

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2020
IN SERIOUS VIOLATION OF THE CONVENTION
(NEW EXTENDED DEADLINE AND RENEWED DEMINING NEEDED TO RETURN TO COMPLIANCE)

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
 MINE CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM**

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

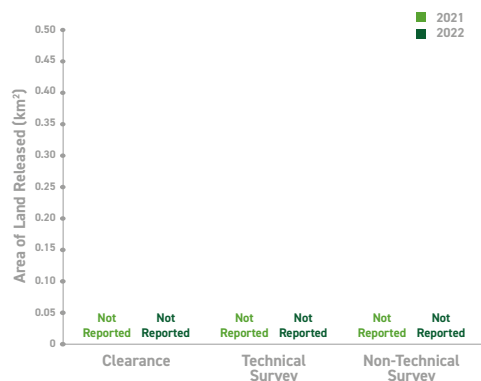
10 KM²

AP MINE
 CLEARANCE IN 2022

AP MINES
 DESTROYED IN 2022

NOT REPORTED NOT REPORTED

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



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

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Eritrea's Article 5 deadline expired on 31 December 2020 after it was granted an interim extension a year earlier. Eritrea was expected to submit a more detailed extension request by 31 March 2020 but failed to do so and did not seek a further extension, placing it in serious violation of the Convention. Eritrea has also not submitted an Article 7 transparency report since 2014.

Eritrea has wilfully failed to comply with its obligation under Article 5 of the APBMC to complete clearance as soon as possible. There is no indication of any demining since the end of 2013, which, without exceptional justification, would itself amount to a serious violation of the Convention. On 9 June 2023, the President of the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties to the APBMC announced that, following the Decision of the Twentieth Meeting concerning the situation of non-compliance by Eritrea, a request for clarification from Eritrea through the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General had been launched in accordance with Article 8(2) of the

Convention.¹ This is the first time in the history of the Convention that this formal procedure for the facilitation and clarification of compliance has been invoked.

Subsequently, on 3 July 2023, the President of the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties to the APBMC announced that, on 21 June 2023, Eritrea responded to the request for clarification from the UN Secretary-General, indicating that the "Government of the State of Eritrea has decided to withdraw from the Convention in accordance with Article 20 of the Convention".² Eritrea cited its reason for withdrawal from the Convention as "experts on mission for the United Nations assigned to oversee the implementation process ... engaged themselves in unlawful activities, for the purpose of gathering unauthorized information of the state, which could have compromised the state's classified intelligence and thereby threaten the national security."³

1 Email newsletter, "On the eve of the 2023 Intersessionals", Implementation Support Unit (ISU), 9 June 2023.

2 Letter from the President of the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties (21MSP) regarding "Response from Eritrea to the Request for Clarification under Article 8.2", 3 July 2023.

3 Letter from Osman Saleh, Minister, Government of Eritrea, regarding "Decision for the withdrawal of the State of Eritrea from the Anti-Personal [sic] Mine Ban Convention" to the UN Secretary-General, 21 June 2023.

Further to this communication, in a note verbale dated 2 October 2023, submitted to the UN Secretary-General (UNSG), Eritrea indicated that "after consultation with the relevant authority", Eritrea has "decided to withdraw its notification letter of 21 June 2023 addressed to the UNSG regarding the 'withdrawal from the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention'."⁴ Germany, President of 21MSP, welcomed the news and said it looked forward to "working with Eritrea in the Convention's traditional spirit of transparency and cooperation to ensure Eritrea's return to full compliance with the Convention in order to meet our collective desire of putting an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines."⁵

