



TURKEY

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2022
(NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE)

MINE ACTION PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

For 2016

For 2015

MINE ACTION PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE	For 2016	For 2015
Problem understood	7	7
Target date for completion of mine clearance	3	2
Targeted clearance	5	4
Efficient clearance	5	4
National funding of programme	6	6
Timely clearance	3	2
Land release system in place	6	6
National mine action standards	6	6
Reporting on progress	6	6
Improving performance	6	6
PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE	5.3	4.9

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

In 2016, Turkey, with the support from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), made progress in operationalising the Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC), drafting national mine action standards, establishing an information management system, and implementing its March 2015 workplan for mine clearance. In June 2016, mine clearance operations, managed by UNDP, began under Phase 1 of the European

Union (EU) Eastern Border Mine Clearance project. However, despite these positive developments, Turkey is not on track to meet its extended Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 clearance deadline of March 2022. It must accelerate efforts to survey and clear non-border areas, in addition to areas on its south-eastern border, including with Iraq, and along the border with Syria.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- TURMAC should finalise its national strategic mine action plan for 2017–19 as soon as possible.
- It should also ensure that national mine action standards that ensure application of best practice in land release are approved as soon as possible, so that technical survey may be given priority over full clearance so as to accurately delineate the contaminated area.
- Turkey should mobilise the necessary resources for survey and clearance operations beyond the EU Eastern Border Mine Clearance project.
- Turkey should move forward, without delay, to demine both non-border areas and its south-eastern border and its border with Syria.
- TURMAC should provide additional details of ongoing survey of eastern border areas, as well as confirming how and when it will address the huge contamination in this region that is not specified in its workplan.
- Turkey should report on plans for clearance of mined areas under its control in northern Cyprus, in order to meet all of its APMBC Article 5 obligations.
- Turkey and Cyprus should heed the UN Security Council's renewed call for access to all remaining mined areas inside and outside the Buffer Zone.¹

CONTAMINATION

Turkey is contaminated with anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines, as well as improvised explosive devices (IEDs), with at more than 172km² of confirmed mined area across 3,080 areas, as summarised in Table 1. A further 701 areas are suspected to be mined, but the area they cover and the number of mines that may lie within them

remain to be quantified.² The great majority of anti-personnel mines in Turkey are found along its borders. The mines were laid in 1955–59 all along the border with Syria, as well as on some sections of the border with Armenia, Iran, and Iraq in 1992–95. Mines were also laid around military installations.³

Table 1: Contamination by province (as at end-2016)⁴

Region	SHAs	Area (m ²)	CHAs	Area (m ²)	AP mines in CHAs	AV mines in CHAs
Syrian border	84	Unknown	1,308	144,290,431	413,152	194,678
Iraqi border	373	Unknown	596	2,862,835	79,017	0
Iranian border	38	Unknown	467	21,207,047	198,190	0
Armenian border	0	0	42	1,097,077	20,275	0
Non-border areas	206	Unknown	667	3,107,849	34,410	0
Totals	701	Unknown	3,080	172,565,239	745,044	194,678

SHAs = Suspected hazardous areas CHAs = Confirmed hazardous areas AP = Anti-personnel AV = Anti-vehicle

The baseline mine contamination as at the end of 2016 is slightly lower than that reported for the end of the previous year, as 122,764m² was reported as having been cleared on the border with Iran during 2016.⁵ However, no mined area had been formally released by Turkey to date, and Turkey has also not reported on areas reduced and cancelled in 2016, which it plans to report “at a future date”.⁶

The number of reported mines in confirmed mined areas decreased by 9,845 during 2016, which Turkey states is the result of destruction of 9,008 anti-personnel on the Iranian border, as part of the EU Eastern Border Mine Clearance project, and 837 anti-personnel mines destroyed on the Syria border, during construction of a border security surveillance system.⁷

According to Turkey, its western borders with Bulgaria and Greece, as well as the border with Georgia, are mine-free.⁸

Government forces emplaced landmines during the 1984–99 conflict with the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, PKK) in the south-east of the country. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, these mines have been progressively cleared since 1998.⁹ In addition to mines laid by Turkish security forces, non-state armed groups have also emplaced mines and IEDs, rendering the clearance process more complex.¹⁰

Eighteen of Turkey’s eighty-one provinces still contain mined areas. The number of mined areas along the Iraqi border, as well as part of the Iranian border, is an estimate, as, according to Turkey, precise calculation is hampered by terrorist activities and the presence of unconfirmed mined areas. In addition, fewer mines are expected along the Syrian border than indicated because of detonations by smugglers and as a result of wildfires.¹¹

In its Article 5 deadline extension request, submitted in March 2013, Turkey estimated that a total of 3,520 confirmed and suspected mined areas covered almost 215km². This estimate was provisional as the size of the (then) 346 suspected mined areas had not even been estimated.¹²

