

CYPRUS

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JULY 2019
(EXTENSION REQUESTED TO 1 JULY 2022)

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE	2017	2016
Problem understood	6	5
Target date for completion of mine clearance	5	5
Targeted clearance	8	8
Efficient clearance	8	8
National funding of programme	4	4
Timely clearance	5	5
Land-release system in place	7	7
National mine action standards	7	7
Reporting on progress	4	4
Improving performance	4	5
PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE	5.8	5.8

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

No anti-personnel mines are believed to remain in minefields on territory under the control of the Republic of Cyprus. Incremental progress was made in 2017 through survey and clearance towards releasing mined areas in Turkish Cypriot-controlled territory in northern Cyprus. The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) also undertook a complete review of demining records which resulted in a reduction in the number of recorded suspected hazardous areas (SHAs), from 67 to 47, and the estimated contaminated area nationwide, from just over 3.1km² to just over 1.7km².

In Turkish Cypriot-controlled territory in northern Cyprus, the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) coordinated technical survey and clearance through its implementing partner, Mines Advisory Group (MAG). Survey in 2017 removed legacy minefields that were recorded as SHAs but no longer contained any explosive hazards. The minefields were part of a package of confidence-building measures between the two sides agreed in May 2015 in support of discussions towards a final settlement agreement. Clearance was also conducted in the Mammari minefield just north of the buffer zone between the two sides.

In November 2017, following the breakdown of settlement talks between the two sides the previous July, the UNFICYP's demining capacity was demobilised.

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

- The Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot authorities in northern Cyprus should heed the UN Security Council's renewed call for access to all remaining mined areas within and outside the buffer zone.¹

CONTAMINATION

Cyprus is contaminated by anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines. The island has been divided geographically and politically by what was once a heavily mined, 180km-long buffer zone since 1974, following Turkish Forces' operations in the north of the island. Minefields were laid by both the Greek Cypriot National Guard and the Turkish Armed Forces. The exact extent of the remaining mine contamination across the island is not known, and permission for UNFICYP to access areas outside the buffer zone remains limited.²

UNFICYP data indicates that at the end of 2017, 29 SHAs and 18 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) remained across Cyprus covering just over 1.7km². Contamination in these areas is either mixed (anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines), of unknown nature, or from anti-vehicle mines only (see Table 1).³

In 2017, UNFICYP undertook a complete review of all demining documentation and records, which resulted in a reduction in the number of recorded SHAs, from 67 to 47, and in the estimated contaminated area nationwide, from just over 3.1km² to just over 1.7km².⁴

Table 1: Contamination (as at end of 2017)⁵

Location	CHAs	Type of contamination	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Type of contamination	Area (m ²)
South of the buffer zone (in territory controlled by the Republic of Cyprus)	13	AV mines	418,543	15	AV mines	299,898
Buffer Zone	4	AV mines (3), Unknown (1)	703,581	0	N/A	N/A
North of the buffer zone (in territory controlled by Turkish Cypriot authorities)	1	Mixed	170,493	14	Unknown	130,784
Totals	18		1,292,617	29		430,682

AV = Anti-vehicle

Territory controlled by the Republic of Cyprus

Cyprus has reported that no anti-personnel mines remain in the minefields laid by the National Guard that are on territory under its effective control.⁶ In total, between becoming a state party on 1 July 2003 and its original Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline of 1 July 2013, Cyprus released all 20 mined areas under its effective control.⁷

Buffer Zone

Previously, 81 mined areas had been located within the buffer zone (13 of which contained mines laid by the National Guard) containing a total of 27,174 mines and extending over almost 11km².⁸ In November 2013, Cyprus reported that no minefields under its control remained in the buffer zone, after its clearance of two mined areas in Dali in 2012 and a further mined area at Potamia by July 2013, in accordance with its National Plan.⁹

According to the Republic of Cyprus, the sole remaining minefield in the buffer zone is located in Turkish Forces-controlled area, close to the village of Deryneia¹⁰ (also spelt Derynia or Dherynia). In 2017, the Turkish Forces rejected the request made by UNFICYP to clear a small portion of land around one of its permanently manned positions adjacent to the Deryneia/Derinya minefield for “safety reasons”.¹¹

In July 2015, however, a report of the UN Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus noted that “no progress was registered on the issue of access to the four known remaining minefields in the buffer zone, of which three are under the control of the National Guard and one is under the control of the Turkish forces, despite requests by UNFICYP”.¹² This was restated in subsequent reports of the Secretary-General, most recently in July 2018, in which it was reported that, “the two sides have not begun clearance of the four known remaining minefields in the buffer zone, of which three belong to the National Guard and one to the Turkish forces. While the Turkish Cypriot side has indicated that it would accept the clearance of all four areas as a package, the Greek Cypriot side maintains the position that its three minefields are required to counter a perceived threat.”¹³

