

TAJIKISTAN

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 APRIL 2020
(NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE)

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE	2017	2016
Problem understood	5	5
Target date for completion of mine clearance	4	4
Targeted clearance	6	6
Efficient clearance	5	5
National funding of programme	4	4
Timely clearance	6	5
Land-release system in place	7	7
National mine action standards	6	6
Reporting on progress	6	5
Improving performance	6	5
PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE	5.5	5.2

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Tajikistan's mine action programme performance improved in the latest reporting period. The granting of permission by Tajikistan border authorities in January 2017 for clearance operations to restart on the Afghan border after more than two years of security restrictions was a very positive development. It has already enabled release of some of Tajikistan's most densely contaminated mined areas. In addition, a normalisation of relations between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan resulted in high-level discussions regarding the potential survey and clearance of their common border.

Operationally, the efficiency of survey operations has improved following application and approval of the "non-technical survey with technical intervention" methodology. This involves a more integrated form of non-technical and technical survey in which technical interventions are used to identify the starting point of minefields and to locate direct evidence points. This in turn enables suspected mined areas to be classified as confirmed hazardous areas and their perimeters better delineated. Tajikistan also continued to progress in surveying the remaining, previously unsurveyed minefields using this new methodology. This will more accurately determine a national baseline of mine contamination. Finally, continuing efforts were made to improve task prioritisation and integrate a newly developed prioritisation system.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Tajikistan should complete survey of the 45 unsurveyed mined areas/tasks (59 minefields), predominantly located along its border with Afghanistan, in order to more accurately determine the extent of remaining mine contamination.
- Tajikistan should update and make public its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 completion workplan, based on current survey and clearance capacity.
- Tajikistan should consider expanding the humanitarian demining capacity of the Tajik Armed Forces, to help it meet its Article 5 obligations.
- Tajikistan should report more accurately and consistently on land release data, in a manner consistent with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). Data on mined areas, or areas of mixed mine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination, should be disaggregated from areas solely contaminated by cluster munition remnants (CMR) and other ERW.

CONTAMINATION

Tajikistan is affected by mines and, to a much lesser extent, ERW, including CMR, as a result of past conflicts (also see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants* report on Tajikistan for further information).

At the end of 2017, Tajikistan had just under 7.46km² of mine contamination across 153 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs), and almost 1.35km² of suspected hazardous area (SHA) across 59 unsurveyed minefields, as set out in Table 1.¹ The 59 SHAs equate to 45 remaining tasks to be surveyed, as some tasks contain multiple minefields, potentially laid at different times/during different conflicts and because minefields are counted separately if they are more than 500 metres apart.² The mined areas are located in three provinces and thirteen districts of Tajikistan.

The overall baseline contamination at the end of 2017 is a small reduction compared to the end of the previous year (7.76km² of confirmed contamination and 1.97km² of suspected mined area).³ The differences in the figures, though, cannot be satisfactorily explained or reconciled by area released by clearance and survey during 2017.

Table 1: Anti-personnel mine contamination by province (at end-2017)⁴

Province	District	CHA		SHA	
		No.	Area (m ²)	No.	Area (m ²)*
Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region	Darvoz	7	1,103,600	2	20,000
	Vanj	5	908,119	0	0
	Shugnan	3	56,000	0	0
	Ishkoshi	0	0	1	5,000
Subtotals		15	2,067,719	3	25,000
Khatlon	Farkhor	6	96,800	1	8,000
	Hamadoni	3	80,772	6	177,000
	Panj	24	1,600,585	13	204,000
	Jayhun	8	135,636	11	307,000
	Shamsiddin Shohin	93	3,317,134	18	439,000
	Kabodiyon	1	N/K	0	0
	Shahri	1	30,000	0	0
	Khovaling	1	80,000	5	135,000
Subtotals		137	5,340,927	54	1,270,000
Central Region	Sangvor	1	50,000	2	50,000
Subtotals		1	50,000	2	50,000
Totals		153	7,458,646	59	1,345,000

N/K = Not known

* The size of the mined areas is estimated from desk analysis but is pending survey.

Mine contamination in Tajikistan is the consequence of different conflicts. Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan was mined by Russian forces in 1992–98; the border with Uzbekistan was mined by Uzbek forces in 2000–01; and the Central Region of Tajikistan was contaminated as a result of the 1992–97 civil war.⁵

A national survey in 2003–05 by the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD) estimated that mine and ERW contamination extended over 50km².⁶ Tajikistan subsequently alleged that lack of experience among the initial survey teams, the absence of minefield records and other important information, and inadequate equipment led to that first impact survey not generating robust results. As a result, the sizes of SHAs were miscalculated and their descriptions not clearly recorded.⁷ While most minefield records are of good quality, some do not reflect the reality on the ground, and as such the records have to be verified and validated by non-technical survey and data analysis.⁸

