

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION (Colombia (Chair), Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom)

Intersessional Meetings 18-20 June 2024

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 5 BY IRAQ

I. Progress in implementation (OAP Action #8, #21, #22)

1. Iraq reported that in 2023, the Directorate of Mine Action (DMA)¹ addressed a total of 39 mined areas measuring 22,615,868 square metres, including, 19,568,023 square metres reduced and 3,047,844 square metres cleared, in the process destroying 4,847 anti-personnel mines, and 7,322 other items of explosive ordnance. Iraq also reported that the DMA addressed 293 areas contaminated with IEDs measuring 120,391,527 square metres, including 106,862,505 square metres cancelled, 43,793 square metres reduced and 13,485,231 square metres cleared, resulting in the destruction of 8,401 IEDs, and 4,298 other items of explosive ordnance.
2. Iraq further reported that as a result of non-technical survey the DMA identified 34 mined areas measuring 20,639,964 square metres in 6 Provinces. Iraq also reported that the DMA identified 222 new areas contaminated with IEDs located in 5 Provinces measuring 127,204,749 square metres.
3. Iraq reported that in 2023, the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Authority (IKMAA)² addressed a total of 1,319,883 square metres in 3 Provinces, including 319,669 square meters reduced, and 1,000,214 square metres cleared, as well as an 'area prepared' measuring 70,861 square metres, as a result destroying 3,067 anti-personnel mines, 40 illumination mines (ILL), 14 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and 709 other items of explosive ordnance. Iraq also reported that IKMAA addressed 9 areas contaminated with IEDs measuring 1,442,929 square metres, resulting in the destruction of 78 IEDs, and 78 items of ERW.
4. Iraq further reported that IKMAA addressed a total of 360 dangerous areas measuring 828,775 square metres, resulting in the destruction of 270 anti-personnel mines, 7 anti-tank mines, 14 ILL, 1 IED and 4,390 items of unexploded ordnance.
5. The Committee observed that Iraq reported to be affected by anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature and had reported, to the extent possible, on the disaggregation of anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature from other types of improvised explosive devices (Action #21).
6. The Committee observed that the information provided by Iraq on progress in implementation allowed for comparability with that provided in its 2023 updated work plan. The Committee observed that progress in implementation was less than that projected Iraq's 2023 updated work plan. The Committee welcomed Iraq reporting information on progress in accordance with land release methodology employed, the Guide to Reporting and in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and disaggregated by type of contamination. In this regard, the

¹ The Directorate of Mine Action (DMA) represents the federal government and covers all governorates except the Kurdistan region provinces.

² The Kurdistan of Iraq Mine Action Agency (IKMAA) covers the governorates of Erbil, Duhok, Slemani and Halabja.

Committee observed Iraq reporting progress in implementation including, an “area prepared” and encourages Iraq to continue 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) (Action #8, Action #22).

II. Clarity regarding remaining challenge (OAP Action #18, #22)

7. The Committee observed that Iraq provided a high degree of clarity³ on its remaining challenge (Action #18). Iraq reported that in areas under the responsibility of the DMA a total of 418 mined areas located in 24 districts of 10 Provinces measuring 985,926,860 square metres, including 381 confirmed hazardous areas (CHA) measuring 968,634,846 square metres and 37 suspected hazardous areas (SHA) measuring 17,292,014 square metres remain to be addressed. Iraq reported that in areas under the responsibility of the DMA a total of 1,727 areas contaminated with IEDs in 26 districts of 6 Provinces measuring 434,007,380 square metres, including 1,250 CHAs measuring 301,813,862 square metres and 477 SHAs measuring 132,193,518 square metres remaining to be addressed. (Action #22)
8. Iraq reported that in areas under the responsibility of IKMAA a total of 3,280 mined areas located in 28 districts of 4 Provinces measuring 208,499,906 square metres, including 3,154 CHAs measuring 178,505,140 square metres and 126 SHAs measuring 29,994,766 square metres remain to be addressed. Iraq reported that in areas under the responsibility of IKMAA 69 areas contaminated with IED in 3 Provinces measuring 7,269,871 square metres, including 34 CHAs measuring 5,473,492 square metres and 35 SHAs measuring 1,796,379 remain to be addressed. (Action #22)
9. The Committee welcomed Iraq reporting on its remaining challenges in a manner consistent with IMAS, disaggregating by SHAs and CHAs and their relative size and type of contamination. (Action #22)
10. The Oslo Action Plan (OAP) requests States that have not yet done so to identify the precise perimeter of mined areas, to the extent possible, and establish evidence based, accurate baselines of contamination based on information collected from all relevant sources. The Committee observed that Iraq was still in the process of identifying the precise perimeter of mined areas and would welcome updated information from Iraq on these efforts.
11. Iraq reported on its efforts to establish Iraq’s baseline through inclusive consultations with women, girls, boys and men, including through the Gender Justice unit which implements activities, including through attending training programs on gender equality. (Action #18)

