

UCLEANER

UKRAINE COMMISSION ON LANDMINE AND OTHER
EXPLOSIVES: ALERT, NOTIFY, EDUCATE, REMOVE



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Too often lost amidst the headlines of a conflict are the people, communities, and livelihoods caught between the major players. In Ukraine, violence between central government forces and Donbas region separatists has had profound and tragic consequences for civilian populations. Landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERWs) contributed to nearly half of civilian casualties in 2018. In the blur of intra-state conflict, non-state combatants, and hybrid warfare, it perhaps comes as no surprise that the illegality of these weapons has not proved a sufficient deterrent of their use. The Ukraine Commission on Landmine and other Explosives: Alert, Notify, Educate, Remove (UCLEANER) is in part driven by the view that a project with narrow but well-defined objectives can have a significant effect on the conflict as a whole. By leveraging the expertise of NGOs operating in the conflict area, UCLEANER hopes to not only reduce casualties, but to build trust with affected communities, allow displaced persons to return home, and rebuild local economies. In doing so, the project will work to bring the principles agreed upon in Minsk II closer to fruition.

In order to make the most efficient use of available resources, UCLEANER targets specific locations and economic sectors for its decontamination operations. Additional weight is attributed to more densely populated areas, as well as to the primary economic sectors in the Donbas: the industrial and agricultural sectors.

UCLEANER will begin its preliminary phase in May 2019, transition into the operational phase one year out, and come to a close in May 2023. The budget for the project amounts to CAD 20 million, the bulk of which will be distributed in the operational phase. During the preliminary phase, CAD 2 million will be allocated for the following: the establishment of a nexus between all relevant stakeholders, outreach to affected communities, and information gathering to determine the areas that are most in need of mine clearance. The operational phase will see the remaining CAD 20 million will be allocated to select Ukrainian localities for clearance and associated monitoring programs. The latter will be conducted by the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS), and will gauge the impact of the project using data collected on internal displaced persons (IDPs) and changes to economic activity.

OBJECTIVES

- Mine clearance in Avdiivka, Debaltseve, Horlivka, Kramatorsk, and Slovyansk oblasts
- Provide internally displaced persons (IDPs) freedom to return to their homes and reintegrate into local economies
- Economic Development in Donbas region (Minsk II, s. 8)
- Reduce casualties (Minsk II, s. 10)
- Strengthen Canada's hand in proposing a political solution to the conflict (Minsk II, s. 13)

STAKEHOLDERS

In light of the many competing interests present in the conflict region, The Ukraine Commission on Landmine and other Explosives: Alert, Notify, Educate, Remove (UCLEANER) aims to involve an extensive list of parties throughout the entirety of the project. Stakeholder types range from external governments such as Canada, to NGOs like the HALO Trust group, to intergovernmental organizations like Organization of Security Co-operation Europe (OSCE), to internal non-state actors like the Donetsk Peoples Republic (DPR), Luhansk Peoples Republic (LPR), and the governors and mayors of the areas most in need of mine clearance. There are “interest blocs” that exist across these categories. Canada's primary interests are shared with HALO Trust, the OSCE, and local groups like the Ukraine Demining Team, each of which prioritizes reduced casualties and the promotion of economic development in the affected region (sections 10 and 8 of Minsk II). The direct beneficiaries of the project are the local civilian population and the internally displaced persons (IDPs) that will be able to safely return home.ⁱ The Canadian Government (GoC) also has a broader interest in championing a rules-based international order, enhanced by the role it played in establishing the global ban on landmines.ⁱⁱ

The neutrality of this bloc is essential to project success. Perceived close ties with the Ukrainian Government could erode trust with the groups in Eastern Ukraine, causing increased suspicion that the end product of the decentralization promise (section 11 of Minsk II) will fall short of expectations.ⁱⁱⁱ A rival bloc prioritizes major autonomy concessions to Donbas, and is composed of the Russian-led separatist forces, including the DPR and the LPR. For these parties, de-mining activities carry the cost of a lost deterrent of Ukrainian government forces. The latter represents a final bloc; the Poroshenko government's hard stance against the DPR and LPR fuels the perception that Kyiv is less-than-genuine about decentralization.

