

KEY DATA

NO CCM ARTICLE 4 DEADLINE:

State not party to the CCM

CMR CONTAMINATION:

Unknown, but extensive

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS

Release of cluster munition-contaminated area	Release in 2024 (km ²)	Release in 2023 (km ²)
Clearance	2.12	1.96
Technical Survey	0	0.10
Non-Technical Survey	0	0.25
Destruction of submunitions during clearance, survey, and spot tasks	2024	2023
Submunitions destroyed	1,103 (including 522 in spot tasks)	705 (including 483 in spot tasks)

MAIN CMR SURVEY AND CLEARANCE OPERATORS IN 2024:

Conducting survey and clearance in areas then controlled by the Assad regime:

- Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society (SARC)
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- United Nations Mine Action Service's (UNMAS) implementing partner Safety Solutions

Operating in the north-west:

- Syria Civil Defence (SCD) (also called the White Helmets)
- The HALO Trust (HALO)

Operating in the north-east:

- DanChurchAid (DCA)
- Humanity & Inclusion (HI)
- Enhancing Human Security (ITF)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- Roj Mine Control Organization (RMC0)

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The fall of the Assad regime in December 2024 has enabled a shift to a country-wide approach to mine action coordination, with operators reporting improved access and cooperation. Clearance output increased in 2024, and operators have been expanding survey and clearance capacity in 2025 to reach new areas, but major challenges remain, including a surge in casualties, persistent funding shortfalls, the absence of a national contamination baseline, only nascent managerial capacity in the transitional government, and ongoing security risks.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Syria should accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a matter of priority.
- Syria should urgently establish a baseline of cluster munition-contaminated area to enable effective prioritisation and planning, with particular focus on agricultural land due to its importance for food security and economic recovery, and the high number of victims.

- Syria should continue to strengthen coordination mechanisms and information management by promoting consistent, timely data sharing among all mine action operators and integrating the Northeast Syria Mine Action Centre (NESMAC) into a unified national system.
- Syria should develop national mine action standards (NMAS) in consultation with operators and ensure their application across all survey and clearance activities.
- Syria should systematically assess and address informal clearance practices by untrained civilians, which pose severe risks to life.

CLUSTER MUNITION SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT

- Ministry of Emergency and Disaster Management

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society (SARC)
- Syria Civil Defence (SCD) (also called the White Helmets)
- Roj Mine Control Organization (RMCÖ)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- The HALO Trust (HALO)
- DanChurchAid (DCA)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
- Enhancing Human Security (ITF)
- Humanity & Inclusion (HI)

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of contamination from cluster munition remnants (CMR) in Syria is unknown but it is certainly widespread due to the repeated use of cluster munitions during 14 years of conflict. No comprehensive countrywide survey of contamination has been conducted. Prior to the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, such a survey was not feasible. UNMAS is now leading efforts to coordinate with all mine action implementing partners to prioritise a baseline non-technical survey (NTS) across accessible areas in north-west and central Syria to understand the scope and extent of weapon contamination more fully.¹

Estimates indicate that more than 65% of all Syrians—15.4 million of the 23.6 million population—are at risk from explosive ordnance, with extensive impact on communities, farmland, and infrastructure.² Contamination is particularly high in Deir ez-Zor in the north east where roughly a

quarter of all accidents since December have taken place. Contributing factors include former frontlines being dismantled and redistributed as arable land, restricted humanitarian access on both sides of the Euphrates river, and limited access to essential services, forcing people to travel long distances.³ The 2024 Humanitarian Needs Overview estimated that the highest percentages of explosive contamination were in Quneitra, As-Sweida, Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Idlib, Ar-Raqqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, and Dar'a governorates and Damascus governorate neighbourhoods.⁴ The Syria Civil Defence (SCD), also known as the White Helmets, published a map of hazardous areas of northern Syria, showing the highest intensity of explosive ordnance contamination in the sub-districts of Saraqeb (Idlib governorate) and Al-Atareb (Aleppo governorate), followed by Jisr Al-shighur, Nabul (Idlib), Al-Bab, and Tadaf (Aleppo).⁵

1 Emails from Adesh Singh, Technical Advisor, DanChurchAid (DCA), 6 June 2025; and Joseph McCartan, Chief Mine Action Programme, UNMAS, 25 June 2025.

2 UNMAS, Syria, data as of June 2025, at: <https://bit.ly/4lFMXkn>.

3 Mine Action AoR Syria, Situation Update No.3, covering the period 1-30 April 2025, at: <https://bit.ly/4eBpEWT>.

4 Syria 2024 Humanitarian Needs Overview, February 2024, OCHA, at: <https://bit.ly/4erk3St>.

5 The White Helmets website, (Arabic), accessed on 4 August 2025, at: <https://bit.ly/4fks3Wl>.

Since December 2024, Syria has witnessed a surge in casualties from explosive ordnance. More than 1,000 victims, one third of whom are children, were reported in December 2024 to May 2025. The 414 people killed and 592 injured compares to the 912 casualties reported for the whole of 2024.⁶ In June 2025, the Minister of Emergency and Disaster Management stated that the Ministry records victims of mines and explosive ordnance on daily basis.⁷ The recent rise in casualties in Syria is linked to multiple factors. Abandoned military vehicles and weapons stockpiles have increased civilian exposure, while military strikes on ammunition depots have scattered explosive ordnance more widely. Since December, many internally displaced persons (IDPs) have returned to areas with contamination, often unaware of the risks. Economic hardship has also pushed people to collect scrap metal, which includes explosive ordnance. Without a comprehensive mine action programme, civilians are increasingly attempting to clear or dismantle explosives themselves, often at great personal risk.⁸

