



CAMEROON

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2013
(NEEDS TO REQUEST NEW ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Cameroon should urgently clear any landmines on its territory, including those of an improvised nature, and take immediate steps to minimise harm to civilians from all explosive devices, including through the provision of risk education.
- Cameroon should inform states parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) of the discovery of any anti-personnel mine contamination and report on the location of all suspected or confirmed mined areas under its jurisdiction or control and on the status of programmes for their destruction in its Article 7 transparency report.
- Cameroon should request a new APMBC Article 5 deadline.
- As soon as security conditions permit, non-technical survey should commence in the Extrême-Nord (Far North) region, which has been reportedly most affected by conflict.
- As necessary, Cameroon should seek, encourage, and facilitate assistance and expertise from humanitarian demining organisations.

CONTAMINATION

In 2017, there continued to be a number of reports of casualties and incidents from landmines, including mines of an improvised nature, reportedly laid by the non-state armed group, Boko Haram. These are found primarily in the north of Cameroon along its border with Nigeria. These have followed Cameroon's increased involvement in joint military offensives against Boko Haram as part of a Multi-National Joint Task Force launched in 2015.¹ Most of the reports appear to describe use of mines of an improvised nature produced by Boko Haram.

In September 2017, two Cameroonian soldiers were killed when they stepped on a mine during foot patrol near the Nigerian border.² In June 2017, two Cameroonian soldiers were killed and five others were injured when their truck hit a mine on the Homaka road, near the Nigerian border.³ In May 2017, six civilians were reportedly injured outside the village of Homaka when one stepped on a landmine while looking for straw to use for roofing.⁴ In February 2017, four soldiers were killed and several others injured in the Mayo-Tsanaga department, Far North region, after their vehicle detonated a mine.⁵

While the extent of contamination from anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature is not known, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) undertook a monitoring mission in January to April 2017 and reported that in 2016, there were 15 incidents involving “roadside IEDs”. These caused 54 casualties, killing 30 and injuring 24 others. At least three quarters of the victims were military personnel. There were six “roadside IED” incidents in the first three months of 2017, killing one person and injuring eight others.⁶ UNMAS did not specify to Mine Action Review the type of IED, therefore it is not known whether or not these explosive devices meet the definition of an anti-personnel mine, as defined under the APMBC.

A report by a Cameroonian analyst in 2016 claimed that mines had been used extensively around roads, houses, and vehicles, and that “damage caused by these homemade mines is becoming ever more frequent”.⁷ Cameroonian military officials reported in 2015 that “huge” numbers of landmines had been planted by Boko Haram along Cameroon’s Nigerian border, posing a threat to civilians, livestock, and soldiers, and reported recurrent use of mines of an improvised nature along the road between Kerawa and Kolofata, targeting army vehicles.⁸

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Cameroon does not have a functioning mine action programme. It has not submitted an Article 7 transparency report concerning the newly laid contamination, as is required of each state party to the APMBC. Its last Article 7 report was submitted in 2009.

LAND RELEASE

It is not known to what extent mine clearance or explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) has been undertaken in affected areas. UNMAS reported in April 2017 that Cameroon’s Military Engineer Corps has official responsibility for clearing munitions and that an EOD capacity within the *gendarmerie* was being created to address the mine threat. A capacity for battle area clearance and EOD spot tasks was also needed, it said.⁹

From March to April 2018, 25 Cameroonian soldiers were trained by the French and US Army in Level 4 EOD disposal.¹⁰ In June 2017, the United States (US) was reported to have donated significant quantities of demining equipment to Cameroon, including metal detectors.¹¹ In March 2016, it was reported that US

military advisors and officers were training Cameroonian soldiers on detection and destruction techniques for mines and other explosive devices.¹² Previously, in 2015, Cameroon was reported to have received demining/ EOD training and equipment from the United States and Russia, and armoured mine-detection vehicles were provided by the US Army Africa Command.¹³

In April 2017, UNMAS confirmed that the military and *gendarmerie* had benefitted from substantial and ongoing specialised capacity support from international actors, including France and the United States, but noted a shortage of equipment, and called for further awareness-raising on explosive devices and EOD training.¹⁴

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Cameroon is a state party to the APMBC. Its Article 5 deadline to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control expired on 1 March 2013.

