

Analysis of the request submitted by Jordan for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention¹

Submitted by the Co-Rapporteurs of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies on behalf of the States Parties mandated to analyse requests for extensions²

16 October 2008

1. Jordan ratified the Convention on 13 November 1998. The Convention entered into force for Jordan on 1 May 1999. In its initial transparency report submitted on 9 August 1999, Jordan reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. Jordan is obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 1 May 2009. Jordan, believing that it will be unable to do so by that date, submitted on 31 March 2008 to the President of the Eighth Meeting of the States Parties, a request for an extension of its deadline. Jordan's request is for three years (until 1 May 2012).
2. The request indicates that at the beginning of demining operations in 1993, it was estimated that there were approximately 60 square kilometres of suspect hazard areas, divided into 500 minefields containing roughly 305,000 mines, including 216,000 anti-personnel mines. The request further indicates that landmines in Jordan were mainly laid by the Jordan Armed Forces or the Israeli Defence Forces and that fairly accurate military records and maps existed and were made available. In order to improve the information provided by the original minefield maps, Jordan engaged in several data gathering activities since 1993 including general surveys, re-surveys and technical assessments and technical surveys. The States Parties mandated to analyse requests submitted under Article 5 of the Convention (hereafter referred to as the "analysing group") noted that no additional figure had been provided to indicate the extent of the challenge at or around the time of entry into force of the Convention for Jordan.
3. The request states that during the period 1993 to 2007, approximately 16 square kilometres were cleared with 129,800 anti-personnel mines, 41,897 anti-vehicle mines and approximately 40,000 unexploded ordinance destroyed. In addition, 34 square kilometres of previously suspected mined areas were released by cancellation.
4. Jordan's remaining clearance challenge is the "Northern Border Project", a 104 kilometre-long mine belt along Jordan's border with Syria, which covers an area of 10,355,967 square metres (i.e., approximately 10.36 square kilometres) and contains 135,570 mines, including 92,569 anti-personnel mines, spread in 93 minefields. In addition to this Project, Jordan is working on: a) small spot-demining sites and

¹ In response to an invitation by the Co- Rapporteurs of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies to comment on a draft analysis, Jordan provided a series of remarks and additional information, which interested States Parties can access at www.apminebanconvention.org/extensions.

² At the Seventh Meeting of the States Parties, the States Parties mandated the President and the Co-Chairs and Co-Rapporteurs of the Standing Committees to prepare an analysis of request received and mandated the President, acting on behalf of the Co-Chairs and Co-Rapporteurs, to submit analyses. As the President is Jordanian, he chose not to participate in the analysis of the request submitted by Jordan and asked that that Co-Rapporteurs of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies take the lead in preparing the analysis of Jordan's request.

verification of previous clearance work completed in the Jordan Valley and Mount Nebo area; b) a desk study to evaluate a number of minefields in the Jordan Valley which were demined prior to entry into force of the Convention, to ensure that clearance was carried out consistent with present-day standards; and c) quality control for a number of minefields, including 8 in the Jordan Valley and 28 in Wadi Araba.

