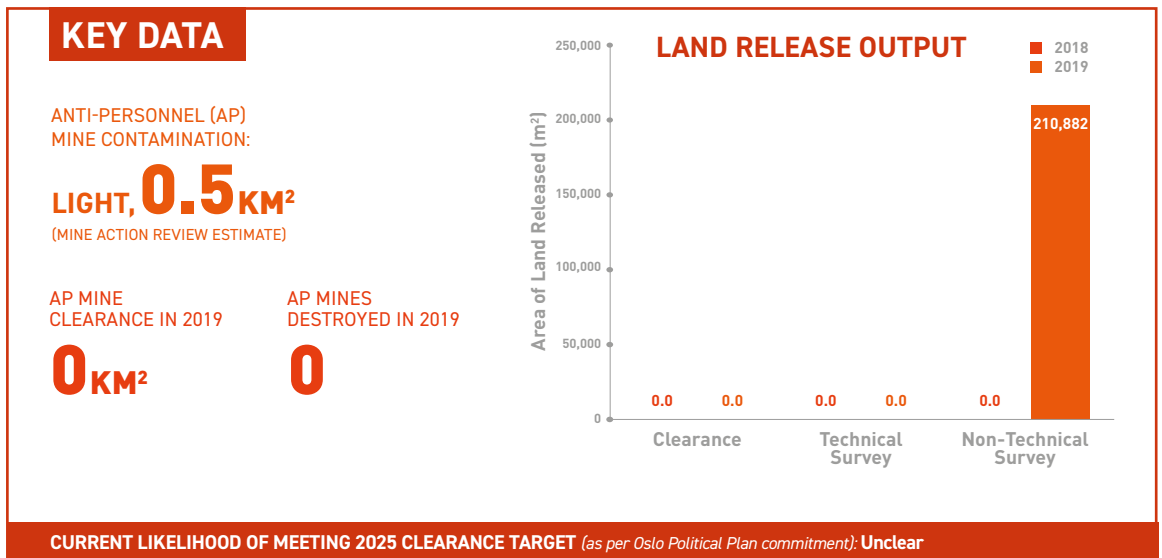


ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JULY 2022
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Cyprus released 18 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs), nine on each side of the buffer zone and totalling 0.2km². The release was according to confidence-building measures agreed by the Republic and the authorities in the north in February 2019, with the work being completed in December 2019. In addition, Turkish forces released 13,000m² to facilitate restoration of two churches located in the Buffer Zone.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot authorities in northern Cyprus should comply with the UN Security Council's renewed call for access to all remaining mined areas within and outside the buffer zone.¹
- Both sides should collaborate with the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) in developing a work plan to complete clearance of all known mined areas.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- No national mine action authority or mine action centre

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None (Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and DOK-ING were last active in 2017)

OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations (UN)-supported mine action in Cyprus is coordinated by the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) on behalf of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

At the end of 2019, Cyprus had an estimated total of 1.5km² of area contaminated by mines (including mixed anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mined area and anti-vehicle mined area), representing the first reduction recorded in three years. The number and size of confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) remains unchanged at 18, affecting 1.3km² but non-technical survey conducted as part of confidence-building measures resulted in a sharp drop in the number of hazardous areas from 47 to 29 and the estimate of suspected mined area by 44% to 0.24km² (see Table 1).²

Table 1: Mined area (at December 2019)³

Location	CHAs	Contamination	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Contamination	Area (m ²)	Total area (m ²)
South of buffer zone (controlled by Cyprus)	13	AV mines	418,543	6	AV mines	174,014	592,557
Buffer Zone	4	AV mines (3 areas) Unknown (1 area)	703,581	0	N/A	N/A	703,581
North of buffer zone (controlled by Turkish Cypriot authorities)	1	Mixed	170,493	5	Mixed	65,281	235,774
Totals	18		1,292,617	11		239,295	1,531,912

Cyprus has been divided geographically and politically since 1974 by what was once a heavily mined, 180km-long buffer zone, following Turkish Forces' operations in the north of the island. Minefields were laid by both the Greek Cypriot National Guard and the Turkish Armed Forces. The exact extent of the remaining mine contamination across the island is not known, and permission for UNFICYP to access areas within and outside the buffer zone remains limited.⁴

