



GOVERNO DA GUINÉ-BISSAU

MINISTERIO DOS COMBATENTES DA
LIBERDADE DA PÁTRIA

Guinea-Bissau 's Mine Action Programme:

Overview of remaining challenges and requirements for assistance

Wednesday, 18 June 2025

Introduction

On 18 June 2025, Guinea-Bissau and the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, with support from the Convention's Implementation Support Unit, invited State and civil society representatives to engage in an open and frank discussion on Guinea-Bissau's mine action challenges and cooperation needs.

Invited participants received a package that included an invitation, programme, background materials, and information on Guinea-Bissau's mine action programme. These and other documents will be made available on Guinea-Bissau's country page of the Convention website¹.

Participants

States: Algeria, Angola, Cameroon, Denmark, Guinea-Bissau, Japan, Mali, Mozambique, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Senegal, South Sudan, Switzerland, Türkiye, United Kingdom, Zimbabwe.

Organizations: European Union (EU), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), The Halo Trust, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Mine Action Review (MAR), Senegal Landmine Survivor Association.

Summary

The meeting was opened by Ms. Sofie Kallehauge, First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Denmark in Geneva and then Chair of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance.

Opening remarks were provided by H.E. Ib Petersen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations in Geneva. Ambassador Petersen congratulated Guinea-Bissau for being the first State Party to take advantage of the Individualised Approach since the Fifth Review Conference and reiterated the importance of the Individualised Approach as part of a broader resource mobilisation strategy, most efficiently supported by establishing national platforms at a national level. In closing, Ambassador Petersen encouraged participants to share in an open and constructive dialogue during the Individualized Approach.

H.E. Ali Hijasi, Minister for Freedom Fighters of the Homeland (online), delivered an opening statement on behalf of Guinea-Bissau. Minister Hijasi noted the intention of Guinea-Bissau to complete implementation of its mine clearance commitments under Article 5, as specified in Guinea-Bissau's 2024 extension request, as soon as possible. Minister Hijasi mentioned the commitment of the Government of Guinea-Bissau of US \$100,000 to support implementation activities in Guinea-

¹ <https://www.apminebanconvention.org/en/membership/guinea-bissau>

Bissau and appealed to international partners to support Guinea-Bissau's efforts to fulfil its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention as soon as possible.

Presentation

Mr. Nautan Mancabu, Director, Mine Action Coordination Centre of Guinea-Bissau (Centro Nacional de Coordenação da Ação Anti-Minas (CAAMI)) (online), began his presentation by extending his gratitude to the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance, and the Chair, Denmark, for supporting Guinea-Bissau's Individualised Approach meeting and welcomed the opportunity provided by the Individualised Approach.

Guinea-Bissau acceded to the Convention in 2001 and declared completion of its Article 5 obligations in 2012. However, data gathered on new incidents since 2014 revealed ongoing contamination, with 14 accidents resulting in 76 casualties recorded. Since 2021, Guinea-Bissau submitted three requests for extension of its Article 5 deadline: the first, a 12-month request in 2021 to revive national institutions which had been closed following Guinea-Bissau's Declaration of Completion, this was followed by a 24-month request in 2022, to conduct survey and risk education activities with funding from the Netherlands and Norway, and 36-month request submitted in 2024 to complete this work by 31 December 2027.

Guinea-Bissau provided an overview of efforts in implementation for the period 2022-2024. Including the accreditation of three mine action operators—two international (The HALO Trust, and Mines Advisory Group) and one national - Humanitarian Aid (HUMAID). This resulted in the retraining of one national clearance team. Guinea-Bissau shared that a planned nationwide non-technical survey, scheduled to begin in 2022, could not be implemented due to funding constraints. Guinea-Bissau shared that with the financial support of the Netherlands and Norway, Guinea-Bissau was able to conduct risk education sessions and non-technical survey on former battlefields in the period 2022-2024. As a result of these activities, Guinea-Bissau reported an initial total of 38 hazardous areas, the identification of 24 hazardous areas, including, 14 confirmed hazardous areas (CHA) and 10 suspected hazardous areas (SHA). Guinea-Bissau also shared that during this period, clearance operations conducted by HUMAID and MAG, included the clearance of one battlefield and 19 'explosive ordnance disposal' (EOD) tasks, resulting in the destruction of 806 items of explosive ordnance. Community-based risk education sessions and non-technical surveys were also conducted.

Guinea-Bissau shared that MAG, in partnership with the local organization NADEL, conducted 143 survey tasks in border areas with Senegal, including initial contamination analyses, non-technical surveys and risk education sessions. As a result of these efforts, 13 CHAs were identified measuring 145,218 square metres.

Guinea-Bissau noted that with the completion of the Netherlands and Norwegian funded project, clearance operations ceased in July 2024, community liaison activities ceased in December 2024, and a complete pause of all operations in January 2025.

Guinea-Bissau emphasized that despite the financial challenges, these results demonstrate the impact of coordinated action combining technical expertise, community engagement, and capacity building.

Moving forward, Guinea-Bissau presented a three-year budget for the period, (2025–2027) with an estimated total of US \$7.65 million to support the following priority areas:

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| ▪ Coordination by CAAMI: | US \$842,000 |
| ▪ Information management and standards: | US \$267,000 |
| ▪ Nationwide non-technical survey: | US \$2,000,000 |

- Clearance and marking operations: US \$2,200,000
- Risk education and capacity building: US \$500,000
- Administration, logistics, and security: US \$1,760,000

Guinea-Bissau shared that the budget was developed in coordination with technical and operational partners and reflects a structured and responsible approach to fulfilling humanitarian obligations. Guinea-Bissau shared that it is actively advocating for increased national contribution of US \$100,000 and calls on international partners to align support with national priorities in a coordinated and predictable manner. Guinea-Bissau reaffirmed its strong commitment to the Convention, highlighting its institutional reforms, adopted national standards, and progress in the development of national strategies. With ongoing support from UNDP and its implementing partners, Guinea-Bissau is preparing to scale up operations and build a sustainable response to residual contamination.

