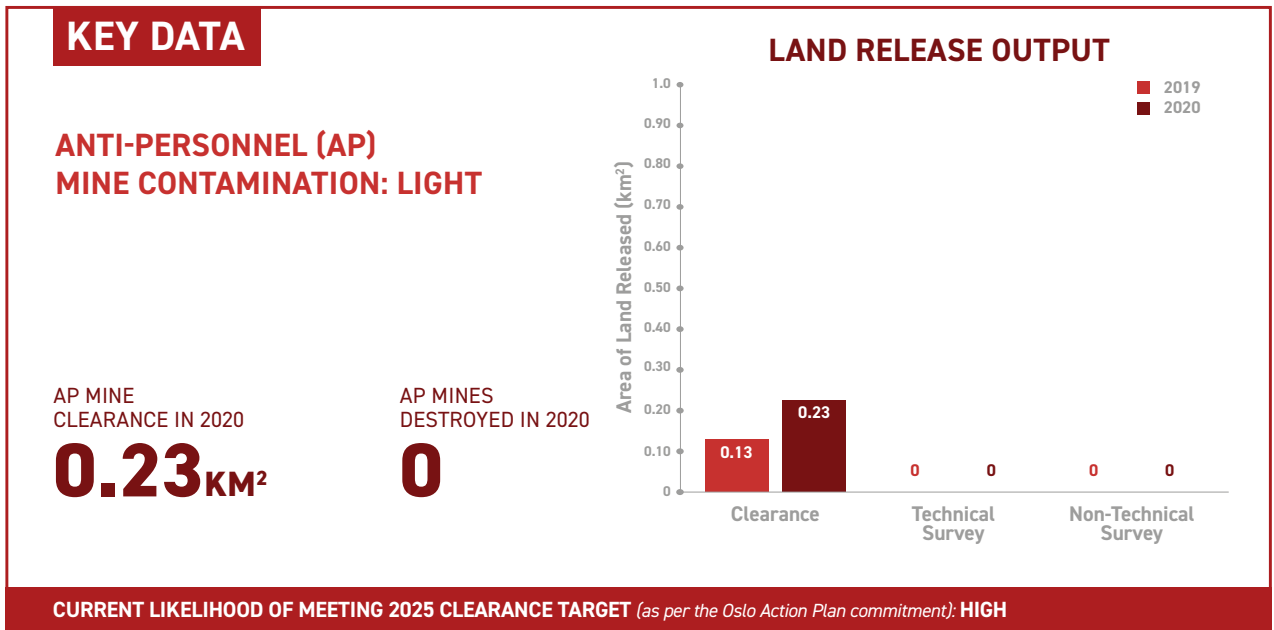


ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 FEBRUARY 2025
ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Oman is accelerating progress in “re-clearing” suspected mined areas and plans to complete release of all areas ahead of its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline of 1 February 2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Oman should establish a mine action centre to oversee its national programme as soon as possible.
- Oman should ensure the release of all mined areas as soon as possible but not later than its February 2025 Article 5 deadline.
- Oman should ensure it conducts land release operations according to international standards, applying non-technical and technical survey to confirm contamination prior to clearance whenever possible.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2020)	Score (2019)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	7	7	Oman does not have any confirmed mined areas, but does have suspected contamination resulting from mine use during the 1960s and 1970s. Oman has reported earlier clearance of most of the mined areas but is now "re-clearing" certain areas to make sure they are free of anti-personnel mines.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	8	7	All clearance is conducted by the Executive Operational Unit of the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Oman does not have a mine action centre but its mine action programme is fully nationally owned.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	2	2	Oman's statements on mine action make no reference to the issue of gender. In 2020, women were not represented in Oman's mine action programme.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	7	6	Oman submits annual Article 7 transparency reports detailing its progress in re-clearance. The report covering 2020 was submitted in advance of the treaty deadline and provided details of its updated work plan.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	6	6	In its Article 7 transparency report submitted in 2020, Oman included a work plan to release all remaining suspected mined areas before its 2025 Article 5 deadline. According to the plan, clearance is expected to conclude by April 2024, leaving a buffer of nine months to accommodate delays due to adverse weather or unexpected events.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	4	3	In 2020, as in previous years, Oman conducted clearance/re-clearance of mined areas, during which no anti-personnel mines were discovered. It is not known if Oman conducts evidence-based non-technical survey or technical survey prior to clearance, to better target its efforts.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	7	6	Oman "re-cleared" 225,100m ² of suspected mined area in 2020; a significant increase on the previous year. As at the end of 2020, Oman had completed 68% of the total area identified for re-clearance and was on track to complete re-clearance by its February 2025 Article 5 deadline.
Average Score	5.9	5.3	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- No national mine action authority or mine action centre

