

TAJIKISTAN

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MINE ACTION PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

For 2016

For 2015

MINE ACTION PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE	For 2016	For 2015
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	5	4
Land release system in place	7	7
National mine action standards	6	6
Reporting on progress	5	5
Improving performance	5	4
PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE	5.2	5.0

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Tajikistan's mine action programme performance improved in the latest reporting period, with a doubling of clearance output compared to 2015. The Union of the Sappers of Tajikistan (UST), a national not-for-profit demining organisation, became operational for non-technical survey, which it undertook for a significant number of the unsurveyed minefields on the Tajik-Afghan border. In addition, continuing efforts were made to improve task prioritisation and land release techniques. The granting of permission by Tajikistan border authorities in January 2017 for clearance operations to restart on the Tajik-Afghan border, after more than two years of security restrictions, is a very positive development, which will enable release of the country's most densely contaminated mined areas.

A humanitarian demining law was ratified in 2016, though it seems that humanitarian clearance operators were not consulted during the drafting process. In addition, a National Strategy on Humanitarian Mine Action for 2017–20 and National Mine Action Standards were also approved by the government in 2016. The national strategy, however, is very general, without meaningful detail on how and when the strategy will be implemented. This will instead be outlined in an Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 completion plan for 2016–20, which the Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre (TNMAC) is in the process of developing. While Tajikistan's reporting on the extent of mined area and on clearance data improved for 2016, there were still issues with the quality, accuracy, and disaggregation of survey data.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Tajikistan should, as soon as possible, complete survey of the 58 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, including precise and clear milestones for all mined areas in Tajikistan. The workplan should include information on how Tajikistan plans to address “inaccessible areas” and “non-executable tasks”, which are not recognised or defined terms under the APMBC.
- Tajikistan should report more accurately and consistently on land release data disaggregated by product (cancelled, reduced and cleared), activity (non-technical survey, technical survey, and clearance), and classification (suspected hazardous area (SHA) and confirmed hazardous area (CHA)), in a manner consistent with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).

CONTAMINATION

At the end of 2016, Tajikistan had more than 7.76km² of mine contamination across 147 CHAs, and 1.97km² of suspected mine contamination across 77 SHAs, as set out in Table 1.¹ The mined areas are located in three provinces and fourteen districts of Tajikistan.

By May 2017, contamination had come down to 7.7km² of confirmed mined area in 144 CHAs, and 1.7km² of suspected contamination (based on desk analysis) in 58 unsurveyed minefields. A further 1.1km², in nine battle areas, contains explosive remnants of war (ERW) only.² While Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) completed clearance of the remaining known area of cluster munition remnants (CMR) contamination in August 2017, additional, previously unknown CMR were found later in the year during 2017 battle area clearance (BAC) at two locations in Rasht valley of the Central Region by the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD).³

This is a small reduction in overall baseline contamination compared to the end of 2015, when Tajikistan had 6.76km² of confirmed contamination (5.72km² of confirmed “accessible” and “executable” mined area and 1.04km² of “inaccessible” and “non-executable” areas), in addition to an estimated 3.6km² of suspected mined area still to be surveyed.⁴

Table 1: Anti-personnel mine contamination by province (as at end-2016)⁵

Province	District	CHA		SHA	
		No.	Area (m ²)	No.	Area (m ²)*
GBO	Darvos	4	163,828	2	20,000
	Vanj	8	1,348,450	0	0
	Shugnan	3	56,000	0	0
	Ishkoshi	0	0	1	5,000
Sub-total		15	1,568,278	3	25,000
Khatlon	Farkhor	6	96,800	1	8,000
	Hamadoni	3	80,772	6	177,000
	Panj	24	1,606,285	13	204,000
	Jayhun	8	135,636	10	307,000
	Shokhin	81	3,030,085	37	1,064,000
	Kabodiyon	1	0	0	0
	Shahri	1	30,000	0	0
Sub-total		124	4,979,578	67	1,760,000
Central Region	Darvos	4	1,000,800	0	0
	Lyahgsh	2	85,600	0	0
	Tavildara	1	50,000	2	50,000
	Khovaling	1	80,000	5	135,000
Subtotals		8	1,216,400	7	185,000
Totals		147	7,764,256	77	1,970,000

