

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JUNE 2028
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

PROBABLY LESS THAN 5 KM²

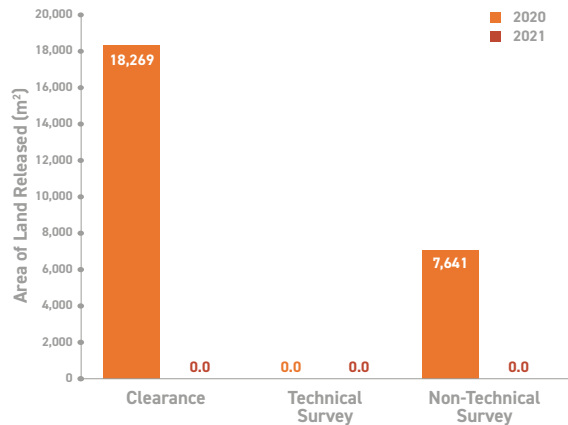
AP MINE CLEARANCE IN 2021

0 M²

AP MINES DESTROYED IN 2021

0

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): LOW

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

All mined areas in Palestine are located in territory under Israeli control. To date, Israel has not authorised the Palestinian Mine Action Centre (PMAC) to conduct demining. The HALO Trust's clearance activities in the West Bank were suspended at the end of 2020, primarily because of a lack of funding, and no land was released in 2021. However, HALO Trust secured funding to restart clearance in the West Bank in 2022 where it planned to clear three priority minefields by the end of 2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Israel should allow survey and clearance of all mined areas on Palestinian territory to proceed as a matter of urgency.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Higher Committee for Mine Action
- Palestine Mine Action Centre (PMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- The HALO Trust

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

In its initial Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 7 transparency report, submitted in November 2018, Palestine reported 69 areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mines on the border with Jordan, covering a total area of 18.51km². All of the mined areas were said to be under Israeli control.¹ Palestine said it was not in a position to know whether further mined areas are located in East Jerusalem or in other areas of Palestine under Israeli control, including in the region of Israeli settlements or closed military zones.²

The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) informed The HALO Trust in 2012 about the presence of 90 minefields in the West Bank, 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. The minefields are located east of the security fence, inside a military buffer zone, and do not carry immediate threat to civilians. All the minefields, including those laid by the Jordanian military, are under Israeli military control.³ There are no known mined areas in the Gaza strip.⁴

The HALO Trust conducts clearance operations in Palestine and works under the auspices of both the Israeli National Mine Action Authority (INMAA) and PMAC. Clearance operations must be coordinated with the Israeli authorities and PMAC, and, under Israeli law, must be quality assured by an Israeli company.⁵

In 2019, HALO Trust was made aware of three other anti-personnel mined areas in the Jordan Valley, namely at Shademot Mehola (65,000m²) and Sokot (228,000m²), containing a mix of anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines; and at Taysir (5,500m²), which contains only anti-vehicle mines. Sokot is an Israeli-laid minefield while the other two minefields were laid by Jordanian forces.⁶ In 2020, HALO discussed the possibility of surveying these three minefields with both Palestinian and Israeli authorities. However, given the current political sensitivity over the Jordan Valley, these minefields had to be put on hold until the INMAA or the IDF decide to clear the areas themselves.⁷

Clearance of the Jordanian-laid minefields in Tulkarem and Jenin is not funded by either the Palestinian or the Israeli governments and HALO has faced significant challenges raising funds for their clearance from donor countries.⁸ However, having secured funding from The Netherlands and the US Department of State, The HALO Trust planned to complete clearance at the site in Tulkarem in 2022⁹ and will clear the remaining two sites in Jenin by the end of 2023. The funding may also be used to clear land in the Jordan Valley, if the donors agree.¹⁰

As at end of 2021, there was nearly 0.26km² of confirmed mined area (excluding the Jordan Valley) across three minefields in Palestine and two minefields in no-man's-land between the West Bank and Israel (see Table 1).¹¹ All five minefields had been laid by the Jordanian army.

Table 1: Mined area (excluding the Jordan Valley) (at end 2021)¹²

Governorate	Minefield Task	Contamination	CHAs	Area (m ²)
Jenin	Qabatiya	AV and AP mines	1	8,212
	Yabad	AV and AP mines	1	40,032
Tulkarem	Nur a-Shams	AV and AP mines	1	24,100
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			5	262,278

CHAs = Confirmed hazardous areas AV = Anti-vehicle AP = Anti-personnel

1 Palestine Initial Article 7 Report, dated 26 November 2018, Form D and Annex 2.

2 Ibid., Form D.

3 Emails from Tom Meredith, Desk Officer, HALO Trust, 24 June and 23 October 2015; and Sonia Pezier, Junior Programme Officer, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), 14 April 2015; and Ronen Shimoni, Programme Manager, HALO Trust, 13 June 2021.