III. National plans for clearance and survey (OAP Actions #1, #2, #3, #6, #19, #20, #21, #26)

12. The Committee observed that Iraq had a national evidence based and costed plan for clearance and survey in place for the period (2023-2028) (Action #2, #19). The Committee recalled that in Iraq’s 2023 updated work plan, Iraq projected to address in mined areas under the responsibility of DMA a total of 36,226,157 square metres in 2024, 72,452,315 square metres in 2025, 108,678,473 square metres in 2026, and 144,904,630 square metres in 2027. Iraq’s updated workplan also projected to address in areas under the responsibility of DMA contaminated with IED a total of 36,226,157 square metres in 2024, 72,452,315 square metres in 2025, 108,678,473 square metres in 2026, and

³ “High degree of clarity” has been used when a State Party has provided a list of all remaining areas (known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines), the estimated size of each area, the status of each area (i.e., “known” or “suspected,” and information on the geographic location of each area.

144,904,630 square metres in 2027. The Committee also recalled that in Iraq's 2023 updated work plan, Iraq projected to address in mined areas under the responsibility of IKMAA a total of 1,150,000 square metres and 1,200,000 square metres of dangerous area in the period 1 September 2023 – 31 August 2024, and a total of 1,150,000 square metres and 1,450,000 square metres of dangerous area in the period 1 September 2024 – 31 August 2025.

13. The OAP requests States to annually update their national work plans based on new evidenced and report on adjusted milestones. The Committee observed that while Iraq had in place an updated two-year work plan, and had reported new evidence, Iraq had not provided information in its Article 7 Report on annual updates based on new evidence and adjusted milestones and would welcome additional information in this regard. (Action #20)
14. Iraq reported an annual national financial contribution towards implementation, including the integration of mine action activities within the National Development Plan and the Ministry of Finance in order to be integrated within the national budget. (Action #1)
15. Iraq reported in detail on its efforts to integrate Convention implementation activities into national development plans, including activities to strengthen information sharing and coordination with relevant ministries, including the Ministry of Planning (MoP) to further reinforce connections between mine action and broader development and humanitarian agendas, including the Iraq Vision 2030 sustainability development plan. Iraq also reported that the DMA sent clearance projects to the MoP in order to integrate these with the National Development Plan and that these tasks were sent to Ministry of Finance in order to be integrated with the national budget. Iraq further reported that the DMA worked to enhance efforts, create partnerships and integrate with all governmental and non-governmental sectors in order to clear dangerous lands and provide a safe environment as well as are able to development and investment. (Action #1, Action #6)
16. Iraq reported on its efforts to ensure that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men are considered, including participation in training programs on gender quality. (Action #3)
17. Iraq reported on its efforts to develop a sustainable national capacity, including establishing a flexible annual training plan and internal courses to develop the capabilities of supervision and implementation teams of Governmental and covering both national and international non-governmental organisations and companies. (Action #26)

IV. Efficient and expedient implementation (OAP Actions #5, #9, #27)

18. Iraq reported on its efforts to keep national mine action standards up to date and that in 2023 Iraq updated 24 National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) in accordance with the latest IMAS. (Action #5)
19. Iraq reported on its efforts to maintain an accurate and up-to-date information management system, including the development of a tailored Information System designed specifically for Mine Action in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), and that it has been designed to meet the needs of Mine Action practitioners and other stakeholder, including the active mine action organization in the region, balancing robust functionality with a user-friendly interface. Its aim is to facilitate active and simplified management of Mine Action data, ensuring efficiency and accuracy in decision-making processes, and that this new system is scheduled to become operational starting April 2024. (Action #9)
20. Iraq reported on its efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of survey, including through updated NMAS. (Action #27)

V. Actions in accordance with plans in extension requests and decisions on them

21. In considering Iraq's request, the Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties (16MSP) had requested Iraq to submit updated information on several matters. The Committee welcomes the information provided by Iraq on:

- Progress made relative to the commitments contained in Iraq's two-year work plan during the extension period; Geographically specific information on the implementation of survey plans, locations and the results of these efforts and how additional clarity obtained may change Iraq's understanding of the remaining implementation challenge;
- Resource mobilisation efforts and external financing received and resources made available by the government of Iraq to support implementation efforts, including through efforts to facilitate operations of international demining organisations and expanding of indigenous capacities, and the results of these efforts.

