Meeting 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 8 and 12 of the provisional agenda
Informal presentation of requests for extension of deadlines submitted under Article 5 and of the analysis of these requests
Consideration of requests submitted under Article 5

Request for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention

Summary

Document submitted by Burkina Faso*

I. Origin of contamination under Article 5

1. At the time of the Convention's entry into force for Burkina Faso on 1 March 1999, there was no anti-personnel mine contamination requiring clearance under Article 5 of the Convention in the country. Indeed, at that time, Burkina Faso reported that there were no mined areas under its jurisdiction or control.

2. However, the regional context in West Africa, and more particularly in the Sahelian zone starting in 2010, has contributed significantly to the emergence and proliferation of weapons and explosive devices. The situation had changed over the years. Since 2015, Burkina Faso has been dealing with a terrorist threat involving, as early as October 2016, the use of improvised anti-personnel mines that are activated primarily by the victim.

II. Challenges relating to Article 5

3. Since 2016, Burkina Faso has faced challenges in the implementation of Article 5 of the Convention, as it has established or suspects the existence of contaminated areas under its jurisdiction or control.

4. Attacks involving the use of improvised anti-personnel mines have primarily affected 8 of the 13 administrative regions of Burkina Faso – Sahel, Est, Centre-Nord, Nord, Boucle du Mouhoun, Cascades, Centre-Ouest and Centre-Est. The use of improvised anti-personnel mines is spreading to other regions. In addition to expanding geographically, their use is also increasingly affecting the civilian population, with the number of victims rising steadily.

* The present report was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.

5. The presence of improvised anti-personnel mines has been proven by recurrent incident reports and casualty statistics. This extension request concerns the:

(i) Performance of an initial risk analysis;

(ii) Introduction of an information management system;

(iii) Conduct of non-technical surveys;

(iv) Continued and expanded information sessions on the risks of explosive ordnance;

(v) Conduct of occasional explosive ordnance disposal activities.

6. This is the first request submitted by Burkina Faso for an extension under Article 5 of the Convention. The suspected localities are in the vicinity of others where there have already been incidents involving improvised anti-personnel mines. Related risks are spread across 226 localities in Burkina Faso.

7. In Burkina Faso, the inaccessibility of certain localities is linked to the intensity of terrorist attacks and the risks associated with improvised anti-personnel mines. Therefore, depending on the security situation, some localities remain inaccessible for mine action. However, risk education activities and non-technical surveys can be carried out in those areas.

III. Geographic and demographic characteristics of contaminated areas

8. Contaminated areas present various geographical challenges, including:

(i) Remoteness: most mined localities are located in remote areas of central Burkina Faso, making access and transport of the necessary equipment, not to mention the mobility of deminers, difficult;

(ii) Vegetation: dense vegetation in certain areas, particularly in the administrative regions of Est, Boucle du Mouhoun, Cascades, Sud-Ouest and Hauts-Bassins, makes the detection of improvised anti-personnel mines more complex and increases the risk for deminers;

(iii) Soil characteristics: rocky or sandy soils in some regions make detection equipment less efficient and slow down operations;

(iv) Climatic conditions: climatic hazards such as high temperatures, strong winds and heavy rainfall, depending on the locality, slow down operations, including the use of animals to detect mines.

IV. Victim information

9. Improvised anti-personnel mines have caused numerous casualties in Burkina Faso. While the first victims were personnel of the defence and security forces, civilian casualties began to be registered in 2018. According to data collected by the Mine Action Service of the United Nations (UNMAS) between January 2017 and June 2024, improvised anti-personnel mines caused more than 817 security incidents, resulting in around 1,627 casualties, including 805 deaths and 822 injuries among civilians, and 338 deaths and 414 injuries among the defence and security forces. Between January and June 2024, 146 incidents involving improvised explosive devices were registered. These incidents claimed 79 victims (29 killed and 50 wounded), 60 per cent of whom were civilians (32 per cent women and 35 per cent children).

V. National demining institutions

A. National authority for the review of the implementation of the Convention

10. The national mine action authority of Burkina Faso is the National Commission for Arms Control. It is responsible for the implementation of the Convention, including assessment, clearance, education about the risks of improvised anti-personnel mines, and reporting. The Commission is also responsible for coordinating the work of the various humanitarian actors. Detection and neutralization operations are mainly carried out by the Army Corps of Engineers, which operate the national demining centre.

B. Efforts to build sustainable national capacity

11. Burkina Faso has taken a number of steps towards establishing sustainable national capacity to clean up contaminated areas.

12. As part of its national capacity-building efforts, Burkina Faso trained demining units within the national armed forces and internal security forces, in particular for the detection and neutralization of improvised anti-personnel mines. In addition, strategic documents have been drawn up, notably the Burkina Faso mine action standards, which provide a framework for mine action activities, and the 2023–2027 national strategy for the elimination of improvised explosive devices (SNLC-EEI 2023-2027).

