

Mine/UXO clearance in the North

An overview of current status, issues and challenges

November 20, 2009

Scope of the problem

- Mine/UXO contamination forms an impediment to the return and resettlement of IDPs.
- The newly liberated areas cover roughly 5000 square kilometers and total contamination is not yet known.
- The LTTE used mines extensively including sporadic mining while retreating.
- The LTTE also used Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) or popular called Booby traps.
- The intense fighting has left many Un-Exploded Ordnance (UXOs) scattered over the entire area.
- Mine clearance is a time consuming process: one deminer clears an average of 10 square meters daily and One Square kilometer is equal to 1,000,000 square meters.

UNDP Support to Mine Action Project:

- The Project supports the Government of Sri Lanka in managing and coordination mine action
- The Project has field offices (DMAOs) in Jaffna, Vavuniya and Mannar
- Sub-offices in Killinochchi and/or Mullaitivu will be opened when UN resumes operational presence in these districts
- Among other tasks DMAO staff prepare tasking folders, carry out quality assurance/control of tasks, and maintain the IMSMA database (info management system)

Mine Action tasking cycle (1)

1. Suspected contaminated area prioritized for tasking by GA and other government authorities (2 to 3 weeks)
2. Official approval secured and task(s) assigned to demining agencies, by the DMAO (1 week)
3. Demining agency will start operations in the area in accordance with the Sri Lanka National Mine Action Standards (1 to 2 days to start and up-to several weeks/months to complete)
4. DMAO conducts regular Quality Assurance checks of the site under clearance (immediately after start of operation and every 2 weeks for the duration of clearance)

Mine Action tasking cycle (2)

5. Demining agency declares the demining task as completed and the DMAO conducts the final Quality Control check (Depends on the size of area: Manual 10 m² per de-miner per day/Mechanical 10 000 m² per day and final QC: 1 to 2 days)
6. Completion Survey Form is co-signed by the GA, the demining agency and the head of the DMAO (2 days)
7. Land released for resettlement and livelihood development activities

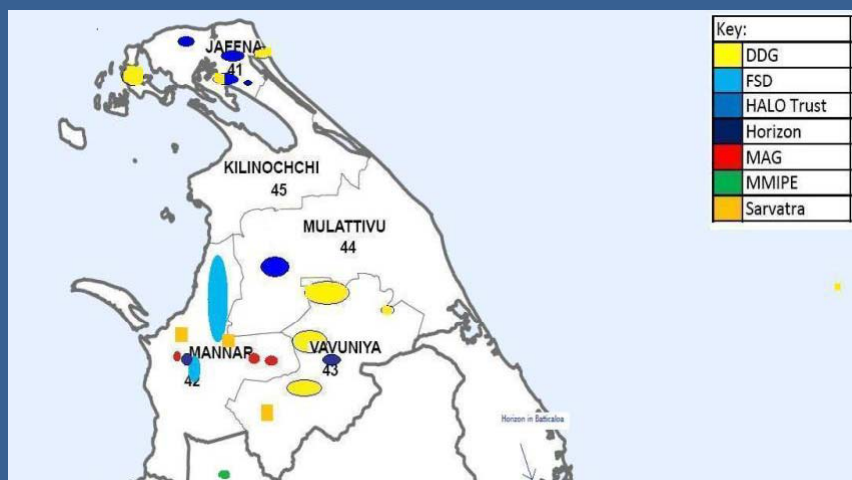
Mine Action updates (1)

- Tasks in the North are increasing exponentially, with new survey and clearance tasks now also being issued in Killinochchi and Mullaitivu. DDG and HALO Trust operators have moved assets to these districts last week and started survey and clearance activities.
- Given the Government's priority to resettle 80% of IDPs before the end of January 2010, demining operators and the DMAO in the East have been requested by the Government to move all assets to the North. Tasks in the East were finished or suspended towards the end of September. However, there remains a need for clearance activities!

