

## **Annexe 4. Country strategies**

### **Afghanistan**

#### **Landmine situation**

Afghanistan has one of the highest levels of landmine contamination and consequently of landmine victims in the world. Many of the mines date from the conflict with the Soviet Union and or are explosive remnants of war (ERW) resulting from the US presence since 2001. Recently, large numbers of improvised mines have also been found, many of which have been left behind and are no longer active. That does not mean they are no longer dangerous. There is a relatively clear picture of mine contamination in Afghanistan. The geography and the ongoing conflict, however, obstruct clearance operations.

The main coordinating body for mine action in Afghanistan is the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC), which is supported by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). DMAC is known as a relatively strong mine action authority, but its effectiveness may decrease if it does not receive substantial support. There are many different local and international mine action organisations active in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is a signatory to the Ottawa Treaty and Oslo Convention.

#### **Dutch policy**

Dutch policy in Afghanistan focuses on peace, security, stability and migration; the international legal order and human rights; and social development with the ultimate aim of achieving a self-reliant, safe and stable Afghanistan. In the field of peace, security, stability and migration, the Netherlands is involved in both civil and military activities. Dutch military presence takes the form of participation in the NATO mission Resolute Support, with military personnel active in Mazar-i-Sharif and Kabul.

In terms of the international legal order and human rights, the Netherlands focuses on improving Afghans' access to the justice system and strengthening the rule of law and the Afghan legal system. Regarding social development, the Netherlands is active in helping make the Afghan economy independent and sustainable. This includes a major Dutch role in investing in agricultural education in Afghanistan.

Key partners in achieving these policy objectives are NATO, the UN, the World Bank, international and local NGOs and the Afghan government itself. The Netherlands contributes to various international multi-donor funds aimed at achieving these objectives, including the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan, the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund and the Afghan National Army Trust Fund.

#### **Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme**

The Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme primarily links up with the Dutch policy area of peace, security, stability and migration by reducing the threat to Afghans posed by landmines. The programme also contributes to the country's socioeconomic development by making land safe for economic purposes.

The Netherlands considers it important for improvised mines that have been left behind to be cleared and for mined land to be made safe for agriculture and other economic purposes. In view of the Dutch military presence in Mazar-i-Sharif, mine action in that area is particularly desirable to enhance the Netherlands' integrated approach to development and security programmes. Lastly, it is a priority for the Netherlands for the DMAC to operate independently and be self-reliant.

# Iraq

## Landmine situation

Iraq has one of the highest levels of landmine contamination in the world. Not only are there many legacy mines from earlier conflicts in the years from 1980 to 1988 and from the period of the Gulf Wars, but a great deal of new contamination was added during the conflict with Islamic State (ISIS), mainly in the form of improvised mines. Some cities have been completely destroyed by the conflict and are strewn with mines and other ERW, often improvised. This makes these cities less liveable and hinders the return of displaced residents. Due to this high level of contamination, Iraq also has one of the world's highest numbers of victims of landmines and ERW.

There are two mine action authorities in Iraq; the Directorate of Mine Action (DMA) is responsible for federal Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA) for the autonomous Kurdish territory. While both authorities have some capacity to clear mines, the scale of existing contamination together with the new contamination created by improvised mines present them with complex challenges. The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) plays an important supporting role, especially in terms of coordination. UNMAS and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are working together to ensure the demining of public infrastructure identified as having priority within UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization in Iraq (FFS).

Iraq is a signatory to the Ottawa Treaty and Oslo Convention.

## Dutch policy

The Netherlands and Iraq have a constructive relationship. The Netherlands has interests in Iraq in the field of security, migration, human rights and the economy, takes part in the anti-ISIS coalition and has contributed to humanitarian and stabilisation efforts. In the field of stability and security specific attention is devoted to combating violent extremism, improving the security sector, transitional justice and gender. The Netherlands is a major donor to the FFS, and Dutch aid is used for activities including rebuilding crucial public infrastructure.

The Netherlands aims to enhance the protection and socioeconomic opportunities of displaced persons in Iraq by increasing access to basic services and improving the quality of education. In addition the Netherlands promotes the development of the private sector, especially the agricultural, water and energy sectors. The Netherlands also supports Iraq in the field of water management for agriculture.

## Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme

The Netherlands sees humanitarian mine action as the basis for a stable, safe and peaceful Iraq. The Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme contributes to this aim by reducing the risks to Iraqis' personal safety. The programme also boosts the country's socioeconomic development by making land safe and enabling displaced persons to return to their homes.

