



# TAJIKISTAN

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

## PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

For 2015

For 2014

	For 2015	For 2014
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	4	4
Land release system in place	7	7
National mine action standards	6	6
Reporting on progress	5	5
Improving performance	4	3
<b>PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>4.9</b>

## PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Tajikistan's mine action programme performed slightly better in the latest reporting period, with continuing efforts to improve task prioritisation and land release techniques in the Central Region. A humanitarian demining law was ratified in 2016, though it seems that humanitarian clearance operators were not consulted during the drafting process. The Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre (TNMAC) has been developing an Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 completion plan for 2016–20. TNMAC, however, needs to improve the quality and accuracy of land release data.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Tajikistan should, as soon as possible, complete survey of 79 unsurveyed mined areas along the Tajik-Afghan border whose records were made publicly available in September 2013, in order to clarify the actual extent of mine contamination.
- Tajikistan should finalise its Article 5 completion workplan and its mine action strategic plan, including precise and clear milestones.
- Tajikistan should develop a resource mobilisation strategy to secure funding for mine clearance operations in both the border regions and the Central Region.
- Tajikistan should submit its outstanding annual APMBC Article 7 transparency report.

## CONTAMINATION

At the end of 2015, Tajikistan had 5.72km<sup>2</sup> of confirmed “accessible” and “executable” mined area across three provinces and fifteen districts, as set out in Table 1. This excludes another 23 so-called “inaccessible” and “non-executable” areas, which cover an estimated 1.04km<sup>2</sup>. In addition, an estimated 3.6km<sup>2</sup> of mined area still to be surveyed exists across 101 areas. A further 2.3km<sup>2</sup> contains explosive remnants of war (ERW) only.<sup>1</sup>

Of the surveyed mined area that can be readily cleared, 60 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) totalling approximately 3.98km<sup>2</sup> are along the border with Afghanistan. Minefield records for the 101 unsurveyed areas are also along the Tajik-Afghan border.<sup>2</sup> A further 10 CHAs totalling approximately 1.74km<sup>2</sup> are in the Central Region, and though they are located on mountains that are difficult to access, they can still be cleared during the region's relatively brief summer period.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1: Anti-personnel mine contamination by district as at end 2015<sup>4</sup>**

District	Province	Total CHA		Inaccessible CHA		Non-executable CHA		Readily clearable CHA		SHA*	
		No.	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	No.	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	No.	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	No.	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	No.	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
Tajik-Afghan Border	GBAO Region	20	2.13	4	0.27	0	0	16	1.86	4	3.6
	Khatlon Region	63	2.89	15	0.75	4	0.016	44	2.12	97	0
<b>Sub-totals</b>		<b>83</b>	<b>5.02</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.016</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>3.6</b>
Central Region	GBAO Region	6	1.22	0	0	0	0	6	1.22	0	0
	Direct Rule District	4	0.52	0	0	0	0	4	0.52	0	0
<b>Sub-totals</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>1.74</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1.74</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Totals</b>		<b>93</b>	<b>6.76</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.016</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>5.72</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>3.6</b>

\* The approximate size of the 101 suspected minefields is an estimate, based on desk analysis, and pending further survey.

1 Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015; and TNMAC Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20, 4 October 2016.

2 Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015.

3 Ibid.

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.<sup>5</sup>

Mine contamination remains in the provinces of Khatlon and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO) along the Tajik-Afghan border region (estimated to contain 60,357 anti-personnel mines), and in the Central Region.<sup>6</sup> Shuroobod, in the Khatlon region on the Afghan border, is the most heavily mined district, and most of the mines were dropped by helicopter due to the inaccessibility for vehicles and people.<sup>7</sup> In 2013, following a Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD) survey, FSD and the Tajikistan Mine Action Centre (TMAC) concluded that no mines remain on the Tajikistan side of the border with Uzbekistan.<sup>8</sup>

A national survey in 2003–05 by FSD estimated that mine and ERW contamination extended over 50km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>9</sup> Tajikistan subsequently alleged that lack of experience among the initial survey teams, the absence of minefield records and other important information, and inadequate survey equipment contributed to the first impact survey not generating sufficiently robust results. As a result, the sizes of SHAs were miscalculated and their descriptions not clearly recorded.<sup>10</sup>

