

MINE  
ACTION  
REVIEW

# CLEARING THE MINES 2020

A REPORT BY MINE ACTION REVIEW FOR THE EIGHTEENTH MEETING  
OF STATES PARTIES TO THE ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION

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MINE ACTION REVIEW ADVISORY BOARD:



**Norwegian People's Aid**



### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Azerbaijan should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.
- Despite not yet being a State Party to the APMBC, Azerbaijan has obligations under international human rights law to clear anti-personnel mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.
- Azerbaijan should complete its countrywide re-survey of anti-personnel mine contamination as soon as the situation allows.
- Azerbaijan should ensure that clearance is only conducted in areas where there is firm evidence of contamination.

### UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of contamination from anti-personnel mines in Azerbaijan is unknown, as Armenian forces currently occupy a significant area of the country where considerable contamination exists. The Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) has suggested that contamination in areas occupied by Armenia may cover between 350km<sup>2</sup> and 830km<sup>2</sup>, and contain between 50,000 and 100,000 mines.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of 2019, Azerbaijan reported 59 mined areas in regions under its control totalling 9.4km<sup>2</sup> (see Table 1). A more precise estimate of contamination will only be known after completion of a countrywide re-survey which, as at July 2020, had been delayed due to the outbreak of COVID-19.<sup>2</sup>

Table 1: Mined area by type (at end 2019)<sup>3</sup>

Contamination	CHAs	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	SHAs	Estimated area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Total SHAs/CHAs	Total area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Anti-personnel mines	8	1,012,469	14	3,000,000	22	4,012,469
Anti-vehicle mines	17	1,430,226	20	4,000,000	37	5,430,226
<b>Totals</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2,442,695</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>7,000,000</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>9,442,695</b>

CHAs = Confirmed hazardous areas SHAs = Suspected hazardous areas

As at the end of 2019, Azerbaijan estimated that it had 8 confirmed anti-personnel mined areas covering a total of more than 1km<sup>2</sup> (see Table 2).<sup>4</sup>

Table 2: Anti-personnel mined area by region (at end 2019)<sup>5</sup>

Region	CHAs	Area(m <sup>2</sup> )	SHAs	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Garadagh	1	17,744	1	-
Jabrail	3	833,907	2	-
Fizuli	2	147,694	3	-
Aghdam	2	11,574	0	-
Aghstafa	0	550	0	-
Ganja	0	600	0	-
Gazakh	0	400	0	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1,012,469</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>est. 1,000,000</b>

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Nagorno-Karabakh should make a commitment to respect the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) and set a deadline for the clearance of all anti-personnel mines.
- Despite not being a State Party to the APMBC, Nagorno-Karabakh has obligations under international human rights law to clear anti-personnel mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.
- The Nagorno-Karabakh authorities should commit to never use anti-personnel mines and provide resources for mine survey and clearance.
- Nagorno-Karabakh should expedite creation of a mine action authority to centralise and strengthen information management and enhance coordination between all stakeholders.

### UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The estimate of anti-personnel mine contamination more than doubled to 7.75km<sup>2</sup> in 2019 (see Table 1) as a result of a nationwide survey started by HALO Trust and expected to continue until 2022. It found 125 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs), up from 70 a year earlier, covering 4.72km<sup>2</sup> compared with 3.78km<sup>2</sup> at the end of 2018. It also identified 108 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) affecting 3.03km<sup>2</sup>, mostly in the north-eastern Martakert area bordering Azerbaijan.<sup>1</sup>

Table 1: Anti-personnel mined area by region (at end 2019)

Region	CHAs	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	SHAs	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Total area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Askeran	8	321,286	1	28,309	349,595
Hadrut	15	1,614,398	0	0	1,614,398
Lachin	19	560,044	0	0	560,044
Martakert	77	1,902,840	107	3,003,233	4,906,073
Martuni	2	154,715	0	0	154,715
Shahumyan	4	167,900	0	0	167,900
<b>Totals</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>4,721,183</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>3,031,542</b>	<b>7,752,725</b>

All regions of Nagorno-Karabakh have been affected by mines and unexploded submunitions as a result of the 1988–94 conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and subsequent fighting. Mines were laid by both the Azeri and pro-Karabakh forces during the war, with a relatively high proportion of anti-vehicle mines being used in some regions.<sup>2</sup> The mines were of Soviet design and manufacture, and due to the nature of the conflict certain areas were mined several times.<sup>3</sup> Nagorno-Karabakh's armed forces said they laid additional anti-personnel mines along the Armenian-Azerbaijani line of contact in 2013, east and north of disputed territory.<sup>4</sup>

Of 183 CHAs and SHAs newly identified in 2019, 182 covering a total of 4,633,027m<sup>2</sup> were within the Traditional Oblast while the remaining one, covering 14,318m<sup>2</sup> was outside. The significant discoveries around Martakert underscored the many years that had elapsed since previous surveys, which were mostly conducted in the early 2000s with some additional survey in 2010–11 and 2014, and increased knowledge of contamination accumulated by local communities.<sup>5</sup>

Nagorno-Karabakh has a relatively small amount of anti-vehicle mine contamination but much more extensive cluster munition contamination (see Table 2), which covers approximately 10 times as much area as anti-personnel mines as well as explosive remnants of war (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munitions 2020*).