

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JULY 2025

NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE (LACK OF EFFECTIVE CONTROL)

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: LIGHT

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

1 KM²

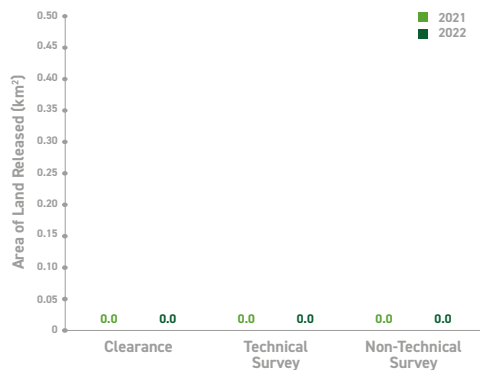
AP MINE CLEARANCE IN 2022

0 KM²

AP MINES DESTROYED IN 2022

0

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



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

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot authorities in northern Cyprus made no progress towards an agreement to complete mine clearance on the island in 2022, and for a third consecutive year no mined area was released.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot authorities should both comply with the UN Security Council's call for leaders of the two communities to agree and continue a plan of work to achieve a mine-free Cyprus, and make expeditious progress towards releasing the 29 remaining hazardous areas on the island.¹
- The Republic of Cyprus and the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) should update, consolidate and align data on remaining mined areas.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- No national mine action authority or mine action centre

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None (Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and DOK-ING were last active in 2017)

OTHER ACTORS

- UN-supported mine action in Cyprus is coordinated by the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) on behalf of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)

¹ UN Security Council Resolution 2674 (2023) operative para. 16.

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination in Cyprus is unclear. The Article 7 Report submitted by Cyprus in April 2023 stated that 21 AP minefields laid by Turkish Armed Forces remained: one in the buffer zone and the other twenty north of but “overwhelmingly situated adjacent to the buffer zone”. Cyprus said it did not know the size of these mined areas or if they contained mines other than AP mines.²

Contamination data in the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)’s mine action database cited by the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) differs significantly from that

provided by Cyprus. It showed that across Cyprus 29 mined areas covered a total of 1.5km² at the end of 2022, a level unchanged since the end of 2019,³ but that contamination consisted mostly of anti-vehicle (AV) mines – see Table 1. North of the buffer zone, mined areas include one confirmed hazardous area (CHA) and five suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) thought to contain a mixture of AP and AV mines. Nineteen hazardous areas recorded south of the buffer zone contain only AV mines (13 CHAs and 6 SHAs) as do three of four CHAs in the buffer zone (the mine type in the fourth was unknown).⁴

Table 1: Mined area in Cyprus (at end 2022)⁵

Location	CHAs	Contamination	Area (m ²)	SHAs	Contamination	Area (m ²)	Total SHA/CHA	Total area (m ²)
South of the buffer zone (territory under effective control of the Government of Cyprus)	13	AV mines	418,543	6	AV mines	174,014	19	592,557
Buffer Zone	4	AV mines (3 areas) Unknown (1 area)	703,581	0	N/A	N/A	4	703,581
North of the buffer zone (territory controlled by the Turkish Cypriot authorities)	1	Mixed (AV mines and AP mines)	170,493	5	Mixed	65,281	6	235,774
Totals	18		1,292,617	11		239,295	29	1,531,912

Cyprus has been divided since 1974 by a 180km-long buffer zone, following Turkish Armed Forces’ operations in the north of the island. Minefields were laid by both the Greek Cypriot National Guard and the Turkish Armed Forces. Permission for UNFICYP to access areas within and outside the buffer zone remains limited.⁶

In 2021, Cyprus sought and was granted a fourth extension to its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline on the basis it still does not have effective control over areas in the north in which AP mines have been or are suspected to have been emplaced, so cannot fulfil its mine

clearance obligations.⁷ The request was granted and the deadline extended until 1 July 2025.⁸

