
Fifth Review Conference 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

8 October 2024

Original: English

Siem Reap, 25-29 November 2024

Item 11 of the provisional agenda

Consideration of submissions of States Parties as provided for in Article 5**Analysis of the request submitted by Guinea-Bissau for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention****Submitted by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation: Colombia (Chair), Sweden, Thailand, and the United Kingdom***

1. Guinea-Bissau ratified the Convention on 22 May 2001. The Convention entered into force for Guinea-Bissau on 1 November 2001. In its initial transparency report submitted on 19 June 2002, Guinea-Bissau reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines. Guinea-Bissau was obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 1 November 2011. On 8 September 2010, Guinea-Bissau submitted to the President of the Second Review Conference a request for an extension of its deadline. The Tenth Meeting of the States Parties agreed unanimously to grant the request for a period of two months, until 1 January 2012. On 5 December 2012, Guinea-Bissau reported to the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties that it had fulfilled its obligation under Article 5 of the Convention ahead of its 1 January 2012 deadline.
2. On 11 August 2021, Guinea-Bissau submitted a request for an extended deadline to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation (“the Committee”). The request highlighted that Guinea-Bissau had discovered previously unknown mined areas. Guinea-Bissau’s request was for an extended deadline until 31 December 2022. The Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties agreed unanimously to grant the request for extension.
3. In granting the request, the Meeting highlighted in its decision that, while it is unfortunate that Guinea-Bissau, having declared completion of its Article 5 obligations under the Convention, has discovered previously unknown mined areas under its jurisdiction or control, the Meeting welcomed Guinea-Bissau’s adherence with the decision of the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties on how to address such situations. In granting the request, the Meeting also welcomed the fact that Guinea-Bissau is requesting only the period of time necessary to gather and assess data on landmine contamination and other relevant information with a view to developing a meaningful forward-looking plan based on this information. In this regard, the Meeting noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau ensuring that survey activities take into account best practices in a manner consistent with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). The Meeting also noted Guinea-Bissau’s commitment to submit a subsequent request by 31 March 2022 containing plans based on a clearer understanding of the extent of the challenge and which project with greater certainty the amount of time required to complete Article 5 implementation.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

4. On 22 April 2022, Guinea-Bissau submitted to the Committee a request for extension of its 31 December 2022 deadline. Guinea-Bissau's request was for 2 years, until 31 December 2024. The Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties agreed unanimously to grant the request for two years until 31 December 2024.

5. In granting the request, the Meeting highlighted in its decision that, while Guinea-Bissau had not complied with the principle commitment it had made in its initial extension request, as recorded in the decisions of the Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties, to acquire a clear understanding of the extent of the challenge and project with greater certainty the amount of time that will be required to complete Article 5 implementation, it is positive that Guinea-Bissau has made commendable progress and has committed to increase its capacity and reinvigorate efforts to garner an understanding of the extent of the remaining challenge.

6. On 19 April 2024, Guinea-Bissau submitted to the Committee a request to extend its 31 December 2024 deadline. On 28 June 2024, the Committee wrote to Guinea-Bissau to request additional information and clarity on the content of its request for extension. On 2 August 2024, Guinea-Bissau submitted to the Committee additional information in response to the Committee's questions. The Committee noted with satisfaction that Guinea-Bissau submitted its request in a timely manner and had engaged in a cooperative dialogue with the Committee. Guinea-Bissau's request is for 3 years until 31 December 2027.

7. The request indicates that at the time of submission of the previous request, as a result of investigations carried out by the national non-governmental organisation (NGO) Humanitarian Aid in Guinea-Bissau (HUMAID) and through population reports received, it identified 9 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) measuring 1,093,840 square metres, 43 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) of unknown size, 5 battle areas clearance tasks measuring 402,304 square metres and 3 spot clearance tasks. The request also indicated that despite the information available, the assessment conducted in 2014 by HUMAID did not follow a systematic methodology and that a national evidence-based survey compliant with IMAS is required.

