, Qalqilya, Ramallah, and Tulkarem, who conduct rapid response to locate and remove items of UXO; it is not known whether the number of staff has changed. The EOD unit is only permitted to work in Area A of the West Bank.⁵⁶ All West Bank Police EOD Units are poorly equipped and lack EOD training. Due to poor information technology systems, none

37 Fenix Insight, Situation Update, 7 August 2024.

38 Fenix Insight database, “Filters:01/01/2023-20/082024, mines”, accessed 22 August 2024.

39 “Mine clearance operations will take years’ in the Gaza Strip, warns Handicap International”, *Actual News Magazine*, 10 February 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/4eVtZ5V>.

40 “Hamas Is Reconstituting Itself In The Gaza Strip”, *The Times of Israel*, 10 July 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3zEBajJ>.

41 “Hamas Uses Israeli ‘Unexploded Missiles, Mines’ To Attack IDF; Claim Of Killing Troops In Fresh Trap”, *Hindustan Times*, 29 June 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3xTw9Dm>.

42 “More than 1,000 craters: satellite images show destruction of northern Gaza Strip”, *The Guardian*, 4 November 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/4eW5TZP>.

43 Email from Soula Kreitem, UNMAS, 30 June 2021.

44 The New Humanitarian, “Unexploded ordnance: The growing Gaza challenge that’s not going away”, 10 June 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3S4ofOB>.

45 The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), “Today’s top news: Occupied Palestinian Territory, Haiti, Mozambique”, 14 March 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3LIWdKI>; and OCHA, “Gaza Humanitarian Response Update: 10–23 June 2024”, 26 June 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3XZWC6p>.

46 Minister of Interior Decision No. 69, 25 March 2012.

47 Emails from Celine Francois, UNMAS Jerusalem, 19 July 2012; and Imad Mohareb, Planning Department, PMAC, 31 March 2013.

48 Emails from Celine Francois, UNMAS Jerusalem, 5 and 19 July 2012; and UN, “2012 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects”, New York, 2013.

49 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 9 May 2016.

50 Statement of Palestine, APMBC Fifteenth Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 29 November 2016.

51 Email from Maj. Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 23 March 2023.

52 Interview with Brig. Osama Abu Hananeh, PMAC, Geneva, 30 April 2024.

53 Initial Article 7 Report, Form A.

54 Email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 23 March 2023.

55 Initial Article 7 Report, Form D.

56 Email from staff member in the Planning Department, PMAC, 26 June 2018.

of the EOD teams shares information with PMAC, although this was reported to be changing.⁵⁷ In 2022, UNMAS and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) conducted preparatory work to support PMAC to upgrade to the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core.⁵⁸

PMAC does not have its own budget, and the Palestinian authority only provides funding for the salaries of PMAC employees and the costs of the PMAC office.⁵⁹ As at July 2024, Israel had not granted the Palestinian authorities authorisation to conduct area mine clearance in the West Bank. As indicated above, HALO's recent land release operations of priority minefields in the West Bank and

AV mined areas in the Jordan Valley were funded by international donors.⁶⁰

Clearance must be coordinated with the Israeli authorities and PMAC, and, under Israeli law, must be quality assured by an Israeli company.⁶¹ There is an unwritten understanding between HALO with both authorities regarding the division of responsibilities,⁶² and both the INMAA and PMAC support HALO's activities and provide the necessary coordination and involvement.⁶³

In Gaza, in the absence of a functioning national mine authority, on 9 April 2024 the UN circulated a letter identifying UNMAS as the official mine action coordination and tasking body in April 2024.⁶⁴

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

PMAC has said it has a gender policy and implementation plan in place, that it disaggregates data by sex and age,⁶⁵ and that qualified women and men have equal access to employment.⁶⁶ As a result of a one-year grant from UNMAS for the mainstreaming of gender in its risk education activities, in 2021 the number of women working and volunteering at PMAC increased.⁶⁷ No detailed updated gender breakdown data has been disclosed by PMAC, but at April 2024, it suggested that between 40% and 50% of its staff are female.⁶⁸

