

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION:

UNKNOWN

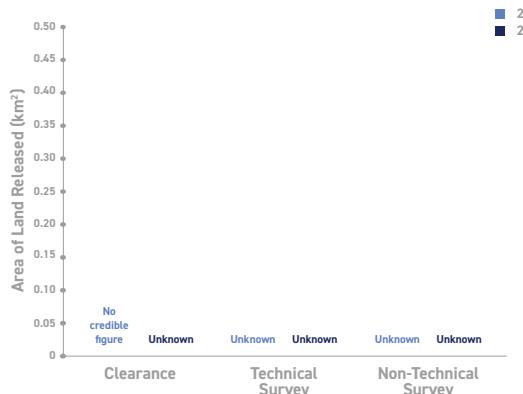
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2023

NO CREDIBLE
FIGURE

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2023

NOT REPORTED

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Extensive use of AP mines by Russian forces in Ukraine continued in 2023. Unverified reports were emerging at the time of writing of possible use of landmines by Ukraine in the Kursk region of western Russia following Ukraine's incursion that began on 6 August 2024. It was reported in July 2024, that Russian State operators were clearing explosive ordnance (EO) in Ukrainian territory under Russian occupation, namely in the Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, with mine clearance occurring in Donetsk. Available data on survey and clearance, disaggregated by explosive threat type, continue to be limited. As was the case in 2022, the extent of territory in the Russian Federation reportedly cleared of EO during 2023 does not seem credible.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Russia should cease any use of anti-personnel (AP) mines, including in Ukraine and accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Russia should clear AP mines in all areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT*

- No national mine action authority or civilian mine action programme
- International Mine Action Centre of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (IMAC), formerly known as the International Demining Action Centre. IMAC is a training base that co-ordinates Russia's mine action activities internationally. It is not a mine action centre as the term is generally understood in mine action.

NATIONAL OPERATORS*

- Military units of the Engineering Troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation
- Military Engineers of the Airborne Forces
- Federal Ministry of Defence Engineers
- Demining brigades of the Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES) specialised demining units (EMERCOM Demining, the "Leader" Center for Special Tasks, and Pyrotechnic Units)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

* IMAC, the Military Units of the Engineering Troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, EMERCOM, and EMERCOM Pyrotechnic Units are referred to in publicly available sources dated during 2024. Other information is based on information from earlier years and it is not known if it remains accurate.

OTHER ACTORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

There is no accurate estimate of the extent of mine contamination but Russia remains contaminated with mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) as a result of the Second World War, the two Chechen wars (1994–96 and 1999–2009), and armed conflicts in the Caucasian republics of Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria.

Unverified reports were emerging at the time of writing of possible new use of landmines by Ukraine in the Kursk region of western Russia. On 6 August 2024, Ukrainian troops and armoured vehicles entered Russian territory with the Head of Ukraine's armed forces claiming control a week later of "about 1,000 square kilometres" and Ukraine's President, Volodymyr Zelensky, saying that "74 communities" were under Ukrainian control.¹ However, none of these claims regarding the extent of Ukraine's advance into Russia could be independently verified. Unverified video footage, made publicly available by an individual reporting to be a civilian filming in Kursk on 10 August 2024, appears to show several anti-vehicle (AV) mines laid across a road.² On 2 September 2024, a Russian news agency reported, based on information from the Ministry of Emergency Situations, that nine settlements in the Kursk region had been cleared of mines over the preceding week, with 150 munitions rendered safe. Teams were continuing survey of populated areas and infrastructure.³ It is not known if Ukraine has emplaced AP mines as part of this offensive.

AP mines and AV mines were used extensively in the two major conflicts in Chechnya (1994–96 and 1999–2009). Estimates of the extent of contamination vary greatly because no systematic effort has been undertaken to assess the scope or impact of the problem. In 2010, Russia's deputy prime

minister and presidential special envoy to the Caucasus, Aleksandr Khlopomin, claimed that mines affected 14km² of land and posed a major obstacle to development.⁴ In contrast, Chechen officials and human rights organisations have previously estimated that 245km² of land was mined, including 165km² of farmland and 73km² of woodland.⁵

In January 2017, a commander in the Russian Armed Forces reportedly told press agency Interfax that more than 100km² of land remained to be cleared in Chechnya, and a further 20km² in neighbouring Ingushetia.⁶ According to the online media report, areas cleared to date had nearly all been in lowland Chechnya and remaining mined area is in more mountainous terrain, complicating demining efforts.⁷

