

CAMEROON



CLEARING THE MINES 2021

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2013
NEW EXTENDED DEADLINE NEEDED TO RETURN TO COMPLIANCE

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION:
LOW, EXTENT UNKNOWN**

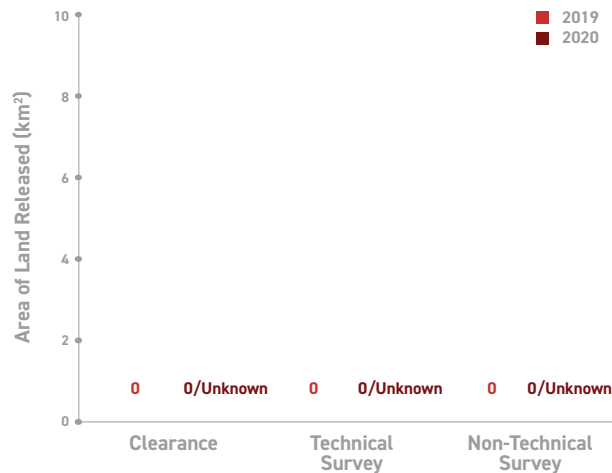
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2020

0
KM²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2020

UNKNOWN

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Explosive devices, including mines of an improvised nature, continue to claim casualties, particularly in Cameroon's northern districts along the border with Nigeria but also in other regions amid escalating military activity by Boko Haram. No formal mine action programme has yet been established and Cameroon remains without an extended Article 5 deadline.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Cameroon should respect its obligations to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC).
- Cameroon should inform States Parties to the APMBC of the discovery of any anti-personnel mine contamination, including mines of an improvised nature. It should 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 in order to return to compliance with the Convention.
- Cameroon should try to mobilise and facilitate assistance and expertise from humanitarian demining organisations for survey and clearance.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- No national mine action authority or national mine action centre

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Army Engineer Corps

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Cameroon faces an escalating threat from explosive devices, including mines of an improvised nature, resulting from conflict in three regions. This includes a widening Boko Haram insurgency spilling over from Nigeria into the Lake Chad region and an increasingly violent separatist insurgency in the Anglophone North-West and South-West regions. The extent of the area affected by explosive devices is unknown. In all three regions, the main threat appears to stem less from minefields than from explosive devices, including victim-activated and remotely detonated devices, placed on an ad hoc basis on roads and sites frequented by civilians.¹

Casualties inflicted by explosive devices linked to the five-year old Anglophone insurgency escalated sharply in 2020 and 2021.² The military said in December 2020 that it had cleared six devices placed along a major road in the south west that was regularly used by troops.³ The following month, a roadside explosive device struck a military convoy near the North Western town of Mbengwi, killing four soldiers and a government official.⁴ Cameroon's Defence Minister Joseph Beti Assomo said in May 2021 that improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in western Cameroon had killed 24 people in the preceding two weeks and that the military were seizing or destroying them almost daily.⁵

In August 2020, customs authorities in northern Cameroon intercepted 207 improvised devices weighing more than two tons being transported across the border from Nigeria. In

the second half of 2020 customs officers also seized large quantities of hydrogen peroxide and other chemicals used in producing IEDs.⁶

One member of Cameroon's elite Rapid Intervention Battalion was killed and 11 others were injured in February 2019 when their truck detonated an anti-vehicle mine of an improvised nature in the vicinity of Kerawa on the border with Nigeria. The troops were returning from an operation in which soldiers reportedly destroyed four workshops which were producing mines and found to hold hundreds of containers of explosives, batteries, and detonators. Two other detonations in the area in October 2018 involving mines or improvised devices reportedly caused the deaths of three soldiers and injured six others. Seven soldiers were killed in two separate incidents in the same area in April 2019.⁷

A senior army officer commented in 2017 that some roads in areas bordering Nigeria were "riddled with mines".⁸ A Cameroonian analyst commented that insurgents were using "homemade mines" with increasing frequency on roads, in houses, and in vehicles.⁹ The effect has been to reduce access for humanitarian organisations working in the area. International Organization for Migration (IOM) personnel who visited the Far North region in September 2018 were denied permission to visit a number of towns in Mayo-Tsanaga,¹⁰ a department bordering Nigeria, because of the presence of mines and reports of kidnappings.¹¹

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Cameroon does not have a functioning mine action programme. Mine clearance and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) are mainly the responsibility of the Cameroon Military Engineer Corps. Cameroon's gendarmes and police officers have also attended training courses for tackling IEDs.¹²

Cameroon informed the United Nations in 2019 that casualties from mines and improvised devices had increased 43% in the previous year requiring a change of approach by the government. It appealed for international assistance but provided no information about any action to address the issue.¹³