HALO has a global policy on gender and diversity. When conducting operations, HALO's Palestine programme

deploys all-male deminers from Georgia due to "cultural considerations". HALO's Palestinian employees include mechanical operators, and medical and support teams. The representation of female employees varies according to the operation. For managerial positions within HALO's West Bank office team, there is said to be equal access to employment for qualified women and men.⁶⁹ But in June 2024, HALO reported that just one of its twenty-one staff in the West Bank was a woman. She was employed in one of five managerial/supervisory positions within the organisation.⁷⁰

UNMAS has a female liaison officer in Ramallah who works with PMAC on a daily basis.⁷¹

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

In the West Bank, HALO follows its global policy and standard operating procedures (SOPs) on the environmental impact of clearance operations and mitigation⁷² and all clearance operations are planned and conducted to minimise any environmental impact. Where impact cannot be avoided, plans are made to mitigate this and to make good any damage caused, for example replacing soil, replanting vegetation, and conducting full remediation following mechanical clearance. Landowners and communities are included in the development of clearance plans and mitigation and remedial measures.⁷³

57 Emails from Patrick McCabe, Chief of Operations, UNMAS Palestine, 22 August 2022; and Tess Bresnan, Head of Project Unit/Senior Programme Officer, UNMAS Palestine, 25 April 2023.

58 Email from Tess Bresnan, UNMAS Palestine, 25 April 2023.

59 Interview with Brig. Osama Abu Hananeh, PMAC, Geneva, 7 February 2019; email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 23 March 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023); Form D.

60 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

61 Email from Soula Kreitem, Programme Support Officer, UNMAS, 30 June 2021.

62 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 30 June 2024.

63 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 24 July 2022.

64 UNMAS presentation to Mine Action Support Group, Latest Timelines: UNMAS in Gaza", 29 April 2024 (Geneva), at: <https://bit.ly/3Y4Gabl>.

65 Email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 24 May 2020.

66 Email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 12 May 2021.

67 Emails from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 15 June 2022 and 23 March 2023.

68 Interview with Brig. Osama Abu Hananeh, PMAC, Geneva, 30 April 2024.

69 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 23 April and 13 June 2021 and 17 May 2022.

70 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

71 Emails from Patrick McCabe, UNMAS Palestine, 17 August 2022; and Tess Bresnan, UNMAS Palestine, 25 April 2023.

72 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 17 May 2022 and 26 March 2023.

73 Ibid.

HALO's operations are accredited to ISO 14001 on environmental management and comply with the environmental standards set by the authorities in the West Bank. An annual assessment and review is conducted to ensure that the programme operates according to all required procedures.⁷⁴ Standards are monitored by an external QA company and the Israeli Standards Institute.⁷⁵ In accordance with national specifications and laws, the relevant authorities approve HALO's activities in advance of any new activities, and HALO takes into account any comments or objections including environmental issues. Clearance plans are submitted for approval and include a risk management table. Weather conditions are addressed as part of the national specification requirements, including weather hazards (extreme heat, rain, and flooding). The weather forecast is monitored daily and the team in the field is notified of any risks, as needed.⁷⁶

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

PMAC uses an old version of IMSMA.⁷⁷ The Police EOD systems are also old and EOD teams have not been inputting information into the IMSMA database.⁷⁸ In 2022, as planned, UNMAS and the GICHD supported PMAC in preparations to install IMSMA Core. In 2023, this was to be taken forward with in-person facilitation and training in the West Bank.⁷⁹ As at April 2024, the transition was reported to be ongoing, and it was noted that PMAC staff still required training.⁸⁰

HALO is in the process of rolling out its global database, the Global Operations Information Management System (GO-IMS), which was to be introduced in the West Bank in 2023,⁸¹ but this was delayed and was due to be introduced in 2024.⁸² HALO follows the INMAA's national standards and, when

undertaking operations in the West Bank, provides daily and weekly reports as well as completion reports for every task. The information is shared with PMAC weekly, along with completion reports and geographic information system (GIS) data for every completed task.⁸³ As a result, all three entities are in possession of HALO survey and clearance data relating to demining in the West Bank.

Palestine submitted an initial Article 7 report in November 2018, as required by the APMBC.⁸⁴ No Article 7 reports were submitted for 2020 or 2021. Palestine did, however, submit an Article 7 report covering 2022 in June 2023 (although much of the information it contained pre-dated 2022).⁸⁵ An annual report covering 2023 was duly submitted in 2024.

