

# Mine Action and Disarmament Programme Ukraine



## CONTEXT

Ukraine has been heavily affected by armed conflict since 2014 following Russia's annexation of Crimea. On 24 February 2022, Russia initiated a large-scale military operation in Ukraine targeting all major cities in the eastern, southern and central part of the country.

Since its early stages, the full-scale invasion of Ukraine has been characterized by the widespread use of explosive weapons in populated areas, including landmines, cluster munitions and aerial bombings. OCHA indicates that 17.6 million people in Ukraine require humanitarian assistance, with 10.7 million specifically in need of mine action services.

To date there has been no systematic, wide-scale assessment of explosive ordnance contamination and what humanitarian impact they pose, but initial information indicates that the size of mine contamination is "massive but unquantified"<sup>1</sup>, while the cluster munitions remnants contamination is estimated to be "large"<sup>2</sup>.

The Ukrainian Government currently estimates that an area covering 138,503 km<sup>2</sup>, which witnessed hostilities, may be at risk of containing explosive ordnance. A non-technical survey will need to be conducted in this area to confirm the presence or absence of explosive ordnance.

The extensive explosive ordnance contamination not only puts at great risk the lives and limbs of thousands of civilians but also hinders access to basic services and the delivery of live-saving humanitarian aid, thus exacerbating the already critical situation.

## PROGRAMME

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) deployed to Ukraine in May 2022 with the aim of establishing a mine action programme, seeking to alleviate civilians' suffering from the effects of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive ordnance.

From the initial deployment NPA focused on supporting the main national mine action operator: the State Emergency Services of Ukraine (SESU), and in parallel established its own mine action

<sup>1</sup> [Clearing the Mines 2024.pdf](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Cluster Munition Remnants 2024.pdf](#)

operational capacities. NPA's collaboration with and support of SESU has taken different forms, including equipping 20 of their demining teams, and delivering and training six mine-detection dogs and their handlers for humanitarian demining operations. Additional training of trainers (ToT), and capacity development activities for SESU and the National Mine Action Centre are ongoing, mostly focusing on National Mine Action Standards, the use of mine detection dogs and quality management (quality control and assurance) of demining operations.

Following a successful process of legal registration and obtaining the necessary operational accreditations, NPA started directly implementing mine action activities from February 2023 onwards. Since then, the programme has grown to almost 500 staff, mostly Ukrainian nationals, who are conducting risk education, survey, and clearance of landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive ordnance in the country's most affected communities. Our work focuses on agricultural areas and local communities. The programme currently deploys 16 non-technical survey & risk education teams in Sumy, Mykolaiv and Kherson regions, 34 manual demining teams in Mykolaiv and Kherson regions, 12 mine-detection dogs (with five more on the way) and their handlers, and 13 mechanical demining assets (with two more on the way) in support of clearance operations.

In addition to more classic mine action operations, NPA also implements, directly through its 16 non-technical survey teams and indirectly via two local NGO partners, [Conflict Preparedness and Protection](#) programming which aims to empower civilians with the tools and knowledge they need to be better prepared and protected against the use of explosive weapons, and other conflict related threats.

From 2023, NPA has been clearing agricultural land in the regions of Mykolaiv and Kherson, releasing a total of a total of 1,104,959 m<sup>2</sup> (equivalent to approximately 155 football pitches) through technical survey and clearance. As of 31 March 2025, NPA's non-technical survey teams surveyed 1,158,162,744 m<sup>2</sup> of land, identifying 51,943,428 m<sup>2</sup> as hazardous area. The teams also released 2,986,352 m<sup>2</sup> of land through non-technical survey. During the survey and clearance process NPA has found and handed over for destruction a total of

2,551 explosive items, including anti-vehicle mines, anti-personnel mines, cluster munition remnants and other explosive ordnance.

NPA's humanitarian mine action activities are delivered in close coordination with the Ukrainian mine action authorities and capacity development of local authorities have been at the core of the response since the beginning.

#### **Mine Action and Disarmament Programme activities:**

- Survey and clearance of explosive ordnance contaminated areas, explosive ordnance risk education and conflict preparedness and protection trainings in Mykolaiv, Kherson and Sumy regions.
- Capacity development of SESU in building their sustainable mine action capacity.
- Capacity development of the National Mine Action Centre in the field of Quality Management for Mine Action.
- Conflict preparedness and protection trainings through NPA's partners in Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhyya, and Donetsk in 2025.
- Support the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), through partnership agreement, surveying damaged homes and infrastructure to confirm the presence or absence of explosive ordnance to support a rehabilitation project of NRC for returning families.
- Partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), aiming to release and rehabilitate small and medium farmland and household plots in areas contaminated by explosive ordnance.
- Partnership with UNDP in conducting third party monitoring of mine action activities funded by UNDP.
- To address the growing issue of armed violence and weapons proliferation, NPA will add an arms management and destruction component to a project starting in 2025.



### Operational results as of 31 March 2025

- Surveyed 1,158,162,744 m<sup>2</sup> of land through non-technical survey across Ukraine
- Identified 51,943,428 m<sup>2</sup> hazardous area through non-technical survey
- Processed 770,839 m<sup>2</sup> of hazardous area through clearance and technical survey
- Found and safely removed 2,551 items of explosive ordnance through survey and clearance operations
- Released 4,091,311 m<sup>2</sup> of land through non-technical survey, technical survey and clearance, and returned to communities for productive use
- Reached 5,662 direct beneficiaries (2,338 women, 435 girls, 461 boys, and 2,467 men), and 4,762 indirect beneficiaries (1,968 women, 490 girls, 484 boys, and 1,820 men) through the release of land
- Provided explosive ordnance risk education/conflict preparedness and protection to 65,819 individuals (28,654 women, 12,269 girls, 11,830 boys, and 13,066 men). Of these 843 are persons with disabilities. (Achieved by NPA's teams and national NGOs partnering with NPA)

### DONORS and FUNDING

We thank our donors for the ongoing support of NPA's work in Ukraine. Currently NPA's activities in Ukraine are supported through the generous funding from the **Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad)**, the **German Federal Foreign Office**, the **US DOS PM/WRA**, **WFP**, **UNDP**, the **Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)**, and **COOP Norway**.

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