Thirteen of Syria's fourteen governorates (all except Tartus) have experienced cluster munition use since 2012.⁹ The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) recorded at least 496 cluster munition attacks in Syria between July 2012 and January 2023 attributing them to Syrian government forces or Russian forces (or the alliance of the two).¹⁰ Cluster munition attacks are said to have resulted in the deaths of

1,053 civilians, including 394 children and 219 women. In addition, at least 382 civilians, including 124 children and 31 women, were killed due to the detonation of submunitions left after earlier attacks.¹¹ A range of Russian-made cluster munitions were used in the conflict.¹²

Sub-regional surveys and impact assessments have confirmed that CMR contamination in Syria is widespread and persistent. HALO's 2018–20 community impact assessment in Aleppo and Idlib governorates found contamination in more than 400 communities, with unexploded submunitions the most frequent ordnance type and which were responsible for 36% of recorded contamination and 42% of casualties.¹³ The SCD conducted NTS in Aleppo, Hama, and Idlib and recorded explosive contamination in between 22% and 38% of communities surveyed between 2021 and 2022, with submunitions comprising more than 40% of identified items. These were predominantly Russian-made with cluster munitions including SHOAB-0.5, AO-2.5RT, 9N235, AO1-SCH, M77-HEAT, SPBE-HEAT, and PTAB-1M and 2.5M types.¹⁴ A joint Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society (SARC) and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) assessment across nine governorates (Al-Hassakeh, Aleppo, Daraa, Deir Ezzor, Hama, Homs, Idlib, Quneitra, and Sweida) reported explosive ordnance in 92% of surveyed communities, of which 46% reported the presence of CMR.¹⁵

OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND LANDMINES

The continued use of cluster munitions adds to the existing CMR problem in addition to dense contamination from other explosive ordnance, in particular landmines, including those of an improvised nature (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Syria for further information).

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

There is no functioning national mine action authority or national mine action centre in Syria. In March 2025, the Syrian transitional government appointed Raed al-Saleh, former head of the White Helmets, as Minister of Emergency and Disaster Management with responsibility for coordinating mine action in the country. However, due to the ministry's nascent status and limited operational capacity, UNMAS has assumed a coordination role and will provide support to the ministry to establish a national mine action authority and national mine action centre.¹⁶

On 20 June 2025, the Minister of Emergency and Disaster Management stated that the Ministry intends to establish a national mine action centre "soon", in collaboration with national and international partners. He added that the Ministry also plans on establishing a national emergency response system¹⁷ and designate zones that are safe for return, construction, and agriculture, within three years.¹⁸

6 Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 6, as of 27 May 2025, OCHA, at: <https://bit.ly/3TmDkey>; and ICRC, International Mine Awareness Day: Addressing the threat of explosive ordnance in Syria, 3 April 2025, at: <https://bit.ly/3lDKMGy>.

7 "The Minister of Emergency and Disaster Management to Al-Ikhbariah: The Ministry's mission is to plan and prepare before disasters strike", (Arabic), *Al-Ikhbariah*, (in Arabic), 20 June 2025, at: <https://bit.ly/46FjmDz>.

8 ICRC, International Mine Awareness Day: Addressing the threat of explosive ordnance in Syria, 3 April 2025.

9 Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, Syria Cluster Munition Ban Policy, last updated end 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3K0dtbb>.

10 SNHR, "Cluster Munitions Remnants are an Open-Ended Threat to the Lives of Syria's Future Generations", Report, 30 January 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/40NicQ0>, p. 10.

11 SNHR, "Cluster Munitions Remnants are an Open-Ended Threat to the Lives of Syria's Future Generations", Report, 30 January 2023.

12 Ibid., pp. 11–20.

13 HALO, "Syria, A Hidden Emergency", Report, at: <https://bit.ly/3fD4w4x>, pp. 3, 7, and 11.

14 Emails from Michael Edwards, SCD, 11 May 2021 and 15 June 2022.

15 ICRC and SARC, Mine Risk Needs Assessment and Education, PowerPoint presentation to the 24th National Director's Meeting, Geneva, 25 May 2021.

16 UNMAS, UNMAS Syria and the Syrian Minister of Emergency and Disaster Management Discuss Future Cooperation on Mine Action, 15 May 2025, at: <https://bit.ly/44AAfwz>; and email from Joseph McCartan, UNMAS, 25 June 2025.

17 "The Minister of Emergency and Disaster Management to Al-Ikhbariah: The Ministry's mission is to plan and prepare before disasters strike", (Arabic), *Al-Ikhbariah*, (Arabic), 20 June 2025; and "The Minister of Emergency

18 "The Ministry of Emergency and Disaster Management launches a plan for safe zones and a mine action centre", (Arabic), *Ultra Syria*, 21 June 2025, at: <https://bit.ly/4mlali6>.

In north-east Syria, mine action is coordinated by the Northeast Syria Mine Action Centre (NESMAC), which was established by local authorities in 2021. In 2024, MAG continued to strengthen NESMAC's capacity, particularly in information management (IM), delivering four training courses in IM, EOD Level 2, quality management, and gender equity, diversity, and inclusion (GEDI), for 11 NESMAC staff. MAG's IM unit also supported NESMAC in collecting and analysing data from mine action actors to develop an ongoing portal-dashboard project.¹⁹ DCA provided limited in-kind support to sustain NESMAC's operations in 2024, providing equipment such as solar panels, batteries, and electronics to improve office capabilities.²⁰ In November 2024, Humanity & Inclusion (HI) trained 16 NESMAC staff (7 women and 9 men) in disability, gender, and age (DGA) issues as part of its victim assistance activities.²¹ HI also reported, however, that coordination with NESMAC remains a challenge.

