

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

KEY DATA

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

NATIONAL ESTIMATE

17.89 km²

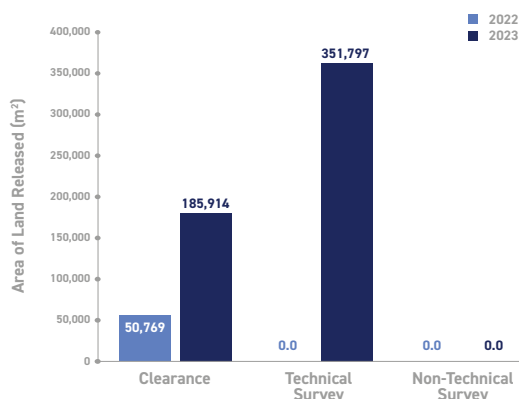
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2023

0.19 km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2023

170

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



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

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Mauritania reported clearance of three small mined areas in 2023, resulting in the destruction of 170 anti-personnel (AP) mines. Two areas were cleared by the international NGO HAMAP-Humanitaire in the Nouadhibou peninsula, and the other was released by the Programme National de Déminage Humanitaire pour le Développement (PNDHD) in Tiris Zemmour region, completing mine clearance in that region. The PNDHD reported the discovery of six new mined areas during non-technical survey (NTS): five in Dakhlet Nouadhibou and the other in Adrar, adding 6.9km² of confirmed hazardous area (CHA) to the contamination baseline. In 2024, HAMAP continued clearance of one mined area and Mines Advisory Group (MAG) initiated NTS and risk education in Dakhlet Nouadhibou.

FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW

In June 2020, two years after declaring it had fulfilled its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 clearance obligations, Mauritania reported the discovery of previously unknown mined areas in the regions of Dakhlet Nouadhibou (the north-west of the country), Tiris Zemmour (the north), and Adrar (the centre). It also reported that some areas of the Nouadhibou peninsula that were previously inaccessible had been redefined as falling under its jurisdiction or control. To better identify the extent of its contamination and submit a "final" request for extension, Mauritania received a one-year interim extension. In February

2021, it carried out a joint assessment with Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), which identified almost 15.47km² of mined areas across ten suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) in Dakhlet Nouadhibou and Tiris Zemmour. This mined area included two SHAs covering an estimated 4.56km², which were contaminated only with anti-vehicle (AV) mines. Later in 2021, Mauritania was granted a fourth deadline extension until the end of 2026. In 2023, the PNDHD discovered newly contaminated areas in Nouadhibou and Adrar, bringing the national estimate of AP mined area to 17.89km².

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Mauritania should report on its AP mine contamination accurately and in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), disaggregating areas containing AP mines from those containing only AV mines.
- Mauritania should indicate in its Article 7 report the number of mines (disaggregated by type) destroyed during land release operations.
- Mauritania should accelerate technical survey (TS) to establish a more accurate baseline of AP mined area and better determine the perimeter of 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 (2023)	Score (2022)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	6	7	In 2023, the PNDHD discovered newly contaminated areas during NTS, increasing the national estimate of AP mined area to 17.89km ² . Further technical survey is required to accurately determine the size of the CHAs. In its Article 7 report covering 2023, Mauritania continued to report, within its national baseline estimate, areas contaminated with only AV mines – these are not covered by the APMBC.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	5	5	Mauritania contributes national resources to its mine action programme but the PNDHD needs greater operational, financial, and technical capacity to fulfil its role and is seeking international assistance for fulfilment of the country's Article 5 obligations. In 2023, it contributed €120,000 to its mine action programme and received support from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the NGO HAMAP-Humanitaire. New funding has been provided for 2024. Additionally, Norway and the United Kingdom supported MAG for capacity building and NTS, which began in 2024.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	4	4	Mauritania has still to develop a specific gender and diversity policy but the programme says it complies with the national policy, which aims to guarantee equality of opportunity for women. A gender unit has been integrated into the PNDHD's organisational chart, with a focal point trained by the Geneva International Centre of Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). At the end of 2023, women accounted for nearly 40% of all PNDHD staff (10 of 26). Mauritania has said that attaining gender balance within the seconded staff from the Corps of Engineers might be a challenge.
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION* (10% of overall score)	5	Not Scored	The PNDHD has stated that Mauritania has an environmental policy reflected in national standards along with standard operating procedures (SOPs). The PNDHD listed a number of measures aiming at minimising potential harm to the environment from land release. However, environmental management is not referenced in the Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in 2021 or in Mauritania's latest Article 7 report.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	4	4	The PNDHD hosts and manages the national mine action database. In 2021, the PNDHD said it had established its own database, but it is only working offline and is not directly accessible to operators. The PNDHD said it had asked the GICHD to install Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core. Mauritania's reporting under the APMBC lacks disaggregation of the type of contamination, and the number and type of munition destroyed. Mauritania did not provide information on the circumstances of the discovery of six minefields in 2023.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	5	3	Mauritania submitted an updated strategic mine action plan for 2023–26 to the Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC in November 2023. In its plan, the PNDHD aimed to release the then 15.5km ² of mined area by the end of 2026 (including the more than 4km ² of AV mined area). The cost over four years was budgeted at US\$3.7 million. The plan's annual projections were not, however, met in 2023, while 6.9km ² of mined area was added to the baseline. Mauritania accredited and tasked HAMAP to clear two mined areas in 2023 and one in 2024. MAG has also been tasked to carry out NTS in 53 localities in Dakhlet Nouadhibou region in 2024.

