

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2020
 EXTENSION REQUESTED TO 31 DECEMBER 2024

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
 MINE CONTAMINATION:

LIGHT, LESS THAN 0.2 KM²

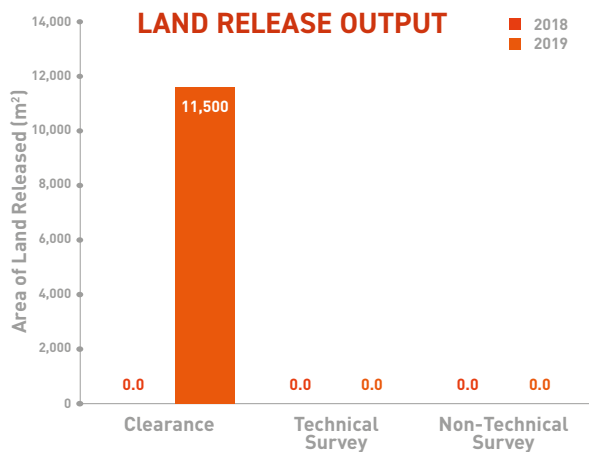
OF LEGACY CONTAMINATION, BUT EXTENT OF
 IMPROVISED MINE CONTAMINATION UNCLEAR

AP MINE
 CLEARANCE IN 2019

11,500 M²

AP MINES
 DESTROYED IN 2019

199



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per Oslo Political Plan commitment): **MEDIUM**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Niger reported conducting its first mine clearance in three years and although very limited in extent it was funded nationally. In May 2020, Niger requested a four-year extension to its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline in order to address less than 200,000m² of anti-personnel mine contamination. Niger experienced a surge in attacks by non-state armed groups employing mines and other explosive devices of an improvised nature in 2018 which appears to have continued into 2019 and 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Niger should submit a revised and comprehensive extension request with details of past survey and clearance, an updated list of mined areas requiring clearance, and a detailed work plan for meeting its international legal obligations.
- Niger should submit annual Article 7 reports detailing the progress of mine action as the APMBC requires.
- Niger should develop and implement a fundraising strategy to ensure it fulfils commitments made in its earlier Article 5 deadline extension request.
- Niger should seek and facilitate engagement of international demining organisations.
- Niger should ensure its national mine action standards accord with international standards and that a quality management system is in place to safeguard the quality of demining operations.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2019)	Score (2018)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	6	6	Niger has identified limited anti-personnel mine contamination in the Agadez region but it lacks clarity on the extent. It also now faces escalating attacks by non-state armed groups and new contamination from mines of an improvised nature.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	5	5	Limited mine action in the past five years was funded by Niger's limited resources and Niger has not yet been successful in securing the international funding it requires to fulfil its Article 5 obligations.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	3	2	Niger reported at the Fourth APMBC Review Conference in November 2019 that women made up eight of the forty deminers deployed in June 2019 in the resumption of clearance operations. However, no reference to gender or diversity is made in Niger's 2020 extension request.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	2	3	Inconsistent reporting on mine clearance points to weak information management. Niger has submitted only one Article 7 transparency report since 2012 (in 2018). Reporting is an obligation under the APMBC.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	3	3	Niger lacks a strategic plan for mine action or detailed work plans. A request to extend its Article 5 deadline by four years submitted in May 2020 left out key details including proposed timelines for clearance and available demining capacity.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	4	4	Niger has reported that it has national standards that are compliant with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) but it is not known if they have been formally adopted.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	4	2	Niger said it released a tiny amount of mined area in 2019 after two years in which no land was released but its 2020 Article 5 extension request lacks clarity about the extent of clearance since 2014 and what remains to be done to achieve completion.
Average Score	4.1	3.7	Overall Programme Performance: POOR

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Commission Nationale pour la Collecte et le Contrôle des Armes Illicites (CNCCA)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- CNCCA

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Niger reported in November 2019 that its remaining anti-personnel mine contamination amounted to 187,172m² in the vicinity of Madama, a military base in the north-eastern Agadez region of the country, but Niger's varying statements about contamination and clearance in recent years leave uncertainty about the precise extent of contamination remaining.¹ A request submitted by Niger six months later in May 2020 for an extension of its Article 5 deadline did not clarify the issue. It said the remaining contamination amounted to 177,760m² but supporting data is not consistent. It said the area was surrounded by barbed wire and monitored by sentries.²

