

Briefing Note

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Mine Action in Angola Landmine-Free by 2025



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Introduction

2017 is a critical anniversary year for landmine action in Angola. In December 1997 Angola was among the 122 original signatories to the newly concluded Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, also known as the Ottawa Treaty.¹ Earlier that year Diana, Princess of Wales, had been photographed with landmine survivors during a visit to Angola with mine action charity The HALO Trust, bringing the issue of Angola's legacy of landmines to the attention of a global audience. Her work campaigning for landmine survivors in Angola and elsewhere² was a key driver of this landmark agreement.

Two decades on, however, and 15 years after the end of the civil war, Angola remains one of the most heavily mine-contaminated countries in the world. As a state party to the Ottawa Treaty, Angola has committed to clearing its landmines by 2025. Progress has been achieved, but state-led demining has focused principally on clearing areas designated for infrastructure projects. It is now critical that humanitarian demining in largely agricultural areas is prioritized to bring to an end the daily threat to Angola's rural poor of injury or death as a result of landmine accidents.

International funding for mine action has fallen by 86% in the last decade

Article 5 of the Ottawa Treaty requires states party to the treaty to identify and clear all known or suspected mine contamination within 10 years of the entry into force of the Convention for that party. Angola has already submitted one extension request to meet this obligation, and the country's Commission for Humanitarian Demining and Assistance (Comissão Nacional Intersectorial de Desminagem e Assistência Humanitária – CNIDAH) will submit a second extension request in 2017, seeking assistance to finally eradicate landmines from its territory by 2025.

The work of CNIDAH is supported by HALO, the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), which have collectively helped clear 56 per cent of known landmine-contaminated land since the end of the civil war in Angola.³ However, funding cuts threaten the continuation of this work. The ongoing downturn in world prices for Angola's export commodities has hit its national mine action agencies' clearance efforts, while international funding for mine clearance in Angola has fallen by more than 80 per cent between 2008 and 2015.⁴

In April 2017, on International Mine Awareness Day, UK Secretary of State for International Development Priti Patel announced £100 million in UK funding to support mine action globally over the next three years, including an extension of the Department for International Development's (DFID) Global Mine Action Programme (GMAP).⁵ The UK had, however, ended direct aid to Angola in 2011, stopping its £2m mine action programme.⁶

¹ As of June 2017, 162 states had ratified or acceded to the Convention.

² On another prominent visit, Diana, Princess of Wales met landmine survivors in Bosnia. See *Metro* (2017), 'Prince Harry vows to continue Diana's campaign to rid world of land mines', 4 April 2017, <http://metro.co.uk/2017/04/04/prince-harry-vows-to-continue-dianas-campaign-to-rid-world-of-land-mines-6553347/>.

³ Mines Advisory Group (MAG) (April 2017), 'Time to Change Course: Angola and the Ottawa Treaty', p. 8.

⁴ Mine Action Review (2016), *2016 Mines Report for Angola*, p. 28.

⁵ Department for International Development, Scotland Office, and The Rt Hon Priti Patel (2017), 'UK triples support for action against landmines on 20th anniversary of Princess Diana's iconic Angola visit', press release, 4 April 2017, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-triples-support-for-action-against-landmines-on-20th-anniversary-of-princess-dianas-iconic-angola-visit>.

⁶ Department for International Development (2011), 'The future of UK aid', news story, 1 March 2011, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-future-of-uk-aid> and 'De-mining priority'. See also *The Guardian* (2010),

As DFID considers which countries to include in the next GMAP round, speakers and participants at a recent meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Angola, held on 26 April 2017,⁷ discussed whether the UK should once again directly support mine clearance in Angola, and explored policy options to ensure the continuation of action to eliminate landmines in Angola.