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Royal Army of Oman

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Oman is suspected to be contaminated by mines, though the precise location and extent of any residual threat is not known. In its initial Article 7 report, submitted in 2015, Oman declared that no areas in the Sultanate were confirmed as mined, but reported “many” suspected mined areas in the south, particularly in the Dhofar region.¹ In a statement to the APMBC Intersessional Meetings in Geneva in June 2018, and in its Article 7 reports submitted in 2020 and 2021, Oman repeated there were no confirmed mined areas and no record of any mine casualties for more than 20 years, but referenced the previously mentioned suspected mined areas requiring “re-search”/“re-clearance”² in order to confirm they were free of anti-personnel mines.

According to its 2015 report, during the mid 1960s to mid 1970s, the presence of rebel movements in Dhofar led to “vast” areas being affected by anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines. There was small-scale use of mines by militants without maps or records of where mines were laid. Government forces reported clearing an area of contamination they had laid immediately following the end of

military actions in 1976 and the Armed Sultan’s Engineering Unit Forces initiated clearance of the areas suspected to have been mined by the militants.³

However, Oman has reported that it is impossible to be sure that the areas were fully cleared and are therefore re-clearing certain areas is required to ensure no anti-personnel mines remain.⁴ This is for three reasons: the size of the region (about 99,000km²); the lack of maps or marking; and the terrain (which includes mountains and valleys), with many mined areas located on steep slopes. In addition, rain over the years may have scattered any residual mines.⁵

In 2001, it had been reported that the Royal Army of Oman had mapped seven zones of suspected mined areas based on historical records of battlefield areas, unit positions, and mine incident reports.⁶

As at the end of 2020, Oman reported the areas set out in Table 1 as potentially contaminated and had set out on a plan to re-clear them between February 2021 and April 2024.⁷

Table 1: Anti-personnel mined area by region (at end 2020)⁸

Area/region	SHAs	Area (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
East of Doukah valley	1	52,800	52,800
Line of Demafend	1	145,200	145,200
Tadhou Wadi Bouthaina	1	52,800	52,800
Sarfeit, Seik valley	1	105,600	105,600
Ain Gharnout, Afeit, Aswad valley	1	52,800	52,800
Tawi Atir	1	52,800	52,800
Thent valley	1	52,800	52,800
Totals	7	514,800	514,800

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Oman’s mine action programme is fully nationally owned.⁹ Clearance is performed by the Executive Operational Unit of the national Army engineers.¹⁰ Oman reports its national clearance plan was elaborated in consultation with the administrative regional units.¹¹

Oman stated in June 2018 that it began implementing a national programme in 2017 and was planning to set up a national mine action centre and would then appeal for supply of equipment but it did not specify when this would occur.¹² As at June 2021, however, Oman had no plans to establish a mine action centre, stating that its existing national capacities could meet the demand and maintain the ongoing clearance operations without need for a coordinating body.¹³

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Oman reports that its national programmes, including that of mine action, follow clear guidelines that consider the needs of different groups, including these of different genders. Women did not occupy supervisory, administrative, or operational positions in Oman’s mine action programme in 2020.¹⁴ Women have, though, been permitted to serve in the Oman Army for a decade.¹⁵

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Oman does not have a national information management database, but the Executive Operational Unit generates monthly operational reports. Maps of the cleared areas are then produced and retained both digitally and on paper.¹⁶

After becoming a State Party to the APMB in 2015, Oman has submitted annual Article 7 reports covering progress in the previous calendar year. The report for 2020 disaggregated data key data on contamination and clearance, and updated its work plan. Oman submitted its Article 7 report for 2020 two months before the treaty deadline of end April 2021.

PLANNING AND TASKING

In its Article 7 report submitted in February 2021, Oman provided a work plan that foresees the release of all remaining suspected mined area before its Article 5 deadline in 2025.¹⁷ According to the compilation of data provided in the annual Article 7 reports for 2018–20, Oman has implemented 68% of its planned mine re-clearance and is expected to complete land release by April 2024, leaving a buffer of nine months ahead of its February 2025 deadline.¹⁸

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Oman reports the following standards are applied during clearance: pre-clearance field survey based on maps and available records; determination and provision of administrative and medical requirements; implementation of operational safety measures; and preservation of wildlife and the environment.¹⁹ It is not clear whether these standards are documented and acted upon as national mine action standards (NMAS), as the term is generally understood in mine action, or to which extent they accord with the international mine action standards (IMAS). Oman reported that mined areas were earlier cleared “in accordance with the resources available”.²⁰