Criterion	Score (2023)	Score (2022)	Performance Commentary
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM** (10% of overall score)	6	6	Following a request from the PNDHD, the GICHD drafted national mine action standards (NMAS) for clearance, marking, quality management, and accreditation during the first quarter of 2023. However, the timeline and process for approving the new national standards has not been shared by Mauritania. NMAS are not publicly available, even to operators. In 2023, HAMAP proposed new SOPs to the PNDHD, which are currently used by demining teams.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	6	5	In 2022 and 2023, the PNDHD cleared some mined areas but appealed for further support from the international community in order to upscale clearance. Mauritania reported clearance of three mined areas in 2023 and the reduction of a fourth.
Average Score	5.3	5.2	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

* 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

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

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Army Engineer Corps

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- HAMAP-Humanitaire (HAMAP)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG) (NTS and risk education)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre of Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Mauritania's mine contamination is a legacy of the conflict over Western Sahara in 1976–78, which was marked by the large-scale use of mines, generally haphazard and without the use of plans or maps. A 2006 Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) identified 65 SHAs covering 76km², of which 35.7km² was mined areas thought to contain AP mines.¹ At the end of 2015, Mauritania reported release of all known AP mined areas but requested a second Article 5 deadline extension of five years as it "suspected that the security system along the border with Western Sahara, which comprises fortifications and minefields, may be located in some instances in Mauritanian territory".² On 29 November 2018, at the Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC (17MSP), Mauritania announced that it had fulfilled its obligations under Article 5.³

In June 2020, however, Mauritania reported the discovery of further mined areas,⁴ as well as areas of the Nouadhibou peninsula that were previously politically inaccessible

but had been redefined as falling under its jurisdiction or control.⁵ A joint assessment with NPA to survey the newly identified contamination in February 2021 identified almost 15.47km² of mined area across ten SHAs in Nouadhibou and Tiris Zemmour regions, of which two areas covering an estimated 4.56km² were contaminated only with AV mines.⁶ NPA highlighted the high likelihood of discovering further contamination after completion of clearance, since the mines are in remote and sparsely populated areas.⁷ Indeed, Mauritania has continued to receive reports from local authorities of previously unknown mined area.⁸

In its latest extension request (submitted in June 2021), Mauritania estimated total mined area at 16.18km² across 20 hazardous areas, including several areas thought to contain only AV mines.⁹ Mauritania told Mine Action Review in 2022 that all the contamination identified in Nouadhibou and Tiris Zemmour lay clearly within its jurisdiction and control.¹⁰ The

1 2010 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 3 and 6; and 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 2.

