

PALESTINE

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JUNE 2028
(UNCLEAR WHETHER ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE)

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE	2017	2016
Problem understood	5	5
Target date for completion of mine clearance	6	6
Targeted clearance	7	6
Efficient clearance	6	6
National funding of programme	3	3
Timely clearance	5	5
Land-release system in place	7	7
National mine action standards	5	5
Reporting on progress	5	5
Improving performance	7	6
PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE	5.6	5.4

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Palestine acceded to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) in December 2017, becoming a state party on 1 June 2018. Palestine is required to submit an Article 7 transparency report by 28 November 2018, including formally reporting on any mined areas under its jurisdiction or control. Through 2017, Palestine made progress in demining with the completion of clearance by The HALO Trust of the Surif minefield in the governorate of Hebron in June 2017. Work then began on clearing the Deir Abu Daif minefield in Jenin governorate, which was completed in October 2017.

In addition, in 2017, the Israeli National Mine Action Authority (INMAA) surveyed and subsequently cancelled suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) in the Jordan Valley in the West Bank, while 4M was awarded an Israeli Ministry of Defence tender, beginning clearance of the two minefields in Qalqiliya governorate of the West Bank in late 2017.

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

- The Palestine Mine Action Centre (PMAC) should report accurately and consistently on the extent of landmine contamination and annual clearance output.

CONTAMINATION

In Palestine, hazards encompass minefields, military training zones, and areas of confrontation where many explosive devices remain. A 2013 survey by PMAC found that Palestine has mined areas covering a total of 19.9km², marginally less than its previous estimate of 20.4km².¹ A HALO Trust survey of the West Bank in 2012 identified 90 minefields, 13 of which were laid by the Jordanian military in 1948–67, while the remaining 77 were laid by the Israeli military along the Jordan River

after the 1967 war.² All minefields, including those laid by the Jordanian military, are under Israeli military control.³

According to The HALO Trust, as at the end of 2017, more than 0.4km² of confirmed mined area exists (excluding the Jordan Valley) across six minefields in Palestine and two minefields in no-man’s-land between the West Bank and Israel. All eight minefields (see Table 1) were laid by the Jordanian army.⁴

Table 1: Confirmed mine contamination (at end-2017) (excluding the Jordan Valley)⁵

Governorate	Minefield Task	Contamination	CHAs	Area (m ²)
Jenin	Araba	AV and AP mines	1	10,630
	Qabatiya	AV and AP mines	1	11,100
	Yabad	AV and AP mines	1	48,050
Tul Kareem	Nur a-Shams	AV and AP mines	1	37,810
Qalqiliya	Karne Shomron	AV and AP mines	1	66,726
	Jinsafut	AP mines	1	37,810
Ramallah	No Man’s Land Yalo	AV and AP mines	1	104,226
	No Man’s Land -Canada Park	AV and AP mines	1	85,708
Totals			8	402,060

CHA = Confirmed hazardous area AV=Anti-vehicle AP=Anti-personnel

Four of the twelve governorates in the West Bank contained mined areas, as at the end of 2017.⁶ The governorate of Hebron is no longer considered contaminated, after clearance of the Surif minefield was completed on 1 June 2017.⁷

Most mined areas are located in Area C of the West Bank (see below), along the border with Jordan. Area C covers approximately 60% of the West Bank and is under full Israeli control for security, planning, and construction.⁸

According to the United Nations (UN), of the estimated total of 90 minefields in the West Bank, those in more “central areas” – the governorates of Jenin, Qalqiliya, and Tulkarm – are priorities for clearance.⁹ In addition to posing a risk to civilians, mines affect the socio-economic development of Palestinian communities. Mined areas are located in, or close to, populated areas,¹⁰ mostly on privately owned agricultural and grazing land or along roads used daily by communities, and are often

either poorly marked or not marked at all.¹¹ They are accessible to the population, and in the case of Yabad minefield, in Jenin governorate, local farmers cultivate parts of the polygon. In Nur a-Shams minefield, in Tul Kareem governorate, members of the community have

dumped construction waste on part of the minefield.¹² These minefields were laid by the Jordanian military and are all located in areas under Israeli security control. Clearance operations must therefore be coordinated with the Israeli authorities,¹³ in addition to PMAC.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