The scale of the challenge

Landmines in Angola are a remnant of four decades of conflict, with Angola's war of independence (1961–74) followed by an intermittent civil war (1975–2002). As a proxy battleground in the Cold War period, anti-personnel and anti-tank landmines were laid in huge numbers by numerous actors. All 18 Angolan provinces were affected, but areas that saw the heaviest fighting in the east and southeast and centre in the centre were the worst hit. Compounding the scale of the problem is that the locations of randomly laid or clustered landmines were not systematically recorded.⁸

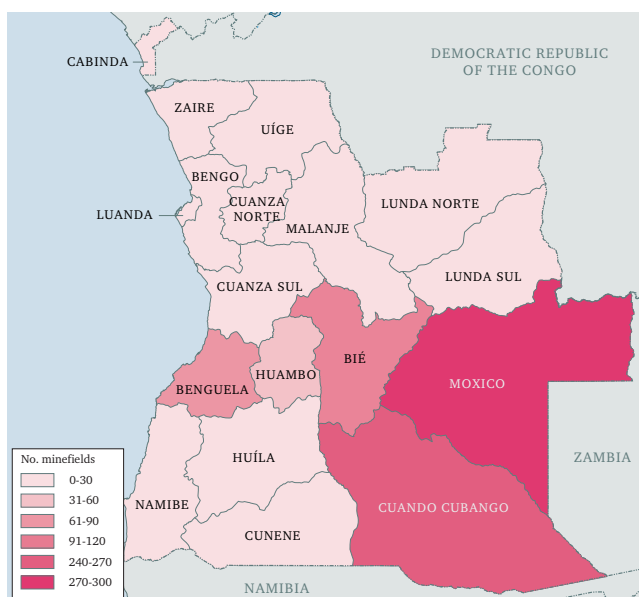
Although Angola signed the Ottawa Treaty in 1997, the government did not ratify the treaty until 2002, and both government and opposition forces continued to lay mines in the intervening period.⁹ According to a 1997 Human Rights Watch report, as many as 51 different types of landmines from 18 countries had already been identified in Angola.¹⁰

Landmine accidents in Angola have caused 21 deaths and 15 injuries in the past 12 months

At the time of the meeting, 21 lives were reported to have been lost, and 15 people to have been injured, due to landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) in the past 12 months alone.¹¹ An estimated 88,000 Angolans are living with injuries caused by landmine accidents.

The socioeconomic impact of living with landmines disproportionately affects Angola's marginalized rural poor, who also suffer the greatest food insecurity.¹² While Angola was once self-sufficient in major food crops and was a net exporter of coffee and maize,¹³ the deepening economic crisis driven by low oil prices, foreign

Figure 1: Reported minefields in Angola, 2015



Source: Landmine and Cluster Mmunition Monitor

⁷ 'De-mining priority', letter from Alex Vines, Chatham House, 17 November 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/nov/17/demining-priority-angola-congo>.

⁸ Angola APPG event, 'Mine Action in Angola: The Role of the International Community', 26 April 2017, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/event/mine-action-angola-role-international-community>.

⁹ Helen La Lime, US Ambassador to Angola, speaking at the Angola APPG event.

¹⁰ Vines, A. (1999), *Angola Unravels: The Rise and Fall of the Lusaka Peace Process*, Human Rights Watch, p. 37.

¹¹ This includes anti-tank mines from the UK. See: Vines, A. (1997), *Still Killing: Landmines in Southern Africa*, Human Rights Watch, p. 36.

¹² Helen La Lime speaking at the Angola APPG event.

¹³ Chris Loughran, Director of Policy at MAG, speaking at the Angola APPG event.

¹⁴ Mines Advisory Group (MAG) (2017), 'Time to Change Course: Angola and The Ottawa Treaty', Issue Brief, April 2017, p. 3.

currency restrictions, and a widening gap between official and black-market exchange rates¹⁴ has led to social welfare cuts to the national budget, including the slashing of the Public Investment Programme by half in 2015, and a rise in food imports.

Particularly as Angola's oil boom propelled the country to upper-middle-income status in 2012,¹⁵ the government focused on mine clearance for infrastructure projects.¹⁶ Now, 15 years after the end of the civil war, the priority must shift to humanitarian demining in rural areas. This will both save lives and release land for other uses – including agriculture to improve food security – and also help to realize a key component of the government's diversification policy.¹⁷