In March 2015, Turkey submitted an updated workplan for its mine clearance activities, in which it reported a total of 3,080 CHAs containing mines and 701 SHAs, of which the CHAs cover almost 173km².¹³ The estimated

area of contamination and the number of emplaced mines have not yet been quantified for the 701 SHAs; therefore the total estimated contaminated area is likely to be significantly larger. The greatest mined area is on the border with Syria (approximately 144km²), with smaller areas on the borders with Iran (approximately 21km²), Iraq (less than 3km²), and Armenia (just over 1km²). A further 873 mined areas covering a total of approximately 3km² have been identified in “areas other than borders”.¹⁴

In Annex II to its updated workplan, Turkey offered a comparison between contamination reported at the time of its 2013 Article 5 extension request and the revised contamination data reported in its 2015 workplan.¹⁵ The comparison showed that in border areas the number of SHAs rose by 216, while the number of CHAs went down by 118, corresponding to a 41.39km² reduction in CHA between the 2013 extension request and the 2015 workplan. In non-border areas the number of CHAs increased by 30, with the area of CHA increasing by 0.49km² between the two datasets. In addition, the number of SHAs in non-border areas increased by 139.

Turkey has proffered a range of explanations for these discrepancies, mostly related to information management problems.

Mine contamination in Turkey has both a humanitarian and economic impact. Up to 80% of mined areas along the Syrian border are on arable land, which cannot be used. The risk to livestock is widespread, especially where fencing is damaged. Mined areas have also prevented access for development activities.¹⁶

In 2016, Turkey reported 57 casualties, including 14 fatalities, from anti-personnel mines.¹⁷ This included eight civilians (four children and four adults) who were wounded, and 50 military personnel (36 wounded and 14 killed).¹⁸ While this is still a high number, it is a significant decrease on the 215 anti-personnel mines casualties, including 29 fatalities, which Turkey reported for 2015.¹⁹

Northern Cyprus

Turkey’s original Article 5 clearance deadline was 1 March 2014. In 2013, states parties granted Turkey an eight-year extension until 1 March 2022, for clearance of mines in Turkey, but Turkey did not request additional time for clearance of the areas it controls in northern Cyprus.²⁰

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Previously, Turkey had reported that efforts were underway to centralise coordination of clearance activities through efforts by the Ministry of National Defence to establish a national mine action authority (NMAA) and a national mine action centre (NMAC). In its 2013 Article 5 deadline extension request, Turkey reported that a draft law on the establishment of an NMAA and an NMAC had been completed and was awaiting input from other ministries before delivery to the Prime Minister to submit to parliament.²¹

In January 2015, Law No. 6586 on the “Establishment of a National Mine Action Centre and Amendment of Some Other Laws” was adopted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly; the law entered into force on 3 February 2015. The law aims to define the modalities and provide the basis regarding functions, jurisdictions, and responsibilities of NMAC, which will carry out humanitarian clearance of mines and/or unexploded ordnance (UXO) in Turkey.²² The law entitles the Turkish mine action centre, now known as TURMAC, which was established under the Ministry of National Defence, to elaborate policies for this clearance; plan and steer related activities and monitor their implementation; and carry out the necessary coordination and cooperation with domestic and foreign institutions.²³

TURMAC was established on 3 February 2015,²⁴ and a director of the centre was appointed in August of the same year.²⁵ As at February 2016, core staff had been recruited and the centre was in the initial stages of becoming operational.²⁶ However, following the attempted coup in Turkey in July 2016 TURMAC's director was dismissed. In late August 2016, Colonel Aydin Imren was appointed as the new head of TURMAC.²⁷ Law 671 of 15 August 2016 and the subsequent enactment of Law 6757 of 9 November 2016 put TURMAC under the Directorate of General Plans and Principles within the Ministry of National Defence.²⁸

TURMAC's capacity-development efforts are being implemented in partnership with UNDP and the GICHD, as well as other national partners.²⁹ A capacity needs assessment conducted by UNDP and the GICHD in October 2016 highlighted several capacity gaps for TURMAC. The assessment is the basis on which TURMAC is developing its capacity for 2017 and beyond.³⁰ As at June 2017, TURMAC reported that capacity development was progressing as planned.³¹ TURMAC reported plans to be fully operational by the end of 2017, after approval of proposed organisational changes and the appointment of required personnel.³²

Strategic Planning

Turkey has still to develop a national mine action strategy. In March 2015, Turkey reported that following the official inauguration of TURMAC, a national mine action strategy for 2016–22 would be prepared in 2015 and submitted to the Council of Ministers.³³ However, the strategy was delayed until after the general elections in Turkey, which took place in November 2015.³⁴ The attempted coup in July 2016 has further delayed the strategy. In its APMBC Article 7 transparency report for 2015, Turkey stated that TURMAC was preparing a national mine action strategy, which would be submitted to the Council of Ministers by the end of 2016.³⁵

