

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2026
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION:

NATIONAL ESTIMATE

11.52 km²

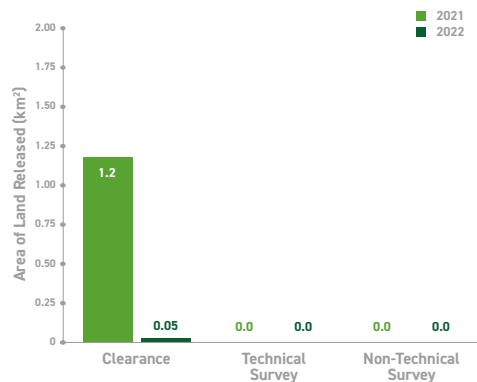
AP MINE CLEARANCE IN 2022

0.05 km²

AP MINES DESTROYED IN 2022

UNKNOWN

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2022, the Programme National de Déminage Humanitaire pour le Développement (PNDHD) released two small mined areas, one containing anti-personnel (AP) mines, the other containing anti-vehicle (AV) mines. Reporting did not detail how many mines were discovered and destroyed. Based on current clearance output, Mauritania is not on track to fulfil its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 clearance obligations by its deadline of end of 2026. In 2022, Mines Advisory Group (MAG) secured Norwegian government funding to conduct capacity and needs assessments and to create a capacity development plan with the PNDHD.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Mauritania should continue its efforts to mobilise the necessary international funds and operational support to enable it to fulfil its Article 5 obligations.
- Mauritania should report on its AP mine contamination accurately, consistently, and in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), including through timely submission of Article 7 reports. It should disaggregate AP mined area and mixed AP and AV mined area from areas only containing AV mines. It should also report on the number of mines (disaggregated by type) discovered and destroyed during land release operations.
- The PNDHD should update its national mine action standards (NMAS) to ensure they are in accordance with the latest IMAS.
- Mauritania should conduct technical survey (TS) to establish a more accurate baseline of AP mine contamination and better determine the size of the identified confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs).
- Mauritania should establish a sustainable national capacity to address any residual AP mine contamination discovered following the fulfilment of Article 5 obligations.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	7	7	In 2021, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), in collaboration with the PNDHD, conducted the first baseline survey assessment to determine the extent of AP mine contamination since Mauritania's discovery of new contaminated areas in 2019. Mauritania does not report mined areas as suspected hazardous areas (SHA) or CHAs, in line with IMAS and international best practice. It also does not sufficiently disaggregate areas containing AP mines or mixed AP and AV mines, from those areas only containing AV mines. Further TS is required to accurately determine the size and extent of the actual contamination.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	5	5	Mauritania contributes national resources to support its mine action programme but the PNDHD needs greater operational, financial, and technical capacities to fulfil that role and is seeking international funding to fulfil its Article 5 obligations. Mauritania is also seeking to establish a Country Coalition and has discussed the possibility of forming a coalition with France.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	4	4	Mauritania does not appear to have a gender and diversity policy for mine action, and neither issue is referenced in the Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in June 2021 or in Mauritania's latest Article 7 report, submitted in October 2022. Mauritania did, however, state in response to questions from the Committee on Article 5 Implementation that it intends to deploy diverse and gender-balanced teams to the extent possible, and that it includes consultation of women, girls, and boys in the planning of its mine action programme.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	4	4	Mauritania uses Version 6 of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) software. Mauritania's reporting under the APMBC is often late and lacks detail, accuracy and consistency, and the data it provides often vary across different reports. Data reported by Mauritania lacks sufficient disaggregation, with respect to the type of hazardous area and the type of mine contamination. As at July 2023, Mauritania had yet to submit an Article 7 report covering all of 2022.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	3	3	Mauritania's last mine action strategic plan and work plan expired in 2020. Mauritania estimates that AP mine clearance can be concluded in five years, accounting for the time required to mobilise resources, deploy teams to the field, and finalise reporting. As at July 2023, however, Mauritania had yet to secure the international funding it requires to clear the remaining mined areas by its extended Article 5 deadline.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	6	6	Mauritania's NMAS were adopted in 2007 and revised in 2020 with support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and NPA. It is unclear to what extent the NMAS have been subsequently updated in line with IMAS updates and best practice.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	5	5	In November 2021, Mauritania was granted an almost five-year extension to its Article 5 clearance deadline. In 2022, the PNDHD continued to clear contamination within its limited national resources, but has appealed for further support from the international community which it needs to upscale clearance significantly.
Average Score	5.2	5.2	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- National Humanitarian Demining Programme for Development (Programme National de Déminage Humanitaire pour le Développement, PNDHD)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Army Engineer Corps