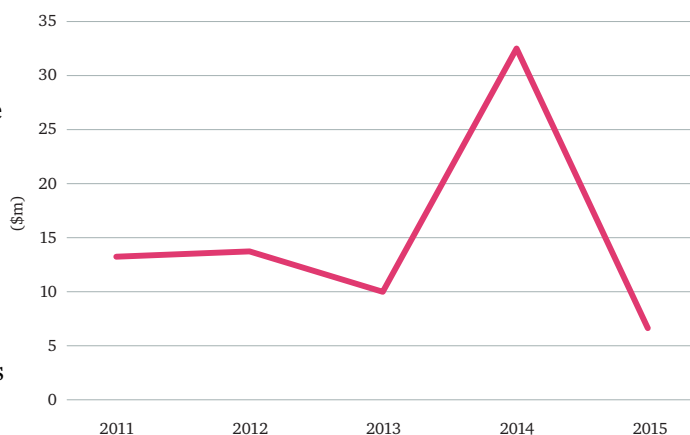
Funding cuts

The main challenge for mine action in Angola is the lack of funding. The estimated cost for Angola to clear its landmines by 2025 is \$275 million, which is based on the costs of surveying and clearing land for CNIDAH.¹⁸ This figure does not take into account the significant improvements in quality assurance needed by Angola's national mine action agencies.

The first surveys of mine contamination in Angola relied on unverified local testimonies, which overestimated the extent of contamination.¹⁹ A nationwide non-technical survey began following Angola's first Article 5 extension request to fulfil the obligations of the Ottawa Treaty, but this was completed in only 12 out of 18 provinces due to funding shortfalls.²⁰

Mine action now depends overwhelmingly on the support of the US, which has invested more than \$124 million into humanitarian mine clearance in Angola since 1993; much of this into land re-surveying and release.²¹ This funding is at risk, however, and if lost would seriously jeopardize the work of the remaining mine action charities operating in Angola. These NGOs are the main proponents of humanitarian mine clearance in Angola, as

Figure 2: International funding for mine action in Angola, 2011–15



Source: Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor

¹⁴ Jensen, S. K. (2015), 'Angola Can Mark 40 Years Since Independence with Bold Economic Reforms', Chatham House Expert Comment, 11 November 2015, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/angola-can-mark-40-years-independence-bold-economic-reforms>.

¹⁵ Jensen, S. K. (2016), 'Can the IMF Help Angola Deepen Its Reform Agenda?', Chatham House Expert Comment, 15 April 2016, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/can-imf-help-angola-deepen-its-reform-agenda>.

¹⁶ Helen La Lime, speaking at the Angola APPG event.

¹⁷ Miguel Gaspar Fernandes Neto, Angolan Ambassador to the UK, speaking at the Angola APPG event.

¹⁸ Mine Action Review (2016), *2016 Mines Report for Angola*, p. 29.

¹⁹ Helen La Lime, speaking at the Angola APPG event.

²⁰ Mines Advisory Group (MAG) (2017), 'Time to Change Course', p. 8.

²¹ Helen La Lime, speaking at the Angola APPG event.

opposed to the national mine action agencies' focus on clearance for infrastructure rebuilding. In 2015 the US was the largest contributor to demining in Angola, at \$5.3 million, with other donors contributing \$1.1m (Finland) and \$200,000 (Japan).^{22 23}

International funding for mine action in Angola dropped by \$25.9 million between 2014 and 2015, more than in any other mine-affected country.²⁴ International funding has reduced by 86 per cent from a decade ago, leading to an 89 per cent reduction in locally recruited demining staff.²⁵ For Angola to become landmine-free by 2025, at least \$34 million in funding will be needed every year until then.

Fresh thinking needed

Participants at the Angola APPG meeting held on 26 April 2017²⁶ assessed the current state of mine action in Angola and discussed a range of policy options to inform fresh thinking to capitalize on capacity for demining in Angola and boost funding for mine action.

The nature of the UK's relationship with Angola was examined. Angola is a strategic partner for the UK, although much of the current focus for the bilateral relationship is on trade. The UK government designated Angola a 'High Level Prosperity Partner' in 2013,²⁷ and maintains a post of Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Angola. Aside from the humanitarian necessity, funding mine action would support Angola's investment potential and diversification aims.

Perceptions of value for money underpinned the then Secretary of State for International Development Andrew Mitchell's decision to end aid to Angola in 2011. Angola was considered prosperous enough to fund its own mine clearance, and the preference was for larger aid programmes offering opportunities for signification spending and better returns than smaller country programmes. A number of programmes that survived the funding cuts were in reality more expensive per mine cleared, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.²⁸ Angola is now a middle-income country in reverse, and funding demining there maximizes returns.

