

KEY DATA

CLUSTER MUNITION CONTAMINATION: LIGHT

LESS THAN 1KM² IN AREAS UNDER CIVILIAN CONTROL, AND EXTENT OF CONTAMINATED AREAS UNDER MILITARY CONTROL NOT REPORTED

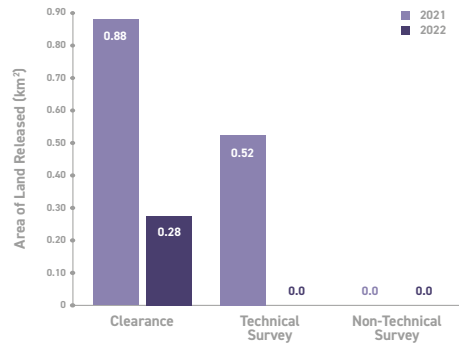
SUBMUNITION CLEARANCE IN 2022

0.28 KM²

SUBMUNITIONS DESTROYED IN 2022

2

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Serbia should accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a matter of priority.
- Serbia 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.
- Serbia should consider using its armed forces to conduct clearance of CMR as they are already clearing other unexploded ordnance (UXO).
- The Serbian Mine Action Centre (SMAC) should conduct non-technical and technical survey, rather than full clearance, in instances where survey represents the most efficient means to release part or all of areas suspected or confirmed to contain CMR.
- SMAC should seek to develop National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) as soon as the new mine action decree is adopted.

CLUSTER MUNITION SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT

- The Sector for Emergency Management, Ministry of Interior
- The Serbian Mine Action Centre (SMAC)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- In 2022, 11 companies/organisations were accredited for demining, but only one conducted clearance of CMR:
 - NGO In Demining

UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION

At the end of 2022, Serbia had a total of just over 0.74km² of cluster munition-contaminated area, comprising one area confirmed to contain CMR covering almost 0.03m² and two areas suspected to contain CMR covering almost 0.72m² (see Table 1).¹ This is a slight decrease compared to the total of nearly 1km² of CMR-contaminated area (one area confirmed to contain CMR covering more than 0.28km² and two areas suspected to contain CMR covering almost 0.72km²) as at the end of 2021,² which is the result of release through clearance of CMR-contaminated area in 2022.³

SMAC does not possess data on explosive ordnance contamination in any areas under the Ministry of Defence (MoD)'s responsibility in Serbia, including former military sites bombed in 1999.⁴

Table 1: Cluster munition-contaminated area by municipality (at end 2022)⁵

Municipality	Village	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)
Bujanovac	Borovac	1	*25,570	0	0
Tutin	Istočni Mostar	0	0	1	131,900
Užice	Bioska	0	0	1	584,567
Totals		1	*25,570	2	716,467

CHAs = confirmed hazardous areas SHAs = suspected hazardous areas

* Additional cluster munition-contaminated area identified during completion of an existing clearance task in 2022 using cluster munition remnants survey (CMRS), which resulted in the development of a new clearance project totalling 25,570m².

CMR resulted from North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air strikes in 1999. According to Serbia, cluster munitions struck 16 municipalities: Brus, Bujanovac, Čačak, Gadžin Han, Knić, Kraljevo, Kuršumlja, Niš City-municipality of Crveni Krst, Niš City-municipality of Medijana, Preševo, Raška, Sjenica, Sopot, Stara Pazova, Tutin, and Vladimirci.⁶ Only three municipalities are considered to still contain contamination today.

OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND LANDMINES

Serbia is also contaminated by other explosive remnants of war (ERW), including unexploded aircraft bombs, both on land and in its internal waterways, and by anti-personnel mines⁷ (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Serbia for further information).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

According to a Government Decree on Protection against Unexploded Ordnance, the Sector for Emergency Management, under the Ministry of Interior, acts as the national mine action authority (NMAA).⁸ The NMAA is responsible for developing standard operating procedures (SOPs), accrediting demining operators, and supervising the work of SMAC.⁹