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre of Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- HAMAP Humanitaire (HAMAP)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

There is no clear estimate of AP mined area under the jurisdiction or control of Mauritania as figures differ and reporting by Mauritania is incomplete and inconsistent. Mine Action Review has used the total AP mined area of nearly 11.52km² as the national baseline. This is the figure reported in Mauritania's latest Article 7 report submitted in October 2022 (see Table 1), although further survey is likely to reduce the total figure significantly. Mine Action Review has separated out areas that seemingly only contain AV mines (4.48km²), based on the type of mines specified by Mauritania.

On 23 June 2020, after having declared fulfilment of its Article 5 obligations on 29 November 2018 at the Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC (17MSP), Mauritania reported the discovery of previously unknown mined areas.¹ A joint assessment with NPA to survey the newly discovered contamination took place in February 2021.² NPA identified almost 15.47km² of mined areas across 10 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) in Nouadhibou (west) and Tiris Zemmour (north) regions. Of the total, 10.90km² across eight SHAs were thought to contain AP mines. The other two SHAs, covering an estimated 4.56km², were contaminated only with AV mines.³ Mauritania estimated that the size of areas requiring clearance will be reduced by an average of 37%

once further survey is conducted (though without elaborating the methodology it used to reach this conclusion).⁴

According to NPA, further survey is needed to determine the size and extent of the hazardous areas more accurately, and NPA thought that, once this has been done, the areas requiring full clearance will be further reduced. NPA also highlighted the high likelihood of discovering residual contamination after completion, since mines are in remote and sparsely populated areas.⁵ Indeed, Mauritania continued to receive reports from local authorities indicating previously unknown mine contamination following NPA's initial assessment.⁶

In its extension request of June 2021, Mauritania estimated total mined area at 16.18km² across 20 hazardous areas (including areas which appear to contain only AV mines).⁷ Based on the type of mines specified, its Article 7 report of October 2022 indicated that 16 mined areas totalling nearly 11.52km² contain AP mines while 2 mined areas, totalling 4.48m² contain only AV mines (see Table 1). At the APMBC intersessional meetings in June 2023, Mauritania said it had 15.5km² of mined area remaining, but this presumably also includes areas containing only AV mines, which do not fall under Mauritania's Article 5 obligations.⁸

Table 1: Mined area by region (reported at October 2022)⁹

Region ¹⁰	Location ID	CHAs	CHA with AP mines (m ²)	CHA with AV mines (m ²)	Mines identified	Contamination type ¹¹
Adrar	Mayaatag	1	538,549		PT Mi-K and APID51	AP/AV mines*
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Bouchon24	1	839,424		APID51 and ACID51	AP/AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Bouchon55	1	9,147,780		PT Mi-K, APID51, and TM57	AP/AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Guergara	1		1,203,880	PT Mi-K	AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Lewej 2	1	329,829		APID51 and VS50	AP mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Pk 126	1	132,585		APID51	AP mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Pk 173 Partie II	1		3,280,805	Type 72	AV mines

1 Third APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2020, pp. 1 and 3. In November 2020, Mauritania was granted a thirteen-month extension to 31 January 2022.

2 NPA, Mauritania Assessment Report, 12 April 2021, p. 2.

3 Third Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2020, p. 3; Article 7 Report (covering 2019), p. 6; and email from Melissa Andersson, Country Director, NPA, 26 April 2021.

4 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 10.

5 NPA, Mauritania Assessment Report, 12 April 2021, pp. 2-3.

6 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 6.

7 Ibid., p. 5.

8 Statement of Mauritania, APMBC Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 19-21 June 2023.

9 Article 7 report (covering most of 2022), submitted in October 2022, pp. 3-4.

10 The Article 7 report did not specify the region. These data are provided by Mine Action Review from earlier information.

11 The Article 7 report did not specify the contamination type. These data are provided by Mine Action Review from reported mine types.