22. The Committee would welcome updated information from Iraq on the following decisions of the 16MSP:

- Changes in the security situation and how these changes positively or negatively affect implementation;
- Efforts to resolve political issues which prevent the carrying out of mine action activities in border areas of Iraq.

23. The Committee recalled that in considering Iraq's 2017 extension request, the 16MSP requested Iraq to submit to the States Parties, by 30 April 2018 a plan for non-technical survey operations and that emergency non-technical survey operations. The Committee recalled that Iraq had acted on the decisions of the 16MSP by submitting a plan for non-technical survey.

24. The Committee recalled that in considering Iraq's 2017 extension request, the 16MSP requested Iraq to submit to the Fourth Review Conference in 2019, an updated work plan for the remaining period covered by the extension request and every two years following this. The Meeting requested that this work plan contain an updated list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, annual projections of which areas and area that would be dealt with each year during the remaining period covered by the request and a revised detailed updated budget. The Committee recalled that Iraq had acted on the decisions of the 16MSP by submitting an updated work plan to the Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties, and two years subsequently to the 19MSP and the 21MSP.

VI. Mine risk education and reduction (OAP Actions #28-32)

25. Iraq reported on its efforts to effectively exclude the population from mined areas, the methodologies used, challenges faced, and the results achieved, disaggregated by gender and age, including through the distribution of risk education materials, social media, institutional partners and community wardens. (Action #32)

26. Iraq reported on the integration of mine risk education and reduction (MRE/R) into wider humanitarian, development, protection and education efforts, as well as with ongoing survey, and clearance activities, including all operators being informed of the need for mine awareness teams to accompany survey and clearance teams according to national standard (12.10). (Action #28)

27. Iraq reported on its efforts to provide context-specific mine risk education and reduction programmes, including awareness teams evaluating the needs of communities by using forms filled out in the field and that the risk education and media department in cooperation with UNMAS has completed a knowledge survey form which the needs and extent of communities' need for various awareness programs and activities are extracted, in addition to the information available from the Operations and Quality Control Department regarding the type of contamination present. Iraq reported that this information forms a database on which the needs are evaluated in the work of various awareness programs. Iraq further reported efforts to coordinate with the Ministry of Education / General Directorate of Curricula to introduce awareness messages into all school curricula, as well as coordinating with the Ministry of Interior / Community Police Directorate to monitor dangerous behaviours through communication platforms, and that social media, allows access to promoters of dangerous behaviour, and can create content that promotes safe behaviour. Iraq reported that IKMAA conducted a comprehensive research survey on those killed and disabled working in the field of mine action program in the KRI, and that these findings were distributed among relevant stakeholders. (Action #29)
28. Iraq reported on its efforts to prioritise people most at-risk, including analysing risk behaviours, rates of injuries, accidents and the proximity to hazardous areas in order to prioritise areas for risk awareness. (Action #30)
29. Iraq reported on its efforts to build capacity to deliver MRE/R in affected communities, including conducting capacity building and trainings for institutional bodies, including Ministry of Interior / Directorate of Community Police, Ministry of Culture / Department of Cultural Palaces, Ministry of Oil / Central Oil Company, Ministry of Education / Directorate of Sports and School Activities (Action #31). Iraq also reported that IKMAA trained Community Safety Wardens (CSW) to deliver lifesaving messages and instructions to the people of their villages and areas, and that this move has had a great positive impact on the villagers of their area so that no more accidents were recorded, and that IKMAA through its website, social media and media channels disseminated risk education messages and instructions. (Action #31)

VII. Challenges in implementation (OAP Action #8)

30. The Committee observed that Iraq had provided quality information on challenges in implementation, including; shortages in financial support in 2023 for risk education activities. (Action #8)