SMAC was established on 7 March 2002, with a 2004 law making it responsible for coordinating survey and clearance; collecting and managing mine action information (including

casualty data); and surveying SHAs. It also has a mandate to plan demining projects, conduct quality control (QC) and monitor operations, ensure implementation of international standards, and conduct risk education.¹⁰ As from 1 January 2014, according to the Government Decree on Protection against Unexploded Ordnance, the Sector for Emergency Management, under the Ministry of Interior, was made responsible for accrediting demining operators. Previously, SMAC was responsible for doing so.¹¹

1 Email from Slađana Košutić, Senior Advisor for Planning, International Cooperation and European Integrations, Serbian Mine Action Centre (SMAC), 11 April 2023.

2 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 March 2022; and Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2022), pp. 28–29.

3 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 SMAC, "Mine Situation", accessed 21 April 2023, at: <http://bit.ly/1Nom1V7>.

7 Ibid.

8 Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 70/13.

9 Emails from Darvin Lisica, Regional Programme Manager, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), 6 May and 12 June 2016.

10 Law of Alterations and Supplementations of the Law of Ministries, Official Gazette, 84/04, August 2004; interview with Petar Mihajlović and Slađana Košutić, SMAC, Belgrade, 26 April 2010; and APMBC 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 19.

11 APMBC 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 20.

The current director of SMAC was appointed by the Serbian government in July 2019.¹² As at April 2023, thirteen people were employed at SMAC – the Director, two assistant directors, and ten other employees.¹³

SMAC is fully funded by Serbia, including salaries and running costs, as well as for survey activities, development of project tasks for demining and clearance of contaminated areas, follow-up on implementation of project tasks, and quality assurance (QA) and QC of demining. In 2022, Serbia reported that around €320,000 per annum was allocated from the national state budget for the work of SMAC,¹⁴ the same amount as in 2021.¹⁵ In addition, the UXO disposal work of the Sector for Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Interior is also State funded.¹⁶

National funding for survey and clearance remained at €260,000 for 2022,¹⁷—the same as the previous year—and was expected to be maintained at this level through to 2025, matched with available donor funds through ITF Enhancing Human Security.¹⁸ None of the national funding for survey and clearance in 2022 was allocated to CMR operations, as SMAC will continue to prioritise its national funding to mine survey and clearance with a view to meeting its obligations under Article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC).¹⁹

In March 2020, SMAC and the Serbian MoD signed an Agreement on Cooperation in the field of demining and UXO/ERW removal. The Agreement is reported to envisage, among others, the joint participation in training of personnel to conduct demining and ERW demolition operations, training certification, joint participation in survey, collection of data on ERW-suspected and contaminated areas, as well as implementation of ERW removal projects, with monitoring and implementation of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and regulations in the field of demining. The initial focus was said to be on training personnel in ERW demolition operations, including in CMR clearance.²⁰ In November 2022, SMAC organised training for MoD personnel on magnetometry. SMAC also organised this training for the personnel of the MoD's Technical Test Centre, and in February 2023, SMAC concluded a contract on cooperation in mine action with the Technical Test Centre, relating to use of their demolition site.²¹ A training centre within SMAC became operational in 2020. Together with experts from the Ministry of Interior, SMAC provides different training modules, including on ERW recognition, IMAS, medical aspects, and risk reduction.²²

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) is supporting SMAC to implement Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core.²³

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

SMAC said that it has been committed to taking environmental aspects into account and minimising potential harm from demining activities ever since its foundation. It reported that for each survey or clearance project task there is an obligation on the contractor (the demining operator) to include in its execution plan an environmental protection and a fire protection plan, together with a plan for health and safety at work. Illustrative examples related to environment being taken into consideration during CMR clearance operations include contaminated areas cleared in Kopaonik National Park. For these tasks, a special regime was required for the protection of native trees and other plant species. The chopping down of trees, and the cutting of tree branches and blueberry and juniper bushes, as well as the removal of plants could only be conducted in justified cases and after obtaining the consent of relevant authorities.²⁴

12 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020.

13 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

14 Ibid.

15 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 March 2022.

