

### ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2013

NEW EXTENDED DEADLINE NEEDED TO RETURN TO COMPLIANCE

#### KEY DATA

#### ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION:

LOW, EXTENT UNKNOWN

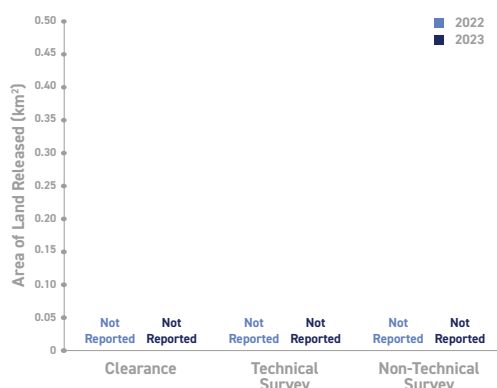
AP MINE  
CLEARANCE IN 2023

**NOT REPORTED**

AP MINES  
DESTROYED IN 2023

**NOT REPORTED**

#### LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



**CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET** (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In February 2024, at a regional conference in Ghana on improvised anti-personnel (AP) mines, Cameroon stated that, for more than a decade, its Far North region bordering Nigeria has been confronted with armed violence resulting from the Boko Haram insurgency. The violence has included use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), some of which are improvised AP mines banned under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). Cameroon also reported that its North-West and South-West (NWSW) regions have been facing a separatist Anglophone movement that has extensively used IEDs since 2018, some directly targeting civilians. A significant number of incidents were reported in 2023.

In May 2024, Cameroon submitted what is effectively an Article 7 report that detailed the national implementation measures it had adopted in line with the APMBC, particularly highlighting progress made between 2014 and 2019. Cameroon termed the document an "Article 9 report".<sup>1</sup> In June 2024, Cameroon notified Mine Action Review of its intention to request an extension to its APMBC Article 5 deadline, although it did not say when this would occur. Additionally, Cameroon indicated its plan to submit a full Article 7 report by November 2024, with its last formal report dating back to 2009. Until then, Cameroon remains in violation of the Convention.

## FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW

In 2019, Cameroon informed the United Nations that casualties from mines and improvised devices had surged by 43% in the previous year, requiring a change of approach by the government.<sup>2</sup> While it appealed for international assistance it did not take action to address the issue. Since then, Cameroon has made insufficient progress in returning to compliance with the APMBC, despite a continued rise in casualties across its three affected regions, especially the two NWSW regions. The government has not established a formal, civilian mine action programme; instead, ad hoc clearance and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) have remained the sole prerogative of the Military Engineer Corps. Cameroon has not systematically reported on incidents involving IEDs, nor identified those involving victim-activated devices that constitute improvised AP mines.

<sup>1</sup> Cameroon informed Mine Action Review that it had submitted the report to the Cambodian Presidency of the Fifth Review Conference.

<sup>2</sup> Statement of Cameroon to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, New York, 23 October 2019.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Cameroon should urgently submit an Article 7 report detailing all suspected or confirmed mined areas on its territory and report on plans to release them.
- Cameroon should urgently request an Article 5 deadline in order to return to compliance with the APMBC.
- Cameroon should put in place a monitoring capacity and a database to support systematic collection of data and reporting.
- Cameroon should seek international assistance to establish a sustainable national capacity to respond to the contamination.

## 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

The extent of AP mined area in Cameroon has not been quantified. IEDs, including improvised AP mines, began to be used in 2014 when the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria spread into Cameroon's Far North region. The number of IED attacks attributed to the non-State armed group (NSAG) significantly decreased after 2017, with very few incidents reported between 2021 and 2022. In 2023, however, there was a resurgence of IED attacks by Boko Haram fighters.<sup>3</sup>

According to Cameroon, the localities most affected by IEDs in the Far North in 2023 were Amchidé, Ashigashia, Djibrilli, Fotokol, Gousda Vreket, Kerawa, and Zelevet. Materials used by Boko Haram to manufacture IEDs typically involve industrial explosives, such as ANFO-based mixtures (a combination of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil). More recently, however, IEDs have been made from military-grade explosives and repurposed explosive remnants of war (ERW), such as mortar shells, grenades, anti-vehicle (AV) mines, and helicopter rockets, including Beluga-type submunitions.<sup>4</sup> In the NWSW regions, the number of IEDs incidents related to the Anglophone separatist conflict has been rising each year. According to Cameroon, the localities most affected by IEDs in the NWSW regions in 2023 were Bamenda, Buea, Bali, Limbe, and Mbengwi.<sup>5</sup>

The first IED incident occurred on 21 November 2018, in Ekok, in the Mamfé border area with Nigeria. NSAGs have been using IEDs primarily to target the security forces. Nevertheless, many incidents have also caused

civilian casualties and some even target civilians directly. For instance, on 25 February 2023, the day of the Mount Cameroon race in the Southwest region, several IEDs detonated along the racetrack leaving at least 19 people injured, three of whom were children.<sup>6</sup> On 11 February 2024, a town of the Northwest region was hit by an IED explosion during National Youth Day celebrations. The incident resulted in one death and 120 injuries. Most of the victims were children and women participating in the festivities.<sup>7</sup> The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) database recorded a second death from the same event and noted that 11 civilians required lower limb amputations.<sup>8</sup>

According to the United Nations' 2024 Humanitarian Needs Overview, at least six civilians were killed and a further twenty-seven injured by IEDs in the Far North and NWSW regions between January and September 2023.<sup>9</sup> ACLED recorded a total of 70 IED incidents in 2023 – the highest it had recorded over the previous five years, with a further 39 incidents occurring in the first six months of 2024. Six of the incidents were attributed to Boko Haram and other Islamic State-affiliated groups but the vast majority (56) involved improvised AV mines emplaced by separatists in the NWSW regions. IEDs targeted border patrol officers, security forces, and also civilian infrastructure such as a bar, a supermarket, or a public square during celebrations. In 2023, of the 72 fatalities recorded by ACLED, eight were civilians. In the first half of 2024, of the 38 fatalities, 11 were civilians.<sup>10</sup>

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

4 Email from Dr Paul Serges Ntamack Epoh, First Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Cameroon to the UN in Geneva, 13 June 2024.