4 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 13 June 2021.

5 Email from Soula Kreitem, Programme Support Officer, UNMAS, 30 June 2021.

6 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 21 September 2019, 20 April 2020, and 17 May 2022.

7 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021.

8 Ibid.

9 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

10 Ibid.

11 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021 and 17 May 2022.

12 Emails from Maj. Wala Jarrar, External and Internal Relations Officer, PMAC, 13 May 2020 and 15 June 2022; and Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021 and 17 May 2022.

The total extent of anti-personnel mine contamination at the end of 2021 is the same as at the end of the previous year, reflecting the fact that The HALO Trust was unable to perform any clearance in 2021.¹³

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.¹⁴ Most

mined areas are located in Area C of the West Bank, along the border with Jordan. Area C covers approximately 60% of the West Bank.¹⁵

Palestine is also contaminated with explosive remnants of war (ERW). According to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), PMAC has identified 46 ERW-contaminated areas in the West Bank. These areas are predominantly Israeli military training sites. In 2020, UNMAS also conducted an ERW impact survey in some locations close to these areas to better understand the impact of the contamination on the residents.¹⁶

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

PMAC was established in accordance with Palestinian Minister of Interior decision on 25 March 2012,¹⁷ 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 with developing mine action legislation and allocating resources for the sector.¹⁸

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 UNMAS.¹⁹ PMAC has established a number of subcommittees to deal with technical issues, risk education, legal affairs, foreign affairs, and health and safety.²⁰

In 2016, Palestine announced it was seeking to enact a mine action law. Palestine was hopeful of completing the legal procedures within a year and then presenting the draft law to the legislative council for endorsement, followed by signature by the President.²¹ Palestine confirmed on 20 April 2022 that it was working to issue a mine action law in accordance with the APMBC, and that preparations were underway.²² As at June 2022, however, the process of developing and adopting the legislation was still ongoing.²³ In November 2017, Palestine's constitutional court ruled that, in an event

of any contradiction, obligations in international conventions, including the APMBC, override national legislation.²⁴

PMAC, which has 11 employees,²⁵ is staffed with personnel from the Palestinian National Security Forces, Civil Police, and Civil Defence. In 2013, 36 PMAC personnel were trained by UNMAS for demining but were not subsequently authorised by Israel to conduct clearance.²⁶ The Civil Police have an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) unit with 42 personnel in Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, Nablus, Qalqilya, Ramallah, and Tulkarem, 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.²⁷ All West Bank Police EOD Units are poorly equipped and lack EOD training. Due to poor IT systems none of the EOD teams shares information with PMAC, although this is changing.²⁸

PMAC does not have its own budget, and the Palestinian authority only provides funding for the salaries of PMAC employees and the costs of the PMAC office.²⁹ As at July 2022, Israel had not granted Palestine authorisation to conduct mine clearance operations in the West Bank.

HALO Trust's land release operations of the priority minefields in the West Bank are funded by international donors. Both the INMAA and PMAC support HALO's activities and provide the necessary coordination and involvement.³⁰

13 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

14 Email from Celine Francois, Programme Officer, UNMAS Jerusalem, 5 July 2012.

15 Ibid.; and "UNMAS 2013 Annual Report".

16 Email from Soula Kreitem, UNMAS, 30 June 2021.

17 Minister of Interior Decision No. 69, 25 March 2012.

18 Emails from Celine Francois, UNMAS Jerusalem, 19 July 2012; and Imad Mohareb, Planning Department, PMAC, 31 March 2013.

19 Emails from Celine Francois, UNMAS Jerusalem, 5 and 19 July 2012; and UN, "2012 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects", New York, 2013.

20 Email from the Planning Department, PMAC, 9 May 2016.

21 Statement of Palestine, APMBC 15th Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 29 November 2016.

22 Preliminary Observations Committee on Cooperative Compliance, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022, p. 6.

23 Statement of Palestine, Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Oslo, 25 November 2019; and email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 17 June 2022.

24 Initial APMBC Article 7 Report, 26 November 2018, Form A.

25 Email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 13 May 2021.

26 Initial Article 7 Report, 26 November 2018, Form D.

27 Email from staff member in the Planning Department, PMAC, 26 June 2018.

28 Email from Patrick McCabe, Chief of Operations, UNMAS Palestine, 22 August 2022.

29 Interview with Brig. Osama Abu Hananeh, PMAC, Geneva, 7 February 2019; and email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 24 May 2020.

30 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 24 July 2022.

