

ICBL intervention on Art. 5 extension requests

Intersessional meeting to the Mine Ban Treaty, 18-20 June 2024, Geneva

Thank you Chair,

The ICBL thanks all States for presenting today their draft requests for Art. 5 deadline extensions. The ICBL has already shared detailed comments in writing on the draft requests with the Committee on Art. 5 Implementation, and we look forward to discussing these directly with the requesting States this week.

In the interest of time, today we are going to present only short comments.

Nous remercions le **Tchad** pour la présentation de sa demande de prorogation aujourd'hui. Nous étudierons attentivement la demande et transmettrons des commentaires détaillés au Tchad, ainsi qu'au Comité sur la mise en œuvre de l'Article 5.

Due to unchanged circumstances, **Cyprus** is requesting another extension to fulfill its obligations under Art. 5 for mined areas that are outside of its effective control. By requesting an extended deadline of 3 years until 1 July 2028, Cyprus ensures its continued compliance with Art. 5 and upholds the integrity of the convention. However, we would like to take the opportunity to recall the latest UN Security Council resolution of 2024 (UNFICYP - 2723) urging the leaders of both sides to agree and continue a plan of work to achieve a mine-free Cyprus. Furthermore, we would welcome an update on estimations related to the extent of the remaining contamination.

We acknowledge the important preparation work that has taken place in **Guinea-Bissau** during the current extension period, including the reactivation of the National Centre for Humanitarian Demining. As required by Oslo Action Plan Action 23, Guinea-Bissau has presented a work plan and budget for the extension period. However, the submitted workplan does not provide sufficient information in terms of the time required to plan, train personnel for, and effectively implement the survey. Equally, the budget for different activities including personnel, equipment, transportation, etc. needs to be further specified. Moreover, it is important for Guinea-Bissau to provide more information regarding follow-up activities for already identified confirmed and suspected hazardous areas, the extent of the remaining funding gap, and Guinea-Bissau's plan to actively approach donors and the international community to close the identified gap. Finally, as with most of the requesting states, Guinea-Bissau did not include a detailed, costed risk education plan as called for under Action 24 of the Oslo Action Plan.

Le **Niger** demande une prorogation de 5 ans de sa date butoir de déminage actuelle, fixée au 31 décembre 2024, pour dépolluer une petite surface mesurant 177 760 m² dans le camp de Madama. Nous soulignons les efforts et les progrès réalisés par le Niger en matière de dépollution des zones minées par le passé, y compris au cours de la période de prorogation actuelle. Nous reconnaissons également que les zones restant à dépolluer sont clôturées et ne constituent pas une menace pour les civils. Nous sommes toutefois préoccupés par la durée de la prorogation demandée pour dépolluer la contamination restante, d'autant plus que la localisation de cette contamination est connue et la taille de la zone contaminée est relativement petite. Nous encourageons le Niger à communiquer davantage de détails dans sa demande de prorogation révisée, en y intégrant un plan de travail présentant des projections annuelles de dépollution, ainsi que les coûts annuels estimés pour la période demandée. Nous appelons également le Niger à présenter un calendrier prévisionnel de dépollution plus ambitieux. En outre, nous encourageons le Niger à fournir davantage de

précisions sur la contamination et les accidents causés par des mines improvisées. Si une enquête confirme une contamination par des mines improvisées relevant de l'Article 5, celle-ci pourrait faire l'objet d'une demande de prorogation distincte.

Peru has been clearing its contamination over the past 25 years. It is now asking for a third extension of another 5 years to clear the small remainder of 46 confirmed hazardous areas totaling 279,388 m². We emphasize that we fully understand the challenges related to the access, weather and other circumstances related to conducting clearance in a difficult and remote terrain. We understand that new suspected areas were added to Peru's clearance obligations after border agreements with Ecuador. Their cooperation in demining along a previously contested border is a useful model for other states in that situation. However, we are concerned that planning for 5 more years of clearance is not in line with the treaty's obligation to clear mined areas "as soon as possible" given the time it has had to improve methodologies and approaches in that region. We appeal to Peru and all relevant partners to intensify efforts to find an effective solution to these old challenges that would allow Peru to shorten the requested period and most importantly to complete the job much sooner than in another five years. Furthermore, we would like to emphasize the importance of including in the revised extension request a detailed, multiyear and costed risk education plan as required by OAP Action#24 to ensure at-risk groups remain safe until the clearance is completed.

Serbia has been surveying and clearing its contamination for the past 20 years. Between 2018 and 2024, Serbia reported a total clearance of only around 1.7km², with no land released at all in 2023. As well, there is no indication that any progress has been made in providing a clearer picture of the remaining suspected hazardous areas discovered in Bujanovac municipality back in 2019. We understand there are political and financial challenges complicating progress. But we urge Serbia to maximize efforts to clear the remaining small confirmed hazardous areas and to complete surveying the remaining suspected hazardous areas without any additional delay. In addition, Serbia needs to urgently seek confirmation of the tentatively allocated funds.

We would also like to remind all States Parties of the importance to include within their requests a detailed, costed and multi-year plan for context-specific mine risk education in affected communities, as required by **Action#24** of the Oslo Action Plan. This is an element that is frequently missing, with past risk education activities described, but no detailed forward-planning explanations provided as to how at-risk groups will be reached.

We also encourage all affected States to request only the amount of time for which they are able to plan and present a detailed, costed, multiyear work plan as required by **Action#23** of the Oslo Action Plan, to enable close and regular check-in and follow-up on their survey and clearance planning and implementation progress.

We also appeal to donors and partners to provide the support and means for achieving completion of clearance without delays, including to countries – like all of the ones we have just discussed – that have only small contamination left and could become mine-free very soon with just a bit of extra funding. More effective implementation of Article 5 will require more effort under Article 6 and a determined effort to leave no country behind, even those with small amounts of remaining contamination.

Lastly, we would like to express our concern regarding the two countries with a 2025 deadline that have not submitted an extension request. We understand a request has been submitted by the Afghan authorities in Kabul and a legal discussion is underway on how to accept it. With continuous high levels of casualties in **Afghanistan**, demining organizations and victim assistance groups are

anxious for a solution to be quickly found so that Afghanistan will remain in compliance with the convention and funding can continue at badly needed levels.

Finally, we are disappointed not to see **Eritrea's** request yet. We know that convention leadership and the ISU have reached out to provide support, as has the ICBL, and we hope this situation can be resolved very quickly to avoid another regrettable situation of non-compliance.

Thank you.