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.<sup>11</sup> The number of minefields was subsequently confirmed as 107 (not 110).<sup>12</sup> All are located in the provinces of Khatlon and the GBAO along the border with Afghanistan.<sup>13</sup> Non-technical survey (NTS) of the minefields began in 2014.<sup>14</sup> As at December 2015, 101 unsurveyed minefields were said to remain, covering an estimated 3.6km<sup>2</sup>,<sup>15</sup> and as at September 2016 stood at 79 unsurveyed minefields.<sup>16</sup> Serious challenges have been reported during NTS, due to the extreme inaccessibility of mined areas and one mined area blocking access

to others.<sup>17</sup> 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).<sup>18</sup>

Since 1992, TMAC/TNMAC has recorded 858 mine/ERW casualties (374 killed, 484 injured), of whom almost one-third were children.<sup>19</sup> Mine contamination in Tajikistan constrains development, limits access to grazing and agricultural land, and affects farming, wood gathering, and grazing activities related to rural life, especially in the Central Region.<sup>20</sup> The main mine contamination is located along the borders, with a less direct impact on local communities and development, as these are restricted military security zones. However, contamination in these regions affects cross-border trade and security, and has political impact on peacebuilding initiatives with neighbouring countries.<sup>21</sup>

## PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Commission for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law (CIIHL) acts as Tajikistan's national mine action authority (NMAA), responsible for mainstreaming mine action into the government's socio-economic development policies.<sup>22</sup>

In June 2003, the Government of Tajikistan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) established TMAC with a view to the mine action programme becoming fully nationally owned in the short- to medium-term,<sup>23</sup> though this did not actually occur for more than ten years. TMAC was made responsible for coordinating and monitoring all mine action activities.<sup>24</sup> Since then, TMAC has acted as the secretariat for the CIIHL, to which it also reports.<sup>25</sup>

4 Ibid.; and TNMAC Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20, 4 October 2016. The figures are not consistent with TNMAC's statement at the APMBBC intersessional meetings in May 2016, when it reported contamination as at December 2015 of some 10.3km<sup>2</sup>, in addition to 2.3km<sup>2</sup> of battle area.

5 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2009, p. 1; and Tajikistan Mine Action Centre (TMAC), “Scope of the Problem”, accessed 23 September 2015 at: <http://www.mineaction.tj/about/scope/>.

6 TNMAC, Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20, 4 October 2016.

7 Ibid.

8 Email from Parviz Mavlonkulov, TMAC, 12 March 2014; and email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TMAC, 19 March 2014; and TNMAC, Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20”, 4 October 2016.

9 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).

10 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2009, p. 1.

11 Statement of Tajikistan, APMBBC 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015.

12 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, and Sebastian Kasack, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in Geneva, 23 June 2015.

13 TNMAC Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20, 4 October 2016.

14 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 30 September 2015.

15 Statement of Tajikistan, APMBBC 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015; and TNMAC, Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20”, 4 October 2016.

16 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, Country Director, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), 18 October 2016.

17 TNMAC Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20, 4 October 2016.

18 Ibid.

19 TMAC, “Initiative of Tajikistan on Releasing Land from Mines and Advocacy against Landmines”, 5 April 2015, at: [http://www.mineaction.tj/news/index.php?ELEMENT\\_ID=223](http://www.mineaction.tj/news/index.php?ELEMENT_ID=223).

20 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016; Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2009, p. 1; and email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 10 August 2016.

21 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 10 August 2016.

22 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2009, p. 4.

23 Roberts, “Evaluation of UNDP Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme”, p. 12.

24 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2009, p. 1; and TMAC, “About TMAC”, accessed 1 September 2016 at: <http://www.mineaction.tj/about/>.

