TAJIKISTAN

MINE ACTION REVIEW

CLEARING CLUSTER MUNITION REMNANTS 2023

KEY DATA

CLUSTER MUNITION CONTAMINATION: LIGHT

NATIONAL AUTHORITY ESTIMATE

4KM²

SUBMUNITION CLEARANCE IN 2022

0.61 KM²

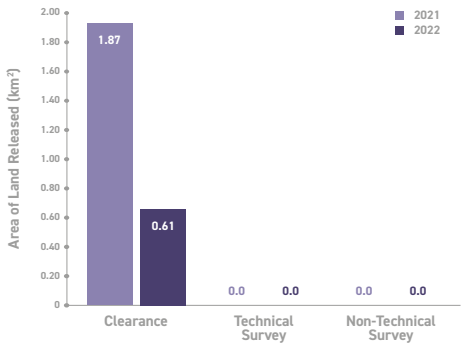
(NATIONAL AUTHORITY ESTIMATE)

SUBMUNITIONS DESTROYED IN 2022

122

(INCLUDING 12 DESTROYED DURING EOD SPOT TASKS)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Tajikistan's clearance output decreased significantly in 2022 compared to the previous year. The national authority estimates that total contamination from cluster munition remnants (CMR) increased hugely to almost 4.04km² at the end of 2022 from 1.87km² a year earlier. This increase was due to the identification of previously unrecorded contamination.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- **Tajikistan should accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a matter of priority.**
- **Tajikistan should comply with its obligations under international human rights law to clear CMR on territory under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.**
- **The Tajikistan National Mine Action Center (TNMAC) should seek to confirm the extent of remaining CMR contamination and ensure timely clearance and release of the contaminated areas.**

CLUSTER MUNITION SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT

- Commission for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law (CIIHL)
- Tajikistan National Mine Action Center (TNMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Union of Sappers Tajikistan (UST)
- Ministry of Defence – Humanitarian Demining Company (HDC)
- Border Guard Forces of Tajikistan

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- FSD

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION

Tajikistan has a CMR problem that is estimated by TNMAC to cover a total of 4.03km^2 in 16 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) (see Table 1).[1] Tajikistan reports no suspected hazardous areas (SHAs).

TNMAC's current estimate of contamination represents a more than doubling on the 1.86km^2 identified by TNMAC at the end of 2021.[2] CMR contamination is spread across three regions, with the largest concentration in Rasht in the Districts of Republican Subordination (DRS) region, a further third concentrated in the mountainous district of Darvoz in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous region, and almost one quarter in Vahdat, also in DRS region.[3] The significant increase in the estimate of cluster munition-contaminated area is the result of nine battle areas being confirmed as containing CMR, with a total area of 2.67km^2 being added to the national database in 2022.[4] Contamination data is disaggregated by weapon type in the national database, with CMR disaggregated from other explosive remnants of war (ERW).[5]

TNMAC cautioned in 2021 that "taking into account the scale of the past civil war, unexplored military ranges, unexplored difficult areas where battles took place, it can be assumed that the number of explosive remnants of war sites and dangerous areas may exceed those discovered and cleared so far".[6] Tajikistan plans to finish surveying all explosive ordnance contamination by the end of 2025 in the districts of Darvoz, Rasht, and Vahdat where cluster munition-contaminated areas have continued to be identified.[7]

Table 1: Cluster munition-contaminated area (at end 2022) (National Authority estimate)[8]

Region	District	CHAs	Area (m^2)
Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (VKMB)	Darvoz	5	1,404,463
DRS	Rasht	6	1,651,400
DRS	Vahdat	5	979,313
Totals		**16**	**4,035,176**

Tajikistan traces its CMR contamination back to the civil war of 1992–97 but has not clarified who was responsible for using cluster munitions.[9] Most of the submunitions being cleared are Soviet-era AO 2.5RT/RTM type.[10] SHOAB-0.5 submunitions have also been found.[11]