* The approximate size of the suspected minefields is an estimate, based on desk analysis, and pending further 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.⁶

Mine contamination remains in the provinces of Khatlon and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBO) along the Tajik-Afghan border region (reported to contain 60,357 anti-personnel mines), and in the Central Region.⁷ 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.⁸

In 2013, following a FSD survey, FSD and the Tajikistan Mine Action Centre (TMAC) concluded that no mines remain on the Tajikistan side of the border with Uzbekistan.⁹ However, in its National Strategy on Humanitarian Mine Action for 2017–20, Tajikistan reports that the population living in dangerous areas near the Tajik-Uzbek border are mainly engaged in livestock, agriculture, fodder, and collection of firewood, and that “despite the high degree of mine risk, the local population is forced to operate in hazardous areas”. Furthermore, the strategy also states that “as a result of natural disasters, it is possible that some minefields or individual mines have moved to the territory of the

Republic of Tajikistan, although at the moment, their exact location and area are not known”. The strategy also refers to Mine Risk Education (MRE) measures, including those to minimise the number of mine or unexploded ordnance (UXO) accidents during demining; to establish a transparent mechanism for reporting incidents involving mines or UXO; and refers to “questionable mined areas”.¹⁰ This raises doubts about whether the Tajik-Uzbek border is in fact mine-free, as previously reported.

A national survey in 2003–05 by FSD estimated that mine and ERW contamination extended over 50km².¹¹ Tajikistan subsequently alleged that lack of experience among the initial survey teams, the absence of minefield records and other important information, and inadequate 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.¹² While most minefield records are of good quality, some records, for example for areas where mines were dropped by helicopter, 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.¹³

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.¹⁴ The number of minefields was subsequently confirmed as 107 (not 110).¹⁵ All are

located in the provinces of Khatlon and the GBAO along the border with Afghanistan.¹⁶ Non-technical survey of the minefields began in 2014.¹⁷ As at December 2015, 101 unsurveyed minefields were said to remain, covering an estimated 3.6km²,¹⁸ while by May 2017 the number had come down to 58.¹⁹ Serious challenges have been reported during non-technical survey, due to the extreme inaccessibility of mined areas and one mined area blocking access to others.²⁰ 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).²¹

Mine contamination in Tajikistan is said to constrain development, limit access to grazing and agricultural land, and affect farming, wood gathering, and grazing activities related to rural life, especially in the Central Region.²² Most of the contamination is 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 road construction, disaster mitigation activities, water piping, electricity line posts, gold extraction, and maintenance of dams.²³ Furthermore, contamination in these regions affects cross-border trade and security, and has a negative political impact on peacebuilding initiatives with neighbouring countries.²⁴

In 2016, one person was killed and five others were injured in incidents involving ERW and mines. This includes two Tajik border guards injured by an anti-personnel mine blast.²⁵

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.²⁶

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,²⁷ though this did not actually occur for more than ten years. TMAC was made responsible for coordinating and monitoring all mine action activities.²⁸ Since then, TMAC has acted as the secretariat for the CIIHL, to which it also reports.²⁹

On 3 January 2014, TNMAC was established by government decree to replace TMAC.³⁰ Prior to this, lack of legal recognition had presented problems for TMAC,³¹ including, for example, its inability to open a bank account to receive and disburse funds.³² The importance of clarifying the centre’s status had been highlighted in the 2012 evaluation of UNDP support to mine action in Tajikistan.³³ Since its nationalisation TNMAC believes its cooperation with national ministries and agencies has improved.³⁴

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.³⁵

The Ministry of Defence 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 a sound national mine action programme.³⁶ The OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe supported the Ministry of Defence 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.³⁷