PMAC was established in accordance with Palestinian Minister of Interior decision on 25 March 2012,¹⁴ which appointed a director and created a Higher Committee for Mine Action as an interministerial body, with 27 members representing the ministries of education, foreign affairs, health, intelligence, interior, justice, and military liaison, as well as the police and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society. The Higher Committee for Mine Action, which serves as the national mine action authority, is tasked to develop mine action legislation and allocate resources for the sector.¹⁵

PMAC, which is located in the Ministry of Interior in Ramallah, is mandated to coordinate all aspects of mine action in the West Bank. It receives technical advice from the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS).¹⁶ The committee has established a number of sub-committees to deal with technical issues, risk education, legal affairs, foreign affairs, and health and safety.¹⁷

PMAC, which has ten employees,¹⁸ is staffed with personnel from the Palestinian National Security Forces, Civil Police, and Civil Defence. PMAC also has a team of 30 personnel who were trained by UNMAS for demining a few years ago, but, to date, have not been authorised or equipped to do so, and no agreement has been reached with Israel on this matter.¹⁹ The Civil Police have an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) unit with 42 personnel in Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, Nablus, Qalqilya, Ramallah, and Tulkarm, who conduct rapid response to locate and remove items of unexploded ordnance (UXO). The EOD unit is only permitted to work in Area A of the West Bank.²⁰ A new director of PMAC was appointed in July 2017, following the previous director's retirement.²¹

Mine action is subject to the 1995 Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, commonly known as the Oslo II accord, under which the West Bank is divided into three areas: Area A is under full Palestinian civil and security control; Area B is under full Palestinian civil control and joint Israeli-Palestinian security control; and Area C refers to areas where Israel has full civil and security control.²²

Strategic Planning

PMAC has a Strategic Plan for 2017–20, whose primary objectives are the clearance of the Araba, Deir Abu Daif, Nur a-Shams, Qabatiya, and Yabad minefields.²³ As at July 2018, clearance of Deir Abu Daif had been completed.

HALO Trust's survey and clearance in the West Bank is prioritised by its international donors, in conjunction with the INMAA and PMAC.²⁴

Legislation and Standards

In November 2016, Palestine announced that it was seeking to adopt and enact a mine action law. Palestine was hopeful that it would complete the legal procedures within a year and present the draft law to the legislative council for endorsement, followed by signature by the President.²⁵ As at June 2018, however, the process was still ongoing.²⁶

The HALO Trust's standing operating procedures (SOPs), which are based on its international standards and which also comply with national standards, are approved by the INMAA. Once a year, The HALO Trust submits its SOPs, including any necessary amendments, to the INMAA for approval.²⁷

Quality Management

The HALO Trust's work in the West Bank complies with the Israeli Standard Institute for Standards, in particular ISO 9001, 14001, and 18001. The HALO Trust carries out its own internal quality control (QC), which is conducted by senior programme staff, and which complies with the ISO standards and HALO Trust's own SOPs.²⁸ In addition, as required by the INMAA, 4CI Security, an external INMAA-certified quality assurance (QA)/QC company, is contracted to monitor HALO Trust's clearance in accordance with Israeli National Mine Action Standards.²⁹

Information Management

The Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database, Level 1, is used by PMAC.³⁰

The HALO Trust follows the INMAA's national standards and provides daily and weekly reports as well as completion reports for every task. The information is shared with PMAC.³¹ As a result, all three entities are in possession of HALO Trust survey and clearance data relating to demining operations in the West Bank.

Operators

To date, Israel has not authorised demining operations to be conducted by or on behalf of PMAC.³² In September 2013, however, the INMAA gave formal authorisation for The HALO Trust to clear two minefields in the West Bank deemed high priority by PMAC. Following INMAA authorisation, HALO Trust began mine clearance in the West Bank in April 2014,³³ and has continued clearance operations in the West Bank to the present day.