The most recent reported release of mine-contaminated area was in 2019 when 18 SHAs (nine under the effective control of Cyprus and nine in the north of the island) were checked and declared mine-free.⁹ UNFICYP had defined the 18 areas as potentially hazardous as a result of mines laid in the areas. The successful inspection of the 18 SHAs was achieved following a 2019 agreement between the President of the Republic of Cyprus and the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community in the context of confidence building measures.¹⁰

2 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

3 Emails from Mark Connelly, Chief of Operations, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), 8 April 2020, 26 June 2020, 28 May 2021, 12 May 2022, and 22 March 2023.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 26 September 2017.

7 Cyprus Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 9 February 2021.

8 Decision of the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC, November 2021.

9 Cyprus Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Additional Information, 11 August 2021.

10 Ibid.; and email from Aysan Mulla Hasan Atilgan, Director for Political Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (MoFA TRNC), 12 August 2022.

Despite repeated calls from the Security Council for the two sides to agree on "a plan of work to achieve a mine-free Cyprus" and to, "overcome existing barriers to this work", most recently in January 2023,¹¹ 2022 passed without progress¹² and there was no change in the situation as of the end of July 2023.¹³ UNFICYP continues to follow up on the calls by the Security Council, engaging with military representatives on both sides in order to make progress towards releasing the 29 remaining suspected hazardous areas on the island.¹⁴ While the Turkish Cypriot authorities expressed potential interest if it involved reciprocity from the other side, setting out proposals for cooperation via the UN Secretary-General,¹⁵ the Greek Cypriot National Guard did not wish to discuss the matter.¹⁶ The Government of the Republic of Cyprus maintains that mined areas in which AP mines have been or are suspected to be emplaced are in areas outside its effective control.¹⁷ UNFICYP will continue to consider options for the next phase of clearance activities to be presented to the two sides, with a particular focus on the buffer zone.¹⁸

TERRITORY UNDER THE EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Cyprus' latest Article 7 report (covering 2022) reiterates that no AP mines remain in the minefields laid by the National Guard that are in territory under its effective control.¹⁹ In total, between becoming a State Party on 1 July 2003 and its original Article 5 deadline of 1 July 2013, Cyprus released 20 mined areas under its effective control.²⁰

BUFFER ZONE

Four mined areas remained in the Buffer Zone at the end of 2022, three of which belong to the Greek Cypriot National Guard and contain only AV mines. The fourth belongs to Turkish Armed Forces and the mine type is unknown.²¹ The Government of Cyprus considers the three minefields with only AV mines to be under its control and not within the buffer zone.²²

TURKISH-CONTROLLED TERRITORY IN THE NORTHERN PART OF CYPRUS

The extent of mine contamination in areas controlled by Turkish Armed Forces is not known. Cyprus made its 2021 Article 5 extension deadline request, for the same reason as the previous three extension requests (in 2012, 2015, and 2018), on the grounds that certain parts of its territory outside its effective control contained mined areas "in which anti-personnel mines have been or are suspected to be emplaced."²³ Since the end of 2019, Cyprus has estimated that 20 Turkish-laid AP minefields remain north of and mostly adjacent to the buffer zone, plus one in the buffer zone near Deryneia village. The size of the minefields and whether they include mines other than AP mines, was reported as unknown.²⁴

One minefield has been reported 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 Armed Forces and has offered assistance in this regard.²⁵ In 2017, a small area of the Mammari minefield was cleared by a Croatian commercial operator contracted by the Turkish Armed Forces.²⁶

11 UN Security Council 2674 (2023), operative para. 16.

12 Email from Mark Connelly, UNFICYP, 23 March 2023.

13 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2023/498, 5 July 2023, operative para. 25; and email from Mark Connelly, UNFICYP, 23 March 2023.

