

ICRC Statement on Yemen's Extension Request
Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education
and Mine Action Technologies,

Geneva, 9 April 2014

The International Committee of the Red Cross would like to thank Yemen for the timely submission of its extension request. Yemen has faced a number of challenges throughout the last extension period, and we welcome Yemen's ongoing commitment to comply with its Article 5 obligations.

The extension request includes important information regarding the remaining challenge, but it would benefit from further clarity in a number of areas. In particular, we urge Yemen to provide additional details on achievements in survey and clearance throughout the first extension period from 2008 to 2013, including the location and size of suspected hazardous areas that have been cancelled or cleared, as well as the type and quantity of mines cleared in each area.

In terms of the remaining challenge, we note that the confirmed contamination is relatively small and should be dealt with quite easily over a 5 year extension period. In addition, the extension request identifies in addition over 900km² of possible suspected hazardous areas. It is not clear if Yemen suspects all of these areas to contain anti-personnel mines (as against contamination by explosive remnants of war) but as Yemen intends to address such "remaining areas" only in the final months of its extension period, it would appear that it expects only a very small proportion of these areas to be confirmed hazardous areas. It would be beneficial if Yemen could submit an amended extension request, providing additional clarity and a revised estimate of mined areas if possible.

We welcome Yemen's commitment to update its demining standards so as to reflect the latest IMAS, and to upgrade demining equipment used by the Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre (YEMAC). We would encourage Yemen to prioritise this process, including revision of quality management standards. Harmonising national standards with the latest IMAS could also help to facilitate collaboration with national and international demining organisations. Although to date clearance has been carried solely by YEMAC, Yemen may benefit from developing partnerships with other organisations.

In regards to funding, we note that the budget estimate provided in the extension request is significantly higher than previous funding achievements. The ICRC urges donors to support Yemen in carrying out its Article 5 obligations, however we query whether such a high budget is realistic. It would also be prudent for Yemen to develop a resource mobilization strategy and to provide annual updates on both national and international funding received throughout the extension period.

The extension request describes the significant humanitarian and socio-economic impact of anti-personnel mines. In addressing the remaining Article 5 challenge over the five year extension period, we therefore encourage Yemen to develop criteria and mechanisms for establishing clearance priorities, and to communicate this information to the States Parties. It would also be valuable if Yemen could develop a comprehensive National Mine Action Strategy that prioritises clearance in areas that will have maximum benefit for the population.