8. The request indicates that, during the requested period, six 'one-off' tasks were completed, mine action operations were conducted in one battlefield, and technical survey was conducted on an area previously identified in 2014. As a result of these efforts, a total of 53,499 square metres was addressed, identifying and destroying 1 anti-personnel mine and 518 explosive remnants of war (ERW). The request also indicates that only 1 of the 9 CHAs previously reported is currently undergoing technical survey by HUMAID. The request further indicates that risk education activities have been initiated and that a hotline for reporting information concerning incidents with explosive ordnance was established within the National Mine Action Coordination Centre of Guinea Bissau (CAAMI).

9. The request indicates that the National Centre for Humanitarian Demining (CNDH) was reactivated in February 2023 and that in May 2023, three humanitarian mine action organisations were accredited to allow the resumption of mine clearance activities: The HALO Trust, HUMAID, and the Mines Advisory Group (MAG). The Committee wrote to Guinea-Bissau to request additional information on the specific involvement of these implementing partners in implementing survey and clearance activities in Guinea-Bissau during the previous extension period. Guinea-Bissau indicated in its response that MAG conducted non-technical survey in 70 tabancas (villages), 36 in Cacheu and 34 in the Oio region, with SHAs being identified in 3 villages in the Oio region and 4 in the Cacheu region. Guinea-Bissau also indicated that 2 tasks were carried out in the São Domingos sector, Cacheu region, and 5 in the Farim sector in the Oio region. Guinea-Bissau further revealed that according to the survey results, 55,662 square metres of the village of Imbai-baila was identified as contaminated by anti-personnel mines. Guinea-Bissau further indicated that, as the survey is ongoing, results are not available at the time of writing.

10. The Committee wrote to Guinea-Bissau to request additional information on the result of the resurvey activities of the 9 CHAs. Guinea-Bissau indicated in its response that non-technical survey confirmed 2 of the 9 CHAs. Guinea-Bissau further revealed that the 7 remaining CHAs are undergoing survey to reconfirm the data provided by HUMAID.

Guinea-Bissau further indicated that progress in this regard, over the course of the previous request, has been limited due primarily to the lack of financial resources.

11. The Committee welcomed Guinea-Bissau applying best practices and, in particular, the identified “value of States Parties requesting only the period of time necessary to gather and assess data on landmine contamination and other relevant information with a view to developing a meaningful forward-looking plan based on this information, and then submitting a second request containing plans based on a clearer understanding of the extent of the challenge and which project with greater certainty the amount of time that will be required to complete Article 5 implementation.” The Committee welcomed the additional information provided by Guinea-Bissau and noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau continuing to report on progress in implementation in a manner consistent with IMAS to ensure a clear understanding of the progress made by Guinea-Bissau in implementation of its obligations under Article 5 (i.e., cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey, or cleared through clearance and disaggregated by the type of explosive ordnance identified and destroyed (e.g. anti-personnel mines, anti-tank mines)). The Committee further noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau continuing to strengthen partnerships with international non-governmental organisations to support the capacity building of the CAAMI and the implementation of its obligations under the Convention.

12. The request indicates the circumstances which, in Guinea-Bissau’s view, acted as impeding circumstances to complete implementation during the extension period: a) limited national and international financial resources, b) delays in the verification of suspected and confirmed mined areas due to a shortage of technical and human resources for demining, information management and risk education, c) fragmented collection and verification of information, and d) absence of historical data for the period 2001-2012 which could not be recovered from the old information management system due to lack of technical skills within CAAMI.

13. The request indicates that, while 40 people have fallen victim to mines and other explosive ordnance since declaring completion, no incidents have been reported since 2021. The Committee wrote to Guinea-Bissau to request additional information on the social, economic, and environmental implications of the extension request and on its efforts to integrate mine action into other development and humanitarian plans and other national frameworks. Guinea-Bissau indicated that while there have been no accidents, it is likely that other accidents have occurred but have been unreported in the absence of a formal reporting mechanisms and information management system and that anti-personnel mines represent a serious obstacles to socioeconomic growth and development (agriculture, pastures, infrastructure) which can indirectly contribute to the resurgence of instability and violence.

14. Guinea-Bissau further indicated in its response that the Government of Guinea-Bissau, after reactivating the CNDH, has been working to strengthen partnerships between mine action implementers and affected communities and the integration of mine action in the areas of consolidation of peace, humanitarianism, and respect for human rights, through the National Movement of Civil Society, for Peace, Democracy and Development, with reference to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Guinea-Bissau further indicated that the government has committed to the integration of Convention implementation activities into national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, and humanitarian response plans to be approved by the National People's Congress, promulgated by His Excellency the President of the Republic and published in the official journal, in accordance with the Constitution.

