

GICHD remarks on APBMC Article 5 extension request submitted by Turkey

Intersessional meeting of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention June 2021

The GICHD would like to congratulate the government of Turkey on the submission of an initial Article 5 extension request of three years and nine months.

The objectives outlined in the request appear likely achievable, in the light of the information provided on extent of the contamination, activity plan and tentative budget; national normative framework; and increase in operational capacities. Despite the overall soundness of this request, however, the GICHD would like to draw attention to the following points.

The request outlines plans for a nation-wide Non-Technical Survey to determine the precise perimeter of the remaining mined areas. Limited Technical Survey, for example with Animal Detection or mechanical systems, could be considered, at least as a quality control measure, as well as to support the reduction or cancellation of hazardous areas.

The GICHD notes with concern the reported increase in the number of EO victims in the period 2019-2020, compared to the previous triennium, and encourages Turkey to take all necessary measures to address this increase and include relevant information in the request, in addition to information already provided on marking and fencing to prevent access to mined areas.

Further details would also be useful on the extent of the contamination in areas other than the identified minefields, which includes landmines of an improvised nature used by non-state armed groups. The request does not provide details on clearance plans for these areas, including on whether the available demining capacity could also be used to that end.

On EORE, the GICHD commends Turkey's development of a multi-year *Mine Risk Education Plan (2021-2023)* that is in line with the Oslo Action Plan, as well as the inclusion of Risk Education as a focus area in *TURMAC's Strategic Mine Action Plan for 2020-2025*.

In the light of the increasing reported EO victims and of the impact of COVID-19 on the delivery of risk education, TURMAC is encouraged to consider and implement alternative ways to maintain the delivery of EORE, also by adapting its plan based on good practice developed by the sector. Many resources have been developed and are publicly accessible, including through the EORE.org website. In addition, greater information on planned risk education interventions for populations on the move in highly contaminated areas/border areas, such as refugees, would be useful. These would be central to ensure adequate levels of protection for all affected population groups.

The GICHD would like to commend the Republic of Turkey for submitting a detailed request, with clear objectives and detailed information, and to reaffirm its commitment to providing support in its path towards completion.