Since iMAP Inc. ended its capacity support in July 2024, NESMAC has faced significant operational constraints, limiting its ability to provide consistent technical oversight, coordination, tasking, and information management. Limited institutional capacity and lack of formal recognition also hinder robust quality assurance (QA) and standardised procedures. As a result, mine action actors in north-east Syria must rely on external coordination and technical support, highlighting the need for continued capacity-building and resources to strengthen NESMAC's role. Meanwhile, no formal relationship exists between NESMAC and UNMAS, which cites "political sensitivities" and unclear dynamics between Damascus and Hassakeh as barriers. NESMAC remains a de facto coordination body for mine action in north-east Syria but is not officially recognised by international frameworks or the UN system.²²

Prior to the fall of the Assad regime on 8 December 2024, mine action coordination in Syria was divided into three separate regions: government-controlled areas, the north-west, and the north-east, with coordination mechanisms operating separately in each and with no effective integration between them. Since the fall of the regime, a country-wide approach has become the central framework for mine action coordination.²³

The Syria Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR), part of the Syria Protection Cluster, with UNMAS as the cluster lead

agency and with a co-coordinator hosted by HI. That said, as at June 2025, UNMAS was facing delays in staff recruitment and did not yet have an MA AoR Coordinator or full-time IM officer in place.²⁴ The Syria MA AoR unifies all previously existing coordination structures and hosts technical working groups (TWGs) in: risk education, victim assistance, IM, survey and clearance, and advocacy. The Syria MA AoR coordinates the activities of 38 partners nationwide implementing a range of mine action programmes.²⁵ MA AoR partners must be engaged in at least two pillars of mine action, one of which must include survey and clearance.²⁶ Coordination meetings are held twice monthly, beginning on 6 February 2025, while TWGs meet monthly, except for the Advocacy TWG which meets twice a month. NESMAC is not invited to participate.²⁷ According to operators, cooperation and information sharing among national and international mine action actors has seen a significant improvement.²⁸

Operators have generally reported a more enabling environment for their work since December 2024, but numerous challenges remain. HI reported facing significant constraints from new requirements as of January 2025 for international NGOs to operate under the umbrella of Syria Trust for Development (STD) or SARC, limiting independence and impartiality, and a provision that calls for INGOs to hand over all assets to the government prior to closing operations.²⁹ Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) reported that access permission processes are lengthy taking up to six weeks, although these now cover larger areas at the governorate level for three-month, extendable periods, and visitor visas are easier and cheaper to obtain than before.³⁰ In north-east Syria, DanChurchAid (DCA) and Mines Advisory Group (MAG) operate in a relatively enabling environment with good international staff access via the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) border, cooperative local authorities, and streamlined MoU processes. Both operators reported facing delays and restrictions on importing mine action equipment, though, with a ban in place on the importation of explosives and equipment such as detectors, GPS, and Push to Talk radios.³¹ In north-west Syria, HALO reported improved international staff access via Jordan since December 2024 and strong relations with local authorities enabling wide operational freedom, but persistent challenges in importing large equipment, leading to reliance on local procurement.³²

FUNDING FOR CMR SURVEY AND CLEARANCE

The mine action sector remained underfunded throughout 2024, with only 13% of the required US\$51 million received.³³ In 2024, DCA's survey and clearance operations were funded

by the European Union - Foreign Policy Instruments (EU-FPI) until June, with internal gap funding covering the remainder of the year. DCA secured UK Foreign, Commonwealth

19 Email from Najat El Hamri, Regional Director, MAG, 3 June 2025.

20 Email from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025.

21 Email from Lejla Susic, AVR Specialist, HI, 2 June 2025.

22 Email from Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025.

23 Email from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025.

24 Email from Joseph McCartan, UNMAS, 25 June 2025.

25 Mine Action AoR, Situation Update No. 3 (covering April 2025).

26 Online meeting with Aida Burnett-Cargill, Co-coordinator, Syria Mine Action AoR, 7 August 2025.

27 Emails from Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025; Joseph McCartan, UNMAS, 25 June 2025; and online meeting with Aida Burnett-Cargill, Syria Mine Action AoR, 7 August 2025.

28 Email from Chris Tierney, Country Director, NPA, 24 June 2025.

29 Email from Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025.

30 Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June 2025.

31 Emails from Najat El Hamri, MAG, 3 June 2025; and Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025.

32 Email from Simon Jackson, Programme Manager, HALO, 4 June 2025.

33 Email from Joseph McCartan, UNMAS, 25 June 2025.

and Development Office (FCDO) for survey and clearance operations in 2025.³⁴ HALO's survey and clearance operations in 2024 and 2025 were funded by France, Ireland, and Norway, and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF). In addition, the Gould Foundation provided funding for a single project in 2024, and new donors Germany and Canada began funding in 2025. Ireland, Norway, and France were, though, ending their support by December 2025.³⁵ MAG's survey and clearance operations were funded by US Department of State Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) and Norway NMFA-Norad in 2024, with the Netherlands joining in 2025. US funding faced a temporary suspension until a waiver was issued to continue operations although, as at June 2025, no official outcome has

been received.³⁶ HI's 2024 survey and clearance donors were the US Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), OCHA SCHF, and the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO). In 2025, BHA stopped funding while the rest of the donors have remained.³⁷

UNMAS's 2024 donors included UN OCHA Syria Humanitarian Fund (SHF), Belgium, Finland, Estonia, and the Republic of Korea, which joined as a new donor. For 2025, donors included OCHA SHF, Belgium, UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), UN-Habitat, Italy, and Finland, with Canada in the pipeline.³⁸ NPA was funded in 2024 by the Norwegian MFA, Japan, and SHF. This continued into 2025 with Norwegian funding responsibility moving to Norad and plans for OCHA CERF to also support.³⁹