In 2020, as in the previous three years, no anti-personnel mines were discovered during re-clearance. Oman said the absence of anti-personnel mines “confirms the areas had previously been cleared”.²¹ Oman reports that its current operational procedures are efficient, follow the established work plan, and that they are reviewed and updated regularly.²²

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

The Executive Operational Unit of Oman's army engineers is solely responsible for mine/explosive remnants of war (ERW) clearance. In 2020, the Unit comprised 83 personnel. Oman expected the same capacity to be used throughout 2021.²³

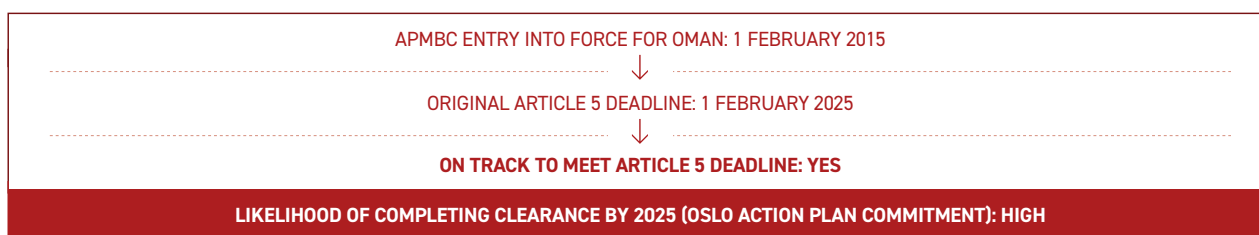
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2020

In 2020, Oman re-cleared a total of 225,100m² in three areas: Arqoum, Maghseel, and Taqa & Khortaqa, all located in the south-western Dhofar governorate. No anti-personnel mines or ERW were found during clearance.²⁴

Clearance output in 2020 was a significant increase compared to the 130,100m² of mined area cleared between February and December 2019.²⁵ This increase is attributed to the development of the Executive Operational Unit through acquiring additional and more modern mine detection and inspection equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE), and transportation vehicles.²⁶

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC, Oman is required to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 February 2025. It is on track to do so.

In its Article 7 report submitted in 2020, Oman presented a plan to complete clearance of remaining suspected mined areas by its Article 5 deadline.²⁷ According to the compilation of data provided in the regular Article 7 reports covering 2018–20, Oman expects to complete release of all mined areas by April 2024.²⁸

Oman has cited the challenges it faces in locating and clearing mines in large and remote areas of desert in addition to the tropical cyclones that hit the south of the country in 2018.²⁹

PLANNING FOR RESIDUAL RISK AFTER COMPLETION

Oman's mine action programme is fully nationally owned and the Executive Operational Unit has the capacity to address any previously unknown mined areas discovered following completion (i.e. residual contamination).³⁰

-
- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 Initial Article 7 Report, 2015, pp. 4–5.</p> <p>2 Oman statement to the APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 7–8 June 2018; and Article 7 Reports (covering 2018 and 2019, respectively).</p> <p>3 Initial Article 7 Report, submitted in 2015.</p> <p>4 Article 7 Reports submitted in 2015, in 2020 (covering 2019), and in 2021 (covering 2020).</p> <p>5 Initial Article 7 Report, submitted in 2015, pp. 4–5.</p> <p>6 "Humanitarian Demining", <i>Journal of Mine Action</i>, 2001, p. 49.</p> <p>7 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), p. 14.</p> <p>8 Ibid.</p> <p>9 Email from Oman Ministry of Defence (MoD), 23 June 2021.</p> <p>10 Article 7 Report (covering 2018).</p> <p>11 Article 7 Report (covering 2017), p. 2.</p> <p>12 Statement of Oman, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 7–8 June 2018.</p> <p>13 Email from Oman MoD, 23 June 2021.</p> <p>14 Ibid.</p> <p>15 "Women officers set to join army in Oman", <i>Khaleej Times</i>, 21 December 2011, at: http://bit.ly/3dYcDaH.</p> | <p>16 Email from the Oman MoD, 23 June 2021.</p> <p>17 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), p. 14.</p> <p>18 Article 7 Report (covering 2020).</p> <p>19 Email from Oman MoD, 23 June 2021.</p> <p>20 Article 7 Report (covering 2018).</p> <p>21 Article 7 Report (covering 2019).</p> <p>22 Email from Oman MoD, 23 June 2021.</p> <p>23 Ibid.</p> <p>24 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), pp. 8–13.</p> <p>25 Article 7 Report (covering 2019).</p> <p>26 Email from Oman MoD, 23 June 2021.</p> <p>27 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), p. 14.</p> <p>28 Ibid.</p> <p>29 Statement of Oman, 17th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 29 November 2018.</p> <p>30 Email from Oman MoD, 23 June 2021.</p> |
|--|---|