

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**

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

Summary

Submitted by the Democratic Republic of the Congo*

1. The history of armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo since its independence, particularly from 1960 to 1964, 1975 to 1977, 1996 to 1997 and 1998 to 2002, is marked by the belligerents' use of anti-personnel mines.
2. Ten years after acceding to the Convention, the Democratic Republic of the Congo was granted an intermediate extension of 26 months to clarify the landmine contamination situation. That intermediate extension was followed by three further extensions – the first of six years, the second of 18 months and the third of 42 months – to clear the hazardous areas identified in the country, which has 26 provinces and a surface area of 2,345,410 km².
3. The contamination has already caused more than 3,136 casualties to date. Confronted with this human tragedy, the Democratic Republic of the Congo resolutely launched a clearance strategy as part of efforts to honour its commitments to eradicate this threat under Article 5 of the Convention since its ratification. Given the numerous challenges to overcome, the Democratic Republic of the Congo plans to meet its obligations under the Convention with support from the international community, which is currently working towards eradicating the threat of anti-personnel mines.

Status of work done in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

4. The challenge during the 42-month extension from 30 June 2022 to 31 December 2025 was to identify the 33 hazardous areas registered in the national database, which represent 117,030.7 m², as well as the two territories of Aru and Dungu, located in the provinces of Ituri and Haut-Uélé, which remained to be surveyed owing to a lack of funding. A clear implementation plan was therefore drawn up. Meanwhile, the security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has continued to deteriorate as a result of multiple armed conflicts.

* The present document was submitted after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.



Circumstances that prevented the Democratic Republic of the Congo from achieving compliance within the allotted time frame

5. Regarding its commitments under Article 5 of the Convention, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been unable to meet its treaty obligations within the 42-month time frame (between 30 June 2022 and 31 December 2025), owing to the following factors:

(a) Insufficient financial resources: the means available have not been sufficient to complete the clearance of the 33 remaining areas or to finalize the national surveys planned in the territories of Aru and Dungu, located in the provinces of Ituri and Haut-Uélé, and to continue with the actual demining operations;

(b) Discovery of additional suspected areas: supplementary technical and non-technical surveys conducted during the execution period revealed additional areas requiring demining, thus increasing the initially estimated workload.

Main humanitarian and security constraints

6. The national mine action programme in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is going through a very difficult period because of the insecurity in the east of the country, which continues to prevent accredited national and international organizations from freely carrying out certain activities related to mine action, besides risk education and non-technical surveys. Demining, clearance and explosive ordnance disposal operations have thus far not been authorized in the area occupied by rebel groups, and this is compounded by a significant drop in international funding, notably the cessation of support from South Korea, through the Mine Action Service of the United Nations (UNMAS), and from the United States of America, through the non-governmental organization DanChurchAid.

Duration of and reasons for the proposed extension

7. The Democratic Republic of the Congo requests an extension of 36 months, from 31 December 2025 – the end date of the previous extension – to 31 December 2028, assuming that the security imperative of a ceasefire is in place by the beginning of the requested extension period.

8. This request is being made for the following reasons:

(a) To raise the funds required to clear the remaining 31 areas contaminated by anti-personnel mines, covering 307,023.80 m², and 2 areas contaminated by explosive remnants of war, covering 28,249.90 m²;

(b) To seek out the technical and financial means required to finalize the surveys in the territory of Dungu, in the province of Haut-Uélé, and to carry out the actual mine clearance.

9. The Democratic Republic of the Congo intends to request funds from various financial partners by:

(a) Mobilizing funds from donors such as the United Nations and the European Union;

(b) Encouraging the private sector to make contributions as part of corporate social responsibility efforts.

10. From an operational point of view, bearing in mind the demining progress made in the Democratic Republic of the Congo thus far, it is essential to focus on the national capacity of the government department in charge of humanitarian demining. This department's current needs are the strengthening of its technical capabilities in relation to explosive ordnance disposal and improvised explosive devices, and the enhancement of the skills of its personnel.

11. The availability of resources also remains a determining factor. A period of 30 months is planned to complete the operations, not including the additional time needed for deployment, which is complex given the vastness of the national territory and the poor state of the road infrastructure.

Humanitarian, social, economic and environmental implications of the extension

12. The humanitarian, social, economic and environmental implications have been considerable, especially in the provinces of North Kivu (territory of Beni), Ituri (territories of Aru, Irmu and Djugu), North Ubangi (territories of Mobayi-Mbongo and Yakoma), Maniema (territory of Lubutu), South Kivu (territories of Fizi, Kalehe, Bunyakiri and Shabunda), Tshuapa (territory of Ikela) and Tanganyika (territory of Moba).

