

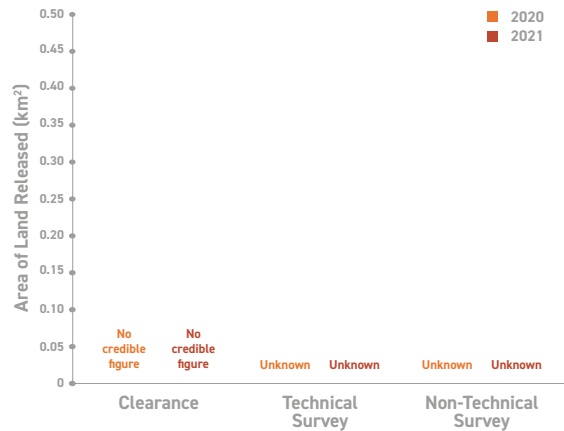
## KEY DATA

### ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: UNKNOWN

AP MINE CLEARANCE IN 2021  
**NO CREDIBLE FIGURE**

AP MINES DESTROYED IN 2021  
**NOT REPORTED**

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Russia should cease laying anti-personnel mines in Ukraine and accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Russia should clear anti-personnel mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, consonant with its obligations under international human rights law.

## DEMINEING CAPACITY

### MANAGEMENT CAPACITY\*

- No national mine action authority.
- No formal civilian mine action programme.
- The International Mine Action Centre of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (IMAC), formerly known as the International Demining Action Centre. IMAC is a specialist training base and co-ordinates Russia's international mine action. It is not a mine action centre as the term is generally understood in mine action.

### INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

### NATIONAL OPERATORS\*

- Military units of the Engineering Troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.
- Military Engineers of the Airborne Forces.
- Federal Ministry of Defence Engineers.
- Demining brigades of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
- Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES) specialised demining units (EMERCOM Demining and the "Leader" Center for Special Tasks).

### OTHER ACTORS

- None

\* IMAC, the Military Units of the Engineering Troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and the Military Engineers of the Airborne Forces are referred to in publicly available sources dated 2021. Other information in this table is based on information from earlier years. It is not known if it remains accurate.

## UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

There is no accurate estimate of the extent of mine contamination but Russia remains contaminated with mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) as a result of the Second World War, the two Chechen wars (1994–96 and 1999–2009), and armed conflicts in the Caucasian republics of Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria.

Anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines were used extensively in the two major conflicts in Chechnya. Estimates of the extent of contamination vary greatly because no systematic effort has been undertaken to assess the scope or impact of the problem.<sup>1</sup> In 2010, Russia's deputy prime minister and presidential special envoy to the Caucasus, Aleksandr Khloponin, claimed that mines affected 14km<sup>2</sup> of land and posed a major obstacle to development.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, Chechen officials and human rights organisations have previously estimated that 245km<sup>2</sup> of land was mined, including 165km<sup>2</sup> of farmland and 73km<sup>2</sup> of woodland.<sup>3</sup>

In January 2017, a commander in the Russian Armed Forces reportedly told press agency Interfax that more than 100km<sup>2</sup> of land remained to be cleared in Chechnya, and a further 20km<sup>2</sup> in neighbouring Ingushetia.<sup>4</sup> According to the online media report, areas cleared to date had nearly all been in lowland Chechnya and remaining mined area is in more mountainous terrain, complicating demining efforts.<sup>5</sup>

According to online media reports, clearance in Chechnya and Ingushetia started in 2012, with most of the explosive devices destroyed resulting from the two Chechen wars.<sup>6</sup> In 2021 Russia's Ministry of Defence (MoD) stated that Russia had planned to clear approximately 160km<sup>2</sup> of agricultural and forest land, but that over the course of nine years, military personnel had exceeded this, surveying approximately 240km<sup>2</sup> and discovering and destroying more than 41,000 explosive items (mines, shells, grenades, and other ammunition), as well as improvised explosive devices (IEDs). It is not clear how much of this 240km<sup>2</sup> represents land contaminated with anti-personnel mines.<sup>7</sup>

### USE OF MINES IN UKRAINE SINCE 2014

In the most recent conflict in Ukraine, Russia has made very widespread use of anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines.<sup>8</sup> In the past, reports of minefields emplaced to demarcate border areas after Russia's annexation of the Crimea in 2014 appeared to have concerned either "phony minefields"<sup>9</sup> or areas containing trip-flares. Trip-flares are not covered by the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). On 7 March 2014, Ukrainian media reported that the Russian military had laid mines around the main gas line into Crimea.<sup>10</sup>

## PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

There is no formal civilian mine action programme in Russia and no national mine action authority. Mine clearance is carried out by Military units of the Engineering Troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation,<sup>11</sup> the Military Engineers of the Airborne Forces,<sup>12</sup> Federal Ministry of Defence engineers, demining brigades of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and by the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES), through its specialised demining units (EMERCOM Demining and the "Leader" Center for Special Tasks).<sup>13</sup>

1 UNMAS, "Portfolio of Mine Action Projects 2009", New York, 2008, p. 284.

2 "Medvedev emphasizes vision of Chechnya's future with personal visit", *Russia Today*, 14 June 2010, at: <https://bit.ly/33H4BgO>.

3 "MoE sappers to demine arable land in Chechnya", *Caucasian Knot*, 3 April 2009; "In Chechnya MES deminers destroyed 25 explosive devices", *Caucasian Knot*, 5 October 2009; and "Human rights activists: 25,000 hectares of Chechen territory are still mined", *Caucasian Knot*, 7 May 2008.

4 "Landmine threat in Chechnya still prevalent", *OC Media*, 23 January 2017, at: <https://bit.ly/33HxfOT>.

5 Ibid.

6 "Land Without Mines", *RGRU news*, 2 June 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/3gcKM93>; "Chechnya. Russian mines continue to kill people", *Caucasus Realities*, 19 December 2019, (Russian), at: <https://bit.ly/3vaMXyd>; "Sappers of the Southern Military District neutralized more than 2 thousand explosive objects on the territory of Chechnya and Ingushetia", *TAC*, 27 November 2019, at: <https://bit.ly/3iBuish>.

7 "Sappers of the Southern Military District completed demining work on the territory of Chechnya", *Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation*, at: <https://bit.ly/3QdfQEO>.

8 "Russians booby-trap 'safe corridor' in Ukraine with landmines: report", *New York Post*, 7 March 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3wkW2rT>; "Ukraine: Russia Uses Banned Antipersonnel Landmines", *Human Rights Watch*, 29 March 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3CiVpTg>; "Russia using banned 'jumping' landmines in Ukraine", *The Telegraph*, 30 March 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3dNKp6t>; "Russia 'using banned landmines' in north-eastern Ukraine", *The Times*, 30 March 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3R1mvCO>; "Russia urged to stop using land mines in its war in Ukraine", *ABC News*, 5 April 2022, at: <https://abcn.ws/3K9VNW3>; "Russia likely using Soviet-era landmines in Ukraine, say U.K. officials", *The Washington Times*, 8 August 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3AdfsA4>.

9 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II defines a phoney minefield as "an area free of mines that simulates a minefield. The term 'minefield' includes phoney minefields." Art. 2(8), CCW Amended Protocol II.

10 ICBL, "Reports of Russian landmine use in Crimea requires immediate response", Geneva, 10 March 2014, at: <http://bit.ly/20XjAzL>.

11 CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2021), Form A.

12 "Military engineers of the Airborne Forces neutralized more than 15 thousand explosive objects in 2021", *Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation*, at: <https://bit.ly/3SfbDCT>.

13 See, e.g., "It is planned to establish special groups for demining of lands within MES", *Caucasian Knot*, 23 July 2009; and "Autumn demining is completed in Chechnya", *Vesti Kavkaza*, 28 October 2009.

Russia reported that its armed forces established an International Demining Action Centre in 2014. The Centre serves as a base for specialist training in detection and clearance of explosive devices, demining, and operation of mobile robotic tools, and does not function as a mine action centre (MAC) as the term is generally understood in mine action.<sup>14</sup> In 2021, Russia referred instead to its International Mine Action Centre (IMAC) and reported that this centre, along with the Office of the General of the Engineering Troops, convened a Fourth International Demining Conference, attended by participants from 24 countries. Conference topics included training, search techniques, personal protective equipment, and robotics.<sup>15</sup>

In 2020, EMERCOM reported that annually it clears about 40,000 items of ordnance remaining from the Second World War in Russia. The bulk of the items found are said to be unexploded bombs, artillery shells, grenades, and landmines.<sup>16</sup>

