



**REPUBLIC OF SERBIA  
MINE ACTION CENTRE**

**ANTI - PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION  
THE SIXTEENTH MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES**

**UPDATE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION**

Vienna, Austria, 18 - 21 December 2017

The Republic of Serbia is a State Party of the Convention since 2004 and is fully committed to the implementation of its obligations under the Convention, and regularly submits its Annual Article 7 Reports.

The Republic of Serbia neither produces AP mines nor possesses the stockpiles of AP mines. Namely, the stockpiles of AP mines were destroyed in 2007, well before the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014, Serbia's original deadline established under Article 5.

The Republic of Serbia fulfils its obligations related to clearance of mine contaminated area, too.

At the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the States Parties of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on their Destruction, which was held in the period 2-6 December 2013, Geneva, the Republic of Serbia was granted a 5 year extension of the deadline for fulfilment of its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention, which is 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019. The remaining mine contamination in Municipalities of Bujanovac and Preševo, totalled around 3,500,000 sqm of land contaminated with groups of mines laid in accordance with no pattern and without any minefield records.

Since the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting, clearance of the area of 270,616 sqm was completed in the Municipality of Preševo. After completing clearance operations in the Preševo Municipality, during which several mines and UXO were discovered and safely destroyed, as well as after a re-survey of cleared and surrounding suspected area, the Serbian Mine Action Centre excluded the surrounding mine suspected area from the category of mine suspected. Thus, in the Municipality of Preševo, according to available data, there is no more confirmed hazardous area, as well as mine suspected area.

Based on the results of a demining project in Bujanovac in 2012, as well as on the results of survey operations and subsequent statements of the local population, in 2015, in order to achieve effectiveness and cost efficiency, the SMAC decided to reclassify the area initially categorized as confirmed hazardous area (defined as such according to then available relevant indicators) and suspected hazardous area into mine suspected

hazardous area (around 3,000,000 sqm in the Municipality of Bujanovac) to be treated with an integrated approach that included survey, manual demining, detection by mine detection dogs.

In 2015, the funds (100,000 EUR) for demining operations have been allocated from the Serbian State Budget for the first time.

SMAC secured with the U.S. Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement to match these national funds. Provision of these matched funds enabled implementation of the SMAC project "An integrated approach to the mine risk land release in the territory of the Municipality of Bujanovac", which included survey, manual demining and detection by mine detection dogs. The project area totaled 1,179,000 sqm, of which 413,915 sqm was subjected to manual clearance in combination with detection by mine detection dogs, while the larger part of the area was land released as the area without confirmed mine risk. During the clearance 14 AP mines and 1 UXO were found and safely destroyed. At that time, the remaining mine suspected hazardous area totaled around 2,000,000 smq in the Municipality of Bujanovac..

In 2016, the funds for demining operations were allocated from the Serbian State Budget, which SMAC intended to match with donor funds and use for the implementation of our demining projects. However, due to the fact that there were no available matching funds in 2016, our demining projects could not be implemented and our relatively modest funds were used to solve cluster munitions related issue in the Municipality of Bujanovac.

At the request of the Bujanovac local authorities, SMAC conducted non-technical survey throughout 2016 and early 2017 in the area for which subsequent information of mine contamination were obtained, which resulted in an increase of suspected hazardous area for about 700,000 sqm in comparison to SHA in early 2016, and totalling 2,630,340 sqm in early 2017.

The Serbian Government allocated funds from the Serbian State Budget for the 2017 demining operations and, in addition to available donor funds in 2017 (U.S. Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement donation, through ITF Enhancing Human Security), we continued our demining operations in order to primarily provide safety of local population, safe exploitation of woods, safe use of road communications, environmental protection, as well as reduction of fire risks.

Namely, SMAC developed technical survey project totaling 995,920 sqm. Technical survey of the project area was envisaged to confirm or reject suspicion that the project area is contaminated with groups of mines and other UXO. Confirmed area was envisaged to be subject to clearance and those areas not confirmed to be mine contaminated to be cancelled.

SMAC submitted the project to ITF Enhancing Human Security in order to implement tender procedure for selection of an implementing agency.

Given that insufficient funds were provided, the technical survey project totalling 995,920 sqm had to be split into 5 separate projects.

As of December 2017, one project totaling 275, 800 sqm (Breznica Village, Bujanovac Municipality) has been completed, with 3 AP mines and 1 UXO found and safely destroyed.

Second project totaling 113,600 sqm (Ravno Bučje Village, Bujanovac Municipality is in progress.

Remaining 3 out of these 5 projects will be hopefully implemented in 2018 upon securing of funding from donors or other sources of funding.

We remain strongly committed to the accomplishment of a goal to make Serbia mine-free and will continue our demining operations for the area suspected to contain groups of mines, as of December 2017 totaling 2,354,540 sqm, in order to primarily provide safety of local population.

In 2018, Serbian Government will continue to allocate funds for demining operations. However, given that these funds will not be sufficient, we have significant concerns that if donor funds are not urgently secured, the Republic of Serbia will not be in a position to fulfill its obligation by March 2019, namely we will have to submit the second extension request by latest March 2018.

Please note that, in addition to mines, Serbia has to deal with clearance of areas contaminated with cluster munitions, air bombs – rockets and other UXO, since they also affect population and block substantial resources and hinder implementation of development and infrastructure.

Given the above, we avail ourselves of this opportunity to urge donors to support our efforts and assist us in our contribution to the joint goal – mine free Serbia and the world.