

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Iran 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, Iran has obligations under international human rights law to clear anti-personnel mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.
- Iran should report publicly on the extent and location of mined areas and prepare a plan for their clearance and destruction.

## ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE CONTAMINATION

Iran is contaminated by anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines, mainly as a result of the 1980–88 war with Iraq. The extent of the remaining mined areas is unknown, but mine contamination is concentrated in five western provinces bordering Iraq.

Minister of Defence Hossein Dehghan said in 2014 that the 4,500km<sup>2</sup> of mine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination left by the Iran-Iraq war in the five western provinces had been reduced to 280km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>1</sup> In February 2014, the Iran Mine Action Centre (IRMAC) reported that the five Western provinces had remaining contamination totalling 250km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>2</sup>

According to online media sources, flooding that hit large parts of Iran in March and April 2019 exposed mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) remaining in western provinces of Iran.<sup>3</sup>

However, two anti-vehicle mine incidents occurred in early 2014 in the Lut desert spanning central and eastern Iran where police reportedly placed mines as a measure against drug traffickers, pointing to contamination outside the five most affected provinces.<sup>4</sup> Sources report that security forces continue to emplace mines in areas close to Iran's borders in order to deter cross-border smugglers and infiltration by anti-regime groups. There are also mined areas around military bases.

A further complication for contamination estimates are reports of continuing casualties in areas that were supposed to have been cleared, calling into question to whether mine clearance has been conducted to international standards.

Iran also has cluster munition remnant contamination (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2019* report on Iran for further information).

## PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

IRMAC was established as the national mine action centre in 2005, taking the place of a Mine Action Committee within the Ministry of Defence. IRMAC is responsible for planning, data, managing survey, procurement, and the accreditation of demining operators. It also sets standards, provides training for clearance operators, concludes contracts with demining operators, and ensures monitoring of their operations. It coordinates mine action with the General Staff of the Armed Forces, the Ministry of Interior, the Management and Planning Organisation of Iran, and other relevant ministries and organisations, and handles international relations.<sup>5</sup> Several IRMAC staff are believed to be serving or former military personnel, including its Director, while others are civilians employed by the Ministry of Defence.

IRMAC has a branch in every affected province. Available demining assets, such as mechanical assets, vary from province to province.

In March 2019, Iran hosted a three-day international roundtable on "humanitarian mine action: challenges and best practices", attended by representatives from other states, national and international demining organisations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). The aim of the roundtable was to share knowledge and experience on mine action, challenges, and best practices.<sup>6</sup>

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

IRMAC actively maintains a national mine action database but it is not known if it is comprehensive.

## LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

### OPERATORS

IRMAC combines the roles of regulator and operator, with demining teams and support staff deployed in five affected provinces.<sup>7</sup> In Kurdistan province, IRMAC is conducting verification, mainly through mechanical clearance. IRMAC also responds to calls from the local community reporting landmines or items of UXO. Demining capacity in Kurdistan province is believed to stand at around 12 personnel, a downsize compared to previous capacity.<sup>8</sup>

Commercial operators include AOM, Immen Sazan Omran Pars International, Immen Zamin Espadana, and Solh Afarinan-e Bedoun-e Marz (SABM). Three other companies, Imen Gostaran Mohit (IGM), Moshaver Omran Iran, and ZPP International, undertake quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC).<sup>9</sup>

Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC), the development arm of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), contracts and monitors commercial operators conducting clearance of Iran's oil and gas producing areas which are concentrated in mine-affected areas of south western Iran bordering Iraq.<sup>10</sup>

The Iranian Army and Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps assisted demining efforts to support the response to the flash flooding which affected Iran in March and April 2019.<sup>11</sup>

International operators are not believed to have been active in Iran since 2008.

There is no available information on quality management procedures. In the past, very high levels of casualties were recorded during demining in Iran.

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS

No data was available on any mine survey or clearance in 2018, as was the case in the previous year.

Iran is believed to have dedicated significant resources and effort to clearing mined areas on its territory, but the results of survey and clearance, and the standards to which clearance has been conducted, have not made publicly available.

- 1 Ministry of Defence, "Commander Dehghan in the ceremony of World Mine Awareness Day: In Iran 28,000 hectares of land are landmine-contaminated", 8 April 2014.
- 2 IRMAC PowerPoint presentation at IRMAC headquarters, Tehran, 9 February 2014.
- 3 "Unexploded Ordnance Threatening Iranian Lives in Flood-Hit Areas", IFP News, 5 April 2019, at: [bit.ly/33Tsp0K](http://bit.ly/33Tsp0K); and "Nationwide Flood Alert In Iran As Emergency Declared In Oil-Producing Province", Radio Farda, 31 March 2019, at: [bit.ly/2zjb3MJ](http://bit.ly/2zjb3MJ).
- 4 "Mine Explosion Killed a Desert Explorer in Birjand", Islamic Republic News Agency, 4 January 2014; and "Four tourists hit a landmine in Lut: one was killed", Iranian Students' News Agency, 25 March 2014.
- 5 IRMAC PowerPoint Presentation, Tehran, 9 February 2014; and IRMAC, "Presentation of IRMAC".
- 6 "Tehran hosts international roundtable on humanitarian mine action", Mehr news agency, 12 March 2019, at: [bit.ly/2Z4LsIE](http://bit.ly/2Z4LsIE); and ICRC, "International roundtable on "humanitarian mine action: challenges and best practices", 15 March 2019, at: [bit.ly/2QH3cR6](http://bit.ly/2QH3cR6).
- 7 Information provided by mine action expert on condition of anonymity.
- 8 Information provided by Reza Amaninasab, Director, Ambassadors for development without borders, September 2019.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Information provided by mine action expert on condition of anonymity.
- 11 Information provided by Reza Amaninasab, Director, Ambassadors for development without borders, September 2019.