2 2015 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 4; and Analysis of Mauritania's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request submitted to the APMBC Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties, 17 November 2015, p. 2.

3 Statement of Mauritania, 17MSP, 29 November 2018; and 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 2.

4 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 1 and 3.

5 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 5.

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

7 NPA, Mauritania Assessment Report, 12 April 2021, pp. 2–3.

8 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 6; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023).

9 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 5.

10 Email from Lt-Col. Moustaphaould Cheikhna, Head of Operations, PNDHD, 15 March 2022.

maps it provided in the extension request, however, show minefields extending outside its borders and into the territory of Western Sahara, although these areas may contain only AV mines.¹¹ For the Adrar minefields, it is not clear if the newly reported contamination lies completely within Mauritania. The extension request said 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".¹²

Mine Action Review has separated out areas that seemingly only contain AV mines (4.48km²) and which are therefore not covered under Mauritania's Article 5 obligations. This adjustment brings the estimated for confirmed AP mined area to more than 17.89km² at the end of 2023 (see Table 1). Mauritania did not report any mined areas remaining in Tiris Zemmour region following clearance of Boukhzame in 2023.¹³

Table 1: Mined area by region (at end 2023)¹⁴

Region ¹⁵	Location ID	CHAs	CHA with AP mines (m ²)	CHA with AV mines only (m ²)
Adrar	Emdel*	1	176,633	
Adrar	Mayaateg**	1	186,752	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Berwaga*	1	207,136	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Bouchon 24	1	***780,125	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Bouchon 55	1	9,147,780	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Eguedet El Ghamboul2*	1	398,422	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Gherd El Angra*	1	5,693,715	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Guergara	1		1,203,880
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Guergueratt*	1	62,817	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Lewej 2	1	329,829	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Oued Emghewess*	1	364,701	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Pk 126	1	132,585	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Pk 173 Partie II	1		3,280,805
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Wettatlechyakh	1	126,578	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 1	1	28,794	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 2	1	16,257	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 3	1	23,638	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 4	1	14,696	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 5	1	75,375	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 6	1	25,565	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 7	1	26,654	
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Zirezargue 8	1	66,987	
Totals		22	17,885,039	4,484,685

* Newly discovered confirmed mined area in 2023. ** Reduced in 2023 by the PNDHD.

*** Remaining surface after the clearance of one part of Bouchon 24 by HAMAP in 2023.

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Mauritania also reported having discovered previously unknown cluster munition remnants (CMR) contamination in a number of instances since 2019.¹⁶ See Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2024* report on Mauritania for more information.

11 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, map 2, p. 6.

12 Ibid., p. 13.

13 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), pp. 3 and 4.

14 Ibid.

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

16 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Annex 1, p. 14; and CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form F.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Mine clearance operations were initially carried out by the Mauritanian army, which set up a structure to implement the APMBC after its ratification in 2000. From 2001 to 2006, mine clearance was carried out by a structure in the Military Engineering Department called the National Office for Humanitarian Clearance. With the support of international partners, the Office developed national standards and standard operating procedures (SOPs).¹⁷ In 2006, the government created the PNDHD, which now coordinates mine action operations in Mauritania.¹⁸ It provides a framework for the national mine action strategic plan, the most recent of which covers the period 2023 to 2026.¹⁹

Since 2007, the programme has been the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior and Decentralisation, with oversight from an interministerial steering committee of representatives from key ministries (defence, finance, and foreign affairs), civil society organisations, and international observers (UNDP).²⁰ The PNDHD, which works in close collaboration with the Military Engineering Department, has its headquarters in Nouakchott, with a regional mine action centre (RMAC) in Nouadhibou. Its Article 7 reports also mention a subregional centre in Tiris Zemmour.²¹ The PNDHD currently employs 26 personnel at its headquarters, including 10 women, in addition to eight demining teams.²²

Mauritania's contribution to its demining is mainly in the form of human resources and office space.²³ This amounted to €120,000 in 2023.²⁴ Mauritania reported a need for international funding to strengthen the capacities of the PNDHD in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, as well as for marking, clearance, and risk education.²⁵