16 SMAC, "Mine situation", accessed 21 April 2023, at: <http://bit.ly/1Nom1V7>.

17 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

18 Statement of Serbia on Clearance, APMBC Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties (virtual meeting), 15–19 November 2021; and 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 8 and 34.

19 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

20 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form H; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 May 2021.

21 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

22 Emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020 and 26 March 2021.

23 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023; and SMAC, "GICHD Workshop on IMSMA Core for Mine Action Actors in the Republic of Serbia", 27 March 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/42PgTc7>.

24 Emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 March 2022 and 11 April 2023.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

In 2014, following the initiative of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and the Minister of Construction, Transportation and Infrastructure, a Coordination Body for Gender Equality was formed as a national coordinating mechanism for gender equality in Serbia. The coordination body recognises the importance of improving the position of women, focusing in particular on increasing the number of female entrepreneurs, as well as their equal participation in management bodies in education, science, culture, information, sports, agriculture, and rural development, among others.²⁵

SMAC does not have a gender policy in place and does not disaggregate relevant mine action data by sex and age. However, it does ensure women and children are consulted during survey and community liaison activities. SMAC also reports that it ensures ethnic or minority groups are consulted.²⁶

Serbia reports there is equal access to employment for qualified women and men in survey and clearance operations.²⁷

At SMAC, five of the thirteen employees (38%) are women, with women holding two of the three managerial/supervisory level positions (67%) and three of the ten operations positions (30%).²⁸

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

SMAC currently uses its own information management system. In early 2020, following initial discussions several years previously, SMAC informally discussed with the GICHD the possibility of installing IMSMA.²⁹ In August 2022, SMAC signed an agreement with the GICHD to enable it to support SMAC to implement IMSMA Core over a project period of one year. In March 2023, the GICHD visited SMAC to hold a workshop with relevant stakeholders to better understand the context and the requirements of SMAC with the aim of defining and planning the next steps of their IMSMA Core Implementation.³⁰

PLANNING AND TASKING

The Government of Serbia adopts SMAC's annual work plans.³¹ SMAC's 2022 work plan included one CMR clearance project in Bujanovac municipality totalling 281,169m² and one technical survey project in Tutin municipality totalling 131,900m². The projects were funded by the United States and the Republic of Korea, through ITF.³² The clearance project was completed in 2022, but the technical survey project planned for 2022 was postponed to 2023, due to unfavourable weather conditions.³³

SMAC's 2023 work plan included four CMR clearance project tasks in Užice, totalling 584,567m², and one clearance project totalling 25,570m² in Bujanovac. The project tasks will be funded, via ITF Enhancing Human Security, by available donor funds. In addition, the above-mentioned postponed technical survey project task in Tutin, totalling 131,900m², was due to be completed in the first half of 2023.³⁴

SMAC said that implementation of the planned project tasks in 2023 will see Serbia complete clearance of known civilian-controlled cluster munition-contaminated areas, excluding military areas.³⁵ SMAC will be receiving requests from the MoD to clear former military compounds, bombed during the NATO strikes, that are intended for civilian use, and which were not in SMAC's database.³⁶

Serbia prioritises release of areas that directly affect the local population, such as those close to settlements where local people have abandoned their houses and stopped cultivating land due to fear of landmines and explosive ordnance.³⁷ SMAC also noted that donors themselves sometimes also influence the choice of the areas which will be cleared first, depending on availability and amount of their funds.³⁸

25 Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2022), p. 20.

26 Emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020, 26 March 2021, and 11 April 2023.

27 Emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020 and 11 April 2023.

28 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

29 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020.

30 Emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023; and GICHD, 26 May 2023.

31 APMBC 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 18 and 21.

32 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 March 2022.

33 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

34 Ibid.

35 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

36 Ibid.

37 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2019.