Mine contamination remains in the provinces of Khatlon and the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO) along the Afghan border (reported to contain 60,357 anti-personnel mines), as well as in the Central Region.⁹ Shamsiddin Shohin district (formerly known as Shuroobod district) in Khatlon province is the most heavily mined district. Mines were laid in and around military positions on hilltops overlooking the Panj river valley, mostly delivered remotely by helicopter or laid by troops who were moved in and out by helicopter as there are no established roads or tracks to access the minefields for survey or clearance.¹⁰

With regards to possible mined areas on the border with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre (TNMAC) and various government entities concluded in 2015 that hazardous areas were on the border and could not be considered as hazardous area within Tajikistan until the border had been delimited. These areas were therefore not included in Tajikistan's clearance plan at that time.¹¹

Moreover, information about mined areas on the Tajik-Uzbek border is limited and based on non-technical survey conducted in 2011–15 by FSD and a needs assessment survey by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 2013–15. However, the FSD non-technical survey did not cover the whole of the Tajik-Uzbek border, only Sughd province. The FSD survey was not comprehensive and was mainly based on incident forms, as the boundary line was not accessible to survey teams. Records lack detail on the exact location where mine incidents occurred and civilians living in the area simply reported the location of mine contamination and landmine incidents as occurring in the border area.¹² According to Tajikistan, communities living in dangerous areas near the Tajik-Uzbek border are mainly engaged in livestock, agriculture, fodder, and collection of firewood, and despite the risk, the local population is forced to operate in these areas.¹³

While Tajikistan and Uzbekistan settled most of their 1,283km-long border dispute following the collapse of the Soviet Union, there are still areas of the border that have not yet been delineated and where the exact location of the landmine contamination is not known. Most of the mined areas are thought to be in disputed sections of the Tajik-Uzbek border which have not been accessible, and for which evaluation and analysis of information is not yet complete.¹⁴ The mine contamination is believed to be on Uzbek territory,¹⁵ but there is a possibility that some mines may have been displaced downhill into Tajikistan due to landslides or flooding.¹⁶ The first ever state visit of the President of Uzbekistan to Tajikistan took place in March 2018, and several agreements were signed between the two countries, including one on demarcation of the separate regions of the Tajik-Uzbek border. Tajikistan expected decisions to be taken in 2018 regarding clarification and identification of SHAs on the Uzbek border, and any demining operations will require agreement and cooperation between both nations.¹⁷

In September 2013, records of 110 previously unrecorded and unsurveyed minefields were made public for the first time, with security constraints said to have prevented survey activities in the past.¹⁸ The number of minefields was subsequently confirmed as 107 (not 110).¹⁹ All are located in the provinces of Khatlon and the GBAO along the border with Afghanistan.²⁰ Non-technical survey of the minefields began in 2014.²¹ As at December 2015, 101 unsurveyed minefields were said to remain, covering an estimated 3.6km²,²² while by May 2017 the number had come down to 58,²³ and as at December 2017, it stood at 45.²⁴ TNMAC plans to complete survey of the remaining unsurveyed minefields by the end of 2020.²⁵

While none of the unsurveyed areas are considered completely inaccessible for the survey (or for subsequent clearance),²⁶ serious challenges have been reported during non-technical survey in accessing the mined

areas in mountainous terrain and with one mined area blocking access to a number of others.²⁷ According to records, these unsurveyed minefields contain 57,189 mines (50,948 blast mines, 4,430 fragmentation mines, and 1,811 “booby-trapped” mines), in addition to 17 munitions employed in booby traps, and 100kg of explosive charges (500 pieces of 200g of TNT).²⁸

Mountains cover more than 90% of Tajikistan’s territory, and so productive land which can be used is extremely important to local communities. Mine contamination in Tajikistan is said to constrain development, limit access to grazing and agricultural land, and affect farming, wood and herb gathering, and grazing activities related to rural life, especially in the Central Region.²⁹ Most of the contamination is, though, located along the borders, with a less direct impact on local communities and development, as these are restricted military security zones. However, District Authorities and local communities do still use these areas for development projects, including collecting firewood and stones, piping for irrigation and drinking water, and fishing and livestock. National authorities have used cleared land for agriculture, fisheries, road construction, disaster mitigation activities, water piping, electricity line posts, gold extraction and mining, and maintenance of dams.³⁰ Furthermore, contamination in these regions affects cross-border trade and security, and has a negative political impact on peacebuilding initiatives with neighbouring countries.³¹

In 2017, there were three mine incidents, which left one dead and three injured. In April 2017, a man was injured while grazing livestock in Rasht district. In May 2017, two teenage boys were injured by a PFM-1 mine while collecting herbs in Shamsiddin Shohin district. In July 2017, a boy was killed by a POMZ-2 mine while grazing sheep in Darvoz district.³²

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Commission for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law (CIHL) acts as Tajikistan’s national mine action authority, responsible for mainstreaming mine action in the government’s socio-economic development policies.³³