A national strategic mine action plan for 2017–19 has now been drafted, and TURMAC reported that the necessary coordination with ministerial bodies was ongoing as at June 2017. Once completed, the strategic plan will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval, after which it will be published in the Official Gazette. Turkey envisaged this would be completed by the end of 2017.³⁶ The three-year plan reportedly covers national capacity development, the clearance of mined areas and areas containing UXO, provision of mine risk education, assistance to mine victims, and the Syrian border security surveillance system.³⁷

Turkey's workplan is divided into planned survey and clearance per region and will be finalised after TURMAC has developed a national mine action strategic plan, and that further revisions were possible due to ongoing investigation and survey of mined areas in the border regions.³⁸ As at June 2017, Turkey reported that a survey plan is now included in the Draft National Strategic Mine Action Plan for 2017–19.³⁹ The summaries of the workplan, by region, are reflected below.

Prioritisation of clearance appears to be influenced more by where permission is granted for operations and where funding can be secured than by humanitarian impact. For example, areas currently being cleared as part of the EU Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project will remain as restricted areas (due to their location) even after completion of mine clearance. While these minefields pose humanitarian risk (particularly to refugees crossing the borders), the greater humanitarian impact appears to be from minefields in the interior of the country, which Turkey is not yet addressing.⁴⁰ TURMAC reported that for the EU Eastern Border Project, survey and clearance is conducted geographically from north to south in order to improve cost, time, and labour efficiency; but that clearance of other areas was prioritised according to impact.⁴¹

Syrian border

In its Article 5 deadline extension request, Turkey accorded priority to clearing the Syrian border, which is 911km long and on average 350 metres wide, and estimated to account for two-thirds of the mines and close to 90% of the remaining mined area in the country. Officials observed it is also the easiest border to clear because the terrain is flat and there has been minimal displacement of mines as a result of factors such as land erosion.⁴² According to Turkey, minefields in this region are clearly mapped, marked, fenced, and well known to the local population.⁴³ Turkey originally expected to complete clearance of mines along the Syria border by the end of 2019.⁴⁴

A bidding process for clearance operations on the Syrian border, initiated on 2 February 2012, was officially cancelled on 20 June 2013 due to armed conflict in Syria. Planned mine clearance along the border is on hold and will begin only once the conflict ends.⁴⁵ In June 2017, TURMAC reported that under the draft strategic mine action plan for 2017–19, survey of SHAs in Sanliurfa province was scheduled for 2018; and in Sirnak province (in parts of the province bordering Syria) and Hatay province for 2019.⁴⁶ Furthermore, survey of CHAs in Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, and Mardin provinces were planned for 2017/2018.⁴⁷

It should also be noted that military demining teams have been deployed along the Syria border, to enable safe construction of the Border Security Surveillance System, which consists of a 730km-long modular concrete wall and impoundment (supported by a fence), roads, and surveillance system.⁴⁸ Demining efforts in support of the construction of the surveillance system also include survey and clearance of areas suspected or confirmed to contain locally produced mines and other explosive devices deployed by non-state armed groups.⁴⁹ According to online media sources, the three-metre-high wall is being built behind minefields and deep ditches, and is reinforced with barbed wire and steel fences, and there are also watch towers and around the clock military patrols.⁵⁰ The Border Security Surveillance System, construction of which began in 2015, was expected to be completed by the end of 2017.⁵¹

Eastern borders

Turkey's 2013 Article 5 extension request sets out plans for clearance of its eastern borders, beginning with the Armenian border and continuing southwards to the borders with Azerbaijan, Iran, and Iraq.⁵² It was forecast that 13.5km² would be cleared in Phase 1 of the project and 2.4km² in Phase 2 (see below). Demining for both phases was envisaged to start by the end of 2014, after completion of the tender process with demining companies.⁵³ Two-thirds of the total cost of the three-phase project, amounting to €30 million, was expected to be financed as part of an EU "Pre-accession Financial Assistance Scheme".⁵⁴

In 2015, Turkey confirmed that mine clearance along the eastern borders would be carried out as part of a two-phase EU Integrated Border Management Project, under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior in a joint project with UNDP.⁵⁵ The project, which was launched in May 2015 to address the humanitarian and border management challenges posed by mine contamination, aims to contribute to social and economic development through demining and more secure borders in Eastern Turkey.⁵⁶ Phase 1, scheduled for 2015–17, was expected to result in the clearance of 223 mined areas over an area of just less than 11.67km² and the destruction of 189,863 anti-personnel mines.⁵⁷ Phase 2 of the project is scheduled for 2017–19, but the number of mined areas and total area to be cleared is yet to be determined, and is subject to continuing survey.⁵⁸ A budget of €26.4 million has been allocated for the first phase and €13.4 million for the second.⁵⁹ With the establishment of TURMAC, the mine action centre became the main government partner to UNDP in the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project. Under the project, UNDP is managing the demining operations and quality assurance along the eastern border and supporting capacity development of TURMAC.⁶⁰

