



CYPRUS

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

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE	For 2015	For 2014
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

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

- The Republic of Cyprus and Turkey should heed the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General's call for access to all remaining mined areas inside and outside the Buffer Zone, to achieve a mine-free Cyprus.¹

CONTAMINATION

The Republic of Cyprus (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, when Turkish Armed Forces occupied 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. UNFICYP (the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus) estimates that more than 7,000 anti-personnel and anti-tank mines still remain across the island of Cyprus, affecting 2km² of land, with four minefields remaining in the Buffer Zone and thirty-five minefields across the island.²

A total of 20 mined areas containing 4,653 anti-personnel mines previously existed in areas under the effective control of Cyprus outside the Buffer Zone, which had been emplaced by the National Guard. An additional 81 mined areas were 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 11km².³

In total, between becoming a state party on 1 July 2003 and its original Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline of July 2013, Cyprus released all 20 mined areas under its effective control.⁴ Cyprus has reported that no anti-personnel mines remain in the minefields of the National Guard, on territory under its effective control.⁵

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.⁶ According to Cyprus, the sole remaining minefield in the Buffer Zone is located in Turkish-controlled area, close to the village of Dherynia.⁷

However, in July 2015, 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".⁸ This was restated in reports of the Secretary-General in 2016, which 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". The report also noted that: "Efforts continue at all levels to advance a more comprehensive approach to demining, both inside and outside the Buffer Zone."⁹

This raised concerns that mine contamination remains in 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.¹⁰

The extent of mine contamination in areas controlled by Turkish Armed Forces is not known. However, Cyprus has claimed in its latest Article 7 transparency report (for 2015) 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.¹¹ According to the UN, some military mine clearance appears to have been conducted over most locations that are still recorded as minefields.¹²

1 UN Security Council Resolution 2300 (2016), §11; and Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2016/598, 8 July 2016, p. 8.

2 UNFICYP, "Factsheet: towards a Mine-free Cyprus", April 2016, at: https://unficyp.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/mine-factsheet_-_final_update_april_2016.pdf.

3 "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.

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

5 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form C.

6 Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by George Stavrinou, Security Policy Department, Cypriot Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 25 November 2013.

7 APMBC Article 7 Reports (for 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015), Form C.

8 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, 2 July 2015, p. 3.

9 Ibid.

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

11 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form C.

12 Email from Julie Myers, Programme Officer, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS Chief of Operations, and Major Mike Holgate, UNFICYP Mine Action Officer), 6 October 2016.

Twenty-eight known minefields laid by the Republic of Cyprus National Guard prior to the 1974 Turkish invasion, north of Nicosia towards the Pentadaktylos mountain range, are today located in the Turkish-occupied areas. The minefields included 1,006 anti-personnel mines, but Cyprus was not aware of the condition of these minefields and whether or not they have been cleared by the Turkish Armed Forces.¹³

The President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades, provided the northern Cyprus president, Mustafa Akinci, with coordinates of the 28 minefields

during a meeting on 15 May 2015.¹⁴ This meeting marked the re-launching of negotiations after an almost seven-month hiatus, and the decision to provide information on these minefields was commended by the UN Secretary-General.¹⁵ Survey of the minefields was subsequently conducted by the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), supported by Turkish Engineering Forces, in conjunction with UNFICYP¹⁶ (see "Land Release" section).

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

In the Buffer Zone, survey is typically conducted by UNMAS. In 2015, clearance was conducted by the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) Troop Contributing Country (TCC) demining teams (currently the Cambodian Construction & Engineering Company (CAMBCOY)), as part of UNFICYP's inter-mission cooperation with UNIFIL.¹⁷ In mid-2016, UNMAS initiated survey and clearance activities on behalf of UNFICYP in accordance with the objectives outlined in UN General Assembly report A/70/717.¹⁸

Quality Management

In 2015, external quality assurance (QA) was conducted by the UNMAS Lebanon QA section, in accordance with procedures detailed in its standard working procedures (SWP) and the national technical and safety guidelines (TSG).¹⁹ In 2016, UNMAS Cyprus was conducting external QA of the demining undertaken by the UN-funded team.²⁰