Table 1 Continued

Region	Location ID	CHAs	CHA with AP mines (m ²)	CHA with AV mines (m ²)	Mines identified	Contamination type
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Rbeit l'echar1	1	62,819		PT Mi-K and APID51	AP/AV mines*
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Wettatlechyakh	1	126,578		APID51	AP mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 1	1	28,794		VS50 and TM57	AP/AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 2	1	16,257		VS50 and TM57	AP and AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 3	1	23,638		VS50 and TM57	AP and AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 4	1	14,696		VS50 and TM57	AP and AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 5	1	75,375		VS50 and TM57	AP and AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 6	1	25,565		VS50 and TM57	AP and AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 7	1	26,654		VS50 and TM57	AP and AV mines
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 8	1	66,987		VS50 and TM57	AP and AV mines
Tiris Zemmour	Boukhzame	1	63,796		VS50	AP mines
Totals		18	11,519,326	4,484,685		

* Previously reported as containing an AV mine type only in Mauritania's 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request.

In Nouadhibou, at least 11.53km² of the contamination was known to Mauritania prior to its declaration of compliance in November 2018, but was considered politically inaccessible until 2019. A further 3.82km² has been newly discovered since 2018. In Tiris Zemmour, Mauritania had not been aware of the mined areas before their discovery in 2019.¹² In Adrar, it is not clear whether the discovered mined areas were known to Mauritania before its compliance declaration. In the 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request, it is stated that: "Mauritania submitted a request in June 2020 to extend its Article 5 deadline by one year having recently found two additional minefields in the Northern areas of Mauritania, and then redefining which mined areas are considered to be under its jurisdiction or control in the Nouadhibou peninsula".¹³

In November 2018, prior to reporting new discoveries of mined area, Mauritania had declared completion of its Article 5 obligations at the Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties.¹⁴ At the end of 2015, Mauritania reported release of all known AP mined areas (40 areas totalling an estimated 67km²),¹⁵ but said that other contaminated areas existed close to Western Sahara. Depending on the demarcation of the border, these areas could be inside Mauritanian territory and thus within its jurisdiction.¹⁶ In its 2015 request for a second extension to its Article 5 clearance deadline, Mauritania said it "suspects that the security system along the border with Western Sahara, which comprises fortifications and minefields, crosses Mauritanian territory, especially since there is no natural border between the two". It also said that border markers from the colonial period were unclear, non-existent, and/or found at intervals of between 115km and 175km.¹⁷

12 NPA, Mauritania Assessment Report, 12 April 2021, p. 2.

13 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 4.

14 Statement of Mauritania, APMBC Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties (17MSP), 29 November 2018; and Third Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2020, p. 2.

15 Analysis of Mauritania's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request submitted by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation to the Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties, 17 November 2015, p. 2.

16 Analysis of Mauritania's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request submitted by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation to the Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties, 17 November 2015, p. 2.

17 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 2 April 2015, p. 4. In the original French: "nous suspectons que le dispositif de sécurité le long de la frontière avec le Sahara occidental, composé de fortification et champs de mines, interfère en territoire Mauritanien surtout qu'il n'existe aucune frontière naturelle".

In 2021, Mauritania informed Mine Action Review that all identified contamination in Nouadhibou and Tiris Zemmour regions lie clearly within its jurisdiction and control,¹⁸ bringing the duty to clear unequivocally within Mauritania's international legal obligations under the APMB. The maps provided by Mauritania in its Article 5 deadline extension request, however, show minefields clearly extending beyond its borders and into the territory of Western Sahara, although these may contain only contain AV mines.¹⁹ Moreover, as most of the minefields are located along the borders with Western Sahara, it is possible that AP mine contamination extends beyond Mauritanian territory. Such contamination extending beyond the border, if it is found to exist, is outside Mauritania's jurisdiction and therefore any clearance would need to be agreed upon with the Western Sahara. For the Adrar minefields, it is not clear if the newly reported contamination lies within Mauritania's jurisdiction or control.