In December 2015, Turkey reported it was working with UNDP on the tender process, and that a clearance contractor had been identified, with the contract due to be signed imminently as part of the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project. In February 2016, Turkey reported that the demining tender had been awarded to Denel MECHEM (MECHEM), as part of a consortium in which national operators would be sub-contracted by MECHEM.⁶¹ Phase 1 of the project was officially announced in April 2016, with clearance operations beginning in June. It was scheduled to be completed by December 2017.⁶²

Previously, task dossiers received by clearance operators as part of the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project were classified, which had implications for QA and security clearance. However, according to TURMAC, as at June 2017, the task dossiers for the project were no longer classified as secret.⁶³

UNDP is encouraging TURMAC to apply efficient land release practice and make use of evidence-based survey (instead of full clearance) to confirm the presence or absence of mines in areas between marked minefields.⁶⁴

With regard to Phase 2 of the project, Turkey reported that "the contract was ongoing" in cooperation with UNDP,⁶⁵ and that it was expected to be completed in accordance with the planned schedule (i.e. 2017–19).⁶⁶

South-eastern/Iraqi border

Under the draft strategic mine action plan for 2017–19 survey is planned of suspected mined area in Sirnak Province (in parts of the province bordering Iraq) in 2018 and of confirmed mined area in this province in 2019; and of suspected mined area in Hakkari Province in 2019.⁶⁷ Clearance along the south-eastern/Iraqi border is not scheduled to commence until 2019, after completion of Phases 1 and 2 of the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project,⁶⁸ and because of the conflict in Syria.⁶⁹ Clearance of the 969 mined areas, totalling just over 2.86km², is scheduled to take place in 2019–21, with the destruction of 79,017 anti-personnel mines. This represents all known mine contamination in this region. The resources for the clearance will be determined by TURMAC,⁷⁰ and the national strategic mine action plan for 2020–22 will include a mine clearance plan for this region.⁷¹

Non-border areas

In its 2013 Article 5 deadline extension request, Turkey reported that partial clearance in non-border areas would be conducted by the Turkish armed forces until the establishment of an operational national mine action authority and mine action centre and a subsequent tendering process. It was expected that clearance would be conducted in 2015–22. No dedicated budget had been allocated for clearance in these interior regions. To date, mine clearance in non-border areas has been conducted only on a very limited scale, for instance to clear paths in case of urgent need.⁷² At the time of its 2015 updated workplan, Turkey estimated that all 873 mined areas in non-border areas would be cleared by 2021, amounting to total clearance of 3.1km², with the destruction of 34,410 anti-personnel mines. This represents all known mine contamination in the region.⁷³

Of the total interior contaminated area, the Turkish armed forces were forecast to clear 280 mined areas over 1.51km² with the destruction of 18,558 anti-personnel mines. Cleared areas were planned to be certified and opened for humanitarian use following the establishment of the NMAC,⁷⁴ which has now been established. The remaining 593 mined areas, over 1.59km², including destruction of 15,852 anti-personnel mines, were forecast to be cleared in accordance with the mine action plan, once it has been prepared. A budget for clearance of Turkish Lira 84.3 million (approx. \$29 million) was due to be elaborated in detail by TURMAC.⁷⁵ In this region, Turkey prioritises mine clearance activities based on areas used for military operations; areas with low or no risk of terrorist threat; and areas where the local population may benefit from agriculture and livestock.⁷⁶

No mine clearance took place in non-border areas in 2016.⁷⁷ However, the draft national mine action plan for 2017–19 reportedly includes plans for survey of suspected mined area in interior areas of Mardin, Siirt, and Sirnak provinces in 2018, and Hakkari province in 2019; and survey of confirmed mined area in Diyarbakir and Siirt in 2019.⁷⁸ Furthermore, TURMAC reported that clearance of non-border areas was also scheduled for 2018 and 2019, but that both survey and clearance may be subject to revision.⁷⁹

Legislation and Standards

In March 2013, Turkey reported that an “Interministerial Coordination Board”, which in practice functioned as an NMAA, had been working to develop Turkish Mine Action Standards (TMAS), using the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) as a template.⁸⁰ Previously, all land-release activities were based on the standards and principles outlined in the Syrian Border Mine Clearance Standards (SBMCS), prepared by the Ministry of National Defence on the basis of IMAS. According to Turkey, although these standards were developed exclusively for the Syrian border, they are also relevant for other areas.⁸¹

As part of Phase 2 of the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project, UNDP and the Ministry of Interior developed the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Standards (EBMCS) based upon IMAS and the SBMCS. The EBMCS form the basis of all clearance operations (demining) carried out as part of the project. They have been elaborated on the basis of experience gained during a number of demining operations around the world and adapted to the operational conditions and requirements of demining in Turkey.

