
**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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Consideration of requests submitted under Article 5

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

**Submitted by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation
(Chile, Costa Rica, Switzerland and Zambia)**

1. Iraq acceded to the Convention on 15 August 2007, and the Convention entered into force for Iraq on 1 February 2008. On 31 July 2008, Iraq submitted its initial transparency report which indicated that there were areas under Iraq's jurisdiction or control in which anti-personnel mines are known or suspected to be emplaced. Iraq was obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines under its jurisdiction or control by 1 February 2018. Iraq, believing that it would be unable to do so by that date, submitted on 5 April 2017 to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation (the Committee) a request for an extension of its deadline. On 30 June 2017, the Committee wrote to Iraq requesting additional information and clarity on key areas of the request. Iraq provided a revised extension request on 28 August 2017. Iraq's request is for 10 years, until 1 February 2028.
2. The request indicates that a number of conflicts led to Iraq being heavily contaminated by anti-personnel mines. The request indicates that since 1992 a number of surveys have taken place to quantify the mine contamination in Iraq including a 1992 to 2003 General Survey, a 2004-2006 First Stage Landmine Impact Survey (LIS), and a 2007-2009 Second Stage Landmine Impact Survey. The request indicates that since the LIS, 178 new "hazards" covering 771,078,940 square metres were recorded. The request further indicated that given the inaccuracy of these previous surveys, the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Authority (IKMAA) and the Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) carried out several efforts to gain clarity on the challenge.
3. The request indicates that following the LIS the IKMAA conducted numerous higher accuracy surveys under the label of Preliminary Technical Survey (PTS) to verify dangerous areas and reduce suspected contaminated areas in the Governorates of Erbil, Duhok and Slemani resulting in a total of 433'600'000 square metres having been cancelled and a total of 183,700,000 square metres having been identified as confirmed hazardous areas (CHA).
4. The request indicates that following the LIS and since 2010 the DMA has carried out non-technical survey and emergency survey to gain clarity on contamination focusing on updating the database of hazard areas resulting in 6,276,796,205 square metres having been cancelled by non-technical survey and 2,875,422,859 square metres being identified

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as contaminated in 14 Governorates. The request indicates that these figures include contaminated areas consisting of anti-personnel mines, explosive remnants of war (ERW) and cluster munitions. The request also indicates that since June 2014, ISIS (Daesh) terrorist group's invasion and occupation of areas in Iraq have resulted in the contamination of large areas of the country and that the current conflict against ISIS is a fluid situation and will undoubtedly contribute further to the contaminated area which will require technical and non-technical survey to locate the type and size of contamination and to develop a plan to remove this contamination. The Committee noted the importance of Iraq putting plans in place to carry out non-technical survey of these areas and plans to address these areas.

5. The request indicates that throughout the 18 provinces a total of 1,466,306,865 square metres have been addressed, with 914,948,693 square metres cancelled and 551,358,173 square metres cleared resulting in the destruction of 124,072 anti-personnel mines, 2,722 anti-tank mines, 37,491 cluster munitions and 480,510 explosive remnants of war. The Committee noted with satisfaction that Iraq is making use of the full range of practical methods to release, with a high level of confidence, areas suspected of containing anti-personnel mines, in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). The Committee encourages Iraq to continue seeking improved land release techniques which could lead to Iraq fulfilling its obligations in a shorter time frame. In this regard, the Committee noted the importance of Iraq reporting on its progress in a manner consistent with IMAS by providing information disaggregated by release through clearance, technical survey and non-technical survey.

6. The request indicates that there remains an estimated area of 25 square kilometres in border areas where it is currently impossible to conduct PTS or any other demining activity, due to security and political reasons with these areas excluded from any action plans until these areas become accessible again to mine action teams. The request also indicates other areas in which PTS could not be carried out due to security. The request further indicates that the remaining area in which PTS could take place is in the Slemani Governorate and Garmian Administration in an area of 25 square kilometres and that the PTS was scheduled to be completed by mid-2017. The request also includes information on some of the difficulties encountered in carrying out the PTS. The Committee noted the importance of Iraq keeping the States Parties apprised of changes in the security and political situation on the border of Iran, as well as in other areas, which would enable survey and clearance activities to take place. The Committee also noted the importance of receiving updated information regarding PTS activities.