25 Roberts, “Evaluation of UNDP Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme”, p. 12.

On 3 January 2014, TNMAC was established by government decree to replace TMAC.<sup>26</sup> Prior to this, lack of legal recognition had presented problems for TMAC,<sup>27</sup> including, for example, its inability to open a bank account to receive and disburse funds.<sup>28</sup> The importance of clarifying the centre's status had been highlighted in the 2012 evaluation of UNDP support to mine action in Tajikistan.<sup>29</sup> Since becoming a legal entity in its own right, TNMAC believes its relationship with national ministries and agencies has improved.<sup>30</sup>

While transition to national ownership is considered to have been successful, UNDP's Support to Tajikistan Mine Action Programme (STMAP) project will continue until at least the end of 2017 to support the building of sustainable national structures and TNMAC's technical capacity.<sup>31</sup>

The Ministry of Defence plays a significant role in Tajikistan's mine action sector. With the adoption in July 2013 by the ministry 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 a sound national mine action programme.<sup>32</sup>

Areas for land release are prioritised based on tasks issued by the Tajik government, requests from local authorities, and the capacities of demining agencies. Adverse weather conditions during the winter limit access to some designated priority tasks, as do security restrictions.<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup> A two-day prioritisation workshop was held in Dushanbe in May 2016 as part of TNMAC/UNDP's STMAP project, which was also attended by operators, and facilitated by GICHD.<sup>35</sup>

Based on NTS conducted previously by FSD and TNMAC, and also existing minefield records, mine clearance in Tajikistan is mostly focused on areas where contamination has been confirmed.<sup>36</sup>

## Strategic Planning

The current national mine action strategic plan (NMASP) 2010–15 expired at the end of 2015.<sup>37</sup> Tajikistan is in the process of developing a new strategy, the "Article 5 completion plan for 2016–20". Operators have been consulted during development of the plan,<sup>38</sup> and as at October 2016, it was still being revised.<sup>39</sup>

The draft completion plan seeks to focus on the most heavily mine-contaminated 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.<sup>40</sup> 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 NTS 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).<sup>41</sup>

As part of the Article 5 completion plan, Tajikistan has defined four different categories of mined areas: CHAs; "inaccessible CHAs"; "non-executable CHAs"; and "unsurveyed minefield records". CHAs are defined as "An area declared dangerous due to the presence of mines"; inaccessible CHAs are defined as "CHA that is impossible to access by land release teams due to relief (like high mountains, steep slopes, etc.), small river islands, mudflows and other constraints including security"; non-executable CHAs are defined as "A CHA in which clearance is impossible to execute under current working conditions", due to sandy soil, depth of items (60cm–70cm), or waterlogged ground.<sup>42</sup> TNMAC expects further inaccessible and non-executable tasks to be identified through NTS or technical survey or during clearance; and that operating teams and TNMAC will agree on common criteria to declare an area/task as inaccessible or non-executable.<sup>43</sup>

26 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 3 April 2015.

27 Roberts, "Evaluation of UNDP Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme", pp. 12–13; and UNDP Users Guide, "Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures, at: [http://www.undp.org.af/Projects/Direct\\_Implementation.pdf](http://www.undp.org.af/Projects/Direct_Implementation.pdf).

28 Roberts, "Evaluation of UNDP Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme", pp. 12–13.

29 Ibid., pp. 27–29.

30 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 12 May 2015.

31 TNMAC, Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.

32 Ministry of Defence, "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. 2015.

33 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016; and Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 10 August 2016.

34 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016.

35 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 10 August 2016.

36 Ibid.

37 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, and Ahad Mahmudov, Programme Manager, UNDP, in Geneva, 23 June 2015.

38 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 2 September 2016.

39 Email from Parviz Mavlonkulov, UNDP, 4 October 2016.

40 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

The future phases of Tajikistan's national mine action programme to "completion" were formalised into a "transition and exit strategy" in 2013. The strategy was revised in October 2014, to plan the three-year period from the beginning of 2015 to the end of 2017, and seeks to increase national ownership. The GICHD is assisting the programme in this process.<sup>44</sup>

TNMAC's annual workplan for 2016 was approved by the government in December 2015.<sup>45</sup>

## Legislation and Standards

In 2015, Tajikistan drafted a humanitarian demining law, which covers all aspects of mine action. However, mine clearance NGOs are not believed to have been consulted during the drafting of the law.<sup>46</sup> The law (no. 1338) was ratified by Tajikistan's Parliament on 23 July 2016.<sup>47</sup> The new law was presented to mine action stakeholders in Tajikistan in September 2016, during a workshop hosted by TNMAC.<sup>48</sup>

