
**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**

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Item 13 of the agenda

Consideration of requests submitted under article 5

**Revised
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 Guinea-Bissau

1. As a result of three main periods of armed conflict – the Liberation war (1963-1974), the civil war (1998-1999) and the Casamance conflict of March 2006 – Guinea Bissau is contaminated by landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). Mine and UXO contamination affects both urban and rural populations.

2. A total of 1,215 individuals were recorded as killed or injured by UXO/mines between 1963 and 2009. Among mine/UXO victims, approximately 20 percent are women, 45 percent are men, and 35 percent are children. In the last 5-year period, since 2005, 30 people were recorded killed and 45 injured with a peak in 2006 during the Casamance conflict with 37 incidents alone. Roughly 25 percent of accidents resulted from UXO. Livelihood activities, usually farming, are the main reason for risk-taking behaviour.

3. Guinea Bissau is a country reliant on small-scale subsistence agriculture. Usable agricultural land in Guinea Bissau is essential to individual, community, and national survival. The vast majority of the population make their living from small scale agricultural activities and are largely self-employed with some 82 percent of the population relying on agricultural activities for their livelihood. The presence of ERW and mines on agricultural land, with the additional burden in some instances of blocked resource access, poses a threat to the safety and livelihoods of communities and has a detrimental impact on the economic potential and quality of life of affected populations. In 2009, 60 percent of the country's GDP consisted of agriculture activities and contributed to more than 80 percent of export earnings. In the period of 2006-2009, the economy of Guinea Bissau grew by 2,2 percent with the increase largely due to the agriculture sector, which grew with 6,3 percent. However, population increase during this same period have held the same pace implying that the overall poverty rate has stagnated but not decreased, whilst the national budget have suffered the same setback.

4. In early 2001, the Government of Guinea-Bissau established a National Humanitarian Mine Action Programme (PAAMI) and the National Mine Action Coordination Centre (CAAMI). In September 2001, Decree 55/001 formally created the National Commission for Humanitarian Demining (CNDH), which serves as the Government's steering committee for mine action. The UNDP and other UN agencies are full members of CNDH. Until recently under the office of the Minister for Former Combatants and now after a merger, effectively under the Ministry of Defense and Former Combatants, CAAMI sets policy for, plans, coordinates, approves and mobilises resources for all mine action activities in Guinea-Bissau.

5. Due to population density, IDP camp concentration and high casualty rates in and around the capital itself, clearance activities first concentrated on Bissau. The work was finalised in August 2006 and totalled 3,226,859 square metres of mine and battle area clearance. Unfortunately, at this time, the separation of mined areas cleared and battle area cleared was not done whereas later statistics do. This work included the clearance of 3,051 anti-personnel mines, 155 anti-tank mines and 37,407 UXO.

6. Although mine action activities had been carried since 2001, the first systematic coordinated effort to quantify the mine and other explosive remnant of war (ERW) contamination in the country at large took place in 2006 and 2007. The Preliminary Opinion Collection (POC) for the Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) was executed by the National Mine Action Coordination Centre (CAAMI) at the end of 2006. During the process of information collection and analysis, 278 communities were reported to be affected in some way by ERW and/or mines but, as mentioned in the LIS report by Landmine Action, the POC did not aim at identifying the actual extent, nature or affects of contamination as this demanded a more elaborated methodology.

7. A targeted LIS was subsequently carried out by this international NGO, in October 2007 and completed in May 2008. Of the 278 reported communities affected, 11 were found to be duplicates whilst 20 could not be visited due to accessibility, security and other constraints. Additionally, the LIS visited 17 previously not reported communities that were brought to their attention by villagers and NGOs whilst conducting the field work making 264 the total of communities that the survey managed to visit. The LIS subsequently identified 80 of these communities affected in seven of the country's eight regions. Of these, 67 communities were affected by unmixed contamination (11 by anti-personnel mines only, 2 by anti-vehicle mines only and 54 by UXO only) while 13 were affected by mixed contamination (including at least 6 by anti-personnel mines). The survey stated that among these communities, 12 areas were identified and considered to be mined, covering a total area of 2,236,560 square metres. This area was considered to be the size of the impact areas and not the delineation of the mined areas themselves. In addition, five major battle area clearance (BAC) tasks with an estimated area of 930,000 square metres were mapped.