In September 2020, UNMAS provided a one-year grant to PMAC to enable the Centre to mainstream gender in its explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) activities. The project aimed to train particularly women to provide EORE in at-risk communities in the West Bank.³¹

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

HALO has a policy and a standard operating procedure (SOP) on the environmental impact of clearance operations and mitigation³² and all clearance operations are planned and conducted to minimise any environmental impact. Where impact cannot be avoided, plans are made to mitigate this and to make good any damage caused, for example replacing soil and replanting vegetation. Landowners and communities are included in the development of clearance plans, and mitigation and remedial measures.³³

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

PMAC has said it has a gender policy and implementation plan, that it disaggregates data by sex and age,³⁴ and that qualified women and men have equal access to employment.³⁵ As a result of the one-year grant by UNMAS for the mainstreaming of gender in its EORE activities, the number of women working and volunteering at PMAC increased. Forty per cent of PMAC's employees were women in 2021 (an increase from 27% in 2020), all are in managerial or supervisory positions, and 50% are in operational positions.³⁶ Half of EORE volunteers were women.³⁷

The HALO Trust has a global policy on gender and diversity. When conducting operations, HALO's Palestine programme deploys all-male deminers from Georgia due to "cultural considerations". HALO's Palestinian employees include mechanical operators, medical and support teams. The representation of female employees varies according to the operation. For managerial positions within HALO's West Bank office team there is said to be equal access to employment for qualified women and men.³⁸

UNMAS has a female liaison officer in Ramallah who works with PMAC on a daily basis.³⁹

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

PMAC uses an old version of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA), but is planning to update it.⁴⁰ The Police EOD systems are also old and EOD teams have not been inputting information into IMSMA.⁴¹ UNMAS is investigating the possibility of funding new information management (IM) equipment and training for PMAC staff on IMSMA Core, and there is a donor funding proposal for 2022 and 2023.⁴²

The HALO Trust follows the INMAA's national standards and, when undertaking operations in the West Bank, provides daily and weekly reports as well as completion reports for every task. The information is shared with PMAC weekly, along with completion reports and Geographic Information System (GIS) data for every completed task.⁴³ As a result, all three entities are in possession of HALO Trust survey and clearance data relating to demining operations in the West Bank.

Palestine submitted an initial Article 7 report in November 2018, as required by the APMBC.⁴⁴ As at September 2022, Palestine had not submitted Article 7 reports for 2020 or 2021.

31 Email from Soula Kreitem, UNMAS, 30 June 2021.

32 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

33 Ibid.

34 Email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 24 May 2020.

35 Email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 12 May 2021.

36 Email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 15 June 2022.

37 Ibid.

38 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 23 April and 13 June 2021, and 17 May 2022.

39 Email from Patrick McCabe, UNMAS, 17 August 2022.

40 Email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 15 June 2022.

41 Email from Patrick McCabe, UNMAS, 17 August 2022.

42 Ibid.

43 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 3 Sept 2018 and 18 June 2020.

44 Initial Article 7 Report, 26 November 2018, Form D.

PLANNING AND TASKING

PMAC had a Strategic Plan for 2017–20,⁴⁵ in which the primary objectives are the clearance of the Nur a-Shams, Qabatiya, and Yabad minefields.⁴⁶ As of June 2022, a new strategic plan was reported to be in the pipeline but was not finalised.⁴⁷ According to PMAC, there were no annual work plans in place for 2020, 2021, or 2022.⁴⁸

HALO Trust's survey and clearance schedule in the West Bank is set in agreement with PMAC, INMAA, and its international donors.⁴⁹ In 2022, HALO completed clearance operations in Nur a-Shams (in Tulkarem) between June and July, and planned to clear 20% of the minefield in Qabatiya (in Jenin) between August and December 2022, clearing the remainder of the contaminated land in Qabatiya and Yabad (in Jenin) by the end of 2023.⁵⁰

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

The HALO Trust's SOPs, which are based on its international standards and comply with national standards, are approved by the INMAA. The HALO Trust usually submits its SOPs annually, including any necessary amendments, to INMAA for approval.⁵¹ They were last submitted and approved in June 2020 and have not been amended since.⁵²

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

As indicated, Israel does not authorise PMAC to conduct demining operations in the West Bank. In September 2013, however, the INMAA gave formal authorisation to The HALO Trust to clear two minefields in the West Bank deemed high priority by PMAC. Following INMAA authorisation, HALO Trust began clearance in April 2014, and has continued demining operations in the West Bank since then, though operations paused in 2021 due to lack of funding.⁵³

The HALO Trust works under the auspices of both INMAA and PMAC. Its manual clearance team in the West Bank is composed of deminers from Georgia with capacity varying between 15 and 22 deminers according to the task/work cycle, though in 2021, HALO maintained only essential staff at its office in the West Bank given the lack of funding for survey or clearance.⁵⁴

The HALO Trust's work in the West Bank complies with the Israeli 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. In addition, the INMAA requires external INMAA-certified companies to undertake QA/QC of HALO's clearance operations in line with Israeli law National Mine Action Standards.

