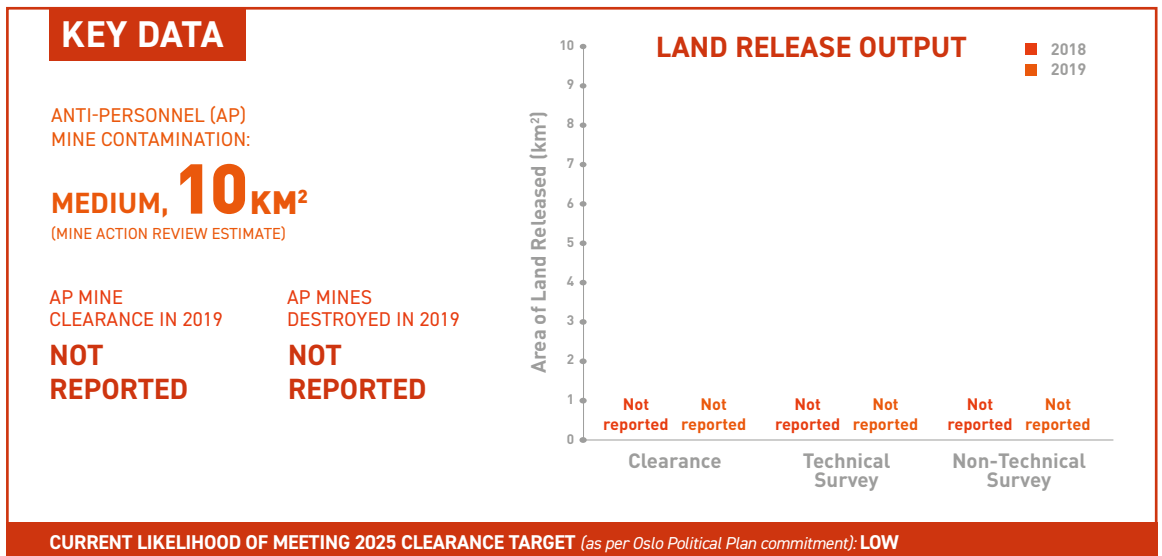


ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2020

NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE AND MUST SEEK NEW EXTENDED DEADLINE IN VIOLATION OF THE CONVENTION



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Eritrea's Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline expires on 31 December 2020 after it was granted an interim extension in November 2019. Eritrea was expected to submit a more detailed extension request by 31 March 2020 but, as at June 2020, had not done so. Nor has it submitted an Article 7 transparency report since 2014 or responded to repeated requests for updated information from Mine Action Review, most recently in 2020.

Eritrea is failing to comply with its obligation under Article 5 of the APMBC to complete clearance as soon as possible. There is no indication of any demining since the end of 2013, which would amount to a violation of the Convention.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Eritrea needs to return to compliance with its obligations under the APMBC. The authorities should ensure that demining is undertaken for humanitarian and developmental purposes as a matter of urgency.
- Eritrea should urgently submit an extension request for its Article 5 deadline, which includes an up-to-date list of all known or suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) with anti-personnel mines and a detailed timeline of activities planned for the extension period sought.
- Eritrea must urgently submit its outstanding annual Article 7 reports, the latest of which was due by 30 April 2020.
- Eritrea should reconsider its policy of excluding international technical assistance in mine action, which would support efficient land release and re-open international funding paths.
- Eritrea should cooperate with Ethiopia in cross-border mine action activities, which will also help to consolidate peace with its neighbour.
- Eritrea should develop and make public a resource mobilisation strategy on the basis of a clear understanding of remaining contamination.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