HAMAP has been sporadically present in Mauritania since 2000, and started a French-funded, €1.7 million project in October 2022 that ran until February 2024.²⁶ HAMAP was accredited and tasked in 2023 to clear two areas containing mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) as well as to provide risk education and capacity support. It trained four demining teams during the year and provided five vehicles and other equipment to the programme. The PNDHD performed quality control (QC) of HAMAP clearance.²⁷ In 2024, HAMAP started a new project involving TS and clearance of one minefield in Dakhlet Nouadhibou.²⁸

In late 2022, MAG secured funding from Norway for a regional project in West Africa to support States Parties in meeting their obligations under the APMBC and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and to enhance national ownership. In Mauritania, the project focuses on strengthening the PNDHD capacities in representation, treaty reporting, information management, and in gaining a better understanding of contamination through community liaison, risk education, and NTS. The partnership with the PNDHD started in September 2023, with training provided in early 2024 on disarmament treaties, community liaison, risk education, IMAS 02.10 ("Guide for the establishment of a mine action programme"), and budgeting.²⁹

At the APMBC Intersessional Meetings in June 2024, France made a statement supporting several countries' resource mobilisation efforts, including Mauritania where it regretted being the sole donor supporting clearance. France emphasised the importance of setting up coalitions of States to help forgotten countries with their mine action programmes.³⁰

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The 2023–26 action plan recognises that Mauritania has yet to develop a specific gender and diversity policy. In the meantime, the programme says it complies with the national policy, which aims to guarantee equal opportunities between genders and to encourage the participation of women in roles that have traditionally been assigned to men. Mauritania says

there are no major obstacles to the balanced participation of women and men in mine action.³¹ It aims to achieve gender balance and diversity within its survey and battle area clearance (BAC) teams, while acknowledging that "attaining complete gender balance within the seconded staff from the Corps of Engineers might present certain limitations".³²

17 2010 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 10.

18 Decree No. 1960/MDAT/MDN establishing the PNDHD, 14 August 2007; and 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 4.

19 Mauritania, "Updated Article 5 Extension Request Work Plan", Submitted to the Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC (21MSP) in November 2023.

20 Decree No. 001358/MDAT establishing the Steering Committee of the PNDHD; and presentation of Mauritania, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18–20 June 2024, p. 2.

21 Presentation of Mauritania, Regional Conference on Improvised AP Mines, Ghana, 13–15 February 2024.

22 Email from Capt. Sarr Mamadou, Head of Operations, PNDHD, 1 September 2024.

23 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 11–12.

24 Email from Capt. Sarr Mamadou, PNDHD, 24 May 2024.

25 Article 7 Report (covering most of 2022), pp. 8–9; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), pp. 7–8.

26 Email from Julien Kempeneers, Mine Action Unit Manager, HAMAP, 5 August 2024.

27 Email from Gourdo Bocoum, Project Coordinator, HAMAP, 10 April 2024.

28 HAMAP website, accessed on 5 August 2024, at: <https://bit.ly/4fs2KkN>.

29 Emails from Natascia Maciel, Project Manager, MAG, 7 May and 29 July 2024.

30 Statement of France, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 18 June 2024.

31 Mauritania, "Plan d'Action Déminage 2023 – 2026", p. 6.

32 CCM Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, pp. 15 and 16.

A gender unit has been integrated into the PNDHD's organisation chart, with a focal point trained by the GICHD. The unit aims to enhance the participation of women in the programme,³³ particularly in management, logistics, and health roles.³⁴ The PNDHD currently employs 10 women, representing nearly 40% of the staff, including a head of the risk education and victim assistance department, two unit managers for risk education and victim assistance, a head of administrative and financial services, a gender officer, a nurse, a social worker, and three community liaison and NTS staff.³⁵ The PNDHD is deploying five female staff as part of ongoing clearance by HAMAP in the Nouadhibou region, including the gender officer, and the remaining in support functions.³⁶

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

The PNDHD has reported that Mauritania has a policy on environmental protection that is incorporated into national standards and SOPs for clearance operations. The PNDHD listed a number of measures illustrating how environmental considerations are taken into account to minimise potential harm from land release activities. These include the filling-in of holes after a munition is blown up, a ban on burning as a means to destroy explosive devices, and the importance of collecting rubbish at the end of field activities. The PNDHD has stressed the importance of flora and fauna and the need for clearance to protect animals, including one of the largest monk seal communities in Nouadhibou, as well as livestock.³⁷ Environmental management is not, though, referenced in

Mauritania Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in 2021 or its latest Article 7 report, submitted in March 2024.

