

CUBA

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

- Cuba should accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) as a matter of priority.

CONTAMINATION

Cuba's mine contamination remains unchanged from previous years. Cuban authorities maintain minefields around the United States (US) naval base at Guantánamo in the south-east of Cuba. In 2007, Cuba said it carries out "a strict policy with regard to guaranteeing a responsible use of anti-personnel mines with an exclusively defensive character and for [Cuba's] national security."¹ According to an earlier statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, existing minefields are duly "marked, fenced and guarded" in accordance with Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II Meeting of Experts.² According to a book published in 2008, mines laid around the naval base detonate "at least once a month";³ but it has not been possible to independently confirm this claim. In February 2018, a fire broke out in the 17-mile strip of land separating the Guantánamo base from Cuban territory which reportedly detonated 1,000 landmines and burned 1,700 acres over three days before being extinguished.⁴

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

There is no mine action programme in Cuba.

LAND RELEASE

Cuba has not conducted clearance in its minefields around the US naval base at Guantánamo over the last ten years.

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Cuba is not a state party to the APMBC, but nonetheless has obligations under customary international human rights law to protect life, which requires the clearance of mines in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.

1 Statement by Rebeca Hernández Toledano, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Cuba to the UN, "Item 29: Assistance in mine action", UN General Assembly, Fourth Committee, New York, 6 November 2007.

2 Statement of the Directorate of Multilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 19 June 2000.

3 "The Cuban mines detonate at least once a month, sometimes starting fires that sweep across the fence line. [Staff Sergeant Kaveh Wooley of the US Marines]... described a fire that started the previous summer and turned into a giant cook-off, with about 30 mines exploding...." D. P. Erikson, *Cuba Wars: Fidel Castro, the United States, and the Next Revolution*, Bloomsbury, United States, October 2008, pp. 196–97.

4 "U.S. and Cuban forces unite to fight a common foe: wildfire at Guantanamo" *USA Today*, 1 March 2018, at: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2018/03/01/u-s-and-cuban-forces-unite-fight-common-foe-wildfire-guantanamo/386221002/>.