

SOUTH SUDAN



PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE	2016	2015
Problem understood	6	6
Target date for completion of cluster munition clearance	5	4
Targeted clearance	8	7
Efficient clearance	6	6
National funding of programme	4	4
Timely clearance	5	5
Land release system in place	7	7
National mine action standards	8	7
Reporting on progress	6	6
Improving performance	7	6
PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE	6.2	5.8

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

South Sudan's clearance output for cluster munition remnants (CMR) more than doubled in area in 2016, despite ongoing conflict and an escalation of violence in July, which led to many operators suspending their activities. The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) attributed the significant increase to a shift in the deployment of the bulk of mine action capacity to CMR-related tasks and more efficient land release methodology.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- South Sudan should ensure that every effort is made to identify and address all CMR on its territory as soon as possible.
- South Sudan should accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a matter of priority.
- Operator and national reporting formats should disaggregate submunitions from other unexploded ordnance (UXO). Mine action data should be recorded and reported according to International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) land release terminology.
- South Sudan should develop a resource mobilisation strategy and initiate dialogue with development partners on long-term support for mine action, including a specific focus on CMR.
- South Sudan should increase its financial support for mine action operations. Greater assistance from the government and international partners should be provided to the National Mine Action Authority to strengthen its capacity to develop effective policies to address explosive hazards.

CONTAMINATION

At the end of 2016, South Sudan had a total of 142 areas suspected to contain CMR, with a total size estimated at nearly 4.6km².¹ This compares to the end of 2015, when 116 areas were suspected to contain CMR covering a total of more than 6.5km².² Areas of CMR contamination from decades of pre-independence conflict continued to be identified in 2016, and the threat was compounded by the fighting which broke out in December 2013.³

Despite the signature of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan in August 2015, UNMAS reported that sporadic fighting continued across the country in 2016, which it said “continues to litter vast swathes of land, roads and buildings with Explosive Remnants of War (ERW)”.⁴ Ongoing insecurity, particularly in Greater Upper Nile region (Jonglei, Unity, and Upper Nile states), persisted in preventing access to confirm or address CMR contamination.⁵

Eight of the ten states in South Sudan have areas suspected to contain CMR (see Table 1), with Central, Eastern, and Western Equatoria remaining the most heavily contaminated.⁶ CMR have been found in residential areas, farmland, pastures, rivers and streams, on hillsides, in desert areas, in and around former military barracks, on roads, in minefields, and in ammunition storage areas.⁷

From 1995 to 2000, prior to South Sudan’s independence, Sudanese government forces are believed to have air dropped cluster munitions sporadically in southern Sudan. Many types of submunitions have been found, including Spanish-manufactured HESPIN 21, US-manufactured M42 and Mk118 (Rockeyes), Chilean-made PM-1, and Soviet-manufactured PTAB-1.5 and AO-1SCh submunitions.⁸

In 2006–16, at least 746 sites containing CMR were identified across all 10 states in South Sudan, including new contamination as a result of renewed conflict since December 2013.⁹ In 2016, an additional 66 CMR-contaminated areas were identified of which 11 were cleared during the year.¹⁰

UNMAS discovered evidence of new CMR contamination in February 2014, south of Bor in Jonglei state.¹¹ Evidence indicated the cluster munitions had been used in previous weeks during the conflict between opposition forces supporting South Sudan’s former Vice President Riek Machar and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) government forces, which received air support from Uganda.¹² In September 2014, South Sudan reported that a joint government-UNMAS team had investigated the allegations and established that cluster munitions had been used, but could not determine the user.¹³

Table 1: CMR contamination by province (as at end 2016)¹⁴

State	SHAs with CMR	Area (m ²)
Central Equatoria	52	1,350,521
East Equatoria	67	2,500,805
Jonglei	3	60,958
Lakes	1	525
Unity	2	99,000
Upper Nile	2	0
West Bahr El Ghazal	2	120,000
West Equatoria	13	453,134
Totals	142	4,584,943

CMR contamination in South Sudan continues to pose a physical threat to local populations, prevents the delivery of vital humanitarian aid, curtails freedom of movement, and significantly impedes the development of affected communities.¹⁵ In 2016, due to the escalating violence, internally displaced populations were particularly vulnerable to CMR and other explosive hazards as they moved across unfamiliar territory. CMR contamination continued to limit access to agricultural land and increased food insecurity, at a time when nearly four million South Sudanese were facing famine. During the year, UNMAS documented numerous examples of CMR and explosive hazards preventing the delivery of food and other humanitarian aid.¹⁶

Other Explosive Remnants of War and Landmines

South Sudan has a significant problem with mines and especially ERW, resulting from large-scale use of explosive weapons during armed conflicts in 1955–72 and 1983–2005.