Tajikistan faces several challenges in determining an accurate baseline of CMR contamination. Owing to a lack of nationwide survey, Tajikistan has no recorded SHAs and continues to discover areas of contamination for which no previous information exists.[12] As the Union of Sappers Tajikistan (UST) notes, many cluster munitions were used without documentation. As such, non-technical survey (NTS) teams are investing effort into finding former military personnel and other informants who were involved in the civil war and can help survey teams build a picture of likely contamination. Information about previously unknown areas of contamination also comes from explosive accidents, such as the one in 2021 involving two civilians and the explosion of a SHOAB-0.5 cluster bomb in the Romit Gorge in Vahdat district. This prompted survey and eventually led to confirmation of a previously unrecorded total of 1.74km^2 of cluster munition-contaminated area.[13] Tajikistan's terrain can present a challenge to determining an accurate baseline of contamination in a given area. Mudslides, landslides, avalanches, and rockfalls can cause submunitions to move or become more deeply buried.[14]

OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND MINES

Tajikistan is also contaminated with anti-personnel mines. See Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* reports on Tajikistan for further information.

1 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, Director, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.
2 Ibid., 19 June 2022.
3 Ibid., 31 March 2023.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., 16 June 2023.
6 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2021), Form A.
7 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 and 24 June 2022 and 31 March 2023.
8 Ibid., 31 March and 16 June 2023. Based on reconciliation of data provided by TNMAC in 2021 with that provided by TNMAC in 2022, Mine Action Review estimates that contaminated area in Vahdat may be slightly higher than that given in Table 1, at 1.07km^2.
9 Statement of Tajikistan, Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015.
10 Email from Melissa Andersson, Country Director, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), 29 April 2020.
11 Email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, Director, Union of Sappers Tajikistan (UST), 14 April 2023.
12 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.
13 Email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.
14 Presentation by Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 22 June 2022; and email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Commission for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law (CIIHL), chaired by the First Deputy Prime Minister, and comprising senior representatives from relevant line ministries, acts as Tajikistan's national mine action authority, responsible for mainstreaming mine action in the government's socio-economic development policies.[15]

TNMAC is the executive arm of CIIHL and the body coordinating mine action, responsible for issuing task orders, information management, quality assurance (QA), and quality control (QC).[16] It was set up by government decree in 2014, replacing the Tajikistan Mine Action Centre and assuming responsibility for the transition to a fully nationally-owed programme.[17] Tajikistan's Parliament adopted a Law on Humanitarian Mine Action in 2016.[18] The Ministry of Defence (MoD) plays a significant role in the mine actor sector through the Humanitarian Demining Company (HDC), the biggest national operator, which is funded by the United States.[19]

TNMAC has submitted an evidence-based, costed, and time-bound mine action strategy for 2021–30 and an action plan for its implementation, both of which have been approved by the government.[20] However, as Tajikistan has not yet adhered to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), the problem of cluster munitions is not integrated into its national mine action strategy. TNMAC does, however include instructions regarding CMR when tasking demining operators with survey and clearance.[21]

The Government of Tajikistan and TNMAC are enabling and highly supportive of mine action activities in the country. This includes the granting of visas, concluding memoranda of understanding with operators, facilitating imports, and involving operators in decisions as and when needed.[22]

In 2022, the Tajik government provided modest funding for mine action, including US$480,000 in "technical and non-technical assistance" (the same level of funding it provided in 2021) to facilitate the implementation of the Tajikistan's obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). A further US$56,400 (a slight increase compared to 2021), was allocated to support operational mine action.[23] TNMAC reports that, as Tajikistan has not yet adhered to the CCM, no separate funding was allocated specifically for survey and clearance of cluster munition-contaminated area in Tajikistan in 2022.[24]

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Programme Office in Dushanbe (OSCE POiD), has previously supported the Ministry of Defence to update its multi-year plan, entitled "Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Tajikistan Co-operation Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2018–2023".[25] In 2022, the OSCE continued to support mine action, providing €278,000 to TNMAC (a similar level of funding to 2021), as well as two vehicles (a pick-up truck and an ambulance), for use by MoD demining teams.[26]

TNMAC receives support on information management f rom the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) through regular online consultations.[27] Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), does not have a formal capacity development agreement with TNMAC but assists informally with capacity development activities as and when requested.[28] In February 2023, NPA provided International Mine Action Standards (IMAS)-compliant medical training for staff from NPA and other demining organisations in Tajikistan.[29]