PLANNING AND TASKING

PMAC had a Strategic Plan for 2017–20,⁸⁶ in which the primary objectives were the clearance of the Nur a-Shams, Qabatiya, and Yabad minefields in the West Bank.⁸⁷ Clearance of the Nur a-Shams minefield was completed in 2022 and clearance of the Qabatiya and Yabad minefields was completed in 2023. As of March 2023, the new strategic plan was again reported to be still in the pipeline but had not been finalised.⁸⁸ In April 2024, PMAC indicated that the new plan was still being developed but that it was being reviewed to take into account developments in Gaza since October 2023.⁸⁹ According to PMAC, there were no annual work plans in place between 2020 and 2023.⁹⁰

HALO's survey and clearance schedule in the West Bank is agreed with PMAC, INMAA, and its international donors,⁹¹ and clearance is conducted in an order approved by both PMAC and INMAA.⁹² As noted above, HALO completed clearance of the nine high-priority minefields in the West Bank under Phase 1 of its operations in 2023, nine years after they started. It cleared the final two sites in Qabatiya and Yabad in Jenin by early June.⁹³ In the Jordan Valley, under Phase 2 of its operations, HALO cleared the Taysir and Sokot AV minefields in 2023.⁹⁴

74 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 30 June 2024.

75 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

76 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 30 June 2024.

77 Emails from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 15 June 2022, and 23 March 2023.

78 Email from Patrick McCabe, UNMAS Palestine, 17 August 2022.

79 Email from Tess Bresnan, UNMAS Palestine, 25 April 2023.

80 Interview with Brig. Osama Abu Hananeh, PMAC, Geneva, 30 April 2024.

81 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

82 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 30 June 2024.

83 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 3 Sept 2018, 18 June 2020, 26 March 2023, and 30 June 2024.

84 Initial Article 7 Report, Form D.

85 Article 7 Report (covering 2022).

86 The Article 7 report covering 2017 indicated that the strategic plan covered 2017–22.

87 PMAC, "Strategic Plan 2017–2020", undated.

88 Emails from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 15 June 2022 and 23 March 2023.

89 Interview with Brig. Osama Abu Hananeh, PMAC, Geneva, 30 April 2024.

90 Emails from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 24 May 2020, 12 May 2021, and 15 June 2022.

91 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 18 June 2020 and 26 March 2023.

92 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 30 June 2024.

93 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March and 27 July 2023 and 30 June 2024.

94 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March, 27 July, and 2 August 2023, and 30 June 2024.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

HALO reported that no updates were made to any of the national mine action standards (NMAS) relating to the survey and clearance of AP mines in the West Bank in 2023.⁹⁵ HALO's SOPs are approved by the INMAA.⁹⁶ They were last submitted and approved in June 2020, and have not been amended since.⁹⁷

HALO's work in the West Bank complies with the Israeli Institute for Standards, and in particular with ISO 9001, ISO 14001, and ISO 18001. INMAA regularly visits sites and monitors operations against national standards, and clearance plans. There is daily contact between INMAA and HALO staff, and INMAA is reported to be involved in the details of HALO's operations.⁹⁸

HALO has its own internal quality control (QC), which is conducted by senior programme staff, and which complies with the ISO standards and HALO's own SOPs. In addition, the INMAA requires external INMAA-certified companies to undertake QA/QC of HALO's clearance operations in line with Israeli law.

HALO performed survey as part of its release of the Jordanian-laid minefields in Area C of the West Bank.⁹⁹ HALO conducts both manual and mechanical clearance. It also uses a drone for survey and mapping, with the maps generated shared with all parties involved for planning and follow-up.¹⁰⁰

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2023, HALO deployed one demining team, with between 10 and 12 deminers, along with two front-loaders, two excavators, and two screeners.¹⁰¹ This is a reduction in capacity on 2022, when HALO employed 28 staff in the West Bank (one NTS team plus a team of nine deminers with seven mechanical assets). No major changes to the number of survey or clearance personnel had been expected for 2023,¹⁰² and none was anticipated for 2024.¹⁰³