Niger had previously reported in 2018 that it had two mined areas totalling 235,557m² near Madama, consisting of a confirmed hazardous area (CHA) of 39,304m² containing French M51 minimum-metal anti-personnel mines and a suspected hazardous area (SHA) of 196,253m² with mixed AP and anti-vehicle mines.³ Nigerien army engineers, conducting earlier clearance operations, had found the mines buried in sand at depths of up to one metre.⁴

Niger had previously identified five additional SHAs in the Agadez region (in Achouloulouma, Blaka, Enneri, Orida, and Zouzoulinga) but said non-technical and technical survey in 2014 had determined they were not contaminated by anti-personnel mines and that communities in the area had reported accidents only involving anti-vehicle mines.⁵ A PRB M3 anti-vehicle mine was also discovered in March 2019 near the central town of Intikane, also in the Agadez region.⁶ The areas are all located in a remote desert area, 450km from the rural community of Dirkou in Bilma department and reported to contain mines that date back to the French colonial era.⁷

NEW CONTAMINATION

Starting in the second half of 2018, Niger experienced a surge in attacks by non-state armed groups affiliated with Islamic State or al-Qaida, adding a new challenge in the form of mines of an improvised nature. Attacks were concentrated in the western Tillabery and Tahoua regions, employing a range of artisanal explosive devices, including anti-vehicle mines, victim-activated pressure plate devices that appear to meet the APMBC definition of anti-personnel mines, and command-detonated devices (which are not mines under international law).⁸

A mine or improvised explosive device (IED) detonation in January 2019 injured four Niger soldiers near Titahoune (Tillabery region)⁹ and an improvised device detonated under a convoy of vehicles in an ambush by insurgents in Tillabery in May 2019 during which 28 soldiers were killed.¹⁰ A 12-ton armoured US Army vehicle was disabled in June 2019 by an improvised mine on the outskirts of Ouallem town (Tillabery region). The device was activated by a pressure plate linked to an 81mm mortar. Its explosion detonated a main charge consisting of nearly a dozen 60mm mortar shells.¹¹

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The national mine action programme is managed by the National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons (Commission Nationale pour la Collecte et le Contrôle des Armes Illicites, CNCCAI), which reports directly to the President.

All demining has been carried out by the Nigerien army. In 2015, Niger said it had 60 deminers but lacked sufficient equipment for them to be able to work at the same time.¹² In its May 2020 extension request it noted the need for personal protective equipment, detectors, and transportation.¹³

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) conducted evaluation missions to Niger in May 2015 and December 2017 to assess the possibility of assisting Niger to meet its Article 5 deadline. Contacts continued in 2019, exploring the possibility of NPA setting up a programme to support CNCCAI clearance operations, but in the end the support did not proceed in 2019 or 2020.¹⁴

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Niger's third Article 5 deadline extension request, submitted in 2016, had made no reference to gender. Niger reported at the Fourth APMBC Review Conference, however, that women made up eight of the forty deminers deployed in June 2019 in the resumption of clearance operations.¹⁵ It did not address the issue in its fourth Article 5 deadline extension request in 2020.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Niger submitted an Article 7 report in 2018, the first report since 2012, covering the period 1 January 2013 through end April 2018, but has not done so since. It delivered statements to the Intersessional Meetings and the Meeting of States Parties in 2018 and the Fourth Review Conference in Oslo in 2019.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Niger does not have a strategic plan for mine action. Its third Article 5 deadline extension request in 2016 did not set out a work plan or benchmarks for survey or clearance as requested by the APMBC Committee on Article 5 Implementation.

