

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JULY 2025

THREE-YEAR EXTENSION REQUESTED TO 1 JULY 2028 (LACK OF EFFECTIVE CONTROL)

## KEY DATA

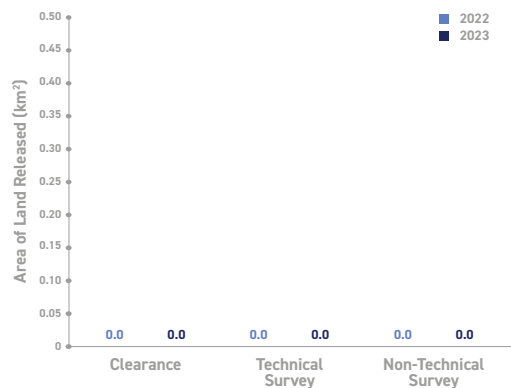
ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)  
MINE CONTAMINATION: LIGHT

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

1 km<sup>2</sup>AP MINE  
CLEARANCE IN 20230 M<sup>2</sup>AP MINES  
DESTROYED IN 2023

0

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUT

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

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

No progress was reported in 2023 towards the Republic of Cyprus (Cyprus) and Türkiye/the Turkish Cypriot authorities agreeing to complete mine clearance on the island, and for a fourth consecutive year no mined area was released.

## FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW

The extent of anti-personnel (AP) mined area in Cyprus remains unclear, but available data indicates that the only remaining contamination is in the north of the island, in areas of mixed AP and anti-vehicle (AV) mines and on territory not under the effective control of the government of the Republic of Cyprus. There has been no progress in clearance or other land release since 2019.

Cyprus reported clearing all AP mines from territory under its control by its initial Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APBMC) Article 5 deadline in July 2013. It has requested five extensions to its Article 5 deadline in total, including two since 2019, because it does not have effective control over the areas in question. The most recent reported release of mined area was in 2019 when 18 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs – nine under the effective control of Cyprus and nine under the control of Türkiye/the Turkish Cypriot authorities), none of them AP mined areas, were declared mine-free.<sup>1</sup> The United Nations Security Council has consistently urged the two sides to agree on “a plan of work to achieve a mine-free Cyprus”.<sup>2</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot authorities should both work to achieve a mine-free Cyprus and make progress towards releasing the 29 remaining hazardous areas on the island.<sup>3</sup>

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

2 UN Security Council Resolution 2723, 30 January 2024, operative para. 19.

3 Ibid.

■ 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)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of AP mine contamination in Cyprus is unclear. Cyprus's most recent Article 7 report submitted in July 2024 repeated that 21 AP minefields laid by Turkish Armed Forces remained: 1 in the buffer zone in the vicinity of the Deryneia village, and the other 20 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.<sup>4</sup> In a media report in June 2024, sources from the Cypriot government seemingly reported that no AP mines were left in the buffer zone, though it is unclear whether this referred only to AP mines laid by its own forces.<sup>5</sup> The media report also claimed to cite an estimate from UNFICYP that 7,000 mines remain emplaced across the island, covering 2km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>6</sup>

Contamination data in UNFICYP's mine action database cited by the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) differs from that provided by Cyprus. It showed that across Cyprus 29 mined areas covered a total of 1.5km<sup>2</sup> at the end of 2022, a level unchanged since the end of 2019,<sup>7</sup> 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 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).<sup>8</sup> UNMAS did not indicate any changes in recorded contamination in 2023.<sup>9</sup>

Table 1: Mined area in Cyprus (at end 2023)<sup>10</sup>

Location	CHAs	Contamination	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	SHAs	Contamination	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Total SHA/CHA	Total area (m <sup>2</sup> )
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

4 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form C.  
5 "Buffer zone now free of mines, government says", Cyprus Mail, 8 June 2024 at: <https://bit.ly/3KGIRcz>.  
6 Ibid.  
7 Emails from Mark Connelly, Chief of Operations, UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), UNFICYP, 8 April 2020, 26 June 2020, 28 May 2021, 12 May 2022, and 22 March 2023.  
8 Ibid.  
9 Email from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 16 April 2024; and interview in Geneva, 30 April 2024.  
10 Emails from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 8 April and 26 June 2020, 28 May 2021, 12 May 2021, 22 March 2023, and 16 April 2024.

