

CAMEROON



CLEARING THE MINES 2022

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2013
NEW EXTENDED DEADLINE NEEDED TO RETURN TO COMPLIANCE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: LOW
EXTENT UNKNOWN**

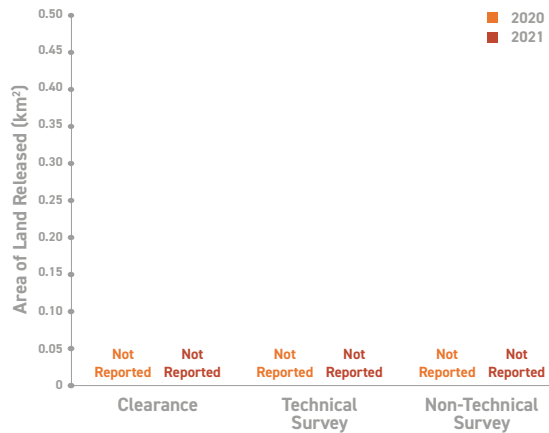
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2021

0
M²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2021

**NOT
REPORTED**

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Non-state armed groups increased use of explosive devices, including mines of an improvised nature, particularly in Cameroon's northern districts along the border with Nigeria amid escalating military activity by Boko Haram but also in other regions such as the south west, also affected by anglophone insurgency.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Cameroon should inform states parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) of the discovery of any anti-personnel mine contamination, including mines of an improvised nature.
- Cameroon should submit an Article 7 transparency report detailing all suspected or confirmed mined areas under its jurisdiction or control and should report systematically on explosive device incidents detailing the number, location, and device type.
- Cameroon should request a new APMBC Article 5 deadline from the other States Parties.
- Cameroon should put in place a sustainable national capacity to respond to the contamination, seeking international assistance to achieve this, as required

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- No national mine action authority or national mine action centre

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Army Engineer Corps

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Cameroon faces an escalating threat from explosive devices, including mines of an improvised nature, resulting from conflict in three regions. They include a widening Boko Haram insurgency spilling over from Nigeria into the Lake Chad region and an increasingly violent separatist insurgency in the Anglophone North West and South West regions. The extent of the area affected by explosive devices is unknown. In all three regions, the main threat appears to stem from explosive devices, including victim-activated and remotely detonated devices, placed on an ad hoc basis on roads and sites frequented by civilians, not from minefields.¹

The United Nations reported that more than 10 improvised explosive device (IED) incidents occurred every month during 2021. It said attacks targeting civilians increased in the south-west during the last quarter of 2021 and reported 35 incidents in the north-west region in October 2021.² The UN reported 13 IED incidents in July 2022, seven in the north-west and six in the south-west.³ Casualties inflicted by explosive devices linked to the five-year old Anglophone insurgency escalated sharply in 2020 and 2021.⁴

Five police officers and three gendarmes were reportedly killed in the north west region in November 2021 when their vehicle detonated an improvised device.⁵ A roadside explosive device struck a military convoy near the North Western town of Mbengwi in January 2021 killing four

soldiers and a government official.⁶ The attack occurred a month after Cameroon's military reported that it had cleared six devices placed along a major road in the south-west that was regularly used by troops.⁷ Cameroon's Defence Minister Joseph Beti Assomo said in May 2021 that IEDs in western Cameroon had killed 24 people in the preceding two weeks and that the military was seizing or destroying them on an almost daily basis.⁸

In August 2020, customs authorities in northern Cameroon intercepted 207 improvised devices weighing more than two tons being transported across the border from Nigeria. In the second half of 2020, customs officers also seized large quantities of hydrogen peroxide and other chemicals used in producing IEDs.⁹

A senior army officer commented in 2017 that some roads in areas bordering Nigeria were "riddled with mines."¹⁰ A Cameroonian analyst commented that insurgents were using "homemade mines" with increasing frequency on roads and in houses.¹¹ The effect has been to reduce access for humanitarian organisations working in the area. International Organization for Migration (IOM) personnel who visited the Far North region in September 2018 were denied permission to visit a number of towns in Mayo-Tsanaga,¹² a department bordering Nigeria, because of the presence of mines and reports of kidnappings.¹³

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Cameroon does not have a functioning mine action programme. Mine clearance and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) are mainly the responsibility of the Cameroon Military Engineer Corps. Cameroon's gendarmes and police officers have also attended training courses for tackling IEDs.¹⁴

1 UNICEF, "Cameroon Humanitarian Situation Report No. 2", February 2021, accessed at: <https://uni.cf/33TBRCs>.

2 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Cameroon Humanitarian Bulletin, Issue No. 29, January 2022, p. 3.

