

## RELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

### COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION (Colombia, France (Chair), Iraq, and Sweden )

#### Intersessional Meetings 19 – 21 June 2023

#### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 5 BY IRAQ

##### I. Progress in implementation (OAP Action #8, #21, #22)

1. Iraq reported that in 2022, the Directorate of Mine Action (DMA)<sup>1</sup> addressed a total of 93 mined areas measuring 39,582,089 square metres, including 12,731,465 square metres cancelled, 23,839,843 square metres reduced and 3,010,780 square metres cleared, in the process destroying 3,154 anti-personnel mines and 14,416 other items of explosive ordnance. The DMA also reported that it released 219 areas contaminated with IEDs measuring 31,393,612 square metres, including 23,283,557 square metres cancelled, 47,863 square metres reduced and 8,062,191 square metres cleared, resulting in the destruction of 10,577 Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), and 2,735 other items of explosive ordnance.
2. Iraq also reported that as a result of non-technical survey the DMA identified 57 mined areas measuring 12,443,053 square metres in 6 Provinces. Iraq reported that the DMA identified 57 new areas contaminated with IEDs located in 5 Provinces measuring 53,458,312 square metres.
3. Iraq reported that in 2022, the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Authority (IKMAA)<sup>2</sup> addressed a total of 1,007,321 square metres in 3 Provinces, including 190,973 square meters reduced, and 816,348 square metres cleared, as well as an ‘area prepared’ measuring 52,694 square metres, as a result destroying 2,548 anti-personnel mines, 80 “illumination mines (ILL) (trip flares)”, and 993 items of unexploded ordnance.
4. IKMAA also reported a total of 486 dangerous areas addressed measuring 251,791 square metres, resulting in the destruction of 252 anti-personnel mines, 6 anti-tank mines, 1 ILL, and 12,999 items of unexploded ordnance.
5. The Committee observed that Iraq reported to be affected by anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature and had reported, to the extent possible, on the disaggregation of anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature from other types of improvised explosive devices (Action #21).
6. The Committee observed that the information provided by Iraq on progress in implementation allowed for comparability with that provided in its 2021 updated work plan. The Committee observed that progress in implementation was less than that projected Iraq’s 2021 updated work plan. The Committee welcomed Iraq reporting information on progress in accordance with land release methodology employed, the Guide to Reporting and in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and disaggregated by type of contamination. In this regard, the

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<sup>1</sup> The Directorate of Mine Action (DMA) represents the federal government and covers all governorates except the Kurdistan region provinces.

<sup>2</sup> The Kurdistan of Iraq Mine Action Agency (IKMAA) covers the governorates of Erbil, Duhok, Slemani and Halabja.

Committee observed Iraq reporting progress in implementation including, “area prepared” and would welcome further information on these activities, accordingly (Action #8, Action #22).

## **II. Clarity regarding remaining challenge (OAP Action #18, #22)**

7. The Committee observed that Iraq provided a high degree of clarity<sup>3</sup> on its remaining challenge, (Action #18). Iraq reported that in areas under the responsibility of the DMA a total of 389 mined areas located in 9 Provinces and 22 districts measuring 976,273,525 square metres, including 353 confirmed hazardous areas (CHA) measuring 958,986,173 square metres and 36 suspected hazardous areas (SHA) measuring 17,287,352 square metres, remain to be addressed. The DMA also reported a total of 1,721 areas containing IEDs in 5 Provinces and 26 districts measuring 526,636,847 square metres, including 1,348 CHAs measuring 390,390,130 square metres and 373 SHAs measuring 135,246,716 square metres remaining to be addressed (Action #22).
8. Iraq reported that in areas under the responsibility of IKMAA a total of 3,322 mined areas located in 4 Provinces and 28 districts measuring 212,814,126 square metres, including 3,196 CHAs measuring 182,819,360 square metres and 126 SHAs measuring 29,994,766 square metres remain to be addressed. IKMAA also reported 85 IED areas in 3 Provinces and 9 districts containing IEDs measuring 4,128,086 square metres, including 37 CHAs measuring 1,093,009 square metres and 48 SHAs measuring 3,069,929 remain to be addressed (Action #22).
9. The Committee welcomed Iraq reporting on its remaining challenges in a manner consistent with IMAS, disaggregating by SHAs and CHAs and their relative size and type of contamination (Action #22).
10. Action #18 of the Oslo Action Plan (OAP) requests States that have not yet done so to identify the precise perimeter of mined areas, to the extent possible, and establish evidence based, accurate baselines of contamination based on information collected from all relevant sources. The Committee observed that Iraq was still in the process of identifying the precise perimeter of mined areas and would welcome updated information from Iraq on these efforts.
11. Iraq reported on its efforts to establish Iraq’s baseline through inclusive consultations with women, girls, boys and men, including through the gender unit which implements activities, including quality assistance and follow-up site visits to evaluate the inclusion of gender and diversity in mine activities (Action #18).

