WESTERN SAHARA

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

	2017	2016
Problem understood	8	7
Target date for completion of mine clearance	3	3
Targeted clearance	5	6
Efficient clearance	6	7
National funding of programme	3	3
Timely clearance	1	1
Land-release system in place	8	8
National mine action standards	8	8
Reporting on progress	3	4
Improving performance	5	5
PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE	5.0	5.2

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

There was a significant increase in the cancellation and reduction of areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mines through survey in 2017 in Western Sahara, with a total of close to 8.3km^2 released through survey compared to just under 1km^2 in 2016. This was, though, countered by a massive amount of area confirmed as contaminated by anti-personnel mines, of nearly 89km^2. These areas were previously thought to contain only anti-vehicle mines but were found during survey to also contain anti-personnel mines. However, no anti-personnel mines were cleared for yet another year in Western Sahara.[1]

Clearance of cluster munition remnant (CMR)-contaminated areas was prioritised in 2017, while the primary focus with respect to mines continued to be non-technical survey of suspected hazardous areas (SHAs), with a view to reducing the inflated estimates of the size of SHAs recorded in a 2008 survey and confirming areas of actual contamination.[2]

With the return to full operational capacity and the removal of political restrictions by Morocco on United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)-contracted mine action operations, along with an increase in available resources in 2017, UNMAS reported that Western Sahara remained on track to complete clearance of all mined areas east of the Berm and outside the buffer strip by 2025.[3]

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) should formally commit to respect and implement the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), including to clear all mine contamination east of the Berm as soon as possible.
- Greater efforts should be focused to ensure that mine clearance capacity is only deployed on areas which contain actual anti-personnel and anti-vehicle contamination.
- All efforts should be taken to complete clearance of all mined areas in Western Sahara by 2025.
- Morocco should ensure freedom of access and unhindered movement of all civilian UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) staff and take all necessary measures to facilitate the conduct of demining.
- Morocco is strongly encouraged to provide minefield and cluster strike data to other relevant stakeholders to facilitate survey and clearance of affected areas.

CONTAMINATION

The exact extent of mine contamination across Western Sahara is not known, although the areas along the Berm[4] are thought to contain some of the densest mine contamination in the world.[5] The contamination is a result of fighting in previous decades between the Royal Moroccan Army (RMA) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro (Polisario Front) forces.

According to UNMAS, the primary mine threat in Western Sahara east of the Berm, excluding both the Berm itself and the buffer strip, is from anti-vehicle rather than anti-personnel mines; CMR are also a major hazard.[6] It stated that, at the start of 2017, only a limited number of areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mines remained to the east of the Berm, and the majority of mine contamination identified during ongoing and historical clearance efforts was from anti-vehicle mines.[7] However, UNMAS reported that during the year, as a result of non-technical survey conducted in the Agwanit Area of Responsibility, a number of large minefields previously thought to contain only anti-vehicle mines were found to also contain anti-personnel mines.[8]

At the end of 2017, land in Western Sahara to the east of the Berm contained a total of 27 areas confirmed and suspected to contain anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mine contamination covering a total of more than 218km^2, as set out in Table 1.[9] This is close to 34km^2 less than what UNMAS reported as mine contamination remaining at the end of 2016, when it reported that a total of 37 areas with a size of 252km^2 remained to be addressed.[10]

In September 2018, UNMAS reported that following non-technical survey efforts, 10 of the 27 mined areas, were reported to remain covering an estimated total of almost 120km^2, and are located within the 5km-wide buffer strip and are inaccessible for clearance.[11] Clearance of the buffer strip of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) is not foreseen in MINURSO mission agreements, which according to the UN, considerably limits the ability of MINURSO military observers to patrol and verify developments.[12]

Table 1: Mine contamination east of the Berm (at end-2017)[13]

Type of contamination	CHAs	Area (km²)	SHAs	Area (km²)
AP mines	1	0.10	0	0
AV mines	8	11.15	8	37.48
AP/AV mines	5	80.02	5	89.36
Totals	**14**	**91.27**	**13**	**126.84**

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

Both the north and south of Western Sahara are known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, with 11 areas confirmed or suspected areas with a total size of almost 169.5km² remaining to be addressed at the end of 2017, as set out in Table 2.[14] This is compared to the end of the previous year, when a total of 11 areas confirmed or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines were reported to remain with a total size of more than 154.5km².[15]