The HALO Trust works under the auspices of both the INMAA and PMAC.³⁴ The HALO Trust's manual clearance team in the West Bank is composed of deminers from Georgia with capacity varying according to the task. For the Deir Abu Daif minefield task there were 22 deminers while for the manual section of the Araba minefield task, up to 14 deminers were deployed. In addition, during 2017, HALO Trust deployed three armoured CASE721 wheeled medium loaders, one armoured CAT320B tracked excavator, and one industrial rock crusher. The machines were operated by a Palestinian team.³⁵

LAND RELEASE

The total mined area released by clearance in 2017 was 41,857m², which is a slight increase compared to 34,057m² in 2016.

Survey in 2017

No land was reduced by technical survey in 2017 or cancelled by non-technical survey.

The HALO Trust performs survey as part of its clearance operations of the Jordanian-laid minefields in Area C of the West Bank, which includes joint site visits with PMAC and the INMAA, but it is part of pre-clearance task preparation, and is of CHAs already recorded in PMAC's database and on maps.³⁶

Clearance in 2017

In 2017, The HALO Trust cleared 41,857m² of mined area, during which 86 anti-personnel mines, 8 anti-vehicle mines, and 2 other items of UXO were destroyed.

This included completion of Surif minefield in Hebron governorate, from January to June 2017, during which eight anti-personnel mines were destroyed. Upon completion of Surif minefield HALO Trust immediately relocated to Jenin governorate, and commenced clearance of Deir Abu Daif minefield, which was declared free of mines on 1 October 2017. During clearance of Deir Abu Daif minefield, 76 Belgian PRB-M35 anti-personnel mines and 3 British MK5 anti-tank mines were destroyed.³⁷

Following completion of Deir Abu Daif minefield, it was agreed with PMAC and the INMAA to scale down mechanical operations over the winter due to wet soil limiting machine use, and to prioritise clearance of the manual segments of Araba, Qabatiya, and Yabad minefields in Jenin governorate. Mechanical clearance recommenced in Spring 2018, as soon as the soil was sufficiently dry.³⁸

Table 2: HALO Trust mine clearance in the West Bank in 2017³⁹

Governorate	Minefield Task	Areas released	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Hebron	Surif	1	11,900	8	0	0
Jenin	Araba	0	3,542	1	1	0
	Deir Abu Daif	1	23,527	76	3	0
	Qabatiya	0	2,888	1	4	2
Totals		2	41,857	86	8	2

In addition, from October 2017 Israel undertook Israeli-funded clearance of the Karne Shomron and Jinsafut minefields, in the Qalqiliya governorate of the West Bank. Israeli operator 4M was awarded the demining tender by the Israeli Ministry of Defence, and clearance of the two minefields was expected to be completed by May 2018.⁴⁰ The INMAA did not, however, report the area of land cleared in these two minefields in 2017.

Progress in 2018

Clearance of the West Bank minefield at Qaser al-Yahud (the baptism site), in the Jordan Valley, commenced in March 2018.⁴¹ The project aims to remove mines and explosive ordnance in the area of the baptism site, which covers a total estimated area of 870,000m².⁴² Approximately 90,000m² is thought to potentially contain

anti-personnel mines, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs).⁴³ IDF minefield records provided to The HALO Trust separate the land for clearance outside of the church compounds into eleven areas, all of which contain a potential UXO threat. Six of the eleven areas are known to contain significant numbers of M15 anti-tank mines in multiple lines and over 2,600 anti-tank mines in total. The land and buildings inside the seven church compounds are suspected to contain mines and booby traps, but no official records exist regarding this contamination.⁴⁴

The INMAA expected clearance of the baptism site to take between 12 and 16 months,⁴⁵ and as at August 2018, HALO Trust expected that the site would be fully cleared by mid-2019.⁴⁶

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Palestine acceded to the APMBC on 29 December 2017, becoming a state party on 1 June 2018. Palestine was required to submit its first Article 7 transparency report by 28 November 2018, to include details of mined areas under its jurisdiction or control.

