

CAMEROON



ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2013
(NEED TO REQUEST EXTENSION)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Cameroon should urgently clear any anti-personnel mines or victim-activated explosive devices on its territory and take immediate steps to minimise harm to civilian populations, 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, including victim-activated improvised explosive devices (IEDs), 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.
- As soon as security conditions permit, non-technical survey (NTS) should commence in Extrême-Nord (Far North) region, which has been reportedly most affected by conflict in 2015–16.
- As necessary, Cameroon should encourage and facilitate assistance and expertise from humanitarian demining organisations.

CONTAMINATION

In 2015–16, there were a number of reports of casualties and incidents from “landmines” including victim-activated IEDs reportedly laid by the non-state armed group, Boko Haram, primarily in the north of Cameroon along its border with Nigeria. These 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 appeared to describe the use of victim-activated IEDs made by Boko Haram, which functioned as either anti-personnel mines or anti-vehicle mines.²

While the extent of possible contamination is not known, according to Cameroonian military officials in May 2015, “huge” numbers of landmines had been planted by Boko Haram along Cameroon’s Nigerian border, posing a threat to civilians, livestock, and soldiers.³ In March

2015, a Cameroonian captain reported recurrent use of improvised mines and explosives along the road between Kerawa and Kolofata, which were targeting army vehicles.⁴ In June 2016, a Cameroonian analyst stated that mines had been used extensively around roads, houses, and vehicles, and that “damage caused by these homemade mines is becoming ever more frequent”.⁵

The precise extent to which civilians were casualties from use of these devices in 2015–16 is not clear; however, there were many reports of soldiers killed or injured.

Cameroon’s Minister of Communication reported at least 12 mine incidents in Cameroon in 2015.⁶ In February 2015, two Cameroonian soldiers were killed and eight

others injured after their convoy rode over a mine near to Kerawa, near the Nigerian border.⁷ In December 2015, two Cameroonian soldiers were reported to have been killed by a mine in the northern village of Gancé.⁸

On 4 March 2016, it was reported that 34 people, including at least 11 soldiers, had been killed and another 40 injured in seven landmine explosions over the previous five days in the Extrême-Nord region.⁹ In June 2016, three other Cameroonian soldiers were reportedly seriously wounded when their vehicle hit a mine planted by Boko Haram along the Kolofata-Gancé road, again in the far north region.¹⁰

LAND RELEASE

It is not known whether and to which extent mine clearance or explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) has been undertaken. Cameroon has not submitted an Article 7 transparency report since 2009.

In 2015, Cameroon was reported to have received training and equipment from the United States (US) and Russia to detect and destroy mines and explosive devices, including armoured mine-detection vehicles provided by the US Army Africa Command.¹¹ Additionally, in May 2015, Cameroon’s Defence Minister stated that Chadian soldiers had been sent to assist in finding and destroying mines, and that while “much had been done...a lot still needs to be done” to eradicate the threat.¹² 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.¹³

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Cameroon is a state party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (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 Convention’s agreed framework, Cameroon should immediately inform all states parties of any newly discovered anti-personnel mine contamination following the expiry of its Article 5 deadline and ensure its 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 the obligation to report on the location of any suspected or confirmed mined areas under its jurisdiction or control and on the status of programmes for their destruction.¹⁴

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, at: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/int/mnjtf.htm>.

2 M. P. Moore, “This Month in Mines, February 2015”, Landmines in Africa blog, 12 March 2015.

3 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>.

4 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>.

5 “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>.

6 B. R. Mbodiam, “Boko Haram has already caused 1,000 deaths in Cameroon since 2013, according to government”, *Business in Cameroon*, 17 January 2016, at: <http://www.businessincameroon.com/public-management/1701-5926-boko-haram-has-already-caused-1-000-deaths-in-cameroon-since-2013-according-to-the-government>.

7 M. E. Kindzeka, “A military officer says a commanding officer and a soldier with Cameroon’s military have died after their convoy hit a land mine as they returned from an anti-Boko Haram operation in Nigeria”, *US News*, 15 February 2016, at: <http://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2016-02-15/boko-haram-land-mine-kills-2-in-cameroon-military-convoy>.

8 L.-M. Eleftheriou-Smith, “Boko Haram: Cameroon army kills 100 militants and frees 900 hostages”, *The Independent*, 2 December 2015, at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/boko-haram-cameroon-army-reportedly-kills-100-militants-and-frees-900-hostages-a6757066.html>.

9 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>.

10 “Fighting Boko Haram: Landmine seriously injures 3 Cameroonian service men”, *Cameroon Concord*, 8 June 2016, at: <http://cameroon-concord.com/headlines/item/6191-fighting-boko-haram-landmine-seriously-injures-3-cameroonian-service-men>.

11 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>.

12 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>.

13 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>.

14 Final Report of the APMBC Twelfth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 21 January 2013, p. 10, at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G13/600/64/PDF/G1360064.pdf?OpenElement>.