Table 2: Areas containing anti-personnel mines by province east of the Berm (as at end-2017)[16]

Province	CHAs	Area (km²)	SHAs	Area (km²)
North Region	3	0.31	2	0.81
South Region	3	79.81	3	88.55
Totals	**6**	**80.12**	**5**	**89.36**

The figure of 169.5km² of remaining suspected and confirmed anti-personnel mine contamination is not consistent with the figure reported at the end of 2016, adjusted by release and confirmation reported during the year. This figure would be just under 235km².[17]

A survey in 2006–08 by an international non-governmental organisation (NGO), Landmine Action, later renamed Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), initially identified 37 mined areas on the east of the Berm, nearly half of which were in Bir Lahlou, followed by Tifariti, Mehaires, and Agwanit.[18]

Neither survey nor clearance has been conducted in the 5km-wide buffer strip to the east of the Berm. The extent of contamination west of the Berm remains unknown, and as of 2018, no survey had been carried out there.[19] UNMAS reported in 2018 that there were areas of known contamination in the buffer strip that remained inaccessible for clearance due to military agreements.[20] The RMA controls territory to the west of the Berm where it has been conducting large-scale demining. According to UNMAS, the RMA cooperates with the MINURSO mine action component and submits regular monthly reports, helping to build a clearer understanding of the mine and ERW threat across Western Sahara.[21]

The significant mine, submunition, and other unexploded ordnance (UXO) contamination in Western Sahara continues to pose a daily threat to the local, nomadic, and refugee populations, along with UN personnel and military observers, and humanitarian actors.[22] Contamination from mines and ERW negatively impacts socio-economic growth and development, limiting access to fluctuating and seasonally dependent water sources vital for animal herding and small-scale agriculture on which local populations depend.[23]

According to Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), the impact of contamination is primarily socio-economic, although human accidents continued to occur. In 2017, the local mine action authority, the Saharawi Mine Action Coordination Office (SMACO), reported 11 victims in 13 incidents.[24]

In 2017, mines and ERW, including CMR, continued to block access to arable land and critical water sources for the local population and impeded the free movement of UN personnel on patrol routes and in areas of UN operations.[25] Areas near to the Berm are considered the most heavily contaminated, though mines and ERW remain a significant risk along frequently used tracks and in close proximity to traditional settlements. According to UNMAS, a number of incidents have occurred in the vicinity of the Berm in areas rich with river beds, *wadis*, and water sources, which are fertile for seasonal agricultural cultivation, and a direct threat to the Sahrawi population.[26]

NPA reported that, in 2017, mines and ERW continued to pose a threat to the approximately 12,000 Sahrawi nomads and internally displaced persons in refugee camps who traversed contaminated areas to graze livestock, cultivate land, and visit relatives. Once cleared, the majority of land released is put to use for pasture and grazing of livestock by nomadic and semi-nomadic communities, while released land located close to village centres is used for building.[27]

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

In Western Sahara, MINURSO manages a Mine Action Coordination Centre (MACC). UNMAS contracted a survey/clearance capacity through Dynasafe MineTech Limited (DML) in 2017, with quality assurance (QA) performed externally by UNMAS staff in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). Survey and clearance were also implemented by international humanitarian demining NGO NPA in 2017.[28]

In 2013–14, the Polisario Front, with UN support, established SMACO, which is responsible for coordinating mine action activities in Western Sahara east of the Berm and for land release activities.[29]

In 2017, UNMAS implemented an ongoing capacity development project with SMACO, funded for 28 months, which was due to end in October 2018.[30] It contracted a technical advisor for capacity development to work with SMACO to improve operations and coordination with the MACC and operators. Individual training was provided to SMACO staff on all aspects of mine action programme management, including information management and support services. Training on operational skills such as prioritisation, tasking, marking, accreditation, the development of mine action standards, and survey and clearance methodology were also conducted. Emphasis was placed on building the programme's capacity to translate local mine action requirements into proposals and budgets with the aim of ensuring that SMACO can independently seek funds and report on progress in the future.[31]

UNMAS stated that efforts were also aimed at regularly raising the profile of SMACO within the local and wider communities and internationally.[32] The construction of an office building for SMACO in 2017 with German funding was another significant contributor to increasing its capacity and effectiveness.[33]