3 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Cameroon Situation Report, 13 July 2022, p. 3.

4 "Cameroon: Violence spirals in Anglophone region", Ake Intel Department, 3 March 2021.

5 B. Etahoben, "Landmine explosion kills eight security officers in north west Cameroon", HumAngle, 15 November 2021.

6 J. Kouam, "Roadside bomb kills five in Cameroon's restive North West region", Reuters, 6 January 2021.

7 "Cameroonian forces dismantle explosive devices in restive Anglophone region", Xinhua, 14 December 2020.

8 M. E. Kindzeka, "Military says rebels turn to IEDs as numbers fall", Voice of America, 11 May 2021.

9 "La douane camerounaise intercepte 2000 litres d'un produit entrant dans la fabrication des Engins explosifs improvisés", Agence ecofin, 21 December 2020; P. N. Ngouern, "Cameroun: saisie record par la douane de plus de deux tonnes d'engins explosifs improvisés", Le360afrique.com, 31 August 2020.

10 P. Kum, "Landmine explosion kills two Cameroon soldiers", Anadolu Agency, 28 September 2017, at: <https://bit.ly/2LxKjQ0>.

11 "Boko Haram landmines inflict heavy toll on Cameroon", Latin American Herald Tribune, 30 May 2019.

12 The towns were Talla-Katchi, Assighassia, Zéméné and Cherif Moussari.

13 IOM, "Cameroon, Far North Region, Displacement Report, Round 15, 3-15 September 2018", p. 8.

14 "Cameroun: formation de 1 000 policiers et gendarmes à la lutte contre les engins explosifs improvisés" Xinhua, 20 June 2019.

Cameroon informed the United Nations in 2019 that casualties from mines and improvised devices had increased 43% in the previous year requiring a change of approach by the government. It appealed for international assistance but provided no information about any action to address the issue.¹⁵ However, Cameroon has not reported systematically on incidents involving improvised explosive devices or identified incidents involving victim-activated devices that constitute mines of an improvised nature.

In the past five years, the Army has received military training in demining and counter-IED measures, mainly from the France and the United States.¹⁶ A twitter feed by the US mission in Yaoundé in May 2021 reported provision of equipment for countering IEDs and training.¹⁷

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in Cameroon in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

As at September 2022, Cameroon had yet to submit an Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 7 transparency report covering the previous calendar year or for previous years, since its last Article 7 report which was submitted in 2009.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2021

Cameroon did not report results of clearance and EOD conducted by its Army engineers.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Cameroon's Article 5 deadline to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control expired on 1 March 2013. It has not sought to extend the deadline and is therefore in violation of the Convention.

Cameroon has not submitted an Article 7 report since August 2009 when it reported there were no areas of mine contamination under its jurisdiction or control. In view of the casualties reported by Cameroon from mines and/or victim-activated mines of an improvised nature, Cameroon needs to revise its position.

Under the APMBC's agreed framework, Cameroon should immediately inform all states parties of any newly discovered anti-personnel mines following the expiry of its Article 5 deadline in 2013 and ensure their destruction as soon as possible. It should also submit a request for a new Article 5 deadline, which should be as short as possible. Cameroon must continue to fulfil its reporting obligations under the convention, including on the location of any suspected or confirmed mined areas under its jurisdiction or control and on the status of programmes for the destruction of all anti-personnel mines within them.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Cameroon does not have plans in place to address residual contamination once its Article 5 obligations have been fulfilled.

15 Cameroon statement to the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 23 October 2019.

16 "Military Cooperation: mine clearing training (Sept. 19-30th 2016)", French embassy in Yaoundé webpage at: <http://bit.ly/2Z3ShnY>; and M. E. Kindzeka, "Cameroon Vigilantes Hunt for Boko Haram Landmines", Voice of America News, 4 March 2016, at: <http://bit.ly/2XZGxGM>.

17 US Embassy Yaoundé, @USEmbYaounde, 8 May 2021.