Given the magnitude of the needs in Iraq, the Netherlands attaches importance to ensuring mine action operations are carried out in the country within all pillars of activity, with a focus on the areas liberated from ISIS. Geographical priorities should be determined by balancing needs and available capacity, and should ideally bear a relation to other development activities in a specific area. Because much of the new contamination is found in cities, it is important to provide additional support to build the capacity of various actors in Iraq that are addressing this challenge.

Besides the humanitarian mine action programme, the Netherlands is also contributing to other UNMAS activities in Iraq until mid-2021.

# Lebanon

## Landmine situation

Lebanon has a medium level of contamination by landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war. The highest level of contamination is on Lebanon's southern border, as a consequence of the war with neighbouring Israel. In the northeast of the country, along the border with Syria, new contamination has also been identified, on top of existing minefields. This mainly takes the form of improvised mines laid during the Islamic State occupation. Mines restrict access to land in areas where farming is the main source of income for local communities. They also present a physical threat to the many Syrian refugees living in the area.

Lebanon has a relatively strong mine action authority, the Lebanon Mine Action Center (LMAC), which falls under the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). LMAC is responsible for setting norms and priorities for the mine action sector. In addition, it coordinates all mine action in the country conducted by the LAF and international and local organisations. UNDP provides process-related support for LMAC's activities. In 2017 a regional school was established in Lebanon offering training on mine action.

Lebanon is not a signatory to the Ottawa Treaty, but has signed the Oslo Convention.

## Dutch policy

Lebanon is one of the Dutch government's focus countries. The Netherlands attaches importance to the country's security, political stability and socioeconomic development. The Netherlands is therefore active in the fields of peace, security, stability and migration, social progress and sustainable trade and investment. The Netherlands' efforts focus on both refugees and host communities. It helps support the Lebanese security sector and armed forces, preventing violent extremism and improving the protection and socioeconomic prospects of refugees from Syria.

The Netherlands is also working to advance sustainable and inclusive private sector development in Lebanon, by supporting SMEs and start-ups, strengthening economic institutions and improving access to capital and the market. Social development is also a major policy goal, with a focus on education. Lastly, defending human rights and strengthening democracy governed by the rule of law are an important dimension of Dutch policy as a whole in Lebanon. Where possible, the Netherlands acts through the EU.

## Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme

The Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme serves a number of Dutch policy goals. Firstly, it contributes to a peaceful, secure and stable Lebanon by enhancing human security in areas affected by mines. Secondly, the programme aims to improve the socioeconomic prospects of vulnerable host communities and refugees in those areas, for example by making contaminated areas safe for economic activities. Lastly, the programme supports the security sector in Lebanon, specifically LMAC.

Because the Netherlands links the mine action programme to socioeconomic development, it considers it important that mine action focus on improving the economic prospects of people affected by landmines. The Netherlands would like LMAC to operate autonomously as from 2025. Achieving this goal would set an example to other mine action authorities. Besides survey and clearance, the Netherlands considers raising risk awareness a priority, particularly for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The Netherlands sees prospects of Lebanon signing the Ottawa Treaty in the near future.

# Libya

## Landmine situation

Libya has a very high level of landmine contamination by both legacy mines from conflicts in past decades and improvised mines laid during the recent conflicts in the country. The current conflict raging in the country is leaving many explosive remnants of war in its wake. This has led to a relatively high number of victims: 3,302, 410 of whom have died and 2,892 have been wounded in the 1999-2018 period. Contamination is highest in the cities along the coast (Tripoli, Misrata, Benghazi, Sirte and Derna), which has had a major effect on the living environment there. Homes have been destroyed and crucial infrastructure like roads, schools, hospitals and water collection points have been badly damaged. Many mined areas still have to be surveyed; this is a serious problem. Libya also has the largest unguarded ammunition stores in the world.

Libya has a relatively strong coordination mechanism for mine action in which the Libyan Mine Action Centre (LibMAC) takes the lead with support from UNMAS. Despite the current division between eastern and western Libya, LibMAC is managing to make agreements on mine action throughout the country. The Libyan authorities, international institutions and international and local organisations are all working hard to clear mines.

Libya is not a signatory to the Ottawa Treaty or Oslo Convention.