15. The Committee welcomed the information provided by Guinea-Bissau and noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau continuing to demonstrate high levels of national ownership, including by integrating Convention implementation activities into national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, humanitarian response plans and national strategies for the inclusion of persons with disabilities, as appropriate, and by making financial and other commitments to implementation. The Committee further welcomed Guinea-Bissau, providing information on its efforts to ensure consideration for the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities. In this regard, the Committee also noted that completion of Article 5 implementation during the requested extension period has the potential of making a

significant contribution to improving human safety and socio-economic conditions in affected areas in Guinea-Bissau.

16. The request indicates a remaining challenge of an estimated 9 CHAs measuring 1,093,840 square metres (7 of which are undergoing resurvey), in addition to 43 SHAs of unknown size. Guinea-Bissau also reported 4 battlefields measuring approximately 342,304 square metres and ‘one-off’ tasks remaining to be addressed. The Committee, in noting that Guinea-Bissau is not able to provide clear information on the scale of contamination by anti-personnel mines, noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau carrying out non-technical survey in all contaminated areas, as soon as possible, to acquire a clear understanding of the contamination and to report on progress and the remaining challenge. The Committee further noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau providing information on the remaining challenge in a manner consistent with IMAS, by disaggregating by ‘suspect hazardous areas’, and ‘confirmed hazardous areas’ and their relative size including by disaggregating between the type of contamination to ensure increased clarity on the remaining challenges.

17. As noted, Guinea-Bissau’s request is for three years, until 31 December 2027. The request indicates that the extension period will allow sufficient time for Guinea-Bissau to complete national non-technical survey, and to analyse the location, extent and nature of Guinea-Bissau’s remaining challenge. The request contains a work plan and budget for the extension period including the following priorities: a) implementation of non-technical survey 2024-2026, b) implementation of marking and clearance activities in support of the non-technical survey 2024-2026, and c) implementation of marking and clearance activities according to identified needs and priorities 2026-2027.

18. The request includes specific activities that Guinea-Bissau will carry out during the period 2024-2025, including: a) creation of an information management system, b) review and adoption of National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) aligned with IMAS, c) extension of the capacities for the national non-technical survey, d) preparation of technical activities (technical control, marking and clearance), e) resumption of mine risk education activities, f) assistance to victims, and g) resource mobilisation. The request also indicates the following activities to be carried out during the period of 2025-2027: a) monitoring and evaluation of activities, (Quality Assurance/Quality Control), b) strengthening capacities of CAAMI and operators, and c) development of a residual risk management strategy.

19. The request indicates that risk education activities will be conducted in nine priority communities where the presence of anti-personnel mines has been confirmed by HUMAID, as well as in communities near the remaining 43 suspected hazardous areas. The request also indicates that while risk education activities are currently limited, Guinea-Bissau projects to increase risk education activities in support of the national non-technical survey. The Committee noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau continuing to report updates regarding the development and implementation of a detailed, costed, and multi-year plan for context-specific mine risk education and reduction in affected communities, including information on the methodologies used, the challenges faced, and the results achieved, with information disaggregated by gender and age.

20. The Committee wrote to Guinea-Bissau to request additional information on the planned nationwide non-technical survey, including on the number of survey teams required and a timeline for their recruitment and training, including details on Guinea-Bissau’s efforts to ensure survey teams are comprised of mixed genders, with the appropriate language and communication skills to reach all potential informants within affected communities including women, girls, boys, women, and men. Guinea-Bissau indicated in its response that the country strives to ensure that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys, and men are considered in the mine action programme, to achieve an inclusive approach. Guinea Bissau further indicated that considerable effort has been made to remove the obstacles to full, equal, and gender-balanced participation in mine action activities, as well as in Convention meetings. The Committee noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau continuing to report on its efforts on how implementation efforts consider the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys, and men and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities. The Committee further noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau continuing to report on the impact of survey and clearance outcomes and how additional

clarity obtained may change Guinea-Bissau's assessment of the remaining implementation challenge and timeframe for implementation.

