
Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

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Consideration of requests submitted under Article 5

Analysis of the request submitted by Turkey for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention*

**Submitted by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation (Belgium,
Norway, Sri Lanka and Zambia)**

1. Turkey acceded to the Convention on 25 September 2003. The Convention entered into force for Turkey on 1 March 2004. In its initial transparency report submitted on 1 October 2004, Turkey reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. Turkey was obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 1 March 2014. Turkey, believing that it will be unable to do so by that date, submitted on 28 March 2013 to the President of the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties, a request for an extension of its deadline. The request for extension was granted to Turkey by the Thirteenth Meeting of the States Parties (13MSP) for a period of eight years, until 1 March 2022.
2. In granting Turkey's request, the 13MSP noted that while no significant demining had taken place since entry into force, Turkey had nevertheless made a clear commitment through its extension request to start mine clearance operations and ultimately comply with its obligations by 1 March 2022. In this context, the 13MSP noted that, with speedy establishment of a national mine action authority (NMAA) and national mine action centre (NMAC), Turkey may find itself in a situation wherein it could complete implementation before 1 March 2022.
3. Turkey, believing that it will be unable to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by its deadline, submitted on 26 March 2021 to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation a request for an extension of its deadline. On 25 June 2021 the Committee wrote to Turkey to request additional information. Turkey provided a response on 17 August 2021. The Committee noted with satisfaction that Turkey had submitted its request in a timely manner and had engaged in a cooperative dialogue with the Committee. Turkey's request is for three years and nine months, until 31 December 2025.
4. The request indicates that in 2015 Turkey established the Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC). The request indicates that since its establishment, the land release process and quality assurance and control activities has been strengthened. The request indicates that during the previous extension request period a total of 110 mined areas measuring

* This document is submitted late due to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



27'126'823 square metres have been addressed with 22'391'861 square metres cancelled, 732'563 square metres reduced and 4'002'399 square metres cleared resulting in the destruction of 119'361 anti-personnel mines and 1'729 items of explosive ordnance. The Committee welcomes Turkey reporting on progress in a manner consistent with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and encourages Turkey continuing to report on progress in accordance with the land release methodology employed (i.e. cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey, or cleared through clearance). The Committee further noted that Turkey is employing the full range of methods to permit the safe return of land to the population and encourages Turkey to continue seeking improved land release techniques which could lead to Turkey fulfilling its obligation as soon as possible.

5. The Committee wrote to Turkey to recall the importance of States Parties contaminated by improvised anti-personnel mines applying all provisions of the Convention and requested further details on the estimated extent of contamination and plan for addressing contamination by mines of an improvised nature. Turkey responded by indicating that counter Improvised Explosive Device (IED)/Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) contribute to the safety of civilians and security personnel by locating and destroying anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature "considered to be placed by a terrorist group" in line with Action 21 of the Oslo Action Plan. Turkey further indicated that it annually reports these improvised anti-personnel mines in its Article 7 Reports. The Committee noted the importance of Turkey continuing to ensure that they apply all provisions and obligations under the Convention to such contamination as they do for all other types of anti-personnel mines, including during survey and clearance in fulfilment of Article 5 and that this information be disaggregated by types of mines when reporting in fulfilment of Article 7 obligations

6. The request indicates that since the establishment of the TURMAC, Turkey had developed National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) and operational procedures which are in line with IMAS. The request further indicates that TURMAC Quality Management Department is in charge of controlling and assuring the quality of operations including through ensuring that all mine action activities comply with NMAS. The Committee noted the importance of Turkey ensuring that the NMAS continue to be kept up to date in accordance with the latest IMAS, adapt them to new challenges and to ensure that it employs best practices to ensure efficient and effective implementation.

7. The Committee wrote to Turkey to request information on efforts to carry out quality control of mined areas addressed by Military Demining Units (MDU) prior to the establishment of the TURMAC and prior to the development of NMAS and Quality Assurance and Quality Control procedures. Turkey indicated in its response that these mined areas were cleared with a 90-95 percent mine detection/destruction rates and that these areas are planned to be surveyed within the scope of the non-technical survey (NTS) project between 2021-2023. The request further indicates that following survey, TURMAC will evaluate the course of action that needs to be taken.