In June 2003, the Government of Tajikistan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) established the Tajikistan Mine Action Centre (TMAC) with a view to it becoming a nationally owned programme in the short term,³⁴ though this did not happen until more than ten years afterwards. TMAC was made responsible for coordinating and monitoring all mine action activities.³⁵ Since then, TMAC has acted as the secretariat for the CIHL to which it reports.³⁶

On 3 January 2014, TNMAC was established by government decree to replace TMAC.³⁷ While transition to national ownership is considered to have been successful, UNDP’s Support to Tajikistan Mine Action

Programme (STMAP) project has continued to support the building of sustainable national structures and TNMAC’s technical capacity.³⁸ However, lack of funding might result in the project folding in 2018.³⁹

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) plays a significant role in Tajikistan’s mine action sector. With its adoption in July 2013 of the Strategic Plan on Humanitarian Demining (2013–16), the Ministry has sought to focus on three main objectives: to further support demining; to enhance national capacities; and to create the conditions for an effective national mine action programme.⁴⁰ The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Programme Office in Dushanbe (OCSE PoID) supported the MoD to develop an updated plan, entitled “Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Tajikistan Co-operation Plan for Humanitarian Demining 2018–23”. The draft plan was developed in August and September 2017 through a joint working group, and as at early October was with the Ministry of Defence for review.⁴¹

In conjunction with the Government of Tajikistan and the Tajik Border Forces, TNMAC prioritises land release activities using a district-by-district approach based on the following criteria: mined areas with economic and infrastructure impact; the number of unsurveyed minefield records in each district (those with a larger number of minefields records will be considered a priority for the deployment of non-technical survey teams); and the number of mined areas in each district (a smaller number of minefields will be considered a priority to deploy clearance teams to release the whole district).⁴² Issues of accessibility due to mountainous terrain and adverse weather conditions during winter limit access to some designated priority tasks, as do security restrictions.⁴³

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) is working with TNMAC and UNDP to develop a prioritisation system and tool for Tajikistan, which will identify distinct criteria and indicators for the separate regions.⁴⁴ A pilot of PriSMA (the Priority Setting Tool for Mine Action) was conducted from July to September 2017.⁴⁵ As at May 2018, a second version of PriSMA had been developed and piloted and was in the process of being integrated with TNMAC's existing priority-setting workflow, including specific requests received from the government and field survey recommendations.⁴⁶

An agreement on cooperation between the Governments of Tajikistan and Afghanistan was signed in 2014, and TNMAC has coordinated with the UN Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (UNMACCA) and Afghanistan's Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC) on land release approaches, NMAS, exchange visits, cross-border projects, victim assistance, and risk education.⁴⁷ Since 2017, this also includes collaboration regarding quality management (QM).⁴⁸

Depending on weather conditions, land release operations in the Khatlon region of the border usually start in February/March; the GBAO part of the border only becomes accessible from May until October; and the Central Region from June until September.⁴⁹

Strategic Planning

The previous national mine action strategic plan 2010–15 expired at the end of 2015.⁵⁰ A new National Strategy on Humanitarian Mine Action for 2017–20 was approved by government decree No. 91 on 25 February 2017.⁵¹ The national strategy is, however, very general, and while it includes a "plan", which lists the various overarching activities to implement the strategy, it lacks detail on prioritisation of clearance tasks, timelines, or capacities for survey and clearance operations. This is disappointing as Tajikistan has, over several years, benefitted from support on strategic planning from the GICHD.⁵²

In addition, operators were not consulted on the final version of the national strategy, but only in the draft "Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", which focuses on mine contamination, and for which operators advised that the national strategy's planning concept needed more work.⁵³ This recommendation, however, is not reflected in the planning details of the National Strategy as approved by the government.

TNMAC is still in the process of finalising the draft Article 5 completion plan for 2016–20, which contains more detail on implementing the strategy, and which will be reviewed each year.⁵⁴ Based on the October 2016 draft, the completion plan focuses on the most heavily mined regions, which are along the Afghan border. From June to September, during favourable weather in the high-altitude areas, efforts will focus on the Central Region.⁵⁵ In conjunction with the Government of Tajikistan and the Tajik Border Forces, TNMAC will prioritise land release activities using a district-by-district approach based on the following criteria:

- Mined areas with economic and infrastructure impact
- The number of unsurveyed minefield records in each district (those with a larger number of minefields records will be considered a priority for the deployment of non-technical survey teams); and
- The number of mined areas in each district (a smaller number of minefields will be considered a priority to deploy clearance teams to release the whole district).⁵⁶

In 2017, TNMAC further developed its new approach to survey, known as "non-technical survey with technical intervention". In addition to standard non-technical survey, survey teams are also using technical assets to confirm and locate actual evidence of mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). This is intended to enhance the efficiency of operations by confirming areas as mined and by more accurately determining the location of minefields.⁵⁷

Legislation and Standards

In 2015, Tajikistan drafted a Law on Humanitarian Mine Action, which covers all aspects of mine action. However, relevant non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are not believed to have been consulted during its drafting.⁵⁸ The law (number 1338), which was ratified by Tajikistan's Parliament on 23 July 2016,⁵⁹ was presented to mine action stakeholders in September 2016, during a workshop hosted by TNMAC.⁶⁰