Areas for land release are prioritised on a district-by-district basis, based on tasks issued by the Tajik government, requests from local authorities, and the capacities of demining agencies. Issues of accessibility due to mountainous terrain and adverse weather conditions during winter limit access to some designated priority tasks, as do security restrictions.³⁸ There is typically a six-month operational season in Tajikistan, from May to October, but in the Central Region mined areas are only accessible for up to four months. As such, while the priority for clearance of mined areas in the Afghan border of the Khatlon region is lower than for example the Khaburabod pass in the Sagirdasht area of the Central Region, clearance teams are deployed to the Khatlon region at the beginning of the working season, as it is accessible, whereas mined areas in the Central Region are not.³⁹

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.⁴⁰ In May 2016, the GICHD facilitated a two-day prioritisation workshop in Dushanbe, attended by TNMAC, UNDP, and clearance operators, which resulted in a list of agreed criteria and indicators to help set priorities.⁴¹ Following the workshop, TNMAC and UNDP gathered geodata which would represent these indicators for use in the pilot of PriSMA (the Priority Setting Tool for Mine Action), and the pilot subsequently began in July 2017 and was completed as of September 2017.⁴² A second version of PriSMA was due to be completed in November 2017, with updates based on feedback from pilot countries, including Tajikistan. Once completed, TNMAC and UNDP will run a second pilot of new version of PriSMA. Discussions will take place on how to incorporate priority setting in Tajikistan’s strategy, and how PriSMA can be integrated into Tajikistan’s existing priority setting workflow in 2018.⁴³

Strategic Planning

The previous national mine action strategic plan (NMASP) 2010–15 expired at the end of 2015.⁴⁴ A new National Strategy on Humanitarian Mine Action for 2017–20 was approved by the Government of Tajikistan on 25 February 2017.⁴⁵

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 GICHD, including a regional workshop with participants from the Afghan mine action programme and the Tajik programme in November 2014, during which key strategic planning principles were presented and discussed.⁴⁶

In addition, in April 2015, GICHD supported the facilitation of a strategy stakeholder workshop, in collaboration with UNDP, to develop a new national strategy to replace the existing one which was due to expire. All relevant stakeholders, including humanitarian operators, and representatives from several government ministries, actively participated in the workshop, which focused on ensuring that implementation of the strategy could be monitored, that objectives were SMART, and that timelines were clear.⁴⁷

There was, however, a long delay in translating the final strategy document, and unfortunately there is reportedly little resemblance between the first draft resulting from the 2015 strategy workshop and Tajikistan’s final national strategy for 2017–20, approved by the government in February 2017. One stated reason for this, reported to GICHD by TNMAC, is that the national strategy was converted into a government template. It is, however, unfortunate that several important aspects of the original draft, including SMART objectives, targets, and indicators, were removed during this process.⁴⁸

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 for it to become sufficiently robust.⁴⁹ This recommendation, however, is not reflected in the planning details of the final National Strategy on Humanitarian Mine Action for 2017–20 approved by the government.

TNMAC is still in the process of finalising the draft Article 5 completion plan for 2016–20 referred to above, and which contains more detail on operationalisation and implementation of the strategy, and which will be reviewed each year.⁵⁰ As at May 2017, it was still being revised and finalised by TNMAC.⁵¹ Based on the October 2016 draft, the completion plan seeks to focus 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.⁵² 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).⁵³

As part of the draft 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.⁵⁴ As at November 2016, Tajikistan had identified 23 areas, covering an estimated 1.3km², on the Tajik-Afghan border, which it deemed not accessible for further clearance operations due to “relief, sandy soil, islands, flows, mine located too deep (60-70cm), no access by road, and other constraints”.⁵⁵ TNMAC expects further inaccessible and non-executable tasks to be identified through non-technical survey 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.⁵⁶ In June 2017, 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”.⁵⁷

In May 2017, TNMAC reported that it is using a new approach to survey, in which, in addition to standard non-technical survey information gathering, survey teams are also using technical assets to identify actual evidence of mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO), including locating parts of, or whole mines, and items of UXO, as well as explosion craters, to confirm areas as contaminated.⁵⁸

