



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

STATEMENT

Convention on the Prohibition of Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer  
of Anti-Personal Mines and on Their Destruction

---

17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention

Geneve 26-30 November 2018

Mr President, Your Excellences, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Statement of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the thematic matters concerning request extension and fulfilment of obligations under Article 5 of the Convention

Please allow me that on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina delegation, once more point out that our country's entire mine action community, still remains dedicated to fulfil all challenges ahead in order to reach all Maputo goals and only when all population are no longer at risk of these weapons and when all contaminated areas are cleared, we can stand proud and say we did it.

And although so far achievement is remarkable, there is still a lot of work to do towards reaching mine free country. It goes without saying how big toll that AP mines take on everyday life and how huge amount of land was turned into waste. That is why our efforts need to be even stronger in realizing this noble vision.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is still facing large scale of mine contamination with mine suspected area sized approximately to 2,1% of total country size. There are still 1398 of affected communities, where there are still living 545.000 of impacted citizens.

Suspected area sized is around 1055 km<sup>2</sup>, with estimated number of mines/UXO up to 75-80.000 .

A General assessment of mine problem in Bosnia and Herzegovina was carried out in the preparation of the previous request in 2007, where the Study identified 1.600 communities contaminated with mines. On 26 March 2008, Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted a request to extend its 1 March 2009 mine clearance deadline. The request was granted at the Ninth Meeting of the States Parties and a new deadline set for 1 March 2019. After nine (9) years of implementation Bosnia and Herzegovina will not be able to fulfil obligations in accordance with the previous request.

The circumstances that have prevented Bosnia and Herzegovina from meeting the deadline of 1 March 2019 are related to the following:

- **Lack of financial means**
- **The size of mine problem**
- **Non-functional minefield records available.**
- **Prevailing climate conditions.**

From 2013 to 2016 and in order to fulfil the obligations taken under the Article 5 of the Convention, Mine Action Centre in BiH implemented “Land Release” project IPA 2011, with the support from Delegation of European Union in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project promoted the full engagement of the land release process with non-technical survey efforts, resulting in either cancellation of the Suspected Hazard Areas in case of insufficient evidence about the existence of mine/explosive devices or confirmation of hazardous areas.

Within the stated project, Mine Action Centre in BiH created the following first three chapters of the new Standards: Land Release, Non-technical survey and Technical survey. These chapters were drafted in accordance with IMAS and adopted by the Demining Commission in Bosnia and Herzegovina in January 2016.

In accordance with Article 5, Bosnia and Herzegovina is requesting a two (2) years extension from 01 March 2019 to 01 March 2021, to carry out survey and clearance activities to better define the precise perimeter of mined areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Following the better definition of the remaining challenge, Bosnia and Herzegovina will be in a better position to highlight the exact amount of time required to implement its obligations under Article 5. Bosnia and Herzegovina will submit a final request for extension for completion, based on a more precise understanding of the remaining challenge by 31th March 2020.

Elimination of risk for population and social and economic development of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be resolved through integrated approach to mine action.

During the requested time period, three main activities will be carried out:

1. **Country assessment of SHAs in Bosnia and Herzegovina:** The Mine Action Centre Bosnia and Herzegovina, Armed Forces BiH and Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) will carry out a project entitled “Country assessment of SHAs in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, which will be carried out from 2 July 2018 – 31 December 2019. This project is approved and will be financed through EC emergency grants. The aim of this project is to increase the efficiency in mine action in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the aim of setting a new baseline, through the application of non-technical survey and technical survey i.e. it will aim to establish a new baseline for realistic planning in mine action in order to plan the realization of the Mine Action Strategy 2018-2025 and preparation of the final request for fulfilling the obligations under Article 5 of the Convention.
2. **Mine Action Governance and Management Project:** the BHMIC with support of the UNDP and financing from the European Union, will create a new web orientated database to replace the existing system and increase accessibility and transparency of mine action data. Project Title is “Mine Action Governance and Management Project”. This project will aim to influence policy and build the capacity to instil greater organisational openness and adaptability to new implementation

methodologies such as the country assessment project. The aim is to re-establish donor confidence through the formulation of a credible, realistic and achievable completion plan to clear all remaining mined areas in the country and comply with the country's obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

3. **Land release operations: survey and clearance operations** will continue in line with the annual priorities presented by municipal authorities, as well as in line with the financing available for implementation. As per the National Demining Law, these plans are developed on an annual basis.

At the moment, there are 26 accredited organizations for mine action in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Five of them are government organizations (Armed Forces, Federal Administration of Civil Protection FBiH, Republic Administration of Civil Protection RS, Brčko District Civil Protection and Red Cross Society BiH), seven commercial organizations (all national), ten non-government organizations and 4 civil society organizations.

Mine risk education in the period 2019-2020 will be implemented through public information, education of affected population groups and through linking mine action with an affected community. Mine risk education will focus on the priority implementation of activities in communities that have a large SHAs of priority category III and the most affected target population groups.

In accordance with the Demining Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina, funds for the conduct of mine action in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be ensured via donors' sources, budgets of Bosnia and Herzegovina institutions, entity budgets and other sources. In order to fulfil the obligations under Article 5 of the Convention in requested timeframe (two years), the funds totalling 79,260,000 BAM (approximately USD47 million) are required. The finance plan according to the operational plan for 2019-2020 is prepared in accordance with the realistic financial frame of mine action, and in accordance with the analysis of financial plan for mine action in the period 2009-2017.

In 2017, Mine Action Centre Bosnia and Herzegovina cooperated with GICHD and created the Mine Action Strategy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2018-2025 and in accordance with the obligations of the Demining Commission in Bosnia and Herzegovina is confirmed. The stated document encompasses strategic and operational aim related to the plan of mobilizing finance resources with annual sums of expected funds and explained manners to keep traditional and attract new donors.

We stay opened for all comments and suggestions in this matter.

At the end I will took opportunity to express our countries deep gratitude to all the assistance and cooperation we received during the past period from various donor community and very much hope that they will stay determined and committed in bringing us step by step further towards the fulfilment of our aspiration for a mine free country. Their support in this regard is encouraging and thus enabling our success.

We look forward to sharing our all lessons learned and gained expertize with all international community and all interested parties.

Thank you.