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

There is no national gender and diversity policy for the mine action programme. However, several operators have their own frameworks in place.⁴⁰ DCA has both a global and a country-specific gender and diversity policy with an implementation plan. MAG and NPA each have institutional gender and diversity policies and implementation plans.⁴¹ UNMAS has an institutional gender and diversity strategy.⁴² SCD has a gender strategy and a diversity strategy, along with policies to prevent discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, or sex.⁴³

HI has reported working to integrate gender and diversity considerations into its humanitarian and development programs in Syria, in alignment with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) Gender Equality Strategy for Syria 2024–26,⁴⁴ which aims to advance gender justice and women's empowerment by increasing their participation in decision-making, improving access to resources and services, and engaging men as allies.⁴⁵

Table 1: Gender composition of operators in 2024⁴⁶

Operator	Total staff	Women staff	Total managerial or supervisory staff	Women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total operational staff	Women in operational positions
UNMAS	12	6 (50%)	4	2 (50%)	2	1 (50%)
NPA	70	31 (44%)	27	10 (37%)	54	23 (43%)
HALO	58	19 (33%)	14	5 (36%)	48	14 (29%)
MAG	222	43 (19%)	39	7 (18%)	153	34 (22%)
DCA	35	7 (20%)	4	1 (25%)	31	6 (19%)
HI	254	73 (20%)	29	7 (24%)	6	4 (67%)
SCD*	3,246	419 (13%)	630	88 (14%)	2,616	331 (13%)
Totals	3,897	598 (15%)	747	120 (16%)	2,910	413 (14%)

* Data is from 2023

34 Email from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025.

35 Email from Simon Jackson, HALO, 4 June 2025.

36 Email from Najat El Hamri, MAG, 3 June 2025.

37 Email from Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025.

38 Email from Joseph McCartan, UNMAS, 25 June 2025.

39 Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June 2025.

40 Email from Adesh Singh, DCA, 16 May 2024.

41 Emails from MAG, 24 May 2021; and Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 June 2024.

42 Email from Francesca Chiaudani, UNMAS, 31 March 2022.

43 Emails from Michael Edwards, SCD, 5 March and 15 June 2022.

44 UNDP, Gender Equality Strategy 2024 – 2026, at: <http://bit.ly/44pJL5D>.

45 Email from Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025.

46 Emails from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025; Simon Jackson, HALO, 4 June 2025; Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025; Najat El Hamri, MAG, 3 June 2025; Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June and 29 July 2025; Joseph McCartan, UNMAS, 25 June 2025; and Sami Mohammad, SCD, 24 May 2024.

In 2024, all HALO Syria staff received safeguarding training on gender and power dynamics, with improved reporting mechanisms to help all staff, especially women and vulnerable groups, feel safe speaking up about abuses.⁴⁷ MAG's senior management held workshops and awareness sessions to strengthen staff and NESMAC understanding of gender, diversity, and practical integration in fieldwork.⁴⁸ HI deployed an Inclusion Technical Specialist based in Amman to support projects across Syria, ensuring interventions are responsive to disability, gender, and age through inclusive case management and technical assistance for local service providers in health, education, livelihoods, and protection.

The specialist also advances HI's "BeHInclusive" action plan, highlighting its commitment to inclusive humanitarian action.⁴⁹

In 2025, NPA delivered training to 20 students, half of whom were women, and over the past year has promoted more women than men to team leader positions based on performance. Four NPA staff were trained in Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) data collection, with plans to conduct regular or ad-hoc surveys in operational areas, sharing results with the PSEA coordinator at the OCHA Protection Sector.⁵⁰

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

UNMAS's partnerships with implementing partners follow guidelines that include environmental requirements. UNMAS applies the IMAS 10.70 on environmental management, and the "do no harm" principle. It also considers the environmental impacts of assessing and removing explosive ordnance, such as the necessary removal of vegetation for operations.⁵¹

Table 2: Environmental policies, assessments and focal points⁵²

Operator	Environmental policy in place	Environmental assessments conducted to support survey and clearance	Environmental focal point at country programme level
NPA	Yes	Yes	Yes
HALO	No - SOP	No	No
DCA	No - SOP	Yes	No
HI	No - SOP	Yes	Yes
MAG	No - SOP	Yes	Yes
SCD	No - in development	No	N/R

N/R = Not Reported

In 2024, two female staff from NPA were trained on the Green Field Tool and have translated the accompanying Survey123 form for use in Syria. Training sessions on the tool with programme staff were planned to be held in July and August 2025, with implementation of the tool on all projects scheduled thereafter. NPA also signed an MoU with a national NGO, the Athar Organization, to recycle NPA's empty 10-litre plastic water bottles with Athar.⁵³ DCA began using an environmental assessment tool in its clearance operations in 2024 and planned to adopt the Green Field Tool via Survey123 in 2025.⁵⁴ HI assessed MUNIREM technology in 2024, a chemical neutralisation agent for EOD, as a more environmentally friendly option for disposal but found it impractical in Syria due to the need for specialised equipment

and high water consumption. Instead, HI adopted Dragon Fire, a thermite-based system, which leaves minimal residue, reduces the logistical burden in the field, and meets IMAS and environmental protection principles.⁵⁵

Operators report considering climate and extreme weather risks during operational planning.⁵⁶ In 2024, DCA delivered risk education sessions in the informal settlement camps of Hweijet Zehra and Al-Khalil, targeting communities displaced by flooding. DCA also accounts for risks such as vegetation fires during dry periods, heat-related health hazards in summer, and reduced accessibility during the rainy season when planning and prioritising survey and clearance.⁵⁷

47 Email from Simon Jackson, HALO, 4 June 2025.

48 Email from Najat El Hamri, MAG, 3 June 2025.

49 Email from Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025.

50 Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June 2025.

