

## **ICRC Statement**

### **Sudan's Extension Request**

#### **Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies**

**28 May 2013**

The International Committee of the Red Cross supports Sudan's request for a 5-year extension of time. In our view, Sudan has presented well the estimates of remaining contamination as well as the challenges it has faced in fulfilling its Article 5 obligations. Sudan's clearance plan is very detailed and will allow the monitoring of progress on almost a monthly basis. The clearance methods presented appear to be sound and well planned.

The clearance plan is, however, subject to a number of risk factors that can all impact on expected progress. These include, in particular, the unpredictable security situation in South Kordofan, where most of the known contamination exists, the risk that new contamination may be discovered or occur and the uncertainty of future funding. There is also no guarantee that Sudan will be able to cancel 50 – 90 % of the suspected area as it estimates.

To some extent, Sudan can take account of these factors in its planning. For example, it should continue collecting basic information on contamination as much as possible, and constantly re-evaluate the possibility of calling upon other independent organisations to support its clearance efforts in areas where the National Mine Action Centre (NMAC) does not have access.

In terms of funding, it is commendable that the Government of Sudan has contributed to NMAC and National Demining Unit (NDU) activities to date. As with other extension requests, Sudan should now provide information on national funding commitments for running costs and operations, ideally in the form of a 5-year commitment for the extension period, as well as additional details of external funds required and a resource mobilisation strategy. In this regard, we note Sudan's intention to convene a donor workshop later this year.

In addition to financial resources, it appears that existing human resources will be stretched. Sudan might therefore need to consider increasing the number of personnel involved in actual operations, either within the NDU or in the two Sudanese NGOs supporting operations, or by bringing in other organisations for support.

In light of all of the risk factors potentially affecting the mine clearance programme, we would recommend that Sudan produce an annual report of achievements and challenges in order to better monitor implementation of the plan. In addition, it would be useful to receive a revised work plan and budget during the extension period, with a more precise estimate of the remaining clearance challenge in light of the evolving security situation and funding commitments.

Finally, the ICRC is concerned by the increased number of victims of mines and explosive remnants of war in 2011 and 2012. With uncertainty regarding access for clearance teams to the most affected areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile regions, we hope that Sudan can implement risk reduction activities to reduce the impact of weapon contamination pending clearance.