



# Our Mine Action Programme in Ukraine

January 2024

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# Table of Contents

⦿ About FSD	p.3
⦿ Where we Work	p.5
⦿ Background of FSD's Involvement in Ukraine	p.7
⦿ Our Current Mine Action Programme in Ukraine	p.9
⦿ Perspectives for the Next Twelve Months	p.11
⦿ Our Funding	p.13
⦿ FSD's Expertise	p.15

## Our Activities

FSD (Fondation suisse de déminage) is a Geneva-based humanitarian organisation that has been working for 26 years to protect civilians from landmines and explosive remnants of war.

Our teams locate and destroy explosive devices, conduct awareness-raising campaigns among affected populations, set up assistance projects for victims of accidental explosions and reinforce the capacities of local authorities and NGOs.

FSD has worked in some 30 countries since its founding in 1997 and currently employs more than 700 staff on four continents.

### **DEMINING**

The precise localisation, detection and neutralisation of explosive devices is carried out by locally recruited and trained teams, sometimes assisted by specialised machines, drones and dogs.

### **RISK EDUCATION**

Until mine clearance operations are completed, education about the dangers of explosive ordnance helps to raise awareness among the local population and prevent potentially lethal accidents.

### **VICTIM ASSISTANCE**

FSD provides socio-economic support and facilitates access to medical care for mine accident survivors, enabling them to return to an activity compatible with their disability.

### **CAPACITY BUILDING**

The training and mentoring of local authorities and NGOs is essential to ensure the sustainability of demining work and its ownership by the stakeholders in the concerned countries.

### **WEAPONS & AMMUNITION DESTRUCTION**

FSD destroys obsolete or confiscated weapons and ammunition to prevent accidental explosions or use by armed non-state actors.

## OUR IMPACT IN 2023\*

 **5,360,187**  
m<sup>2</sup> cleared

 **225,827**  
people educated on  
the risks of explosive  
ordnance

 **178**  
mine victims  
supported

 **4,856**  
explosive ordnance  
located

 **5,191**  
weapons &  
ammunition destroyed

\*Up to 30 November 2023





This collection of abandoned ammunition was discovered by drone in a forest during a non-technical survey (August 2023).





# Current FSD Programmes

## AFGHANISTAN



Mine clearance · Explosive ordnance risk education · Mine victim assistance

## CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



Support to the peace process · Socio-economic support to communities

## COLOMBIA



Capacity building · Mine victim assistance

## IRAQ



Mine clearance · Explosive ordnance risk education · Capacity building

## PHILIPPINES



Mine clearance · Explosive ordnance risk education · Capacity building

## TAJIKISTAN



Mine clearance · Environmental remediation

## UKRAINE



Mine clearance · Explosive ordnance risk education · Capacity building





This new FSD recruit is practicing his skills before deployment to a real minefield (November 2023).



# Background of FSD's Involvement in Ukraine

**FSD's involvement in Ukraine dates back to early 2015, in the Donbas, along the line of contact between the Ukrainian government-controlled area and the separatist-controlled area.**

Our teams started by deploying emergency risk education campaigns aiming to drastically reduce civilian casualties. This was achieved by teaching the affected population to 'live with' mines and unexploded ordnance while waiting for the surrounding land to be cleared. Our survey teams then began assessing the contamination by explosive remnants of war.

In 2016, FSD started demining work, with around 50 local staff recruited, trained and deployed from the operational bases in Sloviansk and Mariupol. In the following years, these teams investigated dozens of former battlefields and located hundreds of items of unexploded ordnance. In parallel, FSD supported Ukrainian institutions by establishing a national mine action authority.

At the end of February 2022, with the Russian military intervention, FSD's activities were suspended and reoriented for a few months to allow our staff to ensure the safety of their loved ones and to provide emergency humanitarian aid to the most affected inhabitants. In June 2022, the security situation allowed FSD to establish a new operational base in Chernihiv, north-east of Kyiv. In the following months, another operational base was set up in the province of Kharkiv.

**In 2023, FSD continued to strengthen its operational capacities through the recruitment and training of staff, as well as the acquisition of equipment. With this enhanced capacity, more than 300 locals and international FSD staff assess and clear agricultural lands, urban areas, and infrastructure.**



FSD staff member training on the use of drones for non-technical surveys (September 2023).



Aerial view taken by a drone showcasing a damaged building during non-technical survey (July 2023).







FSD team leaders regularly undergo evaluation on mines and explosive ordnance identification (July 2023).