In May 2016, in response to a request for clarification, a government diplomat in Geneva clarified that the Government of the Republic of Cyprus considers the three minefields to be under its control and not within the buffer zone. In addition, the official stated that the three minefields in question do not contain anti-personnel mines.¹⁴ UNFICYP reported that as at December 2017 three of the mined areas in the buffer zone are contaminated with anti-vehicle mines and that contamination in the fourth mined area is unknown.¹⁵

In its latest resolution the UN Security Council calls on “both sides to continue to engage, as a matter of urgency and while respecting UNFICYP’s mandate, in consultations with UNFICYP on the demarcation of the buffer zone, and on the United Nations 1989

aide-memoire, with a view to reaching early agreement on outstanding issues.”¹⁶ Reiterating the statement made in previous resolutions.¹⁷ According to UNFICYP, such demarcation would, in particular, help to resolve any ambiguity or lack of agreement between the sides and the UN about the precise location of the buffer zone.¹⁸

Turkish Cypriot-controlled territory in northern Cyprus

The extent of mine contamination in areas controlled by Turkish Forces is not known. However, the Republic of Cyprus claimed in its latest Article 7 transparency report (for 2017) that at least 20 minefields laid and maintained in the occupied areas by Turkish Forces are yet to be cleared of anti-personnel mines, of which one is situated within the buffer zone.¹⁹ According to the UN, some military mine clearance appears to have been conducted over most locations that are still recorded as minefields.²⁰

During a meeting on 15 May 2015, the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades, provided the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, Mustafa Akinci, with coordinates of the 28 known minefields laid by the National Guard prior to Turkey’s military action in 1974.²¹ These minefields, located north of Nicosia towards the Pentadaktylos mountain range, in what is today Turkish Cypriot-occupied area, contained 1,006 anti-personnel mines.²²

On 4 June 2015, leader of the Turkish Cypriot community asked for assistance to address the 28 minefields. In response, and with a view to facilitating future demining, UNFICYP and UNMAS worked to refine the data and map the minefields, which were suspected to contain both anti-vehicle and anti-personnel mines.²³

Survey of the minefields was conducted and completed in the summer of 2015 by UNMAS, supported by Turkish Engineering Forces, in conjunction with UNFICYP.²⁴ The survey resulted in three of the twenty-eight areas being found to have a higher risk of mine contamination and to require technical survey, as well as an additional two suspected locations identified by the local community. UNFICYP support for clearance of these areas occurred under an agreement known as “3+2” support.²⁵ In July 2017, a report of the UN Secretary-General stated that “UNFICYP had completed demining operations on the last 2 of the 28 legacy minefields, the locations of which were provided to the Turkish Cypriot leader by the Greek Cypriot leader as part of a package of confidence-building measures announced in May 2015”.²⁶

In addition, there is a minefield just north of the buffer zone in Mammari, where heavy rains led to mines being washed into the buffer zone in 2014 and 2015. UNFICYP has raised the issue of clearance of this minefield with the Turkish forces and has offered assistance in this regard.²⁷ In 2017, a small area of the Mammari minefield was cleared by a Croatian commercial operator contracted by the Turkish Armed Forces.²⁸

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus are coordinated by UNMAS on behalf of UNFICYP.²⁹ In July 2016, UNMAS became an integral component of UNFICYP, providing its expertise in mine action planning and coordination, QA oversight, and management of mine action information.³⁰

UN-facilitated settlement talks between the two sides in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, in July 2017, came to an abrupt halt after 10 days. Since the breakdown of these talks, no further access has been granted to the SHAs in the UN's Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database.³¹ The lack of access resulted in the demobilisation of the UN demining capacity on 20 November 2017. UNFICYP retains a technical capacity and non-technical survey contingency to conduct new activities when access is permitted.³²

UNMAS also provides assistance to the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) to ensure safe access to areas it conducts activities and to UNFICYP for explosive ordnance disposal call-out tasks.³³

Legislation and Standards

All UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus are said to be conducted in accordance with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).³⁴

In 2016, to guide UN operations, UNMAS updated the national technical standards and guidelines that are used in UNFICYP to reflect current best practice and to ensure the highest standards are applied for UNFICYP clearance operations.³⁵

Quality Management

UNMAS is responsible for conducting QA and quality control of all UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus. In addition, all task documentation was quality controlled by UNMAS before acceptance by UNFICYP and the relevant authorities.³⁶

Information Management

UNFICYP uses the IMSMA database. In 2017, a review and reconciliation of all electronic and hardcopy minefield database documentation revealed that a number of SHAs had already been cleared and/or cancelled. However, due to capacity limitations between 2011 and 2016, the information had not been removed from the database. The review resulted in the removal of seven SHAs (totalling over 950,000m²) from the database.³⁷