PMAC planned to complete clearance of mines areas by the end of 2020, if there are not obstacles from the other parties.⁴⁷ Clearance in the West Bank is, however, largely constrained by political factors, including the lack of authorisation granted by Israel for Palestine to conduct mine clearance operations.

It is, however, a positive development that The HALO Trust was permitted to begin mine clearance operations in April 2014, and as at July 2018, HALO Trust had completed clearance of five minefields in Area C of the West Bank.

The HALO Trust has completed survey of the Jordanian-laid minefields in the West Bank, and as at the end of 2017, four Jordanian-laid minefields in the governorates of Jenin and Tul Kareem, which fall within HALO Trust's donor agreement, remained to be cleared. Of these, HALO Trust reported that it was well placed to complete the mechanical clearance of Araba, Qabatiya, and Yabad minefields in Jenin governorate during the course of 2018. After completion of the four priority Jordanian-laid minefields, HALO Trust planned to look into clearance of mined areas in the Jordan Valley, the majority of which are Israeli-laid.⁴⁸

The two minefields in Qalqiliya Governorate fall outside of The HALO Trust's funding agreement with international donors, and these two minefields are being cleared by 4M, with Israeli funding, under an Israeli Ministry of Defence tender.⁴⁹

Furthermore, the INMAA began survey of the Jordan Valley minefields in the West Bank in 2017, using Israeli national budget and operating with Israeli companies. The INMAA sees significant potential for cancellation and reduction of land in the Jordan Valley, and is using various technologies and scientific tools to assess the likelihood of mine drift. The INMAA planned to invest around ILS 900,000 (approximately US\$250,000) on this project in 2017–19.⁵⁰

Table 3: Mine clearance in 2013–17⁵¹

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2017	41,857
2016	34,057
2015	63,411
2014	21,832
2013	7,000
Total	168,157

PMAC does not have its own budget, and the Palestinian authority only provides funding for the salary of PMAC employees and the PMAC office.⁵² In 2017, UNMAS provided a grant of \$20,000 to PMAC.⁵³

Neither PMAC nor the INMAA provides direct funding for HALO Trust's clearance operations,⁵⁴ with the exception of the baptism site clearance task in the West Bank, to which the INMAA contributes ILS 2 million (approximately US\$548,000).⁵⁵ The HALO Trust's clearance programme in the West Bank is primarily funded by the governments of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as by private donors.⁵⁶