# FSD's Mine Action Programme in Ukraine

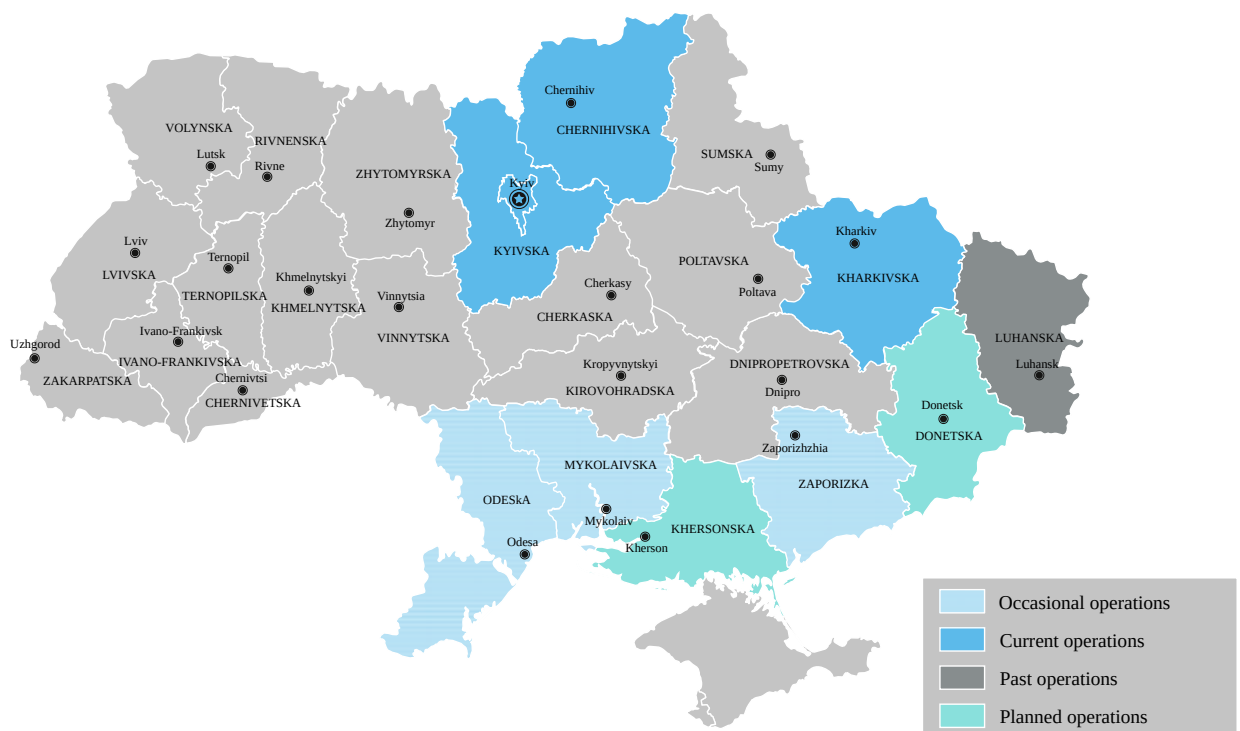
The fighting in Ukraine has left behind hundreds of thousands of landmines, cluster munitions and other unexploded or abandoned ordnance. According to UNDP, Ukraine is now one of the world's most heavily mine-contaminated countries. It's estimated that about one-third of the country, an area four and a half times the size of Switzerland, may be contaminated with landmines and unexploded ordnance. These dangerous remnants of war not only threaten the lives of civilians but also hamper humanitarian efforts, reconstruction, the resumption of agriculture and the return of displaced persons.

**As of 1st January 2024, more than 300 FSD staff members are active in the provinces of Chernihiv and Kharkiv. FSD occasionally deploys to Mykolaiv, Kherson and Odesa provinces.**

Twelve teams conduct surveys of suspected hazardous areas, and eighteen teams of deminers locate explosive devices in minefields and former battle areas. Specialised machines are used to prepare the ground for clearance in rural areas, while armoured construction machines help with the clearance of collapsed buildings. Simultaneously, nine teams carry out risk education sessions in schools and villages.

**In 2023\*, FSD deminers have rendered safe more than 300,000 square metres of land, including agricultural land, village areas, towns and vital infrastructures. In the same period, more than 130,000 women, men and children participated in FSD risk education sessions and have learned to spot and identify explosive devices hidden in their surroundings and to behave accordingly in order to stay safe faced with such items.**

Since March 2023, FSD has also been providing logistical support and training to the Ukrainian State Emergency Service in the use of eight ground-preparation machines.



\*Up to November 30, 2023





Deminers use their detector to search for mines and other explosive remnants of war (November 2023).