13. Burkina Faso received international support from the United Nations system, mainly UNMAS, from 2019 to 2024, which subsequently withdrew from the country citing constraints related to the funding of their activities. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also supports programmes to teach educators and children about the risks of explosive devices.

14. International non-governmental organizations, such as the Mines Advisory Group, Humanity and Inclusion, the Danish Refugee Council, DanChurchAid and the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, are helping to build local capacity in demining and risk education.

15. Local civil society organizations are also contributing, especially in the area of explosive ordnance risk education for communities.

VI. Methods and standards used in identifying and clearing areas where the presence of improvised anti-personnel mines is known or suspected

16. Burkina Faso uses a combination of methods to identify and clear contaminated areas. For the detection and destruction of improvised anti-personnel mines, both manual and canine resources are currently being used. These activities are carried out in line with the Burkina Faso mine action standards, which are regularly updated to keep pace with international best practice.

17. The methodologies used for demining operations include:

(i) Manual demining: use of metal detectors to locate explosives, followed by manual excavation and neutralization of improvised anti-personnel mines;

(ii) Animal detection systems: use of specially trained dogs that rely on their sense of smell to detect improvised anti-personnel mines.

A. Climate and environmental considerations

18. In line with the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan 2025–2029, environmental protection remains a fundamental aspect of the implementation of the Convention in Burkina Faso.

19. The Fight for the Enhanced Plant Cover of Burkina Faso, a plan that has already been adopted, provides for the establishment of 45 groves across the country, or 1 for every province, in order to stem the degradation observed since the start of the crisis.

20. In addition, the Green Climate Fund has drawn up a guide for designing and carrying out climate projects in fragile areas of Burkina Faso. This is in response to climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in a difficult security context. All these efforts demonstrate the commitment of Burkina Faso to using effective methods and standards to identify and clear contaminated areas, while taking climatic and environmental considerations into account. An environmental standard for mine action in Burkina Faso will be developed in the first quarter of 2026.

B. Efforts made to ensure the effective exclusion of civilians from contaminated localities and the methods employed

21. Civilians are not excluded from intervention zones in the context of operations to secure the territory. However, the Army Corps of Engineers detect and destroy improvised anti-personnel mines with a view to facilitating the return of displaced populations to their communities of origin.

VII. Resources made available to support progress to date

22. Burkina Faso has received significant financial support for its demining efforts.

23. This support comes from

(a) International and domestic resources:

(i) United Nations: United Nations Development Programme;

(ii) UNICEF and UNMAS provided technical and financial assistance for demining operations.

(b) Foreign Governments:

(i) Germany has given the Government of Burkina Faso some two billion CFA francs towards building a national demining centre and a dog training centre;

(ii) Canada has provided financial support through UNMAS and the Mines Advisory Group for the development of a national strategy to combat improvised anti-personnel landmines and the strengthening of Burkina Faso’s demining capacities.

(c) From the Government of Burkina Faso: the Government has allocated financial resources for the training of “search and detect” and explosive ordnance disposal specialists, the acquisition of detection and neutralization equipment and awareness-raising about the risks associated with improvised anti-personnel mines.

VIII. Humanitarian, economic, social and environmental implications

24. Improvised anti-personnel mines have a devastating impact on local communities. Social and economic consequences include:

(i) Population displacement: in areas contaminated by improvised anti-personnel mines, people are forced to leave their homes, leading to internal displacement to safer areas;

(ii) Loss of livelihoods: farmers and herders can no longer access their land, resulting in loss of income and food insecurity. Commercial activities, which represent the main source of income for a large part of the population, are hampered by the existence of improvised anti-personnel mines along trade routes;

(iii) Stress and trauma: incidents involving improvised landmines cause significant psychological stress and trauma among survivors and affected communities.

IX. Time required and justification

25. Burkina Faso is requesting a deadline extension until 31 December 2028. The additional time is needed to complete the initial analysis of contamination, set up an information management system, carry out non-technical surveys and perform tasks involving explosive ordnance disposal by the Army Corps of Engineers.

26. In parallel, explosive ordnance risk education will continue to be provided to communities at risk. The activities planned during the extension period are as follows:

(i) Information gathering;

(ii) Capacity-building;

(iii) Planning and implementation;

(iv) Monitoring and evaluation;

(v) Resource mobilization;

(vi) Explosive ordnance risk education.

X. Workplan for the deadline extension requested

(i) Initial analysis of contamination;

(ii) Information management;

(iii) Non-technical surveys;

(iv) Tasks relating to explosive ordnance disposal;

(v) Risk education about improvised anti-personnel mines.

27. The workplan contains a budget broken down by year and activity totalling US$ 5,601,133, of which US$ 1,660,900 is to be provided by Burkina Faso and US$ 3,940,233 is to be raised from external sources.