At the start of 2017, almost eight million people in South Sudan were living with the constant threat of the presence of ERW, including more than 2.3 million

South Sudanese who have been forced to become internally displaced since the outbreak of fighting in 2013. According to UNMAS, surveys of internally displaced persons identified a fear of ERW as among the most significant reasons for their inability to return home.¹⁷ UNMAS has claimed that the socio-economic cost of mines and ERW in South Sudan in terms of interrupted agricultural production, food insecurity, halted commerce, and the lack of freedom of movement is “incalculable”.¹⁸

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The South Sudan Demining Authority (SSDA) – now named the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) – was established by presidential decree in 2006 to act as the national agency for planning, coordination, and monitoring of mine action in South Sudan.¹⁹

In 2011, UN Security Council Resolution 1996 tasked UNMAS with supporting South Sudan in demining and strengthening the capacity of the NMAA. UNMAS (with the NMAA) has been overseeing mine action across the country through its main office in Juba, and sub-offices in Bentiu, Bor, Malakal, and Wau. UNMAS is responsible for accrediting mine action organisations, drafting national mine action standards, establishing a quality management system, managing the national database, and tasking operators.²⁰ The NMAA takes the lead on victim assistance and risk education.²¹

While it is planned that eventually the NMAA will assume full responsibility for all mine action activities, South Sudan’s national strategic plan for mine action for 2012–16 notes that the government did “not have the financial and technical capacity to support its mine action program. UN agencies, development partners, and international organizations will need to support the program in providing technical and financial assistance”.²² UN Security Council Resolution 1996 authorised the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to support mine action through assessed peacekeeping funds.²³

In May 2014, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2155 in response to the conflict that broke out in December 2013. The resolution, which marked a significant change in mine action policy, effectively ended the mission’s mandate to support capacity development of government institutions.

Strategic Planning

In April 2017, UNMAS reported that an exercise to update South Sudan’s national mine action strategic plan was scheduled to take place in the first half of 2017.²⁴ There were no significant changes in 2016 to the existing national mine action strategic plan for 2012–16, which was developed by the NMAA with assistance from the UN and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).²⁵ The main objectives of that plan are to ensure that:

- South Sudan is in a position to comply with all international instruments related to mines and ERW and can conduct and manage the national mine action programme.
- The scope and location of the mine and ERW contamination are fully recorded, and all high-impact contaminated areas are identified, prioritised, cleared, and released.
- The national mine action programme contributes to reducing poverty and increasing socio-economic development by being mainstreamed into development programmes.²⁶

Standards

While there were no changes to the National Technical Standards and Guidelines (NTSG) for mine action in South Sudan during 2016, according to UNMAS, revisions to the NTSG which were implemented from October 2015 were a factor which contributed to more efficient land release and a significant increase in CMR clearance output in 2016.²⁷ The NTSGs, which contain provisions specific to CMR survey and clearance, are monitored by UNMAS and the NMAA.²⁸

Quality management

UNMAS reported carrying out external quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) operations throughout 2016 on all mine action operators in South Sudan. It stated that at the end of the year the QA/QC system was amended slightly, but QA/QC activities were set to continue with the same level of coverage for all operators in 2017.²⁹

Due to constraints on the movement of UN staff due to increasing security concerns, at the end of 2016, UNMAS contracted a private company, JANUS Global Operations, to conduct external QA/QC on behalf of UNMAS in South Sudan.³⁰

Operators

Four international demining non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operated in South Sudan in 2016: DanChurchAid (DCA), Danish Demining Group (DDG), MAG, and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). Four commercial companies also conducted demining: G4S Ordnance Management (G4S), Mechem, Dynasafe MineTech Limited (DML) (formerly MineTech International, MTI), and The Development Initiative (TDI). No national demining organisations were involved in clearance in 2016.³¹

According to UNMAS, at its peak in 2016, mine action capacity in South Sudan included 62 technical teams, the bulk of which was in commercial companies, along with six mechanical assets, and one team supported by mine detection dogs (MDDs). However, this capacity lay idle in the second half of 2016, after conflict resurged in Juba and insecurity spread across the country. As at April 2017, survey and clearance capacity had not returned to the levels prior to the July 2016 crisis, and according to UNMAS, remained dependent on the re-establishment of secure operating conditions.³²