PRE-PROJECT RISK ASSESSMENT

LOCATION

The project seeks to implement mine clearance in a way which maximizes impact. As such, despite an estimated contamination zone of 16,000 km², urban areas and population centres under the control of the Ukraine government will be targeted. By focusing on key locations like Avdiivka, Horlivka, Kramatorsk, and Slavyansk we can create the greatest amount of economic and social revitalization. These areas are industrial powerhouses responsible for a significant portion of economic output in Donbas. Focus will also include areas related to Donbas' significant agricultural production, such as farm plots adjacent to roads. This initiative fits the needs of the local populations in Donbas in regard to post-war livelihood restoration. Agriculture is the second largest

sector in the Donbas, after the industrial sector. The agriculture sector experienced large losses throughout the conflict, 10,034 heads of cattle and 160,000 heads of poultry were lost as of 2015 alone.^{iv} Displaced persons are unable to cultivate crops and produce food. In order to restore Donbas' economy and facilitate the return of displaced populations, mines and ERWs must be cleared so regular farming and economic activity can continue.

TIMING

The Ukraine conflict is somewhere between the de-escalation and resolution phase. As such, we can expect violence and hostilities to subside as political reformations return stability to the country. The previously existing principles of Minsk I and Minsk II offer an established framework on which a peace will be brokered. The increased funding, which has been cited numerous times as an impediment to mine decontamination, should speed up demining efforts. Multiple international NGOs are operating in the region, such as the Danish Demining Group, the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action, and the HALO Trust. Domestic responders include the Ukrainian military and the Demining Team of Ukraine. It is fundamental to clear the areas now as opposed to later, so the return of displaced populations in conjunction with the diminishing violence and electoral changes work together to restore and normalize day to day economic and social activities in Donbas.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Ukraine's presidential elections are tightly monitored and will likely result in the establishment of a pro-Western government. None of the actors continue to pursue territorial gains. With the violence subsided, and structural changes imminent, the restoration of local livelihoods emerges as a dire area of need for Ukraine. In 2018, the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine noted this issue is affecting 1.9 million people and 200,000 children.^v

OPPORTUNITIES

Ukraine has been struggling to introduce mine action legislation, which would identify government bodies responsible for demining, regulate this activity, and create a national mine action plan. After the rejection of two draft bills in 2017, the Rada adopted a first reading of a mine action bill in November 2018, bill No. 9080-1. This bill will establish a mine action authority, based on International Mine Action Standards, under democratic civic control.^{vi} These structural changes identify landmine decontamination as an area of need for the Ukrainian government. When the new national authority is eventually instituted, they can look to the practices and policies of this project for guidance, experience, and local insight.

POSSIBLE IMPACTS

In order to achieve the Ukrainian governments' restoration of territorial integrity in Donbas, UCLEANER can work to fulfill the provisions in the Minsk Agreement signed on February, 12 2015 (Minsk II) as follows:

RESTRICTIONS ON FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT (MINSK II, S. 7)

With the current provisions listed in the Minsk Agreement, such as Article 7, Global Affairs Canada's (GAC) UCLEANER is set out to develop mine clearance in Avdiivka, Debaltseve, Horlivka, Kramatorsk, and Sloviansk's

oblasts. This will fulfill the clause of Article 7 by “ensuring safe access, delivery, storage, and distribution of humanitarian assistance to those in need, on the basis of an international mechanism” through a landmine clean up.^{vii}

The implementation of UCLEANER initiative will give reason for internal displaced peoples (IDPs) to reintegrate into local towns and villages. As a consequence of the outbreak of conflict in 2014, 485,311 persons from Donetsk and 286,887 from Luhansk were categorized as IDP. A zone free of ERWs and landmines within the 15km buffer zone incentivizes IDPs from Donetsk and Luhansk Oblast to return and restart their lives.^{viii}

REDUCING CASUALTIES (MINSK II, S. 10)

While section 10 refers to heavy armaments and foreign troops, landmines are a major contributor to the high rate of civilian casualties caused by Russian Led Separatist Forces (RLSF). Over 1,793 casualties have resulted from landmine detonation since 2014.^{ix} In 2018, landmines and ERWs contributed to 43% of civilian casualties.^x Moreover, landmines impose a substantial risk to the 220,000 children in the sensitive areas of Donbas; limiting civilians’ access to go to school, drive or walk to work, and play outside; resulting in civilians to be restricted from their daily routines.^{xi} In the town of Horlivka, for example, three 13 year old boys were pronounced dead after exploring a vacant lot surrounded by landmines.^{xii}