8. As mentioned, clearance has been undertaken since 2001 and even before, by several national and international agencies, military personnel and by villagers themselves: HUMAID (Humanitarian Aid) began operations in early 2000 with support from the United States, Germany, Japan and the UNDP. LUTCAM (Lutamos Todos Contra As Minas) has been active since February 2003 with support provided by the UNDP. In addition, a British NGO, Cleared Ground Demining, has been operational since 2007 and in September 2010, Norwegian People's Aid became operational. Parallel to the LIS, additional clearance was carried out and by 1 October of 2010, a total of 2,357,643 square meters of mine contaminated land had been cleared in the country, in total resulting in the destruction of 3,237 AP mines, 156 anti-vehicle mines and 37,478 UXO. This square meter figure is lower than that mentioned above with regards to the clearance in Bissau as those results also included battle area clearance.

9. Since the results of the survey that came out in 2008, a further 29 affected communities have been identified through reports by NGOs and communities, and are currently being surveyed to verify the extent of any suspected contamination and impact. Therefore, the benchmark from which the remaining work and progress can be measured in Guinea Bissau as of end of 2009 included 12 areas known to contain landmines measuring 2,236,560 square metres and an additional 49 communities reported to be affected. (20 picked up by the POC but not surveyed by the LIS due to accessibility problems and 29 communities not included in the LIS).

10. In order to gain a clear picture of the remaining landmine/UXO problem in Guinea-Bissau, the UNDP and CAAMI requested Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA) to conduct a general and technical survey. Implementation of this survey is expected to revisit the affected areas and verify the degree of landmine/UXO contamination and to increase clearance capacity for Guinea-Bissau to achieve its Article 5 deadline of November 2011. The main areas of activity are as follows:

(a) General survey will be conducted on a national scale by NPA to pinpoint, where possible, the size of contamination allowing the first area reduction and cancellation processes to take place. As soon as the general survey is concluded, NPA will conduct mine clearance to help increase clearance rates with the target to achieve the set deadline, while technical survey will continue in the preparation of clearance tasks in accordance with the work plan that comprises all known and confirmed LIS areas starting from the high-impacted areas to the low impacted.

(b) Technical survey by NPA will accurately define the boundaries of contaminated areas and reduce most of suspected segments in accordance with the work plan of CAAMI, HUMAID and LUTCAM. These organizations are now conducting clearance tasks following NPA's survey activities under CAAMI's guidance. Technical survey now allows for the remaining clearance to commence no later than one month following survey completion.

11. So to summarize the status of today, counting from the 12 mined areas identified as a result of the LIS, four of these have now been finalised, three other areas are currently being addressed by LUTCAM and HUMAID after having been area reduced by NPA and 5 areas remain to be verified and possibly cleared. Of these five, NPA has already conducted non-technical and technical survey on one, reducing the number further by effectively declaring it not mined and not in need of further clearance. However, they have also found four new areas that were not included in the original list and that they consider mined. The areas that were not listed on the LIS have also been added to the list of affected areas for clearance, per today, effectively leaving 8 known areas that remain to be addressed.

12. The further work is based on the following assumptions:

(a) Based on the current and past clearance rates from HUMAID and LUTCAM the average clearance for the two demining organization would be in the region of 95,000 square metres per month, with this rate subject to change based upon environmental and climatic factors and the degree of contamination. NPA is also conducting non-technical and technical survey wherefore their clearance capacity will not be at full capacity until the survey has been finalised, currently expected in March 2011.

(b) Given the above assumption, if all capacities remains operational and no interruptions occur, it is estimated that by November 2011, Guinea-Bissau would manage to clear the remaining mined areas identified in the country, i.e. the 8 areas that have yet not commenced. Of these, the original 4 stemming from the LIS currently measure 547,292 square metres and the 4 newly discovered are yet to be delineated.

(c) It is expected that survey work will continue and compensate for delays by cancelling and reducing area to be cleared with survey work expected to reduce the total area for clearance to less than 50 percent of the whole suspected area.

(d) It is assumed that there will be enough funds to keep all NGOs in operations, especially further funds to support LUTCAM operations and CAAMI operational planning and coordination throughout 2011.