Tajikistan's National Mine Action Standards (TNMAS) have been revised, and were approved by decree No. 162 on 1 April 2017. The new standards have been translated into Russian and English.⁶¹

Quality Management

TNMAC coordinates and monitors the QM process in Tajikistan, and the TNMAS are said to cover all QM requirements, both from a process and from a final product (released land) perspective.⁶²

In addition, in 2017, TNMAC officers began conducting quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) on demining operations on the Afghan side of the border, having been accredited by DMAC Afghanistan and according to Afghanistan National Mine Action Standards. This is based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, within the framework of a cross-border cooperation project, with financial support from the United States; this cooperation has continued into 2018.⁶³

Information Management

In 2016, Tajikistan updated its mine action information management system to Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) version 6.0.⁶⁴ According to TNMAC, one of the challenges it faces in information management is retention of experienced staff.⁶⁵

Operators

In 2017, operational capacity included two manual clearance FSD teams; five multi-purpose manual Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) teams; five military multi-purpose manual teams (four from the Ministry of Defence Humanitarian Demining Company (HDC) and one from the Committee of Emergency and Civil Defence); and two Union of Sappers of Tajikistan (UST) non-technical survey teams.⁶⁶ Clearance capacity in 2018 is less than the previous year, with NPA deploying one less multi-purpose manual clearance team due to the cessation of NRK Telethon funding in Norway. Also, as at May 2018, no funding had been secured for FSD survey or clearance operations in Tajikistan in 2018 and both FSD's clearance teams had been disbanded.⁶⁷

Following the signature of an MoU with the OSCE POiD in 2009, the MoD established the HDC.⁶⁸ Since TMAC's nationalisation, the HDC has acted as a contractor for TNMAC, and OSCE POiD funds the HDC through TNMAC.⁶⁹ The HDC increased its operational capacities in 2016, increasing from three-multi-purpose teams in 2015 to five in 2016.⁷⁰ In 2017, three of the five MoD teams were supported by OSCE POiD unified budget (from participating states) and two by the United States Department of State via the OSCE POiD.⁷¹

The MoD provides five teams to the HDC as part of its commitment to assist TNMAC meet Tajikistan's Article 5 obligations, but according to a representative from the MoD, more deminers could be trained and made available by the MoD if additional international funding was made available. Military deminers are reportedly less expensive than deminers of international NGOs, and have the additional advantage of having security access to survey and clear mined areas in the vicinity of military

bases and other areas which may be inaccessible to other implementing partners due to security restrictions. The MoD also has one demining machine, which is a tiller. Implementing partners can request use of the demining machine from the MoD, but the machine must be operated by MoD personnel.⁷²

The OSCE POiD has been supporting mine action since 2003. The OSCE POiD's strategy in Tajikistan is twofold: to support the development of national demining capacity; and to foster regional cooperation in border management and security.⁷³ The OSCE POiD supported the HDC via the UST, which it contracted to provide project management and administrative support to the Ministry of Defence's HDC in 2010–13.⁷⁴ In addition, the OSCE POiD provided explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) courses to clearance operators and implementing partners in Tajikistan and participants from elsewhere in the region in 2017, at a regional explosive hazard training centre.⁷⁵

Until 2015, limitations in Tajikistan's legislation had prevented UST, a national not-for-profit organisation, gaining accreditation for demining activities.⁷⁶ In 2015, UST obtained permission to conduct survey and received a grant from UNDP for technical and non-technical survey in the south of the country.⁷⁷ UST is accredited to conduct non-technical survey, risk education, and victim assistance. In 2017, UST received additional accreditation to conduct non-technical survey with technical survey intervention, but it is not accredited to conduct stand-alone technical survey or clearance.⁷⁸ In 2016, two UST teams (four surveyors per team) conducted non-technical survey in the Shamsiddin Shohin district of the Khatlon region, and as at May 2018 survey operations were ongoing.⁷⁹ While some staff positions at UST are permanent, such as the Operations Manager, deminers are recruited annually for the operations period from Spring until October, based on UST's annual survey plan.⁸⁰

As at early October 2017, UST was conducting non-technical survey with technical survey intervention, in line with the new land release methodology in Tajikistan.⁸¹ This methodology helps improve the efficiency of survey operations, as minefield records are sometimes incomplete or inconsistent due to incorrect coordinates and grid numbering or lack of landmarks/reference points, and there is often a lack of local people to ask about evidence of mines, accidents etc., as people have moved away because of the contamination. This can result in inflated polygons. In addition, mines are sometimes displaced due to landslides, rock falls, and flooding.⁸² Of the 19 minefields UST surveyed in 2017, four were with the use of technical interventions and the remainder were solely using non-technical survey as they were surveyed before the new methodology was approved. The use of technical interventions by UST is expected to improve operational efficiency, but it will also slow down the rate of survey by UST of the remaining unsurveyed minefields.⁸³