Mauritania stated in its latest extension request, submitted in June 2021, that the PNDHD will "Coordinate with relevant authorities to the extent possible on areas that lie outside of Mauritanian jurisdiction but under Mauritanian de facto control".²⁰

Mauritania's mine contamination is a legacy of the conflict over Western Sahara in 1976–78.²¹ A 2006 Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) found a total of 65 SHAs covering 76km² and affecting 60 communities. This proved to be a significant overestimate of the actual mined area. In 2010, Morocco provided detailed maps of minefields laid during the Western Sahara conflict. The minefields had been partially cleared using military procedures prior to the entry into force of the APMB.²² In its 2020 extension request, Mauritania said that the large-scale use of mines in Mauritania was typically haphazard and without the use of plans or maps.²³

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Mauritania also reported having discovered previously unknown cluster munition remnants (CMR) contamination.²⁴ Please see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2023* report on Mauritania for more information.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The PNDHD, which was created in 2000, coordinates mine action operations in Mauritania.²⁵ Since 2007, the programme has been the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior and Decentralisation with oversight from an interministerial steering committee.²⁶ The PNDHD has its headquarters in the capital, Nouakchott, with a regional mine action centre (RMAC) located at Nouadhibou. As at April 2021, PNDHD had one operational manager and six staff responsible for quality control (QC) and quality assurance (QA).²⁷ More recent data have not been made available.

Mauritania estimated in its latest extension request, submitted in June 2021, that it requires a total five-year budget of US\$9.65 million of international funding to address the newly reported mine contamination.²⁸ This is four times the amount Mauritania had initially intended to mobilise from international donors in its previous extension request, submitted in June 2020, which totalled US\$2.5 million.²⁹ Mauritania's contribution to the demining project will include human resources, office space, and the coordination of operations, including liaison with national and local

governmental and military officials.³⁰ Mauritania allocated a budget of €91,000 to its mine action programme in 2021.³¹ As at the time of writing, the amount allocated in 2022 had yet to be reported.

In its most recent Article 7 report of October 2022, Mauritania reported needing international financial assistance for a wide range of activities, including strengthening the capacities of the PNDHD both in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, and possibly also the sub-branch of Tires Zemmour. The PNDHD also requires international support for marking, TS, and clearance of the mined areas, and the quality management (QM) of operations; and supporting risk education campaigns. Mauritania also needs "logistical" support (replacement of equipment; provision of vehicles; development of the regional offices in Nouadhibou, and opening of a regional office in the Tires Zemmour region; and strengthening of PNDHD capacities through training of personnel); support for the elaboration of a new national strategy and revision of national standards and standing operating procedures (SOPs).³²

18 Email from Lt-Colonel Moustaphaould Cheikhna, Head of Operations, PNDHD, 15 March 2022.

19 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, map 2, p. 6.

20 Ibid., p. 13.

21 Ibid., p. 2.

22 Revised Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 6 September 2010, p. 3; and email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 17 September 2015.

23 Third Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2020, p. 2.

24 Ibid., Annex 1, p. 14.

25 Decree No. 1960/MDAT/MDN establishing the PNDHD, 14 August 2007; Third Article 5 deadline Extension Request, received June 2020, p. 2; and Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 3.

26 Decree No. 001358/MDAT establishing the Steering Committee of the PNDHD, 3 September 2007; Third Article 5 deadline Extension Request, received June 2020, p. 2; and Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 3.

27 Mauritania Assessment Report, NPA, 12 April 2021, p. 10.

28 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, pp. 11–12.

29 Third Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2020, p. 10.

30 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, pp. 11–12; and email from Lt-Colonel Moustaphaould Cheikhna, PNDHD, 15 March 2022.

31 Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F.

32 Article 7 report (covering most of 2022), submitted October 2022, p. 8–9.

In late 2022, MAG secured Norwegian government funding for Mauritania to conduct capacity and needs assessments and create a capacity development plan with PNDHD, review the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) (quality control of existing/historical data and updating/upgrading of the database), provide equipment and training for information management, support the review of the NMAS, and conduct a contamination baseline assessment, non-technical survey (NTS), and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE).³³

Mauritania would like to form a Country Coalition with a willing donor government and an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) to support its clearance completion initiative.³⁴ France has explored the possibility of establishing a Country Coalition with Mauritania.³⁵ However, as at July 2023, no concrete steps were known to have been taken to establish a coalition.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Mauritania is not thought to have environmental standards or a policy on environmental management in place. It is not known if Mauritania takes environmental considerations into account during survey and clearance activities.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

It is believed that the PNDHD does not have a specific policy on gender and diversity, and the topic is not referenced in Mauritania's Article 7 report of October 2022 or its 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request, except for some disaggregation of data by sex and age.