Legislation and Standards

In 2015, Tajikistan drafted a humanitarian demining law, which covers all aspects of mine action. However, relevant non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are not believed to have been consulted during its drafting.⁵⁹ The law, which was ratified by Tajikistan’s Parliament on 23 July 2016,⁶⁰ was presented to mine action stakeholders in Tajikistan in September 2016, during a workshop hosted by TNMAC.⁶¹

Tajikistan’s National Mine Action Standards (TNMAS) have been revised, and were approved by the Government of Tajikistan on 1 April 2017. The new standards have been translated into Russian and English.⁶²

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.⁶³

Information Management

Tajikistan has reported that one of the challenges it faces in information management is retention of experienced staff.⁶⁴ In 2016, Tajikistan enhanced its information management capacity by providing training to two information management officers and updating its information management system to IMSMA 6.0.⁶⁵

Operators

In 2016, combined FSD, NPA, UST, and Ministry of Defence operational capacity for survey and clearance in Tajikistan was 135 personnel across nine multi-purpose teams, one manual clearance team, and two non-technical survey teams⁶⁶ – an increase over the 117 operational personnel deployed in 2015.⁶⁷ Of this, NPA deployed four multi-purpose teams, totalling 46 personnel in 2016; FSD deployed one manual team, consisting of 13 personnel; and the Ministry of Defence's Humanitarian Demining Unit (HDU) deployed five multi-purpose teams, totalling 67 personnel, and the UST deployed two non-technical survey teams, totalling nine personnel.⁶⁸

FSD and NPA are the two international demining operators in Tajikistan.

Having been forced to substantially reduce its demining activities in 2014 due to withdrawal of German funding,⁶⁹ FSD deployed one Japanese-funded team in 2016.⁷⁰ In 2017, FSD deployed a second demining team to address the additional tasks being allocated to it by TNMAC.⁷¹

NPA started operations in Tajikistan in 2010; its arrival significantly increased the demining capacity of Tajikistan's mine action programme and its clearance output.⁷² NPA reported that the number of operations staff deployed in 2016 fluctuated, due to security restrictions on the Tajik-Afghan border and weather limitations in the Central Region, and a subsequent lack of tasking by TNMAC that resulted. During maximum capacity NPA deployed 53 operations staff (including 29 deminers, 4 task supervisors, and 4 team leaders), in addition to 6 management and support staff.⁷³

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).⁷⁴ Since TNMAC's nationalisation, the HDG has acted as a contractor for TNMAC, and OSCE funds the HDG through TNMAC.⁷⁵ The HDG increased its operational capacities in 2016, increasing from three-multi-purpose teams in 2015 to five in 2016.⁷⁶

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.⁷⁷ 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 2010–13.⁷⁸

Until 2015, limitations in Tajikistan's legislation had prevented UST, a national not-for-profit organisation, gaining accreditation for demining activities.⁷⁹ 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.⁸⁰ 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.⁸¹ In 2016, two UST teams conducted non-technical survey in the Shamsiddin Shohin district (formerly known as Shuroobod district) of the Khatlon region, and as at May 2017 survey operations were ongoing.⁸² 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.⁸³

Neither mine detection dogs (MDDs) nor machines were used operationally in 2016.⁸⁴ 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.⁸⁵ Similarly, economic use of mechanical assets reached its limit, and as at November 2016, all areas suitable for machine deployment had been completed.⁸⁶

LAND RELEASE

Total mined area released by clearance in 2016 was 0.5km², with a further 0.95km² released by survey (both technical and non-technical). Almost 2.55km² was confirmed as mined.

Survey in 2016

In 2016, a total of 0.95km² was released through survey, by FSD, NPA, and the MoD.⁸⁷ Whereas in Tajikistan's Article 7 report for 2016, area cancelled and area reduced was disaggregated [see Table 2],⁸⁸ TNMAC reported a combined, non-disaggregated figure for area released by survey, to Mine Action Review (see Table 3).

