



FSD's Mine Action Programme in Ukraine

October 2025

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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 over 650 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 and their potential use by 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



FSD deminers are preparing marking sticks to indicate contaminated areas (September 2025).

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

UKRAINE



Survey · Mine clearance · Risk education · Capacity building



An FSD clearance team is using metal detectors in a field in Kharkiv region (September 2025).

Background of FSD's Involvement in Ukraine

FSD began working in Ukraine in early 2015, focusing on the Donbas region along the line of contact between areas controlled by the Ukrainian government and those under separatist control.

Our risk education teams initially launched emergency campaigns in schools and villages, teaching residents how to stay safe near landmines and unexploded ordnance. At the same time, survey teams assessed and mapped areas contaminated by explosive remnants of war.

In 2016, FSD started clearance operations, recruiting, training, and deploying around 50 local staff from an operational base in Sloviansk. Over the following years, our deminers surveyed dozens of former battlefields and identified hundreds of unexploded ordnance items. Simultaneously, FSD supported Ukrainian institutions in establishing a national mine action authority.

At the end of February 2022, following the Russian military intervention, FSD temporarily suspended and reoriented its activities to allow staff to ensure the safety of their families and provide emergency humanitarian aid to communities affected by the conflict. By June 2022, the improved security situation enabled FSD to establish a new operational base in Chernihiv, followed by another in Kharkiv province in November, allowing the resumption of demining activities.

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.



This drone is being used for non-technical surveys to identify hazardous areas (April 2025).



FSD team members are conducting a non-technical survey in the Kharkiv region (August 2025).



Non-technical survey staff are inspecting a field from a distance (August 2025).

FSD's Mine Action Programme in Ukraine

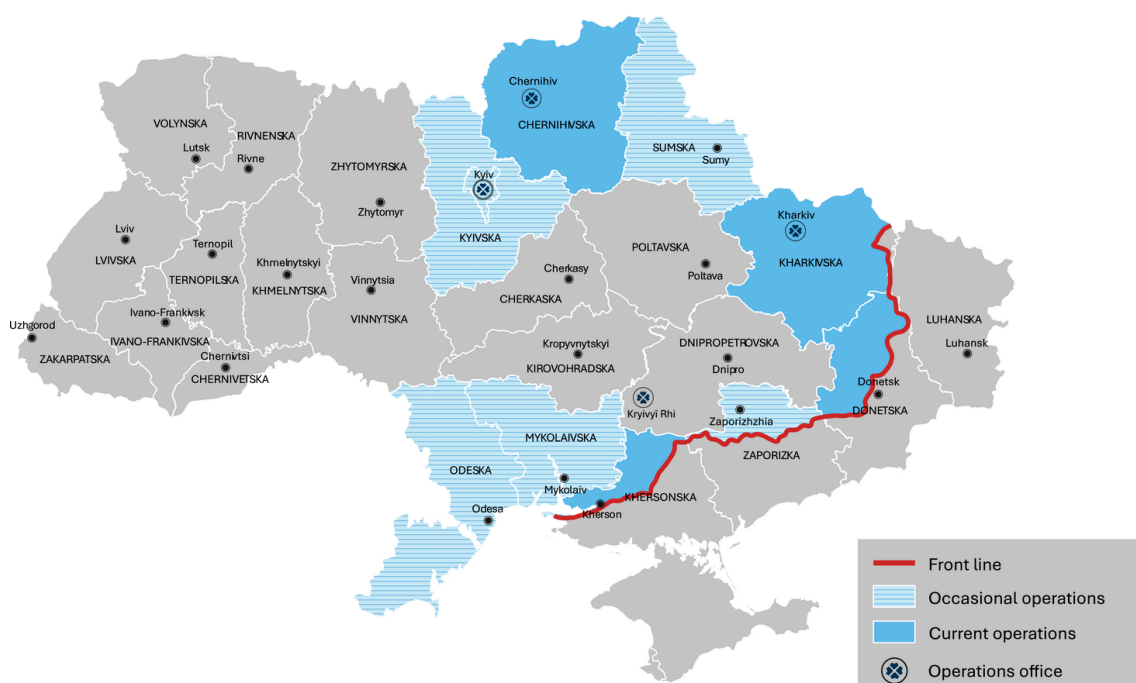
The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has left millions of mines and unexploded ordnance scattered across the area, making it one of the most heavily contaminated countries in the world. More than a quarter of Ukraine is potentially affected. These hazards pose a grave threat to civilian lives, hinder humanitarian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

As of October 2025, more than 500 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.

Eighteen teams are currently conducting surveys of suspected hazardous areas, while 25 demining teams are focused 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. A first mine detection dog team was deployed in mid-September 2025, with a second scheduled for deployment in October. In parallel, thirteen teams are delivering risk education in schools and villages, complemented by online sessions and digital campaigns across social media platforms.

Since June 2022, FSD has cleared around 3.5 million square metres of land, encompassing agricultural fields, village areas, towns, and critical infrastructure. During the same period, FSD teams have surveyed over 127 million square metres of land. Additionally, more than 459,000 individuals have 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 machines.





An FSD dog handler is practising with her mine detection dog to detect explosive ordnance (April 2025).

Objectives for the Next Twelve Months

1

CONSOLIDATION OF ONGOING OPERATIONS

Until the end of 2025, FSD mine action operations will continue at full speed across the four provinces of Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Kherson, and Donetsk, aiming to complete as much clearance as possible before the winter stand-down.

2

INCREASED USE OF DOGS AND TECHNOLOGY

A second team of mine detection dogs will be deployed in the last quarter of 2025. In parallel, FSD continues to work with non-profit start-up FindMine to test their UAV-based remote sensing system in Ukraine. The UAV is equipped with a ground-penetrating radar and can detect buried objects such as mines and unexploded ordnance.

FSD is also conducting an innovative pilot project to test digital hazard marking. By installing signs with QR codes in village centres and along access routes to areas contaminated with explosive ordnance, people will gain access to digital maps that help them understand their surroundings and avoid entering hazardous areas. The system is currently being tested and refined.

3

REINFORCEMENT OF LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECTS

FSD continues to support its local NGO partner, the Ukrainian Center for Humanitarian Protection (UCHP), in strengthening both operational and structural capacities. This includes developing key support functions such as logistics, finance, and human resources. UCHP has already secured accreditation for explosive ordnance risk education and is in the process of obtaining accreditation for non technical survey and clearance activities. In parallel, FSD's capacity-building partnership with the Ukrainian Deminers Association remains active, with a focus on hazardous area marking and fencing. The technical expertise of FSD's national staff is also continuously enhanced through regular training programmes.

4

RESOURCE MOBILISATION FOR RECONSTRUCTION

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.





FSD deminers are preparing for the day's operations in a former battle area in Kherson region (April 2025).

Switzerland

United States of America



Swiss Solidarity

Other foundations, Swiss cantons and cities, and private donors

[illegible]

Remnants of war found during a non-technical survey in the Kharkiv region (August 2025).



An FSD deminer is marking a spot where his metal detector has signalled, placing a red flag to indicate possible unexploded ordnance (Sept. 2025).



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 1.4 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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