38 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 12 April 2018.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

According to SMAC, survey and clearance operations in Serbia are conducted in accordance with the IMAS.³⁹

Serbia is planning to issue a new decree on protection against ERW. The draft decree, developed by SMAC and the Ministry of Interior, will introduce the concept of land release, which was not defined in the former decree, and foresees the development of national mine action standards (NMAS). As at April 2023, the decree was still in the final stages of being adopted by the government.⁴⁰

Under new directorship in late 2015, SMAC reassessed its land release methodology in order to prioritise full clearance over technical survey of hazardous areas.⁴¹ This does not correspond to international best practice and is an inefficient use of scarce clearance assets. In February 2016, SMAC reported to Mine Action Review that while SMAC supports the use of high-quality non-technical survey to identify areas

suspected of containing CMR, it will fully clear these areas, rather than using technical survey to identify the boundaries of contamination more accurately.⁴²

As at April 2023, SMAC's position on its preferred land release methodology remained the same under the current Director, but there was a continued willingness to conduct technical survey in a form "adjusted to the context of Serbia", in response to the stated preference of international donors for technical survey above clearance, where appropriate.⁴³

As part of NPA's project on enhancing quality management systems of national mine action authorities and centres in the Western Balkans, a consultant was hired to conduct a detailed capacity assessment of SMAC in 2023, to identify gaps and discuss required improvements, action points, and priorities, and to develop NMAS chapters as prioritised by SMAC.⁴⁴

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

SMAC does not itself conduct clearance or employ clearance personnel but does conduct survey of areas suspected to contain mines, CMR, or other ERW. Clearance is conducted by commercial companies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which are selected through public tender procedures executed by ITF, supported by international funding.⁴⁵

The Ministry of Interior issues accreditation to mine action operators that is valid for one year. In 2022, 11 companies/organisations, were accredited for demining,⁴⁶ but only one organisation conducted clearance of CMR (see Table 2).⁴⁷

Table 2: Operational CMR clearance capacities deployed in 2022⁴⁸

Operator	Manual teams	Total deminers*	Dogs and handlers	Machines**
NGO in Demining	3	31	0	0
Totals	3	31	0	0

* Excluding team leaders, medics, and drivers. ** Excluding vegetation cutters and sifters.

Table 2 represents a decrease in clearance capacity in 2022 compared to the previous year, when a total of 52 deminers were deployed across four clearance operators.

NGO Stop Mines was due to conduct technical survey of a CMR task in 2022, but this was postponed to 2023 due to unfavourable weather conditions.⁴⁹

An explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) department within the Sector for Emergency Management, in the Ministry of Interior, responds to call-outs for individual items of ERW, and is also responsible for demolition of items found by SMAC survey teams and by contractors/operators during clearance.⁵⁰

39 SMAC, "Mine Situation", accessed 21 April 2023, at: <http://bit.ly/1Nom1V7>; and APMB Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Section 4.

40 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

41 Interview with Jovica Simonović, SMAC, in Geneva, 18 February 2016.

42 Ibid.

43 APMB 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 30; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

44 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

45 APMB Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), p. 18.

46 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Interview with Jovica Simonović, SMAC, Belgrade, 16 May 2017; APMB Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), p. 18; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 3 June 2022.

In September 2022, representatives of SMAC, the Ministry of Interior, and Serbian demining operator PMC Engineering, attended the regional course on quality management in mine action, in Rome. The course was organised by the GICHD in cooperation with the Italian counter-improvised explosive device (C-IED) Centre of Excellence and held for representatives of the Balkan countries.⁵¹

In November 2022, SMAC attended the 86th Partnership for Peace (PfP) training course on IMAS and conformance in Spiez, organised by the GICHD and Switzerland.⁵²

In December 2022, representatives from SMAC, the Ministry of Internal Affairs – Police Directorate, Sector for Emergency Management, and the Gendarmerie, participated in a regional workshop in Sarajevo for NPA's project on enhancing quality management systems of national mine action authorities and centres in the Western Balkans. The project, financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, aims to help improve the management capabilities and support national ownership and leadership in mine action.⁵³

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

A total of just over 0.28km² of CMR-contaminated area was released through clearance in 2022, during which two submunitions and fourteen other items of UXO were destroyed. No CMR-contaminated area was released through technical survey or non-technical survey.⁵⁴

SURVEY IN 2022

No land was reduced through technical survey in 2022. This is a decrease compared to the 515,000m² of CMR-contaminated area reduced through technical survey by NGO Stop Mines in 2021,⁵⁵ although technical survey of a CMR task totalling 131,900m² had been planned for 2022, but was postponed to 2023 due to bad weather.