Niger's submitted its fourth Article 5 deadline extension request in May 2020 calling for four additional years to complete clearance of 177,760m², but it does not set annual clearance targets or provide a detailed work plan for the extension period. The plan includes a graphic which indicates CNCCAI will deploy teams for clearance between 2020 and 2024¹⁶ but does not identify what operating capacity is available for survey and clearance. It projects the costs of completion at US\$1,143,750, of which US\$400,000 is to come from national sources.¹⁷

Niger's Article 7 Report for 2013–18 set out a rudimentary operational timeline providing for clearance of 196,253m² by 2020: 56,000m² in 2018, 100,253m² in 2019, and 40,000m² in 2020.¹⁸ It has not met any of these targets so far.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

In its Third Article 5 Extension Request (2016), Niger reported that it had drafted national mine action standards (NMAS) in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and standard operating procedures.¹⁹ No information has been provided on whether Niger's NMAS have been finalised and adopted.

An NPA team's visit to Madama in December 2017 noted that manual clearance was the main tool of demining by Niger's army engineers but highlighted the operational challenges. The M-51 mines mostly found in the area contained no metal components and were largely undetectable by conventional detectors and sufficiently small as to make detection by GPR-based detectors unreliable. This means that full manual excavation may be the only effective methodology. The process is slow and the sandy environment, prone to subsidence and back-filling, makes it difficult to maintain consistent excavation depths. Mechanical excavation using sifting and screening equipment would dramatically improve the speed of technical survey and clearance but faced severe logistical challenges because of the long distances, absence of roads, limited provisions for maintenance and cost. Mine detection dogs have also been deemed unsuitable because of the extreme climate and the potential for deep-buried mines.²⁰

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

CLEARANCE IN 2019

It appears from data incorporated in Niger's 2020 Article 5 deadline extension request that 11,500m² of land was cleared between July and end 2019 with the destruction of 199 anti-personnel mines.²¹ CNCCAI reported to the Oslo Review Conference that it had deployed 40 deminers in mid-June 2019 to conduct mine clearance in Madama and that by the time of the conference in November it had cleared 9,080m², destroying 183 anti-personnel mines. It said the operation was continuing and that it was funded by Niger from national resources.²² In its Article 5 deadline extension request, it reported total clearance between July 2019 and March 2020 of 18,483m² with the destruction of 323 mines.²³

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the four-year extension request granted by States Parties in 2016), Niger 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.

In May 2020, Niger requested an Article 5 deadline extension of four years until 31 December 2024. The amount of time looks more than sufficient for the modest amount of contamination remaining but Niger has demonstrated only very modest progress or effort to comply with the APMBC and the request does little to build confidence in prospects for completion. The request does not provide detailed annual targets for clearance despite repeated requests for such planning by the other States Parties and vaguely asserts clearance will be conducted between 2020 and 2024.²⁴ The request also does not address the emerging threat of mines of an improvised nature, and does not identify what preparation it is making for sustainable capacity to tackle contamination emplaced or found after completion.

The request cites a number of difficulties confronting mine action in Niger, including environmental factors, (extremes of heat and cold, sandstorms, the remoteness of affected areas), insecurity in border areas, and competing priorities for funding (including counter-terrorist activities and measures to check the proliferation of illegal weapons). It states, however, that the only issue hindering clearance is the lack of funding. It estimates the total cost of completion at US\$1,143,750 and says Niger will provide US\$400,000, appealing to international donors for the balance of US\$743,750. It also states that it cannot guarantee clearance without support from donors.²⁵

The extent of Niger's progress since the Maputo Review Conference is uncertain because the results it reported for 2014 to 2016 varied from 17,000m² and 750 mines to 39,304m² and 1,075 mines.²⁶ The Article 7 report Niger submitted in 2018, covering 2013 to April 2018, set annual targets for achieving completion by the end of 2020 but it came nowhere near achieving them. Niger did not conduct any clearance in 2018, attributing the inaction to a lack of financial resources,

the higher priority given to counterterrorism activities, and the "failure" of unspecified international organisations to respect their commitments.²⁷

Niger submitted a second request for an extension to its Article 5 deadline on 12 November 2015, less than two months before the expiry of its first extended deadline. States Parties observed this did not conform to procedure and left insufficient time for analysis and discussion. The decision also observed that the plan presented by Niger in the request was "workable but lacks ambition". States Parties agreed to give Niger a one-year extension and requested that it provide, in its revised submission, information on the areas already released disaggregated by the method of release and an updated work plan listing all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines and annual clearance projections during the period covered by the request.²⁸ The third extension request Niger submitted in 2016 did not include such a work plan and a request from the Committee on Article 5 Implementation for additional information received no reply.²⁹

