



Afghanistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 3 December 2012

Any information relating to NGOs operating in Afghanistan which specialise in landmine clearance. If such NGOs can be found, can any information be found to indicate what parts of Afghanistan they operate in?

A page on the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan website, in a paragraph headed “Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA)”, states:

“Collectively known as the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA), mine action implementers in Afghanistan form one of the largest mine action programmes in the world. Together, these agencies have a twenty year history of successfully delivering mine action in Afghanistan and have cleared over 18,000 hazard areas throughout the country. The MAPA was the first ‘humanitarian’ (i.e. non-military) mine action programme in the world and encompasses all pillars of mine action: advocacy, demining, stockpile destruction, mine risk education (MRE), and victim assistance (VA). Over 30 mine action organizations currently work in Afghanistan, employing over 14,000 personnel. These partners, which include national and international actors, both from the commercial and not-for-profit sector deliver a wide range of mine action services including manual demining, mechanically assisted clearance, mine dog detection assets, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), survey, MRE, victim assistance activities, and data collection.” (Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (undated) *About MAPA and MACCA*)

In a paragraph headed “About MACCA/DMC and Mine Action Coordination” this webpage states:

“The MACCA employs national personnel and international staff to coordinate and provide support to mine action operations through its headquarters in Kabul and Area Mine Action Centres (AMACs). AMACs, staffed entirely by Afghans, are located in Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kunduz, Gardez, and Jalalabad.” (ibid)

A document published in the online edition of the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor states:

“Afghanistan has the world's oldest and largest mine action program, with an annual budget of some US\$100 million. The total number of people engaged in mine action was around 14,000 in 2010. Most mine clearance is conducted by five long-established national and two international NGOs. The Afghan NGOs are: Afghan Technical Consultants (ATC), Demining Agency for Afghanistan (DAFA), Mine Clearance Planning Agency (MCPA), Mine Detection and Dog Centre (MDC), and Organization for Mine Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation (OMAR); with two international NGOs: Danish Demining Group (DDG) and HALO Trust.” (Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor (May 2012) *Afghanistan – Landmines*)

An article published by the Journal of ERW and Mine Action, in a paragraph headed “Historical Achievement of Mine Action”, states:

“Mine and UXO survey and clearance, which was commenced in 1994 by several organizations including ATC, Organization for Mine Clearance and Afghanistan Rehabilitation, The HALO Trust, Mine Clearance Planning Agency and Mine Detection Dog Center in Kabul City. After some years, two more national and international mine-clearance organizations—Demining Agency for Afghanistan and Danish Demining Group—became involved in this process.” (Journal of ERW and Mine Action, issue 15.3 (2011) *Kabul City Clearance Project*)

An entry in the Afghan Biographies database on Afghan Technical Consultants (ATC) states:

“Afghan Technical Consultants (ATC) is the oldest and largest non-profit and non-governmental organization for humanitarian mine clearance in Afghanistan. It was established in October 1989, by the present director Kefayatullah Eblagh. ATC started demining operations in early 1990, with an initial staff of thirty-five. Since then, it has undergone significant change and expansion. ATC has developed into a highly organized and effective NGO. It was based in Peshawar, Pakistan and later shifted to Kabul City. On Wednesday, March 24, 2010 the oldest Afghan demining organization, Afghan Technical Consultants (ATC), celebrated its 21st anniversary at their Kabul-based Training Center.” (Afghan Biographies (11 April 2012) *Afghan Technical Consultants (ATC)*)

A US Department of State document refers to the Demining Agency for Afghanistan (DAFA) as follows:

“The Demining Agency for Afghanistan (DAFA) is an Afghan non-governmental organization (NGO) headquartered in Kandahar that specializes in landmine clearance throughout the southern and western regions of Afghanistan. It was founded in March 1990, originally under the name South West Afghan Agency for Demining (SWAAD), and changed its name to Demining Agency for Afghanistan in April 1993. DAFA coordinates its operations with the UN's Mine Action Program for Afghanistan (MAPA) which also provides it with financial support, funded in part by the United States. In addition, DAFA has received funding from the United Nations Association of the United States of America's Adopt-A-Minefield program, the European Commission, and, in the past, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), also funded in part by the United States.” (US Department of State (30 June 2003) *Demining Agency for Afghanistan*)

An entry in the Afghan Biographies database for Mine Clearance Planning Agency (MCPA) states:

“MCPA is under Pakistani control active in Afghanistan. Established in 1997, the Mine Clearance Planning Agency (MCPA) is an Afghan NGO responsible for minefield surveys, and mine clearance, as well as maintaining the Mine Action Programme in Afghanistan (MAPA) information system. It is responsible for technical surveys, marking and mapping of minefields, preparation of operational plans, and maintenance of a demining database.

