

ICBL comments on the Extension Request of South Sudan

18MSP MBT, 16-20 November 2020

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

We would like to thank South Sudan for its exemplary request with clear explanation and detailed plans.

This is South Sudan's first request for extending its clearance deadline. We hope it will be its last one. South Sudan is asking for time beyond 2025 - till July 2026 – but intends to clear all contamination including landmines, anti-vehicle mines, cluster munitions and other ERW.

Among positive points we note the following:

- South Sudan has a clear picture of the remaining contamination.
- The workplan is clear and outlines the requirements for completion of clearance in each contaminated region. It presents capacity and projections based on proven clearance rates.
- A Mine Action Strategy 2019-2023 is in place and the national mine action standards are in line with IMAS.
- A risk education workplan and gender strategy are included.

The points that require further attention include:

- The plan requires an increase in funding. Currently more than 80% of funding for clearance is coming from UNMISS, although these funds may be redirected to other priorities. It is crucial to have alternative funding options to ensure South Sudan will be able to implement the plan. In this regard, we were pleased to hear that South Sudan, UNMAS, and the Chair of the Mine Action Support Group, are in the process of developing a resource mobilization strategy to further support the mine action programme.
- It would be pertinent for the government to consider providing funding for clearance and risk awareness operations, in addition to funds for the Mine Action Authority.
- Lastly, it is important for South Sudan to develop sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas following completion.

In closing, we would like to call on all states, as well as UNMISS and UNMAS, to continue their support for South Sudan (both technically & financially) in fast-tracking its clearance.

We would also like to take this opportunity to call on South Sudan to accede to the sister Convention on Cluster Munitions and to make every possible effort to become mine-free by 2025.

Thank you.