Under the APMBC’s agreed framework, Cameroon should immediately inform all states parties of any newly discovered anti-personnel mines following the expiry of its Article 5 deadline and ensure their destruction as soon as possible. If necessary, it should also submit a request for a new Article 5 deadline, which should be as short as possible and not more than ten years. Cameroon must continue to fulfil its reporting obligations under the convention, including on the location of any suspected or confirmed mined areas under its jurisdiction or control and on the status of programmes for the destruction of all anti-personnel mines within them.

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- 1 M. P. Moore, "This Month in Mines, February 2015", Landmines in Africa blog, 12 March 2015, at: <https://landminesinafrica.wordpress.com/2015/03/12/the-month-in-mines-february-2015/>; and "Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)", *GlobalSecurity.org*, 2017, at: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/int/mnjtf.htm>.
 - 2 "Landmine explosion kills 2 Cameroonian soldiers", *Andolu Agency*, 28 September 2017, at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/landmine-explosion-kills-2-cameroon-soldiers/921956>.
 - 3 "Landmine explosion kills 2 soldiers in north Cameroon", *Andolu Agency*, 24 April 2017, at: <http://aa.com.tr/en/africa/landmine-explosion-kills-2-soldiers-in-north-cameroon/804001>.
 - 4 "Six villagers injured in Boko haram landmine explosion", *Journal du Cameroun*, 17 May 2017, at: <https://www.journalducameroun.com/en/six-villagers-injured-boko-haram-landmine-explosion/>.
 - 5 P. Kum, "Landmine kills 4 Cameroonian soldiers", *Andolu Agency*, 17 February 2017, at: <http://aa.com.tr/en/africa/landmine-kills-4-cameroonien-soldiers/752448>.
 - 6 UNMAS, "Mission Report: UNMAS explosive hazard mitigation response in Cameroon, 9 January – 13 April 2017", 30 April 2017, p. 11; and email from Camille Aubourg, UNMAS, 17 September 2018.
 - 7 "Boko Haram Landmines Inflict Heavy Toll on Cameroon", *Latin American Herald Tribune*, 25 June 2016, at: <http://laht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=2415012&CategoryId=12395>.
 - 8 M. E. Kindzeka, "Land Mines Hamper Cameroon, Chad in Fight Against Boko Haram", *Voice of America News*, 3 March 2015, at: <http://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-chad-team-up-to-fight-boko-haram/2665815.html>; and M. E. Kindzeka, "Boko Haram Surrounds Havens with Land Mines", *Voice of America News*, 24 May 2015, at: <http://www.voanews.com/a/boko-haram-surrounds-havens-with-land-mines/2787598.html>.
 - 9 UNMAS, "Mission Report: UNMAS explosive hazard mitigation response in Cameroon, 9 January – 13 April 2017", 30 April 2017, pp. 12 and 14.
 - 10 "Génie Militaire - Des démineurs formés", *Cameroon Tribune (Yaoundé)*, 23 April 2018, at: <https://fr.allafrica.com/stories/201804230960.html>.
 - 11 "US donates mine-clearing devices to Cameroon", *Journal du Cameroun*, 24 April 2017; at: <https://www.journalducameroun.com/en/us-donates-mine-clearing-devices-to-cameroon/>.
 - 12 M. E. Kindzeka, "Cameroon Vigilantes Hunt for Boko Haram Landmines", *Voice of America News*, 4 March 2016, at: <http://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-vigilantes-hunt-for-boko-haram-landmines/3219444.html>.
 - 13 M. E. Kindzeka, "Land Mines Hamper Cameroon, Chad in Fight Against Boko Haram", *Voice of America News*, 3 March 2015, at: <http://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-chad-team-up-to-fight-boko-haram/2665815.html>; and "US Helps Cameroon in Fight Against Boko Haram", *Voice of America News*, 17 October 2015, at: <http://www.voanews.com/a/us-provides-cameroon-military-equipment-troops-to-fight-boko-haram/3011730.html>.
 - 14 UNMAS, "Mission Report: UNMAS explosive hazard mitigation response in Cameroon, 9 January – 13 April 2017", 30 April 2017, p. 1.