UNDP and GICHD are assisting TURMAC to formulate new national mine action standards based upon IMAS, the SBMCS, and the EBMCS.⁸² Turkey reported that it had developed a land release policy relating to the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project, which will allow for efficient land release. In addition, as at June 2017, national mine action standards (including a national land release policy) had also been drafted and sent to the Turkish Standardisation Institute for approval. Of the 19 standards, 2 have been published and 4 were expected to be published soon. The remainder were under review and were planned to be finalised by the last quarter of 2017.⁸³

Quality Management

Cleared areas are re-checked with mechanical demining systems following the completion of clearance operations. Additionally, a few days later, final controls are executed with mine detectors and mine detection dog (MDD) teams.⁸⁴

As part of its mandate under the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project in Turkey, UNDP is responsible for managing mine clearance services, QA/QC services and post-clearance certification to provide confidence that clearance and quality requirements defined in the standards have been met and that cleared land is safe for use.⁸⁵ UNDP has reported that, following an international competitive tender process, it awarded a contract for QA/QC services to RPS-Explosive Engineering Services in March 2016. In April 2016, UNDP and TURMAC completed the accreditation of RPS-Explosive Engineering Services, and the company then began the accreditation process for the mine clearance contractor under the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project.⁸⁶ In addition, TURMAC oversees on-site operations and regularly attends operational working group meetings in the field.⁸⁷

Information Management

UNDP and the GICHD are supporting TURMAC for the establishment of a functioning information management (IM) system.⁸⁸ UNDP was maintaining a project database to record all operational data related to the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project until a national mine action database can be established in TURMAC.⁸⁹ In its APMBC Article 7 transparency report for 2016, Turkey reported that it planned to establish IMSMA and provide training to TURMAC personnel in 2017.⁹⁰ As at June 2017, 12 TURMAC personnel had undergone IMSMA training, and IMSMA was expected to be fully operational by January 2018.⁹¹ Due to national security concerns, much of the minefield data remains classified, presenting a challenge to mine action information management in Turkey.⁹²

Operators

As at June 2017, mine clearance operations in Turkey were being conducted by MECHEM, under the Eastern Border Mine Clearance project, and by the Turkish Armed forces along the Syria border, to support construction of the Border Security Surveillance System.⁹³

MECHEM, a South African company, which is partnering with national sub-contractor Altay, was awarded the tender for mine clearance under Phase 1 of the EU Eastern Border Mine Clearance project by UNDP in December 2015.⁹⁴ MECHEM was subsequently accredited in Turkey, and as at June 2017, was employing 140 deminers, although it was planning to increase capacity to 200 in July of the same year. MECHEM did not deploy MDDs in 2016, as the dogs had not yet received accreditation. Accreditation was subsequently granted, and as at June 2017, 30 MDDs were being deployed, along with one MineWolf.⁹⁵ As noted above, RPS, a UK company, is contracted for QA and QC.⁹⁶

Demining units of the Turkish Armed Forces have a total operational capacity of 85 deminers, 6 MDDs, and 4 machines.⁹⁷ As at June 2017, organisational accreditation of the Turkish Armed Forces Demining Units had been completed,⁹⁸ but operational accreditation of the military demining troops was ongoing and due to be finalised in 2017.⁹⁹

LAND RELEASE

Turkey reported that 122,764m² of mined area had been cleared in 2016 on its border with Iran, but that no mined area had been formally released to date. Turkey also did not provide information on the area of land reduced or cancelled in 2016, but stated that this information would “be reported in the following years”.¹⁰⁰

In addition, Turkey reported to Mine Action Review that more than 3.36km² of mined area had been cleared on the Syrian border in 2016, to enable safe construction of the Border Security Surveillance System.¹⁰¹

Survey in 2016

A comprehensive desk assessment of minefield records of the Eastern and Syrian Borders was conducted in 2016,¹⁰² but information on area cancelled has not yet been reported. According to the observations of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation, produced for the Intersessional Meetings in June 2017, Turkey indicated that it would provide information on these areas in its 2017 report.¹⁰³

Clearance in 2016

MECHEM, with sub-contracting partner Altay, began clearance operation of Phase 1 of the EU Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project in June 2016.¹⁰⁴ As at September 2016, manual clearance operations were reportedly taking place along the Armenian border, in mapped and fenced minefields on flat terrain.¹⁰⁵ However, the only clearance reported by TURMAC as part of the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project in 2016 was 9,008 anti-personnel mines which were cleared in Iğdir Province, on the Iran border, releasing 122,764m².¹⁰⁶