Table 1 Continued

Location	CHAs	Contamination	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	SHAs	Contamination	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Total SHA/CHA	Total area (m <sup>2</sup> )
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 not under the effective control of the Government of Cyprus)	1	Mixed (AV mines and AP mines)	170,493	5	Mixed	65,281	6	235,774
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>1,292,617</b>	<b>11</b>		<b>239,295</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1,531,912</b>

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.<sup>11</sup>

In 2021, Cyprus sought and was granted a fourth extension to its 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.<sup>12</sup> The request was granted and the deadline extended until 1 July 2025.<sup>13</sup> On 8 March 2024, Cyprus submitted its fifth deadline extension request, until 1 July 2028, for the same reason, that relevant "areas of Cyprus's sovereign territory are occupied by Türkiye and are therefore de facto outside the effective control of the Republic of Cyprus".<sup>14</sup>

In a statement to the APMBC Intersessional Meetings in June 2024, Cyprus provided further details, stating that it "continue[s] to be forcefully prevented from exercising effective control over a large area of its sovereign territory in the northern part of the island, which is occupied by Türkiye, rendering it impossible to verify the status of known or suspected minefields in this area".<sup>15</sup> Türkiye accused Cyprus of disseminating "inaccurate and misleading information", saying that, "as part of its false allegations, the Greek Cypriot side claims that it has cleared all anti-personnel mines as of 2013 as part of its obligations stemming from the Ottawa

Convention and that the only other mined areas that contain, or are suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines are located in the areas north of the buffer zone." Türkiye added: "This allegation of the Greek Cypriot side is a blatant falsehood."<sup>16</sup>

The most recent reported release of mined 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.<sup>17</sup> 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 Cyprus and the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community in the context of confidence-building measures.<sup>18</sup>

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 overcome existing barriers to this work", most recently in January 2024,<sup>19</sup> 2023 passed without progress<sup>20</sup> and there was no reported change in the situation at the time of writing. UNFICYP continues to follow up on the calls by the UN Security Council, and has engaged with military representatives on both sides in order to make progress towards releasing the 29 remaining SHAs on the island.<sup>21</sup> While the Turkish Cypriot authorities have expressed potential interest if it involved reciprocity from the other side, setting out proposals for cooperation via the UN Secretary-General,<sup>22</sup> the Greek Cypriot National Guard has not wished to discuss the matter.<sup>23</sup> The Government of Cyprus maintains that mined areas in which AP mines have

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

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

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

14 Cyprus Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 8 March 2024.

15 Statement of Cyprus on its Article 5 deadline extension request, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18 June 2024.

16 Statement of Türkiye on Cyprus's Article 5 deadline extension request, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18 June 2024.

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

18 Ibid.; and email from Aysan Mullahasan Atılğan, Director for Political Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (MoFA TRNC), 12 August 2022.

19 UN Security Council Resolution 2723 (2024), 30 January 2024, operative para. 19.

20 Email from Mark Connelly, UNFICYP, 16 April 2024.

21 Reports of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2023/498, 5 July 2023, operative para. 25; UN doc. S/2024/12, 3 January 2024, operative para. 24; UN doc. S/2024/527, 5 July 2024, operative para. 22; and email from Mark Connelly, UNFICYP, 16 April 2024.

22 Email from Aysan Mullahasan Atılğan, 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, and attached to email from Aysan Mullahasan Atılğan, MoFA TRNC, of 3 May 2023.

23 Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2024/12, operative para. 24.

been or are suspected to be emplaced are in areas outside its effective control.<sup>24</sup> UNFICYP has continued to consider options for the next phase of clearance activities, with a particular focus on the buffer zone and AP mines.<sup>25</sup> In July 2024, the UN Secretary-General reported that UNFICYP's "Mine Action Service has prepared options for a new phase of clearance activities, with a special focus on the buffer zone and on remaining anti-personnel mines."<sup>26</sup> No further details were disclosed.

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

Cyprus' latest Article 7 report (covering 2023) reiterates that no AP mines remain in the minefields laid by the National Guard that are in territory under its effective control.<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup>

### BUFFER ZONE

Four mined areas remained in the buffer zone at the end of 2022, three of which belong to the National Guard and contain only AV mines. The fourth belongs to Turkish Armed Forces and the mine type is unknown.<sup>29</sup> The Government of Cyprus considers the three minefields with only AV mines to be under its control and not within the buffer zone.<sup>30</sup>

### 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 2024 Article 5 extension deadline request for the same reason as the previous four extension requests (in 2012, 2015, 2018, and 2021), on the grounds that areas "occupied by Türkiye" are, "the only ones in the jurisdiction of the Republic of Cyprus that remain emplaced with anti-personnel mines or are suspected" to be so.<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup>

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.<sup>33</sup> In 2017, a small area of the Mammari minefield was cleared by a Croatian commercial operator contracted by the Turkish Armed Forces.<sup>34</sup>

## NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus are coordinated by UNMAS on behalf of UNFICYP.<sup>35</sup> UNMAS is a component of UNFICYP, providing expertise in mine action planning and coordination, quality assurance (QA) oversight, and management of mine action information.<sup>36</sup> UNMAS also provides assistance to the Committee on Missing Persons to ensure safe access to areas where it conducts activities and to UNFICYP for small arms ammunition storage.<sup>37</sup>

## GENDER AND DIVERSITY

There is only one member of staff deployed at UNMAS UNFICYP—the Chief of Operations—who is a man.<sup>38</sup> No information on gender and diversity policies relevant to demining in Cyprus were available, but given that UN-supported mine action operations

24 Email from Giorgos Samouel, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Cyprus to the United Nations Office, 10 August 2023; and 2024 Article 5 deadline Extension Request.