Area clearance in Chechnya and Ingushetia started in 2012; most of the explosive devices destroyed were the result of the two Chechen wars.⁸ In 2021, Russia's Ministry of Defence (MoD) stated that Russia had planned to clear approximately 160km² of agricultural and forest land, but that over the course of nine years, military personnel had exceeded this, surveying approximately 240km² and discovering and destroying more than 41,000 explosive items (mines, shells, grenades, and other ammunition), as well as improvised explosive devices (IEDs). It is not clear how much of this 240km² represents AP mined area.⁹

In 2020, the specialised demining units of the Ministry of Emergency Situations (EMERCOM) reported that annually it clears about 40,000 items of ordnance remaining from the Second World War in Russia. The bulk of the items found are said to be unexploded bombs, artillery shells, grenades, and landmines.¹⁰

1 "What to Know About Ukraine's Cross-Border Assault Into Russia", *The New York Times*, 14 August 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3X1J6EX>; and "Ukraine claims to control 1,000 sq km of Russian territory", *BBC News*, 12 August 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3SS4iL5>.

2 "Civilian gets shot after dodging landmines in Kursk 10.8.24", *YouTube*, accessed 14 August 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3M30Bg4>.

3 "Nine settlements in Kursk Region cleared of explosive objects in past week", *TASS Russian News Agency*, 1 September 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/4gk1YH0>.

4 "Medvedev emphasizes vision of Chechnya's future with personal visit", *Russia Today*, 14 June 2010, at: <https://bit.ly/33H4Bg0>.

5 "MoE sappers to demine arable land in Chechnya", *Caucasian Knot*, 3 April 2009; "In Chechnya MES deminers destroyed 25 explosive devices", *Caucasian Knot*, 5 October 2009; and "Human rights activists: 25,000 hectares of Chechen territory are still mined", *Caucasian Knot*, 7 May 2008, at: <https://bit.ly/46Hy6z3>.

6 "Landmine threat in Chechnya still prevalent", *OC Media*, 23 January 2017, at: <https://bit.ly/33HxfoT>.

7 *Ibid.*

8 "Land Without Mines", *RGRU news*, 2 June 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/3gcKM93>; "Chechnya. Russian mines continue to kill people", *Caucasus Realities*, 19 December 2019, at: <https://bit.ly/3vaMxyd>; "Sappers of the Southern Military District neutralized more than 2 thousand explosive objects on the territory of Chechnya and Ingushetia", *TAC*, 27 November 2019, at: <https://bit.ly/3iBuisH>.

9 "Sappers of the Southern Military District completed demining work on the territory of Chechnya", Ministry of Defence (MoD) of the Russian Federation, at: <https://bit.ly/3QdfQE0>.

10 "About 40 thousand explosive objects from the time of the Great Patriotic War are annually destroyed by the pyrotechnic units of the Ministry of Emergencies of Russia", *EMERCOM media news*, 8 May 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/3wsuLlr>.

USE OF MINES IN UKRAINE SINCE 2014

At the APMBC Intersessional Meetings in May 2019, Ukraine accused Russia of having used AP mines in its territory since 2014. According to Ukraine, these mines have been emplaced by Russia-backed illegal armed groups in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and it said that Russia has also put mines on the administrative border between Crimea and the rest of Ukraine.¹¹ The mines allegedly used by separatist groups include PMN-1, PMN-2, PMN-4, POM-2R, OZM-72, MES type mines, and MON-50 mines with tripwire.¹²

In the most recent conflict in Ukraine, which began with Russia's invasion in February 2022, Russia has made very widespread use of both AP and AV mines.¹³ This extensive use of AP mines by Russian forces continued in 2023, including in areas with civilians. In June 2024, Ukraine stated that it is encountering an "unprecedented density" of contamination with up to three landmines being laid in a single square metre of land. Ukraine also reports ongoing use of AP mines by Russian forces, "launched by land and air combat systems to hit civilians, as well as objects used or inhabited by civilians".¹⁴ Humanitarian organisations and media outlets indicate that Russian forces have scattered mines in a haphazard and disorganized fashion across civilian areas.¹⁵

AP mined areas in Ukraine can be directly associated with Russian defensive positions. Among the contamination identified international operator, The HALO Trust, has encountered a significant number of tripwire AP mines in areas evacuated by Russian forces in their retreat. In 2023, HALO identified four hand-grenades attached to tripwire, which are considered AP mines under APMBC.¹⁶ HALO had similarly seen hand grenades set to be detonated by tripwire in 2022.¹⁷ Ukraine states that Russia has used "anti-personnel mines and improvised explosive devices, prohibited by the Ottawa Convention".¹⁸