In addition, as part of demining efforts in support of the construction of the Border Security Surveillance System, military demining teams were deployed along the Syria border, and destroyed a further 414 mines in 2016.¹⁰⁷ While the corresponding amount of mined area cleared during the demining operations to enable safe construction of the Border Security Surveillance System was not reported in Turkey’s Article 7 transparency report, as required by the APMBC, TURMAC reported to Mine Action Review that more than 3.3km² had been cleared long the Syria border in 2016.¹⁰⁸ Clearance data relating to the area of land released along the Syria border, during survey and clearance to support construction of the Border Security Surveillance System, has not been officially reported to-date, as QA/QC procedures had not yet been completed, and the Turkish armed forces demining units are not yet accredited operationally.¹⁰⁹

Table 2: Anti-personnel mine clearance in 2016¹¹⁰

Province	Operator	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Iran border	Denel MECHEM	5	122,764	9,008	1
Syria border	Turkish Armed Forces Demining Units	N/A	3,305,925	414	0
Totals		5	3,428,689	9,422	1

No mine clearance was conducted in 2016 along the South-eastern/Iraqi border or in non-border areas.¹¹¹

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the eight-year extension granted by states parties in 2013), Turkey is required to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 March 2022. Turkey is not on track to meet this deadline.

Turkey's original Article 5 deadline was 1 March 2014. At the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties in December 2011, Turkey disclosed that clearance of its border with Syria would not be completed until 2016. In 2012, it acknowledged to the Twelfth Meeting of States Parties that it would seek an extension to its deadline.¹¹²

In March 2013, Turkey submitted a request for an eight-year extension to its deadline until 2022 to complete clearance of all mined areas. Turkey stated that the envisaged timeframe was subject to revision pending progress with tenders and clearance activities on the ground.¹¹³

In its 2013 request, Turkey cited a number of circumstances that had impeded it from carrying out mine clearance, including: delays in the establishment of an NMAA and NMAC which will supervise clearance activities; adverse weather conditions allowing clearance to be conducted for only five or six months a year; security problems posed by the continuation of the terrorist threat; mined territory contaminated with metal residue resulting from the fight against terrorism; uncertainties about the mine-free status of some areas due to the irregular completion of registration forms; and topographical challenges. According to Turkey, the eastern and south-eastern borders and non-border areas are the most complicated to address due to topographical difficulties.¹¹⁴

The 2013 extension request provided more detail on Turkey's mine contamination and its plans to tackle them than had previously been the case, but shed no light on some key issues, creating uncertainty over the prospects of it fulfilling its clearance obligations. No budget had at that time been allocated for clearance of mined areas in the interior of the country, which have caused most of Turkey's mine casualties. A budget was subsequently allocated in Turkey's 2015 updated workplan.¹¹⁵

In granting the 2013 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, the Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties recalled the number of efforts to be carried out during 2013–14, crucial to the success of the implementation of Turkey's plan, and requested that Turkey report to the Third Review Conference in June 2014 on: the tendering processes for clearance along Turkey's border with Syria and the results of any related demining efforts and annual milestones of expected progress; the tendering processes for the clearance of areas along Turkey's eastern borders; developments in the establishment of the NMAA and NMAC; and process in clearance of mined areas in non-border areas.¹¹⁶ Turkey did not provide an update on clearance progress at the Third Review Conference, but did subsequently submit a workplan in March 2015.¹¹⁷

Turkey revealed in its 2013 extension request that since 1998 it had only cleared a total of 1.15km² of mined area, close to three-quarters of which took place in one year (2011), with destruction of 760 anti-personnel mines and 974 anti-vehicle mines. In addition, military teams had cleared 24,287 mines, but only to allow safe movement of troops, not to release a contaminated area.¹¹⁸

Turkey's total mine clearance to date only amounts to a tiny fraction of its overall mine contamination, and more than 13 years after becoming a state party to the APMBC, Turkey has only made very marginal progress in addressing mine contamination.

Table 3: Mine clearance in 2012–16¹¹⁹

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2016	122,764*
2015	0
2014	157,251
2013	Unknown
2012	0
Total	280,015

* TURMAC also reported to Mine Action Review that a further 3,305,925m² had been cleared on the Syria border, as part of the demining efforts in support of the construction of the Border Security Surveillance System.¹²⁰

The commencement of clearance operations in June 2016, for Phase 1 of the EU Eastern Borders project (in the provinces of Ardahan, Kars, Igdir, and Agri), is a welcome development. Funding for first two Phases of this project is provided by the EU (75% of funding), Turkey (24%), and the UN (1%).¹²¹ As at June 2017, Turkey was in the process of determining how to fund Phase 3 of the project.¹²² Implementation of the project in the provinces of Van and Hakkari risked facing significant security challenges if fighting continues between Turkey and the PKK.

