

**ICRC statement on Turkey's Extension Request,  
13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention  
Geneva, 2 December 2013**

The International Committee of the Red Cross would like to commend Turkey for submitting a comprehensive and well-articulated extension request. The ICRC supports Turkey's request for an 8-year extension until 1 March 2022, but subject to the security situation on the Syrian border, strongly hopes that clearance operations may actually take less time than predicted, given that Turkey possesses precise information about its mined areas that will greatly facilitate clearance efforts.

The ICRC would like to reiterate its concern that the pace of clearance in Turkey has been unduly slow, with only 1.15km<sup>2</sup> being cleared over the past 9 years. We trust that the extension request will reenergise Turkey's undertaking to fulfil its article 5 obligations "as soon as possible," and note with appreciation Turkey's commitment to now move forward in a consistent, transparent and speedy manner.

Turkey's extension request refers to mined areas on the Syrian border, its Eastern borders and "areas other than borders", as well as additional "suspected mined areas" identified on the basis of recorded accidents. Regarding the mined areas on the Syrian border, the ICRC notes Turkey's report today that the tender process has been cancelled. We trust that until the security situation allows clearance of the Syrian border to proceed, Turkey will expeditiously apply its resources to dealing with other mined areas.

In relation to the mined areas on Turkey's Eastern borders, we urge both Turkey and the European Union to make all efforts to ensure that clearance begins as planned. We look forward to an update from Turkey at the Third Review Conference on the tender process for these borders, including a detailed work plan with annual milestones, against which Turkey should report in subsequent years. Turkey should also keep the States Parties informed of funding strategies for the third phase of the clearance programme for the Eastern borders, for which funding has not yet been secured.

Concerning the 704 "areas other than borders," which we understand are primarily around military installations, we find the estimated timeframe of 8 years for clearance of these areas excessively long. Given the commitment of the Turkish Armed Forces to provide funding for demining personnel and equipment, the ICRC believes that clearance of these areas in accordance with humanitarian standards could be completed by military deminers in as little as two years, unless some of these 704 areas are inaccessible for security reasons.

In relation to the 356 "suspected" mined areas indicated in the extension request, we strongly recommend that survey of these areas be factored into an updated work plan, to be submitted by 1 March 2015. We also recommend that the States Parties ask for another revised work plan to be submitted by 1 March 2018, taking into account progress in all areas to that date.

Finally, we support the recommendation of the Analysing Group that Turkey should prioritise areas that will most benefit the local population and limit civilian casualties. We also urge Turkey to share information on any risk education programmes, which will reduce the potential impact of mined areas on the population pending clearance.

In sum, the ICRC regrets that the remaining land to be addressed in Turkey is still substantial, almost 9 years after entry into force. Turkey has expressed a commitment to completing its Article 5 obligations and has taken steps towards starting clearance. We hope that during the extension period Turkey will do its utmost to accelerate the tender processes, overcome delays in establishing the NMAA and NMAC, and greatly improve its rate of clearance, including by using military deminers trained in humanitarian demining standards.