5 Ibid.

6 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "Humanitarian Needs Overview", February 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/4cba9lw>.

7 5 OCHA, "L'explosion d'un engin explosif improvisé à Nkambe fait un mort et plus de 100 blessés", Press release, 28 February 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/4cba2X8>.

8 ACLED, "Filters: 01/01/2023-14/07/2024, Remote explosive/landmine/IED, Cameroon", accessed 26 July 2024, at: [www.acleddata.com](http://www.acleddata.com).

9 OCHA, "Humanitarian Needs Overview", February 2024.

10 Ibid.

Cameroon claims that more than 2,300 victims have been caused by explosive devices since 1999, including 55 in 2023.<sup>11</sup> According to the Small Arms Survey database on IEDs, 310 IED incidents occurred in Cameroon between

January 2014 and July 2022, resulting in 570 deaths and 827 injured.<sup>12</sup> Between 2020 and 2022, IEDs were also used outside conflict zones, notably in the administrative capital, Yaoundé, and in the coastal city of Douala.<sup>13</sup>

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# NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Cameroon lacks a formal institutional mechanism specifically dedicated to mine action. In August 2024, however, Cameroon indicated to Mine Action Review that such a mechanism was in the process of being established. In the interim, Cameroon has designated two national focal points to oversee mine action efforts: one within the Ministry of Defence and the other in the Ministry of External Relations. These focal points collaborate closely with Cameroon's Permanent Mission in Geneva to monitor and implement the obligations under the APMBC.<sup>14</sup>

On 15 May 2024, Cameroon submitted an "Article 9" report,<sup>15</sup> which is effectively a partial Article 7 report, detailing how it had strengthened its national implementation measures in the last decade. The legal framework is described as robust, with various legislative and regulatory measures that have been in place for many years. Between 2014 and 2019, Cameroon enacted several laws and decrees, including a law on the repression of acts of terrorism; a law on the general regime of weapons and ammunition; and a decree establishing the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of former Boko Haram fighters and other armed groups in the NWSW regions.<sup>16</sup>

In its partial Article 7 report, Cameroon detailed several administrative and operational measures that the government

had implemented to address AP mines and IED threats. The government initiated "clearance programmes aimed at localising and neutralising AP mines laid within its territory". Additionally, Cameroon provided risk education and training to local populations in mine-affected areas. The government also enhanced its control over the movement of both national and international components, focusing on preventing the spread and illicit trafficking of materials related to AP mines. To complement these efforts, Cameroon bolstered its intelligence capabilities to better monitor and respond to threats related to AP mines, ensuring that preventive and responsive actions were more effectively coordinated.<sup>17</sup>

Mine clearance and EOD are the sole prerogative of the Cameroon Military Engineer Corps under the authority of the Ministry of Defence.<sup>18</sup> Since 2014, training courses for gendarmes and military personnel in IED detection and neutralisation have been provided by the United States (US) Special Operations Command for Africa (SOCAFRICA). Over the past three years, defence and security forces have received training from both France and the United States. In addition, soldiers and police officers have been specifically trained in conducting operational searches. Cameroon has also revised the curricula of the training centres for defence and security forces to include IEDs.<sup>19</sup>

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# GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Cameroon has not provided information on whether it has mainstreamed issues of gender and diversity in its clearance and EOD activities.

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# ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

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

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11 Statement of Cameroon, Regional Conference on Improvised AP Mines, Ghana, 13–15 February 2024.

12 Small Arms Survey, "Hors de Contrôle. Le trafic de composants d'EET et d'explosifs commerciaux en Afrique de l'Ouest", November 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3WoPMvo>, p. 39.

13 Ibid.

14 Email from Paul Serges Ntamack Epoh, Permanent Mission of Cameroon to the UN in Geneva, 14 August 2024.

15 Cameroon informed Mine Action Review that it had submitted the report to the Cambodian Presidency of the Fifth Review Conference.

16 Report on national implementation measures, submitted to the President of the Fourth APMBC Review Conference, 15 May 2024.

17 Ibid.

18 Email from Paul Serges Ntamack Epoh, Permanent Mission of Cameroon to the UN Office, Geneva, 13 June 2024.

19 Statement of Cameroon, Regional Conference on Improvised AP Mines, Ghana, 13–15 February 2024; Report on national implementation measures, submitted to the President of the Fourth APMBC Review Conference, 15 May 2024; and "RS-SSR Annual Report", Lake Chad Basin Commission, November 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3ymS2eD>.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

As at August 2024, Cameroon had yet to submit a full Article 7 report covering the previous calendar year or for previous years stretching back over a decade. A partial report on national implementation measures was submitted in 2024, as noted above. Cameroon's last full annual report was submitted in 2009. Writing to Mine Action Review in June 2024, Cameroon pledged to submit an Article 7 report by November 2024.<sup>20</sup>

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2023

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

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2013

NEW ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE REQUEST REQUIRED

LIKELIHOOD OF COMPLETING CLEARANCE BY 2025 (AS PER THE OSLO ACTION PLAN COMMITMENT): NONE

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 given the new contamination.

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.

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 landmines, including AP mines of an improvised nature, Cameroon needs to revise its position.

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.

20 Email from Paul Serges Ntamack Eph, Permanent Mission of Cameroon to the UN in Geneva, 13 June 2024.