In granting Turkey's Article 5 deadline extension, the Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties noted that "any additional delays in the establishment of an NMAA and NMAC should not further delay clearance efforts from proceeding".¹²³ Unfortunately, clearance efforts do appear to have suffered unnecessary delays at least in part due to the lack of an NMAA and NMAC. The adoption in January 2015 of a mine action law resulted in the establishment of TURMAC. TURMAC, with capacity development support from UNDP and the GICHD, has since made steady process towards becoming operational and assuming management and coordination of mine action in Turkey. TURMAC is entirely funded by national funding,¹²⁴ as are Turkish Armed Forces demining units.¹²⁵

While Turkey's submission of an updated workplan for Article 5 implementation in March 2015 and the establishment and operationalisation of TURMAC can be viewed as positive developments. The 2017 workplan itself only included plans to address a small portion (10%) of overall mine contamination, and it was unclear how and when the remaining contamination will be addressed. However, in 2017, TURMAC reported that the draft national strategic mine action plan for 2017–19 also includes plans for survey of SHA and CHA in the south-eastern/Iraqi border, the Syrian border, and non-border areas.¹²⁶ TURMAC reported that it planned to complete survey training by the third quarter of 2017, and to have survey capacity by October 2017.¹²⁷

Based on the current rate of clearance, Turkey is not on track to complete implementation of Article 5 by its deadline in 2022. TURMAC, however, claims that Turkey is planning to meet its Article 5 deadline of 1 March 2022, but also recognises potential obstacles, including: the possibility that the demining contractor for the EU Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project will not meet its deadline for Phase 1; potential delays to the project for Phase 2; the fact that political uncertainties in Syria and Iraq may hinder survey and clearance activities on these borders, in addition to non-state armed groups hindering demining operations in other areas; and weather conditions limiting clearance to no more than seven months a year.¹²⁸

- 1 UN Security Council Resolution 2338 (2017), §11.
- 2 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form D; and email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 3 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, pp. A-1 and A-5.
- 4 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form D; and email from Lt. Col Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Statement of Turkey, Intersessional meetings (Standing Committee on Mine Action), Geneva, 23 May 2012; and Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-1.
- 9 Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by Elif Comoglu Utgen, Head, Disarmament and Arms Control Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 14 July 2008.
- 10 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-5.
- 11 Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form C.
- 12 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, pp. A-2, and A-5.
- 13 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities".
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid, Form F, and Annex II.
- 16 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, pp. A-4 and A-7.
- 17 Statement of Turkey, Intersessional meetings (Standing Committee on Victim Assistance), Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 18 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017; and "Preliminary observations of the committee on Article 5 implementation – observations on the implementation of Article 5 by Turkey", 8 June 2017.
- 19 Article 7 Report (for 2014), Form J.
- 20 Turkey's Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013.
- 21 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. 3.
- 22 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", Annex 1; and Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons [CCW] Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report, Form A, 2015.
- 23 Article 7 Reports (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", Annex 1; and (for 2015), Form A; and CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report, Form A, 2015.
- 24 Article 7 Report (for 2014), Form F.
- 25 Interview with Gen. Celalettin Coban, Director, TURMAC, and Col. Ali Güngör, Mine Action Officer, Strategic Planning Branch, TURMAC, Geneva, 18 February 2016.
- 26 Interview with Gen. Celalettin Coban and Col. Ali Güngör, TURMAC, Geneva, 18 February 2016.
- 27 Interview with Hans Risser, Regional Specialist, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, Geneva, 7 September 2016.
- 28 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form A.
- 29 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form H; and Statement of Turkey, Intersessional meetings (Standing Committee on Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance), Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 30 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form A; and Statement of Turkey, Intersessional meetings (Standing Committee on Article 5 Implementation), Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 31 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities"; and CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report, Form A, 2015.
- 34 Interview with Gönenç Ağaçcıoğlu, Head of Section, Deputy Directorate General for the OSCE, Arms Control and Disarmament, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Dubrovnik, 11 September 2015.
- 35 Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form A.
- 36 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form A; and email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 37 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form A; and Statement of Turkey, intersessional meetings (Standing Committee on Victim Assistance), Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 38 Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form F.
- 39 Email from Lt. Col Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 40 ICBL, "Spotlight on Turkey", 19 February 2014, at: <http://www.icbl.org/en-gb/news-and-events/news/2014/spotlight-on-turkey.aspx>.
- 41 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 42 ICBL interview with Ömer Burhan Tüzel, Serhan Yiğit, and Ramazan Ercan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Abdullah Özbek, Ministry of Interior, Ankara, 5 May 2011.
- 43 Statement of Turkey, 15th Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 29 November 2016.
- 44 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, pp. A-2, A-13, and A-14.
- 45 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", pp. 3 and 8; and statement of Turkey, 15th Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 29 November 2016.
- 46 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form A.
- 49 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 50 "Walls, drones and mines: Turkey tightens border as Syria incursion deepens", Reuters, 3 March 2017; and "Amid terror threats, Turkey extends its 'Great Wall' on Syrian border", Daily Sabah Turkey, 3 January 2017.
- 51 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 52 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-14.
- 53 Ibid., p. A-14, pp. A-14 and A-15.
- 54 Ibid., pp. A-3 and A-15.
- 55 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", p. 6.
- 56 UNDP, "Mine Action Programming: Turkey", February 2016, at: <http://www.mineaction.org/sites/default/files/documents/UNDP%20Turkey%20One-Pager%20revised%20FEB2016.pdf>.
- 57 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", p. 7; UNDP subsequently announced slightly revised figures for Phase 1, reporting a plan to clear 551 minefields covering more than 15km², and to destroy a total of 222,000 landmines along the border with Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Iran. UNDP, "Turkey, UNDP begin clearing landmines along eastern borders", 4 April 2016.
- 58 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", p. 7.
- 59 Ibid.

