

CAMEROON

MINE
ACTION
REVIEW

CLEARING THE MINES 2023

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

KEY DATA

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

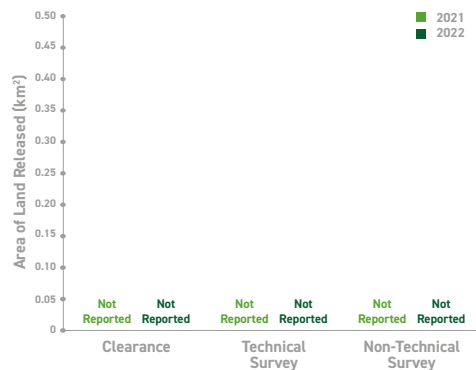
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2022

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2022

NOT REPORTED

NOT REPORTED

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



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

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Cameroon faces an ongoing threat from improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including mines of an improvised nature, primarily in the Far North region, deployed by the Boko Haram insurgency, and in the North West and South West regions, by the anglophone separatist movement. Cameroon has still not submitted a request to extend its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline despite its known mine contamination and is therefore in violation of the convention.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Cameroon should inform States Parties to the APMBC of the discovery of any anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination, including mines of an improvised nature.
- Cameroon should submit an Article 7 transparency report detailing all suspected or confirmed mined areas under its jurisdiction or control and should report systematically on explosive device incidents detailing the number, location, and device type.
- Cameroon should request a new Article 5 deadline from the other States Parties to the APMBC.
- Cameroon should put in place a sustainable national capacity to respond to the contamination, seeking international assistance to achieve this, as required.

DEMINEING 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

There is an increasing threat from explosive devices in Cameroon, including mines of an improvised nature, resulting from conflict in three regions. They include a widening Boko Haram insurgency spilling over from Nigeria into Far North region¹ 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. Non-State armed groups (NSAGs) continue to use IEDs in the three regions, primarily targeting military convoys.² Nevertheless, civilian casualties have also been documented, including an incident on 4 February 2022, where two children were killed when they stepped on an improvised AP mine in their village in the Sagné locality, in the Far North region.³

According to UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports, there were at least 53 reported incidents involving IEDs in the North-West, South-West, and Far North regions in 2022.⁴ The UN did not specify which of these incidents involved victim-activated devices. In 2023, Cameroon experienced a surge in IED incidents in the North West and South West regions during February, with approximately 20 reported cases.⁵ The prevalence of IED incidents continued in May, in the North West and South West regions, leading to restricted civilian movements and limited humanitarian access in the affected regions.⁶ In the Far North, two IED incidents involved military convoys detonating improvised anti-vehicle (AV) mines, in March and April respectively, causing numerous deaths and injuries.⁷

The UN reported that more than 10 IED incidents occurred every month during 2021. It said attacks targeting civilians increased in the south-west during the last quarter of 2021 and reported 35 incidents in the North-West region in October 2021.⁸ Cameroon's Defence Minister Joseph Beti Assomo said in May 2021 that IEDs in western Cameroon had killed 24 people in the preceding two weeks and that the military was seizing or destroying them on an almost daily basis.⁹

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.¹⁰

A senior army officer commented in 2017 that some roads in areas bordering Nigeria were "riddled with mines."¹¹ A Cameroonian analyst commented that insurgents were using "homemade mines" with increasing frequency on roads and in houses.¹² 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,¹³ a department bordering Nigeria, because of the presence of mines and reports of kidnappings.¹⁴

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.¹⁵

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.¹⁶ However, Cameroon has not reported systematically on incidents

1 See, e.g., C. Delanga, "La menace des engins explosifs pèse sur l'Extrême-Nord du Cameroun", Institute for Security Studies, 16 June 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3siaul8>.

2 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Humanitarian Needs Overview*, March 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3YJHBL0>.

3 OCHA, "West and Central Africa: Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot (8–14 February 2022)", at: <https://bit.ly/3E3fD3d>.

4 OCHA, "Cameroon: North-West and South-West – Situation Report No. 40 (As of 28 February 2022)", at: <https://bit.ly/44d0hSH>; OCHA "Cameroon: North-West and South-West – Situation Report No. 42 (As of 30 April 2022)", at: <https://bit.ly/30EBliH>; OCHA "Cameroon Situation Report, 31 May 2022", at: <https://bit.ly/47xokjL>; OCHA "Cameroon: North-West and South-West – Situation Report No. 44 (June 2022)", at: <https://bit.ly/3s97K9z>; UN OCHA, "Cameroon Situation Report, 13 July 2022", at: <https://bit.ly/3QOCYgq>; OCHA "Cameroon: North-West and South-West – Situation Report No. 47 (October 2022)", at: <https://bit.ly/3DYty9H>.

