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# Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

21 September 2020

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## **Eighteenth Meeting**

**Geneva, 16-20 November 2020**

Item 11 of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of requests submitted under Article 5**

## **Request for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention**

### **Executive Summary**

#### **Submitted by South Sudan**

1. The conflict that led to the creation of South Sudan lasted for 50 years and officially ended on 9 January 2005, with the signature of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the Government of Sudan (GoS)<sup>1</sup>. It had been one of the deadliest and longest lasting wars of the twentieth century and resulted in an estimated four million displaced people and two million deaths attributed to violence, famine and disease.
2. The CPA aimed at promoting democratic governance and the sharing of oil revenues between Sudan and South Sudan. It also established a timeline to the January 2011 referendum that led to the independence of South Sudan on 9 July 2011 South Sudan when it became the 193rd member state of the United Nations.
3. From the outset, the country faced tremendous humanitarian, development and security challenges. There were few tarmacked roads and long running tribal tensions were not healed by the liberation. Intercommunal violence had broken out in several areas of the country even by the time of independence.
4. The legacy of the conflict could be found all over the country, not only in the form of minefields, cluster strikes and mined roads, but with unexploded ordnance also ever-present. More than four thousand people had already been injured by landmines and other unexploded ordnance and many of the roads remained mined. Further adding to the logistical challenges there was only one bridge across the Nile and that is in the capital of Juba. This situation remains today.
5. Shortly after independence, the security situation along the border with Sudan deteriorated, especially in the disputed area of Abyei, in Upper Nile and Unity states, which resulted in significant addition of contamination of explosive remnants of war (ERW).
6. The country remained at peace for little more than two years before a new phase of conflict erupted first in December 2013 and then again in July 2016. The fighting was largely

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<sup>1</sup> "Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement 2005". Peace Accords Matrix. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame. Retrieved 16 July 2016.



along ethnic lines and was fought between the largely Dinka Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) led by President Kiir and the largely Nuer Sudan People's Liberation Movement In Opposition (SPLM-IO) led by the former Vice-President Dr Riek Machar<sup>2</sup>. The renewed violence led to widespread displacement, distress and destitution and added yet more explosive contamination to a country that was struggling to remove the legacy of previous fighting. Despite the signing of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS<sup>3</sup>) in August 2015, there have been few periods of genuine peace coupled with seasonal rainfall which has reduced the actual demining season to only six months. The conflict's explosive legacy prevents the delivery of vital humanitarian aid and threatens the safety of individuals, communities and humanitarian actors. The socioeconomic cost of interrupted agricultural production, food insecurity, halted commerce and the lack of freedom of movement is incalculable.

7. The Government of Sudan (GoS) signed the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention on 4 December 1997 and ratified it on 13 October 2003 when Sudan was one country. In South Sudan Sudan People's Liberation Army / Movement (SPLA/M) reaffirmed their commitment to the Deed of Commitment of the Geneva Call in August 2003 in March 2008<sup>4</sup> they destroyed 6,000 anti-personnel mines to comply with Article Four of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Since then all newly identified anti-personnel mine stockpiles have been destroyed in South Sudan.

8. South Sudan deposited its notification of succession to the Convention<sup>5</sup> on 11 November 2011.

9. After acceding to the Convention, South Sudan was granted a 10-year period to meet all of its obligations under the Anti -Personnel Mine Ban Convention, in accordance with the provisions of this convention. That period is due to end in July 2021, but despite significant efforts and very generous international support it is clear that the country will not meet its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention that requires it to clear all anti-personnel mined areas.

10. Clearance efforts were already well underway, as demining had begun in earnest in 2004. However, the return to violence, and general insecurity that has affected the country for the majority of the time since independence, had had a severe impact on the clearance effort and added yet more contamination to be cleared.

11. Since the succession, 1,609 hazardous areas have been cleared or cancelled and 388.6 square kilometres of confirmed or suspected hazardous areas (SHA) have been released. This work has left 353 known hazardous areas with a total area of 19.5 square kilometres to be addressed. This is disaggregated as follows:

**Table of remaining contamination in South Sudan as of 30 June 2020**

<i>Hazard type</i>	<i>Number of hazards</i>	<i>Area of hazards (m2)</i>
AP Minefields	122	7,337,011
AT Minefields	38	1,172,873
Mined Roads	25	3,313,354
Cluster Strikes	133	6,408,965
Battle Areas	35	1,278,907
<b>Total</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>19,511,110</b>

12. Over the years, South Sudan has developed efficient clearance techniques to address each of these hazard types as well as honing its capacity to undertake non-technical survey

<sup>2</sup> Dr Machar was reappointed as First Vice President again on 22 February 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Agreement on Resolution of Conflict in Republic of South Sudan, August 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Article 7 report for 2012.

