



PALESTINE

MINE ACTION PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

For 2016

For 2015

Problem understood	5	5
Target date for completion of mine clearance	6	5
Targeted clearance	6	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	6	5
PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE	5.4	5.2

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Palestine continued to make progress in demining in 2016, with the completion of clearance by The HALO Trust of the Husan minefield in the governorate of Bethlehem in January 2016, followed by the clearance of the Um Daraj minefield in the governorate of Hebron in November 2016. In addition, in another positive development the Israeli National Mine Action Authority (INMAA) began a survey of Israeli- and Jordanian-laid minefields in the Jordan Valley in early 2017.

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

- Palestine should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.

CONTAMINATION

In Palestine, hazards encompass minefields, military training zones, and areas of confrontation where many explosive devices remain. A 2013 survey by the Palestine Mine Action Centre (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 August 2017, more than 0.4km² of confirmed mined area exists (excluding the Jordan Valley) across seven minefields in Palestinian-controlled territory and two minefields are in no-man's-land between the West Bank and Israel. All nine minefields (see Table 1) were laid by the Jordanian army.⁴

Table 1: Confirmed mine contamination (as at August 2017) (excluding the Jordan Valley)*⁵

Governorate	Minefield Task Name	Contamination	CHAs	Area (m ²)
Jenin	Araba	AV and AP mines	1	11,451
	Qabatiya	AV and AP mines	1	11,300
	Yabad	AV and AP mines	1	48,054
	Deir Abu Daif	AV and AP mines	1	14,506
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			9	417,591

CHAs = Confirmed hazardous areas

AV = Anti-vehicle

AP = Anti-personnel

Four of the twelve governorates in the West Bank still contain mined areas, as at August 2017.⁶ The governorates of Bethlehem and Hebron are no longer considered contaminated, after clearance of the Husan task, the sole remaining minefield in Bethlehem governorate, was completed on 19 January 2016, and clearance of the Um Daraj and Surif minefields in Hebron governorate was completed on 6 November 2016 and 1 June 2017 respectively.⁷

Most mined areas are located in Area C of the West Bank (see below) along the border with Jordan, which 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 either poorly marked or not marked at all. They are accessible to the population, and in some cases are even under cultivation. 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,¹¹ in addition to PMAC.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

An authorisation from the Palestinian Authority's prime minister on 25 March 2012 set up PMAC, appointed its 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.¹²

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).¹³ The committee has established a number of sub-committees to deal with technical issues, risk education, legal affairs, foreign affairs, and health and safety.¹⁴

PMAC currently has ten employees¹⁵ and 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.¹⁶ 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.¹⁷

Mine action is subject to the 1995 Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, under which the West Bank is divided into three areas: Area A is under full Palestinian civilian 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 control of security, planning, and construction.¹⁸

Strategic Planning

According to PMAC, a three-year strategic mine action plan up to 2020 has been drafted for Palestine,¹⁹ but as at September 2017, the details of the plan had not yet been shared with mine action partners.²⁰

Survey and clearance in the West Bank, which is conducted by The HALO Trust, is prioritised by HALO Trust's donors, in conjunction with the INMAA and PMAC.²¹

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.²² As at May 2017, however, no further development had been made regarding the draft law.²³

HALO Trust's standing operating procedures (SOPs) are approved by INMAA and are based on national standards. Once a year, HALO Trust submits its SOPs, including any necessary amendments, to INMAA for approval.²⁴

Quality Management

The HALO Trust's work in the West Bank complies with the Israeli Standard Institute for Standards, in particular ISOs 9001, 14001, and 18001. 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 SOPs.²⁵ In addition, as required by 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.²⁶

Operators

To date, Israel has not authorised demining operations by Palestinian deminers and no clearance operation has been conducted by PMAC.²⁷ In September 2013, however, the INMAA gave formal authorisation for The HALO Trust to clear two of the eleven minefields deemed high priority by PMAC. Following INMAA authorisation, The HALO Trust began mine clearance in the West Bank in April 2014.²⁸

The HALO Trust works under the auspices of both the INMAA and PMAC.²⁹ In 2016, it employed 22 manual deminers for its operations in the West Bank, and deployed mechanical assets including three front-loading shovels, an armoured excavator, and a rock crusher.³⁰

LAND RELEASE

The total mined area released by clearance in 2016 was 34,057m², compared to 63,411m² in 2015.

Survey in 2016

No land was reduced by technical survey in 2016 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 INMAA, but it is part of pre-clearance task preparation, and is of confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) already recorded in PMAC's database and on maps.³¹

Clearance in 2016

In 2016, The HALO Trust cleared 34,057m² of mined area in 2016.

This included completion of clearance of the Husan minefield, in the governorate of Bethlehem, which had been partially cleared by Quadro in 2013, before The HALO Trust commenced clearance on the remainder of the site in 2015. In January, HALO Trust's mechanical team excavated the final 1,109m² and destroyed one anti-personnel mine, before completing the task.³²

In addition, HALO Trust cleared 32,948m² of mined area in Um Daraj, in the governorate of Hebron in the West Bank, with the destruction of 23 anti-personnel mines and 14 items of UXO.³³

Table 2: HALO Trust mine clearance in 2016³⁴

Province	Governorate	Areas released	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Husan	Bethlehem	1	1,109	1	0
Um Daraj	Hebron	1	32,948	23	14
Totals		2	34,057	24	14

Following completion of clearance at Um Daraj minefield in November 2016, the start of clearance at Surif minefield (also in Hebron governorate), was delayed until January 2017. This was due to the external QA company's

need to recruit international QA inspectors for the Surif task, as longstanding security arrangements by the Israeli authorities preclude Israeli nationals working on site as QA inspectors.³⁵

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Palestine is not a state party or signatory to the APMBC but nonetheless has obligations under international human rights law to protect life, which requires the clearance of mines as soon as possible.