51 Email from Hassana Mardam Bey, UNMAS, 19 June 2024.

52 Emails from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025; Simon Jackson, HALO, 4 June 2025; Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025; Najat El Hamri, MAG, 3 June 2025; Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June 2025; and Sami Mohammad, SCD, 24 May 2024.

53 Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June 2025.

54 Email from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025.

55 Email from Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025.

56 Emails from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025; Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025; and Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June 2025.

57 Email from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

In 2025, UNMAS assumed responsibility for coordinating information management across all of Syria. This includes managing existing and incoming data related to survey and clearance.⁵⁸ Until the fall of the Assad regime, IM remained fragmented between the north-west, the north-east, and government-controlled areas, with no data sharing between them. UNMAS is now leading efforts to consolidate all data from mine action partners into a centralised Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database, to which, as at June 2025, most operators had submitted data on NTS and explosive ordnance incidents.⁵⁹ To streamline data flow and ensure timely, standardised reporting, UNMAS has asked each operator to formally designate a dedicated user who will be granted access to submit data directly

to the IMSMA server via structured forms or automated scripts (depending on their technical capacity).⁶⁰ This consolidated approach will enable accurate, timely updates to the Mine Action AoR service-mapping dashboard and support evidence-based analysis for prioritising clearance and integrating mine action within broader humanitarian coordination efforts.⁶¹

The IM TWG meets regularly, both monthly and on an ad-hoc basis, with participation from personnel representing all mine action implementing partners. Co-chaired by UNMAS and NPA, the TWG seeks to ensure that information is collected, stored, and analysed in a uniform and coordinated manner.⁶²

PLANNING AND TASKING

Syria does not have a national mine action strategy in place. Operators use their own prioritisation frameworks for clearance.

NPA reported that before December 2024, prioritisation was mainly determined by access permissions and since then, NPA has established its own prioritisation system with priority agricultural areas to support the return of IDPs, strengthen food security, and enable livelihoods activities.⁶³ DCA prioritises clearance based on humanitarian impact and urgency of need, focusing first on areas where civilians live amid known or suspected contamination, followed by areas likely to see the return of IDPs, while also considering access to critical infrastructure, livelihoods, and services.⁶⁴ As at June 2025, HALO was finalising its clearance prioritisation matrix in coordination with UNMAS and local authorities, using indicators such as type of threat, proximity to residential areas, number of accidents, direct beneficiaries, intended land use, and frequency of EOD call-outs.⁶⁵ MAG prioritises

clearance based on threats to local populations and land needed for agriculture.⁶⁶ HI's prioritisation framework aligns with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) principle of "All Reasonable Effort", and considers humanitarian impact, community engagement, and technical assessments. It works closely with local communities to identify priority areas, such as agricultural lands, schools, and healthcare facilities, in an inclusive manner.⁶⁷

UNMAS uses a structured, needs-driven approach aligned with IMAS, national priorities, and humanitarian principles, coordinating closely with implementing partners. Its criteria include humanitarian impact, severity and type of contamination, support for humanitarian and development access, requests from authorities or communities, and operational feasibility and security. UNMAS also employs evidence-based tools like IMSMA to inform and guide prioritisation decisions.⁶⁸

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

There are no formal national mine action standards (NMAS) in Syria. As a result, most of the operators work to their own standard operating procedures (SOPs). HALO has highlighted that the absence of national standards and the lack of requirements for all actors, including local volunteer

and military organisations, to follow them results in partially cleared areas that must be treated as uncleared, wasting time and resources.⁶⁹ DCA has also stressed the urgent need to assess and address widespread informal clearance by untrained civilians, which poses a severe risk to life.⁷⁰

58 Ibid.

59 Email from Joseph McCartan, UNMAS, 25 June 2025.

60 Ibid.

61 Emails from Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025; and Joseph McCartan, UNMAS, 25 June 2025.

62 Emails from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025; Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025; Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June 2025; and Joseph McCartan, UNMAS, 25 June 2025.

63 Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June 2025.

64 Email from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025.

65 Email from Simon Jackson, HALO, 4 June 2025.

66 Email from Najat El Hamri, MAG, 3 June 2025.

67 Email from Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025.

68 Email from Joseph McCartan, UNMAS, 25 June 2025.

69 Email from Simon Jackson, HALO, 4 June 2025.

70 Email from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025.

HALO updated its NTS SOP in 2024 to address the anticipated scale of contamination following increased access after the Assad regime's collapse. Aligned with IMAS 08.10, the revised SOP includes a more detailed survey form and expanded data analysis procedures to improve clearance planning and reporting. HALO also slightly amended its mechanical clearance SOP to maintain safety as it expands its mechanical fleet.⁷¹ DCA began reviewing its manual and mechanical clearance SOPs in 2025 to align with evolving operational contexts, updated technical standards, and best practices,

with planned improvements in safety protocols, task planning, equipment use, and environmental integration.⁷² HI updated its risk education and NTS SOPs in April/May 2025, introducing more concise steps to improve operational clarity, IMAS compliance, and field-level efficiency and consistency.⁷³ NPA revised its SOPs on NTS, environmental considerations, and quality in line with updated IMAS and to better reflect procedures adapted to the specific context in Syria.⁷⁴

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2024, SARC, the ICRC, NPA, and UNMAS implementing partner, Safety Solutions, were conducting survey and clearance in Assad-regime controlled areas; Syria Civil Defence (SCD) and HALO were operating in the north-west; and DCA, HI, ITF, MAG, and Roj Mine Control Organization (RMC), were operating in the north-east.