Towns such as Horlivka are now vulnerable after DPR forces have fled the town, leaving mines to be discovered by innocent civilians.^{xiii} The proposed anti-personnel mine project would also address the lack of risk awareness programs to local schools in Donbas. Landmine awareness and safety initiatives ensuring children are warned of their surroundings, such as an information brief illustrating signs of contamination and danger in uncleared areas. This would include images in the brochure of warning signals when approached by an undetonated grenade, trip-wire, unexploded mortars and mines.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN DONBAS (MINSK II, S. 8)

As Minsk II seeks to reinsure the socioeconomic status of Ukrainians living in Donbas, UNCLEANER will incentivize displaced farmers and industrial workers to return to Donbas. Since 2014, landmines have imposed blockades on farmers’ lands and road ways that transport persons to their local employer. With only 9,000 hectares of agricultural land in Donbas to cultivate, 4,500 hectares of Donbas’s territory is now contaminated by landmines.^{xiv} Households in Donbas which once specialized in cattle breeding, cereals, oil crops, and vegetable growing risk death by continuing to farm in a contaminated environment.^{xv} Farmers in the Donetsk region of Hnutove accidentally detonate landmines with their tractors.^{xvi} Clearing landmines in these regions of Donbas will attract local residents to use the de-contaminated land for subsistence farming.

Additionally, landmines have become a serious threat to the community of Avdiivka. The newly acquired town by the Ukrainian government is troubled by the hundreds of mines scattered across various roadways and vacant check-points to Avdiivka’s Coke and Chemical Plant.^{xvii} With the conflict continuing to display ‘hot-and-cold’ moments, the Coke plant has cut its workforce by one third after indiscriminate mortar, shelling and mines, resulting in 10 of the 4,000 employees to be killed.^{xviii} UCLEANER will normalize industrial output and working conditions in various coke and chemical plants.

STRENGTHENING CANADA’S POSITION IN PROPOSING A POLITICAL RESOLUTION (MINSK II, S. 13)

At present, Canada’s position to Ukraine continues to provide election observations; professionalization of Ukraine’s military; targeted sanctions against the Russian Federation, and ratifying the Canadian-Ukrainian Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA) in effort to support Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.^{xix} However, if UCLEANER sees a significant number of IDP’s returning to Donbas, this project can be used as leverage at the international stage.

Canada’s success in this project can convey all parties to the conflict to negotiate a new diplomatic protocol after demonstrating to all parties that the people of Donbas are rebuilding the local economy. From this, Canada can propose a political resolution, through the foundation of Minsk II, which recognizes all parties to have a seat at the table. Therefore, this proposal can be a political tool used on all members of the conflict by demonstrating that Canada’s efforts, with the collaboration of NGO’s and external stakeholders, are achieving stability through other means.

POSSIBLE PROVOCATIONS

Implementing an anti-landmine project might escalate the conflict in Donbas. The occupied parts of Donbas might view this project as an incentive for the DPR and LPR to re-claim government held territory. The DPR and LPR planted land mines after they could not defend against the Ukrainian forces. Landmines were a form of deterrence in order to prevent the Ukrainian forces from advancing their position into the de facto region of the DPR. Additionally, areas of contamination are in the grey-zone of the Minsk ceasefire. There could be casualties if the DPR or LPR decide to launch mortar strikes in the area.

PROJECT DESIGN OVERVIEW

PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA:

Global Affairs Canada (GAC) • Division of Eastern Europe and Eurasia (ECE) • Division Peace and Stabilization Operations (IRD) • Embassy of Canada to Ukraine (KYIV)

GOVERNMENT OF UKRAINE:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine • Ministry of Temporary Occupied Territories and Internal Displaced People’s • Ministry of Defense of Ukraine • Embassy of Ukraine to Canada • Governors and Mayors of Donetsk oblast

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS):

The HALO Trust • Demining Team of Ukraine • Joint IDPs Profile Service (JIPS)

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (INGOS):

Organization for Security and Co-Operation of Europe (OSCE) • United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

OPERATIONAL TIMELINE

The project will begin May 1st 2019, following the GoC's recent project: Emergency, Shelter and Livelihoods that expired on March 31, 2019.^{xx} In continuation with humanitarian efforts by the GoC, UCLEANER will finish on May 2nd 2023. Our goal is to decontaminate 2,000 sq km of areas vital to economic output, per year.