In 2021, Mauritania told the Committee on Article 5 Implementation it considered gender and diversity to be important for its mine action programme and pledged to ensure that all groups are consulted when designing and implementing activities. It also stated it will seek to achieve gender-balanced and diverse survey and clearance teams "to the extent this might be possible", while acknowledging "some limitations to achieving gender balance from the staff that would be seconded by the Corps of Engineers".³⁶

Mauritania stated that it involves civil society organisations and "target groups" in the areas of mine risk education and ensures women's participation in both administration and operational levels. According to its 2020 statement, two women were employed in financial management and in victim assistance.³⁷

In its June 2023 statement at the APMBBC Intersessionals meeting, Mauritania said its national strategic plan will take into consideration the role of women in different aspects of demining, such as logistics and administration, and that women are encouraged to take part in all aspects of demining. According to the statement, Mauritania's national demining programme currently has women in 45% of mine action positions.³⁸ The accuracy of this figure is open to question, especially if it concerns operational positions.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

PNDHD hosts and manages the national mine action database (an old version of IMSMA).³⁹ Mauritania did not disaggregate AP mined areas into CHAs and SHAs, in line with international best practice and IMAS in its Article 7 report of October 2022 or its 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request. Mauritania often provides inconsistent and inaccurate contamination and clearance figures in its reports, as well as insufficient information on the number of mines destroyed during land release operations. As at July 2023, Mauritania had yet to submit a report covering all of 2022 as Article 7 requires.

33 Email from Roxana Bobolicu, International Policy Manager, MAG, 19 July 2022.

34 CCM Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 13.

35 CCM Implementation Support Unit (ISU), Quarterly Newsletter on the CCM, Q4 2022, 9 January 2023.

36 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, additional information, 10 September 2021, p. 4.

37 Third Article 5 deadline Extension Request, additional information, 16 September 2020, response 5.

38 Statement of Mauritania, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

39 APMBBC Article 7 Report (covering 2017), Form D.

In 2021–22, the PNDHD created an interactive platform that provides updated contamination data, including the locations of identified mined and cluster munition-contaminated areas, surface area, photos documenting the found items, in addition to a record of all TS, NTS, clearance, and victim data.⁴⁰

In March 2022, two participants from the PNDHD participated in the Arab Regional Cooperation Programme (ARCP) IMSMA Core workshop organised by the Geneva International Centre of Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).⁴¹

PLANNING AND TASKING

Mauritania's mine action strategy expired in 2020. Part of the international cooperation and assistance sought by Mauritania is to support its efforts to draft a new mine action strategy, to replace the former strategy.⁴² Mauritania's 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request envisages five years to technically survey and clear the AP mined areas identified. This includes six months to mobilise the necessary resources (funding, staffing, and equipment) as well as for team deployment.⁴³ Mauritania has issued an action plan for its proposed extension period.⁴⁴ The plan, however, lacks detail.

In its 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request, Mauritania said it would prioritise survey and clearance of the newly reported contaminated areas based on humanitarian impact, taking into account gender and diverse needs of the mine-affected communities.⁴⁵

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Survey and clearance operations are conducted in accordance with the Mauritanian NMAS (Les normes Mauritaniennes de l'action antimines, NMAM), which are said to reflect the IMAS, but which are adapted to Mauritanian realities in terms of geography and equipment.⁴⁶ The NMAS, which include standards on NTS, TS, mine clearance, and QC, were adopted in 2007. They were revised in 2010 and translated into Arabic.⁴⁷ According to Mauritania, the NMAS are updated regularly based on experiences in the field,⁴⁸ but it is unclear to what extent they have been updated in recent years.

In 2021, Mauritania recognised that an update to its NMAS was due and committed to "carry out an analysis of its NMAS to ensure that they are up to date and fit for purpose to address the remaining challenge".⁴⁹ In 2022, the PNDHD informed Mine Action Review it had revised and adapted the NMAS to the "new ways of working",⁵⁰ but it is unclear what this means in practice. As noted above, MAG, with the support of the GICHD, has offered to support Mauritania to review its NMAS as part of its capacity-development plan.⁵¹

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

At the end of 2021, the PNDHD had four demining teams, five cars, and one ambulance, all of which were equipped with demining equipment. The total number of personnel was not reported.⁵² The current capacity of the PNDHD had not been reported as at the time of writing.