7. The request indicates that Iraq had reported that in addition to anti-personnel mines, anti-tank (AT) mines and ERW also pose extreme risk to the civilian population and block development activities. Further to the clearance of areas contaminated by anti-personnel mines, the clearance of AT mines and ERW contaminated areas form part of the overall mine action programme. The Committee noted the significant effort Iraq has undertaken in order to build a work plan for addressing its remaining Article 5 challenge. Iraq also reported areas contaminated by abandoned improvised explosive devices (IED) as anti-personnel hazard areas and therefore counted these as part of the remaining Article 5 challenge.

8. The request indicates the following factors that have acted as impeding circumstances during Iraq's original ten-year period following accession to the Convention:

- Insufficient funding;
- Human resources;
- Security situation and conflict with ISIS;
- New minefields;
- Climate and topography;
- Outdated mine clearance technology;
- Random minefields;
- Lack of information on minefields;

- Lack of international support to Iraq;
- Lack of international organisations working in Iraq;
- The setback of financial situation of the country; and
- A lack of expertise.

9. The request indicates that as of December 2016 Iraq's remaining challenge consists of 3,554 known or suspect hazardous areas measuring 1,195,565,732 square metres as follows:

Contamination by Region per province

Region	Governorate	Hazard Type	Area size (Square metres)	No of Hazards
IKMAA	Duhok	CHA	19,108,042	400
	Erbil	CHA	48,091,213	337
	Slemani	CHA	84,721,837	1,887
		SHA	71,245,685	498
	<i>Total</i>		223,166,777	3,122
RMAC-M EU	Babylon	SHA	1,301,600	10
	Kerbala	SHA	5,627,900	20
	Wassit	CHA	39,646,306	31
	<i>Total</i>		46,575,806	61
RMAC-N	Diyala	CHA		1
		SHA	29,438,137	84
	Ninewa	SHA	137,500	7
	Salah al-Din	SHA	123,196,029	35
	<i>Total</i>		152,771,666	127
RMAC-S	Basrah	CHA	689,303,917	41
		SHA	962,731	1
	Missan	CHA	44,839,415	198
		SHA		1
	Muthanna	CHA	37,845,692	2
	Thi-Qar	SHA	99,728	1
	<i>Total</i>		773,051,483	244
Grand Total			1,195,565,732	3,554

10. The request indicates that the remaining mined areas in Iraq have both an economic and social impact on local communities. The request indicates that anti-personnel mines have been killing and injuring civilians in Iraq since 1961 and that since the 1970s there have been a total of 36,081 casualties. The request also indicates that the presence of anti-personnel mines has also resulted in humanitarian and economic implications on the Iraqi population, including: internal displacement, denial of access to agricultural land and water sources. The request shows that anti-personnel mines obstruct 808,400,012 square metres of agricultural areas directly impacting 1.6 million people, 672,606,189 square metres of infrastructure land, 679,650,043 square metres of water sources, and 328,453,132 square metres of roads. The Committee noted that completion of Article 5 implementation during the requested extension period had the potential of making a significant contribution to improving human safety and socio-economic conditions in Iraq. The Committee further noted that Iraq had provided in its request data on mine victims disaggregated by age and sex in keeping with best practices and commitments made by the States Parties.

11. As noted, Iraq's request is for 10 years until 1 February 2028. The request indicates that the amount of time requested is based on the extent of the remaining contamination. The request indicates that there are three key factors that can impact on this timeframe: (a) the survey and identification of more hazardous areas; (b) changes in funding levels; and (c) changes in the current security situation. The Committee noted the importance of Iraq having identified the key variables that could affect the implementation of the plan contained in the request and of regularly reporting on their evolution to the States Parties.