While in many instances the contaminated area is cancelled or reduced through survey by UST, there are also instances when survey reveals the size of the mined area as being larger than indicated on the minefield records. This can be due to a number of factors, such as windy conditions at the time when helicopter-dropped mines were deployed which leads to greater dispersal of the mines; the height of the helicopter above the ground at the time of deployment (in time of hostilities, the distance of the helicopter from the ground is significantly increased, resulting in wider dispersal of the mines); and mountainous terrain.⁸⁴

Neither mine detection dogs (MDDs) nor machines were used operationally in 2017.⁸⁵ The MDD programme ended in early 2015 due to the very limited number of tasks suitable for dogs. Consequently, 18 MDDs were handed

over to the Ministry of Interior and to the Border Forces.⁸⁶ Similarly, economic use of mechanical assets reached its limit, and as at November 2016, all areas suitable for machine deployment had reportedly been completed,⁸⁷ and the remaining mined area is only suitable for manual demining operations.⁸⁸ However, this refers to accessible remaining mined area in districts in which security permission has been granted for clearance operations. Many of the western districts of the Tajik-Afghan border, which are currently not accessible because of security restrictions, contain mined areas on flat terrain, which is suitable for mechanical demining.⁸⁹ Furthermore, NPA believes there may be some potential for use of machinery in some of the current demining operations, which could potentially save significant time, especially in areas which are subject to full excavation because of high scrap metal contamination in the soil.⁹⁰

LAND RELEASE

Total mined area released by clearance in 2017 was nearly 0.62km². In addition, nearly 0.16km² was released by technical survey and over 0.48km² was cancelled by non-technical survey.

This is an increase in clearance output on the 0.5km² of mined area cleared in 2016, with a five-fold increase in the number of anti-personnel mines destroyed, but a decrease on the 0.95km² reduced by technical survey the previous year.⁹¹

Survey in 2017

In 2017, a total of 156,615m² was reduced through technical survey and a further 483,419m² was cancelled by non-technical survey in Lakhsh and Rasht districts in the Central Region, Darvoz and Vanj districts in GBAO region, and Shamsiddin Shohin district in Khatlon province.⁹²

Clearance in 2017

In 2017, FSD, NPA, and the MoD/HDC cleared nearly 0.62km² across 23 mined areas (some of which were suspended and not yet completed as at the end of 2017), destroying 6,647 anti-personnel mines and 22 items of UXO (see Table 2).⁹³ This is a slight increase on the 0.5km² cleared in 2016, but a substantial increase on the 1,248 anti-personnel mines destroyed in 2016,⁹⁴ due to the density of mines along the Afghan border.

Table 2: Mine clearance by operator in 2017*⁹⁵

Operator	Province	District	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
FSD	GBAO	Darvoz	2	27,297	352	2
		Khatlon	3	67,374	1,529	18
	DRD	Khatlon	1	5,700	0	0
		Rasht	1	12,296	0	7
NPA	GBAO	Darvoz	2	31,765	30	25
	Khatlon	Sh. Shohin	3	122,940	**2,652	33
	DRD	Lyakhsh	2	18,704	5	0
MoD	GBAO	Vanj	3	194,958	535	88
		Khatlon	5	118,139	1,540	32
	Khatlon	Panj	1	18,885	4	16
Totals			23	618,058	6,647	221

AP = Anti-personnel

* Clearance includes suspended area not yet completed as at end-2017

** Excludes 298 anti-personnel mines found in 2017, but not destroyed until 2018.

Anti-personnel mines were found in nearly all clearance tasks in 2017, with the exception of a minefield in Rasht district, DRD province, a minefield in Panj district, Khatlon province tasked to FSD for clearance, and a minefield tasked to NPA in Lyakhsh district in the Central Region. NPA, however, found strong evidence on its task of the past presence of mines, such as pieces of rubber plates, pieces of plastic fragments, and holes created as a result of the detonation of PMN mines.⁹⁶

NPA also reported some challenges posed by the very high density of metal scrap in tasks in Sarichashma municipality, in Shamsiddin Shohin district, which on many occasions made work with the metal detectors impossible and full excavation had to be conducted.⁹⁷

Due to a security incident on the Afghan border in the beginning of December 2017 (unrelated to mine action), NPA had to leave its area of operations in Shamsiddin Shohin district one week earlier than planned.⁹⁸ As a result, an additional 298 mines found in 2017 were not destroyed until 2018.⁹⁹

In 2015 and 2016, due to increased security in northern parts of Afghanistan (along the Tajik border), the Border Forces denied permission for clearance operations in the Khatlon border region – an area that contains nearly three-quarters of all mine contamination in Tajikistan.¹⁰⁰ In 2016, the Border Forces only permitted non-technical survey operations in Shamsiddin Shohin district to survey some of the previously unrecorded minefields.¹⁰¹ In January 2017, greater access for clearance and survey operations was granted along the Tajik-Afghan border, including Shamsiddin Shohin district.¹⁰²