Strategic Planning

MINURSO MACC's activities are conducted in accordance with the Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013–18, the Local Mine Action Standards (LMAS), and the IMAS. UNMAS planned to develop a mine action strategy specific to Western Sahara in the second half of 2015.[34] According to UNMAS, the strategy was finalised in 2017, yet still was considered an internal document and had not been made publicly available as at September 2018.[35] According to UNMAS, the strategy foresees completion of non-technical survey in 2017–18; release of all recorded cluster munition strike areas east of the Berm by the end of 2019; and a 50% reduction in the total number of recorded SHAs and CHAs remaining in Western Sahara by the end of 2022.[36]

In 2017, NPA claimed that the development of the strategy had brought about a significant improvement in the management of mine action in Western Sahara and increased coordination between the MACC, SMACO, and the operators. Meetings were convened every two months where all mine action stakeholders provided updates on their progress against the plan and future activities, it said.[37]

Legislation and Standards

There is no mine action legislation in Western Sahara but mine action standards were in place and implemented in 2017. The standards were developed and finalised in 2016 by UNMAS, together with SMACO, and in coordination with mine action partners, and were planned to be translated into Arabic.[38] NPA reported that operators had updated their standing operating procedures (SOPs) accordingly, and that the local mine action standards set realistic benchmarks for efficient operations.[39] A first annual review of the standards was set to be held in 2018 with a review board consisting of representatives from UNMAS, SMACO, and all implementing partners.[40]

The MACC identifies priorities for minefield clearance to the east of the Berm in conjunction with SMACO and MINURSO. SMACO identifies priorities based on humanitarian needs for the safety and freedom of movement of local populations, while the MACC ensures that observation patrol routes are safe for military observers and the transport of logistical supplies.[41] NPA confirmed that operators were always consulted in priority setting to ensure sufficient resources and equipment were available to conduct operations in a given area.[42]

In 2017, UNMAS reported that gender policies were implemented in accordance with UNMAS, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and MINURSO guidelines, as well as with direction from the Polisario.[43] NPA stated that gender mainstreaming considerations were included in its Memorandum of Understanding with SMACO, in NPA's internal strategy documents, and taken into account during recruitment processes. Additionally, during survey efforts are made to ensure the needs of men, women, girls, and boys are taken into consideration for more effective and efficient operations.[44]

Quality Management

An external quality management system was in place in 2017 and implemented by MINURSO MACC, consisting of a series of QA inspection visits for organisational and operational accreditation and periodic monitoring of clearance operations. UNMAS reported that 78 QA visits were conducted in 2017 to assess mine clearance activities.[45] NPA stated that internal QA and quality control (QC) activities were carried out on a daily basis and integrated with external quality management across Western Sahara. It reported that despite the remote areas of task locations, the MACC and SMACO conducted regular QA/QC and accredited all new demining personnel and teams during the year.[46]

This compared to 2016, when no external QA/QC was carried out on demining activities in April–September owing to the expulsion of UNMAS and MINURSO staff from Western Sahara by Morocco.[47]

Information Management

According to UNMAS, the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database for Western Sahara improved appreciably as a result of an ongoing data audit initiated at the end of 2015, a process that continued throughout 2017.[48] UNMAS reported that a revised SOP for data management was introduced, putting a stronger emphasis on verification of information.[49] In 2017, UNMAS reported regular support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to correct database errors, and said that plans were under consideration to upgrade the database to the latest IMSMA Core version.[50]

NPA noted significant improvements in information management during the year, with better coordination and monthly updates from the database sent to operators, and easier access for SMACO to receive trainings at the MACC's relocated office in Tindouf.[51]

Operators

DML and NPA were the implementing operators conducting survey and clearance in Western Sahara in 2017. UNMAS reported that the overall mine action capacity in Western Sahara in 2017 consisted of nine multi-task teams (MTTs) and one community liaison/survey team, with a total of 116 operational staff in the field, 18 support staff, and 8 senior staff.[52] This included six DML teams and one community liaison/survey team.[53] NPA continued its operations in Bir Lahlou and deployed two MTTs to conduct non-technical survey, technical survey, and clearance with a total of two team leaders and 15 deminers. At the end of 2017, a new team was trained to bolster NPA's demining capacity and deployed at the start of 2018.[54] No mechanical assets or mine detection dogs were deployed in Western Sahara for mine clearance activities in 2017.[55]