12. The request indicated that the detailed work plan was prepared by a committee consisting of representatives of IKMAA and DMA supported by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the Information Management and Mine Action Programme (iMMAP). The request indicates that due to the complex nature of contamination in Iraq it is not possible to consider the remaining challenge posed by anti-personnel mines in isolation from AT mines and ERW contamination. The request indicates that in order to address this challenge, every 'hazard' (i.e. every anti-personnel minefield, anti-tank minefield, or battlefield area) has been classified in terms of its impact on the community, using a set of impact indicators per region, which is then used to prioritise clearance. Furthermore, in preparation of annual plans, field assessments are carried out to cross check that the priority of their proposed hazards is indeed the priority on the ground. The Committee noted the commitment of Iraq to review the work plan on a continuous basis. The Committee further noted that Iraq and the States Parties as a whole would benefit if Iraq could inform the States Parties of changes to the work plan. The Committee noted both the inclusive approach taken by Iraq in the preparation of its request and the commitment by Iraq to continue this inclusive approach in implementing and revising, as necessary, the plan contained in the extension request.

13. The request indicates that of the remaining challenge, 699 mined areas measuring 723,275,332 square metres are considered high impact, 2,687 mined areas measuring 400,258,495 square metres are considered medium impact and 168 mined areas measuring 72,031,905 square metres are considered low impact. The Committee welcomes Iraq's development and use of a prioritisation matrix to ensure reduction of impact resulting from all types of contamination in the most efficient manner and time possible.

14. The request contains information on the needed capacity for Iraq to achieve completion in ten years which highlighted several gaps in capacity. The Committee noted that the necessary capacity indicated by Iraq to address remaining contamination was significantly less than the capacity available.

15. The request contains two-year work plans for IKMAA and DMA which were devised based on the current levels of explosive hazard contamination, the mine clearance capabilities and capacity available. The request indicates how much area in which Governorates will be addressed in 2018 and 2019 as well as the costs as follows:

- In 2018 and 2019, on an annual basis, IKMAA will seek to address an estimated 3,105,000 square metres in the Governorates of Dohuk, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah employing manual, mechanical and mine detection dog means as well as technical survey at an estimated annual cost of US\$ 24,780,000.
- In 2018 and 2019, on an annual basis, DMA will seek to address an estimated 31,530,000 square metres in the Governorates of Basrah, Missan and Wassit employing manual and mechanical means as well as technical survey at an estimated annual cost of US\$30,577,500.

16. The request includes information on the manner in which the costs for operations were calculated. The request indicates a greater cost for IKMAA given their inclusion of administrative costs as well as the increased costs for mechanical excavation. The Committee noted that it would be useful if Iraq could further break down the costs of operation to offer more clarity on the reasons for the significant difference in costs of implementation.

17. The request indicates that the DMA, through its centres in the North and Middle Euphrates, will continue non-traditional security (NTS) operations in the governorates under its responsibility until the security situation stabilises and the economic situation of

the country improves. The request indicates that the DMA will prepare a plan for these operations in the future in addition to the already prepared plans for the NTS of the area liberated from ISIS groups. The request further indicates that currently emergency surveys are ongoing to expedite the return of internally displaced persons after making sure their houses are free of explosive hazards.

18. The Committee noted that prior surveys may have grossly overestimated the actual amount of area that would need to be addressed by clearance. In this context, the Committee noted that Iraq should ensure as soon as possible that the most relevant land-release standards, policies and methodologies, in line with IMAS, are in place and applied for the full and expedient implementation of this aspect of the Convention in line with the commitments the States Parties made through the adoption of the Maputo Action Plan. The Committee further noted the importance of Iraq continuing to report on its progress in a manner consistent with IMAS by providing information disaggregated by cancellation through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey and cleared.

19. The request indicates that, in order to define the remaining contamination more accurately, non-technical and technical survey will need to take place. The request also indicates that assumptions have been developed for area reduction. Based on previous surveys in the Regional Mine Action Center-South in Basra (RMAC-S), it is estimated that as much as 60 percent of confirmed hazardous areas bigger than 30 square kilometres will be reduced through technical survey. The request indicates that Iraq expects that the remaining 1,195,565,732 square metres will be reduced to 774,034,520 square metres.

20. The request contains a ten-year work plan for IKMAA and DMA to be updated after the two year plan has been implemented. The request contains a number of issues which should be taken into consideration during the implementation of the plan including:

(a) The action plan does not include the battle area and areas contaminated with explosive bombs and cluster munitions;

(b) The action plan does not include areas restricted due to security and political situation;

(c) The action plan depends on continued support of Iraq's implementation partners (organisations and companies) with the current available capacities and capabilities assuming the required financial resources are available to execute the plan;

(d) Productivity will be increased if additional funding becomes available;

(e) The productivity figures specified in the ten-year plan, based on the current capacities and capabilities of the National Mine Action Programme, will not reach more than 15 percent of the total contaminated areas in Iraq;

(f) It is anticipated that there will be an increase in the contaminated area as new suspected hazardous areas are integrated in the database.