The current security condition on the Tajik-Afghan border remains generally stable. As at April 2018, clearance was being tasked to the eastern part of the Tajik-Afghan border and in Shamsiddin Shohin district, which is the most contaminated district along the border, containing 93 CHAs totalling an estimated 3.3km² (approximately 44% of all confirmed mine contamination).¹⁰³

Furthermore, in November 2017, the Border Guards granted permission for demining operations in the Jaykhun, Panj, Farkhor and Hamadoni districts of Khatlon. However, due to the unstable situation on the border and in the interest of the safety of humanitarian deminers, no land release was carried out in these areas.¹⁰⁴ TNMAC is negotiating with Border Forces to provide a security convoy for demining teams in these western districts of the Tajik-Afghan border in the plain areas, which comprise around one quarter of the total contamination.¹⁰⁵ TNMAC is also continuing negotiations with government authorities regarding access for survey and clearance to the remaining districts of the Tajik-Afghan border that are closed at present.¹⁰⁶

Deminer Safety

In 2017, there was one demining accident, during mine clearance operations in Shamsiddin Shohin district in September. A female NPA deminer accidentally penetrated a PFM-1 anti-personal mine during excavation and came into contact with toxic liquid elements from inside the mine. The deminer received medical assistance and made a full recovery.¹⁰⁷

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the ten-year extension granted by states parties in 2009), Tajikistan is required to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 April 2020. It is not on track to meet its deadline.

As at May 2018, TNMAC was considering submitting an interim Article 5 deadline extension request in 2018, to enable it to complete survey of the unsurveyed minefields, with a view to then submitting a third extension request containing workplans based on a clearer understanding of the extent of the challenge and the amount of time that will be required to complete Article 5 implementation.¹⁰⁸

A reduction in demining capacity; insecurity along its border with Afghanistan and lack of permission to conduct demining in some of the Western districts; the inaccessibility and/or operational difficulty of some mined areas; and the very poor quality of some minefield records, mostly from the civil war in the Central Region, means that Tajikistan will not meet its 2020 Article 5 deadline and is not even likely to complete clearance by 2025.¹⁰⁹

In total during the last five years, Tajikistan has cleared just over 4km² of mined area (see Table 3). Progress was hampered in 2015 and 2016 due to restricted access for clearance in the Afghanistan border region because of heightened security. This resulted in delay of clearance operations and a focus on the mountainous Central Region, where adverse weather means the demining window is much shorter, and where additional challenges result from the need to access remote locations and to ensure medical evacuation.¹¹⁰ In a very positive development, clearance was permitted in parts of the Tajik-Afghan border in 2017 and continued in 2018, including Shamsiddin Shohin district, which is one of the most mined districts in Tajikistan.¹¹¹

Table 3: Mine clearance in 2013–17¹¹²

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2017	0.62
2016	0.50
2015	0.25
2014	0.65
2013	1.99
Total	4.01

In its Article 7 transparency report for 2016, Tajikistan estimated that it would clear 1.52km² across 22 mined areas in 2017.¹¹³ Actual mine clearance output in 2017, of nearly 0.62km², fell well short of this target.

In its most recent Article 7 report (for 2017), Tajikistan estimated release of 30 minefields (26 in Khatlon district, 3 in GBAO, and 1 in the Central Region) in 2018, totalling over 1.9km². This would be followed by release of 30 minefields (20 in Khatlon district, 9 in GBAO, and 1 in the Central Region) in 2019, totalling over 2km².¹¹⁴ Taking into account the mountainous terrain, inaccessibility, and climatic conditions of the mined areas, along with the current demining capacity, Tajikistan reassessed that it would actually clear only 1.5km² across 20 minefields in 2018, in addition to conducting non-technical and technical survey on the unsurveyed minefield records.¹¹⁵ However, based on recent annual clearance output, even this reduced estimate of 1.5km² of annual clearance is very high and well over double the 2017 clearance output.

TNMAC estimates that it will complete survey of the 45 unsurveyed minefield records by the end of 2020.¹¹⁶ Many of these unsurveyed minefields are extremely hard to access, with UST's survey teams sometimes having to walk for more than three hours each way in mountainous terrain, to access the survey area, leaving only a few hours each day for survey activities.¹¹⁷ Once survey of the unsurveyed minefields has been completed, Tajikistan will, though, have a more accurate understanding of its baseline mine contamination, which will in turn help TNMAC to develop a more accurate Article 5 completion plan.