<sup>5</sup> The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention that is the Convention on Prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and Transfer of anti-personnel mine and their destruction.

to better define the actual clearance requirement. This has led to almost four times as much ground being cancelled as has been cleared (315,826,314 square metres cancelled versus 72,832,239 square metres cleared) and there remain clear opportunities for further reductions in the overall estimate that will be derived by further survey work.

13. Accordingly, each of the remaining tasks has been classified according to the proposed clearance methodology (manual clearance, mechanical clearance, road clearance or resurvey). In total there are 90 tasks assigned for resurvey that in total extend across 6,333,897m<sup>2</sup> but whereas 28 of those tasks have no area assigned to them at all, the largest three account for 3,303,582m<sup>2</sup> (52% of the area assigned for resurvey and 17% of all remaining contamination). Thus, South Sudan is confident that further survey work will reduce the actual contamination estimate.

14. The majority of the requirement for resurvey work is comprised of tasks in Jonglei State where 19 tasks are registered as contaminating 4,359,449 square metres (45% of which is attributed to a single SHA). In recognition of this disparity for planning purposes, the clearance requirements for each of these hazards has been calculated on the basis of it being the size of a standard minefield or cluster strike (as determined by historical averages for completed tasks).

15. South Sudan has analysed the remaining contamination and made a realistic assessment of the likely clearance resources available to address it and is requesting a five-year extension to allow it to complete its clearance of all mined areas in the country.

16. Explosive Ordnance Risk Education has been a cornerstone of the mine action programme in South Sudan with direct delivery of risk education given to 3.87 million people across the country. All risk education teams are gender balanced and access the entire community in order to understand their concerns and priorities. There is no doubt that this has been effective as since joining the Convention there have been 56 people injured by anti-personnel mines and 585 killed or injured by all explosive ordnance.

17. South Sudan now has a relatively clear picture of the remaining contamination in areas under its jurisdiction or control. With surveys completed, expansion and capacity building of the current demining operators, South Sudan now seeks a five (5) year extension, 9 July 2021 to 9 July 2026 to allow it to complete the clearance of all mined areas in the country. It will make every effort to achieve the 2014 Maputo Review Conference objective of 2025 but cannot envisage doing so without any increase in funding. The current plan for the complete clearance of South Sudan is estimated to cost US\$148million with a maximum annual budget of US\$34.4 million for the demining season of 2021/22 and dropping to \$24.75million in 2025/26. In order to achieve this South Sudan is appealing for an initial increase in support of US\$3million per year.

18. Although this plan is based upon the optimal deployment of the existing funded clearance resources working in South Sudan, some of those resources have other commitments and cannot be dedicated exclusively to the delivery of this plan. Besides which, there is no certainty that the current funding levels will be sustained. The largest single donor to mine action is the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) whose own future is uncertain, but moreover the priorities of UNMISS are not always directly aligned with those of this plan and thus the UNMISS funded mine action teams may be tasked for other work to support UNMISS and the wider peace process.

19. The widespread insecurity that has affected South Sudan since 2013 has led to a plethora of small mobile teams. These are ideally suited for survey work and the clearance of spot unexploded ordnance tasks but are not well suited to the efficient clearance of minefields. In order to deliver the more efficient clearance capacity that is needed to meet the goals of this plan, mine action organisations are being encouraged to reconfigure their clearance teams to allow for more deminers and fewer support staff on each task.

20. This extension request is believed to be grounded in facts and based on proven clearance rates and realistic resource expectations. It is however also based on optimism and the hope that peace can prevail in the country. Without a doubt, the threat of renewed violence is the greatest threat to the plan, but this is followed by uncertainty over funding for mine action. The country is heavily dependent upon aid and food insecurity is rife, millions are

displaced both inside and out of the country. Therefore, even before the emergence of COVID-19, there were already many conflicting demands on aid budgets.

21. This document outlines how full clearance of South Sudan’s hazardous areas can be achieved; it details the resources required and the methodology that will be used to address each of the 353 hazardous areas that remain. It also recognises the uncertainties that still exist and includes a small provision to address those tasks that have not yet been identified but might still exist.

22. The Government of South Sudan is committed to delivering on its obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and believes that it is possible that it may do so by 9th July 2026.

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