Tajikistan's National Mine Action Standards (TNMAS), which have been revised and translated into Russian, were awaiting government approval as at August 2016.<sup>49</sup>

## Operators

FSD and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) are the two international demining operators in Tajikistan. In 2014, FSD was forced to substantially reduce its demining activities, due to withdrawal of German funding.<sup>50</sup> In 2015, the Government of Japan funded one manual team to conduct demining operations in Tavildara district and the US Government once more provided funding for demining operations towards the end of the year.<sup>51</sup>

Until 2015, limitations in Tajikistan's legislation had prevented UST gaining accreditation for demining activities.<sup>52</sup> 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.<sup>53</sup>

NPA started operations in Tajikistan in 2010; its arrival significantly increased the demining capacity of Tajikistan's mine action programme and its clearance output.<sup>54</sup> NPA reported that the number of operational staff deployed in 2015 fluctuated, with an average of between four and five teams during the year; clearance operations were curtailed due to the practical challenges of demining at high altitude in the Central Region, while security imposed clearance restrictions on the Afghan border.<sup>55</sup>

In 2015, combined FSD, NPA, and Ministry of Defence operational capacity for survey and clearance in Tajikistan was 117 deminers across 9 multipurpose teams and 1 manual clearance team – a marked decrease in capacity compared to 2014. Of this, NPA deployed six multi-purpose teams, totalling 62 personnel in 2015; FSD deployed one manual team, consisting of 13 personnel; and the Ministry of Defence's Humanitarian Demining Unit (HDU) deployed three multi-purpose teams, totalling 42 personnel. UST deployed two NTS teams in 2015.<sup>56</sup>

Neither mine detection dogs (MDDs) nor machines were used operationally in 2015.<sup>57</sup> 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.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, economic use of mechanical assets reached its limit, and by 2015, few tasks remained for demining machines. Moreover, in 2015, machines were prevented from even being deployed due to security constraints along the border with Afghanistan, which blocked access to areas suitable for machine deployment.<sup>59</sup> Most future tasks will require manual clearance.<sup>60</sup>

Following the signature of an MoU with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2009, the Ministry of Defence established a Humanitarian Demining Group (HDG).<sup>61</sup> Since TNMAC's nationalisation, the HDG has acted as a contractor for TNMAC, and OSCE funds the HDG through TNMAC.<sup>62</sup> The HDG is expected to increase its operational capacities from 2016, initially with the OSCE's support.<sup>63</sup>

44 Ibid.

45 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, and Ahad Mahmoudov, UNDP, in Geneva, 23 June 2015.

46 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 18 October 2016.

47 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016.

48 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 18 October 2016.

49 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, in Geneva, 18 February 2016; and email 19 August 2016.

50 FSD, Annual Report 2015, at: [http://www.fsd.ch/docs/FSD\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2015.pdf](http://www.fsd.ch/docs/FSD_Annual_Report_2015.pdf).

51 Ibid.; and email from Matthew Wilson, Deputy Head of Operations, FSD, 21 October 2016.

52 FSD, Annual Report 2015, at: [http://www.fsd.ch/docs/FSD\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2015.pdf](http://www.fsd.ch/docs/FSD_Annual_Report_2015.pdf).

53 Ibid.

54 GICHD, "Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Tajikistan", Geneva, October 2013, p. 4.

55 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 10 August 2016.

56 Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19 May 2016; and TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.

57 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016.

58 Ibid., 17 February 2015; Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC Intersessional Meetings (Committee on Article 5 Implementation), Geneva, 25 June 2015; and TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.

59 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016; and TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.

60 Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC Intersessional Meetings (Committee on Article 5 Implementation), Geneva, 19 May 2016.

61 Email from and telephone interview with Luka Buhin, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, 18 March 2014; and Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire, 8 April 2014.

62 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 12 May 2015.

63 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.