Mine Action updates (2)

- Demining agencies have been advised to focus on villages and paddy fields leaving out jungle areas and uninhabited areas.
- In case of time consuming heavy mine contamination, demining agencies has been asked to mark the area and proceed.
- The UNDP Support to Mine Action Project is in the process of scaling up the human resource capacities in the District Mine Action Offices in the North. A new sub-office in Mannar has opened up in October.
- SLA-HDU has increased its capacity significantly with the purchase of additional mini flails.

Operators and areas of operation

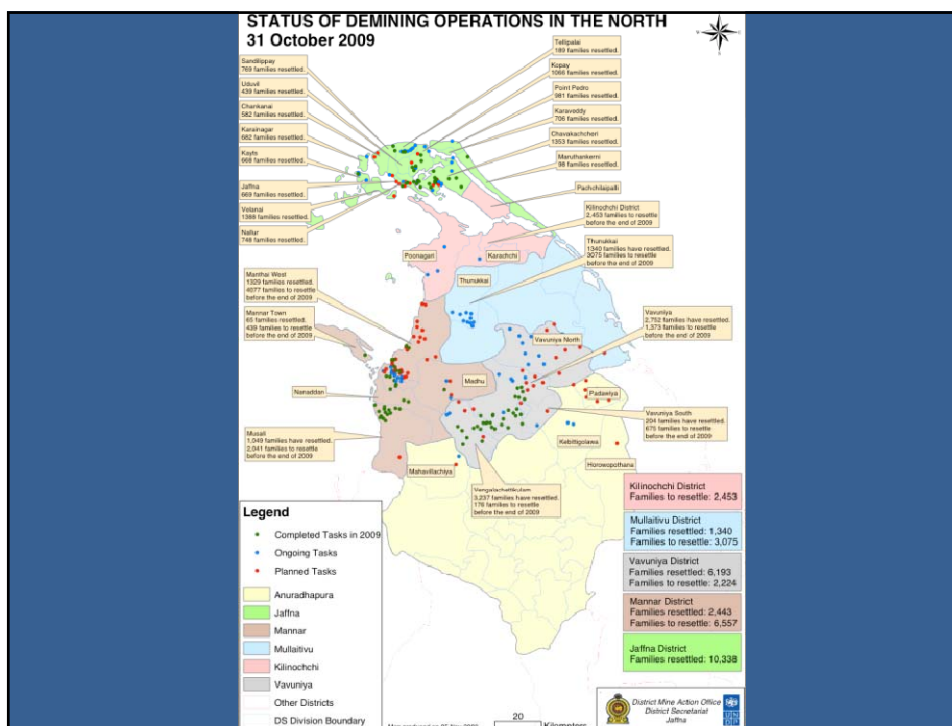


Task update

District	Operators Active	Ongoing and planned tasks	Recently completed tasks
Jaffna	DDG and Halo Trust	10 ongoing 44 planned	2 tasks in Kayts town completed
Killinochchi	DDG and Halo Trust	2 ongoing 34 planned	Areas released through survey in Poonagari: Nallur, Kiranchi, Nachchikuda, Kariyalaynagapattuvan, Pallavaray, Part of Jeyapuram South

Task update

District	Operators active	Current and planned tasks	Recently completed tasks
Mullaitivu	Halo Trust SLA-HDU	11 ongoing 9 planned	Parts of Thenniyankulam, Thunukkai, Yogapuram
Vavuniya	DDG HORIZON	12 ongoing 15 planned	Several areas in Vavuniya North, including Puliyankulam South, Kanakarayankulam North and South, and Sinnadampan
Mannar	FSD MAG Sarvatra HORIZON SLA-HDU	41 ongoing 23 planned	Part of Sornapuri and part of Palaipermalkaddu were cleared. Ongoing tasks concentrated in Manthai West



Challenges

- There is a continuing need for operators and UNDP Support to Mine Action Project to upscale its human resource and technical capacities. However, the process of expanding capacity is a time consuming process with employment, training of new staff, purchase/importation of equipment and deployment.
- Mine clearance is a slow process where one deminer can clear 10 m² per day
- Lack of population in areas under survey increases time needed for survey
- Information sharing with other I/NGOs and agencies in the area remains a challenge