

### KEY DATA

#### ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: UNKNOWN

AP MINE CLEARANCE IN 2022

**UNKNOWN**

AP MINES DESTROYED IN 2022

**UNKNOWN**

### LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Kyrgyzstan should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Kyrgyzstan should clear anti-personnel (AP) mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.
- 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 remaining mined areas and clearance operations.

### DEMINING CAPACITY

#### MANAGEMENT\*

- Kyrgyzstan has no functioning mine action programme.

#### NATIONAL OPERATORS\*

- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) undertakes clearance of explosive remnants of war (ERW).

#### INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

#### OTHER ACTORS\*

- None

\* This is based on information from earlier years. It is not known if the information remains accurate.

## UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Kyrgyzstan is suspected to be contaminated by mines, though the precise location and extent of any mined areas 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.<sup>1</sup> It was reported, however, that rainfall and landslides had caused some mines to shift.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

Kyrgyzstan has admitted using AP mines in 1999 and 2000 to prevent infiltration across its borders, but has claimed that all the mines were subsequently removed and destroyed.<sup>4</sup> In June 2011, a government official confirmed: "We do not have any minefields on the territory of Kyrgyzstan."<sup>5</sup> An online news source reported that demining of areas along the Kyrgyzstan side of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border, in the Batken region and the Chon-Alai district of the Osh region, began on 20 September 2022. This was according to the Border Service of the State Committee for National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic (also known as GKNB). Work was to be carried out to clear these areas of unexploded ordnance (UXO), mines, ammunition and other explosive devices and was to be undertaken in co-ordinated between the authorities of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.<sup>6</sup>

In October 2017, Uzbek President Islam Karimov, and his Kyrgyz counterpart, Almazbek Atambaev, signed an agreement to demarcate some 85% of the countries' nearly 1,300km-long border and began discussing options for the 36 disputed sectors.<sup>7</sup> In March 2021, the prime ministers of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan reached an agreement to end territorial disputes. The agreement entails land swaps and facilitation of movement between the two countries. According to online media sources, the Kyrgyz head of security services, Kamchybek Tashiyev, announced that "issues around the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border have been resolved 100 percent" and that "there is not a single patch of disputed territory left".<sup>8</sup> However, other sources suggested that, in April 2021, just a month later, Mr Tashiyev had told residents of some disputed areas in Kyrgyzstan's southern provinces that the agreement was "not completely a done deal".<sup>9</sup> It has also been reported that the agreement was not ratified after Kyrgyz citizens voiced dissatisfaction over terms concerning use of a reservoir.<sup>10</sup>

Subsequently, it was reported that Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan signed an agreement on 3 November 2022 covering disputed sections of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border, particularly around the Andijan reservoir (also known as the Kempir-Abad reservoir). The agreement includes a land swap between the two countries and stipulates that Uzbekistan will supply water to Kyrgyz villages.<sup>11</sup> In July 2023, Kyrgyzstan was said by the Kyrgyz government press service to be determined to complete the process of delimitation and demarcation of the border with Uzbekistan as soon as possible.<sup>12</sup>

## PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Kyrgyzstan has no functioning mine action programme. Clearance of explosive remnants of war (ERW) is carried out by the Ministry of Defence (MoD).<sup>13</sup>

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), of which Kyrgyzstan is a member, has reported that on 24 June 2022, following a meeting of the CIS Council of Defence Ministers, Russia's Minister of Defence, Sergei Shoigu, pledged that a joint unit of humanitarian demining will be created in the CIS.<sup>14</sup> No timeline for this was given and Mine Action Review has not been able to source any further updates on the matter.

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, No. 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 post, at: <http://bit.ly/2z0s7qU>.

4 Statement of Kyrgyzstan, 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 United Nations (UN) in Geneva, 29 June 2011.

6 "Demining work began on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border", *Azerbaijan 24*, 20 September 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3DrPbA3>.

7 "Tug-Of-War: Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan Look To Finally Settle Decades-Old Border Dispute", *Radio Free Europe*, 14 December 2017, at: <http://bit.ly/2yXsrXt>.

8 "Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan sign deal to end border disputes", *Euroasianet*, 26 March 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3vD5QKA>.

9 "No Issues Remain? Not So Fast. Kyrgyz-Uzbek Border Disputes Don't Appear To Be Decided", *Radio Free Europe*, 2 April 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3zrFrEK>.

10 "Kyrgyzstan reports deaths after Uzbek border troops open fire", *Aljazeera*, 6 May 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3zuh4pT>.

11 "Resolution of Uzbek border disputes heralds increasingly united Central Asia", *Central Asia News*, 12 January 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3r0lp4z>.

12 "Kyrgyzstan hopes to complete process of delimitation, demarcation of state border with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan shortly", *Kazakhstan Interfax*, 20 July 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3r1weq9>.

13 "Border guards of Kyrgyzstan begin clearance on the border with Tajikistan", *EurAsia Daily*, 4 May 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3dbirOT>.

14 CIS, "Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said that a joint unit of humanitarian demining will be created in the CIS", Press release, 27 June 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3b1ulgn>.

## ENVIRONMENT POLICES AND ACTION

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It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in Kyrgyzstan in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

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## GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The extent to which gender and diversity are mainstreamed into mine action in Kyrgyzstan is not known.

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## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Mine Action Review has been unable to source any information on any efforts in Kyrgyzstan to implement or maintain a national mine action database.

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## PLANNING AND TASKING

It is not known whether Kyrgyzstan has a national mine action strategy in place. Nor is it known if Kyrgyzstan has annual work plans for the survey and clearance of AP mines or criteria for the prioritisation of clearance tasks.

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## LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

### STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

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It is not known whether Kyrgyzstan has national mine action standards in place.

### OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

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The United States (US) Quick Reaction Force (QRF) is a team of civilian explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) technical experts that serve as the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs' (PM/WRA's) first responders to conventional weapons disposal-related emergencies around the world, including ERW that pose significant threats to civilians. The QRF and its precursor, the Quick Reaction Demining Force, have deployed to Kyrgyzstan since 2001 to support efforts to tackle the substantial risk from unsecured, deteriorating weapons and ammunition stockpiles.<sup>15</sup> It is not stated if the US QRF has been involved in any disposal or clearance of AP mines.

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) have a presence in Kyrgyzstan to support with the through-life management of ammunition, working with the MoD. Efforts have included disposing of expired artillery and ammunition, training with the Kyrgyz military to provide knowledge on ammunition management, conducting technical assessments on storage facilities and methods for fuel components disposal, and regional assessment visits on Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) practices.<sup>16</sup>

Mine Action Review has been unable to source any recent information on Kyrgyzstan's national operational capacity for AP mine survey and clearance.

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## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

As noted above, demining along the Kyrgyzstan side of the border with Tajikistan, in the Batken region and the Chon-Alai district of the Osh region, began on 20 September 2022. No further details were available at the time of writing.

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15 "To Walk the Earth in Safety, Documenting the United States' Commitment to Conventional Weapons Destruction, Fiscal Year 2022, October 1, 2021-September 30, 2022", pp. 25, 46, and 50.

16 GICHD, "Kyrgyzstan", accessed 21 August 2023 at <https://bit.ly/45D8Pou>.