5. As noted, Jordan's request is for three years (until 1 May 2012). The request further indicates that while in theory the speed of the demining operations could be increased if more resources were allocated, because the remaining minefields are extremely dangerous and complex to demine, the operator (Norwegian People's Aid) prefers to work with a smaller team of highly qualified deminers to retain complete control over the area of operation.
6. The request indicates the following as impeding circumstances: (a) Until 2004 mine action in Jordan was managed by the military, which lacked both the capacity and resources to achieve great progress in demining. This situation combined with a weak national mine action authority and limited exposure to the international mine action community reduced the outputs of the Royal Engineering Corps; (b) Jordan had difficulty attracting donor contributions for military-led demining activities; (c) Progress was slowed by erosion and flooding in the Jordan Valley; (d) The complex nature of the northern border area and the need to consider demining activities jointly with the emplacement of a border security system caused delays; and (e) The unresolved border dispute with Syria has been a cause of delay.
7. The analysing group noted that Jordan had taken action in 2004 to overcome some impeding circumstances that existed at that time. The analysing group also noted that, while there still remains a border dispute with Syria over the western portion of the Northern Border, the request indicates that Jordan has engaged the Syrian authorities on this matter and a joint commission has been created to that effect.
8. The request indicates that the "Northern Border Project" has three phases: (1) demining conducted by Norwegian People's Aid, (2) immediate quality assurance and verification conducted by the NCDR "Quality Management Team" and (3) the emplacement of a border security system by the Royal Engineering Corps. The request contains a clear and detailed work plan where operations are broken down by sector and sub-sector. Sector East has 39 minefields in a 5,544,962 square metres area and divided into 27 tasks; work in this sector is scheduled to be complete by November 2010. Sector North-East has 26 minefields in a 2,960,322 square metres area and is divided in 11 tasks; work in this sector is scheduled to be complete by December 2010. Finally, sector North-West has 28 minefields in a 1,850,683 square metres area and is divided into 13 tasks; work in this area is scheduled to be complete by November 2011. The analysing group noted that while detailed information had been provided on work to be conducted along Jordan's northern border, the request did not describe plans concerning spot-demining, areas pending verification, areas subject to desk studies and areas awaiting quality control.
9. The analysing group noted that the emplacement of a border security system as mentioned in Jordan's request is not related to the obligation to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas as soon as possible.
10. The request indicates that Jordan has developed National Technical Standards and Guidelines based on the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and that land is

released following a five-step process: survey, site preparation, clearance, verification, and mapping/reporting. Approved manual demining techniques include the rake and detector methods. Mechanical clearance and mine detection dogs are used to support manual clearance activities as a way to provide internal quality assurance in specific circumstances. The analysing group noted that while presumably the large amount of area cancelled resulted from the “Landmine Retrofit Survey” and subsequent technical assessment, methods and means used to cancel areas were not mentioned in the request.

11. The request indicates that Jordan has a planned budget of US\$ 13.0 million for its “Northern Border Project” and that it has fully secured this funding from six donors. Further, there is a likelihood that additional funding will be mobilised which would help accelerate implementation. The analysing group noted that this presented a contradiction within the request, being that additional funding could accelerate implementation, but that demining operators preferred to work at the current pace. Further clarity could be provided on this.
12. The analysing group noted that in the past Jordan had provided over 60 percent of financial support for mine clearance since 1993, but that no additional national resources were required to complete the Northern Border Project. Jordan has informed the analysing group that it will provide some in-kind contributions to clearance operations. The analysing group noted that no budgetary estimates had been provided for remaining activities other than the Northern Border Project – being spot-demining, verification, desk studies and quality control for areas other than the northern border.
13. The request indicates that, while great progress has been made in Jordan, the human impact of mines is still dire in areas slated for clearance. At least 33 water wells are inaccessible because of the presence of mines with this affecting almost 7,000 people. In addition, the expansion of agriculture that could result from the completion of implementation could result in a 25 percent increase in incomes and that post-clearance investment was calculated to be US\$15 million. The analysing group noted that expected levels of investment exceed the estimated costs of implementation during the extension period.
14. The request includes other relevant information that may be of use to the States Parties in assessing and considering the request including a variety of tables illustrating the timeline for implementation, demining capacities and the status of minefield records.
15. The analysing group noted that the plan presented is workable and fully funded, although complete implementation was contingent upon resolving border demarcation issues with Syria. Jordan has made a significant effort to overcome many of the circumstances impeding implementation. The analysing group noted that additional clarity could result from providing more detail on spot-demining, areas pending verification, areas subject to desk studies and areas awaiting quality control.
16. The analysing group noted that the accounting of annual milestones of progress to be achieved would greatly assist both Jordan and all States Parties in assessing progress in implementation during the extension period. In this regard, the analyzing group further noted that both could benefit if Jordan provided updates relative to this accounting of areas at meetings of the Standing Committees, at the Second Review Conference and at Meetings of the States Parties.