Prior to the fall of the Assad regime, in areas under the government's control, most survey and clearance had been conducted by Russian and Syrian military engineers and civil defence organisations.⁷⁵ In 2024, the Syrian army conducted clearance in regime-controlled areas, on a limited scale, which included clearance of CMR and other ordnance.⁷⁶

UNMAS signed an MoU with the Syrian government in 2018. The following year, UNMAS reported the government had agreed to the involvement of international demining organisations which would be registered by the government and coordinated by UNMAS.⁷⁷ In 2024, prior to the fall of the Assad regime, four organisations were accredited for mine action in government-controlled areas: DRC, NPA, Safety Solutions, and SHIELD.⁷⁸ UNMAS reported no change in capacity from 2023 to 2024 and but expected an increase in capacity during 2025. The planned increase includes deployment of additional NTS teams and Multi-Task Teams (MTTs) which will conduct TS and clearance and provide risk education.⁷⁹

Following the signature of an MoU with the Syrian government in December 2021,⁸⁰ NPA received accreditation and completed its inception phase in 2022. The inception phase included the recruitment of national staff and the setting up of NPA's office in Damascus.⁸¹ NPA reported no change in capacity from 2023 to 2024. A planned training course for searchers was postponed from December 2024 to January 2025. The newly trained searchers will allow staff to

be reassigned to form dedicated EORE teams. NPA also plans to increase its capacity in 2025, contingent on funding, and was beginning operations in Homs governorate in July 2025.⁸²

The ICRC works in partnership with SARC and has trained and supported SARC risk education and NTS teams with SARC teams conducting NTS in Aleppo, Damascus, Deir Ezzor, Hama, Homs, and Latakia governorates. ICRC has its own clearance teams, and in 2024 it also initiated explosive ordnance disposal (EOD).⁸³

HALO has operated in Syria since 2016. In 2024, given the scale of the programme and the prevailing security situation, HALO cleared a single AP mined area in Idlib governorate. There was no significant change in HALO's survey and clearance capacity in 2024 compared to 2023. As at June 2025, HALO had increased the number of NTS teams from one to three and mechanical clearance teams from two to six. It planned to add a further five NTS teams during the year. In addition, the number of EOD teams has grown from two to five, with a further seven expected to be deployed by the end of 2025. HALO was restarting operations in Daraa and beginning operations in Deir ez-Zor in July 2025. Subject to funding, it also plans to expand into Rural Damascus and Latakia.⁸⁴

SCD has been operational in Syria since 2013. In June 2025, the SCD announced that it will become fully integrated into the Syria government with its emergency response capacity transferred to the Ministry of Emergency and Disaster Management.⁸⁵ In 2024, SCD was operational in 33 sub-districts of Idlib, Aleppo, and Hama governorates providing NTS and single-item disposal via remote-controlled open burning.⁸⁶ The SCD intended to increase its survey and clearance capacity from six to eleven teams in 2025.⁸⁷

71 Email from Simon Jackson, HALO, 4 June 2025.

72 Email from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025.

73 Email from Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025.

74 Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June 2025.

75 "Russian military boosts qualified Syrian sappers to demine war-ravaged country", *Tass*, 9 January 2018.

76 Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 June 2024.

77 Statement by Agnes Marcaillou, Director, UNMAS, to the UN Security Council, 24 October 2019.

78 Email from Hassana Mardam Bey, UNMAS, 19 June 2024.

79 Email from Joseph McCartan, UNMAS, 25 June 2025.

80 NPA, New Humanitarian Mine Action in Syria, at: <https://bit.ly/3MHNXTF>.

81 Email from Claus Nielsen, Programme Manager, NPA, 12 April 2023.

82 Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June 2025.

83 ICRC, *ICRC in Syria, A Year in Review: 2024*, at: <https://bit.ly/401D9JL>, p. 8.

84 Email from Simon Jackson, HALO, 4 June 2025.

85 SCD, Statement on the Integration of the Syria Civil Defence (The White Helmets) into the Syrian Government, 2 June 2025, at: <http://bit.ly/3J8fSQd>.

86 Email from Sami Mohammad, SCD, 24 May 2024.

87 The White Helmets website, (Arabic), accessed on 4 August 2025, at: <https://bit.ly/4fks3WL>.

Table 3: NTS and TS capacities deployed in 2024⁸⁸

Operator	NTS teams	Total NTS personnel	TS teams	Total TS personnel	Comments
RMCO	10	20	0	0	Until the end of January 2024.
DCA	2	6	0	0	
HALO	2	9	0	0	
MAG	10	27	N/A	N/A	NTS and community liaison teams. Clearance teams conduct TS.
HI	28	72	0	0	Of this 11 teams totalling 25 personnel were operational until end of January 2024 and 8 teams totalling 19 personnel until end of August 2024.
Safety Solutions	2	6	0	0	
NPA	4	12	N/A	N/A	Clearance teams conduct TS.
SCD*	6	30	0	0	
Totals	64	182	0	0	

* Data is from 2023. N/A = Not applicable

Table 4: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2024⁸⁹

Operator	Clearance teams	Total deminers*	Mechanical assets/machines	Comments
Safety Solutions	1	4	0	
NPA	4	30	0	
HALO	2	10	2	Two five-strong mechanical clearance teams deployed on AP mined area.
SCD*	6	54	0	
MAG	9	83	10	
DCA	4	27	11	
HI	6	56	0	Of this 3 teams totalling 30 personnel were operational until the end of August 2024
Totals	32	264	23	

* Data is from 2023

DCA has been operational in north-east Syria since 2015. In 2024, it prioritised survey and clearance operations across multiple locations in Ar-Raqqa governorate. In early 2024, it conducted survey and clearance on three public infrastructure sites. Following clearance, the sites were rehabilitated by DCA's Shelter team and handed over to local authorities and communities for use. After a reduction in

clearance teams from 2023 to 2024 following the conclusion of a major grant, an increase in the number of NTS and clearance personnel was expected in 2025. This planned scale-up supports DCA's strategy to expand mine action operations into new areas, including Rural Damascus, Aleppo, and Deir ez-Zor.

