

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2024

IN SERIOUS VIOLATION OF THE CONVENTION (RENEWED DEMINING NEEDED TO RETURN TO COMPLIANCE)

KEY DATA

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

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

10_{KM²}

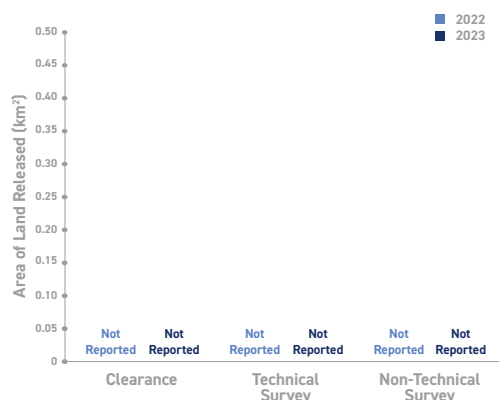
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2023

NOT REPORTED

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2023

NOT REPORTED

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



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

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Eritrea was in serious violation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) for several years, as it failed to request an extension to its third extended Article 5 mine clearance deadline which expired on 31 December 2020. However, on 16 November 2023, Eritrea submitted a long-overdue fourth request to extend its clearance deadline. The interim request was granted by the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties (21MSP) and a new deadline set for 31 December 2024.¹ In its two-paragraph request, Eritrea stated that a restructuring of the Eritrean Demining Authority (EDA) was underway and pledged to work with the President, the Committee on Article 5 Implementation, and the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) to submit a detailed extension request by 31 March 2024 for consideration by the Fifth Review Conference in November 2024.² As at mid-October 2024, no such request had been submitted. If no extension request is submitted and granted at the Fifth Review Conference, Eritrea will again be in serious violation of Article 5 after its current deadline expires on 31 December 2024.

Eritrea's extension request of November 2023 was a reversal of its position four months prior when, in July 2023, the President of the Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties to the APMBC announced that Eritrea had announced its decision to withdraw from the Convention. As mentioned, Eritrea's Article 5 deadline had 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.

Prior to the President's announcement that Eritrea had decided to withdraw from the Convention, the President had also stated that on 9 June 2023 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.³ 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.

¹ Implementation Support Unit, "Eritrea", accessed 12 August 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3WEcvDT>.

² Article 5 deadline Extension Request, submitted on 16 November 2023.

³ Email newsletter, "On the eve of the 2023 Intersessionals", ISU, 9 June 2023.

Subsequently, the President of 21MSP 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".⁴ 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."⁵

On 2 October 2023, Eritrea wrote to the UN Secretary-General stating its decision to rescind its notification of intent to withdraw from the APBMC. Following the establishment of a cooperative dialogue with the President of the 21MSP, Eritrea, on 16 November 2023, submitted its request to extend its Article 5 deadline, which was granted by the 21MSP. The States Parties welcomed Eritrea's re-engagement with the work of the Convention and their participation at the 21MSP.⁶

FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW

Eritrea has reported no progress in survey or clearance of mined areas or in the development of a national mine action programme in the last five years. It has wilfully failed to comply with its obligation under Article 5 of the APMBC 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. Eritrea has also not submitted an Article 7 report since 2014.

Prior to November 2023, Eritrea submitted its previous (third) extension request in November 2019, just before the Fourth APMBC Review Conference. In January 2014, Eritrea had previously secured a second Article 5 deadline extension to continue clearance and to complete re-survey of suspected hazardous areas (SHAs). The States Parties granted Eritrea its extension request at the Third Review Conference in June 2014, 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".⁷

In the interim third extension request submitted on 11 November 2019, just two weeks before the start of the Fourth APMBC Review Conference, Eritrea said it had not gained any clarity on the remaining anti-personnel (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 believed that it had the necessary experience and expertise to address the challenges but would require international support.

The EDA was said to be in the process of restructuring and no information was provided in the interim extension 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.⁸ However, no such detailed extension request has yet been submitted.