14 Ibid.

15 Email from Aysan Mullahasan Atilgan, MoFA, TRNC, 12 August 2022; Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2023/6, 3 January 2022, Annex II, pp. 22–23; and Letter from Damla Güçlü, Director-General, MOFA TRNC, 2 May 2023, attached to email from Aysan Mullahasan Atilgan, MoFA TRNC, of 3 May 2023.

16 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN Doc S/2023/498, 5 July 2023, operative para. 25.

17 Email from Giorgos Samouel, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the United Nations Office, 10 August 2023; and 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request.

18 Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2023/498, 5 July 2023, para. 25.

19 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

20 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Observations on implementation of Article 5 by Cyprus", 23 June 2015; and Article 7 Report (covering 2013), Form G.

21 Emails from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 10 September 2018; and Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 17 July 2019, 12 May 2022, and 23 March 2023. Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2018/676, 6 July 2018, para. 44.

22 Interview with Demitris Samuel, Deputy Permanent Representative, Cyprus Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva, Geneva, 19 May 2016.

23 Cyprus Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 9 February 2021.

24 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

25 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form C; and email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.

26 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 10 September 2018.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus are coordinated by UNMAS on behalf of UNFICYP.²⁷ UNMAS is a component of UNFICYP, providing expertise in mine action planning and coordination, quality assurance (QA) oversight, and management of mine action information.²⁸ UNMAS also provides assistance to the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) to ensure safe access to areas where it conducts activities and to UNFICYP for small arms ammunition storage.²⁹

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

There was no available information on environmental policies relevant to demining in Cyprus, but given that UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus are said to be conducted in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS),³⁰ it is assumed that this includes IMAS environmental standards.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

UNFICYP uses the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database and in 2020 upgraded it from Version 6 to New Generation.³¹

In 2017, a review and reconciliation of all minefield database information 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 more than 950,000m²) from the database.³²

Cyprus has submitted annual Article 7 reports regularly since acceding to the APMBC in July 2003, most recently in 2023, for calendar year 2022. Cyprus has submitted four Article 5 deadline extension requests: in 2012, 2015, 2018, and most recently in 2021. Cyprus submitted most of the reports in a timely manner but provided only limited information due to it not having effective control over the remaining AP mined areas.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Neither the Republic of Cyprus nor Turkish Cypriot side have disclosed plans to survey and clear the remaining mine contamination. The self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) has reported that it made a proposal for a mine-free island on 8 July 2022 (see the section below, *Land Release Outputs and Article 5 Compliance*, for further detail) and that it had previously made comprehensive proposals for clearing mines from the island in 2014, 2015, and 2018.³³

As indicated above, non-technical survey (NTS) conducted in 2019 was initiated as a confidence-building measure agreed in February 2019 by President of Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akıncı in the context of long-running discussions on a political settlement and “with a view to working towards a mine-free Cyprus”.³⁴

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ UNMAS, “Cyprus” webpage, accessed 18 August 2022, at: <http://bit.ly/2GtTXje>.

²⁹ UNMAS, “Cyprus” webpage, accessed 4 May 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3VzNd8L>.

³⁰ Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.

³¹ Email from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 16 June 2021.

³² Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2018/25, 9 January 2018, para. 12.

³³ Email from Aysan Mullahasan Atılğan, MoFA TRNC, 12 August 2022; and Letter from Damla Güçlü, MOFA, TRNC, 3 May 2023.

³⁴ Security Council Press Statement on Cyprus, 27 February 2019, UN doc. SC/13722, at: <http://bit.ly/2JKyYus>.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

All UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus are said to be conducted in accordance with IMAS.³⁵ In 2016, 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.³⁶

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

UNMAS conducts NTS and technical survey (TS) in cooperation with representatives of the National Guard and Turkish Cypriot Security Force.³⁷ No clearance has been conducted since 2017 when the Turkish Armed Forces contracted DOK-ING to conduct clearance, and Mines Advisory Group (MAG) to conduct QA of demining in the Mammari minefield.³⁸