8. The request indicates that in 2018, the Information Management System for Mine Action was established and is fully operational and used by all demining operators in Turkey and contains all up-to-date information on the status of implementation. The Committee noted the importance of Turkey ensuring that the design and implementation of the information management system is sustainable and takes into account the need for data that can be accessed, managed and analysed post-completion.

9. The request indicates the following, which in Turkey's view, acted as impeding circumstances during Turkey's initial extension period: (a) the absence of the TURMAC and delays in its establishment (b) the need to carry national level non-technical survey and (c) the rotation in staff employed in TURMAC (i.e. every 2-3 years).

10. The request indicates that anti-personnel mines continue to have a significant socioeconomic impact and that despite a gradual reduction in the number of mine victims since entry into force, since the last extension period a total of 519 people (civilian and military) have fallen victims to anti-personnel mines with 89 of these victims having been killed and 430 having been injured. Turkey indicated that that "almost all of the identified casualties were caused by improvised anti-personnel mines (victim-activated IEDs) planted

by a terrorist organisation". The request indicates that only since the establishment of the TURMAC has information on mine victims been collected in a disaggregated manner and that since 2016 a total of 213 mine victims have been registered including 182 men (152 injured, 30 killed), 1 woman (injured), 3 girls (killed) and 27 boys (17 injured and 10 killed). The Committee welcomes Turkey providing information on mine victims disaggregated by gender and age and encourages Turkey to continue collecting and reporting information in this manner.

11. The request indicates that, in addition to the injuries and deaths, anti-personnel mines have had an impact on development of infrastructure and agriculture, have prevented access for academic use such as archaeological work and have prevented Turkish Land Forces from patrolling all areas along the border as well as the establishment of a modern border surveillance system. The Committee noted that implementation of Article 5 obligations during the requested extension period had the potential of making a significant contribution to improving human safety and socioeconomic conditions in Turkey.

12. The request indicates that although Turkey's mined areas are mapped, recorded, marked, fenced, and constantly observed by military personnel, they still expose a minor threat to civilians. The request also indicates that Turkey carries out efforts to reach the target of "no mine victims" through mine risk education (MRE) efforts which promote behavioural change among citizens who are settled in closer proximity to mined areas. The request indicates that in 2019 several mine risk education sessions were conducted by TURMAC reaching a total of 388 citizens (4 men, 20 women, 225 boys, 139 girls). The Committee noted the importance of Turkey carrying out context specific mine risk education and reduction efforts that are tailored to the threat encountered by the population and are sensitive to gender, age, disability and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account in accordance with the Oslo Action Plan. The Committee further noted the importance of Turkey continuing to report on progress in this regard.

13. The request highlights that the remaining challenge includes a total of 3'834 confirmed hazardous areas measuring 145'733'105 square metres containing 855'782 anti-personnel and anti-tank mines distributed as follows:

<i>Location</i>	<i>Number of Areas known to contain anti-personnel mines</i>	<i>Amount of area known to contain anti-personnel mines (square metres)</i>	<i>Number of mines Anti-personnel (AP)/Anti-tank (AT)</i>	
			<i>AP</i>	<i>AT</i>
Areas other than borders	920	2'568'012	33'869	
Armenian Border	43	1'097'077	20'275	
Iranian Border	471	15'098'039	116'115	
Iraqi Border	874	2'842'935	78'917	
Syrian Border	1'526	124'127'042	411'990	194'615
Total	3'834	145'733'105	691'166	194'615

14. The Committee welcomes Turkey reporting on its remaining challenge in a manner consistent with IMAS and notes the importance of Turkey continuing to provide information on its remaining challenge in a manner disaggregated by 'suspected hazardous areas' and 'confirmed hazardous areas and their relative size, as well as by the type of contamination.