According to its 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request, Mauritania requires eight clearance teams, each of ten deminers, for about five years to technically survey and clear all the mined areas remaining. The teams are expected to work for 250 days a year, and each team is expected to clear an average of 250m² a day.⁵³ Mauritania also said it will consider using mine detection dogs (MDDs) in Nouadhibou where there may be conventionally undetectable or deeply buried mines.⁵⁴

40 Statement of Mauritania, APMBC Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

41 Email from Lubna Allam, Programme Officer, GICHD, 10 June 2022.

42 Article 7 report (covering most of 2022), submitted October 2022, p. 8–9.

43 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, pp. 9–10.

44 Ibid., pp. 14–15.

45 Ibid., p. 12.

46 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 8.

47 Email from Aliouneould Menane, PNDHD, 17 April 2011; and Third APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, received June 2020, pp. 5 and 8.

48 CCM Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 8.

49 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 9; and Mauritania's answers to the CCM Analysis Group, 29 July 2021, p. 2.

50 Email from Lt-Colonel Moustaphaould Cheikhna, PNDHD, 15 March 2022.

51 Emails from Roxana Bobolicu, MAG, 19 July 2022; and François Fall, HMA advisory – West Africa, MAG, 28 June 2023.

52 Email from Lt-Colonel Moustaphaould Cheikhna, PNDHD, 15 March 2022.

53 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 10; NPA, Mauritania Assessment Report, 12 April 2021, p. 11; and email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 26 April 2021.

54 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 13.

MAG has been working in Mauritania since November 2017, supporting the safe storage of State-held arms and ammunition depots, and providing training to local security and defence force personnel on the same topic.⁵⁵ As mentioned, in 2022 MAG secured funding for capacity development support to the PNDHD and to conduct a contamination baseline assessment as well as NTS and risk education.⁵⁶

HAMAP, an international NGO, has been present in Mauritania since October 2022 becoming operational and receiving its first clearance task order in April 2023. HAMAP is focused on addressing AP mines in Mauritania, but it also conducts risk education and capacity building of the PNDHD. HAMAP proposed renewed SOPs to the PNDHD, trained four demining teams, and provided support to buy equipment. In addition, HAMAP worked with the PNDHD on project management and is preparing geographic information system (GIS) and mapping support. HAMAP hopes to include NTS in the next steps of its programme in Mauritania.⁵⁷

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

Mauritania reported clearance of 50,769m² of mined area containing AP mines in 2022, and clearance of a further 81,559m² containing AV mines.⁵⁸ The number of AP and AV mines destroyed was not reported by Mauritania and as at July 2023, it had yet to submit its Article 7 report covering all of 2022.

SURVEY IN 2022

It is not known whether Mauritania conducted either NTS or TS in 2022 or if it identified any previously unrecorded mined area during the year.

CLEARANCE IN 2022

In 2022, Mauritania cleared the "Guergoum" minefield in the Tiris Zemmour region, which totalled 50,769m² of mined area containing APID51 AP mines (see Table 2). The number of AP mines destroyed, if any, had not been reported by Mauritania at the time of writing.⁵⁹

A further 81,559m² of AV mined area containing Type 72 mines was cleared at the "PK 173 Partie I" minefield in the Dakhlet Nouadhibou region in 2022.⁶⁰ The number of AV mines destroyed, if any, is unknown and had not yet been reported by Mauritania.⁶¹

AP mine clearance output in 2022 was down on 2021, when the PNDHD cleared 1.2km² of AP mined area in the region of Dakhlet Nouadhibou.⁶²

Table 2: Mine clearance in 2022⁶³

Region	Minefield name	AP mined area (m ²)	AV mined area (m ²)
Tiris Zemmour	Guergoum	50,769	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	PK 173 Partie I		81,559
Totals		50,769	81,559

55 MAG website, accessed 8 August 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3NFVEKD>.

56 Email from Roxana Bobolicu, MAG, 19 July 2022.

57 Email from François Ropars, Mine Action Project Manager, HAMAP, 3 July 2023; and HAMAP Humanitaire, "Mauritania", accessed 14 April 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3oedfC9>.

58 Article 7 report (covering most of 2022), submitted October 2022, p. 4.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 Email from Lt-Colonel Moustaphaould Cheikhna, PNDHD, 15 March 2022.