As at June 2023, Human Rights Watch had documented use of at least 13 types of AP mines since the 2022 assault on Ukraine.¹⁹ All manner of delivery methods has been documented: hand-emplaced, mechanically laid, scattered by truck-mounted projectors, and remotely delivered by rockets.²⁰

Several new types of landmine have been used in hostilities for the first time in the ongoing armed conflict. These include the remotely delivered POM-3 AP mine, also known as the "medallion". The mine is typically aerially launched from a rocket, falling back to earth by parachute. It is equipped with a seismic proximity sensor that picks up approaching footsteps, and is said to be able to distinguish between humans and animals, making efforts to locate and destroy it far deadlier and more complicated. The POM-3 has self-destruct features that set the mine to explode after a certain period. Ukrainian deminers are using remote equipment to destroy these mines – an expensive undertaking.²¹

Amnesty International has reported that, between March and April 2022, Russian forces fired rockets to disperse PTM-1S scatterable mines on residential neighbourhoods in Kharkiv killing at least three civilians. This type of attack combines the attributes of cluster munitions and AP mines. Russian forces have also emplaced numerous victim-activated booby-traps as they retreated from positions they had taken, occupied, or fortified during the 2022 invasion. The booby-traps were constructed with various types of hand grenades equipped with tripwires, including F-1, RGD-5, and RGN-type grenades.²² According to Ukraine, Russian forces have laid booby-traps in residential areas, vehicles, critical infrastructures, and even food. Ukraine added that it found booby-traps in dead bodies, including those of children.²³ A considerable portion of the booby-traps are considered AP mines under the APMBC.

The full nature and extent of contamination caused by use of AP and AV mines by Russia in Ukraine since February 2022 will remain unclear until an effective cessation of hostilities and a comprehensive survey has been completed (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines 2024* report on Ukraine for further information). While Russia is not a State Party or signatory to the APMBC it also has obligations under international human rights law to clear AP mines as soon as possible in any areas of Ukraine over which it exercises effective control by virtue of its duty to protect the right to life of every person under its jurisdiction.

11 Statement of Ukraine, Committee on Article 5 implementation, Geneva, 22 May 2019.

12 Government of Ukraine, "Measures to ensure compliance", Geneva, 9 June 2017; Statement of Ukraine on Article 5, APMBC Fifteenth Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 29 November 2016; and Preliminary observations of the committee on cooperative compliance, "Ukraine", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 8–9 June 2017.

13 "Russians booby-trap 'safe corridor' in Ukraine with landmines: report", *New York Post*, 7 March 2022, at; <https://bit.ly/3wkW2rT>; "Ukraine: Russia Uses Banned Antipersonnel Landmines", Human Rights Watch, 29 March 2022, at; <https://bit.ly/3CiVpTg>; "Russia using banned 'jumping' landmines in Ukraine", *The Telegraph*, 30 March 2022, at; <https://bit.ly/3dNKp6t>; "Russia 'using banned landmines' in north-eastern Ukraine", *The Times*, 30 March 2022, at; <https://bit.ly/3R1mvCO>; "Russia urged to stop using land mines in its war in Ukraine", *ABC News*, 5 April 2022, at; <https://bit.ly/3UFdQKj>; "Russia likely using Soviet-era landmines in Ukraine, say U.K. officials", *The Washington Times*, 8 August 2022, at; <https://bit.ly/3AdfsA4>.

14 Statement of Ukraine, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18–20 June 2024.

15 "Land mines create a deadly legacy for Ukraine and possibly beyond", *The Washington Post*, 12 April 2022, at; <https://wapo.st/3e2X9WP>.

16 Email from Michael Brown, Deputy Head of Operations (Support), HALO, 29 May 2024.

17 Email from Denys Holovetskyi, Head of Operations, HALO, 29 May 2023.

18 Ukraine Article 7 Report (covering 2023), p. 26.

19 These are: MOB, MON-50, MON-90, MON-100, MON-200, OZM-72, PFM-1/PFM1-S, PMN-2, PMN-4, POM-2/POM-2R, and POM-3.

20 Human Rights Watch, "Landmine Use in Ukraine", Briefing Paper, 13 June 2023, pp. 2, 3, 8, and 10.

21 Human Rights Watch, "Landmine Use in Ukraine", Report, 15 June 2022, at; <https://bit.ly/3P03Yss>, pp. 4, 7, and 8; "New Russian Land Mine Poses Special Risk in Ukraine", *The New York Times*, 6 April 2022, at; <https://nyti.ms/3TgF9bL>; and Presentation of Ukraine, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023, slide 4.