This is an increase from 2016, when in January–November, there were a total of five MTTs (three DML teams and two NPA teams), with two NPA teams deployed to conduct mine clearance along with two of the three teams contracted from DML.[56]

LAND RELEASE

There was a significant increase in the cancellation and reduction of areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mines through survey in 2017 with a total of close to 8.3km^2 released through survey compared to just under 1km^2 in 2016, along with a nearly 168% increase in areas confirmed to contain anti-personnel mines, with just under 89km^2 confirmed as anti-personnel mine-affected, compared to 0.5km^2 in 2016.[57]

While UNMAS reported that a total of just under 284,200m^2 of area thought to contain anti-personnel mine contamination was cleared, no anti-personnel mines were found. In 2016, no areas containing anti-personnel mines were cleared.[58]

Survey in 2017

According to UNMAS and NPA, four areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mine contamination with a size of just under 7km^2 were cancelled by non-technical survey in 2017, with a further 1.3km^2 of areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mines reduced by technical survey. A total of six areas were confirmed as containing anti-personnel mines, with a total size of nearly 89km^2.[59] According to UNMAS, these were areas previously thought to contain only anti-vehicle contamination which were instead found to have mixed anti-personnel and anti-vehicle contamination.[60]

NPA reported releasing more than 3.5km^2 of suspected anti-personnel mine contamination by cancellation in 2017. It reported that technical survey was also conducted to avoid the use of full clearance methodology in areas where mines were not found, resulting in the further reduction of over 1km^2 of suspected anti-personnel mine contamination in its areas of operations during the year.[61] NPA did not conduct survey in any areas suspected or confirmed to contain anti-personnel mines in 2016.[62]

DML was reported to have cancelled one SHA where anti-personnel mines were suspected with a size of over 3.4km^2 in 2017, and reducing a further 284,000m^2 through technical survey. It confirmed five areas with a total size of close to 85.5km^2 as contaminated with anti-personnel mines.[63] This was a sizeable increase in cancellation and confirmation of anti-personnel contaminated areas from 2016, when DML was reported to have cancelled two SHAs where anti-personnel mines had been suspected, covering nearly 0.46km^2, and confirmed two SHAs with a size of 0.53km^2 as containing anti-personnel mines.[64]

Table 3: Mined area survey in 2017[65]

Operator	SHAs cancelled	Area cancelled (m^2)	SHAs confirmed as mined	Area confirmed (m^2)	Area reduced by TS (m^2)
DML	1	3,446,147	5	85,517,546	284,192
NPA	3	3,534,047	1	3,446,148	1,021,273
Totals	**4**	**6,980,194**	**6**	**88,963,694**	**1,305,465**

Clearance in 2017

In 2017, according to UNMAS, a total of just under 284,200m^2 of areas thought to contain anti-personnel contamination was cleared by DML. However, no anti-personnel mines were found or destroyed. Thirty-two anti-vehicle mines and ten items of UXO were destroyed.[66] No areas containing anti-personnel mines were cleared in 2016, and no anti-personnel mines were destroyed during the year.[67]

According to UNMAS, in 2017, over 32.3km^2 of anti-vehicle mine contamination was released, of which 471,696m^2 was by clearance and nearly 31.9km^2 cancellation by non-technical survey.[68] This is compared to 2016, when nearly 4.5km^2 of area containing anti-vehicle mines and ERW was released: of which 328,355m^2 was by clearance and 4,037,993m^2 that was cancelled by non-technical survey.[69] As was the case in 2016, all tasked areas were believed to be contaminated with anti-vehicle mines and no anti-personnel mines were located during clearance.[70]

NPA reported completing clearance of two CHAs reportedly containing anti-vehicle mines, though no anti-vehicle mines were actually found in 2017.[71] This compared with 2016 when NPA had cleared a total of 132,493m^2 in two mined areas in Bir Lahlou, with the destruction of six anti-vehicle mines. It released a further 0.13km^2 through technical survey and cancelled a total of almost 3.5km^2 during the year.[72]

In 2017, NPA reported that 66 items of UXO were found and destroyed as spot tasks, including an aircraft bomb.[73]

In 2017, over 32.3km^2 of area containing anti-vehicle mines was released by DML, of which just over 0.47km^2 was cleared and nearly 31.9km^2 was cancelled by non-technical survey, locating and destroying 32 anti-vehicle mines.[74] This compared to 2016, when DML released nearly 0.74km^2 of area containing anti-vehicle mines, of which 195,862m^2 was cleared and 548,892m^2 was cancelled by non-technical survey, locating and destroying 17 anti-vehicle mines.[75]