In May 2017, PMAC's director claimed that clearance of anti-personnel mines in Palestine would be completed in 2020.³⁶ 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 August 2017 HALO Trust had completed clearance of four minefields in Area C of the West Bank.³⁷ The HALO Trust has now completed its survey of the Jordanian-laid minefields in the West Bank, and as at August 2017, five Jordanian-laid minefields in the governorates of Jenin and Tul Kareem, which fall within HALO Trust's donor agreement, remained to be cleared. HALO Trust planned to complete clearance of the four minefields in Jenin governorate and the one minefield in Tul Kareem governorate by the end of 2018.³⁸

Furthermore, the INMAA reported that at the start of 2017, it had begun survey of the Jordan Valley minefields in the West Bank, using 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 measure mine drift possibilities. The INMAA planned to invest around NIS 900,000 (approximately US\$250,000) on this project in 2017–19.³⁹

The HALO Trust also reported that after completion of the five priority West Bank minefields it is working on, it would then look into clearance of minefields in the Jordan Valley, the majority of which are Israeli-laid.⁴⁰

Table 3: Mine clearance in 2012–16⁴¹

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2016	34,057
2015	63,411
2014	21,832
2013	7,000
2012	0
Total	126,300

PMAC does not have its own budget, and the Palestinian authority only provides funding for the salary of PMAC employees and the PMAC office.⁴² New Zealand donor funding to PMAC ended in 2016.⁴³ In 2017, UNMAS provided a grant of \$20,000 to PMAC.⁴⁴

Neither PMAC nor INMAA provides direct funding for HALO Trust's clearance operations. HALO Trust's clearance programme in the West Bank is funded by the governments of the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and private donors.⁴⁵

- 1 Email from Brig. Joma Mousa, 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 and 3 August 2017.
- 5 Ibid. 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's data on the number and location of mined areas. As at end-2016, PMAC reported three confirmed mined areas, totalling 0.12km², across the governorates of Bethlehem, Hebron, and Qalqiliya. Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 24 May 2017. PMAC's list, though, appears to contain inaccuracies.
- 6 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 22 April and 3 August 2017.
- 7 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 3 August 2017.
- 8 Email from Celine Francois, Programme Officer, UNMAS, Jerusalem, 5 July 2012; and "UNMAS 2013 Annual Report".
- 9 Ibid.; and UNMAS, "State of Palestine", accessed 29 July 2015 at: <http://www.mineaction.org/print/programmes/state-palestine>.
- 10 Emails from Sonia Pezier, UNMAS, 14 April 2015; Brig. Joma Abdeljabbar, PMAC, 12 March 2015; and Tom Meredith, HALO Trust, 11 May 2015; UNMAS, "State of Palestine", accessed 29 July 2015; and Statement of Palestine, 15th Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 29 November 2016.
- 11 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.
- 12 Emails from Celine Francois, UNMAS Jerusalem, 19 July 2012; and Imad Mohareb, Planning Department, PMAC, 31 March 2013.
- 13 Emails from Celine Francois, UNMAS Jerusalem, 5 and 19 July 2012; and UN, "2012 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects", New York, 2013.
- 14 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 9 May 2016.
- 15 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 24 May 2017.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Email from Celine Francois, UNMAS Jerusalem, 5 July 2012.
- 19 Emails from the Planning Department, PMAC, 28 September and 1 October 2017.
- 20 Email from Sasha Logie, UNMAS, 28 September 2017.
- 21 Email from Ronen Shimoni, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 22 April 2017.
- 22 Statement of Palestine, 15th Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 29 November 2016.
- 23 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 24 May 2017.
- 24 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 22 April 2017.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 24 May 2017.
- 28 Email from Tom Meredith, HALO Trust, 11 May 2015.
- 29 HALO Trust, "West Bank", accessed 25 July 2017.
- 30 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 22 April 2017.
- 31 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 9 May 2016; and telephone interview with Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 3 August 2017.
- 32 Emails from Tom Meredith, HALO Trust, 23 October 2015; and Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 22 April and, 3 and 10 August 2017.
- 33 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 22 April and 10 August 2017.
- 34 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 22 April and 3 and 10 August 2017; and Michael Heiman, Director of Technology and Knowledge Management, INMAA, 23 July and 10 August 2017. There were discrepancies between HALO Trust's data, and that provided by PMAC. PMAC reported HALO Trust clearance of 30,000m² at Um-daraj, with the destruction of 23 anti-personnel mines and one item of UXO. Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 24 May 2017.
- 35 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 22 April 2017.
- 36 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 24 May 2017.
- 37 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 3 August 2017.
- 38 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 22 April, 3 August, and 12 September 2017.
- 39 Emails from Michael Heiman, INMAA, 23 July and 10 August 2017.
- 40 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 22 April 2017, and telephone interview, 3 August 2017.
- 41 See Landmine Monitor and Mine Action Review reports on Palestine in 2012–15. 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.
- 42 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 24 May 2017.
- 43 Email from Sasha Logie, Programme Manager, UNMAS, 18 September 2017.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 22 April 2017; and telephone interview, 3 August 2017.