Since the Fourth Review Conference in 2019, treaty presidents and the Committee on Article 5 Implementation have endeavoured to establish a cooperative dialogue with Eritrea.⁹ At the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties in 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 the situation persisted, 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.¹⁰

At the Twentieth Meeting of States Parties in 2022, States Parties mandated the President of 21MSP to seek clarification and resolve questions on compliance by Eritrea through the good offices of the UN Secretary-General.¹¹ The decision also noted that the President and office holders of the Convention stood ready to sustain a cooperative dialogue with Eritrea to see that this situation could be overcome as soon as possible, and that Eritrea would be supported in reengaging in the work of the Convention.¹²

4 Letter from the President of the 21MSP regarding "Response from Eritrea to the Request for Clarification under Article 8.2", 3 July 2023.

5 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.

6 "Draft Review of the Operation and Status of the Convention of the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction: 2019-2024, Submitted by the President of the Fifth Review Conference", p. 37.

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

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

9 "Draft Review of the Operation and Status of the Convention of the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction: 2019-2024, Submitted by the President of the Fifth Review Conference", p. 37.

10 Draft Final Report of the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC, 18 November 2021.

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

12 "Draft Review of the Operation and Status of the Convention of the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction: 2019-2024, Submitted by the President of the Fifth Review Conference", p. 37.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Eritrea should urgently submit a request to extend its Article 5 deadline for consideration by States Parties at the Fifth Review Conference, to ensure that it has an Article 5 clearance deadline in place and is in compliance with the APMBBC.
- The government should ensure that identification and release of mined areas confirmed or suspected to contain AP mines is undertaken as a matter of urgency.
- Eritrea should urgently submit an up-to-date list of all confirmed or suspected mined areas and a detailed annual and multi-year work plan for survey and clearance.
- Eritrea must urgently submit its outstanding annual Article 7 reports, the latest of which was due by 30 April 2024.
- 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 (2023)	Score (2022)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	3	3	The last estimate of mined area dates back to the end of 2013, when Eritrea reported that 434 mined areas remained covering a total 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 EDA is responsible for mine clearance. Eritrea reported in November 2023 that the EDA was undergoing "restructuring" of its operational mandate.
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.
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION* (10% of overall score)	0	Not Scored	It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	0	0	Details of Eritrea's current information management system are not known. Its failure to submit annual Article 7 reports over the past nine 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** (10% 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.

Criterion	Score (2023)	Score (2022)	Performance Commentary
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 deadline extension period. In 2014, Eritrea reported it would need a third extension. Eritrea submitted an interim 11-month request for a third extension in November 2019 with the apparent intention of making a more detailed request by 31 March 2020. However, Eritrea failed to submit the extension and was in serious violation of the treaty from when its deadline expired on 31 December 2020 until a new fourth deadline extension to 31 December 2024 was submitted and granted at 21MSP in November 2023. Eritrea was due to submit a more detailed fifth extension request by 31 March 2024, but as at mid-October 2024, the required extension request had yet to be submitted and Eritrea remained in violation of the Convention for its failure to undertake demining as soon as possible.
Average Score	1.6	1.9	Overall Programme Performance: VERY POOR

* New criterion introduced in 2024 to assess performance.
 ** The weighting of this criterion was previously 20% of overall performance score, but is now given a 10% weighting.

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Eritrea Demining Agency (EDA)

NATIONAL OPERATORS*

- Engineering units of the Eritrean Armed Forces

* This is based on information from earlier years. It is not known if the information remains accurate.

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- 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.

The last estimate of the extent of mined area in Eritrea dates back to the end of 2013, when Eritrea reported 434 mined areas covering an estimated 33.4km.¹³ This was a two-thirds reduction on the earlier estimate of 99km² of June 2011,¹⁴ and significantly lower than the 129km² identified by the 2004 landmine impact survey.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶

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)¹⁷

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
Debub	29	3,894,036
Maakel	24	2,423,325
Debubawi Keih Bahri	8	1,169,029
Totals	434	33,432,818