| Criterion | Score (2019) | Score (2018) | Performance Commentary |
|--|--------------|--------------|---|
| UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score) | 4 | 4 | The last estimate of mine contamination in Eritrea dates back to the end of 2013, when Eritrea reported that 434 mined areas remained with a size of 33.4km ² . All area is reportedly suspected hazardous area. Mine Action Review is unaware of any indication of progress in land release or updated information on the extent of contamination since this time. |
| NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score) | 4 | 4 | Eritrea's mine action programme is entirely nationally managed. The Eritrean Demining Agency (EDA) is responsible for mine clearance. |
| GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score) | 3 | 3 | It is not known if Eritrea has policies in place relating to gender and mine action. |
| INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score) | 1 | 1 | Details on Eritrea's current information management system are not known. However, its lack of submissions of Article 7 reports over the past six years is a violation of the Convention. It has failed to provide any updates on the status of its mine action obligations in recent years. |
| PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score) | 1 | 1 | Recent details on Eritrea's planning and tasking system are not available. |
| LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score) | 4 | 4 | Eritrea is reported to have National Mine Action Standards dating back to 2012. The EDA was responsible for the implementation of quality management activities. |
| LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score) | 1 | 1 | Eritrea has made little, if any, progress in land release to meet its obligations under its second Article 5 extension period. In 2014, Eritrea reported it expected to require a third extension. Eritrea submitted an interim request for a third extension in November 2019 with the intention of providing a more detailed request by 31 March 2020. As at July 2020, no such request is forthcoming and it remains in violation of the Convention for failing to complete mine survey and clearance as soon as possible, and for not respecting other procedural provisions of the Convention. |
| Average Score | 2.7 | 2.7 | Overall Programme Performance: VERY POOR |

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Eritrea Demining Agency (EDA)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Engineering units of the Eritrean Armed Forces

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Eritrea is affected by mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) dating back to World War II, but largely as the result of the struggle for independence in 1962–91 and its armed conflict with Ethiopia in 1998–2000.

In May 2015, in response to Mine Action Review's request for updated information on the state of contamination and mine action activities in Eritrea, the Deputy General Manager of the Eritrea Demining Agency (EDA) reported "no significant progress registered by the EDA currently". He claimed, though, that the EDA was being reorganised in an effort to make "better progress".¹ Since then, the EDA has not responded to repeated requests from Mine Action Review for further information, most recently in the first half of 2020.

The last estimate of mine contamination in Eritrea dates back to the end of 2013, when Eritrea reported 434 mined areas covering an estimated 33.4km².² This was a two-thirds reduction on the earlier estimate of 99km² of June 2011,³ and significantly lower than the 129km² identified by the 2004 landmine impact survey.⁴

Table 1: Mined area by region (at end 2013)⁵

| Zoba (region) | SHAs | Estimated area (m ²) |
|----------------------|------------|----------------------------------|
| Semienawi Keih Bahri | 166 | 9,462,537 |
| Anseba | 144 | 10,230,940 |
| Gash Barka | 63 | 6,252,951 |
| Dehub | 29 | 3,894,036 |
| Maakel | 24 | 2,423,325 |
| Dehubawi Keih Bahri | 8 | 1,169,029 |
| Totals | 434 | 33,432,818 |

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Eritrea mine action programme is entirely nationally managed. The EDA, established in July 2002, is responsible for policy development, regulation of mine action, and the conduct of mine clearance operations. The EDA reports directly to the Office of the President.

Eritrea projected that costs for its Article 5 extension period to 1 February 2020 would amount to more than US\$7 million, all to be raised nationally.⁶ In 2011–13, Eritrea managed to raise only \$257,000 annually. Eritrea acknowledged at the time that its progress in clearing mines would be slow due to its lack of resources, but it has never been clear how Eritrea intended to secure the funding necessary for its survey and clearance activities, particularly in light of its regrettable policy not to accept international technical assistance.⁷

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Eritrea did not respond to Mine Action Review's inquiries in 2020 about the national mine action programme's policies relating to gender.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Details on Eritrea's current information management system are not known. However, its lack of submissions of Article 7 reporting over the past six years is a violation of the Convention and as at 1 August 2020, Eritrea had yet to submit its latest Article 7 report covering 2019 (or any earlier years). It has also failed to provide an updated Article 5 work plan or detailed extension request.