The Oslo Action Plan country reporting tracker

Article 5 Implementation

Iraq

CROSS-CUTTING ACTIONS

| Actions | Indicators | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | Additional information requested from the Committee (deadline 28 July) |
|---------|---|------|------|------|------|------|--|
| #1 | # States Parties that report, having included Convention implementation activities in national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, humanitarian response plans and national strategies for the inclusion of persons with disabilities, where appropriate | | | | | | |
| | % mine-affected States Parties that report making national financial commitments to the implementation of their obligations under the Convention | | | | | | |
| #2 | % mine-affected States Parties that report having evidence-based, costed and time-bound national strategies and work plans in place | | | | | | |
| #3 | % affected States Parties whose national work plans and strategies integrate gender and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account | | | | | | |
| | # women in States Parties' delegations attending Convention meetings | | | | | | |
| #5 | % States Parties that have updated their national standards to address new challenges and ensure the employment of best practices, taking into consideration the latest IMAS | | | | | | |
| #6 | # States Parties that report having included mine action related activities within their humanitarian response plans, peacebuilding, development or human rights plans, where relevant | | | | | | |
| #8 | # States Parties that prepare their Article 7 reports using the Guide to Reporting | | | | | | |
| | # States Parties that report on progress and challenges during formal and informal meetings | | | | | | |
| #9 | % States Parties that report having a sustainable national information management system in place | | | | | | |

SURVEY AND CLEARANCE OF MINED AREAS

| Actions | Indicators | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | Additional information requested from the Committee (deadline 28 July) |
|---------|---|------|------|------|------|------|---|
| #18 | % affected States Parties that have established an accurate and evidence-based contamination baseline no later than the Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties in 2021 (and by each year thereafter if not all affected States Parties have done so by 19MSP) | | | | | | The Committee observed that Iraq was still in the process of identifying the precise perimeter of mined areas and would welcome updated information from Iraq on these efforts. |
| | % affected States Parties who report having established their baseline through inclusive consultations with women, girls, boys and men | | | | | | |
| #19 | % affected States Parties presenting work plans for the implementation of Article 5 by the Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties (and MSPs thereafter and by each year thereafter if not all affected States Parties have done so by 18MSP) | | | | | | |
| #20 | # affected States Parties that have reported annual updates and adjusted milestones to their national work plans in their 30 April transparency reports | | | | | | The Committee would welcome information on Iraq's efforts to provide annual updates based on new evidence and on adjusted milestones |
| | # States Parties that have fulfilled their obligations under Article 5 | | | | | | |
| #21 | # States Parties that apply the provisions of the Convention to anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature (for the purpose of this indicator: survey, clear and report) | | | | | | |
| #22 | % of affected States Parties reporting on the remaining challenge and progress made in accordance with IMAS | | | | | | |
| | % of affected States Parties providing survey and clearance data in Article 5 extension requests and Article 7 reports that disaggregates by type of contamination | | | | | | |
| #23 | % extension requests that include detailed, costed and multi-year work plans for the extension period | | | | | | |
| | % extension requests that are submitted in accordance with the process established by the States Parties | | | | | | |
| #24 | % extension requests that include appropriate plans for risk education and reduction activities | | | | | | |
| #25 | % States Parties that have completed their Article 5 obligations and that submit voluntary declarations of completion | | | | | | |
| #26 | % affected States Parties that include provisions for addressing previously unknown mined areas in their national strategies and/or completion plans | | | | | | |

| | % affected States Parties that report having put in place sustainable national capacities to address the discovery of previously unknown mined areas | | | | | | |
|--|--|------|------|------|------|------|--|
| | % States Parties that discover previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas, that apply the decision of the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties | | | | | | |
| #27 | # States Parties that report promoting research, application and sharing of innovative technological means | | | | | | |
| MINE RISK EDUCATION AND REDUCTION | | | | | | | |
| Actions | Indicators | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | Additional information requested from the Committee (deadline 28 July) |
| #28 | % affected States Parties that report having included mine risk education and reduction programmes in their humanitarian response and protection plans and/or development plans, as well as in their mine action plans, where relevant | | | | | | |
| #29 | % affected States Parties that report having mine risk education and reduction programmes for all affected populations in place | | | | | | |
| | % States Parties that report carrying out mine risk education and reduction activities that collect, analyse and report data disaggregated by gender, age, disability and other diverse needs | | | | | | |
| #30 | # States Parties that report having established an evidence-based priority-setting mechanism for mine risk education and reduction programmes | | | | | | |
| #31 | # States Parties that provide risk education and reduction programmes to affected communities in the case that previously unknown mined areas are discovered | | | | | | |
| #32 | # States Parties reporting on their mine risk education and other risk reduction programmes and results | | | | | | |