In addition, the UST confirmed 59 mined areas totalling 2.08km², during non-technical survey of Shamsiddin Shohin district, in Khatlon province in 2016.

Table 2: Anti-personnel mine survey by province in 2016⁸⁹

Province	Area cancelled (m ²)	Area reduced by TS (m ²)
GBAO	248,327	135,086
Central Region	411,109	159,749
Totals	659,436	294,835

TS = Technical survey

Table 3: Anti-personnel mine survey by operator in 2016⁹⁰

Operator	Province and District	Areas confirmed as mined	Area confirmed (m ²)	Area reduced by TS (m ²)
FSD	GBAO (Darvos district) and Central Region (Tojikobod province)	1	140,000	178,897
NPA	GBAO (Darvos and Vanj districts) and Central Region (Lyaghsh district)	4	295,600	525,674
UST	Khatlon (Shamsiddin Shohin district)	59	2,083,000	0
MoD	GBAO (Vanj district)	1	30,000	249,700
Totals		65	2,548,600	954,271*

* TNMAC reported a combined figure for area cancelled and area reduced.

In addition, 1.45km² was cancelled in three battle area clearance (BAC) tasks in Rasht district of the Central Region, during joint NPA and TNMAC survey operations.⁹¹

Clearance in 2016

In 2016, FSD, NPA, and the MoD/HDG cleared close to 0.5km² across 17 mined areas (4 of which were suspended and not yet completed as at the end of 2016), destroying 1,248 anti-personnel mines and 206 items of UXO (see Tables 4 and 5).⁹² This is double the clearance output compared to 2015, when 0.25km² was cleared, while significantly more mines were found and destroyed during land release operations in 2016.⁹³

Table 4: Mine clearance by province in 2016⁹⁴

Province	District	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
GBAO	Darvoz	115,650	587	6
	Vanj	245,287	626	185
Central Region	Jirgatal	36,279	9	0
	Tojikobod	11,643	9	0
	Darvoz	87,937	17	15
Totals		496,796	1,248	206

AP = Anti-personnel

Table 5: Mine clearance by operator in 2016⁹⁵

Operator	Province	District	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
NPA	GBAO	Vanj	2	15,116	131	5
		Darvoz	7	128,755	369	17
	Central Region	Jirgatal	1	36,279	9	0
FSD	GBAO	Darvoz	1	43,260	3	4
		Darvoz	1*	31,572*	232	0
	Central Region	Tojikobod	1	11,643	9	0
MoD	GBAO	Vanj	1	55,162	74	23
		Vanj	3*	175,002*	421	157
Totals			17	496,789*	1,248	206

* Clearance suspended and not yet completed as at end-2016.

TNMAC reported that better use is being made of technical survey to collect direct evidence of contamination, and to ensure that CHAs do indeed contain mines.⁹⁶ NPA also reported the application of more efficient land release techniques over SHAs and CHAs in the Central Region, GBAO, and the Tajik-Afghan border and increased cancellation of non-contaminated land.⁹⁷

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.⁹⁸ However, 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.⁹⁹ In 2016, the Border Forces only permitted non-technical survey operations in Shamsiddin Shohin district of Khatlon province, to survey some of the 101 previously unrecorded minefields. As such, two UST survey teams were established; these conducted non-technical survey in 2016, and survey continued in 2017.¹⁰⁰ As at August 2016, TNMAC was negotiating with the Border Forces for the opportunity to start mine clearance operations in Khatlon region,¹⁰¹ and in January 2017 greater access for clearance and survey operations were granted along the Tajik-Afghan border, in particular to Shamsiddin Shohin district.¹⁰²

