

ALGERIA



ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 APRIL 2017
(CLEARANCE DECLARED COMPLETE)

MINE ACTION PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE	For 2016	For 2015
Problem understood	9	8
Target date for completion of mine clearance	10	9
Targeted clearance	9	8
Efficient clearance	7	7
National funding of programme	10	10
Timely clearance	10	9
Land release system in place	7	7
National mine action standards	7	7
Reporting on progress	6	7
Improving performance	9	6.9
PERFORMANCE SCORE: VERY GOOD	8.4	8.1

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Algeria completed demining in late 2016, several months in advance of its extended Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline of 1 April 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Algeria should clarify how much manual clearance took place in 2016 as opposed to release by other means.
- Algeria should ensure an adequate capacity exists to address any mines or other munitions that are encountered in the future.

CONTAMINATION

Algeria was affected by anti-personnel mines as a result of World War II, the French colonial occupation, and the insurgency of the 1990s. During Algeria's struggle for independence, mines were laid by the French along the Challe and Morice lines on the eastern and western borders of the country. Algeria estimated that more than 10 million mines were laid.¹ Some 80% were blast mines while most of the remainder were fragmentation mines.²

In clearance between 1963 and 1988, some 500km² of mined area was cleared, with the destruction of more than 7.8 million anti-personnel mines. A second clearance phase began in November 2004, which resulted in the destruction of 850,000 mines. (A further 159,000 stockpiled mines were destroyed.)³ As at April 2016, clearance had reduced contamination to two contaminated provinces (*wilaya*) (Guelma and Nâama). By July 2016, clearance in Nâama was reportedly complete also.⁴ Clearance of known mined areas in Guelma was completed on 1 December 2016.⁵

Occasionally, "isolated" anti-personnel mines are also found outside known mined areas. In addition, the north of the country is said to be contaminated by an unknown number of locally produced mines and other explosive items laid by insurgent groups.⁶ In the first half of 2017, Algerian police reported seizing 121 landmines from groups linked to terrorism or arms smuggling.⁷

The total number of mine survivors in Algeria is unknown but there have been no new mine victims since 2010.⁸

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Interministerial Committee on the Implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, set up by presidential decree in 2003, is the governmental focal point for all mine action activities in Algeria.

Operator

All demining in Algeria has been carried out manually by the Algerian army.

LAND RELEASE

Clearance in 2016

As in previous years, Algeria has not reported clearly on clearance for the previous calendar year. Demining operations during 2016 destroyed 62,589 anti-personnel mines and 225 anti-vehicle mines.⁹ This included 599 colonial-era anti-personnel mines found outside known mined areas.¹⁰

In its formal declaration of compliance with APMBC Article 5, Algeria reported release of 28.1km² of land¹¹ but has not clarified how much was clearance and how much was release by other means. Its Article 7 transparency report suggests an even higher figure of 29.65km². Mine Action Review has assumed physical clearance of 12km² for the year, consonant with results in 2015.

Outside the mined areas laid by France in the colonial era, clearance in 2016 addressed four further mined areas in Tindouf Province, close to the borders with Mauritania, Morocco, and Western Sahara. One at Meksem El Dahma (5,000m²) involved destruction of 102 anti-personnel mines and 37 anti-vehicle mines; a second at Oum El Achar (882m²) 20 anti-personnel mines and 2 anti-vehicle mines; and two areas in El Bêtina, one of 64,000m² and the other of 4,800m², with the destruction of a further 6,566 anti-personnel mines and 186 anti-vehicle mines. Clearance of the latter three areas was completed on 16 December 2016.¹²

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the five-year extension granted by states parties in 2011), Algeria was required to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 April 2017.

Algeria's accelerated pace of demining in 2015 and 2016 led it to complete clearance before the end of December 2016, in advance of its extended deadline. Algeria systematically funded its mine action programme through its own resources. Algeria has indicated that the specialised army and police units remain ready to destroy any further mines that are reported or discovered.¹³

1 Revised Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 17 August 2011, p. 5.

2 Article 7 Report, 31 December 2015, p. 24.

3 Article 7 Report, 2017, pp. 53–54.

4 "Naâma: fin du déminage de la bande frontalière ouest sur plus de 10.100 hectares", *Actualité Algérie*, 4 July 2016, at: <http://www.actualite-algerie.com/2016/07/04/naama-fin-du-deminage-de-la-bande-frontaliere-ouest-sur-plus-de-10-100-hectares/>.

5 Article 7 Report, 2017, Annexe 1.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

7 "63 terrorists killed in Algeria this year", *Middle East Monitor*, 3 July 2017, at: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170703-63-terrorists-killed-in-algeria-this-year/>.

8 Article 7 Report, 2017, p. 54.

9 *Ibid.*, pp. 53–54.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

11 Declaration of Fulfilment of Article 5, submitted by Algeria, 10 February 2017, p. 8, at: https://www.apminebanconvention.org/fileadmin/APMBC/clearing-mined-areas/art5_extensions/countries/AlgeriaDeclarationCompletion10Feb2017.pdf.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 25.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 54.