13. The presence of mines in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has an adverse impact on the country's ability to feed its people and on its gross domestic product. It thus unfortunately contributes to worsening poverty in the affected communities.

14. The mines impact study shows that a number of people are living with the daily threat of suspected or confirmed mine contamination in their immediate surroundings, resulting in obstacles to agriculture and blocked access to dwellings and roads and tracks.

15. Refugees and displaced persons are also affected. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, is still working towards the return of Congolese refugees based in Uganda, Angola, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Burundi, the Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Malawi and elsewhere, as well as the return of the many internally displaced persons, especially in the east of the country.

16. In addition, 3,136 victims of mines, explosive remnants of war and improved explosive devices, most of whom have been identified and registered in the country, have not received adequate assistance.

Plan of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to meet its obligations during the requested extension period

17. **From an operational point of view**, the Democratic Republic of the Congo will give priority to :

(a) Land release for 31 areas contaminated by anti-personnel mines and 2 areas contaminated by explosive remnants of war, in line with its 2025 mine action implementation plan and taking into account priorities that have been established based on very specific criteria;

(b) The survey of the territory of Dungu and the demining of areas that have been identified and marked.

18. To ensure the feasibility of the three-year plan and to optimize the planning of operations, the Congolese Mine Action Centre has categorized the 31 hazardous areas according to the four criteria below:

(a) **Security** has been assessed based on the security situation in January 2025. It takes into account kidnappings, victims of violence and the presence of rebel groups;

(b) **Accessibility** has been measured in terms of access roads and road conditions, vegetation and the seasons in which minefields may be reached;

(c) **The added value of mine clearance** has been defined in terms of its socioeconomic impact, given that it enables development activities such as livestock breeding, cultivation, construction and hunting/fishing;

(d) **Casualty evacuation** has been measured in terms of the victim assistance capacity inherent in mine clearance. The criteria are the accessibility, capacity and hospital infrastructure of the nearest medical centre.

19. In the territory of Dungu, the non-technical survey to identify mined areas will be conducted together with a technical survey to determine the extent of the contamination, and confirmed areas will be demined at the same time, as was done in the territory of Aru, located in the province of Ituri.

20. From a quality management point of view:

(a) The Democratic Republic of the Congo has already set up more than ten coordinating offices in the provinces, and it intends to increase its technical operational capacity in quality management for the accreditation and monitoring of new national demining organizations;

(b) National standards and standard operating procedures for organizations carrying out mine action will be reviewed;

(c) The work schedule will take account of national priorities: clearance of residential and agricultural areas, areas where State-owned infrastructure is in need of repair and areas to which refugees and displaced persons are to return.

21. From a coordination point of view:

(a) During the extension period, the Congolese Mine Action Centre will continue to enhance the entire coordination system by updating national standards and strengthening quality management (quality assurance and quality control) and information management.

22. In terms of capacity-building:

(a) The Congolese Mine Action Centre, working closely with all those involved in mine action, will focus on building the capacity of its staff in all aspects of mine action, as part of the management of residual contamination;

(b) The Democratic Republic of the Congo intends to consolidate the operational capacity of organizations established in the country, alongside capacity-building in relation to explosive ordnance disposal, for deminers working for the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the National Police who have been seconded by the Army Corps of Engineers for mine clearance and other explosive ordnance disposal more broadly, particularly improvised explosive devices, to the governmental humanitarian demining service.

Funding and technical means available to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to meet its obligations during the requested extension period

23. In financial terms, the requirements of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for this period amount to US\$ 6,329,830, or US\$ 4,861,560 for the clearance of 33 mined areas covering 307,023.80 m²; \$568,270 for the finalization of the survey and clearance of the territories of Dungu, in the province of Haut-Uélé; and \$900,000 for mine risk education activities.

24. The Government has earmarked a minimum of \$600,000 in its own budget to cover the programme's operating costs, including coordination.

25. As for technical means, future land release operations will be carried out manually and will require the integration of explosive device risk education, in accordance with actions 28 and 29 of the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan 2025–2029.

26. The Democratic Republic of the Congo already benefits from services provided by international and national demining operators whose manual and technical teams' technical capacity should be enhanced so as to cover part of the needs mentioned above.

27. The manual clearance part will be strengthened by retraining in explosive ordnance disposal and improvised explosive devices five or six teams from the Armed Forces and the National Police who have already served on multidisciplinary demining and/or explosive ordnance disposal teams of international demining operators. It will be indispensable for them to receive training and new technical tools to ensure effective and efficient management of the work to be done during the extension period.