

ANGOLA



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Angola should confirm as soon as possible whether it believes that cluster munition remnants (CMR) remain to be cleared.
- Angola should ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a priority.
- Angola should develop a resource mobilisation strategy and initiate policy dialogue with development partners on long-term support for mine action, including to address any residual CMR contamination.

CONTAMINATION

The extent to which Angola is affected by CMR remains unclear. There is no confirmed contamination, but a small residual threat may exist from either abandoned cluster munitions or unexploded submunitions. CMR contamination was a result of the decades of armed conflict that ended in 2002, although it is unclear when, or by whom, cluster munitions were used in Angola.

As at May 2016, clearance operators had not found CMR in more than eight years,¹ apart from HALO Trust, which reported finding and destroying 12 unexploded submunitions in 2012.² In 2011, HALO Trust and the National Institute for Demining (Instituto Nacional de Desminagem, INAD) affirmed that unexploded submunitions remained in Cuando Cubango.³ In June 2016, however HALO Trust reported that it had found only a very few submunitions in more than 20 years of clearance operations across Angola.⁴ Menschen gegen Minen (MgM) also reported that it had not encountered CMR in nearly ten years of operations in six Angolan provinces, including near Jamba an area in south-east Cuando Cubango province where contamination might have been expected.⁵

More typical of CMR destruction is the disposal of old or unserviceable cluster munitions identified by HALO Trust's Weapons and Ammunition Disposal (WAD) teams in military storage areas, some of which were earmarked for destruction by the Angolan Armed Forces. Between 2005 and 2012, HALO Trust WAD teams reported destroying a total of 7,284 submunitions.⁶ In May 2016, HALO Trust indicated that it had not been asked by the military to do any further destruction of cluster munition stockpiles since 2012.⁷

Other ERW and Landmines

Angola is heavily contaminated with landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) other than CMR.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Angola's national mine action programme is managed by two mine action structures. The National Intersectoral Commission for Demining and Humanitarian Assistance (Comissão Nacional Intersectorial de Desminagem e Assistência Humanitária, CNIDAH) serves as the national mine action authority. It reports to the Council of Ministers or, in effect, to the President of Angola.

The other mine action coordination body, the Executive Commission for Demining (Comissão Executiva de Desminagem, CED), was established and is chaired by the Minister of Social Assistance and Reintegration (MINARS). In 2002, in order to separate coordination and operational responsibilities, Angola established INAD, which is responsible for demining operations and training under the auspices of MINARS.

Operators

Four international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) conduct demining for humanitarian purposes in Angola: HALO Trust, MgM, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). DanChurchAid (DCA) was forced to close their operations in early 2015 due to lack of funding.⁸ A number of national commercial companies, accredited by CNIDAH and mostly employed by the state or other private companies, also operate in Angola.

LAND RELEASE

No land containing CMR was reported to have been released by clearance or survey in 2015.

ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

As at May 2016, Angola was a signatory but not a state party to the CCM. Nonetheless, Angola has obligations under international human rights law to clear CMR as soon as possible, in particular by virtue of its duty to protect the right to life of every person under its jurisdiction.⁹

Angola is facing a critical decline in international support for mine action. Collectively, the resources of the three largest operators, HALO Trust, MAG, and NPA have decreased by more than 70% in 2008 to end 2015. This sharp reduction, combined with the national economic crisis brought on by the fall of oil prices, which has resulted in a decrease in government revenue by more than half, severe budget cuts, and double-digit inflation, is jeopardising the sustainability and existence of demining in the country.¹⁰

- 1 According to reports from NGO operators in the national database at the Intersectoral Commission for Demining and Humanitarian Assistance (CNIDAH), CMR ceased to be found in significant numbers after 2008. Prior to this, as of February 2008, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) reported clearing 13 submunitions in Kwanza Sul province; Mines Advisory Group (MAG) reported clearing 140 submunitions in Moxico province; and HALO Trust reported clearing 230 submunitions in Bié province. Email from Mohammad Qasim, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/CNIDAH, 22 February 2008. In May 2016, NPA reported finding no CMR during its operations in northern Angola, with the exception of a small number of submunitions found in 2008. Menschen gegen Minen (MgM) reported that no CMR had been discovered in its areas of operations in south-east Angola from 1997 through to May 2016. HALO Trust also confirmed that it had not encountered any cluster munitions since 2012 and MAG's Technical Operations Manager reported that the programme had not found any CMR since his arrival in 2013. Emails from Vanja Sikirica, Country Director, NPA, 11 May 2016; Kenneth O'Connell, Technical Director, MgM, 5 May and 15 June 2016; Gerhard Zank, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 17 May 2016; and Bill Marsden, Regional Director, East and Southern Africa, MAG, 18 May 2016.
- 2 Response to questionnaire by Gerhard Zank, HALO Trust, 19 March 2013.
- 3 Interviews with Jose Antonio, Site Manager, Cuando Cubango, HALO Trust; and with Coxe Sucama, Director, INAD, in Menongue, 24 June 2011.
- 4 Email from Gerhard Zank, HALO Trust, 13 June 2016.
- 5 Email from Kenneth O'Connell, MgM, 15 June 2016.
- 6 Response to questionnaire by Gerhard Zank, HALO Trust, 19 March 2013.
- 7 Emails from Gerhard Zank, HALO Trust, 17 May 2016; and Bill Marsden, MAG, 18 May 2016.
- 8 M. P. Moore, "Angola Avante – Onward Angola", Landmines in Africa blog, 26 February 2016, at: <https://landminesinafrica.wordpress.com/2016/02/26/angola-avante-onwards-angola/>.
- 9 Angola is a state party to the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 6(1) of which stipulates that: "Every human being has the inherent right to life". It is also a state party to the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Article 4 of which provides that "Every human being shall be entitled to respect for his life and the integrity of his person".
- 10 Emails from Vanja Sikirica, NPA, 11 May 2016; Gerhard Zank, HALO Trust, 17 May 2016; and Bill Marsden, MAG, 2 May 2016.