# Perspectives for the Next Twelve Months

# 1

## CONSOLIDATION AND EXPANSION OF OUR AREA OF OPERATION

Our mine action project is in full swing in Chernihiv province, while in Kharkiv province, the team has finalised training and equipment acquisition and is ready for operational deployment as soon as the winter period is over. In 2024, our primary focus is to further increase our capacity with more staff, the development of a new operational base in Kherson oblast and the deployment of additional innovative technical equipment.

# 2

## INCREASED USE OF MACHINERY AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

All our non-technical survey teams have started to use drones for mapping and documentation. FSD has started to deploy a proprietary software application to automate the work for all non-technical survey teams. The software integrates satellite imagery, drone photographs, cadastral and agricultural information, and more. The application is directly connected to the national Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) used by the authorities to coordinate all mine action activities in the country.

During the course of this year, FSD is also planning to deploy technical survey dog teams. FSD is also working to develop new technical solutions aimed at accelerating demining operations. Locally-produced mine rollers, as well as large loop detectors mounted on remote-controlled vehicles, are about to be deployed.

It is also planned to use drones to monitor ground preparation machines. First operational tests are planned for a drone equipped with a ground-penetrating radar, intended to support non-technical survey.

# 3

## RESOURCE MOBILISATION

Ukraine has already become the country with the largest humanitarian mine action programme in the world. Despite these efforts, the contamination from mines and unexploded ordnance is extensive, and more financial support is required. The challenge is substantial, and numerous areas remain inaccessible for humanitarian demining. As new regions are liberated additional tasks will await humanitarian deminers.

FSD is supported by major institutional and private donors but aims to further expand its operations and areas of operation to maximise its impact and efforts in clearing Ukraine of explosive hazards.







After non-technical survey, FSD teams are marking the potentially contaminated areas to prevent accidents. (December 2023)



# Our Funding

As of 1st of January 2024, our mine action activities in Ukraine are supported and funded by the following donors:

## 🌀 **Switzerland**

Full-fledged mine action programme in Kharkiv province and development of a new operational base in Kherson province. Funding is confirmed for four years by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. FSD has recently been accredited as a partner of Swiss Solidarity, which has supported our operations in Ukraine since 2023. Swiss cantons and cities, private donors and companies are also contributing.

## 🌀 **United States of America**

Full-fledged mine action programme in the province of Chernihiv, with occasional deployment to Mykolaiv and Odesa provinces.

## 🌀 **World Food Programme & Food and Agriculture Organisation**

Partnership with FSD focusing on small farms, smallholders and household plots.

## 🌀 **Howard G. Buffett Foundation**

Project to provide logistical support and training for mechanical demining for the SESU.

## 🌀 **Bayer AG**

Continued use of a large ground-preparation machine and joined risk education campaign.

FSD Ukraine's operational budget for 2024 amounts to 30 million Swiss francs. Proposals are currently being examined by various institutional partners to expand our action and speed up demining in the country.



Mine clearance is a methodical task. Deminers examine the ground centimetre by centimetre (October 2023).



FSD teams provide risk education sessions to children in schools and villages (August 2023).





FSD new recruits undergo practical demining evaluation before being deployed in the field (August 2023).





# FSD's Expertise



## 26 YEARS OF DEMINING OPERATIONS AND WORLD-REOWNED EXPERTS

FSD has over 26 years of world-renowned expertise and experience in survey and demining operations, stockpile destruction, explosive ordnance risk education and victim assistance.

Our organisation implemented its first demining project in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1998. Since then, our deminers have cleared 1.5 million explosive devices worldwide. Our teams include several internationally recognised mine action experts who regularly contribute to key mine action publications.

FSD has designed and conducted mine clearance operations in some 30 countries since 1997, including Sudan, Laos, Iraq and Afghanistan. Several large-scale programmes involving the recruitment and on-site training of thousands of deminers have been successfully completed, including in Sri Lanka.



## CONSULTING & LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING

FSD regularly advises national authorities on mine action (currently in Colombia, the Philippines and Ukraine) and helps set up demining coordination centres. Capacity-building projects are also carried out for local demining NGOs to eventually take over.



## INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGIES

For years, FSD has been involved in research and development projects centred on the use of technologies in mine action. As a practical organisation active in the field, FSD is regularly consulted by universities and companies for research and development projects. FSD also assists organisations with field testing new kits. In Switzerland, FSD works closely with the Urs Endress Foundation, based in Arlesheim, and the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL).



## A STRONG PRESENCE IN UKRAINE

FSD has been active in Ukraine since 2015. Our humanitarian mine action programme is today one of the largest in Ukraine. We have recruited, trained and deployed hundreds of staff and work in close coordination with the Ukrainian authorities, local and international actors and other humanitarian mine action organisations.



## More information



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