15. The request indicates that although Turkey has records of the mined area, over the course of 50-70 years some markings/fences along the border were replaced and extended to create a wider buffer to military access zones. The request indicates that this has led to an overestimation of the size of the mined areas having been recorded in the national mine action database, particularly in border regions. The request also highlights that during the initial extension period approximately 25-40 percent of the areas was cancelled. The Committee noted that importance of survey efforts to identify the precise perimeter of mined areas and establish an evidence-based and accurate baseline of contamination. The Committee noted

the importance of Turkey continuing to employ best practices to ensure efficient and effective implementation of its Article 5 commitments.

16. As noted, Turkey's request is for three years and nine months, until 31 December 2025. The request indicates that following this initial period of implementation, Turkey will review its total mined areas remaining to be addressed and will then submit by 31 March 2025 a plan for completion of its Article 5 commitments.

17. The request contains a detailed work plan and budget for the period 2021-2025 to carry out three major projects:

- *Demining and Increasing the Border Surveillance Capacity at the Eastern Border of Turkey - Phase III* which will be carried out during the period of 2021-2023. Turkey expects to address a total of 96 mined areas measuring 3'609'000 square metres expected to contain approximately 79'198 anti-personnel mines. The request indicates that results from the first phase of the project resulted in the reduction through technical survey of approximately 60 percent of the area. The request further indicates that activities will be carried out through a mine clearance contractor contracted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- *Non-Technical Survey Project* which will be carried out during the period of 2021-2023 and will survey 3'834 mined areas. The request indicates that 332 mined areas will be surveyed by TURMAC's Survey Department with TURMAC's resources and the remaining 3'502 mined areas will be surveyed through commercial contract modality. The request indicates that recent non-technical survey activities have led to the cancellation of approximately 40 percent of mined areas. The request further highlights the provinces to be prioritised.
- *Mardin Province Mine Clearance Project* which will be carried out during the period 2021-2023. The request indicates that this is the first project to be tendered by the Turkish government and aims to address 27 mined areas measuring approximately 1 million square metres. The request indicates that, as of 1 February, the tender process is ongoing.

18. The request includes information on the four different prioritisation levels of implementation and indicates that Turkey has the capacity to address all prioritisation levels simultaneously in order to meet the requirements of the government and ensure safety for its citizens. The request also includes detailed information on assumption and potential risk factors including continued restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, security, collaboration with partners and the allocation of national and international funding.

19. The request further indicates that the workplan will be continuously monitored and revised in coordination with the European Union (EU), the UNDP and army command headquarters. The Committee welcomes Turkey's commitment to ensure the continued monitoring and revision of its workplan and welcomes Turkey providing updated milestones of implementation based on new evidence and report on adjusted milestones in their Article 7 reports, including information on the number of areas and amount of mined area to be addressed annually and on how priorities have been established. The Committee further welcomes continued updates on the security situation on the border with Iraq and Syria and the results of operations in this region.

20. The Committee wrote to Turkey to request further information on the activities to take place under the EU supported projects in Van and Hakkari provinces. In particular, the Committee requested information on the activities to take place under the project as well as on the timeline and approval of this project as well as the impact of this project on Turkey's workplan. Turkey responded by indicating that their initial request to the EU for approval for a mine clearance project to be conducted between 2023-2025 in Van province was rejected for the reason that Turkey's Article 5 implementation deadline is March 2022. Turkey indicated that, following the acceptance of Turkey's extension request, another request to the EU for the project will be submitted.

21. The Committee wrote to request information regarding planned non-technical survey activities and in particular on Turkey's efforts to ensure the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boy and men are considered. Turkey responded by indicating that non-technical survey teams have been trained as Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) educators to convey messages regarding contamination and ensure safe behaviour among the populations (women, children and men) living in the vicinity of the 3'834 mined areas. Turkey further indicated that materials consisting of safe behaviour messages are designed for specifically groups (women and girls) which are hard to reach due to social norms and cultural differences. The Committee welcomes the information provided by Turkey and encourages Turkey to continue ensuring that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men are considered and inform all areas of Convention implementation and to continue reporting on these efforts.