25 Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2024/12, operative para. 22.

26 Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2024/527, operative para. 22.

27 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form C.

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

29 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.

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

31 2024 Article 5 deadline Extension Request.

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

33 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.

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

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

36 UNMAS, "Cyprus" webpage, accessed 6 June 2024, at: <http://bit.ly/2GtTXje>.

37 Ibid.

38 Interview with Mark Connelly, UNMAS, Geneva, 30 April 2024.

in Cyprus are said to be conducted in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS),<sup>39</sup> and IMAS are consistent with UN and other international gender and diversity guidelines,<sup>40</sup> it is assumed that UNMAS UNFICYP observes such guidelines.

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

There was no available information on environmental policies relevant to demining in Cyprus but, as noted above, it is assumed that UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus are conducted in compliance with IMAS environmental standards.

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

UNFICYP uses the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) New Generation.<sup>41</sup>

Cyprus has submitted annual Article 7 reports regularly since acceding to the APMBC in July 2003, most recently in 2024, covering calendar year 2023. Cyprus has submitted five Article 5 deadline extension requests: in 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021, and most recently in 2024. 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 Türkiye/the Turkish Cypriot authorities 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) and that it had previously made comprehensive proposals for clearing mines from the island in 2014, 2015, and 2018.<sup>42</sup>

Non-technical survey (NTS) conducted in 2019 was initiated as a confidence-building measure agreed in February 2019 by the 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".<sup>43</sup>

## 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.<sup>44</sup> 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.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.

<sup>40</sup> IMAS 01.10: "Guide for the application and development of International Mine Action Standards (IMAS)", §6.4.

<sup>41</sup> Email from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 16 June 2021.

<sup>42</sup> Email from Aysan Mullahasan Atılğan, MoFA TRNC, 12 August 2022; and Letter from Damla Güçlü, MOFA, TRNC, 3 May 2023.

<sup>43</sup> UN Security Council Press Statement on Cyprus, 27 February 2019, UN doc. SC/13722, at: <http://bit.ly/2JKyYus>.

<sup>44</sup> Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

UNMAS conducts NTS and technical survey (TS) in cooperation with representatives of the National Guard and Turkish Cypriot Security Force.<sup>46</sup> No clearance has been conducted since 2017 when the Turkish Armed Forces contracted DOK-ING to conduct clearance in the Mammari minefield and Mines Advisory Group (MAG) to conduct QA of the demining.<sup>47</sup>

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.<sup>48</sup>

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2023

No mine survey or clearance was reported in Cyprus between 2020 and 2023.<sup>49</sup>

UNFICYP continues to raise the issue of demining in accordance with its mandate, but as at July 2024, there had been no agreement on options to continue demining.<sup>50</sup> It was, however, reported that UNMAS had prepared options for a new phase of clearance with a focus on the buffer zone and on remaining AP mines.<sup>51</sup> No further details were disclosed.

In its proposal for a mine-free island, dated 8 July 2022, reported to have been conveyed to the Government 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 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 the control of the Government of Cyprus); demining in each side to be conducted proportionately and simultaneously; and that both sides convene to discuss, in detail, the modalities of the demining operations.<sup>52</sup> At the APMBC Intersessional Meetings in June 2024, Türkiye confirmed that this proposal was “still on the table”.<sup>53</sup>

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



46 Email from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 26 July 2019.  
47 Ibid.  
48 Email from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 12 May 2022.  
49 Article 7 Reports (covering 2020, 2021, and 2022), Forms C and F; 2024 Article 5 deadline Extension Request; emails from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 28 May 2021, 12 May 2022, 23 March 2023, and 16 April 2024.  
50 Emails from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 12 May 2022, 23 March and 29 July 2023, and 16 April 2024.  
51 Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2024/527, para. 22.  
52 "Proposal of the TRNC for a Mine-Free Island", provided via an email from Aysan Mullahasan Atilgan, MoFA TRNC, 11 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.  
53 Statement of Türkiye (right of reply) on Cyprus's Article 5 deadline extension request, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18 June 2024.

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 five 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 which are "occupied by Türkiye".<sup>54</sup> Cyprus has provided the same justification for all subsequent

extension requests. The fifth request, submitted in March 2024, sought an extension of three years until 1 July 2028.<sup>55</sup>

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 the northern part of Cyprus.<sup>56</sup>

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 2024.<sup>57</sup>

## 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.

<sup>54</sup> See, e.g., the latest request by Cyprus: 2024 Article 5 deadline Extension Request.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> 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.

<sup>57</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 2723 (2024), 30 January 2024, operative para. 19.