



LIBYA

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Libya's Government of National Accord should ensure that forces loyal to it do not use mines.
- Libya should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- As soon as political conditions permit, Libya should enact mine action legislation, establish an interministerial national mine action authority, and adopt a national mine action strategy.
- Libya should conduct a baseline survey to identify the extent of anti-personnel mine contamination, at the earliest opportunity possible and as soon the security situation permits.
- Libya should initiate survey and clearance of mined area as soon as possible.
- Libya should develop national capacity to conduct landmine survey and clearance, with the support of international actors.

CONTAMINATION

Mine contamination in Libya is a legacy of the Second World War as well as subsequent armed conflict with Egypt in 1977 and with Chad in 1980–87, which resulted in mines being laid on Libya's borders with these two neighbours. The border with Tunisia is also believed to be affected. During Colonel Muammur Qaddafi's four decades in power, mines were emplaced around a number of locations, including military facilities and key infrastructure.

Mines were used by both the government and the opposition forces during the 2011 conflict leading to Colonel Qaddafi's overthrow. The only confirmed instance of landmine use by rebels occurred in Ajdabiya, but other locations where pro-government elements laid mines included Brega, Khusha, Misrata, and the

Nafusa Mountains.¹ The escalation of conflict in Libya in 2014 brought new reports of mine use by armed groups fighting around Tripoli airport.² There is also evidence of landmine use by non-state armed groups in 2015 and 2016, especially in areas controlled by the Islamic State.³

Libya is also contaminated by cluster munition remnants (CMR) and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants* report on Libya for further information).

There is no accurate estimate of the extent of anti-personnel mine contamination across Libya, as many suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) have not been surveyed. As at February 2017, national contamination data from the Libyan Mine Action Centre (LibMAC)

Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database, reported six confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) four in Sirte and two in Misrata, totalling almost 41.5km², contaminated by anti-personnel mines, while a seventh CHA, in Sirte, of some 7.5km², was contaminated by anti-vehicle mines. A massive single SHA, of almost 223km², was suspected to contain only anti-vehicle mines.⁴ It is likely that further survey will drastically reduce these figures, but at the same time many further suspected areas have not been surveyed.

UNMAS advocates for the need for survey to help quantify the scale and type of contamination, but the ongoing security situation poses major challenges to operationalising the necessary survey.⁵

Mines of an improvised nature are suspected to have been laid during 2016 by Islamic State in areas that they controlled, such as in Sirte.⁶ In July 2017, the engineering divisions of Operation Dignity⁷ continued to clear mines and booby-traps left by Islamic State fighters from Benghazi, but also warned civilians from attempting to return to their homes before clearance work was finished.⁸

The impact of mine contamination is unknown, but according to the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), the presence of landmines, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and other unexploded ordnance (UXO) poses a persistent threat to the Libyan population. It also hinders the safe return of internally displaced people and restricts access for humanitarian workers.⁹

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Mine action exists in a fragmented and violent political context. Following years of armed conflict, a new United Nations-backed “unity” government, the Government of National Accord, was formally installed in a naval base in Tripoli in early 2016. Through early 2017, however, it continued to face opposition from two rival governments and a host of militia forces.

The LibMAC was mandated by the Minister of Defense to coordinate mine action in December 2011.¹⁰ As at March 2017, it was operating under the UN-backed Government of National Accord. LibMAC’s headquarters are in Tripoli, in the west of the country, and it also has offices in Benghazi¹¹ and Misrata.¹² In April 2016, a regional Operations Manager was appointed for the east.¹³ In July 2016, LibMAC also established a small office in Misrata.¹⁴ The operating costs and salaries for the LibMAC are funded by the United States Department of State and administered by ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF).¹⁵

Strategic Planning

There is no national mine action strategy for Libya.

LibMAC does, however, prioritise survey and clearance operations and is responsible for issuing task orders. Prioritisation is, in part, informed by data collected and reported to LibMAC by operators such as the Danish Demining Group (DDG), during non-technical survey or explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), and by reports from the local community.¹⁶

Legislation and Standards

There is no national mine action legislation in Libya, but National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), in Arabic and English, have been elaborated with the support of the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), and were approved by the Government of National Accord in August 2017. Libya’s NMAS are available on the LibMAC website.¹⁷

As at April 2018, Humanity and Inclusion (HI) was reviewing and updating its standing operating procedures (SOPs) for Libya following the release of the new NMAS, which are aligned with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).¹⁸ DDG was also in the final stages of updating its SOPs, as at June 2018.¹⁹

Quality Management

UNMAS provides remote training and assistance to LibMAC in quality management (QM), from its office in Tunis.²⁰

Information Management

LibMAC receives technical support for the IMSMA database from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and UNMAS.