The OSCE office in Tajikistan has been supporting mine action since 2003. The OSCE's strategy in Tajikistan is twofold: to support the development of national demining capacity; and to foster regional cooperation in border management and security.<sup>64</sup> The OSCE supported the HDG via the UST, which it contracted to provide project management and administrative support to the Ministry of Defence's Humanitarian Demining Unit in 2010–13.<sup>65</sup> UST was accredited to conduct NTS, risk education, and victim assistance, but not technical survey or clearance, as earlier national legislation did not permit public organisations to deal with weapons and explosives. The adoption of the new humanitarian demining law may now offer Tajikistan the opportunity to accredit UST for technical survey and clearance<sup>66</sup> and it is expected that UST will begin to operate independently.<sup>67</sup>

## Quality Management

TNMAC coordinates and monitors the Quality Management (QM) process in Tajikistan, and the TNMAS cover all QM requirements, both from a process and from a final product (released land) perspective.<sup>68</sup>

## LAND RELEASE

Total mined area released by clearance and technical survey in 2015 was almost 0.78km<sup>2</sup>, compared with 1.15km<sup>2</sup> in 2014. In addition, almost 0.57km<sup>2</sup> was cancelled in 2015 by survey while almost 0.4km<sup>2</sup> was confirmed as mined.

### Survey in 2015

In 2015, more than 0.53km<sup>2</sup> was reduced by technical survey, and a further 0.56km<sup>2</sup> was cancelled (see Table 2).<sup>69</sup> In addition, NPA reported that almost 0.4km<sup>2</sup> was confirmed as mined in 2015.

**Table 2: Mined area survey in 2015<sup>70</sup>**

Operator	District	Province	Area cancelled (m <sup>2</sup> )	Area reduced by TS (m <sup>2</sup> )	Area confirmed (m <sup>2</sup> )
NPA	Tavildara	Central Region	242,367	2,656	0
	Jirgatol	Central Region	126,641	32,343	392,000
	Darvoz	GBAO	159,572	111,176	6,000
	Nosiri Khusrav	Khatlon	28,912	18,771	0
FSD	Tavildara	Central Region	0	180,745	0
MoD	Vanj	GBAO	0	187,527	0
<b>Totals</b>			<b>557,492</b>	<b>533,218</b>	<b>398,000</b>

64 Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by Luka Buhin, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, 8 April 2014.

65 Email from and telephone interview with Luka Buhin, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, 18 March 2014; and Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire, 8 April 2014.

66 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016.

67 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.

68 Ibid.

69 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016; and Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 8 September 2016. NPA figures are recorded, as these were disaggregated by area cancelled and area reduced, whereas TNMAC reported only a combined figure.

70 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016; and Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 8 September 2016. NPA figures disaggregated area cancelled and area reduced, whereas TNMAC only reported a combined figure. There was also a discrepancy between NPA and TNMAC data regarding survey data for Nosiri Khusrav District, Khatlon province. NPA reported 28,912m<sup>2</sup> as cancelled and 18,771m<sup>2</sup> as reduced (totalling 47,683m<sup>2</sup>), whereas TNMAC reported a combined total of 38,748m<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, TNMAC did not report the 398,000m<sup>2</sup> confirmed as contaminated by NPA.

## Clearance in 2015

In 2015, FSD, NPA, and the MoD/HDG cleared close to 0.25km<sup>2</sup> across 23 mined areas (5 of which were suspended and not yet completed), destroying 394 anti-personnel mines and 121 items of UXO (see Table 3).<sup>71</sup> This is a marked decrease from 2014, when 0.65km<sup>2</sup> of mine-contaminated area was cleared.<sup>72</sup>

**Table 3: Mine clearance in 2015**<sup>73</sup>

Operator	District	Province	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m <sup>2</sup> )	AP mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
NPA	Tavildara	Central Region	1	4,977	1	0
	Jirgatal	Central Region	2	31,016	19	0
	Darvoz	GBAO	9	88,066	250	20
	Vanj	GBAO	1*	2,566	0	6
	Nosiri Khusrav	Khatlon	4	22,117	38	0
FSD	Tavildara	Central Region	1	19,255	1	10
MoD	Vanj	GBAO	1	71,473	3	81
	Vanj	GBAO	2*	3,997	82	4
	Nosiri Khusrav	Khatlon	2	1,884	0	0
<b>Totals</b>			<b>23</b>	<b>245,351</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>121</b>

\* Clearance suspended and not yet completed.