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Eritrea should urgently submit an Article 5 deadline extension request with an up-to-date list of all confirmed or suspected mined areas and a detailed timeline of activities planned for the period sought.
- The authorities in Asmara should re-start release of mined areas confirmed or suspected to contain anti-personnel (AP) mines as a matter of urgency.
- Eritrea must urgently submit its outstanding annual Article 7 reports, the latest of which was due by 30 April 2023.
- Eritrea should reconsider its policy of excluding international technical assistance in mine action, which would support efficient land release and re-open international funding paths.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	3	4	The last estimate of mine contamination in Eritrea dates back to the end of 2013, when Eritrea reported that 434 mined areas remained with a size of 33.4km ² . All area is reportedly suspected hazardous area (SHA). Mine Action Review is unaware of any indication of progress in land release or updated information on the extent of contamination since this time.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	3	3	Eritrea's mine action programme is entirely nationally managed. The Eritrean Demining Agency (EDA) is believed to be still responsible for mine clearance.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	3	3	It is not known if Eritrea has policies in place relating to gender and diversity in mine action.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	0	0	Details on Eritrea's current information management system are not known. Its failure to submit annual Article 7 reports over the past eight years is also a violation of the Convention. Eritrea has also failed to provide any updates on the implementation of its mine action obligations under Article 5 in recent years by other means.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	1	1	Recent details on Eritrea's planning and tasking system are not available.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	3	3	Eritrea is reported to have national mine action standards dating back to 2012. The EDA was responsible for the implementation of quality management activities.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	0	0	Eritrea seemingly made no progress in land release to meet its obligations under its second Article 5 extension period. In 2014, Eritrea reported it would need a third extension. Eritrea submitted an interim request for a third extension in November 2019 with the apparent intention of making a more detailed request by 31 March 2020. As at September 2023, no such request was forthcoming and Eritrea remains in violation of the Convention both for failing to work towards the completion of mine survey and clearance as soon as possible, and for not respecting the procedural provisions of the Article 5 of the Convention.
Average Score	1.9	2.1	Overall Programme Performance: VERY POOR

⁴ Note Verbale from the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations, 2 October 2023.

⁵ Letter from the President of the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties (21MSP), to interested international and non-governmental organisations, regarding "Communication from Eritrea to the United Nations Secretary General, 30 October 2023", 30 October 2023.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Eritrea Demining Agency (EDA)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Engineering units of the Eritrean Armed Forces

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Eritrea is affected by mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) dating back to the Second World War, but largely as the result of the struggle for independence in 1962–91 and its armed conflict with Ethiopia in 1998–2000.

In May 2015, in response to Mine Action Review's request for updated information on the state of contamination and mine action activities in Eritrea, the Deputy General Manager of the Eritrea Demining Agency (EDA) reported "no significant progress registered by the EDA currently". He claimed, though, that the EDA was being reorganised in an effort to make "better progress".⁶ Since then, the EDA has not responded to repeated requests from Mine Action Review for further information.

The last estimate of mine contamination reported by Eritrea dates back to the end of 2013, when Eritrea reported 434

mined areas covering an estimated 33.4km.⁷ This was a two-thirds reduction on the earlier estimate of 99km² of June 2011,⁸ and significantly lower than the 129km² identified by the 2004 landmine impact survey.⁹ The UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), which was terminated in 2008 due to restrictions imposed by Eritrea and the cutting off of fuel supplies, has stated that there are 995 "dangerous areas", 914 "mined areas", and 702 minefields in Eritrea. UNMEE estimated that some 250,000 landmines were scattered across the country, with the most common being anti-vehicle (AV) mines and blast and fragmentation AP mines.¹⁰

All contaminated areas in Eritrea are thought to be still, classified as suspected hazardous areas (SHAs). Eritrea has not reported on any plans to establish a more accurate baseline of contamination.

Table 1: Mined area by region (at end 2013)¹¹

Zoba (region)	SHAs	Estimated area (m ²)
Semienawi Keih Bahri	166	9,462,537
Anseba	144	10,230,940
Gash Barka	63	6,252,951
Dehub	29	3,894,036
Maakel	24	2,423,325
Dehubawi Keih Bahri	8	1,169,029
Totals	434	33,432,818

SHA = Suspected hazardous area

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

UNMEE also estimated that three million items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) are scattered across Eritrea, ranging from small arms ammunition to bombs dropped from aeroplanes.¹²

6 Email from Habtom Seghid, Deputy General Manager, Eritrean Demining Agency (EDA), 6 May 2015.

7 2014 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7. This was despite finding 49 previously unrecorded suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) in five regions across an estimated area of 9km² during non-technical survey in 2013. Analysis of Eritrea's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, submitted by the President of the Thirteenth Meeting of the States Parties on behalf of the States Parties mandated to analyse requests for extensions, 20 June 2014, p. 2.