HAMAP has an environmental protection policy for demining operations set out in standard operating procedures and implements measures to minimise environmental impacts.³⁸ MAG does not have such a policy but implements a number of environmental impact mitigation measures, such as reducing long-distance trips by setting up sub-offices and using second-hand equipment where possible. MAG also said it will include camel shepherds in risk education and liaise with the PNDHD to mark hazardous areas to protect animals and livestock.³⁹

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

The PNDHD hosts and manages the national mine action database. From 2017 to 2020, it used an old version (New Generation) of the Information Management System for Mine Action, IMSMA.⁴⁰ In 2021, the PNDHD stated that it had established its own database.⁴¹ Due to lack of resources to cover the hosting costs, this database is now offline and not directly accessible to operators. However, the PNDHD said that data would be available to operators upon request and it noted that it was seeking the support of the GICHD to install IMSMA Core.⁴²

MAG began capacity development of PNDHD staff in 2023, notably through information management mentoring on data collection and IMAS-compliant reporting.⁴³ Mauritania did not disaggregate AP mined areas and AV mined areas in line with international best practice and IMAS in either its Article 7 reports of October 2022 and March 2024, or in its 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Mauritania submitted an updated strategic mine action plan for 2023–26 to the Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties in November 2023.⁴⁴ In the plan, the PNDHD aimed to release the then estimated 15.5km² of contaminated areas (including

those containing only AV mines) by the end of 2026, with a four-year budget of US\$3.7 million. This is much less than Mauritania sought in its 2021 extension request, which included a five-year budget of US\$9.65 million.⁴⁵

33 Email from Capt. Sarr Mamadou, PNDHD, 25 June 2024.

34 Mauritania, "Plan d'Action Déminage 2023–2026", p. 6.

35 Email from Capt. Sarr Mamadou, PNDHD, 1 September 2024.

36 Emails from Gourdo Bocoum, HAMAP, 10 April and 5 August 2024.

37 Emails from Capt. Sarr Mamadou, PNDHD, 12 and 25 June 2024.

38 Email from Gourdo Bocoum, HAMAP, 5 August 2024.

39 Email from Natascia Maciel, MAG, 29 July 2024.

40 Article 7 Reports covering 2017, Form D; covering 2019, p. 3; and covering 2020, p. 9.

41 Article 7 Reports covering 2021, p. 5; covering 2022, p. 4; and covering 2023, p. 5.

42 Emails from Capt. Sarr Mamadou, PNDHD, 12 and 25 June 2024.

43 Email from François Fall, HMA Advisor for West Africa, MAG, 7 May 2024.

44 Mauritania, "Updated Article 5 Extension Request Work Plan", Submitted to the 21MSP in November 2023.

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

Mauritania said the government would continue funding the programme to the extent possible given the economic situation, but that a large part of its needs would be asked from the international community.⁴⁶ In 2023, the government contributed €120,000 to mine action.⁴⁷ The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided €1.7 million to HAMAP from October 2022 to February 2024 and renewed support in 2024.⁴⁸ Norway and the United Kingdom have also supported Mauritania through MAG, which received a first task order in April 2024 to carry out NTS in 53 localities of Nouadhibou region.

