

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: UNKNOWN

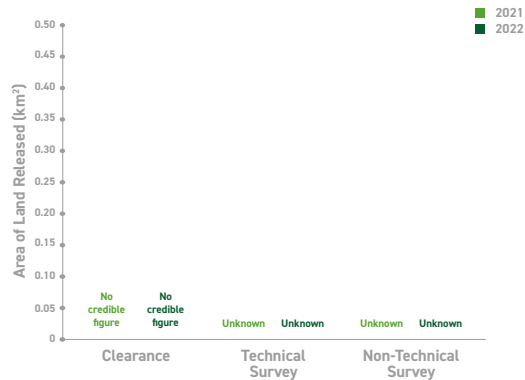
AP MINE CLEARANCE IN 2022

NO CREDIBLE FIGURE

AP MINES DESTROYED IN 2022

NOT REPORTED

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

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

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT*

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

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, the "Leader" Center for Special Tasks, and Pyrotechnic Units)

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- None

* IMAC, the Military Units of the Engineering Troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, EMERCOM, and EMERCOM Pyrotechnic Units are referred to in publicly available sources dated 2022. Other information here 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.

AP mines and anti-vehicle (AV) 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. In 2010, Russia's deputy prime minister and presidential special envoy to the Caucasus, Aleksandr Khloponin, claimed that mines affected 14km² of land and posed a major obstacle to development.¹ In contrast, Chechen officials and human rights organisations have previously estimated that 245km² of land was mined, including 165km² of farmland and 73km² of woodland.²

In January 2017, a commander in the Russian Armed Forces reportedly told press agency Interfax that more than 100km² of land remained to be cleared in Chechnya, and a further

20km² in neighbouring Ingushetia.³ 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.⁴

Area clearance in Chechnya and Ingushetia started in 2012; most of the explosive devices destroyed were the result of the two Chechen wars.⁵ In 2021 Russia's Ministry of Defence (MoD) stated that Russia had planned to clear approximately 160km² of agricultural and forest land, but that over the course of nine years, military personnel had exceeded this, surveying approximately 240km² 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 240km² represents AP mined area.⁶

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.⁷

USE OF MINES IN UKRAINE SINCE 2014

At the APMBIC Intersessional Meetings in May 2019, Ukraine accused Russia of having used AP mines in its territory since 2014. According to Ukraine, these mines have been employed by Russia-backed illegal armed groups in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and it said that Russia has also put mines on the administrative border between Crimea and the rest of Ukraine.⁸ The mines allegedly used by separatist groups include PMN-1, PMN-2, PMN-4, POM-2R, OZM-72, MES type mines, and MON-50 mines with tripwire.⁹

In the most recent conflict in Ukraine, which began with Russia's invasion in February 2022, Russia has made very

widespread use of both AP and AV mines.¹⁰ Media reports indicate that Russian forces have scattered mines in a haphazard and disorganized fashion across civilian areas.¹¹ In April 2022, Ukraine's government said that its teams were removing thousands of explosive devices a day across the country, including from homes and businesses, and especially in the countryside.¹² Many Ukrainians have faced little choice but to try and remove the mines themselves; an extremely risky undertaking made far more deadly due to the lack of laying patterns and the widespread use of booby-traps and anti-lift devices by the Russian forces.¹³

- 1 "Medvedev emphasizes vision of Chechnya's future with personal visit", *Russia Today*, 14 June 2010, at: <https://bit.ly/33H4Bg0>.
- 2 "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, at: <https://bit.ly/46Hy6z3>.
- 3 "Landmine threat in Chechnya still prevalent", *OC Media*, 23 January 2017, at: <https://bit.ly/33Hxf0T>.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 "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, 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>.
- 6 "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>.
- 7 "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>.
- 8 Statement of Ukraine, Committee on Article 5 implementation, Geneva, 22 May 2019.
- 9 Government of Ukraine, "Measures to ensure compliance", Geneva, 9 June 2017; Statement of Ukraine on Article 5, APMBIC Fifteenth Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 29 November 2016; and Preliminary observations of the committee on cooperative compliance, "Ukraine", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 8–9 June 2017.
- 10 "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>.
- 11 "Land mines create a deadly legacy for Ukraine and possibly beyond", *The Washington Post*, 12 April 2022, at: <https://wapo.st/3e2X9WP>.
- 12 "Ukraine's efforts to remove booby traps left behind by Russian troops", *CBC News*, 21 April 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3ckM1nS>.
- 13 "We couldn't wait: Ukrainian farmers improvise to clear their land of mines", *The Guardian*, 19 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/44IX13N>; Ukraine's Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food website, 21 March 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3r0lphu>; and "Clearing land mines by hand, farmers in Ukraine risk their lives for planting season", *CNN*, 27 March 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3PURnrf>.