In 2021, Russia reported that 1,608 military personnel were involved in explosive ordnance clearance, including 292 officers, 38 survey teams, 464 automobile technician units, and 27 engineering technician units.<sup>17</sup> This represents a decrease in capacity deployed compared to 2020, when 1,989 military personnel, 57 survey personnel, 522 machine operators, and 42 engineers were involved in clearance operations in the Russian Federation.<sup>18</sup>

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), of which Russia is a member, has reported that, on 24 June 2022, following a meeting of the Council of Defence Ministers of the CIS countries, that Russian Defence Minister, Sergei Shoigu, had said that a joint unit of humanitarian demining will be created in the CIS. No timeline for this was given.<sup>19</sup>

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

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It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in Russia in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

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## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Russia records information on the use of explosive ordnance at the headquarters of military units, with annual reports submitted to the Office of the Chief of Engineering Troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.<sup>20</sup>

Russia submits Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol II Article 13 reports and Protocol V Article 10 reports annually.

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## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

In 2021, mine clearance was carried out in Chechnya and Ingushetia, as well in areas where military operations were conducted during the Second World War.<sup>21</sup> Russia reported that Ministry of Defence forces cleared just over 175km<sup>2</sup> of mined area on Russian Federation territory in 2021, with 123,683 items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) found and destroyed.<sup>22</sup> The reported amount of land released through clearance decreased compared to 2020, when Russia reported clearing 261km<sup>2</sup> of mined area on Russian Federation territory, with 105,678 items of UXO found and destroyed,<sup>23</sup> again mainly in Chechnya and Ingushetia.<sup>24</sup> None of the figures is credible for the extent of clearance alone.

Over 70% of reported clearance in 2021 (125.8km<sup>2</sup>) took place in the Western Military District. A further 27.1km<sup>2</sup> was cleared in unspecified locations by military units directly subordinate to the General of the engineering troops, as well as 13.2km<sup>2</sup> in the Eastern Military District, 5km<sup>2</sup> in the Central Military District, and 4km<sup>2</sup> in the Southern Military District.<sup>25</sup>

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14 CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report, Form B, 31 March 2015; and meeting with Andrey Grebenshchikov, First Secretary, Department for Non-Proliferation and Arms Control, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Geneva, 9 April 2015.

15 CCW Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form E.

16 "About 40 thousand explosive objects from the time of the Great Patriotic War are annually destroyed by the pyrotechnic units of the Ministry of Emergencies of Russia", *EMERCOM media news*, 8 May 2020, at: <https://bit.ly/3wsuLlr>.

17 CCW Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form B.

18 CCW Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2020), Form B.

19 "Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said that a joint unit of humanitarian demining will be created in the CIS", *Commonwealth of Independent States*, 27 June 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3b1ulgn>.

20 CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2021), Form A.

21 *Ibid.*, Form F.

22 CCW Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form B; and Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2021), Form A.

23 CCW Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2020), Form B.

24 CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2020), Form F.

25 CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2021), Form A.

While the focus of clearance in 2020 was in Chechnya, Ingushetia, and areas where military operations were conducted during the Second World War, clearance operations also took place on training grounds, former arsenals, ammunition warehouses of the Northern Fleet,<sup>26</sup> areas designated for construction by the MoD and Russian Federation, and areas designated for holding events for the International Army Games.<sup>27</sup>

In Chechnya specifically, one MoD news article stated that demining operations were carried out on agricultural and forestry lands in the Achkhoy-Martanovsky district, clearing 3km<sup>2</sup> and destroying more than 700 munitions using mechanical assets and mine detection dogs.<sup>28</sup> Another Russian MoD news article describes how, in November 2021, Deminer Paratroopers from the Pskov Guards Airborne Assault Unit discovered an anti-personnel minefield left by the Second World War, while clearing the area of the Sebezhsy district in the north-west of the country, disposing of 800 mines from the area.<sup>29</sup>

### PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

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Russia has not provided information on whether it has a plan in place for dealing with any residual contamination following completion of clearance of known mined areas.

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26 "The mission of the Northern Fleet is to defend Russia's far north-western Arctic region surrounding the Kola Peninsula", *GlobalSecurity.org* at: <https://bit.ly/3JqQxi>.

27 CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2021), Form G.

28 Sappers of the Southern Military District completed demining work on the territory of Chechnya", Russian Ministry of Defence, at: <https://bit.ly/3QdfQE0>.

29 "Military engineers of the Airborne Forces neutralized more than 15 thousand explosive objects in 2021", *Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation*, at: <https://bit.ly/3SfbDCt>.