TERRITORY CONTROLLED BY THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

The last Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 7 transparency report Cyprus submitted (covering 2019) stated that no anti-personnel mines remained in the minefields laid by the National Guard that are in territory under its effective control.⁵ In total, between becoming a State Party on 1 July 2003 and its original Article 5 deadline of 1 July 2013, Cyprus released all 20 mined areas under its effective control.⁶

BUFFER ZONE

Four mined areas remained in the Buffer Zone at the end of 2019, three of which belong to the National Guard and are contaminated with anti-vehicle mines. The fourth belongs to Turkish Forces and the mine type is unknown.⁷ The Government of Cyprus considers the three minefields contaminated with anti-vehicle mines to be under its control and not within the buffer zone.⁸

TURKISH CYPRIOT-CONTROLLED TERRITORY IN NORTHERN CYPRUS

The extent of mine contamination in areas controlled by Turkish Forces is not known. However, Cyprus claimed in its latest Article 7 transparency report (covering 2019) 21 minefields laid and maintained in the occupied areas by Turkish Forces remain to be cleared of anti-personnel mines, of which one is situated within the buffer zone near the vicinity of the village of Deryneia. According to Cyprus, these are overwhelmingly situated adjacent to the buffer zone.⁹

In addition, there is a minefield just north of the buffer zone in Mammari, where heavy rains led to mines being washed into the buffer zone in 2014 and 2015. UNFICYP has raised the issue of clearance of this minefield with the Turkish forces and has offered assistance in this regard.¹⁰ In 2017, a small area of the Mammari minefield was cleared by a Croatian commercial operator contracted by the Turkish Armed Forces.¹¹

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus are coordinated by the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) on behalf of UNFICYP.¹² In July 2016, UNMAS became an integral component of UNFICYP, providing expertise in mine action planning and coordination, quality assurance (QA) oversight, and management of mine action information.¹³ UNMAS also provides assistance to the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) to ensure safe access to areas in which it conducts activities and to UNFICYP for explosive ordnance disposal call-out tasks.¹⁴

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

UNFICYP uses the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database. In 2017, a review and reconciliation of all electronic and hardcopy minefield database documentation revealed that a number of SHAs had already been cleared and/or cancelled. Due to “capacity limitations” between 2011 and 2016, the information had not been removed from the database. The review resulted in the removal of seven SHAs (totalling more than 950,000m²) from the database.¹⁵ The database is due to be updated but as of July 2020 no date had been set for doing so.¹⁶

Cyprus has submitted annual Article 7 reports since acceding to the APMBC in July 2003 but as of 1 August 2020 had not submitted a report covering 2019. Cyprus has submitted three Article 5 deadline extension requests: in 2012, 2015, and 2018. Cyprus submitted most of the reports in a timely manner but provided only limited information due to it not having effective control over the remaining anti-personnel mined areas.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Neither the Republic of Cyprus nor the authorities in Turkish Cypriot-controlled northern Cyprus have disclosed plans to survey and/or clear remaining mine contamination.

Non-technical survey conducted in 2019 was initiated as a confidence building measure agreed in February 2019 by the President of Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades, and the President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) Mustafa Akinci in the context of long-running discussions on a political settlement and “with a view to working towards a mine-free Cyprus”.¹⁷

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

All UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus are said to be conducted in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).¹⁸ In 2016, UNMAS updated the national technical standards and guidelines that are used in UNFICYP to reflect current best practice and to ensure the highest standards are applied for UNFICYP clearance operations.¹⁹

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

UNMAS conducts non-technical and technical survey in cooperation with representatives of the National Guard and Turkish Cypriot Security Force.²⁰ No clearance has been conducted since 2017 when the Turkish Armed Forces contracted DOK-ING to conduct clearance, and MAG to conduct QA of demining in the Mammari minefield.²¹

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2019

UNFICYP announced the release of 18 SHAs covering 210,882m² in December 2019 under confidence building measures agreed in February 2019.²² The SHAs (nine on each side of the dividing line on the island) were selected by UNMAS in cooperation with the National Guard and forces in the north. The respective militaries conducted non-technical survey and UNMAS and UNFICYP then visited one site in the north and one site in the south to receive documentation certifying completion of the tasks. Some of the sites were located in military areas and respective military forces took the opportunity to conduct training resulting in some area reduction but no items were found.²³

Turkey’s Aegean Army Command PMKI Team conducted confidence clearance of two churches, St. George and St. Jacobs, located in the disputed area of the buffer zone, to facilitate restoration work and released 13,000m². The operation was conducted between May and June 2019 but no explosive items were cleared.²⁴ Reporting of the operation conformed to international standards but as the sites were not listed as hazardous the release did not result in any adjustment to UNFICYP contamination estimates.²⁵

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the third extension (of three years) granted by States Parties in 2018), Cyprus 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 July 2022.