UNMAS assigns CMR tasks to operators. DDG began a CMR-clearance task at the end of 2015 and deployed one team of eight deminers on the battle area clearance (BAC) task in January 2016. Following completion of this task, DDG changed its operational focus to responding to explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) call-outs.³³

In 2016, MAG began deploying Multi-Task Teams (MTTs) with mechanical support from a PT-300D mine clearance machine, a MineWolf 330, and three Bozena machines in 2016, which allowed for a sizeable increase in the scale of its operations on large-area clearance tasks, and a corresponding increase in monthly output of BAC. Its staff level rose to a total of 200, a significant increase in capacity from 2015. Two MTT and one MineWolf team under UN contracts were demobilised, however, after the cancellation of the contracts in September 2016 due to insecurity.³⁴

NPA changed its operations to deploy smaller, more mobile teams focusing on non-technical and technical survey, with support from its MDDs, and for emergency EOD. Teams were re-accredited and a new operations base opened in Juba, although the teams could not be deployed because of the security situation.³⁵ NPA reassessed the viability of its programme in South Sudan, with no signs of improvement in the security and in the wake of an internal restructuring following an incident involving missed mines in an area of its operations in 2015, and took the decision to close the programme indefinitely in November 2016.³⁶

LAND RELEASE

Nearly 3.5km² of CMR-contaminated area was released in 2016, more than double the amount in 2015, when just over 1.4km² of CMR-contaminated area was released.³⁷ This was despite a resurgence in violence which resulted in mine action operations being stood down for much of the second half of 2016 and a dramatic reduction in the areas across the country where operations could safely be carried out.³⁸

Survey in 2016

The UNMAS database indicates that just over 0.9km² of land was confirmed as contaminated with CMR in 2016 (see Table 2).³⁹ This compares to 1.35km² confirmed as CMR contaminated and 500m² cancelled by non-technical survey in 2015.⁴⁰

Table 2: CMR survey in 2016⁴¹

Operator	SHAs confirmed	Area confirmed (m ²)
DCA	1	22
DDG	3	45,823
G4S	18	491,525
MECHEM	6	22,500
MAG	18	233,654
NPA	5	26,025
TDI	4	98,673
Totals	55	918,222

Clearance in 2016

Just under 3.5km² of CMR-contaminated area was cleared in 2016, with the destruction of more than 3,000 submunitions, as shown in Table 3.⁴² This is a significant increase from 2015, when almost 1.4km² was cleared with 1,200 submunitions destroyed.⁴³ As stated above, UNMAS attributed the increase to a shift in most mine clearance teams to CMR tasks, an improvement in the efficiency of land release and revisions to the NTSG.⁴⁴ The decision to deploy the bulk of capacity on CMR

tasks was taken in response to a need to clear areas for humanitarian access and for UN mission-directed activities.⁴⁵

In addition, in 2016, seven operators (DCA, G4S, MAG, Mechem, DML, NPA, and TDI) conducted battle area clearance (BAC) of almost 8km² and closed a total of 2,210 spot tasks, destroying nearly 20,200 items of UXO in the process.⁴⁶ This is also a significant increase, compared to an output of 4.5km² of BAC in 2015.⁴⁷

Table 3: Clearance of CMR-contaminated areas in 2016⁴⁸

Operator	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	Submunitions destroyed
G4S	24	2,599,207	1,378
MAG	7	176,242	603
MECHEM	7	601,242	328
MTI	1	45,210	447
TDI	1	51,035	289
Totals	40	3,472,936	3,045

Deminer Safety

On 12 April 2016, two members of DDG's EOD team were killed by gunmen when their vehicle was ambushed as they travelled to the field from their base in Yei, Central Equatorial state, for a routine EOD call-out.⁴⁹ The outbreak of violence across the Equatorial states in July 2016 affected many operators, including MAG,

which experienced an ambush during evacuation to Nimule, on the Ugandan border, resulting in the death of one national medic and gunshot wounds to three other staff. Two ambulances were set on fire and a large proportion of the team's equipment was lost.⁵⁰

ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

South Sudan is neither a state party nor a signatory to the CCM and therefore does not have a specific clearance deadline under Article 4. Nonetheless, South Sudan has obligations under international human rights law to clear CMR as soon as possible.