PLANNING AND TASKING

There is no apparent recent information on how Eritrea plans its demining operations. Re-survey during the second extension period was planned to involve both technical and non-technical survey of all remaining mined areas across six regions, and to run concurrently with clearance in priority areas in the Anseba, Maakel, and Semienawi Keih Bahri regions.⁸

Eritrea submitted an interim Article 5 deadline extension request on 11 November 2019, which was granted at the Fourth Review Conference of the APMB (25–29 November 2019), but the request did not contain any updated information on the extent of remaining mined area or on Eritrea's plans to address it. Eritrea committed to submit a detailed follow-on extension request by 31 March 2020, but as at July 2020 had still to submit it.⁹

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Eritrea reportedly has National Mine Action Standards that date back at least to 2012. It is not known if any updates to the standards have been made in the eight years since. It was reported that the EDA was responsible for the implementation of quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) activities.¹⁰

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In the past, demining has been primarily conducted by the engineering units of the Eritrean defence forces under the supervision of the EDA.¹¹ According to its 2014 Article 5 deadline extension request, Eritrea planned to deploy “at least” five demining teams during its second extension period.¹²

Since the expulsion of international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in 2005, the authorities do not allow international operators to conduct survey or clearance in Eritrea.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Under its 2014 extension request, Eritrea projected that up to 15.4km² of mined area could be cleared within five years. It reported that 67.3km² of contaminated area had been cancelled through non-technical survey and that 5.7km² was cleared over 38 mined areas in 2011–13.¹³

Eritrea has not provided any updates to States Parties to the APMB, nor responded to Mine Action Review requests for information on any mine action activities (including survey) undertaken in since 2014. In 2013, Eritrea had reported release of 157 SHAs totalling 33.5km², leaving 385 mined areas of close to 24.5km² to be surveyed.¹⁴ Forty-nine new mined areas with a total size of 9km² were discovered in five of the country’s six regions during non-technical survey in 2013: Anseba, Debub, Gash Barka, Maakel, and Semienawi Keih Bahri.¹⁵

Likewise, Eritrea has not made public any information on any mine clearance undertaken in 2019 or recent years. In 2013, Eritrea seemingly cleared approx. 2.26km² of mined area, almost twice the amount cleared in 2012 (1.2km²).¹⁶ The number of anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines destroyed in 2013 was not reported.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2019

As stated, no land release output, including survey or clearance, was reported in 2019.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE

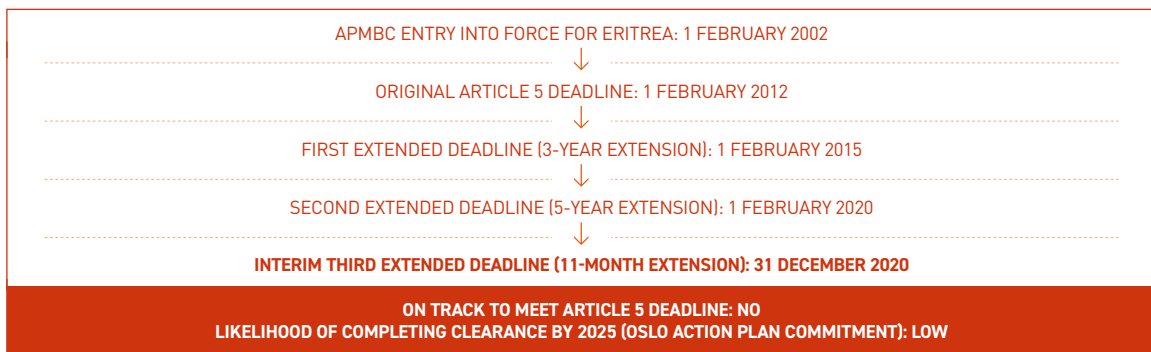


Table 2: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

| Year | Area cleared (m ²) |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| 2019 | N/R |
| 2018 | N/R |
| 2017 | N/R |
| 2016 | N/R |
| 2015 | N/R |
| Total | N/R |

N/R = Not Reported

Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the three-year extension granted by States Parties in 2011, a five-year extension granted in 2014, and an interim 11-month extension in 2019), Eritrea is required to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2020. It is not on track to meet this deadline, is failing to comply with its Article 5 obligations, and as at June 2020 had not submitted a detailed request for an extension to its Article 5 deadline. Eritrea submitted its last extension request in November 2019, just before the Fourth APMBC Review Conference.