Cyprus reported clearing all anti-personnel mines in mined areas that it accepted were under its control within ten years of becoming a State Party, namely by 1 July 2013. In 2012, Cyprus submitted the first of its three Article 5 deadline extension requests, on the grounds that Cyprus does not have effective control over remaining contaminated areas. Cyprus has cited the same reason ever since.²⁶ Cyprus has stated: "Once Turkey ceases the military occupation of Cyprus and returns control of the occupied areas under proper conditions to the authorities of the Republic, they [the Republic of Cyprus] will be able to assume full responsibility and compliance with the provisions of Article 5 for the entire sovereign territory of the Republic of Cyprus."²⁷

Turkey received an eight-year extension of its Article 5 clearance deadline until 1 March 2022 but did not request additional time for clearance of the areas it controls in northern Cyprus.²⁸

The UN Security Council observed with regret in January 2019 "that the sides are withholding access to the remaining minefields in the buffer zone, and that demining in Cyprus must continue." It called on both sides to allow access to deminers and to facilitate the removal of the remaining mines within the buffer zone. In 2019 and most recently in January 2020 it urged both sides in Cyprus to agree and implement a plan of work to achieve a mine-free Cyprus.²⁹

Following the release of 18 SHAs in 2019, UNFICYP and UNMAS were reportedly working on another phase of confidence-building proposals but no agreement on further action had yet been reached as of July 2020.³⁰

1 UN Security Council Resolution 2453 (2019), para. 17.

2 Emails from Mark Connelly, Chief of Operations, UNMAS, 8 April and 26 June 2020.

3 Emails from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 26 June and 3 July 2020.

4 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan de Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 26 September 2017.

5 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form C.

6 APMBC Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Observations on implementation of Article 5 by Cyprus", 23 June 2015; and Article 7 Report (covering 2013), Form G.

7 Emails from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan de Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 10 September 2018; and Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 17 July 2019. Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2018/676, 6 July 2018, para. 44.

8 Interview with Demetris Samuel, Deputy Permanent Representative, Cyprus Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva, Geneva, 19 May 2016.

9 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form C.

10 Ibid.; and email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.

11 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan de Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 10 September 2018.

12 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan de Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 10 September 2018.

13 UNMAS, "Cyprus" webpage, accessed 27 July 2017, at: bit.ly/2GtTjXe.

14 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2018/25, 9 January 2018, para. 12.

15 Ibid.

16 Email from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 3 July 2020.

17 Security Council Press Statement on Cyprus, 27 February 2019, SC/13722, at: bit.ly/2JKyYus.

18 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.

19 Ibid.

20 Email from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 26 July 2019.

21 Ibid.

22 UNFICYP, "18 Suspected Hazardous Areas declared mine free", Press release, 9 December 2019.

23 Emails from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 26 June and 3 July 2020.

24 Turkey Ministry of National Defence Mine Action Centre, Strategic Plan 2020-2025, undated but 2020, p. 3.

25 Email from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 3 July 2020.

26 2012 Article 5 deadline Extension Request.

27 Permanent Mission of Cyprus in Geneva, "Disarmament and Non-proliferation" webpage, accessed 22 July 2019, at: bit.ly/2SAhPGP.

28 Turkey's Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013. On the issue of Turkish jurisdiction, see, e.g., European Court of Human Rights, *Güzelyurtlu and others v. Cyprus and Turkey*, Judgment (Grand Chamber), 29 January 2019.

29 UN Security Council Resolution 2453 (2019), operative para. 17; and Resolution 2506, 30 January 2020, operative para. 13.

30 Email from Mark Connelly, UNMAS 3 July 2020.