22. The request indicates that the TURMAC has conducted an analysis through its database and determined that there are 899 at risk villages in 15 provinces and 42 districts and that it has prioritized these regions, in line with victim data, in the preparation of the "National Mine Risk Education Plan" as part of its National Strategic Mine Action Plan 2020-2025. The request indicates that this includes NTS of mine areas with NTS teams conducting MRE in the vicinity of mined areas. The request further indicates that Turkey will encourage local NGOs to initiate MRE activities by organising workshops and that these activities will help develop national capacities through NGOs. The Committee welcomes the provision of information on Turkey's "National Mine Risk Education Plan" and welcomes its development on the basis of a needs assessment tailored to the threat encountered by the population, sensitive to gender, age and which takes the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account. The Committee further welcomes Turkey's efforts to ensure the development of sustainable national MRE capacities.

23. The request indicates that to complete implementation of the 2020-2025 Plan, Turkey requires a total of EUR 104'803'259.19. The request indicates that mine action is primarily funded by the Government of Turkey which provides the resources and personnel necessary for the operations of the TURMAC, military and gendarmerie teams conducting mine action operations, unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance based on a 'request basis and provides support to mine victim. The request indicates that the funding provide by the Ministry of National Defence will be complimented with additional support being provided through the EU. The request further indicates that fundraising opportunities both from national and international sources will be vital elements of Turkey's future Article 5 activities. The Committee welcomes the high level of national ownership exhibited by Turkey by making financial and other commitments to implementation. The Committee further noted that, given the importance of national and external support to ensure timely implementation, Turkey could benefit from enhancing its resource mobilisation strategy.

24. In noting that Turkey has provided implementation milestones for the period of 2021-2023 as well as the stated assumptions and risks to implementation, the fact that the different projects will be carried out through mine clearance contractors, the need to ensure timely tender and contracting procedures, the need to ensure stable funding as well as the continued challenges posed by COVID-19, the Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from Turkey submitting to the Committee by 30 April 2023 an updated detailed work plan for the remaining period covered by the extension. The Committee emphasised that this work plan should contain an updated list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, annual projections of which areas remain to be addressed by which organisations during the remaining period covered by the request, and a detailed updated budget. The Committee further emphasised the request should contain an updated context specific mine risk education and reduction plan.

25. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the information provided in the request and subsequently in response to the Committee's questions is comprehensive, complete, and clear. The Committee further noted that the plan presented by Turkey is workable, lends itself well to be monitored, and states clearly which factors could affect the pace of implementation. The Committee also noted that the plan is detailed, costed and multi-year.

26. In this regard, the Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from Turkey reporting annually, by 30 April, to the States Parties on the following:

(a) progress made relative to the commitments contained in Turkey's work plan, including progress in tendering and contracting of implementation partners for survey and clearance and the results of survey and clearance efforts, in a manner consistent with IMAS as well the result of mine risk education and reduction efforts;

(b) update on how additional clarity obtained may change Turkey's assessment of the remaining implementation challenge;

(c) adjusted milestones, including information on the number of areas and amount of mined area to be addressed annually and how priorities have been established;

(d) information on how implementation efforts take into consideration the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities;

(e) updates regarding the implementation of mine risk education and reduction efforts in affected communities, including information on the methodologies used, the challenges faced and the results achieved, with information disaggregated by gender and age;

(f) resource mobilisation efforts, external financing received and resources made available by the government of Turkey to support implementation efforts;

(g) changes in the security situation and how these changes positively or negatively affect implementation.

27. The Committee noted the importance, in addition to Turkey reporting to the States Parties as noted above, of keeping the States Parties regularly apprised of other pertinent developments regarding its implementation of Article 5 during the period covered by the request and other commitments made in the request at Intersessional Meetings, Meetings of the States Parties and Review Conferences, as well as through Article 7 reports using the Guide for Reporting.