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, a multi-stakeholder mine action forum for Tajikistan met on a regular basis. NPA believes it would be good to revive the forum.[30] Monthly technical co-ordination meetings were held in 2022 involving participants from TNMAC, the demining operators, senior staff from the central offices of the MoD engineering units, Border Troops, the Committee for Emergency Situations and Civil Defence, and the National Guard.[31]

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

TNMAC states that environmental issues are taken into consideration during survey and clearance to ensure that operations are conducted without negative environmental impact and that hazardous areas released and handed over to communities in a state suitable for intended use.[32]

15 2019 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 20.
16 Ibid., pp. 20–21.
17 Ibid., p. 1.
18 Ibid., pp. 20–21.
19 Ibid., p. 23.
20 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 April 2021 and 7 July 2022.
21 Ibid., 31 March 2023.
22 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022 and 29 March 2023; Saodat Asadova, National Programme Officer, OSCE, 30 March 2023; and Nickhwah Din Mohammed, Country Director, FSD, 24 March 2023.
23 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022 and 31 March 2023.
24 Ibid., 31 March 2023.
25 Emails from Luka Buhin, OSCE Tajikistan, 9 October 2017; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 7 July 2022.
26 Email from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 30 March 2023.
27 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.
28 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022 and 29 March 2023.
29 Ibid., 29 March 2023.
30 Ibid.
31 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.
32 Ibid., 19 June 2022.

Clearance activities are undertaken according to Tajikistan's national mine action standards (NMAS), which contain a chapter on the environment, health, and safety. This chapter covers issues such as safeguarding of the environment during the establishment and removal of worksites and accommodation, waste disposal, air quality, water supply, as well as the recording and reporting of environmental "incidents".[33] As part of compliance with this chapter, demining organisations have developed a pro forma book for recording environmental incidents in minefields and battle areas**.** There were no updates to the environmental chapter of the NMAS in 2022.[34]

Tajikistan does not have an environmental management policy for mine action but a 2011 law on environmental protection and other regulatory documents define the legal basis for all state policy on the environment.[35]

NPA has its own environmental management system in place, which includes a policy adapted to the local context from NPA's Head Office guidelines. NPA also has an environmental standard operating procedure (SOP) and an annual action plan linked to the environmental policy.[36]

FSD has an environmental policy and SOP at headquarter level and was due to begin the ISO 14001 accreditation process in 2023. Refresher training on the SOP and FSD's organisational level commitments to sound environmental practices takes place each year with all management and operational staff, following the winter stand-down period.[37]

UST has an SOP on environmental protection based on Tajikistan's NMAS, which has been approved by TNMAC.[38]

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

TNMAC adopted a gender programme in October 2018 that was prepared by the GICHD (GMAP, now a programme of the GICHD), and is committed to improving the situation of women in the mine action sector.[39] With the assistance of the GICHD, gender and diversity issues were integrated into Tajikistan's national mine action strategy, updated to cover the period 2021 to 2030, with annual plans also addressing the issues.[40] Tajikistan reports that gender is mainstreamed in all aspects of their mine action programme.[41] Relevant mine action data continue to be disaggregated by sex and age.[42]

TNMAC asserts that both men and women with relevant work experience and qualifications in demining have equal access to employment in the sector in Tajikistan.[43] However, TNMAC also acknowledges that it is challenging to achieve gender balance in view of the predominance of men in the military, where service is compulsory for men and voluntary for women. TNMAC states that where it can identify key positions that can be filled by female candidates, such as paramedics and/or QA/QC officers, this will be prioritised. In addition, TNMAC seeks to increase female civilian capacity in mine action in coordination with other implementing partners.[44]

In 2022, 28% of TNMAC's staff were women and 38% of managerial/supervisory positions were occupied by women (an increase on the 30% of 2021). However, no women were employed in operational positions in TNMAC. [45] No women were employed by MoD's HDC in either operational or managerial/supervisory positions in 2021 or 2022.[46]

33 Emails from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 3 and 9 June 2022; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022; and National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), Chapter 20: "Environment, Health and Safety".

34 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

35 Ibid.

36 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022.

37 Email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023.

38 Email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

39 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 14 June 2019.

