

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Pakistan should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Despite not yet being a State Party to the APMBC, Pakistan has obligations under international human rights law to clear anti-personnel mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.

ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE CONTAMINATION

The extent of anti-personnel mine contamination in Pakistan is not known. Pakistan remains affected by mines and other explosive ordnance resulting from the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (1979–89) and three wars with India, as well as from more recent and continuing conflicts in areas bordering Afghanistan, including, in particular, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

In 2019, Pakistan reiterated past statements that, “Pakistan at present faces no problem of uncleared mines since no mines have been laid by [the] Pakistan Army after escalation of 2001–2002 on Pakistan’s Eastern Border”.¹ Previously it had elaborated that mines laid during the tensions in 2001–02 were all cleared and that no mines have since been laid.²

In 2018, Pakistan stated that non-state armed groups (NSAGs) have employed improvised explosive devices (IEDs) including mines during attacks.³ Pakistan again reported the use of IEDs in 2019 by NSAGs had resulted in casualties,⁴ stating also that “terrorists carried out 349 IED attacks involving use of mines as well”.⁵ In fact, according to media reports across Pakistan in 2018–19, civilian mine casualties were from mines of an improvised nature laid by NSAGs, from mines laid by troops along the Line of Control (LoC) between India and Pakistan, and from mines and other explosive hazards in South Waziristan (in an area that had been cleared and declared safe by the military).⁶

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Pakistan has no formal civilian mine action programme. Pakistani military engineering units have been responsible for mine clearance in conflict zones, while the Frontier Constabulary has conducted mine clearance in contaminated areas of Baluchistan, FATA, and other conflict zones in the North-West Frontier Province.

LAND RELEASE

There are no reports of formal survey or clearance of mined area in 2019.

According to a media report, on 15 December 2018 an unnamed senior security official said that 22 demining teams were being formed by the Pakistani Army to defuse and remove IEDs and mines in the North Waziristan District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and in the FATA. These deminers would be in addition to the reported 43 teams already working in the seven former tribal districts.⁷

In a statement delivered at Fourth Review Conference of the APMBC in November 2019, Pakistan said that: “The use of landmines is exclusively by the military for defence purposes”. Pakistan also acknowledged that although it was occurring at [a] “much lower scale now, Pakistan has itself been a victim of the use of landmines, including as IEDs by terrorists and non-state actors. Notwithstanding their use by terrorists. Pakistan security forces do not use mines for the maintenance of internal order and law enforcement in counter-terrorism operations.”⁸

Pakistan reported a total of 187 attacks causing casualties due to IEDs “all over the country”, but did not disaggregate the type of IED or specify the proportion that were victim-activated.⁹

1 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2019), Form B.

2 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2018), Form B; and Statement of Pakistan, 16th Meeting of the States Parties to the APMBC, 18–21 December 2017.

3 CCW Amended Protocol V Article 13 Report (covering 2018), Form E.

4 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2019), Form B.

5 Ibid., Form E.

6 See, e.g., “Two tribal elders killed in Orakzai Agency landmine blast”, The Express Tribune, 15 February 2018, at: bit.ly/2KyGTMc; “Summer brings with it landmines in Azad Kashmir”, Pakistan Today, 6 July 2018, at: bit.ly/2Z033yN; “Landmines killing people in Pakistan’s South Waziristan”, Al Jazeera, 5 February 2018, at: bit.ly/33r8RAG; “Kargil: The forgotten victims of the world’s highest war”, BBC News, 26 July 2019, at: bbc.in/2KKiY3; and “Woman loses her leg to a landmine in South Waziristan”, Samaa Digital, 5 April 2019, at: bit.ly/2ZDe0JQ.

7 “Pakistan: IEDs and Continuous Haemorrhage – Analysis”, Eurasia Review, 24 July 2019, at: bit.ly/31xt1qW.

8 Statement of Pakistan, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 29 November 2019.

9 CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2019), Form B.