In its 2021 extension request, Mauritania said it would prioritise survey and clearance of the newly reported mined

areas based on humanitarian impact, taking into account the needs of the affected communities.⁴⁹ The strategic plan for 2023–26 expected the PNDHD to release 3.7km² in 2023; 5.5km² in 2024; 4.1km² in 2025; and 2.2km² in 2026, but acknowledged that this was ambitious considering past performance, and that it would require substantial additional technical and financial support to do so. Indeed, in 2023, the PNDHD released just over 0.5km² through technical survey and clearance,⁵⁰ falling far short of the target. Mauritania accredited and tasked HAMAP to clear two minefields in 2023 and another in 2024. It also tasked MAG to conduct NTS in Nouadhibou.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

NMAS, known nationally as "les normes Mauritaniennes de l'action antimines" (NMAM), included standards on NTS, TS, mine clearance, and QC. First adopted in 2007, they were revised in 2010 and translated into Arabic.⁵¹ They are said to reflect the IMAS and local conditions.⁵²

Following a request from the PNDHD and a field visit in Mauritania, the GICHD drafted NMAS on clearance, marking, quality management, and accreditation. The draft standards were shared with the PNDHD during the first quarter of 2023.⁵³ In its Article 7 report covering 2023, though, Mauritania did not detail a proposed timeline and process for

approving the new NMAS and operators said the NMAS were not accessible to them. In 2023, HAMAP proposed new SOPs to the PNDHD based on those currently used by the demining teams. HAMAP also trained four teams of 29 deminers to explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) Level 1.⁵⁴

Mauritania is a member of the GICHD's Francophone Regional Cooperation Programme (FRCP) and attended the annual workshop in Benin in October 2023, which addressed improvised explosive devices, risk education, and ammunition management.⁵⁵

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

According to the strategic mine action plan for 2023–26, 32 deminers were added to the initial workforce of 48 in 2023, bringing their total number to 80 in 15 demining teams.⁵⁶ However, the PNDHD reported to Mine Action Review that, in addition to the 26 staff members employed at headquarters, eight demining teams, each consisting of four deminers and a team leader from the Military Engineering Corps, are currently operational, totalling 40 personnel. It specified that, when necessary, the PNDHD relies on the Military Engineering Corps to obtain the required number of specialists for the mission.⁵⁷

According to its 2021 Article 5 deadline extension request, Mauritania required eight clearance teams, each of ten deminers, for about five years to technically survey and clear

all the mined areas then 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.⁵⁸ Mauritania also said it will consider using mine detection dogs (MDDs) in Nouadhibou where there may be difficult-to-detect or deeply buried mines.⁵⁹

HAMAP-Humanitaire is the only current international operator conducting clearance. It started its project in October 2022, becoming operational and receiving its first clearance task order in April 2023. At the end of 2023, HAMAP had six staff members in Mauritania (four internationals, one volunteer, and one national staff member) and 46 other staff seconded from the PNDHD and the army engineers, of whom five were women. Despite efforts to diversify the survey and clearance teams, all operational personnel proposed to

46 Mauritania, "Plan d'Action Déminage 2023–2026", p. 13.

47 Email from Capt. Sarr Mamadou, PNDHD, 12 June 2024.

48 Email from Julien Kempeneers, HAMAP, 5 August 2024.

49 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 12.

50 Mine Action Review calculated land release with information provided in Article 7 reports for 2022 and 2023.

51 Email from Alioune Ould Menane, PNDHD, 17 April 2011; and 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 5 and 8.

52 Mauritania, "Plan d'Action Déminage 2023–2026", p. 14; and 2023 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.

53 Email from Jérémy Repond, Programme Officer, GICHD, 28 May 2024.

54 Email from Gourdo Bocoum, HAMAP, 10 April 2024.

55 Email from Jérémy Repond, GICHD, 28 May 2024.

56 Mauritania, "Plan d'Action Déminage 2023–2026", p. 13.

57 Email from Capt. Sarr Mamadou, PNDHD, 1 September 2024.

58 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 10; NPA, Mauritania Assessment Report, 12 April 2021, p. 11; and email from Melissa Andersson, NPA, 26 April 2021.

59 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 13.