## Dutch policy

The Netherlands' main goal in Libya is peace, security and stability. It contributes to these goals by strengthening government and non-governmental institutions and the democratic process. Through this goal, the Netherlands aims to combat irregular migration, terrorism and violent extremism and instability on the southern borders of the EU. This links up with the broader prevention agenda of Dutch foreign policy. Gender is a crosscutting theme within this goal.

In addition, the Netherlands actively contributes to efforts to improve the living conditions of vulnerable groups in Libya. It therefore invests in protecting human rights and minorities, including by combating international crimes such as human trafficking and people smuggling. Activities within these themes financed by the Netherlands fall under the Dutch policy goal of strengthening the international legal order and respect for human rights.

At the time of the publication of this policy framework, the Dutch staff posted abroad to the embassy in Libya were temporarily relocated in Tunis. When circumstances allow, they will resume their activities in Tripoli.

## Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme

The Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme contributes to the stabilisation of Libya by improving Libyans' immediate safety and living conditions. The focus is on protecting vulnerable groups, including families and children. A secondary aim is to improve the socioeconomic situation of local communities affected by the landmine problem.

The fragile situation in Libya makes the clearance of landmines and ERW more difficult, so raising civilians' risk awareness in affected areas is vital. The Netherlands seeks to play a role in raising public awareness and therefore considers risk education in Libya a priority. In addition, the Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme helps strengthen Libyan capacity to tackle the landmine problem. In the interests of donor coordination and given the activities of other donors in the west of the country, the Netherlands is focusing on capacity building in the east of the country. The Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme ties in with the Netherlands' policy goal of strengthening Libya's institutions.

# Syria

## Landmine situation

Syria has been heavily affected by explosive remnants of war and landmines in the past nine years, especially in former ISIS-occupied areas. Improvised mines in urban areas present an extra challenge, with large residential districts becoming uninhabitable. The exact scale of the problem is unclear, but it can be assumed that there is a high level of already existing contamination and that the ongoing conflict is creating new contamination.

The priorities for the mine action sector have been incorporated in the humanitarian overview of Syria. In areas controlled by the Assad regime, the Syrian army is the main body conducting mine action. Outside these areas, local and sometimes international organisations are active. Since 2018, UNMAS has played a role in coordinating mine action throughout the country.

Syria is not a signatory to the Ottawa Treaty or Oslo Convention.

## Dutch policy

In Syria, the Netherlands focuses on supporting an inclusive political solution on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 2254, safeguarding the international legal order and justice for Syrians, and alleviating human suffering and protecting civilians by offering humanitarian aid. The Netherlands also supports programmes aimed at hosting Syrian refugees in the region. The Netherlands' standpoint, like that of the EU, is that no support should be given to Syrian reconstruction before a political transition is firmly under way. The Netherlands has had no diplomatic relations with the Assad regime since 2012.

The Netherlands acts on the basis of humanitarian imperatives, to provide aid and protection to all people in distress. For that reason, it has a whole-of-Syria approach to humanitarian aid.

The Netherlands has had no diplomatic ties with the Assad regime since 2012, but has a team of diplomatic representatives that focus on Syria from various locations, including Istanbul, Beirut, Geneva and The Hague.

## Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme

The Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme seeks to alleviate the suffering of Syrians who have been affected by the landmine problem, especially vulnerable groups like women and children. The programme also helps make affected areas habitable again to support the return of displaced persons.

The Netherlands sees added value especially in clearance in affected areas and the provision of aid to victims. In providing aid, it seeks to focus extra attention on aid to victims with mental and psychological health problems. Mine action financed by the Netherlands must be part of the humanitarian response plan. Cooperation with the Syrian army is not an option.

# Ukraine

## Landmine situation

Landmines and ERW have been a problem in Ukraine since the outbreak of the conflict in the east of the country in May 2014. Before then, the country was mine-free. The worst affected areas are along the contact line in the conflict zones in the east. Because the problem is recent, the people in the affected areas are often not aware of the dangers, resulting in relatively high numbers of civilian victims since the start of the conflict. It is also impacting on basic services in the conflict area, with hospitals closing and restricted energy and water supplies.

Various Ukrainian government bodies are involved in mine action policy. In practice, the lead agency is the State Emergency Service. Ukraine has by statute placed ownership of the landmine problem with a National Mine Action Authority, but that has not yet become active. In a number of areas around the contact line mine action is not being done because the conflict is ongoing and access is difficult. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) plays an important role in the Ukrainian mine action sector, both in lobbying and advice and in coordination.

Ukraine is a signatory to the Ottawa Treaty, but not the Oslo Convention.