21. The Committee wrote to Guinea-Bissau to request additional information on the development and approval of NMAS. Guinea-Bissau indicated in its response that during the period of the previous extension Guinea-Bissau developed 13 NMAS and that these standards are pending validation by the National Council for Humanitarian Demining. The Committee noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau continuing to report on the timeline and process to approve its NMAS and to ensuring alignment with the latest IMAS. The Committee also stressed the importance of Guinea-Bissau continuing to report on the survey and clearance methodologies to be employed and the establishment of monitoring and evaluation processes and practices.

22. The Committee wrote to Guinea-Bissau to request additional information on the efforts of Guinea-Bissau to ensure the establishment of a national information management system containing up-to-date data information on the status of implementation, including plans to recruit the required human resources. Guinea-Bissau indicated in its response that it has made enormous efforts to put in place and maintain an effective national information management system and that unfortunately the current system is not functioning due to the scarcity of financial and human resources. The request further indicates that CAAMI has not yet been able to ensure the recruitment of qualified personnel capable of deploying and managing an information management system and that one of its priorities has been to support proper information collection by CAAMI and partners, through the drafting of seven data entry forms. The Committee noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau continuing to report on its efforts to establish and strengthen its national information management system, its requirements for assistance in this regard, and its efforts to ensure that the system contains accurate and up-to-date data at the national level on the status of implementation.

23. The request also indicates that the budget for implementation of the work plan presented in its request totals US \$7,648,392, including US \$1,716,117 in 2024, US \$2,496,133 in 2025, US \$2,080,633 in 2026, and US \$1,355,508 in 2027. The budget presented is disaggregated by general operation of the CAAMI, development of the information management system, development of national standards, national non-technical survey, emergency clearance and marking, risk education, capacity building of CAAMI and operators, and development of a management strategy for residual risk.

24. The request indicates that the CAAMI will undertake significant efforts to increase the government's contribution to fulfilling its Article 5 obligations and attracting external financing. The request further indicates that from 2024, a 'substantial contribution' from the government will allow CAAMI to pay all of its staff and recruit additional staff for open positions, ensure that the CAAMI is adequately equipped, and allow operational deployment of the technical teams. The request also highlights that, in 2024, Guinea-Bissau will explore possible contributions from the private sector in Guinea-Bissau. In this regard, the Committee wrote to Guinea-Bissau to request additional information on the "substantial contribution" and if a national financial contribution has been secured for 2024. Guinea-Bissau indicated in its response that the government of Guinea-Bissau is continuing its efforts to mobilise domestic and external resources and that it will take steps to mobilise funds for the implementation of the plan presented.

25. The Committee wrote to Guinea-Bissau to request additional information on the nature of the financial support provided by Norway and the Netherlands for implementing activities during Guinea-Bissau's previous extension period. Guinea-Bissau indicated in its response that to ensure the sustainability of actions over time and the development of national capacities, the support received from Norway and the Netherlands enabled the re-activation of HUMAID. The Committee noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau continuing to report on its resource mobilisation efforts, including efforts in approaching potential donors and organisations, as well as the private sector, to fund and assist in implementation activities and the result of these efforts. The Committee further noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau providing a national contribution, to the extent possible, from its national budget to ensure implementation of its obligations under Article 5.

26. The request indicates that Guinea-Bissau intends to provide quarterly updates from key external stakeholders on progress and challenges facing the work plan presented in the extension request, and that the CNDH, as the national authority for humanitarian demining, will meet quarterly. Guinea-Bissau indicated, however, that the political context of Guinea-Bissau in 2023, which saw several successive ministerial changes, did not allow the CNDH to meet according to schedule. The Committee noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau continuing to report on its efforts to strengthen the inclusive nature of Guinea-Bissau's Mine Action Programme through the establishment of an appropriate national mine action platform, including the terms of reference, scope, membership and meeting frequency.

27. The Committee wrote to Guinea-Bissau to request additional information on its efforts to establish a sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas discovered following completion. Guinea-Bissau indicated in its response that the issue of a sustainable national capacity will be addressed in the process of developing the national strategy and work plan. Guinea-Bissau also responded that in 2023, three CAAMI personnel were retrained in non-technical and technical survey and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and that Guinea-Bissau now has the technical human resources to carry out demining activities. Guinea-Bissau further indicated that the NGO NADEL, which initially specialised in community work, has now been commissioned by the operator MAG and has been trained and deployed to carry out community liaison activities, EOD, and non-technical surveys. The Committee welcomed the information provided by Guinea-Bissau and noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau continuing to report on its efforts to ensure the establishment of a sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas discovered following completion.

