



KYRGYZSTAN

KYRGYZSTAN

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Kyrgyzstan should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Kyrgyzstan should detail whether it has fully addressed mine contamination in areas under its jurisdiction or control and, if not, report on the extent and location of its remaining mined areas and clearance operations.

CONTAMINATION

Kyrgyzstan is suspected to be contaminated by mines, though the precise location and extent of any residual threat is not known. According to the Minister of Defence, contamination in the southern Batken province bordering Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the result of mine use by Uzbekistan's military between 1999 and 2000, was cleared by Uzbek forces in 2005.¹ It was reported, however, that rainfall and landslides had caused some mines to shift.²

In 2003, Kyrgyz authorities claimed that Uzbek forces had also laid mines around the Uzbek enclaves of Sokh and Shakhimardan located within Kyrgyzstan. Press reports have suggested that Uzbek troops partially cleared territory around the Sokh enclave in 2004–05 and that they completely cleared mines around the Shakhimardan enclave in 2004.³

1 Fax from Abibilla Kudaiberdiev, Minister of Defence, 4 April 2011.

2 See, e.g., Y. Yegorov, "Uzbekistan agrees to remove minefields along its border with Kyrgyzstan", *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 1, Issue 41, 29 June 2004.

3 S. Zhimagulov and O. Borisova, "Kyrgyzstan Tries to Defend Itself from Uzbek Mines", *Navigator* (Kazakhstan), 14 March 2003; and "Borders are becoming clear", Blog, at: www.uzbekistan.wordpress.com.

Kyrgyzstan has admitted using anti-personnel mines in 1999 and 2000 to prevent infiltration across its borders, but has claimed that all the mines were subsequently removed and destroyed.⁴ In June 2011, a government official confirmed: "We do not have any minefields on the territory of Kyrgyzstan."⁵

In October 2011, ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and Kyrgyzstan's Ministry of Defence conducted a mine action assessment mission. The assessment confirmed that poor ammunition storage conditions as well as obsolete ammunition posed a serious threat to human security. Agreement on cooperation was reached on 25 July 2013, when ITF signed a Protocol on Cooperation with the Ministry of Defense of the Kyrgyz Republic.⁶ ITF has reported that in 2014 it continued to implement activities agreed on in the Protocol on Cooperation. This includes technical checks on anti-personnel mines and other ammunition in three storage warehouses, procurement of explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) equipment, and support for disposal of ammunition surpluses.⁷

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Kyrgyzstan has no functioning mine action programme.

In April 2013, an EOD military exchange reportedly took place at the Transit Centre at Manas, Kyrgyzstan, between the United States Armed Forces and Kyrgyz Ministry of Defence EOD team members, which involved training in mine clearance.⁸

In September 2015, Kyrgyzstan hosted a five-day regional workshop, supported by OSCE, on responding to and reducing explosive hazards in central Asia and Afghanistan. According to OSCE, participants shared techniques and approaches in disposing of excess and obsolete ammunition and learnt about international and national mine action standards. "OSCE-supported experts from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and Tajikistan National Mine Action Sector also shared their experiences."⁹

LAND RELEASE

There are no reports of any land release occurring in 2015.

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Kyrgyzstan is not a party or signatory to the APMBBC, but nonetheless Kyrgyzstan has obligations under international human rights law to protect life, which requires clearance of mines as soon as possible.¹⁰

4 Statement of Kyrgyzstan, APMBBC Intersessional Meetings (Standing Committee on General Status and Operation of the Convention), Geneva, 8 May 2006; and Letter 011-14/809 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 30 April 2010.

5 Letter from Amb. G. Isakova, Permanent Mission of Kyrgyzstan to the UN in Geneva, 29 June 2011.

6 ITF, "Kyrgyz Republic", accessed 10 October 2015, at: <http://www.itf-fund.si/activities/central-asia/kyrgyz-republic>.

7 Ibid.

8 US Air Forces Central Command, "Kyrgyz, U.S. EOD military exchange", 27 April 2013, at: <http://www.afcent.af.mil/News/ArticleDisplay/tabid/136/Article/217967/kyrgyz-us-eod-military-exchange.aspx>.

9 "Challenges of disposing explosive hazards in Central Asia and Afghanistan discussed at OSCE-supported workshop in Bishkek", OSCE, 18 September 2015, at: <http://www.osce.org/bishkek/183081>.

10 Kyrgyzstan is a state party to the 1966 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 6 of which requires that states parties respect and protect the right to life.