## Dutch policy

The long-term goal of Dutch policy in Ukraine is to strengthen stability, security and prosperity in the country. To achieve this goal, the Netherlands focuses on the implementation of reforms, with the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area as guiding frameworks. The Netherlands' focus lies on combating corruption and promoting good governance (including reforms to the justice system) and human rights.

Regarding the conflict in the east of Ukraine, the Netherlands focuses on strengthening local government with the participation of residents, on local security and on access to the courts. It pursues these aims by investing in the security of communities in vulnerable areas and enhancing their economic self-reliance. The Netherlands works with UNDP in these areas.

As a result of the MH-17 disaster, the Netherlands has special interests in Ukraine, and especially in the east of the country. Although the area where the disaster occurred is not accessible, the families of Dutch victims would benefit from being allowed to visit the area in the future.

## Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme

The Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme is part of a wider Dutch effort to enhance stability in Eastern Ukraine. The programme's aim is two-fold: mine action reduces the risk of mine-related civilian victims and strengthens the socioeconomic development of vulnerable communities.

The Netherlands sees the greatest added value of the mine action programme in Ukraine as clearing mines and ERW and making land safe for economic purposes. Surveying mined areas plays an important role in this respect. That requires the relevant mine action authorities and other bodies acquiring access to areas affected by mines. It is also important to improve the capacity of local organisations. Working more according to international mine action standards is an important step that needs to be implemented at local level.

The Netherlands contributes to humanitarian mine action in Ukraine outside the Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme through its general contribution to the OSCE.

# Yemen

## Landmine situation

Though total figures are not known, partly due to the lack of adequate data, contamination by landmines and cluster mines in Yemen is estimated to be very high. Through a combination of past and more recent conflicts in the country, Yemen is struggling with an increasing number of landmines and cluster munitions. There are also more and more reports of improvised mines, probably laid by Houthi rebels. They are found mainly in areas where armed conflict has taken place, including Taiz, Al Jawf and Al Hudaydah, where most victims are also found. A specific problem in Yemen is posed by naval mines laid in and around ports to obstruct shipping and thereby the supply of food.

Because of the ongoing conflict, the Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre (YEMAC) operates as two separate mine action organisations in the north and the south. YEMAC has insufficient capacity to deal with the growing challenges of mine action in the country. Since 2017, UNDP has been conducting capacity building activities to support YEMAC, but seeks to play a more coordinating role in the coming years. That makes operational support from international mine action organisations active in Yemen even more important in tackling the growing landmine problem.

Yemen is a signatory to the Ottawa Treaty, but not to the Oslo Convention.

## Dutch policy

The Netherlands promotes an inclusive peace process in Yemen leading to lasting peace and stability. To achieve that, an integrated approach focusing on strengthening the building blocks of the transition from conflict to peace is essential. The Netherlands seeks to tackle the root causes of the internal conflict by strengthening local structures, combating social fragmentation and integrating vulnerable groups into society. Lastly, the Netherlands is supporting efforts to increase monitoring to prevent violations of human rights and of the humanitarian law of war. In this way, the Netherlands is supporting the UN-led peace process and the associated multi-track diplomacy.

The Netherlands' priorities for development cooperation are access to water and sanitation, sexual and reproductive health and rights, women's rights, security, the rule of law and human rights, and humanitarian aid. These activities contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 3, 5, 6 and 16. The Netherlands plays a special role in Yemen in the area of water infrastructure. It does not work directly with the Yemeni government, but through international and local non-governmental bodies and multilateral channels. The Netherlands contributes to UNDP's Peace Support Facility and the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen.

At the time this policy framework is published the Dutch embassy in Yemen is housed in The Hague, because of the volatile situation in the country. The local staff remains in the embassy in Sana'a.

## Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme

The Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme should contribute to the goal of promoting stabilisation in Yemen and bringing the conflict and political crisis to an end. The programme should do this specifically by removing the physical threat to people's safety, on the one hand by clearing mines and on the other hand by providing risk education, especially to vulnerable groups. Surveying mine contamination in Yemen is of equal priority. It is also important to raise the quality of mine action operations by enforcing better work standards. Lastly, there is scope for providing support for mine victims and their families. In view of the current security conditions in Yemen, may not be possible to carry out all of these activities.

As contamination is continuing to increase, more capacity is required. Capacity building and support for YEMAC should therefore be a major component of the Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme in Yemen. Besides the Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme, the Netherlands supports UNDP's mine action programme.