40 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

41 APMBC Committee on the Implementation of Article 5, Preliminary Observations on Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

42 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

43 Ibid.

44 2019 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Additional Information received 3 August 2019.

45 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022 and 31 March 2023.

46 Emails from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 3 June 2022; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 16 June 2023.

Table 2: Gender composition of operators in 2022[47]

Organisation	Total staff	Women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Women in operational positions
TNMAC	25	7	8	3	4	0
NPA	81	16	14	4	60	12
FSD	12	3	3	1	9	2
MoD HDC	117	0	15	0	84	0

The OSCE seeks to promote gender awareness by collecting comprehensive relevant information during its work.[48] The OSCE also insists that a module on gender and human rights be included in all pre-season basic training of demining teams, in accordance with IMAS. The OSCE confirmed that these measures continued throughout 2022 and that it will continue to emphasise the importance of gender mainstreaming and balance throughout project implementation.[49]

NPA has integrated a gender and diversity policy into its Tajikistan operations and employs staff from every region.[50] In 2022, 20% of NPA's staff in Tajikistan were women and 29% of managerial/supervisory positions were occupied by women (the same proportions as in 2021). 20% of operational positions were occupied by women in 2022 (compared to 14% in 2021).[51] Despite continuing cultural constraints that inhibit women's employment in mine action, particularly in field positions, NPA has found that greater knowledge about the activities of its female deminers has made it easier to recruit female staff.[52] There is a special focus on staff capacity development around gender and diversity and a specific budget set aside. No significant changes were made to NPA's Gender and Diversity Policy or implementation plan in 2022.[53]

While focused on CMR clearance in 2022, NPA confirms that, when it does conduct survey, it deploys gender-balanced teams. NPA ensures women and children in communities affected by cluster munitions are consulted during community liaison and impact assessment activities, but highlights that consulting with women and children is more challenging in the border regions, where the military/border guard forces are mainly, if not exclusively, male. NPA also highlights that the majority of cluster munition incidents in Tajikistan involve young men or boys working as shepherds. NPA explains that, while ethnic groupings are not as pronounced in Tajikistan as they are in some other contexts, to the extent that this is relevant, community liaison teams take this into consideration when conducting their work.[54]

FSD employs a diverse workforce in Tajikistan in line with the organisation's Gender, Diversity and Inclusion policy. In 2022, 25% of FSD's staff in Tajikistan were female with one third of managerial/supervisory positions and 22% of operational positions occupied by women. FSD disaggregates all relevant mine action data by sex and age.[55]

UST supports equal access to employment for qualified women and men in UST survey and clearance teams in Tajikistan, including for managerial/supervisory positions, but does not yet employ any women among its 54 staff. Although survey teams are not yet mixed gender, UST does consult all groups during survey and community liaison activities, including women and children and representatives from ethnic or minority groups. UST does not yet have a Gender and Diversity policy or implementation plan. Survey data are disaggregated by sex and age.

NPA and TNMAC revived meetings of a gender working group in early 2020. Its meetings were interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic but the group then met twice annually in 2021 and 2022.[56] NPA hopes that this group can become more active in the future.[57]

47 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March and 16 June 2023; and Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March and 23 April 2023; and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March, 4 May, and 23 May 2023.

48 Email from Johan Dahl, Acting Head, Political-Military Department, OSCE Programme Office, Dushanbe, 13 May 2020.

49 Emails from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 9 June 2022 and 30 March 2023; and interview with Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 24 June 2022.

50 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 April 2020.

51 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 23 June 2022, 29 March, and 4 and 23 May 2023.

52 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 April and 4 July 2021.

53 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023.

54 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022 and 29 March 2023.

55 Emails from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March and 23 April 2023.

56 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 April and 4 July 2021, 21 May 2022, and 29 March 2023; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022 and 31 March 2023.