Due to the ongoing conflict, it is not possible to predict when South Sudan might complete clearance of CMR on its territory, nor estimate the true extent of contamination.⁵¹ The National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2012–16 included as a specific objective that South Sudan become a state party to the CCM, approve national implementing legislation, and develop policy dialogue with partners to mobilise resources.⁵² While operators raised concerns over the lack of government funding for the NMAA and mine action activities in the country, according to UNMAS, the Transitional Government of National Unity in South Sudan paid the salaries of the staff of the NMAA in 2016.⁵³

As reported above, the surge in conflict in July 2016 had a significant impact on demining activities across the country. Operations south of Juba were suspended due to security concerns for most of the second half of the year. Due to the spread and intensification of conflict in the Equatoria region, DDG was forced to shut down all clearance operations across Western, Central, and Eastern Equatoria April 2016, following the attack on its staff. It resumed operations in Unity and Upper Nile states two weeks later, however, work remained suspended across the Equatoria region as at June 2017.⁵⁴

MAG suspended its operations on 8 July 2016 and all international staff were evacuated soon after. Due to the persistent conflict, operations could only be restarted in November 2016 in the small state of Terekeka, Central Equatoria, north of Juba, after the retraining of three MTT.⁵⁵ After long periods of stand-down of operations due to a combination of restructuring issues, and constantly increasing security threats towards its staff with no sign of improvement, NPA closed its operations in South Sudan indefinitely in November 2016.⁵⁶

In 2017, MAG was continuing to concentrate operations in Terekeka state, Central Equatoria due to ongoing nationwide insecurity, with the aim of declaring Terekeka free from the threat of ERW within five years. It expected that with additional donor funding, it would increase its non-technical survey capacity and deploy five community liaison and five technical teams during the year and expected that correspondingly, the number of suspected and confirmed CMR-contaminated areas identified would increase during the survey process. MAG hoped that it would return to its former staff capacity by mid-2017, provided that it was successful in winning back the UN contracts that had been cancelled due to insecurity in 2016.⁵⁷ DDG expected to continue to focus on EOD call-outs during the year and did not anticipate undertaking CMR clearance as the areas where its teams were deployed did not contain suspected CMR contamination.⁵⁸

