

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 identify additional funding, including from national and international sources, for the survey and clearance of cluster munition-contaminated areas.
- Serbia should consider using its armed forces to conduct clearance of CMR as they are already clearing other unexploded ordnance (UXO).
- 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.

CLUSTER MUNITION REMNANT CONTAMINATION

At the end of 2018, Serbia had five areas confirmed to contain CMR covering almost 0.64km², while a further nine areas over almost 1.9km² were suspected to contain CMR (see Table 1).¹ This remained unchanged from the CMR contamination baseline reported as at the end of 2017,² as no CMR survey of clearance took place in Serbia during 2018.³

CMR result 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.⁴

OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND LANDMINES

Serbia is also contaminated by other UXO, including aircraft bombs, both on land and in its internal waterways, and by anti-personnel mines (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Serbia for further information).⁵

Table 1: CMR contamination by municipality (at end 2018)⁶

Municipality	Village	CHAs	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Area (m ²)
Bujanovac	Borovac	2	210,881	1	281,169
Niš	Medoševac	0	0	1	119,344
Raška	Lisina	0	0	1	190,359
Sjenica	Čedovo	2	89,450	2	74,474
Sjenica	Vapa	1	338,416	2	94,496
Tutin	Istočni Mojstir	0	0	1	514,682
Užice	Bioska	0	0	1	585,268
Totals		5	638,747	9	1,859,792

CHAs = confirmed hazardous areas SHAs = suspected hazardous areas

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).⁷ The NMAA is responsible for developing standard operating procedures (SOPs); accrediting demining operators; and supervising the work of the Serbian Mine Action Centre (SMAC).⁸

SMAC was established on 7 March 2002, with a 2004 law making it responsible for coordinating demining; collecting and managing mine action information (including casualty data); and surveying suspected hazardous areas (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.⁹ As from 1 January 2014, according to a Government Decree on Protection against Unexploded Ordnance, the Sector for Emergency Management, under the Ministry of Interior, is responsible for accrediting demining operators. Previously, the SMAC was responsible for doing so.¹⁰

A new director of SMAC was appointed by the Serbian government in the autumn of 2015,¹¹ and as at 2018, SMAC had a total of eight staff.¹² SMAC reported that, in 2016, restructuring resulted in a greater proportion of operational posts.¹³

SMAC is fully funded by Serbia, including staff costs and running costs, as well as survey activities, development of project tasks for demining/clearance of areas contaminated by mines, submunitions and other UXO, follow-up on implementation of project tasks, and quality assurance (QA) and QC of demining.¹⁴ Around €150,000 per year is allocated to the work of SMAC from the national state budget.¹⁵ In addition, the UXO disposal work of the Sector for Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Interior is also state funded.¹⁶

Since 2015, Serbia has also been allocating national funds for survey and clearance, with roughly €100,000 allocated per year.¹⁷ In 2018, the Serbian Government allocated double the amount of funds for demining operations to €200,000 allocated per year, and it continues to seek international funding.¹⁸ However, for the time being, and due to funding restraints, SMAC will continue to prioritise its national funding to mine survey and clearance, rather than CMR, to contribute towards meeting its obligations under Article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC).

GENDER

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 and there is equal access to employment for qualified women and men in survey and clearance operations. Around 10% of those employed in survey and clearance teams, and also of those in mine action managerial or supervisory positions in Serbia, are women.¹⁹

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

SMAC does not use the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) at present, but had been discussing for some time the possibility of the system's future installation with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).²⁰ There had been no further developments in that regard as at March 2019.²¹

PLANNING AND TASKING

The Government of Serbia adopts SMAC's workplan, as well as the Annual Report on its work.²² While SMAC had prepared/planned several CMR and UXO clearance projects for 2018, these could not be implemented due to lack of funding.²³

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

According to SMAC, survey and clearance operations in Serbia are conducted in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).²⁴

National mine action standards (NMAS) were said to be in the final phase of development as at September 2015.²⁵ In April 2017, SMAC reported that, along with the relevant national authorities, it was in the process of establishing a commission to develop national standards and SOPs to define methods and techniques for demining in Serbia.²⁶ However, this process has been hindered due to lack of capacity,²⁷ and as at March 2019, the development of the NMAS was still "in progress".²⁸

Under new directorship, SMAC has reassessed its land release methodology to prioritise full clearance over technical survey of hazardous areas.²⁹ This does not correspond to international best practice, and is an inefficient use of scarce clearance assets. In February 2016, the new director of 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 more accurately identify the boundaries of contamination.³⁰

SMAC's position on its preferred land release methodology remains the same, although there is now a 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.³¹ The reduction of mined area through technical survey in the municipality of Bujanovac in 2017³² and in 2018³³ demonstrates SMAC's renewed willingness to adopt more efficient land release practices.

