



2017 Annual Report on the implementation of the Mine Action Strategy of the Swiss Confederation 2016–2019

1. Introduction

In 2017, recognising the important contribution of mine action to human security, peace, humanitarian action, and sustainable development, Switzerland deployed some CHF 22.3 million to efforts to clear mines, raise awareness, strengthen local capacities, and facilitate the implementation of existing conventions at the international level.

Switzerland aims to help create a world without new victims of anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war (ERW) – a world in which sustainable development progresses smoothly and the needs of affected communities are adequately met. With this mission in mind, Switzerland has set itself three objectives:

1. The relevant treaties¹ are fully implemented and universally applied;
2. Safety from mines, cluster munitions and ERW is increased and the conditions for sustainable development improved;
3. Ownership of mine action rests entirely with those affected on the ground.

The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS) adopt a whole-of-government approach to the implementation of Switzerland's mine action strategy. To end the scourge of mines, in 2017 these two federal departments also collaborated with other governments, international organisations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and civil society. The FDFA disbursed CHF 18.9 million, of which CHF 9.3 million was channeled to the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). The DDPS spent CHF 3.4 million on deployments and training within the framework of military peacebuilding and training support. The DDPS does not fund projects implemented on the ground.

¹ The Convention of 18 September 1997 on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention, SR 0.515.092); the Convention of 30 May 2008 on Cluster Munitions (SR 0.515.093); the Convention of 10 October 1980 on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects with its Amended Protocol II on the Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices as amended on 3 May 1996 and its Protocol V of 28 November 2003 on Explosive Remnants of War ("UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons" – CCW, SR 0.515.091, SR 0.515.091.3, SR 0.515.091.4); and the Convention of 13 December 2006 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (SR 0.109).

This annual report presents an overview of the Swiss Confederation's most important achievements in the area of mine action in 2017.

2. Overview and results achieved in 2017

Over the last 20 years, the international community has achieved a great deal in the fight against mines, cluster munitions and ERW, and their consequences on human lives. Vast areas of land have been declared free of mines and have been returned to local communities for productive use. Millions of stockpiled mines and cluster munitions have been destroyed, preventing their future use. And assistance to victims, although at times inadequate and poorly funded, has been recognised as an important international obligation.

Nonetheless, despite these positive developments, a number of recent trends have become a serious concern for the international community. After more than a decade of decline, the number of victims of cluster munitions and landmines has again started to increase. This is attributable to the new use of cluster munitions and landmines in conflict-torn countries, including Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Myanmar. Of particular concern is the increasing use of improvised landmines by armed non-state actors (ANSAs). The vast majority of victims are civilians, with children often the most vulnerable and worst affected. Against this background, the resources deployed by Switzerland during the course of 2017 have been the highest in recent years. These developments underline the relevance of Switzerland's sustained engagement in this area, as well as the need to pursue advocacy efforts towards a universal ban on these weapons.

In line with its well-established humanitarian tradition, Switzerland is involved in mine action through: (1) emphasising the importance of respecting and promoting relevant international instruments; (2) clearing contaminated areas, conducting mine risk education and providing victim assistance; and (3) building local capacities to strengthen local ownership. These constitute Switzerland's three lines of engagement.

2.1 Strategic objective 1: the relevant treaties are fully implemented and universally applied

Sectors of engagement and instruments	Multilateral forums, bilateral talks/political dialogue, advocacy, demining
Countries and areas of engagement	Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Lebanon, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Zimbabwe

Under this objective Switzerland aims to promote compliance with the relevant international treaties by states parties and ANSAs. It also appeals to non-states parties to abide by the basic principles, and supports efforts to clarify alleged breaches. 10% of the resources mobilised in 2017 were invested in this strategic objective. The following activities and projects helped to attain this objective:

- In Colombia and Angola, Switzerland supported seven mine action projects with a demining component. Both countries have important deadlines to meet under the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention.
- In collaboration with UNDP, Switzerland supports six states parties (Ukraine, Angola, Lebanon, Tajikistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Zimbabwe) to the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention and/or the Convention on Cluster Munitions in developing mine action strategies and linking them with wider development priorities.
- In its capacity as the secretariat of the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission (IHFFC), Switzerland provided extensive support to the commission in the assembly and deployment of an independent forensic team to investigate a mine incident that affected the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Eastern Ukraine in 2017.
- In the multilateral forums, especially during the 2017 Meetings of States Parties to the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Switzerland stressed the importance of respecting the deadlines set by these two conventions for the destruction of stockpiles and the clearance of mines and cluster munitions. In particular, it actively engaged with one state party that failed to respect its international obligations, underlining the importance of the integrity of international instruments for their credibility. This engagement will continue in 2018.
- In 2017, as in the past, Switzerland financially supported the research work undertaken by the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor. In doing so, Switzerland promotes transparency and the clarification of possible violations of the treaties' provisions.
- If the promises of Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention and Cluster Munitions Conventions – a world free of mines and cluster munitions with no new victims – are to be kept, it will be essential to engage in dialogue with ANSAs, whose use of improvised mines threatens the vision of these two treaties. Therefore, Switzerland supports, amongst other things, the endeavours of the non-governmental organisation Geneva Call, which engages with these actors in an effort to promote respect for international norms, including those outlined in the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention.