13 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 NTS 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.
 14 Eritrea’s reply to questions from the Article 5 Analysing Group about its Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 7 June 2011, p. 2.
 15 Survey Action Center (SAC), “Landmine Impact Survey, Eritrea, Final Report”, May 2005, p. 7.
 16 United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), “UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea is withdrawn”, accessed 5 June 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/43K5SI5>.
 17 2014 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

UNMEE estimated that three million items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) are scattered across Eritrea, ranging from small arms ammunition to bombs dropped from aeroplanes.¹⁸ There is evidence that Eritrea may be contaminated with cluster munition remnants as a result of the 1998–2000 war with Ethiopia.¹⁹

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

To the extent one exists, Eritrea's mine action programme is entirely nationally managed. The EDA, established in July 2002, is believed to be still 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.

In its Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in November 2023, Eritrea stated that, since its earlier extension request in 2019, it had been working to "address the process of restructuring the EDA, which impeded the implementation of Eritrea's commitments under Article 5, as highlighted in our 2019 request". Specifically, Eritrea stated: "as we indicated in 2019, the restructuring of the EDA presented obstacles to the submission of the request containing detailed data on the progress made to date, as well as the presentation of a work plan for the period beyond Eritrea's deadline of 31 December 2020". Eritrea added that "owing to some force measures [*sic*], including a threat to national security and the COVID-19 Pandemic, the envisaged restructuring of the EDA couldn't be materialized in due time. At present, the restructuring process of the Authority and

its operational mandate is being undertaken."²⁰ However, no further details of what this restructuring of the EDA may entail have been provided.

Eritrea projected that costs during its Article 5 deadline extension period to 1 February 2020 would amount to more than US\$7 million, all to be raised nationally.²¹ 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 lack of resources, but it has never been clear how it intended to secure the funding for its survey and clearance, particularly in light of its policy of not accepting international technical assistance.²² 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 in 2023, nor if Eritrea has made any progress towards developing a resource mobilisation strategy for Article 5 implementation.

Eritrea did not respond to Mine Action Review's inquiries about its national mine action programme in 2022, 2023 or, at the time of writing, in 2024.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

It is not known if Eritrea has policies in place relating to gender and diversity in mine action.

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.

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 nine years is itself a violation of the Convention. As at mid-October 2024, Eritrea had yet to submit its latest Article 7 report covering 2023. It has also failed to provide an updated Article 5 work plan.

In granting Eritrea's 2023 request for an extension to its Article 5 deadline, the 21MSP noted that Eritrea had not acted in accordance with the agreed "process for the preparation, submission and consideration of requests for extensions to Article 5 deadlines", preventing the Committee on Article 5 Implementation from carrying out its mandate to "prepare

¹⁸ UNMEE, "UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea is withdrawn".

¹⁹ Cluster Munition Monitor, "Cluster Munition Ban Policy – Eritrea", accessed 13 August 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/3yrdNtX>.

²⁰ 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request.

²¹ 2014 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 11.

²² Statement of Eritrea, Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 6 December 2013.

and submit to the States Parties in advance of Meetings of the States Parties or Review Conferences an analysis of each request for an Article 5 extended deadline". In granting the 2023 request, the Meeting welcomed Eritrea's commitment

to adhere to the established process and submit a request by 31 March 2024 for consideration by the Fifth Review Conference.²³ As noted, however, as at mid-October 2024, Eritrea had still to submit this 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 survey and non-technical survey (NTS) 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.²⁴ Eritrea's 2023 extension request did not contain any information on the extent of mined area remaining or on plans to address it.

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 twelve years since. It has previously been reported that the EDA was responsible for quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) of demining.²⁵ It is not known whether Eritrea still has national capacity for mine survey or clearance.

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.²⁶ According to its 2014 Article 5 deadline extension request, Eritrea planned to deploy "at least" five demining teams during its second extension period.²⁷ No information is available as to whether any such capacity was deployed.