- 1 Email from Robert Thompson, Chief of Operations, UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), 19 April 2017.
- 2 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 21 April 2016.
- 3 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 19 April 2017; and UNMAS, "2017 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects: South Sudan", January 2017, at: http://www.mineaction.org/sites/default/files/print/country_portfolio6892-1530-44691.pdf.
- 4 UNMAS, "2017 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects: South Sudan", January 2017.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 19 April 2017.
- 7 South Sudan, "National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2012–2016", Juba, 2012, pp. 4–6, 9.
- 8 Cluster Munition Monitor, "Country Profile: South Sudan: Cluster Munition Ban Policy", updated 23 August 2014. See also UNMAS, "Reported use of Cluster Munitions South Sudan February 2014", 12 February 2014; and UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), "Conflict in South Sudan: A Human Rights Report", 8 May 2014, p. 26.
- 9 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 12 May 2014.
- 10 UNMAS also later reported that a total of 69 areas were identified in 2016, and that of these, 14 were cleared during the year. It did not respond to requests for clarification. Emails from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 19 April and 7 June 2017.
- 11 UNMAS, "Reported use of Cluster Munitions South Sudan February 2014", 12 February 2014. See also UNMISS, "Conflict in South Sudan: A Human Rights Report", 8 May 2014, p. 26.
- 12 On 7 February 2014, UNMAS UXO survey teams discovered remnants of RBK-250-275 cluster bombs and unexploded AO-1SCh submunitions on the Juba-Bor road, south of Bor in Jonglei state. The RBK-type cluster munitions are air-delivered weapons, dropped by fixed-wing aircraft or helicopters. Both Uganda and South Sudanese government forces are believed to possess aircraft that can deliver these weapons, whereas opposition forces do not. UNMISS, "Conflict in South Sudan: A Human Rights Report", 8 May 2014, pp. 26–27; and Cluster Munition Monitor, "Country Profile: South Sudan: Cluster Munition Ban Policy", updated 16 August 2014.
- 13 Statement by South Sudan, CCM Fifth Meeting of States Parties, San José, 3 September 2014.
- 14 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 19 April 2017.
- 15 Emails from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 21 April 2016; and Hilde Jørgensen, Desk Officer for Horn of Africa, NPA, 19 May 2016.
- 16 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 19 April 2017; and UNMAS, "2017 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects: South Sudan".
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 UNMAS, "2016 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects: South Sudan", undated but 2016.
- 19 "South Sudan De-Mining Authority", undated, at: <http://www.goss-online.org/>.
- 20 South Sudan, "South Sudan National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2012–2016", Juba, 2012, p. iv.
- 21 Response to questionnaire by Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 24 May 2013.
- 22 South Sudan, "South Sudan National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2012–2016", Juba, 2012, p. iii.
- 23 UNMISS, "United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre [UNMACC]", undated, at: <http://unmiss.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4313&language=en-US>.
- 24 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 18 April 2017.
- 25 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 19 April 2017; and South Sudan, "South Sudan National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2012–2016", Juba, 2012, p. iii.
- 26 South Sudan, "South Sudan National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2012–2016", Juba, 2012, p. v.
- 27 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 19 April 2017.
- 28 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 21 April 2016; and responses to questionnaires by Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 30 March 2015; and Augustino Seja, NPA, 11 May 2015.
- 29 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 18 April 2017.
- 30 Emails from William Maina, Mine Action Operations Manager, DDG, 2 May 2017 and Bill Marsden, Regional Director East and Southern Africa, MAG, 10 May 2017.
- 31 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 19 April 2017. MTI changed its name to DML on 3 August 2015. Dynasafe, "History of MineTech", at: <http://www.minetech.co.uk/who-we-are/history-of-minetech/>.
- 32 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 18 April 2017.
- 33 Email from William Maina, DDG, 1 May 2017.
- 34 Email from Bill Marsden, MAG, 10 May 2017.
- 35 Emails from Frédéric Martin, Programme Manager, NPA, 5 April and 4 May 2017.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Emails from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 19 April 2017 and 21 April 2016.
- 38 Emails from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 19 April 2017; Bill Marsden, MAG, 10 May 2017; and William Maina, DDG, 2 May 2017.
- 39 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 19 April 2017.
- 40 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 21 April 2016.
- 41 Emails from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 19 April and 7 June 2017; Frédéric Martin, NPA, 4 May 2017; William Maina, DDG, 2 May 2017; and Bill Marsden, MAG, 10 May 2017. DDG reported cancelling one CMR-contaminated SHA with a size of 2,119m², confirming one area with a size of 9,616m²; and reducing a further 2,119m² by technical survey in 2016. MAG reported confirming four SHA with a total size of 94,000m². NPA did not report confirming any CMR-contaminated areas.
- 42 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 19 April 2017.
- 43 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 21 April 2016.
- 44 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 19 April 2017.
- 45 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 7 June 2017.
- 46 UNMAS, "IMSMA Monthly Report December 2016"; and emails from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 7 June 2017; and William Maina, DDG, 2 May 2017. DDG reported destroying three submunitions and 648 items of UXO, in the course of carrying out 11,735m² of BAC and 530 spot tasks.
- 47 Email from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 21 April 2016.
- 48 Emails from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 19 April 2017; Frédéric Martin, NPA, 4 May 2017; William Maina, DDG, 2 May 2017; and Bill Marsden, MAG, 10 May 2017. NPA reported processing 54,773m² of land in 2016, however it said no tasks were completed and no area was released for use. It reported finding and destroying 12 submunitions, nine anti-personnel mines, and two items of UXO. MAG reported clearing eight areas with a size of 523,991m² and destroying 486 CMR and 225 items of UXO.
- 49 Email from William Maina, DDG, 2 May 2017; and Danish Refugee Council, "Two national employees have lost their lives in South Sudan", 12 April 2016, at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/two-national-employees-have-lost-their-lives-south-sudan>.
- 50 Emails from Bill Marsden, MAG, 10 May 2017 and 21 October 2016.
- 51 Response to questionnaire by Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 30 March 2015.
- 52 South Sudan, "South Sudan National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2012–2016", Juba, 2012, p. vi.
- 53 Emails from Robert Thompson, UNMAS, 19 April 2017; Bill Marsden, MAG, 10 May 2017; and William Maina, DDG, 2 May 2017.
- 54 Emails from William Maina, DDG, 2 May 2017 and 5 June 2017.
- 55 Email from Bill Marsden, MAG, 10 May 2017.
- 56 Email from Frédéric Martin, NPA, 4 May 2017.
- 57 Email from Bill Marsden, MAG, 10 May 2017.
- 58 Email from William Maina, DDG, 2 May 2017.