
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

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Items 7 and 11 of the provisional agenda

Presentation of requests submitted under Article 5 and of the analyses of these requests

Consideration of submissions of States Parties as provided for in Article 5

Request for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction on Anti-Personnel Mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention

Executive summary

Submitted by Serbia*

1. The former State Union of Serbia and Montenegro ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, on 18 September 2003. The Convention entered into force on 1 March 2004. The continuity to the Convention in relation to the Republic of Serbia was established in accordance with Article 60 of the Charter of the State Union. Serbia is fully committed to the implementation of its obligations under the Convention.
2. In accordance with Article 5, paragraph 1, of the Convention, Serbia had an obligation to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in minefield areas under its jurisdiction or control, as soon as possible, but not later than ten years after the entry into force of the Convention (1 March 2014).
3. The problem related to contamination by landmines and the progress of Serbia in response to its Article 5 challenge is documented in detail in its first, second and third extension requests.
4. At the Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties, the remaining mined area totalled 3 suspected hazardous areas measuring 561,800 square metres in the Municipality of Bujanovac, plus previously unknown suspected mined areas discovered in Bujanovac.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Table: Summary of areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines as of March 2022

Municipality	Village	Number of confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs)	Number of suspected hazardous areas (SHAs)	Total number of areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines	Amount of area known to contain anti-personnel mines (square metres)	Amount of area suspected to contain anti-personnel mines (square metres)	Total amount of area known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines (square metres)
	Dobrosin	/	1	1	/	28,000	28,000
	Ravno Bučje	/	1	1	/	390,300	390,300
	Končulj	/	1	1	/	143,500	143,500
Total	3	/	3	3	/	561,800	561,800

5. Since the previous request, two clearance projects were implemented with a total area of 171,500 square metres cleared. In 2023, one technical survey project, totalling 122,200 square metres commenced, but had to be delayed due to unfavourable weather conditions but was finished on 28 February 2024. The funds were provided by the Serbian Government matched, through ITF-Enhancing Human Security, by the Republic of Korea and U.S. funding.

6. **Table showing progress against milestones 2022-2024**

Year	Projected milestones Survey Clearance	Cleared area (square metres)	Cancelled area (square metres)	Reduced area (square metres)	Total area released (square metres)	Number of anti-personnel mines destroyed	Number of other explosive items destroyed	Size of newly identified/suspect hazardous areas
2022	561,800	171,500			171,500		4	
2023	Subject to survey and assessment							
2024	Subject to survey and assessment			122,200	122,200		1	
Total		171,500		122,200	293,700		5	

7. There are a number of circumstances that have impeded Serbia from complying with its period of third extension request, as follows:

- i. Unregistered mine contaminated areas;
- ii. Newly discovered mine suspected areas in Bujanovac, in October 2019 and in August 2021;
- iii. Climatic conditions;
- iv. Contamination other than mines;
- v. Pending of implementation of non-technical survey project (NTS).

8. NTS of Bujanovac municipality was expected to commence in 2023, however, due to certain security concerns, relevant Serbian authorities estimated that the commencement of the field operations should be delayed. The SHA comprises the area within the Ground Safety Zone along the administrative line with Kosovo and Metohija. Fortunately, circumstances have changed and the Mine Action Centre of the Republic of Serbia (SMAC) expects this project to commence in September 2024.

9. The remaining mine contamination presents a severe socio-economic impact on communities in the municipality of Bujanovac. Bujanovac is the most underdeveloped municipality in Serbia. Mine contaminated areas affect safety of people, hinders safe exploitation of woods, development of cattle breeding and mushroom picking. In addition, road communications are blocked, environment affected, and fire risks increased.

10. Serbia's achievements regarding the fulfilment of its obligation under Article 5 have been significant so far and the aim is to fulfil the remaining obligations as soon as possible. At the same time, Serbia is facing a number of difficulties, and the most important of these is securing multi-year financial resources. Furthermore, Serbia also has to address contamination by cluster munitions, air bombs-rockets and other unexploded ordnance (UXO), which often block development and infrastructural projects. Funding from donors for mine action activities has severely diminished, with donors preferring to provide funds for cluster munitions clearance.

Requested Period of Extension

11. The Republic of Serbia is requesting an extension of the deadline for fulfilling its mine clearance obligations under the Convention for a period of 2 years, (until 31 December 2026).