There were no demining accidents or attacks on personnel in 2023.¹⁰⁴ But following the events of 7 October 2023,

operations at the Sokot AV minefield were suspended, and on 12 October–12 November 2023, the Georgian operations team stayed outside the West Bank.¹⁰⁵ Their return followed a structured process involving the donors, both authorities, and a security assessment. It was agreed that the team would leave their residence in Jericho and move to the north-eastern part of the Jordan Valley, which is considered safer, thereby reducing travel time and minimising the chance that closures and curfews imposed on large cities would restrict the team's freedom of movement.¹⁰⁶

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2023

In 2023, 5,975m² of confirmed AP and AV mined area was released in the West Bank, all through clearance. A total of 32 AP mines and 26 AV mines were destroyed during the clearance operations. Another 15,945m² of AV mined area was cleared by HALO in 2023 in the Jordan Valley.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁵ Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023 and 30 June 2024.

⁹⁶ Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 14 May 2018.

⁹⁷ Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 17 May 2022.

⁹⁸ Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 30 June 2024.

⁹⁹ Emails from staff member in the Planning Department, PMAC, 9 May 2016; and Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 14 June 2020.

¹⁰⁰ Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 10 April 2019.

¹⁰¹ Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 30 June 2024.

¹⁰² Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

¹⁰³ Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 30 June 2024.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.; and online interview with Ronen Shimoni, 5 August 2024.

¹⁰⁶ Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 30 June 2024.

¹⁰⁷ Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 30 June and 5 August 2024; and online interview, 5 August 2024.

SURVEY IN 2023

No hazardous area was released through survey in the West Bank in 2023.¹⁰⁸

CLEARANCE IN 2023

In 2023, HALO cleared 5,975m² of confirmed AP mined area in the West Bank, destroying 32 AP mines and 26 AV mines.¹⁰⁹ This is a decrease from 2022, when 31,854m² of CHA was cleared in the West Bank, with 37 AP mines and 4 AV mines destroyed.¹¹⁰ It is, however, in line with the clearance plan that HALO set in collaboration with PMAC and INMAA, and marks the completion of Phase 1 of HALO's operations in the West Bank.¹¹¹

Table 2: AP mine clearance by HALO in 2023¹¹²

Operator	Governorate	Task Name	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed
HALO	Jenin	Qabatiya (mixed AP/AV minefield)	*3,382	31	26
HALO	Jenin	Yabad (mixed AP/AV minefield)	*2,593	*1	0
Totals			5,975	32	26

* The Article 7 report submitted by Palestine for 2023 indicates in Appendix 5 that 4,888m² was cleared in Qabatiya and that 31 AP mines and 26 AV mines destroyed, and that 2,153m² was cleared in Yabad with 2 AP mines destroyed. HALO reports that in Yabad, 4,379m² of hazardous area was cleared in 20 November 2022–28 February 2023 with three AP mines destroyed; the clearance figure of 2,593m² for 2023 is only an estimate.¹¹³

Clearance of the Yabad task was completed on 28 February 2023.¹¹⁴ Parts of the Yabad polygon were already inhabited and cultivated. HALO focused on areas not in use and cleared 12,397m² over four phases from 22 January 2018, enabling release of 48,050m² on 28 February 2023.¹¹⁵ Contamination at Yabad was previously reported as 40,032m²,¹¹⁶ but the area actually declared mine-free was 48,050m².¹¹⁷

In addition, HALO cleared two AV minefields in the Jordan Valley in 2023, Sokot and Taysir.

Table 3: AV mine clearance by HALO in 2023¹¹⁸

Operator	Governorate	Task Name	Area cleared (m ²)
HALO	Jordan Valley	Sokot*	7,710
HALO	Jordan Valley	Taysir*	8,235
Total			15,945

* The Article 7 report submitted by Palestine for 2023 indicates in Appendix 5 that 68,486m² of contaminated area was cleared in Sokot (mixed AP and AV mines) with no mines destroyed, and 9,942m² of AV contaminated area was cleared in Taysir with no mines destroyed. HALO reports that in Sokot, it cleared 94,947m² in 26 September 2023–28 February 2024; the figure of 7,710m² provided for 2023 is only an estimate.¹¹⁹

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 5 August 2024.