## **III. National plans for clearance and survey (OAP Actions #1, #2, #3, #6, #19, #20, #21, #26)**

12. The Committee recalled that Iraq’s updated work plan submitted in 2021 contained a national evidence based and costed plan for clearance and survey for the period 2022-2023 (Action #2, Action #19). The Committee noted that in Iraq’s 2021 updated work plan, Iraq projected to address in mined areas under the responsibility of DMA a total of 24,998,203.50 square metres in 2023. Iraq’s workplan also projected to address in areas contaminated with IED under the responsibility of DMA a total of 108,559,988 square metres in 2023.
13. Action #20 of the OAP requests States to annually update their national work plans based on new evidenced and report on adjusted milestones. The Committee recalled that in its 2021 updated work plan Iraq projected to address in areas under the responsibility of IKMAA a total of 24,539,139

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<sup>3</sup> “High degree of clarity” has been used when a State Party has provided a list of all remaining areas (known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines), the estimated size of each area, the status of each area (i.e., “known” or “suspected,” and information on the geographic location of each area.

square metres in 2023. The Committee observed that while Iraq had in place an updated two-year work plan, Iraq had not provided information in its Article 7 Report on annual updates based on new evidence and on adjusted milestones and would welcome additional information in this regard (Action #20).

14. Iraq reported in detail on its efforts to integrate Convention implementation activities into national development plans, including the establishment of a working group between the DMA and the Ministry of Planning in order to include mine action activities within government priorities. Iraq reported that mine action projects were sent to the Ministry of Planning in order to integrate them into the National Development Plan and the national budget. Iraq further reported that DMA had reinforced connections between mine action and broader development and humanitarian agendas, including the Iraq Vision 2030 according to the sustainability development plan. Iraq also reported that with the support of UNDP and the Ministry of Planning, and with the participation of other government ministries and institutions, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) vision 2030 was prepared and finalized in 2022. Iraq reported that IKMAA has been able to demonstrate its important role to assisting both public and private sectors to implement their service projects and build infrastructures through mine clearance activities (Action #1, Action #6).

15. Iraq reported an annual national financial contribution towards implementation, including the integration of mine action activities within the National Development Plan and the Ministry of Finance in order to be integrated within the national budget (Action #1).

16. Iraq reported on its efforts to ensure that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men are considered, including the activities of the gender unit to cooperate and coordinate with regional mine action centres, UNMAS and implementing partners. Iraq also reported that the Gender Unit of the DMA conducted visits to implementing partners in order to assist in the integration of gender and diversity in mine action activities. Iraq reported that the Gender Units of IKMAA worked to strengthen the capacity of specialists in gender and social diversity. Iraq further reported that the Gender Units of DMA and IKMMA participated in several trainings for mainstreaming gender and diversity in mine action. The Committee further observed that Iraq reported the inclusion of the Gender Unit in non-technical survey, quality assurance, and participation in EOD course training (Action #3).

17. Iraq reported on its efforts to develop a sustainable national capacity, including the establishment of a flexible annual training plan in order to develop the capabilities of supervisors and implementation teams in coordination with the Ministry of Defence, Military Engineering Units, and the Ministry of Interior. The Committee further observed that Iraq's trainings were part of efforts to strengthen their national capacity (Action #26).

#### **IV. Efficient and expedient implementation (OAP Actions #5, #9, #27)**

18. Iraq reported on its efforts to keep national mine action standards up to date and that in 2022 Iraq updated 4 National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) in accordance with the latest IMAS in 2022 (Action #5).