57 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

TNMAC uses the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core to maintain its national database.[58] There were no significant measures taken to improve the database in 2022, mainly because the reporting system has matured and stakeholders are satisfied with the data. TNMAC regularly receives support on information management through online consultations with the GICHD.[59]

NPA maintains an accurate and up-to-date picture of activities through daily reporting into the IMSMA Core Portal, using the data collection forms introduced and the updated by TNMAC in 2020–21. The portal also contains completion reports and details of outstanding contaminated areas that are scheduled for further survey and clearance work.[60]

PLANNING AND TASKING

TNMAC does not have an annual work plan specifically for the survey and clearance of cluster munition-contaminated areas. However, Tajikistan's General Land Release Operations Plan for 2023 does outline the list of remaining confirmed battle areas, including those containing CMR.[61]

Land release tasks for cluster munition-contaminated areas are prioritised by TNMAC through application of Tajikistan's SOP 1.2 (Planning and Tasking of Mine Action Operations), taking into consideration the following criteria:

- Government and local authority requests
- Donor requirements
- The area's status in relation to the district-by-district approach
- Distance of the task site from populated areas
- The need to complete any previously suspended areas
- The local security situation.[62]

NPA is tasked by TNMAC after discussions that take into account humanitarian impact, national planning priorities, and seasonal access constraints.[63] Operators report that dossiers are issued in a timely matter by TNMAC.[64]

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Tajikistan's revised National Mine Action Standards were approved in April 2017. The revised standards have been translated into Russian and English.[65] While no updates were made to Tajikistan's NMAS or SOPs in 2022,[66] TNMAC states that when any updates to the NMAS or SOPs are made, this is undertaken in consultation with clearance operators.[67] In general, demining operators update their SOPs once every three years during the accreditation process.[68]

Operators report that Tajikistan's NMAS are appropriately adapted to the local threat and enable effective, efficient, and safe survey and clearance work.[69] FSD suggest a minor improvement would be to increase provision for Casualty Evacuation (CASEVAC), and Medical Evacuation (MEDIVAC), when teams are working at high altitude in remote areas.[70]

While the Cluster Munition Remnant Survey (CMRS) methodology originally pioneered in south-east Asia was pilot-tested in Tajikistan in 2019-20, TNMAC concluded that standard survey methods are more suitable in Tajikistan's typically mountainous terrain.[71]

All cluster munition-contaminated areas cleared in Tajikistan in 2022 were found to contain CMR.[72]

58 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 28 May 2020; and APMBC Committee on the Implementation of Article 5, Preliminary Observations on Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

59 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

60 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May 2022 and 29 March 2023.

61 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

62 Ibid.

63 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023.

64 Ibid.; and email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

65 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; and Second APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request (draft), 31 March 2019, p. 21.

66 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023.

67 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022; and APMBC Committee on the Implementation of Article 5, Preliminary Observations on Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

68 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

69 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023; and Dr Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023.

70 Email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 21 April 2023.

71 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 7 July 2022.

72 Ibid., 31 March 2023.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Only UST has non-technical survey (NTS) teams. There are no dedicated technical survey (TS) teams in Tajikistan.

Table 3: Operational NTS and TS capacities deployed in Tajikistan in 2022[73]

Operator	NTS/TS teams	Total NTS/TS personnel*	Comments
UST	4	36	The NTS teams also conduct TS and clearance.
Totals	**4**	**36**	

* Excluding team leaders, medics, drivers etc.

Table 4: Operational clearance capacities deployed in Tajikistan 2022[74]

Operator	Manual CMR clearance teams	Total deminers*	Mechanical assets/ machines**	Comments
FSD	0	6	0	Deployed for EOD spot tasks and to destroy submunitions found during clearance by UST.
UST	4	36	0	These teams also conduct NTS and TS.
NPA	5	43	MoD has 1 Mini-MineWolf machine, also available for use by NPA.	These are battle area clearance (BAC) teams. Also conduct TS.
HDC MoD	6	84		
Totals	**15**	**169**	**1**	

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

Tajikistan slightly increased mine action capacity in 2022 to 169 personnel across the combined survey and clearance teams of all operators (see Tables 3 and 4), compared to 150 personnel in 2021.[75] This overall increase was made possible by US Department of State funding.[76]

NPA remains the only international operator undertaking CMR clearance in Tajikistan, with multi-task teams capable of conducting both mine and battle area clearance (BAC) and engaged in conducting CMR clearance at some point during the year in conjunction with other mine clearance tasks.[77] NPA decreased the number of manual clearance teams from six in 2021 to five in 2022, due to a decrease in funding.[78] NPA continues to cooperate with Tajikistan's Border Guard Forces, annually seconding a number of personnel, typically trained in both demining and BAC, into NPA's multi-task teams. Twelve officers were seconded in 2022, forming part of NPA's five multi-task teams of 43 deminers.[79]

73 Ibid.; and emails from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023, Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

74 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023; Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March and 23 May 2023; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

75 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 and 24 June 2022.