In the past five years, the Army has received military training in demining and counter-IED measures, mainly from France and the United States.¹⁴ A Twitter feed by the US mission in Yaoundé in May 2021 reported provision of equipment for countering IEDs and training.¹⁵ Cameroon previously received demining/explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) equipment from the United States and Russia in 2015, with armoured mine-detection vehicles provided by the US Army Africa Command.¹⁶ The United States also donated significant quantities of demining equipment, including metal detectors, to Cameroon in 2017.¹⁷ US Army Africa and the French Army's French Elements in Gabon (EFG) provided further demining and EOD training up to Level 4 EOD in March–April 2018.¹⁸

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2020

Cameroon did not report results of clearance and EOD conducted by its Army engineers.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE

APMBC ENTRY INTO FORCE FOR CAMEROON 1 MARCH 2003



ORIGINAL ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2013

NEW ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE REQUEST REQUIRED
LIKELIHOOD OF COMPLETING CLEARANCE BY 2025 (OSLO ACTION PLAN COMMITMENT): LOW

Under Article 5 of the APMBC, Cameroon's deadline to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control expired on 1 March 2013.

Cameroon has not submitted an Article 7 report since August 2009 when it reported there were no areas of mine contamination under its jurisdiction or control. In view of the casualties reported by Cameroon from mines and/or victim-activated mines of an improvised nature, Cameroon needs to revise its position.

Under the APMBC's agreed framework, Cameroon needs to immediately inform all States Parties of any newly discovered anti-personnel mines following the expiry of its Article 5 deadline in 2013 and ensure their destruction as soon as possible. It should also submit a request for a new Article 5 deadline. Cameroon must 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.

- 1 UNICEF, "Cameroon Humanitarian Situation Report No. 2", February 2021, accessed at <https://uni.cf/33TBRCs>.
- 2 "Cameroon: Violence spirals in Anglophone region", Ake Intel Department, 3 March 2021.
- 3 "Cameroonian forces dismantle explosive devices I restive Anglophone region", *Xinhua*, 14 December 2020.
- 4 J. Kouam, "Roadside bomb kills five in Cameroon's restive North West region", *Reuters*, 6 January 2021.
- 5 M. E. Kindzeka, "Military says rebels turn to IEDs as numbers fall", *Voice of America*, 11 May 2021.
- 6 « La douane camerounaise intercepte 2000 litres d'un produit entrant dans la fabrication des Engins explosifs improvisés », *Agence ecofin*, 21 December 2020; P. N. Ngouern, "Cameroun : saisie record par la douane de plus de deux tonnes d'engins explosifs improvisés", *Le360afrique.com*, 31 August 2020.
- 7 "Boko Haram landmines inflict heavy toll on Cameroon", *Latin American Herald Tribune*, 30 May 2019, at: <http://bit.ly/2XUT4ef>; "Cameroon: Boko Haram mine kills four soldiers in Far North region", *Journal du Cameroun.com*, 13 April 2019, at <http://bit.ly/2Z50o3u>.
- 8 P. Kum, "Landmine explosion kills two Cameroon soldiers", *Anadolu Agency*, 28 September 2017, at: <http://bit.ly/2LxKjQ0>.
- 9 "Boko Haram landmines inflict heavy toll on Cameroon", *Latin American Herald Tribune*, 30 May 2019.
- 10 The towns were Assighassia, Cherif Moussari, Talla-Katchi, and Zéméné.
- 11 IOM, "Cameroon, Far North Region, Displacement Report, Round 15, 3-15 September 2018", p. 8.
- 12 « Cameroun : formation de 1 000 policiers et gendarmes à la lutte contre les engins explosifs improvisés », *Xinhua*, 20 June 2019.
- 13 Statement of Cameroon to the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 23 October 2019.
- 14 "Military Cooperation: mine clearing training (Sept. 19-30th 2016)", French embassy in Yaoundé webpage at: <http://bit.ly/2Z3ShnY>; M. E. Kindzeka, "Cameroon Vigilantes Hunt for Boko Haram Landmines", *Voice of America News*, 4 March 2016, at: <http://bit.ly/2XZGxGM>.
- 15 US Embassy Yaoundé, @USEmbYaounde, 8 May 2021.
- 16 M. E. Kindzeka, "Land Mines Hamper Cameroon, Chad in Fight Against Boko Haram", *Voice of America News*, 3 March 2015, at: <http://bit.ly/2XX0fkD>; and "US Helps Cameroon in Fight Against Boko Haram", *Voice of America News*, 17 October 2015, at: <http://bit.ly/2y1GeeR>.
- 17 "US donates mine-clearing devices to Cameroon", *Journal du Cameroun*, 24 April 2017; at: <http://bit.ly/2Z3Hryl>.
- 18 "Génie Militaire – Des démineurs formés", *Cameroon Tribune (Yaoundé)*, 23 April 2018, at: <http://bit.ly/2M2uoJO>.