Tajikistan has been developing an Article 5 workplan for 2016–20.¹¹⁸ In June 2017, at the APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Tajikistan reported that it needs “advisory support and exchange experience on addressing inaccessible areas and non-executable tasks, as well as on all other challenges faced”.¹¹⁹ However, with the introduction of an arrangement for medical evacuation by helicopter, in collaboration with the Armed Forces, there were no longer any mined areas deemed to be “inaccessible” as at May 2018. As part of the casevac arrangement, a military helicopter and pilot are on standby in Dushanbe, and are notified of the coordinates of helicopter landing pads in areas where survey and clearance operations are being undertaken in areas not accessible by road.¹²⁰ There are, however, mined areas on two islands in the Panj river on the Tajik-Afghan border, one of which is 538,500m² and the other is 30,000m², which at present are non-executable. The islands were created by a change in the flow of the river, and it is possible that the river may again change its path and re-connect the islands with the Tajik river bank in the future.¹²¹

Tajikistan has reported that it requires continued international assistance to increase demining capacity and fulfil its APMBC Article 5 obligations.¹²² In 2017, a total of almost US\$3 million was spent on mine action, the majority through international funding.¹²³ Of this, the Government of Tajikistan supported TNMAC coordination activities with some 300,000 Tajik Somoni (approximately US\$33,000) in 2017. In addition, the Tajik government contributes five MoD demining teams (500,000 Tajik Somoni), and provides support for the joint projects of TNMAC and UNDP, and OSCE POiD.¹²⁴

TNMAC expected the level of national and international funding to remain constant in 2018, but was seeking additional funding to speed up survey and clearance efforts, towards meeting its Article 5 obligations. Accessing hard-to-reach areas of mine contamination greatly increases the time and cost of clearance operations.¹²⁵

- 1 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, Director, Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre (TNMAC), 27 April 2018; and Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form D.
- 2 Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC 16th Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017; and interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, and Murtazo Gurezov, QA Officer, TNMAC, Dushanbe, 25 May 2018.
- 3 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; and Article 7 Report (for 2016).
- 4 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018; and Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form D and Annex II.
- 5 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2009, p. 1; and Tajikistan Mine Action Centre (TMAC), "Scope of the Problem", accessed 20 August 2018 at: <http://www.mineaction.tj/about/scope/>.
- 6 R. Roberts, "Evaluation of United Nations Development Programme Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme", January 2012, p. 11, at: [http://www.mineaction.tj/docs/plans/Evaluation of UNDP STMAP - Jan 2011.pdf](http://www.mineaction.tj/docs/plans/Evaluation%20of%20UNDP%20STMAP%20-%20Jan%202011.pdf).
- 7 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2009, p. 1.
- 8 Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 9 TNMAC, Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20, 4 October 2016.
- 10 Ibid; interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda and Murtazo Gurezov, TNMAC, Dushanbe, 25 May 2018; and Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC 16th Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
- 11 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 "National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on Humanitarian Mine Action for 2017–2020", 25 February 2017.
- 14 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018.
- 15 Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC 16th Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
- 16 "National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on Humanitarian Mine Action for 2017–2020", 25 February 2017.
- 17 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018.
- 18 Statement of Tajikistan, 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015.
- 19 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, and Sebastian Kasack, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in Geneva, 23 June 2015.
- 20 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 21 Statement of Tajikistan, 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015; and TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 22 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 23 Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 24 Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC 16th Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
- 25 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, Dushanbe, 29 May 2018.
- 26 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018, and interview, Dushanbe, 25 May 2018.
- 27 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016; and Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 28 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 29 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017.
- 30 Ibid.; and Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC 16th Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
- 31 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, Country Director, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), 10 August 2016.
- 32 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Forms D and F; "Number of Landmine and ERW Victims 2017", TNMAC printout provided in Dushanbe, 29 May 2018; and Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC 16th Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
- 33 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2009, p. 4.
- 34 Rebecca Roberts, "Evaluation of UNDP Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme", p. 12.
- 35 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2009, p. 1; and TMAC, "About TMAC", accessed 20 August 2018 at: <http://www.mineaction.tj/about>.
- 36 Roberts, "Evaluation of UNDP Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme", p. 12.
- 37 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 3 April 2015.
- 38 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 39 Emails from Erkin Huseinov, UNDP, 3 July 2018; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 5 July 2018.
- 40 MoD, "Strategic Plan on Humanitarian Demining 2013–2016", Dushanbe, 17 July 2013; and Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by Luka Buhin, Mine Action Office, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, 8 April 2014.
- 41 Email from Luka Buhin, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, 9 October 2017.
- 42 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 43 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; and Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC 16th Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
- 44 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; and Aubrey Sutherland, NPA, 14 March 2017; and Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 45 Email from Wendi Pedersen, Focal point for Tajikistan, GICHD, 5 October 2017.
- 46 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018, and Melissa Andersson, Country Director, NPA, 5 April 2018.
- 47 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016 and 22 May 2017.
- 48 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018; and Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC 16th Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
- 49 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 50 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, and Ahad Mahmoudov, Programme Manager, UNDP, in Geneva, 23 June 2015.
- 51 "National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on humanitarian mine action for 2017–2020", 25 February 2017; email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; and Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC 16th Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
- 52 Email from Asa Massleberg, GICHD, 5 October 2017.
- 53 Emails from Aubrey Sutherland, NPA, 2 September 2016 and 22 June 2017.
- 54 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, and Abdulmain Karimov, Project Manager, UNDP, in Geneva, 10 February 2017; and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, and Erkin Huseinov, UNDP, Dushanbe, 30 May 2018.
- 55 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016, 22 May 2017, and 27 April 2018; GICHD, Presentation on "NTS Field Studies: General Findings", 15 February 2018, Geneva; and Article 7 Report (for 2017), Forms A and D.
- 58 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 18 October 2016.
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- 60 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 18 October 2016.
- 61 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form A; and Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC 16th Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
- 62 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 63 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018; and Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC 16th Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
- 64 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017.
- 65 "National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on humanitarian mine action for 2017–2020", Decree No. 91, 25 February 2017, p. 24.
- 66 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018; Chris Rennick, FSD, 13 March 2018; and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 5 April 2018.
- 67 Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC 16th Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017; and emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018; Chris Rennick, FSD, 13 March 2018; and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 5 April 2018; and interviews with Kurbonmamad Kurbonmamadov, HDC Operations Manager, MoD, and Saynuridin Kalandarov, Director, UST, Dushanbe, 29 May 2018.