OPERATORS

SMAC does not itself carry out clearance or employ deminers but does conduct survey of areas suspected to contain mines, CMR, or other explosive remnants of war (ERW). Clearance is conducted by commercial companies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which are selected through public tender procedures executed by ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF), supported by international funding.³⁴

The Ministry of Interior issues accreditation to mine action operators that is valid for one year. In 2018, 14 companies/organisations were accredited for demining: seven from Serbia, four from Bosnia and Herzegovina, two from Croatia, and one from Russia.³⁵

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 discovered, and is also responsible for the demolition of items found by SMAC.³⁶

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT IN 2018

No CMR-contaminated area was released by survey or clearance in 2018.³⁷

SURVEY IN 2018

No CMR-contaminated area was released by survey in 2018,³⁸ or in 2017.³⁹

CLEARANCE IN 2018

No CMR-contaminated area was released by clearance in 2018.⁴⁰ This is a reduction compared to 2017 when almost 0.18km² of CMR-contaminated area was cleared.⁴¹

SMAC did not have available data on the number or type of individual items of ERW destroyed by the EOD department within the Sector for Emergency Management during spot tasks in 2018.⁴²

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

In 2010–13, significant progress was made in clearing CMR-contaminated areas, but since then progress has stalled. Less than 1km² in total has been cleared in the last five years (see Table 2), and no CMR clearance was conducted in 2018, which is ascribed to a lack of funding.⁴³

Table 2: Five-year summary of CMR clearance (2014–18)⁴⁴

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2018	0.00
2017	0.18
2016	0.25
2015	0.18
2014	0.29
Total	0.90

With regards to CMR clearance operations in Serbia in 2019, as at March 2019, four clearance projects developed by SMAC, and totalling 742,615m², had been submitted to ITF for the selection of a contractor through its tender procedures. Of these four projects, two were to be implemented in Sjenica (totalling 432,912m²), one in Niš (119,344m²), and one in Raška (190,359m²), with funding from the Republic of Korea, Serbia, and the United States.⁴⁵

In the draft of its latest APMB Article 5 deadline extension request, dated 31 March 2018, Serbia includes a workplan for completion of all ERW clearance by 2023, at a predicted total cost of €20 million. CMR are not disaggregated from other ERW.⁴⁶ Progress in CMR clearance is said to be contingent on funding. Serbia predicts that if adequate funds for implementation of survey and clearance projects were secured, CMR clearance could be finished in three years.⁴⁷

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- 1 Second Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), pp. 10 and 24.
- 2 Email from Slađana Košutić, Planning and International Cooperation Advisor, Serbian Mine Action Centre (SMAC), 12 April 2018; and Second APMBC Article 5 Extension Request (2018), p. 24.
- 3 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 6 March 2019.
- 4 SMAC, "Mine Situation", accessed 8 May 2019, at: <https://bit.ly/1Nom1V7>.
- 5 Second APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), P. 10.
- 6 Emails from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 12 April, 5 July 2018, and 6 March 2019; and Second APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), pp. 10 and 24.
- 7 Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 70/13.
- 8 Emails from Darvin Lisica, Regional Programme Manager, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), 6 May and 12 June 2016.
- 9 "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 second APMBC Article 5 Extension Request (2018), p. 17.
- 10 Second APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), p. 17.
- 11 Interview with Jovica Simonović, Director, SMAC, in Geneva, 18 February 2016.
- 12 Second APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), p. 16.
- 13 Ibid.; p. 10.
- 14 SMAC, "About us", accessed 3 June 2016; and Second APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), p. 16.
- 15 SMAC, "About us", accessed 3 June 2016; Second APMBC Article 5 deadline (2018), p. 16.; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2019.
- 16 SMAC, "Mine situation", accessed 8 May 2019, at: <https://bit.ly/1Nom1V7>.
- 17 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 6 April 2017; interview with Jovica Simonović, SMAC, Belgrade, 16 May 2017; and Second APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018).
- 18 Second APMBC Article 5 Extension Request (2018), p. 9; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2019.
- 19 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2019.
- 20 Email from Branislav Jovanović, (then) Director, SMAC, 4 May 2015.
- 21 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2019.
- 22 Second APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), p. 16; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2019.
- 23 Second APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), p. 33; and email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 6 March 2019.
- 24 SMAC, "Mine Situation", accessed 8 May 2019, at: <https://bit.ly/1Nom1V7>.
- 25 Interview with Branislav Jovanović, SMAC, in Dubrovnik, 10 September 2015.
- 26 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 6 April 2017.
- 27 Interview with Jovica Simonović, SMAC, Belgrade, 16 May 2017.
- 28 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2019.
- 29 Interview with Jovica Simonović, SMAC, in Geneva, 18 February 2016.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Interview with Jovica Simonović, SMAC, Belgrade, 16 May 2017; email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 12 April 2018; and Second APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), p. 30.
- 32 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 12 April 2018.
- 33 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2019.
- 34 Second APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), p. 18.
- 35 Ibid., p. 17.
- 36 Interview with Jovica Simonović, SMAC, Belgrade, 16 May 2017; and Second APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (2018), p. 18.
- 37 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 6 March 2019.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 12 April 2018.
- 40 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 6 March 2019.
- 41 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 12 April 2018.
- 42 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2019.
- 43 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 6 March 2019.
- 44 Data from Mine Action Review and Cluster Munition Monitor reports on Serbia covering 2014-18.
- 45 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 26 March 2019.
- 46 Second APMBC Article 5 Extension Request (2018), p. 33.
- 47 Email from Slađana Košutić, SMAC, 12 April 2018.