



Statement by Turkey on Article 5 Implementation

17th MEETING OF STATE PARTIES TO THE ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION Geneva, 26-30 November 2018

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you Madam President,

Please let me also thank the Committee on Article 5 Implementation for the report presented.

Madam President,

In order to save time, I will read short version of my intervention, the long version will be provided to be uploaded on the web site.

I would like to reiterate that Turkey is determined to fulfil its Article V commitments.

In this regard, mine clearance operations and mine action activities have intensified and clearance output has increased significantly. Establishment of new demining companies have been approved by the Ministry of National Defence. The MoD has granted licenced new/additional demining companies. The new teams will be operational by the end of this year. National Mine Action Centre (TURMAC) reports directly to the Undersecretary of the Ministry of National Defence.

National Mine Action Standards including land release policy have been prepared and sent to the National Standards Institute of Turkey on April 2017. The approval process is currently being undertaken. The standards are expected to be issued before the end of 2018 after a protocol is made with the National Standards Institute of Turkey.

The first-ever National Strategic Mine Action Plan for 2019-2021 was drafted and is expected to be approved and published in the Official Gazette in this year. The three-year plan covers national capacity development, survey and clearance of mined areas and areas containing unexploded ordnance within the borders of the Republic of Turkey, provision of mine risk education and assistance to mine victims.

In accordance with the findings of the UNDP and GICHD in October 2017 to assess needs related to capacity, and with the assistance of UNDP, Turkey made significant progress in capacity development.

Structural changes have taken place at TURMAC and the Centre has been strengthened with additional personnel. Development of standard operating procedures and other organizational arrangements are still underway.

The Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) system has been established and will be fully operational soon. Significant amount of personnel both from TURMAC and military demining troops have been trained. In addition to military demining troops, IMSMA will also be used in the second phase of Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project (EBMCP).

TURMAC organized various trainings to improve individual capacity of not only its own personnel, but also personnel of other related organisations in Turkey. Close cooperation was maintained with organisations such as UNDP and GICHD.

TURMAC Personnel was given ISO 9001: 2015 Quality Management System trainings as well as Quality Management in Mine Action Training from GICHD in 2017. The quality management of military demining troops will be conducted by TURMAC personnel.

Military demining troops have been accredited for their manual demining capacity in 2017. The procurement of equipment including demining equipment for the five new companies are underway and will be finalized soon. Three of those teams are planned to be operational by the end of 2018 and rest in 2019.

Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project is funded by the EU, Turkey and the UN; managed and overseen by the UNDP and implemented through commercial contracts with Denel MECHEM and RPS Engineering Company. Phase I of the project has been completed with a total output of more than three millions square meters (3.296.240 m²) released land and over twenty five thousand (25.667) mines destroyed (2016 and 2017). More than six hundred thousand square meters (637.685 m²) of cleared land, more than seventy five thousand square meters (75.445 m²) of reduced land and over two and a half millions square meters (2.583.110 m²) of cancelled land indicates that an efficient land release policy was implemented. The same land release policy will be applied for phase 2.

In the context of Phase-2, clearance activities started on 20 June 2018 by five Clearance Teams of MECHEM Company. From August 2018 onwards, with participation of five additional teams, the total capacity has been increased to eleven mine clearance teams. In order to catch up the target of clearing 1.2 million m² of land, works are going on to extend the Project to 2019.

Along the southern borders, in Hatay province (Reyhanlı and Kırıkhan) and Kilis (Elbeyli) Special Mine Detection and Clearance Teams of the Turkish Defence Ministry have been conducting humanitarian demining activities.

In Afyon and Muş provinces, clearance activities of unexploded ordnance have been conducted. The cleared areas will be referred in the next Article VII report.

Gendarmerie Special Mine Detection and Clearance Teams of the Ministry of Interior have cleared over fifty nine thousand square meters (59.195 m²) of land which accounts for approximately 1 million square meters of suspected hazardous area in Iğdır and Doğubeyazıt provinces. They have been proceeding humanitarian mine clearance activities in the territory of Doğubeyazıt.

Additionally the land will be released in this year after verification. Additional minefields which accounts for more than six hundred thousand square meters (603.710 m²) of contaminated area will also be released. During these operations, IMSMA has been used and quality control is assured.

To enable safe construction of the Border Security Surveillance System which covers 730 km along the Syrian Border in 2017, military demining teams were also deployed.

Four demining teams conducted demining operations in Karkamış and Elbeyli regions on Syrian Border. During these operations, approximately two hundred fifty thousand square meter (250.000 m²) land was cleared (64 mines found/destroyed) and delivered to relevant authorities to be used as customs areas.

Non-technical Survey has been conducted in Hatay Region. It was found out that the areas registered as suspected had been used as agricultural land for many decades and the area has been mine free. Consequently, approximately five million square meters of land has been cancelled.

On survey and Demining Operations in Non-border Areas, Non-technical survey has been conducted at the previously used military range (2.513.000 m²) in Eskişehir province, where the Trans-Anatolia Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) project will be built. The area has been determined as safe and delivered to the relevant authorities.

Due to ongoing capacity development efforts and priority for wall and customs area construction, survey could be conducted only in the minefields to be cleared along the Syrian Border. Non-technical survey for non-border areas is planned for a later stage.

Consultation on a protocol with the Ministry of Education to provide mine risk education in territories where mine risk exists is undergoing. The education will take into consideration age, gender and other relevant classifications.

Madam President,

I would like to reiterate that Turkey is taking its commitment to the convention very seriously and we will continue to share information on the progress regarding implementation of all aspects of the convention.

Taking this opportunity, I would also like to inform this august body that Turkey decided to decrease the amount of the mines retained for training purposes. In this regard, while the amount was 14.902 as stated in Article 7 Report in 2015, in accordance with the plan in 2016 and 2017 totally 5.159 mines were destroyed and as reported this year the current number is 9.303. It is also our intention to decrease the number further as appropriate.

I thank you Madam President.