76 Ibid., 31 March 2023.

77 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 21 May and 23 June 2022; and interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 24 June 2022.

78 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023.

79 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 23 May 2023.

UST, a national not-for-profit organisation received accreditation for manual demining and BAC in 2020[80] and started to conduct CMR survey in the same year, working initially on a joint task with one of NPA's teams for three months to build UST's capacity.[81] UST conducted CMR clearance in 2022. However, UST is in the process of obtaining a license for the use of explosive materials and devices from the relevant authorities.[82] As such, currently all submunitions discovered by UST are destroyed by FSD. UST reports no change in the number of personnel between 2021 and 2022.[83] UST teams report directly to TNMAC, which funds UST's survey and clearance operations.[84]

FSD's Weapons and Ammunition Disposal (WAD) teams in Tajikistan have previously responded to explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) spot tasks. However, at the time of writing, FSD was expected to transition from WAD to demining in Tajikistan, commencing in August 2023, increasing from their current capacity of one team of six deminers up to two teams of 15 personnel each. These teams were expected to conduct NTS, TS, clearance and, most likely, EOD spot tasks located close to their demining tasks.[85]

One mechanical asset, a Mini-MineWolf owned by HDC MoD, was available for use by both HDC MoD and NPA in Tajikistan in 2022.[86] However, there were some technical issues and NPA deployed the machine only for a limited amount of time and for landmine clearance only.[87] TNMAC and all operators expected to maintain the same operational capacity for CMR survey and clearance in 2023 as they did in 2022.[88]

Despite some disruption to operations during earlier stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, TNMAC and operators reported that it caused no disruption to the effective deployment of teams or operational capacity in 2022.[89]

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

A total of 612,168m² of cluster munition-contaminated area was cleared in 2022 (see Table 5). No areas were reduced through TS or cancelled through NTS.[90] 122 submunitions were destroyed, including 110 during clearance[91] and 12 during EOD spot tasks. A total area of 2.67km² previously unrecorded CMR contamination was added to the national database in 2022.[92]

SURVEY IN 2022

As was the case in 2021, no areas were released through survey in Tajikistan in 2022. Nine battle areas across an area of 2.67km² were confirmed as contaminated with cluster munition remnants and added to the national database.[93]

CLEARANCE IN 2022

A total of 422,495m² of cluster munition-contaminated area was cleared in 2022 by NPA in the Vahdat district of DRS region, including 27,038m² in an area that was not complete as at the end of 2022. During this clearance 86 submunitions and 6 other items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) were destroyed.[94] A further 159,073m² was cleared by UST, also in Vahdat. This task was not complete as at the end of 2022.[95] The MoD's HDC cleared 30,600m² in Rasht; again, a task that was not complete as at the end of 2022.[96] The 24 submunitions and 33 other items of UXO discovered during these tasks by UST and MoD HDC were destroyed by FSD.[97] UST is awaiting its licence from the national authority to use explosives.[98]

80 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 16 June 2023.
81 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 April and 27 August 2020.
82 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.
83 Email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.
84 Ibid., 16 May 2023.
85 Email from Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023.
86 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 23 May 2023.
87 Emails from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 23 May and 22 June 2023.
88 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March 2023; Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March 2023; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.
89 Ibid.
90 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.
91 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 8 May 2023.
92 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.
93 Ibid.
94 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March and 16 June 2023; and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March and 8 May 2023.
95 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023; and Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.
96 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 16 June 2023.
97 Emails from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023 and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 16 June 2023.
98 Email from Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023.