GUIDANCE:

While the UCLEANER landmine project will be underway from 2019-2023, it is essential to also include training to local engaged staff working in the areas of Avdiivka, Horlivka, Kramatorsk and Slovyansk. This will consist of HALO Trust working alongside the Demining Team of Ukraine to provide in-depth seminars on safe and effective mine clearance. The Demining Team of Ukraine can inherit the value provided from HALO Trust and branch off to other contaminated areas of Donbas on their own.

Furthermore, HALO Trust's Ukrainian engaged staff will present risk awareness techniques to local elementary and high schools located in the areas noted above in order to inform children of all ages of how to react to finding a landmine. From mine risk awareness to explosive ordnance disposal, NGOs will educate children through different learning techniques on what to look for; how to react, and what procedures to do when coming across a zone contaminated with landmines. The UNCHR has stated effective landmine identification and education as an essential requirement in restoring Ukraine.^{xxi}

INTERNAL CONSULTATION

The division of Eastern Europe and Eurasia (ECE) will overlook the operations of this project. ECE will be in direct communication with Division Peace and Stabilization Operations (IRD) and Embassy of Canada to Ukraine (KYIV) to understand the ground level occurrences, in particular the towns under the de-mining phase. Direct communication with ECE and KYIV will channel back and forth after HALO Trust Group regularly debriefs the Canadian delegation once a month on their landmine clearance efforts. Moreover, the Ukrainian delegation to Canada will visit GAC on a monthly basis to plan and prepare for future demining projects. Following these visits, the Ukrainian delegation to Canada will provide GAC information on returning IDPs to Donbas after being consulted by the Ministry of Occupied Territories and Internal Displaced People's.

PHASE 1: PRELIMINARY PHASE (YEAR 1) [CAD 2 MILLION OF THE BUDGET]

- Create a nexus between the HALO Trust Group, Ukraine Demining Team, Governor of Donetsk, Oleksandr Kuts and Mayors of Avdiivka, Horvika, Kramatorsk, Slovyansk and Debaltseve.
- Begin an in-depth investigation of areas of Donbas that need immediate attention for landmine clearance.
- Establish a de-mining delegation of 10 individuals per team for each town in the Donetsk Oblast i.e., Delegation of Avdiivka
- Outreach to targeted communities in the contaminated areas on risk awareness.
- The HALO Trust and Demining Team of Ukraine will work to collaborate with Ukrainian army forces in the preexisting areas on the appropriate methods, techniques and procurement of removing landmines.

PHASE 2: OPERATIONAL PHASE (4 YEARS) [CAD 1 MILLION PER TOWN]