21. The Committee noted with concern that, with the current capacity and capabilities, the request indicates that completing within a ten-year deadline is not feasible. In light of this concern, the Committee noted the importance of Iraq ensuring that it mobilises sufficient resources from the government as well as from external sources to support completion within the requested extension period.

22. The request indicates that Iraq projects that it will require US\$ 247,800,000 for IKMAA to implement the work plans within the request, and US\$ 238,575,000 for DMA, respectively. The request indicates that the action plan is partially funded by the government budgets but that it is not adequate for the fulfilment of the extension request mainly due to the extent of contamination. The Committee noted that, given the importance of external support to ensure timely implementation, Iraq could benefit from developing a resource mobilisation strategy, in part by providing additional clarity regarding estimated costs for implementation. The Committee further noted that given the importance of external support to ensure timely implementation, Iraq could benefit from clarifying the costs that Iraq's State budget would cover as part of the overall costs of implementation.

23. The request includes other relevant information that may be of use to States Parties in assessing and considering the request, including a detailed assessment of the remaining mined areas, their characteristics, terrain, and impacts, together with maps that provide greater clarity on the nature and extent of contamination. The request also includes an outline of national laws, institutional structures, operational responsibilities, as well as an overview of those methods used to identify areas affected by anti-personnel mines.

24. In recalling that Iraq had indicated that it was in the process of preparing a plan for NTS operations in addition to the already prepared plans for the NTS of the area liberated from ISIS as well as the fact that Iraq indicates that there are currently emergency surveys ongoing the Committee noted that the Convention could benefit from Iraq submitting to the States Parties, by 30 April 2018, plans for NTS in the different areas of the country including NTS plans for areas liberated from ISIS.

25. Recalling that the implementation of Iraq's national demining plan will be affected by new information, the level of resources obtained, changes in the security environment, and the amount of external or internal capacity involved in survey and clearance operations, and welcoming that Iraq has provided a detailed work plan in its request up until the end of 2019, the Committee noted that the Convention could benefit from Iraq submitting to the Fourth Review Conference in 2019 an updated detailed work plan for the remaining period covered by the extension. The Committee noted that this work plan should contain an updated list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, annual projections of which areas would be dealt with by which organisations during the remaining period covered by the request and a detailed updated budget. The Committee further noted that, given the changing circumstance in Iraq, the Convention would benefit from Iraq submitting updated work plans to the Committee every two years.

26. The Committee noted that the plan is ambitious, and that success is contingent upon increased funding, the maintenance of security, and changes in the political climate to enable access to those hazardous areas near international borders. In this regard, the Committee noted that the States Parties would benefit from Iraq reporting annually, by 30 April, to the States Parties on the following:

(a) Progress made relative to the commitments contained in Iraq's two-year work plan during the extension period;

(b) Efforts by the DMA to prepare a plan for NTS operations and milestones to be achieved as well as the milestones to be achieved in the plans that the request indicates have been prepared for NTS of the areas liberated from ISIS groups;

(c) Geographically specific information on the implementation of survey plans, locations and the results of these efforts and how additional clarity obtained may change Iraq's understanding of the remaining implementation challenge;

(d) Changes in the security situation and how these changes positively or negatively affect implementation;

(e) Efforts to resolve political issues which prevent the carrying out of mine action activities in border areas of Iraq;

(f) Resource mobilisation efforts and external financing received and resources made available by the government of Iraq to support implementation efforts, including through efforts to facilitate operations of international demining organisations and expanding of indigenous capacities, and the results of these efforts.

27. The Committee noted the importance, in addition to Iraq reporting to the States Parties as noted above, of keeping the States Parties regularly apprised of other pertinent developments regarding its implementation of Article 5 during the period covered by the request and other commitments made in the request at intersessional meetings, Meeting of the States Parties and Review Conferences as well as through Article 7 reports using the Guide for Reporting.