HAMAP were men.⁶⁰ HAMAP cleared two minefields in the Nouadhibou peninsula in 2023, destroying 133 AP mines as well as other explosive ordnance.⁶¹ In 2023, HAMAP provided the PNDHD with five vehicles, a power generator, eight sets of personal protective equipment (PPE), and other equipment.⁶² HAMAP included TS in the next stage of its programme, which started in February 2024, and received task orders to survey and clear the Lewej 2 mined area.⁶³

MAG has been working in Mauritania since November 2017, supporting the safe storage of arms and ammunition and providing training on this issue to local security and defence force personnel. In 2022, MAG secured Norwegian funding, complemented by UK funding in 2023, for capacity development and to conduct NTS and risk education. In

2023, the project only completed its inception phase, as capacity-building activities started in early 2024, including the establishment of a workflow for data collection. Following the training, two mixed MAG-PNDHD teams were created for community liaison and risk education in the Dakhlet-Nouadhibou region. In April 2024, MAG received a task order to conduct community liaison, risk education, and NTS in 53 localities in the region.⁶⁴

NPA supported Mauritania's mine action programme for many years and cleared contamination until 2015. In 2021, NPA conducted a one-month assessment mission of mined areas discovered since Mauritania's declaration of Article 5 completion in 2018.⁶⁵ NPA has not been operational since then in Mauritania.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2023

Mauritania reported clearance of 185,914m² across three minefields in 2023, two by HAMAP in the Nouadhibou peninsula and the other by the PNDHD in Tiris Zemmour. It also reported reduction of 0.35km² in one mined area in Adrar region.⁶⁶ Based on a comparison between remaining contamination in Mauritania's Article 7 reports for 2022 and 2023, Mine Action Review has estimated that total land release in 2023 was almost 0.54km².

SURVEY IN 2023

Mauritania conducted TS in Mayaateg minefield in Adrar region, resulting in reduction of 351,797m².⁶⁷ Mauritania also reported the discovery of six mined areas during NTS in 2023 – five in Dakhlet Nouadhibou and one in Adrar. The PNDHD specified that these are CHAs.⁶⁸

Table 2: Newly discovered mined area in 2023

Region ⁶⁹	Location ID	CHAs	Area (m ²)	Contamination type
Adrar	Emdel	1	176,633	Not reported
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Berwaga	1	207,136	Not reported
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Eguedet El Ghamboul 2	1	398,422	Not reported
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Gherd El Angra	1	5,693,715	Not reported
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Guergueratt	1	62,817	Not reported
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Oued Emghewess	1	364,701	Not reported
Totals		6	6,903,424	

CLEARANCE IN 2023

Mauritania reported clearance of three minefields in 2023, two by HAMAP and one by the PNDHD, covering 185,914m².⁷⁰ AP mine clearance in 2023 was considerably higher than in 2022 (50,769m²).⁷¹

60 Emails from Gourdo Bocoum and Julien Kempeneers, HAMAP, 10 April and 5 August 2024.

61 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), pp. 3 and 4; and email from Gourdo Bocoum, HAMAP, 10 April 2024.

62 Emails from Gourdo Bocoum, HAMAP, 10 April and 5 August 2024.

63 Ibid.

64 Emails from François Fall, MAG, 7 May, 7 June, and 29 July 2024.

65 Interview with Hans Risser, Head Office Management Team, and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 19 April 2021.

66 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), p. 4.

67 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), pp. 3 and 4; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), pp. 3 and 4.

68 Email from Capt. Sarr Mamadou, PNDHD, 1 September 2024; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), p. 3.

69 The Article 7 report did not specify the region. These details are based on earlier information reported to Mine Action Review.

70 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), p. 4.

71 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), p. 4.

HAMAP cleared the "Bouchon 24 Partie I" and "Rbeit Lachar 1" minefields, both located in the Dakhlet Nouadhibou region, destroying in the process 133 AP mines, 7 AV mines, and 11 ERW.⁷² According to the Article 7 report for the year, the total area cleared by HAMAP was 122,118m² (see Table 3).⁷³ HAMAP claimed a higher output for clearance in 2023 (237,318m²) because it included additional surface areas cleared to create the administrative zones, transition corridors, and baselines for its operations, taking into account the risk that AP mines can move in desert conditions.⁷⁴ Mine Action Review has used the figure provided by the national authorities that only considered confirmed hazardous surface area.