5 OCHA, "Cameroon: North-West and South-West – Situation Report No. 51 (February 2023)", at: <https://bit.ly/3KOiosV>.

6 OCHA, "Cameroon: North-West and South-West – Situation Report No. 54 (May 2023)", at: <https://bit.ly/44fmXDx>.

7 ACLED, "Filters: 01/01/2023-18/08/2023, Remote explosive/landmine/IED, Cameroon", accessed 18 August 2023, at: www.acleddata.com; Fenix Insight Online database, accessed 18 August 2023, at: <https://fenix-insight.online/>.

8 OCHA, *Cameroon Humanitarian Bulletin*, Issue No. 29, January 2022, p. 3.

9 M. E. Kindzeka, "Military says rebels turn to IEDs as numbers fall", *Voice of America*, 11 May 2021.

10 "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, "Cameroon: saisie record par la douane de plus de deux tonnes d'engins explosifs improvisés", *Le360Afrique.com*, 31 August 2020.

11 P. Kum, "Landmine explosion kills two Cameroon soldiers", *Anadolu Agency*, 28 September 2017, at: <https://bit.ly/2LxKjQ0>.

12 "Boko Haram landmines inflict heavy toll on Cameroon", *Latin American Herald Tribune*, 30 May 2019.

13 The towns were Talla-Katchi, Assighassia, Cherif Moussari, and Zéméné.

14 IOM, "Cameroon, Far North Region, Displacement Report, Round 15, 3–15 September 2018", p. 8.

15 "Cameroon: formation de 1 000 policiers et gendarmes à la lutte contre les engins explosifs improvisés" Xinhua, 20 June 2019.

16 Statement of Cameroon to the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 23 October 2019.

involving improvised explosive devices or identified incidents involving victim-activated devices that constitute mines of an improvised nature.

In the past six years, the Army has received military training in demining and counter-IED measures, mainly from the France and the United States.¹⁷ A Twitter feed by the US mission in Yaoundé in May 2021 reported provision of equipment for countering IEDs and training.¹⁸

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in Cameroon in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Cameroon has not provided information on whether it has mainstreamed gender and diversity in the context of its mine action programme.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

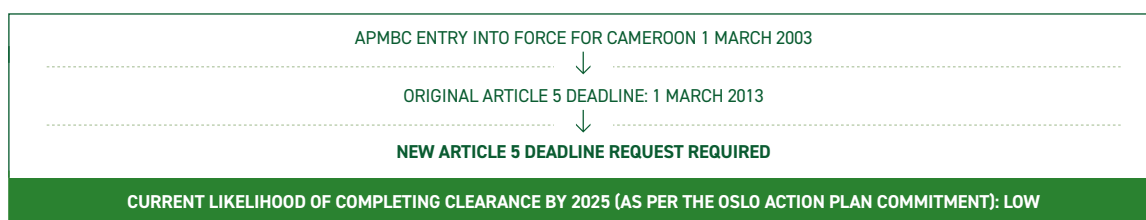
As at August 2023, Cameroon had yet to submit an Article 7 transparency report covering the previous calendar year or for previous years stretching back over a decade. Its last annual report was submitted in 2009.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

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

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Cameroon's Article 5 deadline to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control expired on 1 March 2013. It has not sought to extend the deadline and is therefore in violation of the Convention.

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 should immediately inform all States Parties of any newly discovered AP mines following the expiry of its Article 5 deadline in 2013 and ensure their destruction as soon as possible. It should request a new extended Article 5 deadline, which should be for no more than two years, affording it the opportunity to conduct any necessary survey and provide an assessment of the extent of AP mine contamination. Cameroon must also fulfil its reporting obligations under the Convention, including by reporting 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 AP mines within them.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Cameroon does not have plans in place to address residual contamination once its Article 5 obligations have been fulfilled.

17 "Military Cooperation: mine clearing training (Sept. 19-30th 2016)", French embassy in Yaoundé webpage at: <http://bit.ly/2Z3ShnY>; and M. E. Kindzeka, "Cameroon Vigilantes Hunt for Boko Haram Landmines", Voice of America News, 4 March 2016, at: <http://bit.ly/2XZGxGM>.

18 US Embassy Yaoundé, @USEmbYaounde, 8 May 2021.