8 Eritrea's reply to questions from the Article 5 Analysing Group about its Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 7 June 2011, p. 2.

9 Survey Action Center (SAC), "Landmine Impact Survey, Eritrea, Final Report", May 2005, p. 7.

10 UNMEE, "UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea is withdrawn", accessed 5 June 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/43K5S15>.

11 2014 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.

12 UNMEE, "UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea is withdrawn".

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Eritrea mine action programme is entirely nationally managed. The EDA, established in July 2002, is responsible for policy development, regulation of mine action, and the conduct of mine clearance operations. The EDA is believed to report directly to the Office of the President.

Eritrea projected that costs during its Article 5 extension period to 1 February 2020 would amount to more than US\$7 million, all to be raised nationally.¹³ In 2011–13, Eritrea had managed to raise only \$257,000 annually. Eritrea acknowledged at the time that its progress in clearing mines would be slow due to its lack of resources, but it has never been clear how Eritrea intended to secure the funding for its survey and clearance activities, particularly in light of its policy of not accepting international technical assistance.¹⁴ It is not known if Eritrea contributed any national resources to support the cost of the EDA or any survey or clearance of mined areas carried out in 2022. Nor is it known if Eritrea has made any progress on a resource mobilisation strategy in place for Article 5 implementation.

It is not known if there is any forum in Eritrea for convening relevant stakeholders on a regular basis to discuss challenges, progress, and support for Article 5 implementation.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in Eritrea in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Eritrea did not respond to Mine Action Review's inquiries in 2023 about the national mine action programme's policies relating to gender and diversity.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Details on Eritrea's current information management system are not known. Its failure to submit any Article 7 transparency report over the past eight years is itself a violation of the Convention. As at September 2023, Eritrea had yet to submit its latest Article 7 report covering 2022. It has also failed to provide an updated Article 5 work plan or detailed extension request.

PLANNING AND TASKING

There is no recent information available on whether Eritrea has a national mine action strategy or how Eritrea plans its demining operations. Re-survey during the second extension period was planned to involve both technical and non-technical survey of all remaining mined areas across six regions, and to run concurrently with clearance in priority areas in the Anseba, Maakel, and Semienawi Keih Bahri regions.¹⁵

Eritrea submitted an interim Article 5 deadline extension request on 11 November 2019, which was granted at the Fourth Review Conference in November 2019. The request did not contain any updated information on the extent of remaining mined area or on Eritrea's plans to address it. Eritrea committed to submit a detailed follow-on extension request by 31 March 2020, but as at September 2023 had still to do so.¹⁶

13 2014 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 11.

14 Statement of Eritrea, Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 6 December 2013.

15 Statement of Eritrea, Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Geneva, 9 April 2014.

16 Interim Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 11 November 2019, pp. 2–3.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Eritrea reportedly has national mine action standards (NMAS) that date back at least to 2012. It is not known if any updates to the standards have been made in the eleven years since. It has previously been reported that the EDA was responsible for the implementation of quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) activities.¹⁷ It is not known if Eritrea still has any national capacity for survey or clearance of mined areas. Nor is it known if there have been any demining accidents in 2022 or recent years.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In the past, demining has been primarily conducted by the engineering units of the Eritrean defence forces under the supervision of the EDA.¹⁸ According to its 2014 Article 5 deadline extension request, Eritrea planned to deploy “at least” five demining teams during its second extension period.¹⁹ No information is available as to whether any such capacity was deployed.