63 Article 7 report (covering most of 2022), submitted October 2022, p. 4.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the latest extension granted by States Parties in 2021), Mauritania is required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than its extended deadline of 31 December 2026. Based on current clearance output Mauritania is not on track to meet this deadline. Despite this, in June 2023 it was “optimistic” it could address the 15.5km² of mined area by its end-2026 deadline.⁶⁴

Mauritania previously declared fulfilment of its Article 5 obligations at the 17MSP in November 2018, but in June 2020, submitted an interim extension request, reporting that it had discovered mined areas in the regions of Dakhlet Nouadhibou, Tiris Zemmour, and Adrar.⁶⁵ Mauritania received a one-year interim extension to end-January 2022 in order to better understand the extent of contamination and be in a better position to submit its “final” request for extension. In June 2021, Mauritania submitted its fourth extension request seeking a new deadline of 31 December 2026, which was granted at the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties (19MSP) in November 2021. Mauritania is working on the bold assumption that no, or only limited, contamination will be discovered in the course of the coming four years.⁶⁶

The five-year extension period is based on an operational capacity of eight demining teams working for 250 days a year and each team clearing 250m² per day, equating to clearance of half a square kilometre a year. The period also estimates a final reduction of CHAs by an average 37%.⁶⁷ Further, the almost five-year estimated period includes all mined area,

including some areas which seemingly contain only AV mines which does not fall under the APMBC. On the other hand, Mauritania’s extension request does not consider the time needed to bring in and register international operators, or the time needed to set up the groundwork before commencing clearance.⁶⁸ Mauritania factored in the first six months of 2022 to complete its resource mobilisation,⁶⁹ but as at July 2023, no international funds had yet been secured for mine clearance.

Mauritania has requested US\$9.65 million of financial support, including an initial investment of US\$650,000 to purchase vehicles, detectors, personal protective equipment (PPE), and other field equipment. In addition, an annual budget of US\$1.8 million for five years was requested to cover running costs.⁷⁰ The Government of Mauritania will contribute staff, provide office space, and coordinate clearance.⁷¹

Mauritania participated in an individualised approach initiative meeting with the support of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance on 17 June 2021. Mauritania also appealed for international support during the APMBC Intersessional Meetings in June 2022, as well as the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Intersessional Meetings and CCM Tenth Meeting of States Parties in 2022. As previously mentioned, Mauritania is seeking to form a Country Coalition,⁷² potentially with France.⁷³

64 Statement of Mauritania, Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

65 Third Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2020, p. 2; Article 7 Report (covering 2019), p. 3; and online presentation by Mauritania, Intersessional Meetings, 2 July 2020, available at: <http://bit.ly/3iBV1Dd>.

66 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 3.

67 Ibid., p. 10; NPA, Mauritania Assessment Report, 12 April 2021, p. 11; and email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 26 April 2021.

68 Interview with Hans Risser and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 19 April 2021.

69 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 9.

70 Ibid, p. 11.

71 Ibid., p. 12.

72 Ibid., p. 13.

73 CCM ISU, Quarterly Newsletter on the CCM, Q4 2022, 9 January 2023.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

The PNDHD, despite its limited capacity, continued to survey and clear contamination in 2021 and 2022. Previously, it had reported that one of the main aims of Mauritania's work plan for 2017–20 was to establish a strategy for residual contamination.⁷⁴ No new strategy has been elaborated yet, but PNDHD has confirmed its commitment to building national capacity to address any residual contamination.⁷⁵

In its 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request, Mauritania reported that it will "continue to strengthen and maintain a capacity in-country that is equipped to deal with residual risk", and that in the event of discovering new contamination after the newly proposed deadline, Mauritania will "as soon as possible take action to accurately identify the extent of the contaminated areas identified and destroy all mines found in accordance with international and national standards".⁷⁶ Indeed, in the same extension request, Mauritania acknowledged it may discover additional contamination in the course of the five-year clearance period and beyond. According to its statement: "In an area as large as the deserts of Mauritania, with both vast areas and very limited population numbers, it has always been known that in the future additional previously unknown contamination could be identified. Even when the previously known and newly identified areas are cleared this time, it is still possible that new currently unknown areas of mine contamination may be identified in the future".⁷⁷

74 Email from Alioune ould Menane, PNDHD, 23 July 2018.

75 Email from Lt-Colonel Moustapha ould Cheikhna, PNDHD, 15 March 2022.

76 Fourth Article 5 deadline Extension Request, June 2021, p. 11.

77 Ibid.