Overall, clearance undertaken in 2022 represents a considerable decrease on the 1.87km^2 cleared in 2021.[99] TNMAC states this was due to the main effort in Tajikistan in 2022 being focussed on release of mined areas.[100]

Table 5: CMR clearance in 2022[101]

Operator	Region/ District	Areas released	Area cleared (m^2)	Submunitions destroyed	Submunitions destroyed during spot tasks	Other UXO destroyed
NPA	DRS/Vahdat	1	395,457	79	0	6
NPA	DRS/Vahdat	0	*27,038	7	0	0
UST	DRS/Vahdat	0	*159,073	**14	0	**33
HDC MoD	DRS/Rasht	0	*30,600	**10	0	0
FSD	VMKB/Darvoz	0	0	0	***2	***3
FSD	DRS/Rasht	0	0	0	***10	0
Totals		**1**	**612,168**	**110**	**12**	**42**

* Clearance of these areas was not complete as at the end of 2022.
** Submunitions and UXO discovered during clearance of these areas by UST and HDC MOD were destroyed by FSD.
***FSD reports that these items were collected by security forces and destroyed as part of bulk destruction by FSD, rather than destroyed in the course of survey or clearance.

PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

TNMAC stated in May 2020 that Tajikistan hoped to complete CMR clearance by 2023,[102] although it made clear that progress towards achieving that target depended on the availability of funding.[103] Furthermore, previously unknown areas of contamination have been added to the national database annually for the last three years: 2km^2 in 2020, 2.85km^2 in 2021,[104] and 2.67 km^2 in 2022.[105] TNMAC now states that, with contaminated areas still being found for which no information was previously available, Tajikistan does not have a set target for the completion of CMR clearance.[106] Given that Tajikistan continues to find new areas of contamination, if operational capacity does not grow, this will also impact Tajikistan's expected date of completion.

Tajikistan has a well-functioning mine action programme with strong national ownership and effective collaboration between stakeholders. However, Tajikistan outlines several ongoing challenges for mine action, including difficult terrain, harsh weather conditions, natural disasters such as rockfalls, avalanches and landslides, as well as dense vegetation. Tajikistan identifies a need for an increase in suitable equipment and cross-country vehicles to deal with these conditions.[107] As such, the rate of progress towards completion will be heavily determined by available resources. Furthermore, while TNMAC does task operators with CMR clearance where possible and Tajikistan's General Land Release Plan does include details of known battle areas contaminated with CMR, progress towards completion will also be influenced by the extent to which Tajikistan directs its finite resources towards resourcing its commitment to clear landmines as a State Party to the APMBC.

99 In an email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023, TNMAC stated clearance in 2021 as 1.72km^2. However, this excludes the tasks that were not complete at the end of 2022. As such, Mine Action Review calculates that 1.87km^2 was cleared in 2021. See *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2022*, p. 207.

100 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.

101 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March and 16 June 2023; Nickhwah Din Mohammed, FSD, 24 March and 19 May 2023; Saynurridin Kalandarov, UST, 14 April 2023; and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 29 March and 8 May 2023.

102 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 28 May 2020 and 19 June 2022.

103 Ibid., 4 May 2021.

104 Ibid., 19 June 2022.

105 Ibid., 31 March 2023.

106 Ibid.

107 Presentation by Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 22 June 2022.

Table 6: Five-year summary of CMR clearance

Year	Area cleared (m^2)
2022	0.61
2021	1.87
2020	0.08
2019	0.52
2018	0.41
Total	**3.49**

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Tajikistan is taking measures to prepare for the management of residual risk upon completion. In March 2022, with the support of the OSCE, an adviser for residual risk management took up post, tasked with identifying improvements to the risk management of explosive hazards and to develop residual risk management guidelines to complement the NMAS.[108] Since the introduction of this post a technical manual on residual risk management has been produced, which TNMAC highlights as a legal prerequisite before any further work can progress. With this step completed, TNMAC asserts that the issue of residual risk management will receive higher prioritisation in 2023.[109]

TNMAC also highlights that issues related to residual risk management are discussed during monthly technical meetings with implementing partners, and that residual risk reduction recommendations are reflected in the annual General Land Release Operations Plans. Furthermore, TNMAC is developing the operational capacity of UST and plans that UST will deal with residual risk of unexploded submunitions upon completion of area clearance.[110]

108 Emails from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 3 June 2022; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 June 2022.

109 Email from Saodat Asadova, OSCE, 30 March 2023.

110 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 31 March 2023.