The PNDHD cleared the mined area at Boukhzame, the only known minefield in Tiris Zemmour region. Its surface area was reported as 63,796m² in the Article 7 report for 2022. The number of AP mines destroyed was not reported by Mauritania in its Article 7 report covering 2023, but the PNDHD informed Mine Action Review that it had destroyed 37 AP mines there.⁷⁵

Table 3: Mine clearance in 2023⁷⁶

Region	Minefield name	Operator	AP mined area (m ²)	AP mines destroyed
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Bouchon24 Partie I	HAMAP	59,299	108
Dakhlet Nouadhibou	Rbeit l'Echar1	HAMAP	62,819	25
Tiris Zemmour	Boukhzame	PNDHD	63,796	37
Totals			185,914	170

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE

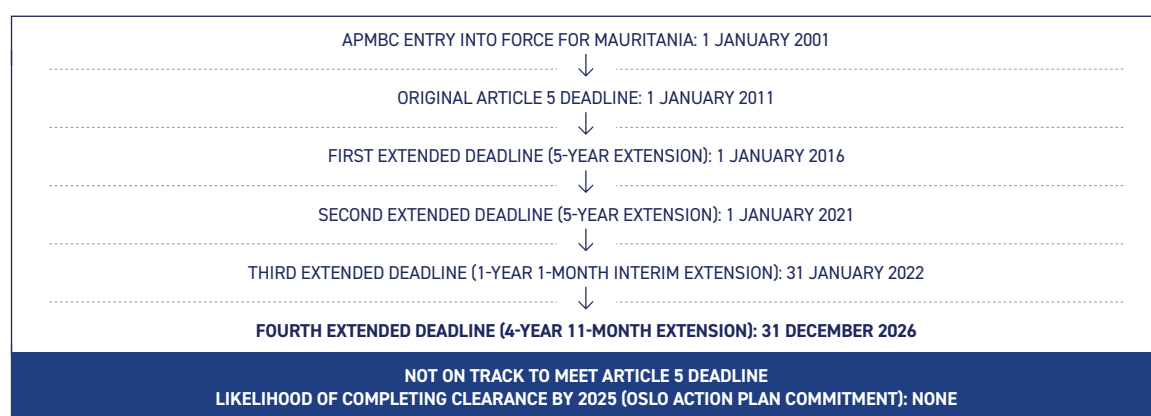


Table 4: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2023	185,914
2022	*50,769
2021	0
2020	0
2019	0
Total	236,683

* This number does not include 81,559m² of AV mined area cleared in 2022.

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 land release output, Mauritania is not on track to meet this deadline.

Mauritania has already fallen behind its target under the updated strategic plan for 2023–26.⁷⁷ Mauritania has also been working on the flawed assumption that no, or only limited contamination would be discovered during the extension period,⁷⁸ whereas it discovered and added 6.9km² of CHA to the contamination baseline in 2023.⁷⁹

⁷² Email from Gourdo Bocoum, HAMAP, 10 April 2024.

⁷³ Calculated by Mine Action Review based on information provided in Article 7 Report (covering 2023).

⁷⁴ Email from Tabin Lissendja, EOD Technical Field Manager, HAMAP, 27 June 2024.

⁷⁵ Email from Capt. Sarr Mamadou, PNDHD, 1 September 2024.

⁷⁶ Article 7 Report (covering 2023), p. 4.

⁷⁷ Mauritania, "Updated Article 5 Extension Request Work Plan", Submitted to the 21MSP in November 2023.

⁷⁸ 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 3.

⁷⁹ Article 7 Report (covering 2023), p. 4.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

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".⁸⁰ It has recognised that: "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".⁸¹

Mauritania's work plan for 2023–26 included several months every year to strengthen the capacity to address residual contamination.⁸² Mauritania also indicated that, once residual contamination has been assessed, an action plan would be put in place, depending on the nature of the contamination, with long-term monitoring.⁸³

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 11.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Mauritania, "Plan d'Action Déminage 2023–2026", pp. 14 and 15.

⁸³ Email from Capt. Sarr Mamadou, PNDHD, 27 May 2024.