

**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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Item 11 of the provisional agenda

Consideration of requests submitted under Article 5

**Request for an extension of the deadline for
completing the destruction of Anti-personnel
Mines in accordance with Article 5 of the
Convention**

Executive Summary**Submitted by Bosnia and Herzegovina**

1. The challenge in the implementation of Article 5 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina dates back to the period 1992-1995. From 1992 to 1995 warring factions in Bosnia and Herzegovina laid a huge number of minefields throughout the country. All warring factions in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Army of B&H, Army of Republic of Srpska, Croatian Defence Council) laid minefields, primarily between confrontation lines, in order to prevent or slow down the movement of military units of one faction into the area controlled by another faction. Minefields were also laid in front of strategic points of all warring factions and military facilities. Geographically speaking, minefields were laid throughout the country, from Herzegovina to the south and south/west, over the mountains, canyons, and gorges of Central Bosnia to the flat areas to the north of the country. Minefields are present on the ground in all types of vegetation typical for Bosnia and Herzegovina (high grass and forest) and all types of ground (stone, karst).

2. The Mine Action Programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina was established in 1996, through the establishment of United Nations Mine Action Centre (UNMAC) and with the aim of establishing a local structure and capacity for mine action. Entity centres for mine action (Mine Action Centre Republika Srpska (MAC RS) and Federation Mine Action Centre (FED MAC)), along with the coordination centre on the state level Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BHMIC) were established in 1998. With the passing of the Demining Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2002, the existing mine action structure was transformed. The central body of the State is represented by the Demining Commission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, operating within the Ministry of Civil Affairs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The expert Commission's body for demining in Bosnia and Herzegovina – the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BHMIC) - was established by the Decision of the Council of Ministers and based on the Demining Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

3. On 26 March 2008, Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted a request to extend its 1 March 2009 mine clearance deadline. The request was granted at the Ninth Meeting of the States Parties and a new deadline set for 1 March 2019. After nine (9) years of implementation



Bosnia and Herzegovina was not able to fulfil obligations in accordance with the previous request. The circumstances that have prevented Bosnia and Herzegovina from meeting its initial deadline of 1 March 2019 were related to the following:

- Lack of financial means;
- The size of mine problem in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Non-functional minefield records available;
- Prevailing climate conditions.

4. On September 2018, Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted an Interim Request for Extension of its deadline for fulfilling its obligations as per Article 5, Para 1 of the Convention. At the time when the Interim Request was submitted the total remaining contamination in Bosnia and Herzegovina included 8,967 Suspected Hazardous Areas (SHA) measuring 1,056,574,142 square metres and 935 (Confirmed Hazardous Areas) measuring 23,846,939 square metres.

5. In accordance with Article 5, Para 1, Bosnia and Herzegovina requested a two-year extension from 1 March 2019 to 1 March 2021 to carry out survey and clearance activities to better define the precise perimeter of mined areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Following the better definition of the remaining challenge, Bosnia and Herzegovina is now in a better position to highlight the exact amount of time required to implement its obligations under Article 5.

6. During the requested time period three main projects/activities were carried out:

- Country assessment of SHAs in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Mine Action Governance and Management Project;
- Land release operations: survey and clearance operations;

7. During the period from 2 July 2018 to 14 May 2020, the Mine Action Centre of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Armed Forces of B&H and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) conducted a project entitled "Country assessment of SHAs in Bosnia and Herzegovina". In the implementation of the project, with the support of authorities of local communities, the initial step was to establish Mine Suspected Areas (MSAs) or geographical areas which brought together a number of areas into one "area of operation" to be subsequently subjected to the land release process (Non-technical Survey (NTS), Technical Survey (TS) and clearance). Activities of the project were directed towards the fulfilment of two specific objectives:

- Reassessing the suspected area in accordance with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and with a developed approach to land release in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Defining the indicators for the implementation of the new mine action strategy in Bosnia and Herzegovina and developing a mid-term action plan for land release.