To the west of the Berm, according to a UN Secretary-General report, RMA reported, highly improbably in the view of Mine Action Review, that it had cleared nearly 145km^2 in territory under its control between April 2016 and April 2017. Clearance operations destroyed more than 1,000 items of UXO, 57 anti-vehicle mines, and 56 anti-personnel mines.[76]

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Western Sahara is not a state party to the APMBC. In June 2014, however, the SADR submitted a voluntary APMBC Article 7 transparency report to the UN "as a sign of the support of the Sahrawi State for the goals of the Treaty".[77] The SADR has obligations under international human rights law to clear mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, including by virtue of being a state party to the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Under Western Sahara's draft mine action strategic plan, non-technical survey was planned to be completed before the end of 2018 and the number of recorded SHAs and CHAs are sought to be reduced by half by the end of 2022.[78]

Despite the significant increase in survey output in 2017, UNMAS reported that delays to clearing areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mines continued as a result of restrictions on accessing certain areas of the buffer strip established by various MINURSO and other party agreements.[79] NPA cited other challenges to operations, including working in a remote desert environment allied to serious difficulties with the procurement of certain equipment and materials.[80] Temperatures of up to 60 degrees Celsius in July and August, strong winds, sandstorms, and heavy rain during the wet season can also cause mine action activities to be suspended.[81]

According to UNMAS, clearance of all mined areas containing anti-personnel mines in the three northern districts of Western Sahara, Bir Lahlou, Tifiariti, and Mehaires, is planned to be completed in 2018. After which clearance operations will commence in the southern sector, in Agwanit district, following the completion of non-technical survey and the confirmation of all hazardous areas identified in re-survey in 2017. It did not expect significant changes in clearance capacity, funding, or output in 2018.[82]

In keeping with previous estimates, UNMAS has estimated that all high and medium hazardous areas in Western Sahara east of the Berm could be released by 2025.[83] Specifically, UNMAS maintained that survey and clearance of all anti-personnel mine contamination in Western Sahara could be completed within three to seven years, between 2021 and 2025, depending on financial support and a stable political and security environment.[84]

NPA reported that as at 31 December 2017, only three minefields remained to be addressed in its area of operations, in the remote region of Bir Lahlou, which it planned to complete by mid-2018. However, at September 2018, clearance was still ongoing in the last remaining minefield, where NPA reported that teams were finding and clearing anti-personnel mines, which was scheduled to be completed at the end of October 2018. It then planned to deploy teams to Agwanit in the south.[85]

On 27 April 2018, the UN Security Council voted to extend MINURSO's mandate in Western Sahara for six months until 31 October 2018, a change from prior resolutions which extended MINURSO's mandate for one year.[86] In 2017–18, UNMAS reported no restrictions on movement in UNMAS's areas of operations east of the Berm.[87]

1 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, Programme Manager, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

2 Email from Virginie Auger, Associate Programme Officer, UNMAS, 29 March 2017.

3 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

4 A 2,700km-long defensive wall, the Berm, was built during the conflict, dividing control of the territory between Morocco on the west, and the Polisario Front on the east. The Berm is 12 times the length of the Berlin Wall and second in length only to the Great Wall of China.

5 See UNMAS, "About UNMAS in Western Sahara", updated May 2015, at: http://www.mineaction.org/programmes/westernsahara; and Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), "Making life safer for the people of Western Sahara", London, August 2011.

6 Email from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March 2018.

7 Email from Virginie Auger, UNMAS, 29 March 2017.

8 Email from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March 2018.

9 Ibid.

10 Email from Virginie Auger, UNMAS, 29 March 2017.

11 Email from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 14 September 2018. The buffer strip is an area 5km wide east of the Berm. MINURSO, "Ceasefire Monitoring Overview", undated but accessed 1 June 2016, at: https://minurso.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=11421&language=en-US.

12 "Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara", UN doc. S/2017/307, 10 April 2017, p. 8.

13 Email from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March 2018.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid. This includes areas recorded as having mixed anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines.

16 Email from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March 2018.

17 Email from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 21 September 2016.

18 Email from Penelope Caswell, Field Programme and Geographic Information System Manager, AOAV, 18 May 2010.

19 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018; and UNMAS, "2017 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects: MINURSO".