Progress in 2017

Improved security conditions in 2017 have enabled greater access for survey and clearance operations along the Tajik-Afghan border, following the permission of the Border Forces Command of Tajikistan, which was granted in late January.¹⁰³ Previously, in 2016, security restrictions had meant that only limited non-technical survey had been possible along the border, and TNMAC had instead focused demining capacity in the Central Region.¹⁰⁴ As mentioned, increased access granted in early 2017 included the Shamsiddin Shohin district in the southern Tajik-Afghan border of Khatlon province, which is the most heavily mined district in Tajikistan, accounting for a significant proportion of overall contamination in the country.¹⁰⁵ In early October 2017, humanitarian demining organisations had received tentative indications from TNMAC that the remaining districts of the Tajik-Afghan border that had been closed might also be opened for survey and clearance.¹⁰⁶

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 2019.¹⁰⁷ Current land release output, 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. Tajikistan reported in June 2017 that: "There is a need to increase the demining capacity in Tajikistan in order to ensure timely implementation of the Ottawa Convention obligations by 2020. Of course this will require additional resources."¹⁰⁸

In total during the last five years, Tajikistan has cleared less than 5km² of mined area (see Table 6). Progress was hampered in 2015 and 2016 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 preparation in January 2016, with deployment in mid- to late-February, being delayed until May. It also saw clearance focused 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.¹⁰⁹

Table 6: Mine clearance in 2012–16¹¹⁰

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2016	0.50
2015	0.25
2014	0.65
2013	1.99
2012	1.10
Total	4.49

TNMAC has said that it anticipates that Tajikistan will complete survey and clearance of mined areas by the end of 2020, but has acknowledged that this is contingent on sufficient funding and capacity, as well as the security situation at the Tajik-Afghan border, both of which could affect its ability to complete.¹¹¹ This also does not take into account how Tajikistan plans to release the "inaccessible" and "non-executable" areas, referred to below.

Tajikistan is in the process of finalising an Article 5 completion plan for 2016–20 in which it will "demonstrate clear and reasonable evidence and efforts of Tajikistan to complete its obligation in time".¹¹² However, the draft completion plan (as at 4 October 2016) only outlined Tajikistan's plans to address 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".¹¹³ This is not compliant with Tajikistan's Article 5 survey and clearance obligations. 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".¹¹⁴

In the Tajik-Afghan Border region, after deducting 23 “inaccessible” and “non-executable” areas, 60 CHAs covering some 2.67km² remain to be addressed under TNMAC’s draft October 2016 completion plan,¹¹⁵ while in the Central Region, 10 CHAs remain to be addressed, covering 1.74km². 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 5.72km² of total CHA, only 3.83km² will be subjected to full clearance.¹¹⁶

In addition, with regards to the unsurveyed minefield records along the Tajik-Afghan border, 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 non-technical survey.¹¹⁷

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.¹¹⁸

In its draft Article 5 completion plan for 2016–20, Tajikistan estimates that to clear 5.52km² of CHA (and excluding the 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 1.4km². Alternatively, a lesser, but still increased, capacity of 14 manual clearance teams could take approximately seven years (2015–23), based on current clearance rates.¹¹⁹

Most recently, in its Article 7 transparency report for 2016, Tajikistan estimates that it will clear a total of almost 4.9km² in 93 mined areas in 2017–19.¹²⁰ This comprised 1.52km² across 22 mined areas in 2017; 1.66km² across 42 mined areas in 2018; and 1.71km² across 29 mined areas in 2019.¹²¹ The 4.9km² of mined area that Tajikistan plans to clear by 2020 represents approximately half the overall combined confirmed and suspected mined area which totals over 9.7km² (see Table 1). This suggests that Tajikistan is currently well behind schedule to meet both its APMBC Article 5 deadline of 1 April 2020 and TNMAC’s expected completion of the end of 2020; and highlights the need for increased capacity and optimum application of non-technical and technical survey to release areas found not to be mine-contaminated, and focus clearance efforts only where contamination is confirmed.