¹⁰⁹ Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 30 June 2024.

¹¹⁰ Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

¹¹¹ Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023 and 30 June 2024.

¹¹² Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 30 June and 5 August 2024.

¹¹³ Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 5 August 2024; and online interview, 5 August 2024.

¹¹⁴ Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

¹¹⁵ Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 4 September 2023.

¹¹⁶ Emails from Maj. Wala Jarrar, External and Internal Relations Officer, PMAC, 13 May 2020 and 15 June 2022; and Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 23 April 2021 and 17 May 2022.

¹¹⁷ Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 1 September 2024.

¹¹⁸ Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 30 June and 5 August 2024; and online interview, 5 August 2024.

¹¹⁹ Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 5 August 2024; and online interview, 5 August 2024.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE

APMBC ENTRY INTO FORCE FOR PALESTINE: 1 JUNE 2018



ORIGINAL ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JUNE 2028

NOT ON TRACK TO MEET ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE. COMPLETION IS CONTINGENT ON POLITICAL FACTORS, AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS, AND DEMINING PROGRESS MADE BY ISRAEL AND HALO, AS PALESTINE DOES NOT HAVE CONTROL OF MINED AREAS UNDER ITS JURISDICTION. LIKELIHOOD OF COMPLETING CLEARANCE BY 2025 (OSLO ACTION PLAN COMMITMENT): NONE

Under Article 5 of the APMBC, Palestine is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 June 2028. It will not meet this deadline.

Clearance in the West Bank is constrained by available funding,¹²⁰ and is affected by political factors, including the lack of authorisation granted by Israel for Palestine to conduct mine clearance.¹²¹ PMAC has reported that concluding clearance and meeting the 2025 deadline is dependent on the facilitation of the Israeli authorities and the availability of funds.¹²² PMAC states with the necessary support, it could complete Phase 2 of its clearance operations by 2027, and can provide a detailed project proposal to those interested in supporting its clearance efforts.¹²³ In its most recent Article 7 report (covering 2023), Palestine lists other challenges it faces in meeting its Article 5 obligations, including a lack of human resources to conduct survey and clearance, a lack of demining equipment for demining operations, and the "Israeli occupation", which prevents the government of Palestine from conducting demining.¹²⁴

Progress did, however, continue in 2023 when HALO completed Phase 1 of its operations in the West Bank.¹²⁵ In 2019, INMAA had originally hoped that clearance of mined areas in the West Bank would be finished in two years, including the Yalo and Canada Park minefields. However, according to humanitarian prioritisation, and noting that the

minefields are fenced and marked, INMAA claimed that the Yalo and Canada Park sites have little humanitarian impact.¹²⁶

Further progress was made at sites in the Jordan Valley. Having received approval, HALO released the AV minefields at Sokot and Taysir in the Jordan Valley.¹²⁷ This leaves only the Sokot AP mined area (227,000m²), and the Shadmot Mehol AP and AV site (65,000m²), where authority has yet to be given for clearance.¹²⁸

INMAA began surveying the Jordan Valley minefields in the West Bank in 2017. INMAA identified significant potential for cancellation and reduction of land in the Jordan Valley, and has used various technologies and scientific tools to assess the likelihood of mine drift.¹²⁹

Table 4: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2023	5,975
2022	31,854
2021	0
2020	18,269
2019	13,976
Total	70,074

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Palestine does not have plans in place to address residual contamination once its Article 5 obligations have been fulfilled.

¹²⁰ Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 17 May 2022.

¹²¹ Initial Article 7 Report, Form D; and interview with Brig. Osama Abu Hananeh, PMAC, in Geneva, 7 February 2019.

¹²² Email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 12 May 2021.

¹²³ Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

¹²⁴ Ibid., Form H.

¹²⁵ Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 20 April 2020, 23 March 2023, and 30 June 2024; and Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 12 May 2021.

¹²⁶ Interview with Marcel Aviv, INMAA, in Geneva, 7 February 2019.

¹²⁷ Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 26 March 2023.

¹²⁸ Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO, 27 July 2023 and 30 June 2024.

¹²⁹ Interview with Michael Heiman, INMAA, in Geneva, 15 February 2018; and emails, 23 July and 10 August 2017; and, after leaving INMAA, 26 May 2018.