Nosiri Khusrav district, in the south-western corner of Khatlon district, was declared mine-free in 2015, following completion of NPA survey and clearance operations over four tasks.<sup>74</sup>

Compared to 2014, far fewer mines were found and destroyed during land release operations in 2015. According to TNMAC this is due to a lower number of clearance operations taking place in Khatlon province – the most heavily mined – owing to the security situation on the Afghan border, along with the lack of opportunity to deploy demining machines.<sup>75</sup>

TNMAC reported that better use is being made of technical survey to collect direct evidence of contamination, and to ensure CHAs do indeed contain mines.<sup>76</sup> NPA reported that despite deploying half the number of teams in 2015 compared to 2014, its output of land released was not less, due to better use of land release techniques over SHAs and CHAs in the Central Region and increased cancellation of non-contaminated land.<sup>77</sup>

71 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016.

72 Ibid., 10 October 2015. There was a discrepancy between cleared data for Khatlon province reported by NPA (424,097m<sup>2</sup>) and that reported by TNMAC (377,580m<sup>2</sup>). Email from Resad Junuzagic, NPA, 7 April 2015. There was also a discrepancy between cleared data for Khatlon province reported by FSD (135,550m<sup>2</sup>) and by TNMAC (125,229m<sup>2</sup>). In addition, FSD also reported destroying one anti-personnel mine in Vanj, GBAO. Email from Gulnomo Khudobakhshova, Programme Officer, FSD, 12 May 2015.

73 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016. However, this is inconsistent with what TNMAC reported for the same period at 14MSP in December 2015 (1.8km<sup>2</sup> released, and 556 mines and 345 ERW destroyed in 2015) and at the May 2016 Intersessional Meetings (1.77km<sup>2</sup> released, destroying 567 AP mines and 1,183 ERW). The 14MSP and intersessional figures are thought likely to include battle area clearance, though this does not account for the difference in the number of mines destroyed.

74 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 10 August 2016.

75 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016.

76 Ibid.

77 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 10 August 2016.

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.<sup>78</sup> However, due to increased security in northern parts of Afghanistan (along the Tajik border), 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.<sup>79</sup> Border Forces only permitted NTS operations in Shuroobod district of Khatlon province, to survey some of the 101 previously unrecorded minefields. As such, two additional survey teams were established.<sup>80</sup> As at August 2016, TNMAC was negotiating with the Border Forces for the opportunity to start mine clearance operations in Khatlon region.<sup>81</sup>

Due to the restricted access to the border areas with Afghanistan, operators were instead tasked mainly to tackle remaining contamination in the Central Region. However, there is a shorter demining window in this region, due to adverse weather conditions.<sup>82</sup>

## Progress in 2016

TNMAC was aiming to survey 50 SHAs in the 101 previously unrecorded minefields in 2016.<sup>83</sup> As at September 2016, the number of unsurveyed minefields was believed to have been reduced through NTS to 79.<sup>84</sup>

As security issues in the Khatlon region have persisted into 2016, TNMAC has instead focused all its demining capacity in the Central Region, and expected to complete mine clearance in two districts.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, as a result of the lack of access to clearance tasks, TNMAC is also concentrating more on release of SHAs by reduction of mined area using technical survey and cancellation of non-contaminated land using NTS.

## Deminer Safety

One mine accident was reported in 2015, which involved a PMN (anti-personnel blast) mine being accidentally detonated during excavation. The accident resulted in an NPA task supervisor losing his eyesight as well as a finger.<sup>86</sup> As a result of the subsequent accident investigation, NPA reviewed and changed its operational structure and equipment.<sup>87</sup>

## 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.

The first quarter of each calendar year is typically not conducive for clearance operations, so in order to meet the deadline, clearance would need to be completed by the end of 2019.<sup>88</sup> Current land release output, continued insecurity along its border with Afghanistan, and the inaccessibility and/or operational difficulty of some mined areas, means that Tajikistan will not finish in time.