19. Iraq reported on its efforts to maintain an accurate and up-to-date information management system, including updated information on the connection of Regional Mine Action Centre-South (RMAC-S) with the DMA database and continued efforts to make an assessment of data before the transfer of national data to IMSMA Core (Action #9).

20. Iraq reported on its efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of survey, including through annual training of national and international organisations on operation efficiency (Action #27).

## **V. Actions in accordance with plans in extension requests and decisions on them**

21. In considering Iraq's request, the Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties (16MSP) had requested Iraq to submit updated information on several matters. The Committee welcomes the information provided by Iraq on:

- Progress made relative to the commitments contained in Iraq's two-year work plan during the extension period; Geographically specific information on the implementation of survey plans, locations and the results of these efforts and how additional clarity obtained may change Iraq's understanding of the remaining implementation challenge;
- Resource mobilisation efforts and external financing received and resources made available by the government of Iraq to support implementation efforts, including through efforts to facilitate operations of international demining organisations and expanding of indigenous capacities, and the results of these efforts.

22. The Committee would welcome updated information from Iraq on the following decisions of the 16MSP:

- Changes in the security situation and how these changes positively or negatively affect implementation;
- Efforts to resolve political issues which prevent the carrying out of mine action activities in border areas of Iraq; and,

23. The Committee recalled that in considering Iraq's 2017 extension request, the 16MSP requested Iraq to submit to the States Parties, by 30 April 2018 a plan for non-technical survey operations and that emergency non-technical survey operations. The Committee recalled that Iraq had acted on the decisions of the 16MSP by submitting a plan for non-technical survey.

24. The Committee recalled that in considering Iraq's 2017 extension request, the 16MSP requested Iraq to submit to the Fourth Review Conference in 2019, an updated work plan for the remaining period covered by the extension request and every two years following this. The Meeting requested that this work plan contain an updated list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, annual projections of which areas and area that would be dealt with each year during the remaining period covered by the request and a revised detailed updated budget. The Committee recalled that Iraq had acted on the decisions of the 16MSP by submitting an updated work plan to the Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties, and two years subsequently to the 19MSP and had indicated its intention to submit an updated work plan to the 21MSP.

## **VI. Mine risk education and reduction (OAP Actions #28-32)**

25. Iraq reported on its efforts to effectively exclude the population from mined areas, the methodologies used, challenges faced, and the results achieved, disaggregated by gender and age. Iraq also reported that in 2022 due to the financial crisis, the risk education teams of IKMAA were unable to visit the mine and ERW contaminated villages and communities and that, as a result, IKMAA trained 26 Community Safety Wardens (CSW) to deliver lifesaving messages and instructions to the people of their villages and areas, and used its website, social media and other media channels to disseminate EORE messages (Action #32).

26. Iraq reported on the integration of mine risk education and reduction (MRE/R) into wider humanitarian, development, protection and education efforts, including the adoption, through the Ministry of Planning, of mine action for all humanitarian purposes, national plans and strategies, such as the, United Nations Cooperation Framework Program for Sustainable Development (UNSDCF) approved by the Iraqi government for the years 2020-2024, and that all survey and clearance activities are accompanied by risk awareness campaigns (Action #28).
27. Iraq reported on its efforts to provide context-specific mine risk education and reduction programmes, highlighting that awareness programmes are working in accordance with information collected from surveys of mined areas, including the use of knowledge survey forms that assist in the development of awareness programs and ensures that they are suitable for the population of the affected community through (gender, age, type of pollution, activity during the accident) their own social customs and language (the dialect) (Action #29).
28. Iraq reported on its efforts to prioritise people most at-risk, including by carrying out intensive awareness campaigns based on an analysis and evaluation of injuries, accidents and behaviour with priority given to areas based on the rate of injuries as well as the proximity to hazardous areas, as well as targeting the most vulnerable groups who are particularly at-risk due to, for example, daily activities and lack of awareness or behaviour (Action #30).
29. Iraq reported on its efforts to build capacity to deliver MRE/R in affected communities, including conducting capacity building and trainings with national Government Ministries, including Ministry of Youth and Sports, Mining of Oil, Department of Regions and non-government organisations, syndicates of artists, journalists, teachers and agriculturalists (Action #31).

## **VII. Challenges in implementation (OAP Action #8)**

29. The Committee observed that Iraq provided quality information on challenges in implementation, including the impact of the financial crisis on the provision of MRE/R programmes in areas under IKMAA.