Operators

In 2017, MAG conducted survey and clearance on behalf of UNMAS and UNFICYP using a 17-strong team that included seven deminers. In July 2017, the team was reduced to five deminers, a medic, and a driver. The entire team was then demobilised in November 2017 due to a budget reduction by UNFICYP following the failure of talks at the Conference on Cyprus in July 2017.³⁸

Clearance of the Mammari minefield was conducted by DOKING, a Croatian commercial operator, and the Quality Assurance was conducted by MAG. Both companies were directly contracted by the Turkish Armed Forces.³⁹

LAND RELEASE

In Turkish Cypriot-controlled territory in northern Cyprus, 22,000m² was released through clearance in 2017, 306,237m² was cancelled by non-technical survey, and 15,853m² reduced through technical survey.⁴⁰ As noted above, database clean-up also removed almost 1km² from IMSMA.

Survey in 2017

In 2017 in northern Cyprus, MAG, the implementing partner of UNMAS in the region, undertook non-technical survey of six minefields and non-technical and technical survey of one minefield, cancelling 306,237m² by non-technical survey and reducing 15,853m² by technical survey (see Table 2).⁴¹

Table 2: Survey of mined area in 2017⁴²

Location	Area Cancelled (m ²)	Area Reduced (m ²)
Gungor	154,791	15,853
Mouttes	67,989	0
Mazeri	60,278	0
Mia Milia	3,384	0
Lapithos	3,607	0
Argidaki	2,937	0
Koutsoventis	13,251	0
Totals	306,237	15,853

Clearance in 2017

DOKING cleared a small area of Alakoy, in Mammari in northern Cyprus, adjacent to an area where flooding had previously washed mines into the buffer zone. A total of 22,000m² was cleared with the destruction of 88 anti-personnel mines and 87 anti-vehicle mines.⁴³

Progress in 2018

In 2018, UNMAS and UNFICYP were planning to support activities in accordance with the priorities and requests for assistance from the two sides. Through its advocacy and engagement in 2018, the UN was encouraging the two sides to:

- Establish a Mine Action Dialogue Mechanism to identify SHAs and/or CHAs for reciprocal survey and removal
- Conduct a review of SHA data with UNFICYP to initiate the removal of legacy information from IMSMA for areas that no longer pose a threat
- Restart the process of non-technical and technical survey to properly identify the scope and content of SHAs and CHAs; and
- Advocate/assist/conduct clearance to continue progress towards a mine-free Cyprus.

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Under Article 5 of the APMB (and in accordance with a second three-year extension granted by states parties in December 2015), the Republic of Cyprus is required to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 July 2019. It will not meet this deadline and in 2018 it submitted a request for a further extension of three years until 1 July 2022. The request consisted of a single page, referring back to the 2015 request.

Cyprus has reported clearing all anti-personnel mines in mined areas that it accepted were under its control within ten years of becoming a state party, namely by 1 July 2013. A three-year extension to its Article 5 deadline until 1 July 2016 was requested and approved in 2012, due to anti-personnel mines remaining in territory occupied by the Turkish forces, which it was unable to clear.⁴⁴

On 27 March 2015, Cyprus submitted a second Article 5 deadline extension request, seeking a further three-year extension, until 1 July 2019. The reason cited for the second extension request was the same as the first, namely that Cyprus does not have effective control over remaining contaminated areas.⁴⁵ According to the website of the Permanent Mission of Cyprus in Geneva, "Once Turkey ceases the military occupation of Cyprus and returns control of the occupied areas under proper conditions to the authorities of the Republic, they [the Republic of Cyprus] will be able to assume full responsibility and compliance with the provisions of Article 5 for the entire sovereign territory of the Republic of Cyprus."⁴⁶ On 2 February 2018, Cyprus submitted a third Article 5 deadline request, seeking a further three-year extension until 1 July 2022. The reason cited for the third extension request was the same as the second and the first, namely that certain parts of Cyprus are occupied by the Turkish Armed Forces and therefore outside of the control of the government.⁴⁷

Turkey's original Article 5 clearance deadline was 1 March 2014. In 2013, states parties granted Turkey an eight-year extension until 1 March 2022, for clearance of mines in Turkey, but Turkey did not request additional time for clearance of the areas it controls in northern Cyprus.⁴⁸

At the Intersessional Meetings in June 2015, Cyprus stated that "negotiations for a settlement of the Cyprus question have recently resumed and there are good reasons for being hopeful that this will in fact be the last extension request that Cyprus needs to submit."⁴⁹

