

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Kyrgyzstan 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, Kyrgyzstan has obligations under international human rights law to clear anti-personnel mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.
- 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.

ANTI-PERSONNEL 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 2005.¹ 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 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.⁴

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.⁵ In June 2011, a government official confirmed: "We do not have any minefields on the territory of Kyrgyzstan."⁶

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 the ITF signed a Protocol on Cooperation with the Ministry of Defense of the Kyrgyz Republic.⁷ The 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.⁸

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Kyrgyzstan has no functioning mine action programme.

LAND RELEASE

There are no reports of any survey or clearance of mined areas occurring in 2018.

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 post, at: bit.ly/2z0s7qU.

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

5 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.

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

7 ITF, "Kyrgyz Republic", accessed 10 October 2015, at: bit.ly/31Fwd44.

8 Ibid.