



CYPRUS

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JULY 2019
 (NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE)

MINE ACTION PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

For 2016

For 2015

MINE ACTION PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE	For 2016	For 2015
Problem understood	5	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	5	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 (Cyprus). Incremental progress was made in 2016 towards releasing mined areas in the Buffer Zone and in Turkish-controlled territory in northern Cyprus.

Within the Buffer Zone, limited progress has been made due to the lack of permitted access to the remaining minefield locations which border the area supervised by the United Nations (UN). These remaining locations are reportedly seen as having operational or strategic significance by the sides.¹ Technical survey was conducted in an area of the Buffer Zone in order to enable the safe movement of United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) personnel, and resulted in reduction of a small part of a hazardous area .

In Turkish-controlled territory in northern Cyprus, UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS)-coordinated technical survey and clearance, through its implementing partner Mines Advisory Group (MAG), was of mined areas that had been confirmed through non-technical survey in 2015. This followed the sharing of information by the President of the Republic of Cyprus on 28 minefields laid by the Greek Cypriot National Guard to the leader of northern Cyprus, as part of a package of confidence-building measures agreed in May 2015 in support of discussions on a final settlement agreement.² Clearance of these areas represents the bulk of UN support to the bi-communal confidence-building measures between the two sides and UNFICYP.³ Seven anti-vehicle mines were destroyed during release of mined area in northern Cyprus in 2016, but no anti-personnel mines.

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

- **Cyprus and Turkey should heed the UN Security Council's renewed call for access to all remaining mined areas inside and outside the Buffer Zone.**⁴

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 remaining mine contamination across the island is not known, and permission for UNFICYP to access areas outside the Buffer Zone remains limited.⁵

UNFICYP data indicates that at the end of 2016, 67 suspected hazardous areas (SHA) across Cyprus might be contaminated with mines and/or explosive remnants of war (ERW).⁶ The type of contamination, however, was not disaggregated and UNFICYP did not report how many of the 67 SHA are believed to contain anti-personnel mines. Of the total number of SHAs, 32 are located south of the Buffer Zone in territory controlled by the Republic of Cyprus (but are not believed to contain anti-personnel mines⁷); 4 are in the Buffer Zone, and 31 are north of the Buffer Zone in Turkish-controlled territory.⁸ Survey of these areas is required to gain a more precise estimate of the scale of contamination, though UNFICYP has estimated that more than 7,000 anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines currently remain across the island of Cyprus.⁹

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.¹⁰

Previously, a total of 20 mined areas containing 4,653 anti-personnel mines existed in areas under the effective control of Cyprus outside the Buffer Zone, which had been replaced by the National Guard.¹¹ 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.¹²

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 11km².¹³ 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.¹⁴

According to Cyprus, the sole remaining minefield in the Buffer Zone is located in Turkish-controlled area, close to the village of Deryneia¹⁵ (also spelt Derynia or Dherynia).

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".¹⁶ This was restated in subsequent reports of the Secretary-General, most recently in July 2017, in which it was reported that, "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".¹⁷

This raised concerns that mine contamination remains in the Republic of Cyprus-controlled areas of the Buffer Zone. 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.¹⁸

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.”¹⁹ 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.²⁰

Turkish-controlled territory in northern Cyprus

The extent of mine contamination in areas controlled by Turkish Forces is not known. However, Cyprus has claimed in its latest Article 7 transparency report (for 2016) 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.²¹ According to the UN, some military mine clearance appears to have been conducted over most locations that are still recorded as minefields.²²

During a meeting on 15 May 2015, the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades, provided the northern Cyprus leader, President Mustafa Akinci, with coordinates of the 28 known minefields laid by the National Guard prior to Turkey’s military action in 1974.²³ These minefields, located north of Nicosia towards the Pentadaktylos mountain range, in what is today Turkish-occupied area, included 1,006 anti-personnel mines.²⁴

On 4 June 2015, the northern Cyprus president asked for assistance to address the 28 minefields on Turkish-controlled territory in the north. In response, and with a view to facilitating future demining, UNFICYP and UNMAS worked to refine the data and map the minefields, which are suspected to contain both anti-vehicle and anti-personnel mines.²⁵