88 Emails from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025; Simon Jackson, HALO, 4 June 2025; Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025; Najat El Hamri, MAG, 3 June 2025; Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June 2025; Joseph McCartan, UNMAS, 25 June 2025; and Sami Mohammad, SCD, 24 May 2024.

89 Emails from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025; Simon Jackson, HALO, 4 June 2025; Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025; Najat El Hamri, MAG, 3 June 2025; Chris Tierney, NPA, 29 July 2025; Joseph McCartan, UNMAS, 25 June 2025; and Sami Mohammad, SCD, 24 May 2024.

Under the Syria Mine Action and Livelihood Outcome-Based Pilot Project funded by the FCDO, a Nexus approach will be implemented in 2025. This will integrate mine action, shelter rehabilitation, and livelihood components in targeted areas. In the countryside, clearance will enable safe access to agricultural land. The livelihood component will include agro-ecology training, distribution of agricultural inputs and irrigation kits, and the construction of greenhouses, designed to promote food security and enhance resilience among rural communities affected by explosive contamination. In urban settings, contaminated public infrastructure, particularly schools, will be cleared of explosive ordnance, with rubble safely removed and managed. Following clearance, the shelter team will rehabilitate the schools, while the livelihood team will provide on-the-job apprenticeship training to community members (of mixed gender) in masonry, carpentry, plumbing, painting, and electrical work. In preparation for this expansion, DCA has initiated the registration process with the Syrian MoFA and has established an office in Damascus. As of June 2025, DCA was working to set up a mine action base and recruit survey and clearance personnel, with an initial focus on clearance in Rural Damascus and the surrounding areas.⁹⁰

A local organisation, RMC0, established in 2016, was conducting clearance in the north-east but sustained heavy casualties among its deminers attempting to clear improvised devices.⁹¹ In 2023, RMC0 partnered with DCA for NTS in hard-to-reach areas and this project concluded at the end of January 2024.⁹²

HI has been present in Syria since 2012. In 2024, it conducted survey, clearance, and EOD in Raqqa, including clearance of the riverbed of the Euphrates, which enabled the reopening of the Al-Rashid Bridge, improving connectivity between Raqqa and the surrounding regions. HI increased its survey

and clearance capacity by 12 personnel in 2024. Plans to expand the programme further in 2025 depended on securing adequate funding. In 2025, HI began clearance at three schools in Deir ez-Zor. In north-west Syria, HI is delivering risk education in Idlib and Aleppo governorates and training its staff and those from SCD in NTS.⁹³

MAG has been operational in north-east Syria since 2016. In 2024, MAG conducted survey and clearance operations in Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, Kisreh, Al Ajil, Hasakah-Markada, Shadaddi, Tal Tamr, and Elwet Eldisheisha. There was no change in operational capacity compared to 2023. In 2025, newly liberated areas with heavy contamination, including locations in southern Ar-Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor governorate, and western Syria, will require expanded operations. MAG has secured new grants to support activities in these areas and expected to receive additional funding. As a result, the number of personnel is expected to increase across the country.⁹⁴

ITF has operated in north-east Syria since 2020. From January 2023 to January 2024, ITF deployed 10 NTS teams as part of a consortium with 3iSolution, DCA, and HI to conduct survey of all accessible explosive ordnance-contaminated areas in north-east Syria. From August 2023 to October 2024, under the “Clear then Grow Phase III” project supported by the French and Slovenian Ministries of Foreign and European Affairs, ITF surveyed and cleared former agricultural land and infrastructure contaminated with explosive ordnance in IS-liberated areas, also providing risk education. ITF also provided capacity building support to its local partner, Reachout, conducting training on IMAS, international donor expectations and project management; developed SOPs and organisational policies; and provided guidance on best practices, including financial management.⁹⁵

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Table 5: Land release outputs in 2024

Release of cluster munition-contaminated area	Release in 2024 (km²)	Comments
Clearance	2.12	Operator data
Technical Survey	0	Operator data
Non-Technical Survey	0	Operator data
Destruction of submunitions during clearance, survey, and spot tasks	2024	
Submunitions destroyed	1,103 (including 522 in spot tasks)	Operator data

90 Email from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025.

91 S. Kajjo, “Landmine removal crucial in post-IS Syria”, *Voice of America*, 3 April 2019; and interview with operators, Erbil, Iraq, May 2019.

92 Emails from Kevin Straker, DCA, 15 March and 28 June 2023; and Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025.

93 Email from Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025.

94 Email from Najat El Hamri, MAG, 3 June 2025.

95 ITF, 2024 Annual Report, at: <https://bit.ly/4m0FJbd>, pp. 105–10.

SURVEY IN 2024

Operators did not release any cluster munition-contaminated area through survey in 2024. This is a decrease from 2023 when 0.35km² was released through survey (nearly 0.10km² reduced through TS and almost 0.25km² cancelled through NTS).⁹⁶

In 2024, a total of 25.42km² of CMR-contaminated area was identified through NTS, of which DCA identified almost 13.49km² in Ar-Raqqa governorate; HALO identified nearly 11.16km²; and NPA identified 0.77km².⁹⁷

CLEARANCE IN 2024

In 2024, a total of almost 2.12km² of cluster munition-contaminated area was cleared, with 581 submunitions destroyed.⁹⁸ This is an increase from the 1.96km² cleared in 2023, with 222 submunitions found and destroyed.⁹⁹

Table 6: CMR clearance in 2024¹⁰⁰

Governorate	Operator	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	Submunitions destroyed	Other UXO destroyed
Raqqa	DCA	3	1,043,669	98	136
Raqqa	MAG	129	197,436	113	15
Raqqa	HI	2	359,007	54	4
Rural Damascus	UNMAS	25	29,355	292	0
Rural Damascus	NPA	10	490,253	24	81
Totals		169	2,119,720	581	236