22 Human Rights Watch, "Landmine Use in Ukraine", Briefing Paper, 13 June 2023, pp. 3 and 8.

23 Presentation of Ukraine, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023, slide 5. See also, "Russians hid an anti-tank mine in a pedestrian figurine - this is a war crime" (Ukrainian), *Canal 24*, 7 August 2023, at; <https://bit.ly/45rALvB>.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

There is no formal civilian mine action programme in Russia and no national mine action authority. Mine clearance is carried out by units of the Engineering Troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation,²⁴ military engineers of the Airborne Forces,²⁵ Federal Ministry of Defence engineers, demining brigades of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and by the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES), through its specialised demining units (EMERCOM Demining, the "Leader" Center for Special Tasks,²⁶ and Pyrotechnic Units²⁷). In its most recent Convention on Certain Conventional weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2023), Russia states that training of military specialists of the Engineering Troops of the Russian Armed Forces as well as of foreign military personnel continued in 2023.²⁸ No further details are provided.

Russia's armed forces established an International Demining Action Centre in 2014. The Centre serves as a base for specialist training in detection and clearance of explosive devices, demining, and operation of mobile robotic tools, and does not function as a mine action centre as the term is generally understood in humanitarian mine action.²⁹ Since 2021, Russia has referred instead to its International Mine Action Centre (IMAC).³⁰ IMAC receives a contribution from

Russia's federal budget, though the amount is unknown.³¹ In July 2024, the Russian MoD reported that IMAC specialists organise clearance, quality assure and quality control demining, and support the subsequent transfer of cleared areas to the heads of municipal administrations.³²

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), of which Russia is a member, has reported that, on 24 June 2022, following a meeting of the Council of Defence Ministers of the CIS countries, that Russian Defence Minister, Sergei Shoigu, had said that a joint unit of humanitarian demining will be created in the CIS.³³ No timeline for this was given and Mine Action Review has not been able to identify any further information on this.

Russia reports regularly on its efforts to deploy troops internationally to clear landmines and train foreign military personnel in related activities. In 2022, IMAC trained a total of 135 military personnel across Armenia, Belarus, Djibouti, Kazakhstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), and Myanmar, as well as undertaking humanitarian demining in Lao PDR.³⁴ Between November 2023 and April 2024, Russian deminers undertook clearance of EO in Lao PDR.³⁵

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The extent to which gender and diversity are mainstreamed into mine action in Russia is not known.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in Russia in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Russia records information on the use of EO at the headquarters of military units, with annual reports submitted to the Office of the Chief of Engineering Troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.³⁶

24 CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Form A.

25 "Military engineers of the Airborne Forces neutralized more than 15 thousand explosive objects in 2021", MoD of the Russian Federation, at: <https://bit.ly/3SfbDCT>.

26 See, e.g., "It is planned to establish special groups for demining of lands within MES", *Caucasian Knot*, 23 July 2009; and "Autumn demining is completed in Chechnya", *Vesti Kavkaza*, 28 October 2009.

27 EMERCOM, "Alexander Kurenkov summed up the work of the Russian Emergencies Ministry in the main areas of activity", 19 July 2023, accessed at: <https://bit.ly/43DQl3e>

28 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2023), Form E.

29 Protocol V Article 10 Report, 31 March 2015, Form B; and meeting with Andrey Grebenschikov, First Secretary, Department for Non-Proliferation and Arms Control, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Geneva, 9 April 2015.

30 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form E.

31 Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

32 "Military engineers checked the readiness of the humanitarian demining unit to perform tasks on the territory of the DPR", MoD of the Russian Federation, 27 July 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3yE6L4T>.

33 Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), "Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said that a joint unit of humanitarian demining will be created in the CIS", 27 June 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3b1ulgn>.

34 Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

35 "Russian sappers completed demining in Laos", Russian MoD, 1 April 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/4cr3kfF>.

36 Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Form B.

Russia submits CCW Protocol II Article 13 reports and CCW Protocol V Article 10 reports annually. Russia submitted both a Protocol V Article 10 report and a Protocol II Article 13 report covering 2023 in March 2024.