Tajikistan reported that in 2016, a total of US\$2.2 million was spent on mine action, the majority through international funding from Japan, Norway, Switzerland, and the United States. Of this, the Government of Tajikistan supported TNMAC coordination activities with some US\$40,000 in 2016,¹²² a slight increase compared to the US\$38,000 provided in 2015. In addition, the Tajik government provides in-kind and technical support to the programme which it equates to some US\$700,000 annually, which has remained constant. No national funding is provided for survey and/or clearance of mined areas.¹²³

1 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, Director, TMAC, 22 May 2017; and Article 7 Report (for 2016).
 2 Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 8 June 2017.
 3 Telephone interview with Aubrey Sutherland, Country Director, NPA, 27 September 2017; and email, 9 October 2017.
 4 Statement of Tajikistan, 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015; and TNMAC Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20, 4 October 2016.
 5 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TMAC, 22 May 2017; and Article 7 Report (for 2016).
 6 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/>.
 7 TNMAC, Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20, 4 October 2016.
 8 Ibid.
 9 Emails from Parviz Mavlonkulov, TMAC, 12 March 2014 and Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TMAC, 19 March 2014; and TNMAC, Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20, 4 October 2016.
 10 “National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on Humanitarian Mine Action for 2017–2020”, 25 February 2017, p. 20.
 11 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).
 12 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2009, p. 1.
 13 Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 8 June 2017.
 14 Statement of Tajikistan, 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015.
 15 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, and Sebastian Kasack, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in Geneva, 23 June 2015.
 16 TNMAC Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20, 4 October 2016.
 17 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 30 September 2015.
 18 Statement of Tajikistan, 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015; and TNMAC, Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20”, 4 October 2016.
 19 Ibid.

19 Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 8 June 2017.
 20 TNMAC Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20, 4 October 2016; and statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 8 June 2017.
 21 TNMAC Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20, 4 October 2016.
 22 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, Director, 22 May 2017.
 23 Ibid.
 24 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 10 August 2016.
 25 Article 7 report (for 2016).
 26 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2009, p. 4.
 27 Roberts, “Evaluation of UNDP Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme”, p. 12.
 28 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2009, p. 1; and TMAC, “About TMAC”, accessed 1 September 2016 at: <http://www.mineaction.tj/about/>.
 29 Roberts, “Evaluation of UNDP Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme”, p. 12.
 30 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 3 April 2015.
 31 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.
 32 Roberts, “Evaluation of UNDP Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme”, pp. 12–13.
 33 Ibid., pp. 27–29.
 34 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 12 May 2015.
 35 TNMAC, Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20, 4 October 2016.
 36 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.
 37 Email from Luka Buhin, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, 9 October 2017.
 38 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017.
 39 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; and Statement of Tajikistan, 15th Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 30 November 2016.