- 1 Email from Brig. Joma Mousa, then Director, PMAC, 31 March 2014.
- 2 HALO Trust, "West Bank, The problem", at: www.halotrust.org/where-we-work/west-bank.
- 3 Emails from Tom Meredith, then Desk Officer, HALO Trust, 24 June and 23 October 2015; and Sonia Pezier, then Junior Programme Officer, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), 14 April 2015.
- 4 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 22 April, 3 August 2017, and 14 May 2018.
- 5 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 14 May 2018; and the Planning Department, PMAC, 26 June 2018. Table 1 refers to Jordanian-laid minefields. The two minefields in no-man's land are located west of the separation barrier in an Israeli controlled area. There were inconsistencies between PMAC and HALO Trust data regarding the size of the Araba, Nur a-Shams, and Qabatiya minefields, as at end of 2017. PMAC's list appeared to contain inaccuracies and included mine contamination at Deir Abu Daif minefield, where clearance was completed in October 2017.
- 6 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 14 May 2018.
- 7 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 14 May and 26 July 2018.
- 8 Email from Celine Francois, Programme Officer, UNMAS, Jerusalem, 5 July 2012; and "UNMAS 2013 Annual Report".
- 9 Email from Celine Francois, Programme Officer, UNMAS, Jerusalem, 5 July 2012; and "UNMAS 2013 Annual Report"; and UNMAS, "State of Palestine", accessed 29 July 2015 at: <http://www.mineaction.org/print/programmes/state-palestine>.
- 10 Statement of Palestine, 16th Meeting of States Parties to the APMB, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
- 11 PMAC, "Strategic Plan 2017–2020", undated.
- 12 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 3 September 2018.
- 13 Email from Sonia Pezier, UNMAS, 14 April 2015; UNMAS, "State of Palestine", accessed 29 July 2015; and email from Tom Meredith, HALO Trust, 23 October 2015.
- 14 Minister of Interior Decision No. 69 [outgoing 1223], 25 March 2012.
- 15 Emails from Celine Francois, UNMAS Jerusalem, 19 July 2012; and Imad Mohareb, Planning Department, PMAC, 31 March 2013.
- 16 Emails from Celine Francois, UNMAS Jerusalem, 5 and 19 July 2012; and UN, "2012 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects", New York, 2013.
- 17 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 9 May 2016.
- 18 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 26 June 2018.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 30 August 2018.
- 22 Email from Celine Francois, UNMAS Jerusalem, 5 July 2012.
- 23 PMAC, "Strategic Plan 2017–2020", undated.
- 24 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 22 April 2017.
- 25 Statement of Palestine, 15th Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 29 November 2016.
- 26 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 26 June 2018.
- 27 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 14 May 2018.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 30 August 2018.
- 31 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 3 Sept 2018.
- 32 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 26 June 2018.
- 33 Email from Tom Meredith, HALO Trust, 11 May 2015.
- 34 HALO Trust, "West Bank", accessed 17 July 2018.
- 35 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 14 May 2018.
- 36 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 9 May 2016; and telephone interview with Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 3 August 2017.
- 37 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 14 May 2018.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Emails from the Planning Department, PMAC, 26 June 2018; Michael Heiman, formerly the Director of Technology and Knowledge Management, INMAA, 26 May 2018; and Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 14 May 2018. There was a minor discrepancy between HALO Trust data and that provided by INMAA, regarding the Araba minefield. INMAA reported HALO Trust clearance of 3,049m², whereas HALO Trust reported 3,542m². There were bigger unexplained discrepancies between HALO Trust clearance output data for 2017 and that provided by PMAC, which totalled 30,886m², with the destruction of 86 anti-personnel mines, 8 anti-vehicle mines, and 7 items of UXO.
- 40 Michael Heiman, formerly INMAA, 26 May 2018; and "Israel to clear mines from over 15 acres to expand West Bank settlement", *The Jerusalem Post*, 6 November 2017.
- 41 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 14 May 2018; and Michael Heiman, formerly INMAA, 26 May 2018.
- 42 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 14 May 2018.
- 43 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly INMAA, 26 May 2018.
- 44 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 14 May 2018; and telephone interview, 23 August 2018.
- 45 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly INMAA, 26 May 2018.
- 46 Telephone interview with Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 23 August 2018.
- 47 Statement of Palestine, 16th Meeting of States Parties to the APMB, Vienna, 20 December 2017; and email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 26 June 2018.
- 48 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 22 April 2017 and 14 May 2018; and telephone interview, 3 August 2017.
- 49 Interview with Michael Heiman, then INMAA, in Geneva, 15 February 2018; and email, 26 May 2018.
- 50 Interview with Michael Heiman, then INMAA, in Geneva, 15 February 2018; and emails, 23 July, 10 August 2017, and 26 May 2018.
- 51 See Landmine Monitor and Mine Action Review reports on Palestine in 2013–16. HALO Trust previously reported 12,226m² of clearance in 2014, but it was subsequently found that this only included manual clearance and excluded 9,606m² of mechanical clearance that also took place. The correct revised total for 2014 is 21,832m². Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 18 October 2016.
- 52 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 26 June 2018.
- 53 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 24 May 2017.
- 54 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 22 April 2017.
- 55 Email from Michael Heiman, formerly INMAA, 26 May 2018.
- 56 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 22 April 2017; and telephone interview, 3 August 2017.