2.2 Strategic objective 2: safety from mines, cluster munitions and ERW is increased and the conditions for sustainable development improved

Sectors of engagement and instruments	Clearance, victim assistance, mine risk education, deployment of experts, capacity building, information management, and training
Countries and areas of engagement	Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Colombia, Croatia, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Gaza, Libya, Mali, Myanmar,

Under this strategic objective Switzerland particularly emphasises three of the five core pillars of mine action: clearance, victim assistance and mine risk education. By engaging in these areas, Switzerland facilitates the delivery of humanitarian goods and services, lays the ground for reconstruction, and contributes to paving the way for sustainable development. Excluding the contribution to the GICHD (CHF 9.3 million), more than 80% of Switzerland's resources was disbursed under this objective. The focus was on projects on the ground and the deployment of experts, particularly in South East Asia (Myanmar and Cambodia). In 2017, the following projects and activities contributed to achieving this objective:

- Within the framework of its peacebuilding, humanitarian and development efforts Switzerland supported 12 mine action projects, all of which followed an integrated approach that included clearance, victim assistance and/or capacity building components. Furthermore, Switzerland streamlined mine risk education in most of its mine action projects to prevent new victims and assist affected communities in managing the risks posed by mines and other ERW. The projects contributed to a reduction in new victims and facilitated the access to resources. Those implemented in Colombia and Gaza also facilitated the return of internally displaced people and refugees to their places of origin.
- During the period under review, Switzerland invested in strengthening the relevant multilateral forums and mechanisms with the purpose of advancing the implementation of the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. From 2015 to 2017, Switzerland actively participated as a member of the Coordination Committee in preparing the work of the 6th and 7th Meetings of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Moreover, it continued to support the two Implementation Support Units.
- By deploying its experts, Switzerland supported five UN mine action programmes in the DRC, Libya, Mali, South Sudan and Western Sahara.
- In Colombia and Croatia, Switzerland supported mine victims by providing them with tools to facilitate their inclusion in the social and economic fabric of their societies. At the global level, Switzerland supports two ICRC initiatives, the Special Fund for the Disabled and the Programme for Humanitarian Impact Investment, both of which assist the rehabilitation of mine victims.
- Special emphasis has been placed on Myanmar where Switzerland funded victim assistance projects implemented by the ICRC. These projects increased the awareness among more than 1,600 people of the risks posed by mines and supported orthopaedic centres in the rehabilitation of mine victims.
- In 2017, in collaboration with UNICEF, Switzerland organised two training courses aimed at better integrating mine risk education into mine action programmes. Additional training courses were carried out with the GICHD, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

2.3 Strategic objective 3: ownership of mine action rests entirely with those affected of the ground

Sectors of engagement and instruments	GICHD core contribution, deployment of experts, capacity building, information management, and training
Countries and areas of engagement	DRC, Libya, Mali, South Sudan, Western Sahara

To be sustainable and relevant in the long term, people most affected should be empowered to carry out mine action. With this in mind, Switzerland stresses the importance of building the capacities and strengthening the knowledge of state authorities and affected populations. Of the CHF 22.3 million deployed by Switzerland, 6% was invested in building local capacities. In 2017, the following projects and activities contributed to achieving this objective:

- The Swiss Armed Forces deployed 12 experts to different UN missions (DRC, Libya, Mali, South Sudan, Western Sahara) to contribute to strengthening local mine action authorities. The experts trained local staff in, among other areas, the management of information and the disposal of explosive ordnance. In countries where it was possible, such as the DRC and Mali, synergies with other domains, e.g. the safe and secure storage of ammunition, were exploited.
- In collaboration with several UN partners (UNICEF, UNOPS, UNAMS, UNDP) and the GICHD, Switzerland funded and participated in the organisation of 11 training courses aimed at improving the local experts' knowledge of mine action tools, such as results-based management, information management, and the implementation of mine action standards.
- In collaboration with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the GICHD, and the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) Switzerland participated in the development and review of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, which aim to decrease the risks posed by ammunition stockpiles (proliferation and explosions).
- In 2017, Switzerland contributed CHF 9.3 million to the activities of the GICHD. The organisation improves the efficiency of mine action by developing capacities and knowledge, and promoting norms and standards.