12. The rationale for the requested period includes a realistic period for Serbia to undertake NTS of Bujanovac municipality and gather the necessary information to develop a fifth request including a workplan for completion that will be submitted 31 March 2026. During the period of this request, Serbia will put maximum effort into clearing the remaining known confirmed hazardous area of 268,100 square metres. National and international funds for 2024 clearance and non-technical survey operations have been secured.

13. During the extension period, Serbia is projecting to recruit survey teams, complete NTS and analyse all data in order to develop a forward-looking work plan. The aim is to project with greater certainty the amount of areas, the size of each area and the amount of time matched with a detail budget to complete Serbia's Article 5 obligations.

Table: Summary of areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines as of March 2024

Municipality	Village	Number of CHA	Number of SHA	Total number of areas	Amount of CHA area (square metres)	Amount of SHA (square metres)	Total amount of area known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines (square metres)
Bujanovac	Ravno Bučje		1	1		268,100	268,100
Bujanovac	Dordevac, Veliki Trnovac, Končulj, Lučani, Dobrosin, Nesalce		5	5			4,367,643
Total	1		6	6		268,100	4,635,743

14. **Demining milestones: In 2024:** clearance of 1 mined area measuring 268,100 square metres, Ravno Bučje village, Municipality of Bujanovac and in the period **2024-2026:** non-technical Survey of Bujanovac Municipality. The starting areas are 5 suspected areas measuring 4,367,643 square metres:

- i. 1,777,367 square metres: "Bujanovac North" site number 0240/20 and site number 0193-4/17.
- ii. 156,125 square metres: "Turijsko brdo 1" site number 0134/12, and "Končulj – Transmission Line 1 and 2", site number 0240/21.
- iii. 1,317,575 square metres: "Končulj Singerit" site number 0209/18.

- iv. 830,383 square metres: site number 0199/18, and “Dobrosin 1” site number 0245/21, and site number 0179/15.
- v. 286,193 square metres: Nesalce village.

15. Demining in the Municipality of Bujanovac (2024-2026):

<i>Year</i>	<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Village</i>	<i>Size of area (square metres)</i>	<i>Source of funding and Amount</i>
2024	Bujanovac	Ravno Bučje, Đorđevac, Dobrosin, Končulj	268,100	National Budget (260,000 EUR) International donations matched through ITF (500,000 EUR)
2025		Lučani, Veliki Trnovac, Nesalce	Subject to survey and assessment	National Budget (260,000 EUR) International donations matched through ITF or other sources of funding (500,000 EUR)
2026		Development of Technical Survey and clearance workplan	Subject to survey and assessment	National Budget (260,000 EUR) International donations matched through ITF or other sources of funding (500,000 EUR)
Total			268,100 + newly identified mine contaminated areas	National Budget (780,000 EUR) International donations matched through ITF or other sources of funding (1,500,000 EUR)

Note: Regarding NTS, funds have been secured for the period 2024 and 2025.

16. In 2015, 100,000 EUR for demining operations were allocated from the Serbian State Budget for the first time. The funds from the Serbian State Budget support the on-going work of the SMAC. In the period 2022-2024, the Serbian Government has allocated a total of 780,000 EUR for demining operations, (2022=260,000 EUR; 2023=260,000 EUR; 2024=260,000 EUR).

17. It is expected that the Serbian Government will continue to allocate the funds for demining operations throughout the requested extension period. In addition to funds from national budget (780,000 EUR), an estimated 1,500,000 EUR in financial resources will need to be mobilised from international donors.

18. Despite the difficult economic situation in the country and modest funds from the National Budget, Serbia will endeavour to secure funding of demining either by submitting projects to ITF, or lobby foreign donors to provide funds for implementation of projects.

Summary Plan for Non-Technical Survey

19. For newly identified suspect hazardous areas discovered in 2019 and 2021, land release needs to be done, beginning with NTS, including; desk assessments, analysis, and field visits all in line with National Standards. These elements will contribute to identifying, accessing, collecting, and reporting in support of land release decision making processes.

20. The NTS project will include 2 mixed survey teams, (1 Serbian, 1 Albanian x 2 surveyors each), which will be fully trained and equipped to conduct required tasks. Activities will be supervised and monitored by SMAC in cooperation with the local authorities.

21. The project will take up to one year and will focus on the areas where forests fires occurred and explosions heard but will also include all other areas in Bujanovac. Upon completion of the survey SMAC will have a clearer picture of the remaining landmine contamination.

