
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 12 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 Guinea-Bissau

Guinea-Bissau ratified the Convention on 22 May 2001, and the Convention entered into force for Guinea-Bissau on 1 November 2001.

In its initial Article 7 report, Guinea-Bissau reported areas under their jurisdiction or control in which anti-personnel mines were known or suspected to be emplaced. As Guinea-Bissau has reported, the landmine problem in Guinea-Bissau dated as far back as the 1963–1974 liberation war with additional landmines and explosive remnants of war laid during the 1998–1999 Civil War and the March 2006 Casamance conflict. In accordance with Article 5 of the Convention, Guinea-Bissau undertook to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in these areas as soon as possible but not later than the ten-year deadline of 1 November 2011.

As a response to this problem, the government of Guinea-Bissau established a National Humanitarian Mine Action Programme (PAAMI) and the National Mine Action Coordination Centre (CAAMI) in early 2001. CAAMI's role includes planning and coordinating all mine action, mobilize resources for the implementation of the national mine action programme, and overseeing the conduct of mine-related activities on behalf of the Government of Guinea-Bissau.

Due to a number of circumstances, including lack of financial resources, clearance capacity, climate and an unclear definition of the problem, Guinea-Bissau was not able to complete its Article 5 deadline by 1 November 2011, and on 8 September 2010, submitted a request to extend its deadline. The request was granted by the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties (10MSP) and a new deadline set for 1 January 2012.

On 5 December 2012, Guinea-Bissau reported to the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties (12MSP) that it had fulfilled its obligation under Article 5 of the Convention ahead of its 1 January 2012 deadline. As a result of efforts undertaken since, Guinea-Bissau submitted its transparency report and declared that it had fulfilled its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention by having determined that there are no longer areas under its jurisdiction or control in which anti-personnel mines are known or suspected to be emplaced. Upon declaring completion, 50 mined areas representing a total of 6,524,533.09 square metres had been released through survey and clearance culminating in the destruction of 3,973 anti-personnel mines, 207 anti-tank mines, and 309,125 items of unexploded ordnance (UXO).



Unfortunately, after the declaration in 2012, the country continued to register victims of explosive devices and mines with more than 40 people, mostly children and women, with little assistance being provided due to a lack of adequate means. Currently, CAAMI has little additional funding to support survivors and carry out necessary survey of reported hazardous areas in Buruntuma.

On 28 January 2021, an explosion was reported in a Buruntuma, Setor de Pitche, in the Gabú region. During a mission to investigate the explosion, further primary accounts of explosions and six injuries and two deaths from explosive ordnance was reported by the local population.

According to a survey done by HUMAID, a national non-governmental organization (NGO), a total of nine Confirmed Hazardous Areas were discovered measuring 1,093,840 square metres. Additionally, a further 43 areas are suspected of containing anti-personnel mines and require further survey. These areas were identified by HUMAID through population reports. These areas are suspected to be contaminated by anti-personnel mines, unexploded ordnance, and explosive remnants of war.

In keeping with the suggested proposed rationale response to situations where States Parties discover previously unknown mined areas after deadlines have passed, Guinea-Bissau informed all States Parties of the discovery of these suspected hazardous areas and submitted a request for an extended deadline for consideration by the Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties until 31 December 2022.

This time will allow Guinea-Bissau to mobilize national and international support to carry out the necessary survey activities to gather and assess data on contamination and other relevant information and submit a subsequent request containing a meaningful forward-looking plan based on a clearer understanding of the extent of the challenge and greater certainty of the amount of time that will be required to complete Article 5 implementation. Guinea-Bissau will submit a subsequent request for extension by 31 March 2022. This is in keeping with the understandings of the States Parties as presented at the 12MSP.

Guinea-Bissau will keep the States Parties informed of progress in this regard at every opportunity, including in its Article 7 Report and during informal and formal meetings of the Convention.

At present CAAMI faces several challenges, in particular a lack of financial resources to carry out its mandate. CAAMI currently does not have funding to carry out mine risk education activities or further survey and clearance activities. The lack of resources also affects other key areas of the CAAMI such as the national database which is completely paralysed and has not worked for the past seven years. Nonetheless, the current capacity of the CAAMI in terms of personnel is good.

It is worthy to note that Guinea-Bissau has been in close contact with the Committee on Article 5 Implementation and with the Implementation Support Unit of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention who is supporting its efforts to reach out to the international community.
