



We travelled for nearly three hours directly north of Hargeisa over sandy, stone and tarmac roads to a beautiful river valley area. The vegetation is lush with mango trees growing on the river banks, groves of orange trees and fields of vegetables (onions, potatoes, lettuces) and fields of maize all growing in abundance.



The HALO base camp is next to the orange groves at Agabar where earlier this year they conducted a baseline survey. The survey found that both sides of the river had been mined with AT mines and that two vehicles had been destroyed by them. HALO also discovered that there have been fatalities in the orange groves of three people and many cattle. Clearance started in November and local elders are asking for the land to be cleared as soon as possible so that they can plant crops for the next harvest.



We arrived five days after the start of the 21 day demining cycle and the teams had already started clearance. The base lane was set and deminers were swinging their detectors.

Alongside the mineclearance, HALO conducted Mine Risk Education. The presentation and demonstration lasted about 45 minutes and HALO distributed small posters showing the mines laid in Somaliland. Mines were laid by the Somali National Movement (SNM) in the mid 1980's



Agabar Town has a population of about 3500, which is dependant on the farms that line the nearby riverbank. This town is growing as a result of successful harvests, but the expansion of the farms is limited due to the adjacent minefield. HALO deployed two mineclearance teams in November 2009, and expects to have completed the identified task by February 2010.