Niger's third extension request in 2020 said it needed more than US\$3.2 million in funding to fulfil its remaining Article 5 obligations, including \$1 million for the CNCCA from the national budget over the five-year period, and \$2.2 million to be mobilised from external donors.³⁰ Niger has made repeated appeals for international assistance for mine action and claimed receiving no external support for its activities, save for assistance from France for medical evacuation in the case of demining accidents.³¹

Table 1: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (verified) (km ²)
2019	0.01
2018	0
2017	0
2016	0.01
2015	0.01
Total	0.03

PLANNING FOR RESIDUAL RISK AFTER COMPLETION

Niger did not report having a strategy in place for managing residual risk post completion.

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- 1 Statement by Niger to the Oslo Review Conference, 27 November 2019.
- 2 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 28 May 2020, pp. 5–6. The document says demining operations had cleared 18,483m² out of contamination of 196,304m², which would leave an area of 177,821m².
- 3 Article 7 Report (covering 2013 to April 2018), Annex I, p. 19.
- 4 NPA, "End of Mission Report: CTA-HMA Inputs", undated but 2018.
- 5 2016 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 6–8.
- 6 "Explosive developments: The growing threat of IEDs in Western Niger", The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) Project, 19 June 2019, p. 3.
- 7 Executive Summary of Niger's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 27 November 2015; and Statement of Niger, Third APMBC Review Conference, Maputo, 24 June 2014.
- 8 "Explosive Developments: The Growing Threat of IEDs in Western Niger", ACLED Project, 16 May 2019, at: bit.ly/32EZSvq.
- 9 "Niger: military convoy hit by IED attack in Tillaberi region Jan. 31", *GardaWorld*, 1 February 2019, at: bit.ly/32lb5Lw.
- 10 "Niger: Attaque meurtrière contre l'armée à la frontière malienne", *Jeune Afrique*, 16 May 2019, at: bit.ly/32EZSvq.
- 11 T. Gibbons-Neff, "Roadside blast in Niger that hit Americans shows growing threat", *New York Times*, 14 June 2019, at: nyti.ms/2M2mZKA.
- 12 Statement of Niger, Intersessional Meetings (Committee on Article 5 Implementation), Geneva, 25 June 2015.
- 13 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 28 May 2020, p. 14.
- 14 Emails from Jean-Denis Larsen, DRC Country Director, NPA, 19 July 2017, 3 October 2018, and 15 August 2019.
- 15 Statement by Niger to the Oslo Review Conference, 27 November 2019.
- 16 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 28 May 2020, p. 12.
- 17 *Ibid.*, pp. 12–14.
- 18 Article 7 Report (covering 2013 to end-April 2018), Annex 1, p. 23.
- 19 2016 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 8–9.
- 20 NPA, "End of Mission Report: CTA-HMA Inputs", undated but 2018.
- 21 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 28 May 2020, pp. 22–24.
- 22 Niger statement to the Oslo Review Conference, 27 November 2019.
- 23 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 28 May 2020, p. 8.
- 24 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 28 May 2020, pp. 11–12.
- 25 *Ibid.*, pp. 12–14.
- 26 Analysis of Niger's 2016 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 3; and Article 7 Report (covering 2013 to April 2018).
- 27 Statements of Niger, Intersessional Meetings (Committee on Article 5 Implementation), 7 June 2018; and 17th Meeting of States Parties, 27 November 2018.
- 28 "Decision on the request submitted by Niger for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention", APMBC 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 4 December 2015.
- 29 Analysis of Niger's 2016 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 2.
- 30 2016 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 11–13; and Executive Summary of Niger's 2015 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 3.
- 31 Statements of Niger, Intersessional Meetings (Committee on Article 5 Implementation), Geneva, 19–20 May 2016; and 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015; 2016 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 13; and Executive Summary of Niger's 2015 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 3.