28. The Committee, in noting that Guinea-Bissau projects to increase risk education activities in support of the national non-technical survey, noted that the Convention would benefit from Guinea-Bissau submitting to the Committee by **30 April 2025**, a detailed, costed, and multi-year work plan for context-specific mine risk education and reduction in affected communities, that is sensitive to gender, age, disability and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account.

29. The Committee, in noting that Guinea-Bissau will undertake national non-technical survey to acquire a more detailed picture of its remaining challenges, noted that the Convention would benefit from Guinea-Bissau submitting to the Committee by **30 April 2026**, an updated detailed work plan for the remainder of the extension period containing, amongst other: a) an updated list of all identified mined areas in accordance with IMAS (i.e. disaggregating by 'suspected hazardous areas' and 'confirmed hazardous areas' and their relative size, as well as by the type of contamination (e.g. anti-personnel mines, anti-tank mines, explosive remnants of war etc.); b) projections of the areas where survey and clearance efforts will take place by which organisations and the methodologies to be employed; c) plan for context-specific mine risk education and reduction in affected communities and methodologies to be employed; d) how priorities have been established, and; e) a detailed budget for implementation. The Committee noted that the detailed work plan should contain information on how Guinea-Bissau ensures consideration for gender, age, disability and takes the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities in its implementation efforts.

30. The Committee noted that the request and additional information submitted by Guinea-Bissau includes other relevant information that may be of use to the States Parties in assessing and considering the request, including additional information on methodologies, material capacities, and risks and assumptions for the implementation of the work plan.

31. The Committee noted that the plan presented by Guinea-Bissau is workable, lends itself well to be monitored, and states clearly which factors could affect the pace of implementation. The Committee also noted that the plans are contingent upon the level and timeliness of national and international support, results of survey as well as the challenges faced by Guinea-Bissau. In this regard, the Committee noted that the States Parties would benefit from Guinea-Bissau reporting annually, by 30 April, to the States Parties on the following:

(a) Progress made relative to the commitments contained in Guinea-Bissau's work plan with progress in survey and clearance presented in a manner consistent with IMAS and progress in accordance with the land release methodology employed (i.e., cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey, or cleared through clearance);

(b) The impact of survey and clearance outcomes and how additional clarity obtained may change Guinea-Bissau's assessment of the remaining implementation challenge and timeframe for implementation, including adjusted annual milestones with information on the number of areas and amount of mined area to be addressed annually and how priorities have been established;

(c) Updates on Guinea-Bissau's efforts to approve its NMAS including updates in accordance with the latest IMAS;

(d) The remaining challenge in a manner consistent with IMAS, by disaggregating by 'suspect hazardous areas', and 'confirmed hazardous areas' and their relative size including by disaggregating between the type of contamination to ensure increased clarity on the remaining challenges;

(e) Efforts to develop and implement a detailed, costed and multi-year plan for context-specific mine risk education and reduction in affected communities, including information on the methodologies used, the challenges faced, and the results achieved, with information disaggregated by gender and age;

(f) Efforts to establish and maintain a national information management system containing accurate and up-to-date data at the national level on the status of implementation;

(g) Efforts to strengthen its national capacity to implement its obligations under the Convention and to address previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas discovered following completion;

(h) Efforts to ensure consideration for the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities as well as climate and environmental considerations in the implementation of the Convention;

(i) The humanitarian, social, economic, and environmental implications of the extension including information on victims disaggregated by gender and age;

(j) Resource mobilization efforts, external financing received, and resource made available by the Government of Guinea-Bissau to support implementation efforts.

32. The Committee noted the importance, in addition to Guinea-Bissau reporting to the States Parties as noted above, of keeping the States Parties regularly apprised of other pertinent developments regarding its implementation of Article 5 during the period covered by the request and other commitments made in the request at Intersessional Meetings, Meetings of the States Parties as well as through Article 7 reports using the Guide for Reporting.