8. The result of this project included the creation of 488 MSAs (+10 MSAs in progress) for further operations and led to the cancellation of approximately 966,686,086 square metres.

9. Concerning the Mine Action Governance and Management Project - The Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BHMAL), with UNDP support, have achieved the following results:

- Re-establishment of the Board of donors in B&H;
- The new National Mine Action Strategy 2018-2025, developed in partnership with stakeholders with the support of the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), developed and accepted by the Council of ministers of B&H;
- Development and design of the public awareness campaign (mobile application) to be published in the near future and available for all interested parties;

- Development and design of the new web orientated information management (database) system for BHMACH, to replace the existing system and increase accessibility and transparency of mine action data. European Union ICSP Programme (Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace) financed this activity and the national mine action authorities (Demining commission and BHMACH) agreed to accept the information management system for mine action developed by the GICHD (IMSMA Core) and adjusted for the needs of BHMACH;
- Two chapters of Standard operating procedures, chapter for non-technical survey and chapter for standard operational procedures for opening and follow-up of the tasks, were adopted by the Demining Commission of B&H in March 2018.

10. Land release operations: survey and clearance operations are continuing in line with the annual priorities presented by municipal authorities as well as in line with the financing available for implementation. As per the National Demining Law, these plans are developed on an annual basis.

11. During the period of the Interim Request, some challenges persisted, and some new challenges manifested themselves:

- A delay in demining: the term of office of the Demining Commission in B&H expired in October 2109;
- Lack of financial means;
- Prevailing climate conditions;
- COVID-19 pandemic.

12. According to the Oslo Action Plan, mine risk education in the period 2020-2027 will be implemented through public information, education of affected population groups and through linking mine action with affected communities. Mine risk education will focus on the entire territory of B&H, primarily its conduct in rural communities ranked low on the priority list for other mine action efforts, where they might present threats for local population for a long period of time. This implies communities that will be technically surveyed and cleared only after 2023.

13. In the period from 2009 to 2019, 128 mine/explosive remnants of war (ERW) victims were registered in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Out of the total, males constitute 95% and females 5%. Additionally, out of the total, adults constitute 88%, and children 12%. More than 80% percent of victims from this period occurred in areas qualified as 3rd category.

14. At their 143rd Session held on May 23rd, 2018, the Council of Ministers has issued the Decision on the Establishing of Coordinating Body for mine/cluster munition/ERW victims.

15. Elimination of the risk caused by anti-personnel mines for the population in affected communities and for the social and economic development of Bosnia and Herzegovina is resolved through an integrated approach to mine action. Mine suspected areas (MSA)¹ are defined and subjected to Non-Technical Survey, Technical Survey and clearance with priorities being set in accordance with the needs of local communities and municipalities/cities in order to eliminate the threat to the population. These needs are assessed through integration of mine risk education activities with wider humanitarian, development, protection and education efforts, as well as with ongoing survey, clearance and victim assistance activities to reduce the risk to the affected population and decrease their need for risk-taking. (Oslo Action Plan: Action 28).

¹ An area made up of SHAs and CHAs which encompasses one or more impacted communities and due to economic, cultural, geographical, and other reasons, is selected as a logical unit. The MSA is selected by BHMACH in close cooperation with the municipal authorities. These areas are then treated comprehensively through the land release procedure. MSA represents an organizational task for a demining organisation.

16. In accordance with the Demining Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina, funds for the conduct of mine action in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be ensured via donors' sources, budgets of Bosnia and Herzegovina institutions, entity budgets and other sources. In order to fulfil the obligations under Article 5 of the Convention in requested timeframe (six years) from 1 March 2021 to 1 March 2027, the funds totaling 336,2 million Bosnian Mark (BAM) are necessary. The budget for the operational plan for 2020-2027 was prepared based on a realistic expectation of funding for mine action.

17. The country assessment of SHAs in Bosnia and Herzegovina provided an insight into the scope of contamination and the size of the mine problem. Further efforts will continue to analyse the evidence and areas will be prepared for technical survey and clearance.