Operators

Mine action operations have been conducted by the army engineers, a police unit, and the Ministry of Interior’s National Safety Authority (NSA), also known as Civil Defense.²¹ The NSA is mandated to conduct EOD in civilian areas.²² These institutions liaise with LibMAC but are not tasked or accredited by them, nor do they provide clearance reports to the Centre.

The deteriorating security situation resulted in the withdrawal of UNMAS and international mine action operators from Libya in mid-2014.

UNMAS has been operating from Tunis since November 2014, from where it provides institutional and operational capacity-building, training, including in EOD, and support and advice to LibMAC, including in establishing processes for the accreditation and activities of mine action actors in Libya.²³ Despite the relocation of the programme to Tunisia, due to poor security in Libya since 2014, UNMAS Libya continues to coordinate with national authorities and implementing partners, including by providing technical advice and advisory support on arms and ammunition management. The UNMAS Libya Programme is an integral part of the UNSMIL.²⁴

Since 2015, UNMAS has trained more than 70 NSA operators and military engineers in advanced EOD and 30 officers from eastern Libya in non-technical survey, and has provided advanced medical first-responder training to 72 EOD operators from Benghazi and other personnel in Sirte.²⁵

DanChurchAid (DCA) is operational in Libya, clearing ERW, and providing risk education, psychosocial support, armed violence reduction, and training of national authorities. Now in its seventh year of working in Libya, DCA reportedly has offices in Benghazi, Misrata, and Tripoli.²⁶

DDG set up its Libya mine action programme remotely from Tunisia in 2014, but in early 2017 it relocated to Libya. DDG is operational in three areas of Libya: Benghazi, Sabha (in the south-west), and Tripoli.²⁷ After setting up in Benghazi in December 2017, DDG spent the first quarter of 2018 obtaining accreditation and putting in place necessary policies and procedures before becoming operational. DDG hoped to expand non-technical survey and EOD capacity in Benghazi from the late summer of 2018. In Sabha, DDG has one non-technical survey team and one EOD team, which it manages remotely. Security issues in the south continue to disrupt mine action operations and prevent continuous operations. In Tripoli, DDG works through its implementing partner, National NGO Free Fields Foundation (3F). 3F operates under DDG's accreditation and SOPs, and has an operational capacity of 37 people, comprising three EOD teams and one non-technical survey team.²⁸

HI's mine action programme in 2017 continued to be remotely managed from Tunis.²⁹ In 2017, HI had three risk education teams, but no survey or clearance capacity in Libya. HI hoped to be able to deploy a roving survey and EOD capacity in 2018 in the Sirte and Misrata regions, in addition to risk education.³⁰

HI trained two local partners in non-technical survey in 2016: Peace Organisation from Zintan, and World Without War (3W) from Misrata. Both organisations received accreditation for non-technical survey from LibMAC after the training. Following the training, Peace Organization conducted non-technical survey under remote management by HI from Tunis.³¹ Another of HI's implementing partners, AMACC, conducted non-technical survey in one CMR-suspected area in 2017.³²

A number of other Libyan civil society organisations are also reported to carry out mine action operations, but they are not accredited by LibMAC.

Military engineers reportedly lack mine detectors and are working with rudimentary tools. According to a military source quoted in the New York Times, 50 have been killed and a further 60 wounded.³³

LAND RELEASE

There were no reports of planned mine clearance during 2017 although several operators engaged in EOD operations. No mined area was reported to have been released by survey in 2017 either, although HI identified an SHA in 2017, which it believes contains anti-personnel and anti-vehicle contamination.

Survey in 2017

No mined area was reported to have been reduced by technical survey or cancelled by non-technical survey in 2017.

HI reported that non-technical survey in 2017 in Kikla, northern Libya, identified a 26km² SHA in a wooded area, which it suspects contains both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines.³⁴

Clearance in 2017

No planned mine clearance was reported for 2017.

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Libya is not a state party to the APMBC, but nonetheless has obligations under international human rights law to protect life, which require the clearance of mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.

LibMAC describes the following challenges to implementation of mine action operations: the high level of contamination; ongoing conflict and the continued presence of Islamic State; the difficulty in convincing internally displaced persons to delay their return until the ERW threat is addressed; security and access to priority areas; the limited ERW and IED disposal capacity in Libya; the vast geographical area; and the shortfall in governmental and international support.³⁵ Security conditions continued to pose a challenge to mine action in Libya, and as at June 2018, non-governmental organisations were frequently forced to suspend operations in the south-west due to poor security.³⁶

In his February 2018 report on the work of UNSMIL, the UN Secretary-General stated that explosive ordnance "continue to pose a significant, indiscriminate threat to the civilian population" and urged "Member States to expand their funding to activities in priority areas equipment."³⁷

As at September 2018, the security situation in Libya had deteriorated significantly, posing considerable challenges for mine action operations for both national and international organisations, including issues of access.³⁸