The focus for UNFICYP is the four CHAs in the buffer zone (three AV minefields belonging to Cyprus, and one mined area, where the mine type is unknown, which is the responsibility of Turkish forces). UNFICYP has a mandate to support the removal of all mines in Cyprus.³⁹

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

No mine survey or clearance was reported in Cyprus between 2020 and 2022.⁴⁰

The last land release occurred in 2019 when UNFICYP announced release of 18 SHAs covering 210, 882m² under confidence-building measures agreed in February 2019.⁴¹ The SHAs included nine on each side of the island divide and were selected by UNMAS in cooperation with the National Guard and Turkish Armed Forces. The respective militaries conducted NTS and UNMAS and UNFICYP then visited one site in the north and one site in the south to receive documentation certifying completion of the tasks. Some of the sites were located in military areas and respective military forces took the opportunity to conduct training resulting in some area reduction but no items were found.⁴²

UNMAS reported that 2022 saw no substantive progress towards demining. UNFICYP continues to raise the issue of demining in accordance with its mandate, but despite continued dialogue between UNFICYP senior managers and key leaders, there has been no agreement on options to continue demining yet.⁴³ In its most recent proposal for a mine-free island, dated 8 July 2022, reported to have been conveyed to the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus through the UN Secretary-General, the TRNC said that it proposed that the ultimate goal be clearance of the 29 remaining SHAs to free the Island from all landmines; demining activities to be facilitated by UNFICYP in coordination with the two sides; demining activities to commence in areas adjacent to the buffer zone (one minefield under the "jurisdiction" of the Turkish Cypriot authorities in Deryneia, the other three under Cypriot control); demining activities in each side to be conducted proportionately and simultaneously; and that both sides convene to discuss, in detail, the modalities of the implementation of the demining operations.⁴⁴

35 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.

36 Ibid.

37 Email from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 26 July 2019.

38 Ibid.

39 Email from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 12 May 2022.

40 Article 7 Reports (covering 2020, 2021, and 2022), Forms C and F; emails from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 28 May 2021, 12 May 2022, and 23 March 2023.

41 UNFICYP, "18 Suspected Hazardous Areas declared mine free", Press release, 9 December 2019.

42 Emails from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 26 June and 3 July 2020.

43 Emails from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 12 May 2022 and 23 March and 29 July 2023.

44 "Proposal of the TRNC for a Mine-Free Island", provided via an email from Aysan Mullahasan Atilgan, MoFA TRNC, 12 August 2022; see also Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2023/6, 3 January 2022, Annex II, pp. 22-23.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Cyprus is obligated to destroy or ensure the destruction of all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control, as soon as possible but not later than 1 July 2025.

Cyprus reported clearing all AP mines in mined areas that it accepted were under its control within ten years of becoming a State Party, namely by 1 July 2013. In 2012, Cyprus submitted the first of four Article 5 deadline extension requests, on the grounds that Cyprus does not have effective control over remaining contaminated areas in the northern part of the island under the control of Turkish Armed Forces.⁴⁵ Cyprus has provided the same justification for all subsequent extension requests. The fourth request, submitted in February 2021, sought an extension of three years until 1 July 2025,⁴⁶ which was granted at the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties.

Türkiye received a three-year, nine-month extension to its Article 5 clearance deadline until 31 December 2025 but did not request additional time for clearance of the areas it controls in northern Cyprus.⁴⁷

As indicated above, the UN Security Council continues to urge both sides in Cyprus to agree upon and implement a plan of work to achieve a mine-free Cyprus, most recently in January 2023.⁴⁸

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

It is not known whether plans are in place to address residual contamination once Cyprus' Article 5 obligations have been fulfilled.

⁴⁵ 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Türkiye's Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2021. On the issue of Turkish jurisdiction, see, e.g., European Court of Human Rights, *Güzelyurtlu and others v. Cyprus and Turkey*, Judgment (Grand Chamber), 29 January 2019.

⁴⁸ UN Security Council Resolution 2674 (2023), operative para. 16.