Survey of the minefields was conducted and completed in the summer of 2015 by UNMAS, supported by Turkish Engineering Forces, in conjunction with UNFICYP.²⁶ 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.²⁷

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.²⁸ In May 2017, Turkish Cypriot security forces reaffirmed their intention to clear the minefield.²⁹

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus are coordinated by UNMAS, on behalf of UNFICYP.³⁰ In July 2016, UNMAS became an integral component of UNFICYP, providing its expertise in mine action planning and coordination, quality assurance oversight, and data management for mine action information, as well as demining capacity.³¹

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.³²

Legislation and Standards

All UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus are conducted in accordance with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).³³

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.³⁴

Quality Management

UNMAS is responsible for conducting quality assurance and quality control of all UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus.³⁵

Operators

In 2016, UN demining activities in Cyprus were conducted by UNMAS’s implementing partner, MAG.³⁶ MAG’s capacity included a multi-task team and a mechanical support team (mini-MineWolf).³⁷

Previously, in 2015, clearance was conducted by a military demining team from the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) Troop Contributing Country (TCC), provided by the Cambodian Construction & Engineering Company (CAMBCOY), as part of UNFICYP’s inter-mission cooperation with UNIFIL.³⁸ In 2016, however, the UNIFIL CAMBCOY did not deploy to Cyprus and UNFICYP did not use a TCC for demining.³⁹

LAND RELEASE

In the Buffer Zone, 20,000m² was reduced through technical survey in 2016.⁴⁰

In Turkish-controlled territory in northern Cyprus, 6,772m² was released through clearance in 2016, and a further 26,757m² reduced through technical survey.⁴¹

Survey and clearance in the Buffer Zone in 2016

In September 2016, UNMAS, through its implementing partner MAG, reduced 20,000m² through technical survey near Deryneia in the Buffer Zone, to facilitate safe mobility for UNFICYP personnel.⁴² No land was released through clearance in the Buffer Zone in 2016.⁴³

This is a reduction compared to 2015, when 16,691m² of mined area was confirmed and cleared in the Buffer Zone, and a further 45,000m² reduced by technical survey.⁴⁴

Survey and clearance in Turkish-controlled territory in northern Cyprus in 2016

In 2016, UNMAS, through its implementing partner MAG, undertook survey and clearance of two minefields in Yedidalga/Karavostasi and a third near Agios Haralambos/Agirdagi Kilisesi, northern Cyprus. These

three minefields were identified during UNMAS surveys in 2015 (supported by Turkish Engineering Forces, in conjunction with UNFICYP), following the provision of information by the President of the Republic of Cyprus to the leader of northern Cyprus, regarding 28 former National Guard minefields that were laid in 1974. Clearance of these minefields is significant as they are part of a package of confidence-building measures agreed in May 2015 in support of the peace process.⁴⁵

During the 2016 survey and clearance operations, MAG confirmed 6,900m² as mined, across the three SHAs. A total of 6,772m² of mined areas was cleared through manual demining, during which seven anti-vehicle mines, but no anti-personnel mines, were destroyed. A further 26,757m² was reduced through technical survey.⁴⁶

Progress in 2017

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".⁴⁷

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with a second three-year extension granted by states parties in December 2015), 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.

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.⁴⁸

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.⁴⁹ 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."⁵⁰

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.⁵¹

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."⁵²

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".⁵³

The UN Security Council, most recently in January 2017, has called on both sides to facilitate clearance of all remaining mined areas on the island.⁵⁴ 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".⁵⁵ 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".⁵⁶

A January 2017 report of the UN Secretary General, observed that: "While the progress made towards the safety of Cypriots via the clearance of five minefields in the north is welcome, much more remains to be done. The lack of action on the clearance of the minefield adjacent to the ceasefire line near Mammari, for example, continues to pose unnecessary risks. Minefields on the island have little military utility, but pose a serious threat to life."⁵⁷ As at July 2017, however, negotiations were still ongoing.⁵⁸