A further 522 submunitions were discovered by operators during spot tasks in 2024: 155 by UNMAS in Rural Damascus and Aleppo; 2 by NPA in Rural Damascus; 315 by SCD in the north-west; and 43 by MAG, and 7 by DCA in Raqqa.¹⁰¹

In 2024, as part of its clearance of agricultural land, ITF released 1,550,386m² through TS and clearance with 3

improvised explosive devices (IEDs), 4 anti-vehicle mines, 7 electric detonators, and 4 items of UXO destroyed. It is not clear if any were CMR.¹⁰² ICRC clearance teams surveyed 1,815,000m² in Aleppo and Rural Damascus, clearing 737,746m² and destroying 559 explosive devices, although it is not clear if any were CMR.¹⁰³

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Syria is not yet a State Party to the CCM, nonetheless, it has obligations under international human rights law to clear CMR as soon as possible. NPA reported conducting quarterly advocacy meetings with the national mine action committee of the former Assad regime to encourage Syria to join both the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) and the CCM. NPA has continued this advocacy with the interim government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Finance. These efforts have been framed as a means to reintegrate Syria into the international community, enable funding from other States Parties, and demonstrate that the interim government prioritises the well-being of the Syrian people. On 22 June 2025, during a meeting on the national disaster plan, the Minister of Emergency Services and Disaster Management announced that the Syrian government is considering acceding to the APMBC, with a decision expected in the coming months.¹⁰⁴

In 2024, until the fall of the Assad regime in December, survey and clearance in Syria remained divided across three main regions as described above. Overall land release output fell from 2023 to 2024 due to the lack of survey, although clearance output increased. An overall rise in survey and clearance capacity was expected in 2025, with operators planning to deploy additional teams. However, this expected increase in survey and clearance output will not be sufficient to meet the expanding demand in newly accessible areas following the change of regime, with a dramatic rise in the number of incidents from explosive ordnance especially in agricultural and grazing lands. Population movements into newly accessible areas combined with high-risk civilian behaviours, such as informal clearance for cash, further compound the challenge.

96 Emails from Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 June 2024; and Adesh Singh, DCA, 16 May 2024

97 Emails from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025; Simon Jackson, HALO, 4 June 2025; and Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June 2025.

98 Emails from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025; Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025; Najat El Hamri, MAG, 3 June 2025; Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June 2025; and Joseph McCartan, UNMAS, 25 June 2025.

99 Emails from Chris Tierney, NPA, 17 June 2024; Riaan Boshoff, MAG, 21 May 2024; and Adesh Singh, DCA, 16 May 2024.

100 Emails from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025; Lejla Susic, HI, 2 June 2025; Najat El Hamri, MAG, 3 June 2025; Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June 2025; and Joseph McCartan, UNMAS, 25 June 2025.

101 Emails from Adesh Singh, DCA, 6 June 2025; Najat El Hamri, MAG, 3 June 2025; Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June 2025; Joseph McCartan, UNMAS, 25 June 2025; and SCD, Annual Report 2024, p. 47, at: <https://bit.ly/44u8Pbz>.

102 ITF, "Annual Report 2024", p. 106.

103 ICRC, International Mine Awareness Day: Addressing the threat of explosive ordnance in Syria, 3 April 2025.

104 Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June 2025.

Funding remains a critical constraint with HALO reporting a lack of long-term, sustainable funding and the absence of multi-year contracts, while NPA notes that mine action continues to receive low funding priority despite the manifest humanitarian need. In 2025, UNMAS was prioritising a baseline survey of accessible areas across Syria to improve understanding of contamination, including from CMR, which will support the development of a nationwide prioritisation process. However, coordination challenges remain with HALO reporting the absence of shared data from other mine action and non-mine action actors while HI highlights the lack of formal recognition and limited capacity of NESMAC with no direct relationship with UNMAS due to political sensitivities. HALO has also raised concerns about the absence of enforced national standards, leading to inconsistent clearance quality and the need to re-clear partially cleared areas.

The interim government of Syria is still building its institutional capacity and does not yet have a recognised national mine action authority or mine action centre to manage mine action. UNMAS has taken on an interim coordinating role and is providing capacity support to the Minister of Emergency Services and Disaster Management. Nevertheless, NPA reports significant regulatory and

administrative challenges, including centralised and understaffed registration and licensing processes in Damascus; frequently changing visa policies; sanctions that restrict direct or indirect support to the interim government; and retrospective customs reviews of previously imported goods.

The security situation in Syria remains fractured and volatile with Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) maintaining control over the north-east; foreign militaries, notably Turkish troops still holding parts of the north-west; regular Israeli strikes on Syrian military positions; and sporadic attacks from Islamic State.¹⁰⁵ In 2024, NPA reported the loss of equipment, including a large-loop detector on loan to the national mine action committee that was stolen during the looting of its building; a 20-foot shipping container used as a temporary ammunition store stolen from Yarmouk; and team uniforms stolen while awaiting clearance at the Lebanese border with Syria.¹⁰⁶ In 2025, three SCD volunteers were killed by a remotely detonated device during EOD operations in eastern Hama. Initial observations raise serious concerns that the team may have been deliberately targeted by individuals monitoring the site.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Council on Foreign Relations, Global Conflict Tracker, Conflict in Syria, accessed 5 July 2025, at: <https://bit.ly/3Gv2Knk>.

¹⁰⁶ Email from Chris Tierney, NPA, 24 June 2025.

¹⁰⁷ SCD, Statement by the Syria Civil Defence (White Helmets) on the killing of three volunteers from the UXO removal team in Hama Countryside, 22 May 2025, at: <http://bit.ly/407TBi6>.