3. Conclusion and way forward

Jointly, and in collaboration with other governments, international organisations, the ICRC, the GICHD, and civil society, the FDFA and the DDPS will continue to pursue their long-term vision of a world without new victims of anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions and other ERW. Furthermore, Switzerland will play an active role in countering the disturbing trend of not respecting deadlines stipulated in international obligations and accepting non-compliance with these obligations as normal.

As a result, Switzerland placed clear emphasis on human security: projects were funded to assist victims and ensure that they receive comprehensive medical care and the necessary support for their social and economic reintegration. With its support to

clearance programmes Switzerland contributed to reducing the risks posed by mines and to facilitating access to local resources. This focus is the result of the reality on the ground and in line with the current strategy.

The 2016–19 mine action strategy is the fourth of its type. Switzerland's commitment to mine action remains high and helps to improve sustainability. The present strategy adopts a more robust and articulated plan of action than previous strategies, including a light results-based management framework. As the first full-year implementation cycle comes to an end, it is clear that these tools have simplified the monitoring of Switzerland's various engagements and have facilitated coordination.

Switzerland will remain engaged in the mine action sector. As proof of its commitment, it increased its financial contributions in 2017 to its highest level in recent years.

4. A concrete example of Switzerland's engagement: Colombia

Summary

Context:

Decades of conflict in Colombia have left the country heavily contaminated by mines. The peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) has given new momentum to the demining effort. Switzerland actively participates in this effort because it believes that demining can contribute to achieving sustainable peace in Colombia.

Focus in 2017:

In 2017, the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) activities focused on the municipality of Ataco (Southern Tolima) with the aim of improving lives and increasing economic activity.

Key partners:

The Halo Trust

Other partners: the National Mine Action Authorities (DAICMA), the Victims' Unit (UARIV), the Land Restitution Unit, the National Agency for Reintegration of Former Combatants (ACR), the Department for Social Prosperity, and the Colombia Institute for Rural Development (INCODER).



The local authorities, together with the HALO Trust and the SDC, hand over the mine-free municipality of Ataco to the population.

At the local level: the municipal authorities and the Juntas de Acción Comunal.

Budget:

CHF 390,000 for the Halo Trust project. Switzerland disburses approximately CHF 1 million per year in mine action in Colombia.



Demining activities in Southern Tolima.

Context

According to the UNHCR, in 2017 Colombia had the second highest number of internally displaced people (IDPs) worldwide and every year reports a very high number of new victims of anti-personnel mines. Improvised anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance contaminate especially rural territories in Colombia, killing and injuring vulnerable people with poor access to medical and rehabilitation services, disrupting their lives, spreading fear among communities, causing loss of economic opportunities, contributing to poverty, and preventing the process of land return.

Progress in the release of contaminated territories through humanitarian demining has been slow in Colombia. However, it has gained increasing importance within the framework of the peace talks between the government and the FARC.

Switzerland funds the demining activities of the NGO Halo Trust, which contributes to improving the lives and increasing the economic activities of the communities living in the municipality of Ataco (Southern Tolima). Once a stronghold of the FARC, these mountainous areas were heavily contaminated by mines, instilling fear in the lives of the local population. Mines and other ERWs have caused many victims among the civilian population and hindered their daily economic and social activities. This in turn slowed the development of this region. The Halo Trust cleared contaminated areas over a period of 16 months. The organisation visited 105 village communities, carried out hundreds of analyses, and raised awareness among local population groups of the risks posed by mines. These activities benefitted 17,000 people living in the municipality of Ataco, which was then declared free of mines in July 2017. This engagement should facilitate the land restitution process and the implementation of development projects in a once marginal region. Furthermore, the project enabled the demobilisation of ex-guerrillas and their recruitment in demining teams, which facilitated both the social reintegration of the former fighters and the confidence-building process within the communities concerned.

Objectives of the Halo Trust project

Improve lives and increase economic activity in mine-affected communities in the municipality of Ataco (Southern Tolima) through humanitarian demining.

Target groups

Directly:

66 women, men, boys, and girls in southern Tolima benefit from the removal of the mine threat. 46 women and men

Outcomes

1. Increased employment for 46 victims of the conflict and former combatants in southern Tolima.
2. Civilian demining capacity established in southern Tolima.
3. After humanitarian demining actions, safe conditions created for economic activities, land restitution and IDP return/resettlement in southern Tolima.

residents of the area and ex-combatants are employed in humanitarian demining.

Indirectly:

About 8,600 people living in rural zones of the project target area, IDPs in possible process of returning to their land, and claimants whose land restitution requests (currently 1,100) could be processed.