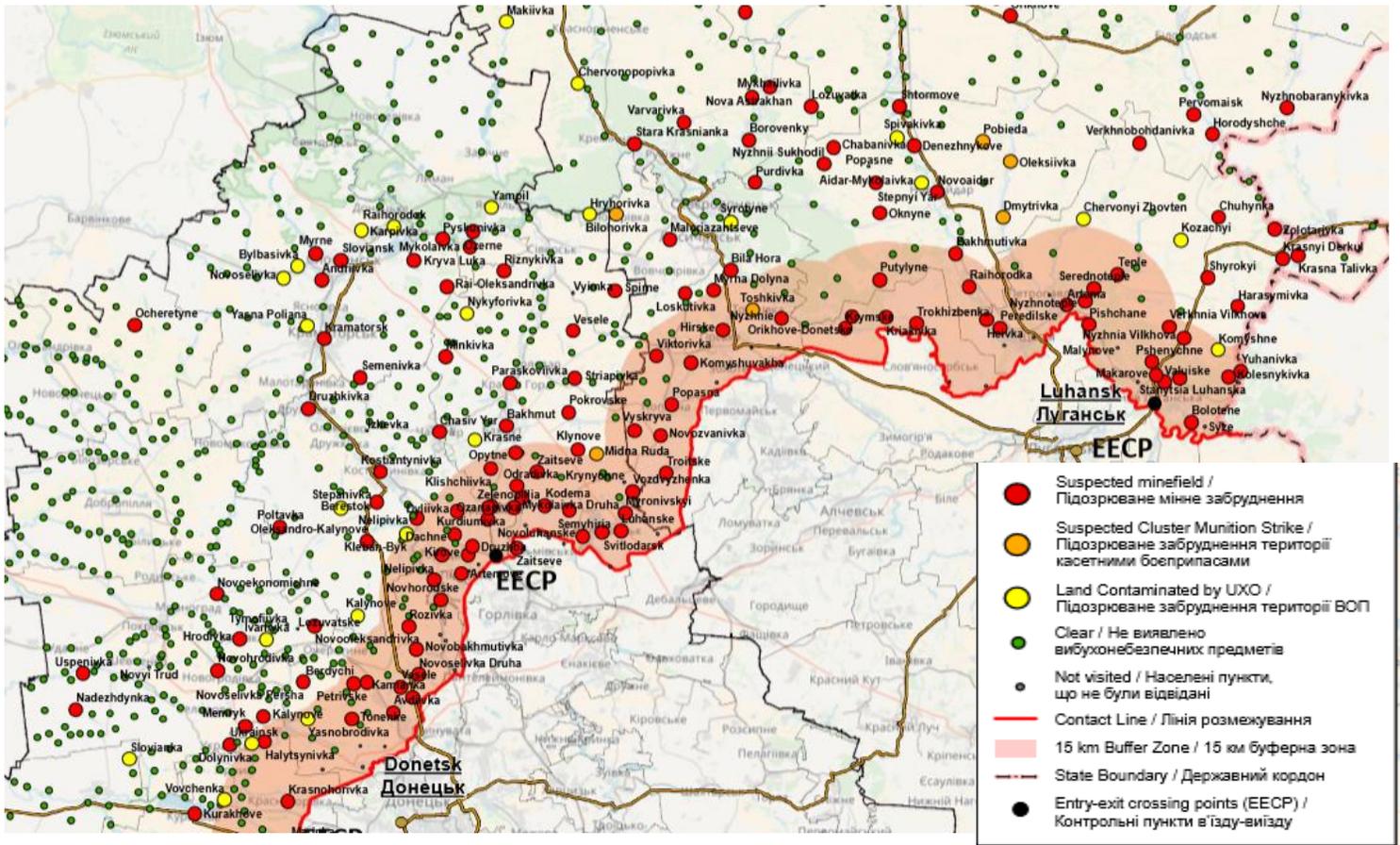
- Allocate CAD 1 million to 18 Ukrainian towns based on the preexisting map of landmines drafted by the HALO Trust group.
- CAD 1 million to Avdiivka, Horvika, Kramatorsk, Slovyansk, Debaltseve, Karpivka, Semenivka, Druzhkivka, Krasne, Berestrale, Duchne, Kalynove, Ivanivka, Hryhorivka, Hryhorivka, Yasna Poliana, Bylbasivka, and Novosolivka
- Regular monitoring and reporting on mine clearance in contaminated territories, by inviting the OSCE SMM to investigate for its field inspections.
- Monitor inflows of IDPs by conducting interviews with locals to ensure the needs of communities are being addressed.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The evaluation and monitoring of UCLEANER will be based on two criteria: the return and inflows of IDPs, and the subsequent economic growth in Donbas. The group responsible for monitoring and evaluation will be the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS). JIPS is responsible for providing agreed upon statistical data, advice, and support, to relevant stakeholders in conflict settings. They are already active in Ukraine since 2016, when the UNCHR requested their support. This group will visit KYIV and provide field reports on returning populations into Donetsk and Luhansk. They will conduct surveys with returning IDPs, to assess potential changes to their quality of life.

The economic development agenda following Minsk II will require close attention. As landmine clearance comes into its later stages, in which most farmland is safe for farmers to cultivate once again, we will want to monitor the stages of economic development experienced in the regions. The head trade commissioner at the KYIV embassy will track the rate of trade as a further indicator of development in this sector.

Appendix



Source: <https://www.halotrust.org/media/4397/rapid-assessment-map-ukraine.pdf>

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