Since the expulsion of international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in 2005, the authorities have not allowed international operators to conduct survey or clearance in Eritrea.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Under its 2014 extension request, Eritrea projected that up to 15.4km² of mined area could be cleared within five years. It reported that 67.3km² of contaminated area had been cancelled through non-technical survey and that 5.7km² was cleared over 38 mined areas in 2011–13.²⁰

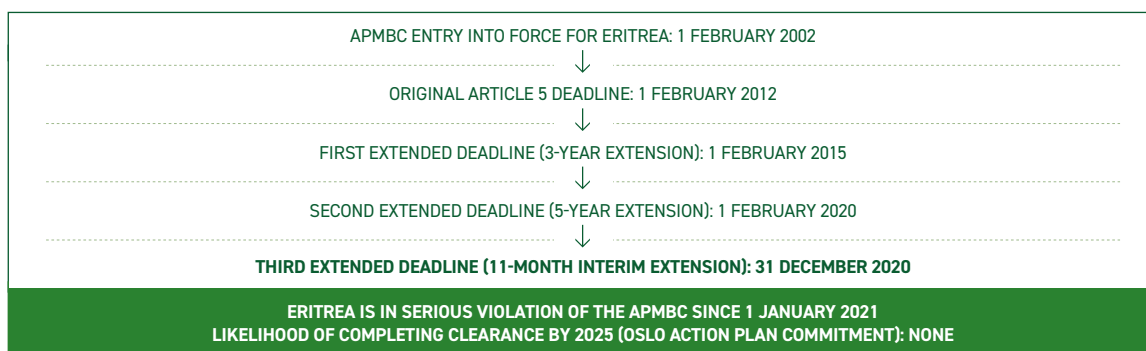
Eritrea has not provided any updates to States Parties to the APMB, nor responded to Mine Action Review recent requests for information on any mine action activities (including survey) undertaken since 2014. In 2013, Eritrea had reported release of 157 SHAs totalling 33.5km², leaving 385 mined areas of close to 24.5km² to be surveyed.²¹ Forty-nine new mined areas with a total size of 9km² were discovered in five of the country’s six regions during non-technical survey in 2013: Anseba, Debub, Gash Barka, Maakel, and Semienawi Keih Bahri.²²

Likewise, Eritrea has not made public any information on any mine clearance that it has undertaken in the last nine years. In 2013, Eritrea seemingly cleared approx. 2.26km² of mined area, almost twice the amount cleared in 2012 (1.2km²).²³ The number of AP and AV mines destroyed was not reported.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

As stated, no land release output, whether through survey or clearance, was reported for 2022.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



¹⁷ Article 7 Report (covering 2012), Form F, p. 5.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 10.

²⁰ Analysis of Eritrea’s Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 20 June 2014, p. 2.

²¹ Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 23 January 2014, p. 7.

²² Analysis of Eritrea’s Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 20 June 2014, p. 2.

²³ Article 7 Report (covering 2012), Form F, p. 10.

Table 2: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2022	N/R
2021	N/R
2020	N/R
2019	N/R
2018	N/R
Total	N/R

N/R = Not reported

Under Article 5 of the APMBBC (and in accordance with the three-year extension granted by States Parties in 2011, a five-year extension granted in 2014, and an interim 11-month extension in 2019), Eritrea was required to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2020. It did not do so and, having failed to submit a more detailed extension request by 31 March 2020, or any further extension request to date has remained in serious violation of the Convention.

Eritrea submitted its last extension request in November 2019, just before the Fourth APMBBC Review Conference. In January 2014, Eritrea had previously secured a second Article 5 deadline extension to continue clearance and to complete re-survey of SHAs. The States Parties granted Eritrea its extension request, but noted that five additional years beyond Eritrea's previous February 2015 deadline "appeared to be a long period of time to meet this objective".²⁴

In the interim extension request submitted on 11 November 2019, just two weeks before the start of the Fourth APMBBC Review Conference, Eritrea stated it had not gained any clarity on the remaining AP mine contamination during the second extension period as Eritrea's demining capacity had been diverted to other government development programmes, such as construction and agriculture, and that mine action had faced financial and resource shortfalls and required external assistance to continue operations. At the time, Eritrea stated it believes that it has the necessary experience and expertise to address the challenges but would require international support.

