

ICBL comments on Afghanistan's Extension Request

Mine Ban Treaty's 5th Review Conference, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 25-29 November 2024

Thank you, Mr. President,

ICBL would like to thank Afghanistan for submitting its request for Article 5 deadline extension, and the Committee on Article 5 Implementation for its assistance and detailed analysis.

Due to political changes in August 2021, Afghanistan was not in a position to submit a comprehensive request, but instead submitted and was granted an interim request by the Meeting of States Parties in November 2021.

This year Afghanistan, with the support of all stakeholders, was able to develop and submit a comprehensive plan to request a new Article 5 deadline, ahead of its current deadline of March 2025.

Mr. President,

As underscored by the Executive Committee of the Mine Action Program for Afghanistan (MAPA), granting a new Art. 5 deadline to Afghanistan based on the extension request submitted by the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC) is crucial to address the remaining 1200 square kilometers of contamination and to survey 183 districts in Afghanistan that continue to endanger the lives of people, particularly women and children, as reported by OCHA.

Following the ISU's guidance, the DMAC in close collaboration with MAPA and UNMAS developed a more technical, concise, and survey-focused plan with a new target deadline of 2030.

The ICBL welcomes and fully supports this extension request by Afghanistan, which shows an ambition to render land safe again as efficiently as possible. We call on all States Parties to support the request and grant Afghanistan the new Art. 5 deadline to ensure Afghanistan remains in compliance, and most importantly that its life-saving clearance efforts can continue without interruption. This convention has remained strong because it focuses on humanitarian imperatives, not politics, and we call on all states to stay committed to this principle.

It is worth mentioning that achieving the targets set under the new extension of 2030 will only be possible with support by all stakeholders, particularly mine action donors, for all mine action operations in Afghanistan, including national demining organizations.

I thank you Mr. President.