According to a July 2017 report of the UN Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, "The Force [UNFICYP] engaged with the sides to identify priorities for the survey and clearance of minefields across the island in 2017 and 2018 and stands ready to support them, initially through a non-technical survey of the relevant areas. The Force has sought prompt agreement from the sides on initiating the survey, given the importance of demining as a safety measure and in achieving the ultimate goal of a mine-free Cyprus".⁵⁹

- 1 Email from Julie Myers, Programme Officer, UNMAS (based on information provided by Maj. Rich Pearce, Mine Action Officer, UNFICYP), 26 September 2017.
- 2 Emails from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, Chief of Operations, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July and 26 September 2017.
- 3 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 26 September 2017.
- 4 UN Security Council Resolution 2338 (2017), §11.
- 5 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 26 September 2017.
- 6 UNMAS, "Cyprus" webpage, accessed 27 July 2017, at: <http://www.mineaction.org/programmes/cyprus>; and emails from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July and 26 September 2017.
- 7 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form C.
- 8 UNMAS, "Cyprus" webpage, accessed 27 July 2017, at: <http://www.mineaction.org/programmes/cyprus>; and email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.
- 9 Ibid. Previously, in an April 2016 Factsheet, it was estimated that mines affected 2km² of land, with four minefields remaining in the Buffer Zone and thirty-five minefields across the rest of the island. UNFICYP, "Factsheet: towards a Mine-free Cyprus", April 2016, at: https://unficyp.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/minefactsheet_-_final_update_april_2016.pdf.
- 10 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form C.
- 11 "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.
- 12 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.
- 13 "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.
- 14 Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by George Stavrinou, Security Policy Department, Cypriot Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 25 November 2013.
- 15 APMBC Article 7 Reports (for 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2017), Form C.
- 16 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2015/517, 2 July 2015, p. 3.
- 17 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2017/586, 10 July 2017, p. 3.
- 18 Interview with Demitris Samuel, Deputy Permanent Representative, Cyprus Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva, Geneva, 19 May 2016.
- 19 UN Security Council Resolution 2338 (2017), §9.
- 20 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.
- 21 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form C.
- 22 Email from Julie Myers, Programme Officer, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Mike Holgate, Mine Action Officer, UNFICYP), 6 October 2016.
- 23 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2015/517, 2 July 2015, p. 1.
- 24 Article 7 Report (for 2014), Form C.
- 25 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2015/517, 2 July 2015, p. 3.
- 26 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Timothy Roberts, Chief of Operations, UNMAS Lebanon), 4 October 2015; and report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2015/517, 2 July 2015, p. 3.
- 27 Emails from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Timothy Roberts, UNMAS Lebanon), 4 October 2015; and based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP, 26 September 2017.
- 28 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2017/586, 10 July 2017, p. 3; and email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.
- 29 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 UNMAS, "Cyprus" webpage, accessed 27 July 2017, at: <http://www.mineaction.org/programmes/cyprus>.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan de Coninck Chief of Operations, UNMAS), 27 September 2017.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS, 26 September 2017.
- 38 UNFICYP, "UNFICYP to clear mine hazard area in Cyprus buffer zone", 25 May 2015, at: http://www.unficyp.org/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=6710&tt=graphic&lang=1; and email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Timothy Roberts, UNMAS Lebanon), 4 October 2015.
- 39 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS), 24 July 2017.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Timothy Roberts, UNMAS Lebanon), 13 October 2016.
- 45 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS), 24 July 2017.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2017/586, 10 July 2017, p. 3.
- 48 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 30 April 2012.
- 49 Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 27 March 2015.
- 50 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.
- 51 Turkey's Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013.
- 52 Statement of Cyprus, APMBC intersessional meetings (Standing Committee on Mine Action), Geneva, 25 June 2015.
- 53 Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2016/598, 8 July 2016, p. 1.
- 54 UN Security Council Resolutions 2026 (2011), 2197 (2015), 2234 (2015), 2263 (2016), 2300 (2016), and 2338 (2017).
- 55 UN Security Council Resolution 2338 (2017), twelfth preambular paragraph.
- 56 Ibid, §11.
- 57 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2017/20, 9 January 2017, p. 8.
- 58 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2017/586, 10 July 2017, p. 3.
- 59 Ibid.