- 1 Human Rights Watch, "Landmines in Libya: Technical Briefing Note", 19 July 2011, at: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/07/19/landmines-libya-technical-briefing-note>.
- 2 Human Rights Watch, "Libya: New evidence of landmine use", 5 November 2014.
- 3 Landmine Monitor, "Libya: Mine Ban Policy", last updated 23 October 2017, at: <http://www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2018/libya/mine-ban-policy.aspx>; email from Lutz Kosewsky, DDG, 22 February 2017; and telephone interview with Darren Devlin, DDG, 20 June 2018.
- 4 Emails from Abdullatif Abujarida, LibMAC, 20 February and 9 March 2017.
- 5 Email from Lance Marlin, Chief, UNMAS Libya, 11 September 2018.
- 6 "Libya forces de-mine and clear Sirte after liberation from Isis militants", *Independent*, 11 August 2016
- 7 Khalifa Haftar launched Operation Dignity to take Benghazi under his forces' control from what he described as Islamist militants and terrorists in May 2014. See, e.g., "Operation Dignity in east Libya declares full control of Benghazi", *Libyan Express*, 5 July 2017, at: <http://www.libyanexpress.com/operation-dignity-in-east-libya-declares-full-control-of-benghazi/>.
- 8 Landmines in Africa blog, July 2017, at: <https://landminesinfrica.wordpress.com/tag/libya/>.
- 9 "Lives and Limbs Shattered by Libya Mines", *Asharq Al-Awsat*, 5 April 2018.
- 10 LibMAC website, accessed 25 June 2018 at: <http://www.lmac.gov.ly/EN/about.html>.
- 11 Email from Jakob Donatz, Associate Programme Officer, UNMAS, 21 June 2018.
- 12 Email from Roman Turšič, Head of Implementation Office Libya/Afghanistan, ITF, 26 February 2017.
- 13 Skype interview with Ezzedine Ata Alia, Administration Manager, LibMAC, 20 March 2017.
- 14 Interview with Col. Turjoman, Director, LibMAC, in Geneva, 10 January 2017.
- 15 Email from Roman Turšič, Head of Implementation Office Libya/Afghanistan, ITF, 26 February 2017.
- 16 Telephone interview with Darren Devlin, Programme Manager Libya, DDG, 20 June 2018; and email, 4 July 2018.
- 17 Libyan Mine Action Centre (LibMAC) website, accessed 25 June 2018, at <http://www.lmac.gov.ly/>; and Report of the Secretary-General on the UN Support Mission in Libya, UN doc. S/2018/140, 12 February 2018, p.12.; and UNMAS, "Programmes: Libya", March 2018, at: <http://www.mineaction.org/programmes/libya>.
- 18 Email from Catherine Smith, Head of Mission, HI, 30 April 2018.
- 19 Telephone interview with Darren Devlin, DDG, 20 June 2018.
- 20 UNMAS, "Programmes: Libya", March 2018, at: <http://www.mineaction.org/programmes/>.
- 21 Interview with Col. Turjoman, LibMAC, in Geneva, 10 January 2017.
- 22 Email from Diek Engelbrecht, UNMAS Libya, 20 July 2013.
- 23 UNMAS, "Programmes: Libya", March 2018, at: <http://www.mineaction.org/programmes/libya>; and emails from Lyuba Guerassimova, Programme Officer, UNMAS, 28 February 2017 and Dandan Xu, Associate Programme Management Officer, UNMAS, 12 July 2017; and Report of the Secretary-General on the UN Support Mission in Libya, UN Doc. S/2018/140, 12 February 2018, p.12.
- 24 Email from Jakob Donatz, UNMAS, 21 June 2018.
- 25 UNMAS, "Programmes: Libya", June 2018, at: <http://www.mineaction.org/programmes/libya>.
- 26 DCA website, accessed 18 June 2018, at: <https://www.danchurchaid.org/where-we-work/libya>.
- 27 Telephone interview with Darren Devlin, DDG, 20 June 2018; and email, 4 July 2018.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Email from Catherine Smith, HI, 30 April 2018.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Email from Catherine Smith, HI, 22 February 2017.
- 32 Email from Catherine Smith, HI, 30 April 2018.
- 33 "Mine still claim legs and lives in Libya's Benghazi, months after war ceased", *New York Times*, 21 January 2018.
- 34 Email from Catherine Smith, HI, 30 April 2018.
- 35 PowerPoint presentation by Mohammad Turjoman, LibMAC, at the National Programme Director's Meeting, Geneva, 8 February 2017.
- 36 Telephone interview with Darren Devlin, DDG, 20 June 2018.
- 37 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, UN doc. S/2018/140, 12 February 2018, p. 16.
- 38 Email from Lance Marlin, UNMAS, 11 September 2018.