No CMR-contaminated area was cancelled through non-technical survey in 2022⁵⁶ or 2021.⁵⁷

CLEARANCE IN 2022

A total of 281,169m² of CMR-contaminated area was cleared in 2022, during which two submunitions and fourteen items of other UXO were destroyed (see Table 3).⁵⁸ This was significantly less than the 877,738m² of CMR-contaminated area cleared in 2021, during which 28 submunitions and 392 items of other UXO were destroyed.⁵⁹

Table 3: CMR clearance by municipality in 2022⁶⁰

Municipality	Village	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	Submunitions destroyed	Other UXO destroyed
Bujanovac	Borovac	NGO in Demining	281,169	2	14
Totals			281,169	2	14

SMAC did not have available data on the number or type of individual items of cluster munition remnants destroyed by the EOD department within the Sector for Emergency Management during spot tasks in 2021.⁶¹ SMAC also does not possess data on explosive ordnance contamination of military areas in Serbia.⁶²

51 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

52 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023; and SMAC, "SMAC Participation in IMAS and Conformance Training Course in Spiez, Switzerland", 8 November 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/41PVI1F>.

53 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023; and SMAC, "Participation of SMAC at Regional Workshop 'Assessment of Needs and Planning of Improvement of Quality management Capacities of National/State Mine Action Authorities' in Sarajevo", 15 December 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3AiX0et>.

54 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

55 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 March 2022.

56 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

57 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2021.

58 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

59 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 March 2022.

60 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

A total of 1.6km² has been cleared in the last five years (see Table 4).

Table 4: Five-year summary of CMR clearance

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2022	0.28
2021	0.88
2020	*0.30
2019	**0.14
2018	0.00
Total	1.60

* Previously reported as 0.28km², but subsequently revised upwards, as the earlier figure excluded a 12,805m² clearance task that had been completed, but not reported.

** Previously reported as 0.12km², but subsequently revised upwards, as excluded a 22,280m² clearance task that had been completed, but not reported.

In its most recent APMBBC Article 5 deadline extension request, dated 31 March 2022, Serbia had included a work plan for completion of all ERW clearance by 2025, at a predicted total cost of €20 million. CMR were not disaggregated from other ERW.⁶³ Serbia has said that once it has implemented the CMR tasks planned for 2023, it will have finished clearance of all known cluster munition-contaminated areas under civilian control, excluding

military areas.⁶⁴ SMAC has received a request from the MoD to clear former military compounds bombed during the NATO strikes, that are intended for civilian use and which are not currently in SMAC's database.⁶⁵ The compounds were targeted during the NATO strikes,⁶⁶ and so a number of these compounds may contain CMR.

In addition to CMR clearance, SMAC also implements multiple other ERW clearance projects which contribute to socio-economic development. A total of almost 0.5km² was cleared of ERW in 2022, with the destruction of 136 items of UXO, funded by the Serbian government or public companies.⁶⁷

In its 2022 APMBBC Article 5 extension request Serbia stated that: "In the territory of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, there are mined areas, as well as areas contaminated with cluster bombs remaining after the armed conflicts. Pursuant to Resolution 1244 of the United Nations Security Council (Annex II, item 6), it is envisaged that after the withdrawal, an agreed number of the Republic of Serbia personnel will be allowed to return to perform certain functions, including marking and clearing minefields. As this provision of Annex II has not been implemented, this issue is still within the competence of UNMIK in accordance with Resolution 1244."⁶⁸

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

SMAC expects to need both national and international capacity to deal with any residual contamination that may be discovered following completion of planned CMR clearance.⁶⁹

63 APMBBC 2022 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 37–38.

64 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

65 Emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 25 March 2022 and 11 April 2023.

66 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 3 June 2022.

67 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 11 April 2023.

68 APMBBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2022), p. 9.

69 Emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 23 April 2020 and 11 April 2023.