When undertaking operations, HALO Trust performs survey as part of its clearance operations of the Jordanian-laid minefields in Area C of the West Bank. It is part of pre-clearance task preparation and is of CHAs already recorded in PMAC's database and on maps.⁵⁵ The HALO Trust conducts both manual and mechanical clearance. It also uses a drone for survey and mapping, and the maps generated are shared with all parties involved for planning and follow-up.⁵⁶

45 Palestine's Article 7 report covering 2017 indicated that the strategic plan covers 2017–22. It is not clear whether Palestine's strategic plan expired in 2020 or is valid until 2022.

46 PMAC, "Strategic Plan 2017–2020", undated.

47 Email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 15 June 2022.

48 Emails from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 24 May 2020, 12 May 2021, and 15 June 2022.

49 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 18 June 2020.

50 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022; and online interview on 28 July 2022.

51 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 14 May 2018.

52 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 Emails from staff member in the Planning Department, PMAC, 9 May 2016; and Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 14 June 2020.

56 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 10 April 2019.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2021

The HALO Trust released no land in 2021 as it had no funding for demining operations.⁵⁷ This is in contrast to 2020, when HALO released 25,910m² of land in the West Bank, including the Jordan valley. Of the released land in 2020, 7,641m² was cancelled while 18,269m² was cleared. A total of 515 anti-personnel mines were destroyed in the process.⁵⁸

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE

APMBC ENTRY INTO FORCE FOR PALESTINE: 1 JUNE 2018



ORIGINAL ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JUNE 2028

NOT ON TRACK TO MEET ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE. COMPLETION IS CONTINGENT ON POLITICAL FACTORS, AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS, AND DEMINING PROGRESS MADE BY ISRAEL AND THE HALO TRUST, AS PALESTINE DOES NOT HAVE CONTROL OF MINED AREAS UNDER ITS JURISDICTION. LIKELIHOOD OF COMPLETING CLEARANCE BY 2025 (OSLO ACTION PLAN COMMITMENT): LOW

Clearance in the West Bank is constrained by available funding,⁵⁹ and is impacted by political factors, including the lack of authorisation granted by Israel for Palestine to conduct mine clearance operations.⁶⁰ PMAC has reported that concluding clearance and meeting the 2025 deadline is highly dependent on the facilitation of the Israeli authorities and the availability of funds.⁶¹

The HALO Trust, which began mine clearance operations in April 2014, had cleared six minefields in Area C of the West Bank by the end of 2020,⁶² and by September 2021 had secured funding to clear the minefields at Qabatiya and Yabad (in Jenin governorate), and the remaining mined area of Nur a-Shams (in Tulkarem governorate). After completion of the three priority Jordanian-laid minefields, HALO Trust plans to look into clearance of certain mined areas in the Jordan Valley, one third of which are Israeli-laid.⁶³

In February 2019, INMAA had hoped that clearance of mined areas in the West Bank would be finished in two years. According to INMAA, the Yalo and Canada Park minefields will both be cleared, but according to humanitarian prioritisation, noting that the minefields are fenced and marked, and claiming that they have little humanitarian impact.⁶⁴ As at

April 2021, clearance in these minefields had not yet started and as at July 2022, the INMAA website did not indicate any progress.

INMAA began survey of the Jordan Valley minefields in the West Bank in 2017, using Israeli national budget and operating with Israeli companies. 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.⁶⁵

Table 2: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2021	0
2020	18,269
2019	13,976
2018	5,221
2017	41,857
Total	79,323

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Palestine does not have plans in place to address residual contamination once its Article 5 obligations have been fulfilled.

57 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

58 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 23 April 2021.

59 Email from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 17 May 2022.

60 Initial Article 7 Report, 26 November 2018, Form D; and interview with Brig. Osama Abu Hananeh, PMAC, in Geneva, 7 February 2019.

61 Email from Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 12 May 2021.

62 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 20 April 2020; and Wala Jarrar, PMAC, 12 May 2021.

63 Emails from Ronen Shimoni, HALO Trust, 22 April 2017, 14 May 2018, and 18 June 2020; and telephone interview, 3 August 2017.

64 Interview with Marcel Aviv, INMAA, in Geneva, 7 February 2019.

65 Interview with Michael Heiman, INMAA, in Geneva, 15 February 2018; and emails, 23 July and 10 August 2017; and, after leaving INMAA, 26 May 2018.