- 60 Email from Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, 3 October 2016.
- 61 Interview with Gen. Celalettin Coban and Col. Ali Güngör, TURMAC, in Geneva, 18 February 2016.
- 62 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Interview with Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, Geneva, 7 September 2016.
- 65 Statement of Turkey, 15th Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 29 November 2016.
- 66 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", p. 7.
- 69 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 70 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", pp. 7 and 8.
- 71 Ibid., p. 7; and email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 72 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-4.
- 73 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", pp. 5 and 6.
- 74 Ibid., pp. 4 and 5.
- 75 Ibid., p. 6.
- 76 Ibid., p. 4.
- 77 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 78 Ibid.
- 79 Ibid.
- 80 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities".
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- 82 Email from Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, 3 October 2016; and Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form F.
- 83 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017; and Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form A; and Statement of Turkey, intersessional meetings (Standing Committee on Victim Assistance), Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 84 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-49; and Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", p. 4.
- 85 UNDP, "Mine Action Programming: Turkey", February 2016, at: <http://www.mineaction.org/sites/default/files/documents/UNDP%20Turkey%20One-Page%20revised%20FEB2016.pdf>.
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- 88 Interview with Col. Ali Güngör, TURMAC, Geneva, 18 February 2016.
- 89 Interview with Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, Geneva, 7 September 2016.
- 90 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form A; and Statement of Turkey, intersessional meetings (Standing Committee on Victim Assistance), Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 91 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 92 Interview with Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, Geneva, 7 September 2016.
- 93 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 94 UNDP, "Turkey, UNDP begin clearing landmine along eastern borders", 4 April 2016.
- 95 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 96 UNDP, "Turkey, UNDP begin clearing landmine along eastern borders", 4 April 2016.
- 97 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 98 Ibid.
- 99 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form A, Form A; Statement of Turkey, intersessional meetings (Standing Committee on Article 5 Implementation), Geneva, 8 June 2017; and email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 100 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Forms A and D; and email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 101 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
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- 103 "Preliminary observations of the committee on Article 5 implementation – observations on the implementation of Article 5 by Turkey", 8 June 2017.
- 104 Interview with Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, Geneva, 7 September 2016; and Altay, "Mine/UXO Clearance", at: http://www.altay.com.tr/pages/2/573/531/f/en-US/MineUXO_Clearance.
- 105 Interview with Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, Geneva, 7 September 2016.
- 106 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form D; and email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 107 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form A; and emails from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017 and Cpt. Ahmet Gün, QM EOD Officer, TURMAC, 16 November 2017.
- 108 Emails from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017, and Cpt. Ahmet Gün, TURMAC, 16 November 2017.
- 109 Interview with Col. Aydin Imren and Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, Geneva, 7 February 2017.
- 110 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 111 Ibid.
- 112 Statements of Turkey, 11th Meeting of States Parties, Phnom Penh, 1 December 2011; and 12th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 5 December 2012.
- 113 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-13.
- 114 Ibid., pp. A-11, A-12.
- 115 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities".
- 116 Decision on Turkey's Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 13MSP, 5 December 2013.
- 117 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities".
- 118 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, pp. A-8 and A-9.
- 119 See Landmine Monitor and Mine Action Review reports on clearance in Turkey covering 2011–13; and Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-9.
- 120 Emails from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017, and Cpt. Ahmet Gün, TURMAC, 16 November 2017.
- 121 Ibid.
- 122 Ibid.
- 123 Decision on Turkey's Article 5 Extension Request, 13th Meeting of States Parties, 2-5 December 2013.
- 124 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 125 Ibid.
- 126 Ibid.
- 127 Ibid.
- 128 Ibid.