**The Oslo Action Plan country reporting tracker**  
**Article 5 Implementation**  
**Iraq**  
**CROSS-CUTTING ACTIONS**

Actions	Indicators	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Additional information requested from the Committee (deadline 28 July)
<b>#1</b>	# States Parties that report, having included Convention implementation activities in national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, humanitarian response plans and national strategies for the inclusion of persons with disabilities, where appropriate						
	% mine-affected States Parties that report making national financial commitments to the implementation of their obligations under the Convention						
<b>#2</b>	% mine-affected States Parties that report having evidence-based, costed and time-bound national strategies and work plans in place						
<b>#3</b>	% affected States Parties whose national work plans and strategies integrate gender and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account						
	# women in States Parties' delegations attending Convention meetings						
<b>#5</b>	% States Parties that have updated their national standards to address new challenges and ensure the employment of best practices, taking into consideration the latest IMAS						
<b>#6</b>	# States Parties that report having included mine action related activities within their humanitarian response plans, peacebuilding, development or human rights plans, where relevant						
<b>#8</b>	# States Parties that prepare their Article 7 reports using the Guide to Reporting						
	# States Parties that report on progress and challenges during formal and informal meetings						
<b>#9</b>	% States Parties that report having a sustainable national information management system in place						

**SURVEY AND CLEARANCE OF MINED AREAS**

Actions	Indicators	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Additional information requested from the Committee (deadline 28 July)
#18	% affected States Parties that have established an accurate and evidence-based contamination baseline no later than the Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties in 2021 (and by each year thereafter if not all affected States Parties have done so by 19MSP)						The Committee observed that Iraq was still in the process of identifying the precise perimeter of mined areas and would welcome updated information from Iraq on these efforts.
	% affected States Parties who report having established their baseline through inclusive consultations with women, girls, boys and men						
#19	% affected States Parties presenting work plans for the implementation of Article 5 by the Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties (and MSPs thereafter and by each year thereafter if not all affected States Parties have done so by 18MSP)						
#20	# affected States Parties that have reported annual updates and adjusted milestones to their national work plans in their 30 April transparency reports						The Committee would welcome information on Iraq's efforts to provide annual updates based on new evidence and on adjusted milestones
	# States Parties that have fulfilled their obligations under Article 5						
#21	# States Parties that apply the provisions of the Convention to anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature (for the purpose of this indicator: survey, clear and report)						
#22	% of affected States Parties reporting on the remaining challenge and progress made in accordance with IMAS						
	% of affected States Parties providing survey and clearance data in Article 5 extension requests and Article 7 reports that disaggregates by type of contamination						
#23	% extension requests that include detailed, costed and multi-year work plans for the extension period						
	% extension requests that are submitted in accordance with the process established by the States Parties						
#24	% extension requests that include appropriate plans for risk education and reduction activities						
#25	% States Parties that have completed their Article 5 obligations and that submit voluntary declarations of completion						
#26	% affected States Parties that include provisions for addressing previously unknown mined areas in their national strategies and/or completion plans						

	% affected States Parties that report having put in place sustainable national capacities to address the discovery of previously unknown mined areas						
	% States Parties that discover previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas, that apply the decision of the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties						
<b>#27</b>	# States Parties that report promoting research, application and sharing of innovative technological means						
<b>MINE RISK EDUCATION AND REDUCTION</b>							
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>Additional information requested from the Committee (deadline 28 July)</b>
<b>#28</b>	% affected States Parties that report having included mine risk education and reduction programmes in their humanitarian response and protection plans and/or development plans, as well as in their mine action plans, where relevant						
<b>#29</b>	% affected States Parties that report having mine risk education and reduction programmes for all affected populations in place						
	% States Parties that report carrying out mine risk education and reduction activities that collect, analyse and report data disaggregated by gender, age, disability and other diverse needs						
<b>#30</b>	# States Parties that report having established an evidence-based priority-setting mechanism for mine risk education and reduction programmes						
<b>#31</b>	# States Parties that provide risk education and reduction programmes to affected communities in the case that previously unknown mined areas are discovered						
<b>#32</b>	# States Parties reporting on their mine risk education and other risk reduction programmes and results						