20 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

21 Email from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 14 September 2018; and UNMAS, "2017 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects: MINURSO".

22 Email from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March 2018.

23 Ibid.; and UNMAS, "2016 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects: MINURSO".

24 Email from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, Programme Manager, NPA, 14 March 2018.

25 Email from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March 2018.

26 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

27 Email from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 14 March 2018.

28 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

29 Response to questionnaire by Sarah Holland, UNMAS, 24 February 2014; and email, 25 February 2014.

30 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Email from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 14 March 2018.

34 Email from Sarah Holland, UNMAS, 5 June 2015.

35 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 18 May and 14 September 2018.

36 Email from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, Programme Manager, NPA, 8 April 2017.

37 Email from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 14 March 2018.

38 Emails from Virginie Auger, UNMAS, 24 April and 29 March 2017; El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 8 April 2017; and Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 31 May 2018.

39 Email from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 14 March 2018.

40 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

41 Ibid.

42 Email from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 14 March 2018.

43 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

44 Email from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 14 March 2018.

45 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

46 Email from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 8 April 2017.

47 Ibid.

48 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

49 Email from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March 2018; and Virginie Auger, UNMAS, 24 April and 29 March 2017.

50 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

51 Email from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 14 March 2018.

52 Email from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March 2018.

53 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 18 May 2018. Of the six DML teams contracted by UNMAS, three were funded by the mission and three by the German Federal Foreign Office.

54 Email from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 14 March 2018.

55 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

56 Email from Virginie Auger, UNMAS, 10 May 2017.

57 Emails from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 14 March and 31 May 2018; and Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

58 Email from Virginie Auger, UNMAS, 29 March 2017.

59 Emails from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 14 March and 31 May 2018; and Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

60 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

61 Emails from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 14 March and 31 May 2018.

62 Email from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 8 April 2017.

63 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

64 Ibid.; and email from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 7 September 2017.

65 Emails from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 14 March and 31 May 2018; and Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

66 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

67 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 7 and 26 September 2017.

68 Email from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 14 September 2018.

69 Email from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 24 August 2016.

70 Ibid.

71 Emails from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 14 March and 31 May 2018. NPA reported that two anti-vehicle mines had been found in 2016.

72 Email from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 8 April 2017.

73 Emails from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 14 March and 31 May 2018.

74 Email from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 14 September 2018.

75 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 7 and 26 September 2017.

76 "Report of the UN Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara", UN doc. S/2018/277, 29 March 2018, p. 8.

77 "SADR initiative welcomed by Maputo Conference on Mine Ban", Sahara Press Service, 2 July 2014, at: http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/sadr-initiative-welcomed-maputo-conference-mine-ban.

78 Email from Virginie Auger, UNMAS, 29 March 2017.

79 Emails from Virginie Auger, UNMAS, 15 March 2017; and Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 14 September 2018.

80 Emails from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 8 April 2017 and 14 March 2018.

81 UNMAS, "About UNMAS in Western Sahara", updated January 2017, at: http://www.mineaction.org/programmes/westernsahara

82 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

83 Emails from Virginie Auger, UNMAS, 10 May and 29 March 2017; and Sarah Holland, UNMAS, 21 April and 18 May 2016.

84 Emails from Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March and 5 May 2018.

85 Emails from El Hadji Mamadou Kebe, NPA, 14 March, 31 May, and 14 September 2018. NPA reported that operations had to be halted in 1 July–15 August due to the high temperatures.

86 The Security Council Report's "What's in Blue" analysis reported that it appeared that the decision to only extend the mandate for a six-month period rather than a year "was done to increase pressure on the parties to the conflict to resolve the current tensions and bring them to the table for a fifth round of formal negotiations". It further stated that "In this regard, the draft resolution also requests the Secretary-General to brief the Council 'on a regular basis, and at any time he deems appropriate during the mandate period, on the status and progress of these negotiations'. A renewal of MINURSO's mandate in October will also allow the Council to consider the strategic review of the mission scheduled for mid-2018". What's in Blue: Insights on the work of the UN Security Council, "Western Sahara: Mandate Renewal*", Security Council Report, 27 April 2018, at: http://www.whatsinblue.org/2018/04/western-sahara-mandate-renewal.php

87 Emails from Virginie Auger, UNMAS, 29 March 2017; and Graeme Abernethy, UNMAS, 1 March 2018.