



FSD's Mine Action Programme in Ukraine

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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
⚙ FSD's Mine Action Programme in Ukraine	p.9
⚙ Objectives for the Next Twelve Months	p.11
⚙ Our Funding	p.13
⚙ FSD's Expertise	p.15

About FSD

FSD is a Swiss non-profit humanitarian organisation that has been working since 1997 to create a safer and more sustainable future for communities affected by war and instability. Its core mission is to protect civilians from landmines and explosive remnants of war.

Since its founding, FSD has operated in around 30 countries and currently employs nearly 1,000 staff across four continents.

DEMINING

Locally recruited and trained FSD teams identify, detect, and dispose of landmines and unexploded ordnance, sometimes using specialised machines, drones, and dogs.

RISK EDUCATION

In parallel to all its mine clearance operations, FSD educates local populations about the dangers of explosive ordnance to raise awareness and prevent potentially lethal accidents.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE

FSD provides socio-economic support and facilitates access to medical care for survivors of landmine and explosive remnants accidents. This enables them to resume income-generating activities adapted to their situation and promotes their socio-economic reintegration.

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 abandoned weapons and ammunition to prevent accidental explosions or their use of armed non-state actors.

ADVOCACY

FSD participates in various mine action forums and working groups, and provides support to countries in fulfilling their obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

OUR IMPACT IN 2024



6,637,289

m2 cleared and
secured



278,210

people educated on the
risks of explosive ordnance



334

mine & conflict victims
supported



6,794

explosive ordnance
located & destroyed



378

weapons and
ammunition destroyed



Warning signs are used to raise awareness about areas potentially contaminated by landmines (Kharkiv province, September 2024).

Where We Work

AFGHANISTAN



Survey · Mine clearance · Mine victim assistance

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



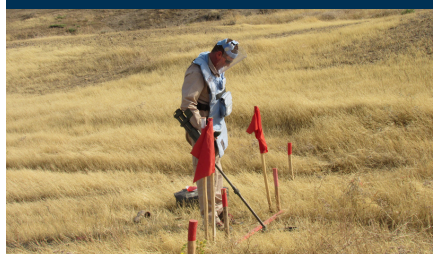
Support to the peace process · Socio-economic support to communities

COLOMBIA



Mine victim assistance

IRAQ



Survey · Mine clearance · Risk education

PHILIPPINES



Survey · Risk education · Capacity building

TAJIKISTAN



Survey · Mine clearance · Risk education · Environmental remediation

UKRAINE



Survey · Mine clearance · Explosive ordnance risk education · Capacity building



With their exceptional sense of smell, mine detection dogs support FSD's demining efforts in Ukraine (December 2024).

In 2023, FSD expanded its operational capacities by recruiting and training additional staff and acquiring new equipment. In 2024, FSD opened two satellite offices in Donetsk province and near Kryvyi Rih to support operations in the northeastern part of Kherson province.



An FSD deminer cuts high grass prior to using his metal detector, ensuring safe and effective clearance work (September 2024).



An FSD deminer conducts an excavation task with the help of a trowel (July 2024).

FSD's Mine Action Programme in Ukraine

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has left millions of mines and unexploded ordnance scattered across the area, making it one of the most heavily contaminated countries in the world. An estimated one-third of Ukraine is potentially affected. These hazards pose a grave threat to civilian lives, hinder humanitarian efforts, delay reconstruction and agricultural recovery, and prevent the safe return of displaced people.

As of January 1, 2025, around 650 FSD staff members are actively engaged in the provinces of Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Donetsk, and Kherson, making FSD the second-largest humanitarian mine action organisation in the country.

Nineteen teams are currently conducting surveys of suspected hazardous areas, while 32 demining teams focus on locating explosive devices in minefields and former battle zones. Specialised machinery is being used to prepare rural areas for clearance, and armoured construction vehicles assist in clearing rubble from structures damaged or destroyed by ordnance. Twelve mine detection dogs are currently being trained by their handlers and will be deployed in 2025. In parallel, fourteen teams are delivering risk education sessions in schools and villages, complemented by online sessions and digital campaigns across social media platforms.

Since June 2022, FSD has cleared around 2.5 million square metres of land, encompassing agricultural fields, village areas, towns, and critical infrastructure. During the same period, FSD teams surveyed over 116 million square metres of land. Additionally, more than 380,000 individuals participated in FSD's risk education sessions, learning how to identify hidden explosive devices and adopt safe behaviours in their environments.

For the past two years, FSD has provided logistical support and expertise to the Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, facilitating the use of 22 ground-preparation





An FSD deminer uses a metal detector to locate and remove explosive hazards in Chernihiv province (October 2024).

Objectives for the Next Twelve Months

CONSOLIDATION OF ONGOING OPERATIONS

In 2025, FSD mine action operations will continue at full speed across the four provinces of Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Kherson, and Donetsk. During the winter stand down, efforts will focus on activities that can be carried out despite snow and frozen ground. These include various types of training, equipment maintenance, marking, risk education and survey work.

In October 2024, mine detection dogs arrived in Ukraine and started with their acclimatisation phase. FSD is currently training twelve newly recruited local handlers, with certification and deployment scheduled for the first half of 2025.

A number of operational trials are planned, one of which for a drone equipped with ground-penetrating radar in early 2025. This 12-month trial aims to support non-technical surveys in collaboration with the FindMine project.






A capacity-building partnership with a local mine action NGO in Kharkiv province will be initiated, focusing on both the technical and institutional aspects of humanitarian mine action. Another capacity-building partnership, already underway with the Ukrainian Deminers Association, focuses on hazard area marking and fencing. Additionally, the technical skills of FSD's national staff will be continuously enhanced through regular training programmes.

The widespread contamination from mines and unexploded ordnance demands sustained support as new regions are liberated and new challenges emerge for humanitarian deminers. With the backing of major institutional and private donors, FSD remains committed to maintaining and expanding activities in its operational areas to maximise humanitarian impact and advance the clearance of explosive hazards. FSD is also working with stakeholders to leverage its demining expertise and the use of existing mechanical assets in support of reconstruction efforts, paving the way for safe and sustainable recovery in affected communities.





An FSD staff member leading an explosive ordnance risk education session at a school in Kharkiv province (April 2024).

-  **Switzerland**
Fully-fledged mine action programme in Kharkiv and Kherson provinces.
-  **United States of America**
Fully-fledged mine action programme in the provinces of Chernihiv and Donetsk.
-  **World Food Programme & Food and Agriculture Organisation**
Fully-fledged mine action programme focusing on small farms, up to 300 hectares, and household garden plots in Kharkiv province.
-  **Swiss Solidarity**
Capacity-building and hazard area marking project in all provinces where FSD is active.
-  **Other foundations, Swiss cantons and cities, and private donors**
General support for FSD's mine action activities in Ukraine.

[illegible]

This unexploded ordnance was discovered in a forest in Kharkiv province during a preliminary survey (October 2024).



An FSD armoured machine working on removing rubble from a destroyed building (June 2024).

FSD's Expertise



27 YEARS OF DEMINING OPERATIONS AND WORLD-RENOWNED EXPERTS

FSD has decades of 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, 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 government institutions (currently in 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 the 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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