22. Taking into account the specific situation of anti-personnel mine contamination present, (groups of mines and not classic minefields), this plan is subject to change, so a detailed plan will be created after the training of survey team, first NTS activities, and collecting more detailed information on the field.

23. Monthly meetings between the SMAC and survey teams will be organized so that the survey teams present the results for that month. These meetings will be used for organizing activities for the next month. Development of technical survey & clearance work plan will be done periodically as relevant information is collected on the areas suspected of being contaminated by mines and other UXO. The final analysis of all performed activities will be performed after the completion of all mine risk education (MRE) and NTS activities.

24. NTS will begin with Djordjevac, Končulj and Dobrosin, as these communities are potentially the most vulnerable to mines and other UXO.

25. Budget Estimation NTS

<i>1. NTS</i>		<i>2024/2025 Budget</i>
Technique and equipment/ technical and demining equipment	EUR	177.615,00
Staff engagement/surveyors, contract services	EUR	131.979,00
TOTAL:	EUR	309.594,00
<i>2. MRE</i>		<i>2024/2025 Budget</i>
Technique and equipment, EORE Material	EUR	31.344,00
Staff engagement/ contract services	EUR	14.664,00
Total:	EUR	48.008,00
3. Budget reserve	EUR	35.560,00
Total: 1+2+3	EUR	391.162,00

Activity	Comment	Month (2024)					Month (2025)													
		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct
Finalizing procedures with ITF and procurement of equipment		x																		
Recruitment	It is planned to recruit minimum 4 surveyors + 1 operational manager	x																		
			x																	
Training of trainers	SMAC personnel will be trained by international instructor		x	x																
Training of survey teams	SMAC personnel under supervision of international instructor will train survey teams				x	x														
Desktop Survey	First step - SMAC staff with surveyors					x	x													
Deployment						x	x													
Area of 1.777.367m2	Engaged 4 surveyors							x	x											
Area of 1.317.575m2	Engaged 4 surveyors									x	x									
Area of 830.383m2	Engaged 4 surveyors										x	x								
Area of 286.193m2	Engaged 2 surveyors											x	x							
Area of 156.125m2	Engaged 2 surveyors												x	x						
Survey of additional areas discovered during NTS														x	x					
SMAC Analysis of survey results	At the end of each month and final analysis					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
Periodical analysis by Project supervisor							x						x							

		<i>Month (2024)</i>												<i>Month (2025)</i>						
		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Comment</i>																			
Final analysis by international instructor or Project supervisor														x	x	x				
Development of technical survey & clearance workplan																	x	x	x	

26. Mine Risk Education Plan in 59 villages of Bujanovac:

Table that shows initial plan for MRE activities in schools and local communities in Bujanovac municipality

Primary School	Month (2024)				Month (2025)								
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Aug
Branko Radičević	x												
Naim Frašeri		x											
Ali Bektaši			x										
Bora Stanković				x									
Miđeni					x								
Sami Frašeri						x							
Vuk Stefanović Karadžić							x						
Desanka Maksimović								x					
Dragomir Trajković									x				
Muarem Kadriju										x			
School for music											x		
High school													
Sveti Sava												x	
30 Local communities - by 3 each month													
Analysis by SMAC team	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Periodic analysis by International instructor	x			x			x						
Final analysis by international instructor or Project supervisor													x

27. Simultaneously with survey activities, mine risk education and reduction (MRE) activities will be conducted in all 59 villages of the Municipality of Bujanovac. During survey, MRE and community liaison activities, women, men and children will be consulted. In addition, there is equal access to employment for qualified women and men in survey and clearance.

28. By conducting MRE activities surveyors will be collecting information about potential contamination of mines and other UXO.

Assumptions and Risks

29. If the funds for demining operations are provided, namely if international funding is made available for clearance of anti-personnel mines, national funding continues to flow for the implementation of the programme and no additional mine areas are discovered ahead of completion, Serbia intends, by the use of methods such as cancelation and reduction through non-technical and technical survey, manual demining, mechanical demining (where applicable) to complete clearance in Serbia as soon as possible.

30. Note: In the territory of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, there are mined areas, as well as areas contaminated with cluster bombs remaining after the armed

conflicts." Pursuant to Resolution 1244 of the United Nations Security Council (Annex II, item 6), it is envisaged that after the withdrawal, an agreed number of the Republic of Serbia personnel, will be allowed to return to perform certain functions, including marking and clearing minefields. As this provision of Annex II has not been implemented, this issue is still within the competence of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo in accordance with Resolution 1244.