Since the expulsion of international 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 (NTS) and that 5.7km² was cleared over 38 mined areas in 2011–13.²⁸

Eritrea has not provided formal updates to States Parties to the APMBC over the last year. It has also not responded to Mine Action Review's 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 covering close to 24.5km²

to be surveyed.²⁹ Forty-nine mined areas with a total size of 9km² were discovered in five of the country's six regions during NTS in 2013: Anseba, Debub, Gash Barka, Maakel, and Semienawi Keih Bahri.³⁰

Likewise, Eritrea has not made public any information on any mine clearance that it has undertaken in the last ten years. In 2013, Eritrea seemingly cleared approximately 2.26km² of mined area, almost twice the amount cleared in 2012 (1.2km²).³¹ The number of AP and AV mines destroyed was not reported.

23 "Decisions on the request submitted by Eritrea for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention", 21MSP, Geneva, 20–24 November 2023.

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

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

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid., p. 10.

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

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

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

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

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2023

No land release outputs through survey or clearance were reported for 2023.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE

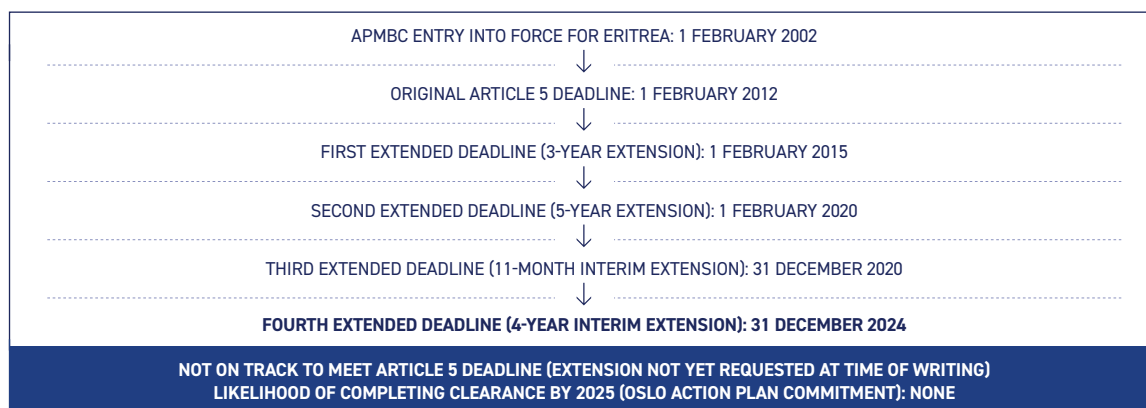


Table 2: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

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 APMBC (in accordance with interim four-year extension in 2023 which ran from the end of 2020), Eritrea is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2024. It will not meet this deadline and as at the time of writing had yet to submit a request to extend its deadline for consideration at the Fifth Review Conference in November 2024. Moreover, Eritrea is already in serious violation of the Convention for its failure to work towards the completion of mine survey and clearance as soon as possible.

In granting the 2023 interim extension request, the 21MSP noted that the submission of a detailed request by Eritrea by 31 March 2024 would permit a “cooperative dialogue with the Committee on Article 5 Implementation to take place, as envisaged by the extension request process” and that Eritrea would benefit from seeking assistance from the ISU in the preparation of its request, “including by inviting the ISU for an in-country visit, in order to ensure that Eritrea benefits from support in the development of its extension request”. The Meeting further noted the importance of Eritrea keeping the States Parties regularly apprised of implementation of its Article 5 obligations at intersessional meetings and meetings of states parties/review conferences as well as through its Article 7 reports.³² Eritrea did not participate in the most recent intersessional meetings that took place in Geneva in June 2024.³³

When its last extension request was granted in November 2023, Eritrea had promised to submit a detailed extension request by 31 March 2024 for consideration at the Fifth Review Conference in November 2024.³⁴ As at mid-October 2024, however, no such request had been submitted. If no extension request is submitted and granted, Eritrea will again be in serious violation of Article 5 after its current deadline expires on 31 December 2024.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

As at mid-October 2024, 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.

³² “Decisions on the request submitted by Eritrea for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention”, 21MSP, Geneva, 20–24 November 2023.

³³ International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), “ICBL Statement on Compliance”, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–24 June 2024.

³⁴ 2023 Article 5 deadline Extension Request.