As at June 2023, Human Rights Watch had documented use of at least 13 types of AP mines since the 2022 assault on Ukraine.¹⁴ Amnesty International has reported that, between March and April 2022, Russian forces fired rockets to disperse PTM-1S scatterable mines on residential neighbourhoods in Kharkiv. Russian forces have also emplaced numerous victim-activated booby-traps as they retreated from positions they had taken, occupied, or fortified during the 2022 invasion. The booby-traps were constructed with various types of hand-grenades equipped with tripwires, including F-1, RGD-5, and RGN-type grenades.¹⁵ A considerable portion of the booby-traps are considered AP mines under the APMBC.

The full nature and extent of contamination caused by use of AP and AV mines by Russia in Ukraine since February 2022 will remain unclear until an effective cessation of hostilities and a comprehensive survey has been completed (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Ukraine for further information). While Russia is not a State Party or signatory to the APMBC it also has obligations under international human rights law to clear AP mines as soon as possible in any areas of Ukraine over which it exercises effective control, by virtue of its duty to protect the right to life of every person under its jurisdiction.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND 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,¹⁶ the Military Engineers of the Airborne Forces,¹⁷ 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, the "Leader" Center for Special Tasks,¹⁸ and Pyrotechnic Units¹⁹).

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.²⁰ Since 2021, Russia has 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.²¹ IMAC receives a contribution from Russia's federal budget, though the amount is unknown.²²

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.²³ No timeline for this was given and Mine Action Review has not been able to source any further updates on the matter.

Russia reports regularly on its efforts to deploy troops internationally to clear landmines and train foreign military personnel in related activities. In 2022 IMAC trained a total of 135 military personnel across Armenia, Belarus, Djibouti, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), and Myanmar, as well as undertaking humanitarian demining operations in Lao PDR.²⁴

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

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.

14 Human Rights Watch, "Landmine Use in Ukraine", Briefing Paper, 13 June 2023, pp. 2, 3, 8, and 10.

15 Ibid., pp. 3 and 8.

16 CCW Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Form A.

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

18 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.

19 EMERCOM, "Alexander Kurenkov summed up the work of the Russian Emergencies Ministry in the main areas of activity", 19 July 2023, accessed at: <https://bit.ly/43DGL3e>

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

21 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form E.

22 Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

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

24 Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Form F.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The extent to which gender and diversity are mainstreamed into mine action in Russia is not known.

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.²⁵

Russia submits Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol II Article 13 reports and Protocol V Article 10 reports annually. As at July 2023, Russia had submitted a Protocol V Article 10 covering 2022 but had yet to submit a Protocol II Article 13 report covering 2022.

PLANNING AND TASKING

It is not known whether Russia has a national mine action strategy in place. It is also not known whether Russia has annual work plans for AP mine survey and clearance or criteria for the prioritisation of clearance tasks.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

It is not known whether Russia has National Mine action Standards (NMAS) in place for land release. In 2022, Russia reported that procedures for ERW disposal are regulated by the "Manual for clearing terrain from explosive objects for the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation".²⁶

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Reporting on clearance of land affected by explosive ordnance in 2022, Russia referred to the involvement of the demining units and the Engineering Troops of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation²⁷ as well as the Pyrotechnic Units of EMERCOM.²⁸ For 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.²⁹

DEMINER SAFETY

It is not known whether any accidents involving deminers took place during AP mine survey or clearance in Russia in 2022.

25 Ibid., Form B.

26 Ibid., Form C.

27 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2022), Forms A, B, and F.

28 EMERCOM "Alexander Kurenkov summed up the work of the Russian Emergencies Ministry in the main areas of activity", 19 July 2023.

29 Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report (covering 2021), Form B.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

Russia reported that, in 2022, more than 321km² of territory were cleared in the Russian Federation, with 974,604 explosive objects found and destroyed.³⁰ Demining was carried out in Chechnya and Ingushetia, as well as areas where military operations were conducted during the Second World War.³¹ It is not known how many of the items destroyed were AP mines. This land release represents an increase on 2021, when Russia reported that Ministry of Defence forces had cleared just over 175km² of mined area on Russian Federation territory, with 123,683 items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) found and destroyed.³² However, none of the figures is credible for the extent of clearance alone.

It was also reported that, in 2022, the Pyrotechnic Units of EMERCOM "continued demining" in the Kaliningrad region

(a Russian semi-enclave situated between Lithuania and Poland), the Central, North-Western, and Southern regions, the territories of the Russian Federation in the waters of the Black and Baltic Seas and in the Republic of Crimea (a territory of Ukraine, which has been under Russian occupation since 2014). EMERCOM reported that, as a result, more than 24,000 explosive objects were defuzed,³³ although there is no reference to AP mines specifically or indeed landmines of any type.

In 2021, as in 2022, mine clearance was carried out in Chechnya and Ingushetia, as well in areas where military operations were conducted during the Second World War,³⁴ with more than 70% of reported clearance in 2021 (125.8km²) taking place in the Western Military District.³⁵

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

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.

30 Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2022), Form A.

31 Ibid., Form F.

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

33 EMERCOM "Alexander Kurenkov summed up the work of the Russian Emergencies Ministry in the main areas of activity", 19 July 2023.

34 Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2021), Form F.

35 Ibid., Form A.