LAND RELEASE

In 2015, in the Buffer Zone, 16,691m² was confirmed as contaminated through survey, and subsequently cleared. A further 45,000m² was reduced by technical survey.²¹

In Turkish-controlled territory in northern Cyprus, 1,847m² was released through clearance. Fourteen areas, totalling 92,963m², were confirmed as mined. In addition, 25 minefields and part of one SHA at Dherynia were cancelled totalling 562,277m². A further 13 minefields were cancelled, but the area was not verified.²²

Survey and Clearance in the Buffer Zone in 2015

On 30 December 2014, mines were displaced into the Buffer Zone from north of the ceasefire line owing to heavy rain. The area is regularly patrolled by UNFICYP and farmed by civilians.²³

UNMAS subsequently conducted non-technical survey (NTS) of the Mammari area in February 2015.²⁴ In addition, as part of a pre-deployment visit and in their capacity as tasking manager for all UNIFIL TCC demining assets, CAMBCOY also conducted survey of the wash-out area in Mammari in April 2015, during which 16,691m² was confirmed as mined, and an additional 45,000m² was reduced by technical survey.²⁵

13 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2014), Form C.

14 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, 2 July 2015, p. 1.

15 Ibid., pp. 1 and 7.

16 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Timothy Roberts, UNMAS Lebanon), 4 October 2015.

17 UNFICYP, "UNFICYP to clear mine hazard area in Cyprus buffer zone", 25 May 2015, at: http://www.unficy.org/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=6710&tt=graphic&lang=l1; and email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Timothy Roberts, Chief of Operations, UNMAS Lebanon), 4 October 2015.

18 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS, 21 October 2016.

19 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Timothy Roberts, UNMAS Lebanon), 4 October 2015.

20 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS, 21 October 2016.

21 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Timothy Roberts, UNMAS Lebanon), 13 October 2016.

22 Ibid.

23 Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, 2 July 2015, p. 3; and "UN issues landmine hazard warning", *Cyprus Mail*, 13 February 2015.

24 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Timothy Roberts, UNMAS Lebanon), 4 October 2015; and "UNFICYP to clear mine hazard in Cyprus buffer zone", 26 May 2015, at: http://www.unficy.org/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=6710&tt=graphic&lang=l1.

25 Ibid.

Clearance began on 26 May 2015, conducted by a 20-strong team, also deployed by UNIFIL's CAMBCOY as part of UNFICYP's inter-mission cooperation with UNIFIL.²⁶ During clearance, 16,691m² was cleared, during which three anti-vehicle mines (one mine considered as complete, two others found in parts), one anti-vehicle mine fuze, one anti-personnel mine fuze, and two anti-vehicle TNT pieces were destroyed.²⁷ The task was completed on 2 September 2015, and the mined area in the Buffer Zone (resulting from the flooding) was declared clear and handed back to the community and landowners on 9 September 2015.²⁸

In July 2015, the UN Secretary-General reported that "to avoid a similar incident in the future, UNFICYP liaised closely with the Turkish Cypriot authorities and secured their commitment to clear the area north of the ceasefire line in the coming months."²⁹ A year later, however, the UN Secretary-General reported in July 2016 that: "With respect to the minefield just north of the Buffer Zone in Mammari, which caused the mine-wash in 2015 as a result of heavy rains, no progress was registered on the clearance of the minefield despite assurances by the Turkish Cypriot security forces."³⁰

Survey and Clearance in Turkish-Controlled Territory in Northern Cyprus in 2015

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-tank and anti-personnel mines.³¹

NTS to assess the scope of the contamination and the requirements for subsequent clearance started on 18 June 2015³² and was completed on 7 July 2015.³³ The survey was conducted by UNMAS, supported by Turkish Engineering Forces, in conjunction with UNFICYP.³⁴

During the survey a total of 321,363m² was cancelled while 92,963m² was confirmed as mined. This included the 28 minefields referred to above (one of which was sub-divided into three minefields), of which 25 were cancelled totalling 321,363m², and the remaining 5 areas, totalling 6,163m², were confirmed as mined. An additional

13 minefields were cancelled (area not verified), while 9 other suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) were confirmed as mined, totalling 86,800m².³⁵