13. Mine clearance has increased the free movement for people and goods and the availability of agricultural land, a decrease in accidents with mines/UXO and safer Guinea-Conakry and Senegalese border travel. In addition, as a result of clearance in Bruntuma, Binta and Suar, about 4,050 people have benefited from safe land for cultivation and for the relocation of IDPs. An additional concrete benefit from clearance is that two mobile operators (MTN and Orange) installed their communication antennas to bring communication to those areas and allow contact with neighbouring countries.

14. All clearance work is conducted in accordance with IMAS standards. Mine clearance in Guinea-Bissau is based on manual methods, with deminers equipped with metal detectors and excavation tools. Land has up to recently been released using clearance only as there was no other method, such as non-technical and technical survey in use. CAAMI is responsible for monitoring and quality assurance, two critical elements of Guinea-Bissau's mine action programme that have received considerable attention during the past year. CAAMI has and continues to work to develop an integrated quality control and post clearance impact assessment plan based on IMAS. CAAMI monitors adherence to IMAS and identifies gaps in technical expertise and efficiency. Through a monthly consultation process, policies and procedures are continually reviewed to ensure best-practice thinking and results-oriented service to ensure the impact. CAAMI oversees the demining process through the accreditation and monitoring of demining organizations before and during the clearance process, and by the inspection of cleared land prior to its formal release.

15. Mine awareness and mine risk education (MRE) are the main tools used to prevent people from entering mined and suspected hazardous areas. CAAMI is responsible for coordination and monitoring of the Education Program to Prevent Mine Accidents (Programa de Educação para a Prevenção de Acidentes com Minas, PEPAM), with support from UNICEF, which also produced MRE materials. The main implementers are national demining NGOs (in conjunction with clearance activities or through community activists and animators), tasked by CAAMI. CAAMI provides refresher training and ensures that methods used are in line with the IMAS. Media is closely involved with diffusion of messages, through radio as Guinea-Bissau rural society primarily functions on oral forms of communication.

16. Financial contributions have been channelled through UNDP for demining activities by national NGOs in addition to some bilateral funds. To date, approximately US\$12 million has been invested in various mine action activities in the period of 2001 – 2009.

17. The circumstances that have impeded the implementation of Guinea Bissau Article 5 obligations in the initial 10 years are as follows: (a) Funding for mine action has not been provided on a long term basis, (b) the existing capacity to clear all known affected areas and other areas potentially reported outside the LIS has not been appropriate and enough for the country to comply with the set deadline. Clearance rates have been relatively low, largely due to the fact that all mine clearance in Guinea Bissau is undertaken manually, (c) operations in the rainy season are subject to delays due to the fact that many areas are inundated and clearance teams are unable to operate during rain, (d) some of the remaining tasks have not yet been subject to technical survey and the estimated figures are based on the LIS estimates completed in 2007-2008. While these figures provide an excellent basis

for strategic planning, as mentioned, some new information have indicated additional communities affected in addition to the size estimations subsequently having been subject to both increases and decreases respectively once clearance and technical survey has been applied.

18. Guinea-Bissau is requesting a 2-month extension of its 1 November 2011 deadline until 1 January 2012. Although Guinea-Bissau is still positive that it could complete its implementation of Article 5 in known areas by its deadline of 1 November 2011, it is still unclear whether new areas will be discovered by the on-going reconfirmation survey that began in September 2010. The results of this survey will be available only in March of 2011, the year of Guinea-Bissau's deadline and after the last Meeting of the States Parties before Guinea-Bissau's deadline, which in fact, is this one taking place now. If Guinea-Bissau does not request an extension and the survey results indicate additional mined areas which would require some additional time to carry out clearance, Guinea-Bissau would then have to submit a request to the Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties (11MSP) for consideration. It is at present not anticipated that this survey will bring out large new areas in need of clearance but, as 4 new areas have indeed been identified and the 11MSP would take part only after Guinea-Bissau's deadline, Guinea-Bissau could then find itself non-compliant with the Convention for the period of 1 month. It is this situation Guinea-Bissau is seeking to avoid with this extension as well as provide the States Parties with a clear and detailed picture of where we are at the moment and where we are seeking to be in the short term.

19. Currently, funds available for implementing the work plan from September 2010 to November 2011 equal US\$ 1,382,000 with an additional US\$ 1 million needed to be raised.