Guinea-Bissau reiterated that the country now has in place;

- A reactivated institutional framework;
- National standards;
- An Explosive Ordnance Risk Education plan;
- Implementing partners; and,
- A national strategy and a comprehensive plan of action (with the support of UNDP).

Guinea-Bissau closed by inviting participants to support national coordination efforts to ensure that every square meter is made safe, every accident prevented, and every capacity strengthened, marking one more step towards a territory free of anti-personnel mines and other explosive ordnance for the benefit of present and future generations.

Discussion

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) shared its insight on progress and challenges since re-engaging with CAAMI in 2021. MAG mentioned that as a result of Guinea-Bissau's first Individualised Approach meeting in 2021, funding from the Netherlands and Norway was mobilised to conduct a needs analysis resulting in the implementation of training and data-sharing workshops to clarify land classification criteria. MAG highlighted its partnerships with HUMAID and NADEL in conducting EOD tasks and risk education sessions. However, the end of its project funding for Guinea-Bissau in December 2024 resulted in the demobilisation of national partners. MAG emphasised that CAAMI is ready, national organisations are trained and have capacity to scale up operations, with Guinea-Bissau close to completion, further delay will result in greater challenges to restart activities and risks the demobilisation of CAAMI and its implementing partners. MAG reiterated the importance of Guinea-Bissau's national financial commitment and the role of international partners to continue efforts to strengthen Guinea-Bissau's national capacity.

UNDP stressed the importance of building a sustainable national capacity to manage residual risks. UNDP asked if discussions included the role of civil protection institutions, (e.g., police, army) as national institutions capable of responding to residual contamination. UNDP highlighted the importance of finding an institutional structure in Guinea-Bissau that can retain information in the national database, ensure equipment is effectively managed and possesses the knowledge to respond to residual contamination after completion.

Guinea-Bissau responded that it has a structure in place to respond to explosive ordnance and is working to advocate and raise awareness of the need for a national budget allocation to support these activities. Guinea-Bissau also mentioned that it is seeking to raise awareness among international partners to support activities, as shared in its work plan (attached).

MAG took the floor to mention that these are crucial questions and that the 2024 extension request also covers these matters. MAG responded that discussions in-country have explored how to extend government funding to national NGOs or to support military engineers who can implement EOD tasks.

Portugal welcomed Guinea-Bissau's commitment and noted the current challenges facing Guinea-Bissau. In response, Portugal offered continued cooperation through bilateral agreements and Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) initiatives. Portugal also noted the current cooperation with the respective States Police Forces; noting the areas of border control, and human rights, and that it is within this bilateral cooperation that Portugal's Public Security sector can expand its support to activities under the Convention, with the Public Security Police (PSP) ready to engage on technical and legal capacity building and joint exercises in implementing obligations under the Convention. Portugal also expressed the openness of the Permanent Mission of Portugal in Geneva to support the authorities of Guinea-Bissau.

UNDP (online) thanked the attendance of H.E. Minister Hijasi and mentioned that the work of UNDP in Guinea-Bissau comes in direct response to a request from the Minister to support CAAMI to develop a strategic document, including an action plan and resource mobilisation strategy, that will constitute CAAMI's re-activation under the Ministry to conduct clearance and demining, and further build its sustainable capacity to carry out these tasks in the country.

The United Kingdom welcomed Guinea-Bissau's transparency and highlighted the need for Guinea-Bissau to consider the integration of mine action with environmental conservation initiatives in the country and highlighted the United Kingdom's interest in connecting Guinea-Bissau with the United Kingdom's partners, The HALO Trust, in Angola, who have worked on similar climate and mine action initiatives. The UK mentioned that such initiatives may result in Guinea-Bissau attracting project funding outside of typical mine action sector funding.

HALO Trust (online) confirmed its past engagement with Guinea-Bissau in weapons and ammunition management (2017), and that HALO Trust met with six embassies in the capital and is currently conducting EOD 1 and EOD 2 training and capacity building, including work with Armed forces and border guards when conducting explosive ordnance disposal. HALO indicated the need to mobilise funding and reiterated the need for sustained support.

Norway expressed its support for Guinea-Bissau's efforts and noted the role of Norway in supporting MAG's previous activities in the country, as part of a regional project encompassing Mauritania, Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. Norway noted a shift in funding focus due to resource constraints. Norway encouraged other donors to join in supporting Guinea-Bissau.

The Director of the ISU took the floor to commend Guinea-Bissau for its clear plan and its engagement with international partners. The ISU highlighted the importance of non-technical survey as a first step to more accurately identify the type and extent of contamination present in-country, the need to continue carrying out emergency EOD tasks, and risk education in order to keep communities safe while survey is being conducted. The ISU noted the importance of international support for non-technical survey to identify contamination more accurately, and the need to ensure that support is provided to avoid further loss of national capacities.

Closing Summary and follow up

In closing, Honourable Minister Ali Hijasi expressed his gratitude to Denmark, the Committee, the ISU, and all participants for their support and engagement. Minister Hijasi reiterated Guinea-Bissau's strong commitment to fulfilling its Convention obligations and appealed for continued support from the international community.

Ms. Sofie Kallehauge, as moderator, thanked all participants for their contributions and confirmed that a meeting summary report would be prepared and circulated to participants and also published on Guinea-Bissau's country page on the Convention website.

For further information on Guinea-Bissau's mine action programme, please direct queries to:
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For any other matter please contact the Implementation Support Unit:
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