The July 2016 report by the Secretary-General also noted that both the Greek Cypriot leader and the Turkish Cypriot leader have "continued to engage in settlement talks with dedication and perseverance", and "underlined their commitment to intensify their efforts in the coming months with the aim of reaching a comprehensive settlement agreement within 2016".⁵⁰ Settlement talks between the two sides were held in July 2017 in Switzerland but broke down after ten days.⁵¹

The UN Security Council, most recently in July 2018, has called on both sides to facilitate clearance of all remaining mined areas on the island.⁵² The Council noted with regret "that the sides are withholding access to the remaining minefields in the buffer zone, and that demining in Cyprus must continue". The Council also noted "the continued danger posed by mines in Cyprus", referring to "proposals and discussions as well as positive initiatives on demining", and urging "rapid agreement on facilitating the recommencement of demining operations and clearance of the remaining minefields".⁵³ The Council called on "both sides to allow access to deminers and to facilitate the removal of the remaining mines in Cyprus within the buffer zone", and urged "both sides to extend demining operations outside the buffer zone".⁵⁴

A January 2018 report of the UN Secretary General, noted the completion of the outstanding non-technical surveys from the list of 28 legacy minefields and also the comprehensive review of the UNFICYP mine action database. However, it was also observed that the “two sides have not begun clearance of the four known remaining minefields in the buffer zone” and that “no additional areas have been released for survey or clearance”.⁵⁵ There are currently no demining operations forecasted for UNMAS-UNFICYP in 2018.⁵⁶

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- 1 UN Security Council Resolution 2430 (2018), para. 15.
- 2 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 26 September 2017.
- 3 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 10 September 2018.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Article 7 Reports (for 2018), Form C.
- 7 APMBC Committee on Article 5 Implementation, “Observations on implementation of Article 5 by Cyprus”, 23 June 2015; and Article 7 Report (for 2013), Form G.
- 8 “Analysis of the request submitted by Cyprus for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention”, 4 October 2012.
- 9 Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by George Stavrinou, Security Policy Department, Cypriot Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 25 November 2013.
- 10 APMBC Article 7 Reports (for 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017, and 2018), Form C.
- 11 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2018/25, 9 January 2018, para. 14.
- 12 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2015/517, 2 July 2015, para. 14.
- 13 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2018/676, 6 July 2018, para. 44.
- 14 Interview with Demitris Samuel, Deputy Permanent Representative, Cyprus Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva, Geneva, 19 May 2016.
- 15 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 10 September 2018.
- 16 UN Security Council Resolution 2430 (2018) para. 13.
- 17 UN Security Council Resolution 2338 (2017), para. 9; and UN Security Council Resolution 2398 (2018) para. 12.
- 18 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.
- 19 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form C.
- 20 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Mike Holgate, Mine Action Officer, UNFICYP), 6 October 2016.
- 21 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2015/517, 2 July 2015, para. 3.
- 22 Article 7 Report (for 2014), Form C.
- 23 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2015/517, 2 July 2015, para. 13.
- 24 Ibid.; and email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Timothy Roberts, Chief of Operations, UNMAS Lebanon), 4 October 2015.
- 25 Emails from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Timothy Roberts, UNMAS Lebanon), 4 October 2015; and (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 26 September 2017.
- 26 Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2017/586, 10 July 2017, p. 3.
- 27 Ibid.; and email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.
- 28 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 10 September 2018.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 UNMAS, “Cyprus” webpage, accessed 27 July 2017, at: <http://www.mineaction.org/programmes/cyprus>.
- 31 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 10 September 2018.
- 32 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2018/25, 9 January 2018, para. 14.
- 33 Ibid, para 12.
- 34 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 10 September 2018.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 10 September 2018.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 30 April 2012.
- 45 Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 27 March 2015.
- 46 Permanent Mission of Cyprus in Geneva, “Disarmament and Non-proliferation” webpage, accessed 27 July 2017, at: http://www.mfa.gov.cy/mfa/PermRep/PermRepUN.nsf/ecsw31_en/ecsw31_en?OpenDocument.
- 47 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 2 February 2018.
- 48 Turkey’s Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013.
- 49 Statement of Cyprus, Standing Committee on Mine Action, Geneva, 25 June 2015.
- 50 Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2016/598, 8 July 2016, p. 1.
- 51 “Cyprus reunification talks collapse amid angry scenes”, *The Guardian*, 7 July 2017, at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/07/cyprus-reunification-talks-collapse-amid-angry-scenes>.
- 52 UN Security Council Resolutions 2026 (2011), 2197 (2015), 2234 (2015), 2263 (2016), 2300 (2016), and 2338 (2017).
- 53 UN Security Council Resolution 2430 (2018), twelfth preambular paragraph.
- 54 Ibid, para. 11.
- 55 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2018/25, 9 January 2018, paras. 12 and 14.
- 56 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 10 September 2018.