- 68 Email from and telephone interview with Luka Buhin, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, 18 March 2014; and Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire, 8 April 2014.
- 69 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 12 May 2015.
- 70 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 71 Interview with Johan Dahl, Head of Mine Action, OSCE, Dushanbe, 29 May 2018.
- 72 Interview with Kurbonmamad Kurbonmamadov, MoD, Dushanbe, 29 May 2018.
- 73 Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by Luka Buhin, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, 8 April 2014.
- 74 Email from and telephone interview with Luka Buhin, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, 18 March 2014; and Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire, 8 April 2014.
- 75 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018; and interview with Johan Dahl, OSCE, Dushanbe, 29 May 2018.
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- 78 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; and Aubrey Sutherland, NPA, 18 October 2017.
- 79 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017 and 27 April 2018; and interview, Dushanbe, 29 May 2018.
- 80 Interview with Saynuridin Kalandarov, UST, Dushanbe, 29 May 2018.
- 81 Email from Luka Buhin, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, 9 October 2017.
- 82 "Non-technical survey/technical intervention", presentation by Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, at the 21st International Meeting of National Mine Action Programme Directors and United Nations Advisers, Geneva, 13–16 February 2018; and interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, Dushanbe, 25 May 2018.
- 83 Interview with Saynuridin Kalandarov, UST, Dushanbe, 29 May 2018.
- 84 Email from Saynuridin Kalandarov, UST, 30 August 2018.
- 85 Statement of Tajikistan, APMB 16th Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
- 86 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 February 2015; Statement of Tajikistan, Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Geneva, 25 June 2015; and TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 87 Statement of Tajikistan, 15th Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 30 November 2016; and Statement of Tajikistan, APMB 16th Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
- 88 Statement of Tajikistan, APMB 16th Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
- 89 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda and Murtazo Gurezov, TNMAC, Dushanbe, 25 May 2018.
- 90 Interview with Melissa Andersson, NPA, and Sasa Jelić, Operations Manager, NPA, Dushanbe, 30 May 2018.
- 91 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017.
- 92 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form D and Annex II.
- 93 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018; Melissa Andersson, NPA, 5 April 2018; and Chris Rennick, FSD, 13 March 2018; and Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A.
- 94 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017.
- 95 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018; Melissa Andersson, NPA, 5 April 2018, and Chris Rennick, FSD, 13 March 2018; and Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A. There was a discrepancy in the number of UXO reported destroyed by TNMAC for NPA (33 items of UXO), and by NPA directly (533 items of UXO).
- 96 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018, Chris Rennick, FSD, 13 March 2018; and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 5 April 2018.
- 97 Email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 5 April 2018.
- 98 Ibid.
- 99 Ibid.
- 100 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016 and 22 May 2017.
- 101 Ibid.
- 102 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017, and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 5 April 2018; and Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 103 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018.
- 104 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form D.
- 105 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018.
- 106 Ibid.
- 107 Ibid, and email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 5 April 2018.
- 108 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, Dushanbe, 30 May 2018.
- 109 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018; and interview, Dushanbe, 30 May 2018.
- 110 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016; and Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 10 August 2016; and Statement of Tajikistan, 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015.
- 111 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018; and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 5 April 2018.
- 112 See Mine Action Review and Landmine Monitor reports on clearance in Tajikistan covering 2013–16.
- 113 Article 7 Report (for 2016).
- 114 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form D and Annex II.
- 115 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018; and Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form D.
- 116 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, Dushanbe, 29 May 2018.
- 117 Interviews with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, and Saynuridin Kalandarov, UST, Dushanbe, 29 May 2018.
- 118 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017.
- 119 Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 120 Interviews with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, and Kurbonmamad Kurbonmamadov, MoD, Dushanbe, 29 May 2018.
- 121 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda and Murtazo Gurezov, TNMAC, Dushanbe, 25 May 2018.
- 122 Statement of Tajikistan, APMB 16th Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
- 123 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form D.
- 124 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 27 April 2018.
- 125 Ibid.