There are an estimated 88,000 landmine survivors living in Angola

Discussion at the meeting also considered whether Angola could trial a scheme that would match funding commitments from donors; this would signal its commitment to demining and secure the funds needed more quickly. The Angolan government could, for example, reallocate money from the defence budget or from expenditure on public order and security.²⁹

²² Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor (2016), 'Angola Mine Action', 22 November 2016, <http://www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2016/angola/mine-action.aspx>.

²³ In August 2016 the UK announced support for a Japanese demining project, to be implemented by NPA in Malanje province. Funding comes from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and not DFID. See British Embassy Luanda (2016), 'UK supports Japanese demining project in Angola', 12 August 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/government/world-location-news/new-uk-japan-cooperation-for-demining-in-angola>.

²⁴ International Campaign to Ban Landmines – Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC) (2016), *Landmine Monitor 2016*, p. 77.

²⁵ Chris Loughran speaking at the Angola APPG event.

²⁶ Angola APPG event, 'Mine Action in Angola: The Role of the International Community'.

²⁷ Department for International Development, Foreign & Commonwealth Office and UK Trade & Investment (2013), 'High Level Prosperity Partnerships in Africa', Policy paper, 19 November 2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-level-prosperity-partnerships-in-africa/high-level-prosperity-partnerships-in-africa>.

²⁸ Alex Vines, Head of the Africa Programme at Chatham House, speaking at the Angola APPG event.

²⁹ Tony Dykes, Director of Action for Southern Africa, speaking at the Angola APPG event.

The role of the private sector was also considered, including how to promote corporate social responsibility schemes focused on mine action; or even whether a levy on oil exports could be introduced.

The need for an integrated mine action framework was discussed, given that Angola's 88,000 landmine survivors need long-term support to manage their physical and psychosocial needs.³⁰

Conclusion: the moment for action

Two decades after signing the Ottawa Treaty, Angola remains some way off fulfilling its obligations under the Convention to remove all known or suspected landmines. Angola is, however, a country no longer at civil war: landmines will not now be re-laid, and this is the moment for action. Mine action organizations are working together better than ever before, focused on achieving a landmine-free world by 2025. New schemes such as HALO's '100 Women in Demining in Angola' project are providing training and salaries to women living in rural areas, helping to reverse demining job losses caused by funding cuts.³¹

As Angola prepares for elections in August 2017 – and the prospect of the first change of president since 1979 – the national political will appears to support such initiatives. Speaking at a political rally in Cuando Cubango in April 2017, the presidential candidate of the governing Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA), defence minister João Lourenço, emphasized the government's commitment to demining 'to save lives, but also to create conditions ... for the development of agriculture, tourism and industries', and to working with the country's international partners on mine action.³²

Angola can become landmine-free by 2025, but it will take fresh thinking and renewed commitment from governments and donors to secure the \$34 million per year needed to achieve this. As a fellow state party to the Ottawa Treaty, the UK government should reinstate its mine action policy in Angola to complement its prosperity agenda. And in order to support the long-term and inclusive development of its strategic partner, the UK must both commit to humanitarian demining in Angola, and ensure that the task is completed definitively.

³⁰ Sarah Njeri, Research Officer at Leeds Trinity University, speaking at the Angola APPG event.

³¹ For more information on The HALO Trust's '100 Women in Demining in Angola' project, see <https://www.halotrust.org/100women/the-project/>.

³² Defence Minister João Lourenço speaking at a political rally in Menongue, Cuando Cubango, 5 April 2017. Translation courtesy of HALO, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwWxIhVdY-s>.

About the APPG

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Angola is an independent and impartial cross-party group of British MPs and peers, which seeks to develop knowledge of Angola in the UK parliament. Formed in 2002, the APPG on Angola helps to build links and foster good relations with Angola, offering support for its development, democratic transition and post-conflict reconstruction. Since its formation, the secretariat for the APPG has been administered by Chatham House.

The APPG on Angola explores the UK-Angola relationship through research activities such as meetings, parliamentary events, country visits and publications.

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Cover image: A danger sign in Angola warning of unexploded ordnance being stored in a small earth bunker for later safe disposal or detonation.

Photo credit: © Titus Moser/Eye Ubiquitous/UIG via Getty Images

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