- 40 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.
- 41 Emails from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 10 August 2016; and Wendi Pedersen, Focal point for Tajikistan, GICHD, 5 October 2017.
- 42 Email from Wendi Pedersen, GICHD, 5 October 2017.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, and Ahad Mahmoudov, Programme Manager, UNDP, in Geneva, 23 June 2015.
- 45 "National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on humanitarian mine action for 2017–2020", 25 February 2017; and email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017.
- 46 Email from Asa Massleberg, GICHD, 5 October 2017.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Emails from Aubrey Sutherland, NPA, 2 September 2016 and 22 June 2017.
- 50 Interview with Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, and Abdulmain Karimov, Project Manager, UNDP, in Geneva, 10 February 2017.
- 51 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017.
- 52 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 53 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 54 Ibid.; and Statements of Tajikistan, 15th Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 30 November 2016 and Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 55 Statement of Tajikistan, 15th Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 30 November 2016.
- 56 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 57 Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 58 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017.
- 59 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 18 October 2016.
- 60 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016 and 22 May 2017.
- 61 Email from Aubrey Sutherland-Pillai, NPA, 18 October 2016.
- 62 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017.
- 63 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 64 "National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on humanitarian mine action for 2017–2020", No. 91, p. 24, 25 February 2017.
- 65 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017.
- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 19 May 2016; and TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 68 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017. FSD reported that it employed 15 personnel for survey and clearance in 2016. Email from Chris Rennick, FSD, 20 March 2017.
- 69 FSD, "Annual Report 2015", at: http://www.fsd.ch/docs/FSD_Annual_Report_2015.pdf.
- 70 Ibid.; and email from Matthew Wilson, Deputy Head of Operations, FSD, 21 October 2016.
- 71 Email from Chris Rennick, FSD, 20 March 2017.
- 72 GICHD, "Strategic Planning in Mine Action Programmes: Tajikistan", Geneva, October 2013, p. 4.
- 73 Email from Aubrey Sutherland, NPA, 14 March 2017.
- 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, 12 May 2015.
- 76 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 77 Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by Luka Buhin, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, 8 April 2014.
- 78 Email from and telephone interview with Luka Buhin, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, 18 March 2014; and Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire, 8 April 2014.
- 79 FSD, "Annual Report 2015".
- 80 Ibid.
- 81 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; and Aubrey Sutherland, NPA, 18 October 2017.
- 82 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017.
- 83 Email from Luka Buhin, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, 9 October 2017.
- 84 Ibid.
- 85 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 17 February 2015; Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings (Committee on Article 5 Implementation), Geneva, 25 June 2015; and TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 86 Statement of Tajikistan, 15th Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 30 November 2016.
- 87 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017.
- 88 Article 7 Report (for 2016).
- 89 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017.
- 90 Ibid.; and emails from Chris Rennick, Operations Office, FSD, 20 March 2017; and Aubrey Sutherland, NPA, 14 March 2017. FSD and NPA figures disaggregated area cancelled and area reduced, whereas TNMAC only reported a combined figure. There was also a discrepancy between FSD and TNMAC data regarding survey data for Darvos district, for which FSD reported 24,000m² as cancelled, whereas TNMAC did not report any area cancelled by FSD for this district. Furthermore, FSD reported an additional 170,000m² of mined area confirmed in Darvos and 157,000m² confirmed in Tojikobod, which TNMAC did not report. There was also a discrepancy between NPA and TNMAC data regarding the area of land confirmed as mined in Darvos District, for which NPA reported an additional 412,790m² of mined not reported by TNMAC.
- 91 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; and Aubrey Sutherland, NPA, 14 March 2017.
- 92 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017.
- 93 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016.
- 94 Article 7 Report (for 2016).
- 95 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; Chris Rennick, FSD, 20 March 2017; and Aubrey Sutherland, NPA, 14 March 2017. There was also a discrepancy between FSD and TNMAC data regarding clearance data for Darvos district, for which FSD reported an additional 74,000m² of clearance, but 15 fewer anti-personnel mines destroyed, compared to TNMAC; and between NPA and TNMAC data, for which NPA reported 131,321m² of clearance in Darvos, destroying 23 anti-personnel mines.
- 96 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016 and 22 May 2017.
- 97 Email from Aubrey Sutherland, NPA, 14 March 2017.
- 98 Emails from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016 and 22 May 2017.
- 99 Ibid.
- 100 Ibid.
- 101 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016.
- 102 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; and Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 103 Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 8 June 2017; and email from Aubrey Sutherland, NPA, 14 March 2017.
- 104 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 19 August 2016.
- 105 Email from Aubrey Sutherland, NPA, 14 March 2017.
- 106 Email from Aubrey Sutherland, NPA, 9 October 2017.
- 107 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 108 Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 109 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.
- 110 See Mine Action Review and Landmine Monitor reports on clearance in Tajikistan covering 2012–15.
- 111 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017.
- 112 Ibid.
- 113 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 114 Statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 115 TNMAC, "Draft Article 5 Completion Plan 2016–20", 4 October 2016.
- 116 Ibid.
- 117 Ibid.
- 118 Ibid.
- 119 Ibid.
- 120 Article 7 Report (for 2016).
- 121 Ibid.
- 122 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017; and Article 7 Report (for 2016); and statement of Tajikistan, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 123 Email from Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda, TNMAC, 22 May 2017.