In January 2014, Eritrea submitted a second Article 5 deadline extension request seeking a further five years to continue clearance and complete re-survey of SHAs, but not to fulfil its clearance obligations under the treaty. In June 2014, however, States Parties granted Eritrea its extension request until 2020, but noted that five additional years beyond Eritrea's previous February 2015 deadline "appeared to be a long period of time to meet this objective".¹⁷

Based on a predicted clearance rate of 0.384km² per team per year and 1.92km² per five teams per year, Eritrea estimated that five teams operating at this pace could clear almost 15.4km² in the five-year period.¹⁸ It acknowledged, though, that this was "ambitious" and the amount projected still accounted for less than half of the total area Eritrea estimated as requiring either clearance or re-survey (33.5km²), leaving some 18km² unaccounted for.¹⁹

In April 2014, at the APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Eritrea stated that the extension period was designed to gain greater clarity about its mine problem, at which point Eritrea "could plan and think about the financial resources to be allocated for mine action".²⁰ It was further stated that Eritrea "won't complete clearance in the next five years", and will likely require a third extension.²¹ Eritrea did not submit an updated Article 5 deadline extension request or work plan as requested.

In the interim extension request submitted on 11 November 2019, just two weeks before the start of the Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Eritrea reported that it had not gained any clarity on the remaining anti-personnel mine contamination during the second extension period as Eritrea's demining capacity had been diverted to other government development programmes, such as construction and agriculture, and that mine action had faced financial and resource shortfalls and required external assistance to continue operations. Eritrea believes that it has the necessary experience and expertise to address the challenges but will require international support.

As at November 2019, the EDA was said to be in the process of restructuring and an interim request was submitted as no information could be provided on outstanding contamination, survey or clearance. Eritrea claimed it was planning to submit a more detailed extension request by 31 March 2020 with information on remaining mine contamination, progress made and a detailed work plan for implementation.²² As at July 2020, however, no additional extension request had been submitted with Eritrea remaining in violation of the Convention.

PLANNING FOR RESIDUAL RISK AFTER COMPLETION

As at June 2020, Eritrea had not provided any information on whether it has made any provision for a sustainable capacity to address previously unknown mined areas following completion.

- 1 Email from Habtom Seghid, Deputy General Manager, EDA, 6 May 2015.
- 2 2014 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7. This was despite finding 49 previously unrecorded suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) in five regions across an estimated area of 9km² during non-technical survey in 2013. Analysis of Eritrea's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, submitted by the President of the 13th Meeting of the States Parties on behalf of the States Parties mandated to analyse requests for extensions, 20 June 2014, p. 2.
- 3 Eritrea's reply to questions from the Article 5 Analysing Group about its Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 7 June 2011, p. 2.
- 4 Survey Action Center (SAC), "Landmine Impact Survey, Eritrea, Final Report", May 2005, p. 7.
- 5 2014 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.
- 6 Ibid., p. 11.
- 7 Statement of Eritrea, 13th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 6 December 2013.
- 8 Statement of Eritrea, Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Geneva, 9 April 2014.
- 9 Interim Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 11 November 2019, pp. 2-3.
- 10 Article 7 Report (covering 2012), Form F, p. 5.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid., p. 10.
- 13 Analysis of Eritrea's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 20 June 2014, p. 2.
- 14 Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 23 January 2014, p. 7.
- 15 Analysis of Eritrea's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 20 June 2014, p. 2.
- 16 Article 7 Report (covering 2012), Form F, p. 10.
- 17 Decision on Eritrea's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Third APMBC Review Conference, Maputo, 26 June 2014.
- 18 Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 23 January 2014, p. 10.
- 19 ICBL Comments on Eritrea's Article 5 Extension Request, March 2014.
- 20 Statement of Eritrea, Standing Committee on Mine Action, Geneva, 9 April 2014. Notes by ICBL.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Interim Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 11 November 2019, pp. 2-3.