PLANNING AND TASKING

It is not known whether Russia has a national mine action strategy in place. It is also not known whether Russia has annual work plans for AP mine survey and clearance or criteria for the prioritisation of clearance tasks.

In its most recent Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2023), Russia states that further work to clear EO from its territory was planned for 2024.³⁷ No further details were provided.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

It is not known whether Russia has national mine action standards (NMAS) in place for land release. In 2022, Russia reported that procedures for ERW disposal are regulated by the "Manual for clearing terrain from explosive objects for the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation".³⁸

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Reporting on clearance of land affected by explosive ordnance in 2022, Russia referred to the involvement of the demining units and the Engineering Troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation³⁹ as well as the Pyrotechnic Units of EMERCOM.⁴⁰ For 2021, Russia reported that 1,608 military personnel were involved in explosive ordnance clearance, including 292 officers, 38 survey teams, 464 automobile technician units, and 27 engineering technician units.⁴¹ Mine Action Review has not been able to source more recent information on Russia's survey and clearance capacity.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Russia reported that, in 2023, a little over 82,408 hectares (824.1km²) of territory were cleared of mines in the Russian Federation.⁴² It is not specified how many mines were cleared, nor of what type (AP or AV). In any case, the extent of clearance reported is not credible.

The 824.1km² reported to have been cleared of mines in 2023 is well over double the 321km² that Russia reported were cleared of all EO in 2022, with 974,604 explosive objects found and destroyed.⁴³ It is not known how many of the items destroyed were AP mines. Demining has been carried out in Chechnya and Ingushetia, as well as areas where military

operations were conducted during the Second World War.⁴⁴ However, none of the figures reported is credible for the extent of clearance alone.

In July 2024, a report by Russia's MoD said that IMAC and the combined detachment of Engineering Troops had "checked the readiness" of the demining detachment of one of the humanitarian demining companies of the armed forces to work in the "liberated territories in the rear areas of the SVO".⁴⁵ The same report states that "specialised organizations" were involved in clearing EO in the Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia regions, as well as

³⁷ Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2023), Form I.

³⁸ Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

³⁹ Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2022), Forms A, B, and F.

⁴⁰ EMERCOM, "Alexander Kurenkov summed up the work of the Russian Emergencies Ministry in the main areas of activity", 19 July 2023.

⁴¹ Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form B.

⁴² Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2023), Form B.

⁴³ Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Form A.

⁴⁴ Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2023), Form F.

⁴⁵ "SVO", also referred to as "special military operation" and abbreviated as SMO, is used to by the Russian government and pro-Russian sources to denote Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"ensuring the safety of the local population and carrying out agricultural work".⁴⁶ The article claims that, to date in 2024, demining had taken place across 350 hectares (3.5km²) of territory, with more than 6,000 items of EO found, and that, as at July 2024, nine "specialized organizations" comprising more than 250 personnel were involved in humanitarian demining "on the territory of the DPR"⁴⁷, under contractual obligations with the Russian Ministry of Defence. Finally, the MoD article claims that, since 2022, "more than 1,000 hectares of territory have been demined by specialized organizations, and over 19,000 explosive objects have been found". It is not specified if AP mines have been cleared.⁴⁸

It was also reported in July 2024 that EMERCOM personnel had "examined more than 620 hectares of open terrain in the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) and detonated about 15,000 landmines", though no time frame is given, nor is it specified how many were AP mines. Footage released by EMERCOM shows deminers detecting EO and clearing the area using an MV-4 machine. The article states that, in the city of Mariupol in particular, some 2,500 explosive devices were found and destroyed. Mine clearance in the area was reported to be ongoing.⁴⁹

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Russia has not provided information on whether it has a plan in place for dealing with any residual contamination following completion of clearance of known mined areas.

⁴⁶ "Military engineers checked the readiness of the humanitarian demining unit to perform tasks on the territory of the DPR", MoD of the Russian Federation, 27 July 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3yE6L4T>.

⁴⁷ "DPR", sometimes also referred to as "DNR", denotes "The Donetsk People's Republic", created by Russian-backed paramilitary forces in 2014 and claimed to have been annexed by Russia in 2022. It comprises the occupied parts of eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region. The territory of the DPR is sovereign Ukrainian territory.

⁴⁸ "Military engineers checked the readiness of the humanitarian demining unit to perform tasks on the territory of the DPR", MoD, 27 July 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3yE6L4T>.

⁴⁹ "About 15,000 explosive devices have been found and destroyed – EMERCOM sappers demining DPR territory", 7 July 2024, Viory, at: <https://bit.ly/3ytWFnL>