UNFICYP reported that the Cambodian CAMBCOY team that conducted clearance in the Mammari area of the Buffer Zone in 2015 surveyed and cleared an additional 1,847m² around Lefka-Aplici in northern Cyprus later in the year, destroying 31 anti-vehicle mines and 1 trip flare in the process.³⁶ In addition, a technical survey of Dherynia was conducted as part of confidence-building measures to open up new crossing points, as agreed by the leaders on 28 May 2015. During the survey, 240,914m² was cancelled in the western portion of the SHA.³⁷

Progress in 2016

Buffer Zone

UNMAS clearance assets supporting UNFICYP are currently conducting survey in the Dherynia area to improve force protection adjacent to a UN position.³⁸ Other than the four remaining minefields in the Buffer Zone, it has been cleared of all known explosive hazards.³⁹

Turkish-controlled territory in northern Cyprus

The UN Secretary-General reported in July 2016 that, "following on from demining conducted in 2015, UNFICYP planned for clearance of the five dangerous areas in the north identified during the survey of the 28 minefield locations released by Mr. Anastasiades to Mr. Akıncı in May 2015 as part of leader-to-leader confidence-building measures. With funding included in the UNFICYP 2016/17 budget, technical expertise from UNMAS will be embedded in the mission and the clearance work contracted to a civilian demining organization."⁴⁰

It was subsequently confirmed that technical survey and clearance of these five areas was in progress and, as at 15 September 2016, one of the five locations, MF#30 in Yedidalda/Potamos tou Kampou village, had been surveyed and 994m² cancelled in September.⁴¹

Work on the remaining areas was forecast to be completed by December 2016, subject to the time required to address mines/explosive remnants of war (ERW) in each site; weather conditions; and further task prioritisation that may take place to address potential urgent requirements and ad hoc tasks during this

26 Ibid.

27 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Timothy Roberts, UNMAS Lebanon), 4 October 2015.

28 Ibid.

29 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, 2 July 2015, p. 3.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Timothy Roberts, UNMAS Lebanon), 4 October 2015.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 UNFICYP, "Factsheet: towards a Mine-free Cyprus", April 2016; and email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Major Mike Holgate, UNFICYP), 6 October 2016.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Major Mike Holgate, UNFICYP), 6 October 2016.

40 Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, 8 July 2016, pp. 2 and 3.

41 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Major Mike Holgate, UNFICYP), 6 October 2016.

period.⁴² All sites will be technically surveyed to determine whether a mine threat exists before either releasing uncontaminated land or conducting clearance on areas confirmed as contaminated.⁴³

Furthermore, UNMAS clearance assets, in support of UNFICYP and the Committee on Missing Persons, completed a survey task on 25 August 2016 in Beykeuy Beykoy, northern Cyprus. The teams undertook survey and ERW clearance to permit safe access for the work of the Committee on Missing Persons at the site, and cancelled 3,100m².⁴⁴

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with a 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 cleared 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 mine contamination remaining in territory occupied by the Turkish forces, which it was unable to clear.⁴⁵

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.⁴⁶

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.⁴⁷

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."⁴⁸

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".⁴⁹

The UN Security Council, most recently in July 2016, has called on both sides to facilitate clearance of all remaining mined areas on the island.⁵⁰ 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 commencement of demining operations and clearance of the remaining minefields".⁵¹ 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".⁵²

The corresponding report of the UN Secretary-General stated: "With the acceleration of the talks, it is all the more important that the two sides engage and take concrete steps without further delay towards island-wide demining. Early clearance would also allow greater freedom of movement in the event of a settlement...." The Secretary-General stated that, "The case for clearing all minefields could not be more compelling" and urged "everyone to work towards a mine-free Cyprus".⁵³

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 30 April 2012.

46 Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 27 March 2015.

47 Turkey's Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013.

48 Statement of Cyprus, APMBC Intersessional Meetings (Standing Committee on Mine Action), Geneva, 25 June 2015.

49 Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, 8 July 2016, p. 1.

50 UN Security Council Resolutions 2026 (2011), 2197 (2015), 2234 (2015), 2263 (2016), and 2300 (2016).

51 UN Security Council Resolution 2300 (2016), twelfth preambular paragraph.

52 Ibid., Operative paragraph 10.

53 Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, 8 July 2016, p. 8.