As at November 2019, the EDA was said to be in the process of restructuring and an interim request was submitted as no information could be provided on outstanding contamination, survey or clearance. Eritrea claimed it was planning to submit a more detailed extension request by 31 March 2020 with information on remaining mine contamination, progress made and a detailed work plan for implementation.²⁵ However, no further extension request has ever been submitted.

At the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties in November 2021, the States Parties collectively expressed grave concern that Eritrea had not engaged in a cooperative dialogue and remained in a situation of non-compliance. The Meeting noted that if a cooperative dialogue was not established and the status of non-compliance resolved then States Parties should consider seeking clarification and resolving questions relating to compliance by Eritrea through the UN Secretary-General in accordance with Article 8(2) of the Convention.²⁶

In April 2022, one of the Convention's Special Envoys, His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Zeid Al Hussein, met with Amanuel Giorgio, Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations in New York to discuss the situation of non-compliance by Eritrea. During the meeting, the Special Envoy and the Implementation Support Unit recalled the decision of the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties and highlighted the support available to Eritrea to overcome the current impasse.²⁷

Serious concern over Eritrea's continued non-compliance was voiced again by numerous states and civil society organisations at the APMBBC Intersessional Meetings in Geneva in June 2022. States again urged Eritrea to re-engage and several put forward the suggestion to collectively consider invoking Article 8(2).

At the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties in November 2022 it was mandated, in accordance with Article 8(2) of the Convention, that the President of the Twenty-first Meeting of the States Parties should, failing the establishment of a cooperative dialogue with Eritrea and resolution of the current status of non-compliance through Eritrea's submission of an extension request by 31 March 2023, seek clarification and resolve questions on compliance by Eritrea through the good offices of the UN Secretary-General.²⁸ On 9 June 2023, the APBMC announced that, following the Decision of the Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties concerning the situation of non-compliance by Eritrea, a request for clarification had been launched through the UN Secretary-General in accordance with Article 8(2) of the Convention.²⁹

24 Decision on Eritrea's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Third APMBBC Review Conference, Maputo, 26 June 2014.

25 Interim Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 11 November 2019, pp. 2-3.

26 Draft Final Report of the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties to the APMBBC, 18 November 2021.

27 Preliminary Observations of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20-22 June 2022, p. 2.

28 Email newsletter, "Colombia concludes presidency, 20MSP recap", ISU, 16 December 2022.

29 Email newsletter, "On the eve of the 2023 Intersessionals", ISU, 9 June 2023.

In July 2023, following Eritrea's lengthy period of wilful non-compliance with the Convention, the President of the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties to the APBMC announced Eritrea's decision to withdraw from the Convention.³⁰ Further to this communication, in a note verbale dated 2 October 2023, submitted to the UNSG, Eritrea indicated that "after consultation with the relevant authority", Eritrea has "decided to withdraw its notification

letter of 21 June 2023 addressed to the UNSG regarding the 'withdrawal from the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention'.³¹ Germany, President of 21MSP, welcomed the news and said it looked forward to "working with Eritrea in the Convention's traditional spirit of transparency and cooperation to ensure Eritrea's return to full compliance with the Convention in order to meet our collective desire of putting an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines."³²

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

As at June 2023, Eritrea had not provided any information on whether it has made any provision for a sustainable capacity to address previously unknown mined areas following completion.

³⁰ Letter from the President of the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties (21MSP) regarding "Response from Eritrea to the Request for Clarification under Article 8.2", 3 July 2023.

³¹ Note Verbale from the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations, 2 October 2023.

³² Letter from the President of the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties (21MSP), to interested international and non-governmental organisations, regarding "Communication from Eritrea to the United Nations Secretary General, 30 October 2023", 30 October 2023.