The computerized management information system plays a vital role in the operational planning of the Afghan Mine Action Programme.” (Afghan Biographies (28 May 2012) *Mine Clearance Planning Agency (MCPA)*)

An Afghan Biographies database entry for the chairman of the Mine Detection Center (MDC) states:

“The Mine Detection Center (MDC) was established in 1989 with the goal to make Afghanistan mine- and explosive remnant of war-impact free, where individuals and communities can have a safe environment conducive to national development. From 1994 to 2006, MDC cleared over 169 million square meters of minefields, about half of what the Afghan Mine Action Program has achieved. Thanks to the support of international donors such as USAID, European Commission, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Thailand, UK, the United Nations and others, MDC now has about 1500 qualified technical field personnel and support staff, along with 270 dogs and six demining machines. It can breed dogs and provide veterinarian and medical services. MDC has 10 Mine Dog Groups, 24 Demining Teams, 46 Mine Dog Sets, 6 Mine Dog Groups, 6 Mechanical Demining Units and 2 EOD teams. With the HQ in Kabul City, MDC has got six Field Offices (FO) in six different regions of Afghanistan Kabul FO, Mazar FO, Baghlan FO, Kunduz FO, Uruzgan FO and Nangarhar FO.” (Afghan Biographies (13 January 2011) *Hakimi, Eng Mohammad Shahab Shohab*)

The home page of the Organization for Mine Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation (OMAR) website states:

“OMAR conducts mine and UXO clearance and mine awareness in various parts of the country, with its head office recently relocated to Kabul (from Peshawar) and offices in Jalalabad, Kandahar, and Herat. OMAR has 645 employees of whom 550 are involved in mine clearance and 95 in mine awareness education. It also runs some primary education, health care and rehabilitation projects with separate staff and budget.” (Organization for Mine Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation (OMAR) (undated) *Home Page*)

A report from the Danish Refugee Council, in a paragraph headed “Facts: DDG in Afghanistan”, states:

“As of January 2012, DDG’s operational plan includes 76 Clearance Sections, 4 Mechanical Demining Units, 7 Mine Risk Education and Impact Monitoring teams, 6 survey teams and 4 Support Sections (preparations). This workforce of 850 national staff members is deployed in the northern region and central regions supported by a field office in each of the respective regions and HQ in Kabul.” (Danish Refugee Council (8 February 2012) *60.000 square-meters of future*)

A document on the home page of the international demining NGO HALO Trust states:

“HALO introduced to the world the concept of humanitarian mineclearance in 1988 and has continued clearing mines in Afghanistan despite the fragile political situation bought on by the continuous conflict that has beleaguered the country since the late 1970s. Over the last 20 years the programme has developed from two teams up to the current 200 teams. HALO policy in

Afghanistan has been based on adherence to principles of good governance and recruiting a multi-ethnic workforce, and this has played a large part in guaranteeing HALO's freedom of movement in the Central and Northern regions of Afghanistan. It has also enabled HALO to work more or less without interference since 1988, regardless of the regime in power. Between 1988 and May 2010, HALO Afghanistan has destroyed over 736,000 mines (195,000 emplaced mines and 541,000 stockpiled mines), 10 million items of large calibre ammunition and 45.6 million bullets. HALO Afghanistan currently has an operational capacity employing over 3,500 Afghans, and runs a mixture of manual, mechanical, survey, battle area clearance (BAC), explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and weapon and ammunition disposal (WAD) teams. HALO's current area of operations, excluding the WAD teams who work in every region of the country, is in nine provinces of the Northern and Central regions and Herat Province in the west of the country." (The HALO Trust (undated) *HALO's humanitarian mineclearance project in Afghanistan remains the oldest and largest in the world*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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