While TNMAC has claimed that Tajikistan is on track to meet its obligations and complete its Article 5 obligations by the end of 2019,<sup>89</sup> it has acknowledged that this is contingent on sufficient funding, as well as the security situation at the Tajik-Afghan border, both of which could affect its ability to meet the deadline.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, Tajikistan is in the process of finalising an Article 5 completion plan for 2016–20 in which it outlines its plans to address only accessible and executable CHAs. "Inaccessible" and "non-executable" areas have been excluded from land release activities during the Article 5 completion period, and will be defined as "residual threat".<sup>91</sup> This is not compliant with Tajikistan's Article 5 survey and clearance obligations.

In the Tajik-Afghan Border region, after deducting 23 "inaccessible" and "non-executable" areas, 60 CHAs covering some 2.67km<sup>2</sup> remain to be addressed under TNMAC's draft completion plan,<sup>92</sup> while in the Central Region, 10 CHAs remain to be addressed, covering 1.74km<sup>2</sup>. TNMAC predicts that the proportion of land manually cleared and reduced by technical survey will remain the same as the average of the last six years, namely 40% and 33% accordingly. Therefore it predicts that from the 5.72km<sup>2</sup> of total CHA, only 3.83km<sup>2</sup> will be subjected to full clearance.<sup>93</sup>

In addition, of the estimated 3.6km<sup>2</sup> within the 101 unsurveyed minefield records along the Tajik-Afghan border (as at the end of 2015), it is assumed that about 20% of mined areas will not be accessible or executable for land release operations, and about 10% will be cancelled through NTS.<sup>94</sup> Therefore, it is predicted that 2.52km<sup>2</sup> (70%) will be confirmed for survey and clearance, of which 33% (0.82km<sup>2</sup>) will be reduced by technical survey and the remaining 67% (1.69km<sup>2</sup>) through full clearance.<sup>95</sup>

78 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.; and email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 10 August 2016; and Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC 14MSP, December 2015.

83 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016.

84 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 18 October 2016.

85 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016.

86 Ibid.; and email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 10 August 2016.

87 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 10 August 2016.

88 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.

89 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016.

90 Ibid.

91 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.

92 Ibid.

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.



If the security situation on the Tajik-Afghan border does not allow for clearance along the border itself, Tajikistan will try to operate in areas at least 1km from the border line. 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.<sup>96</sup>

In its draft Article 5 completion plan for 2016–20, Tajikistan estimates that to clear 5.52km<sup>2</sup> of CHA (and excluding the 101 unsurveyed minefield records on the Tajik-Afghan border, and “inaccessible” and “non-executable” areas) by the end of 2019, would require about 24 manual clearance teams annually clearing an average total each year of 1.4km<sup>2</sup>. Alternatively, a lesser, but still increased, capacity of 14 manual clearance team could take approximately seven years (2015–23), based on current clearance rates.<sup>97</sup>

In the last five years, Tajikistan has cleared a total of 5.59km<sup>2</sup> of mined area (see Table 4), with annual clearance in 2015 at the lowest level yet during this period. This was due to restricted access for clearance in the Afghanistan border region owing to a heightened security situation in Kunduz and other areas in north-east Afghanistan. This resulted in clearance operations originally scheduled for January 2016 being delayed until May. It also saw clearance focusing on the mountainous Central Region, where adverse weather means the demining window is much shorter, with additional challenges posed by the need to access remote locations and to ensure medical evacuation.<sup>98</sup>

**Table 4: Mine clearance in 2011–15<sup>99</sup>**

Year	Area cleared (km <sup>2</sup> )
2015	0.25
2014	0.65
2013	1.99
2012	1.10
2011	1.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.59</b>

The Government of Tajikistan supported TNMAC coordination activities with some US\$38,000 in 2015–16: a decrease compared to the US\$52,000 provided in 2014. In addition, the government provides in-kind and technical support to the programme which it equates to some US\$700,000 annually, which has remained constant.<sup>100</sup> TNMAC expected to receive increased funding in 2016, based on indications from the US, which together with Norway is one of Tajikistan’s main mine action donors.<sup>101</sup>

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid.

98 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016; and Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 10 August 2016; and Statement of Tajikistan, APMBC 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015.

99 See Mine Action Review and Landmine Monitor reports on clearance in Tajikistan covering 2011–14.

100 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016.

101 Ibid.