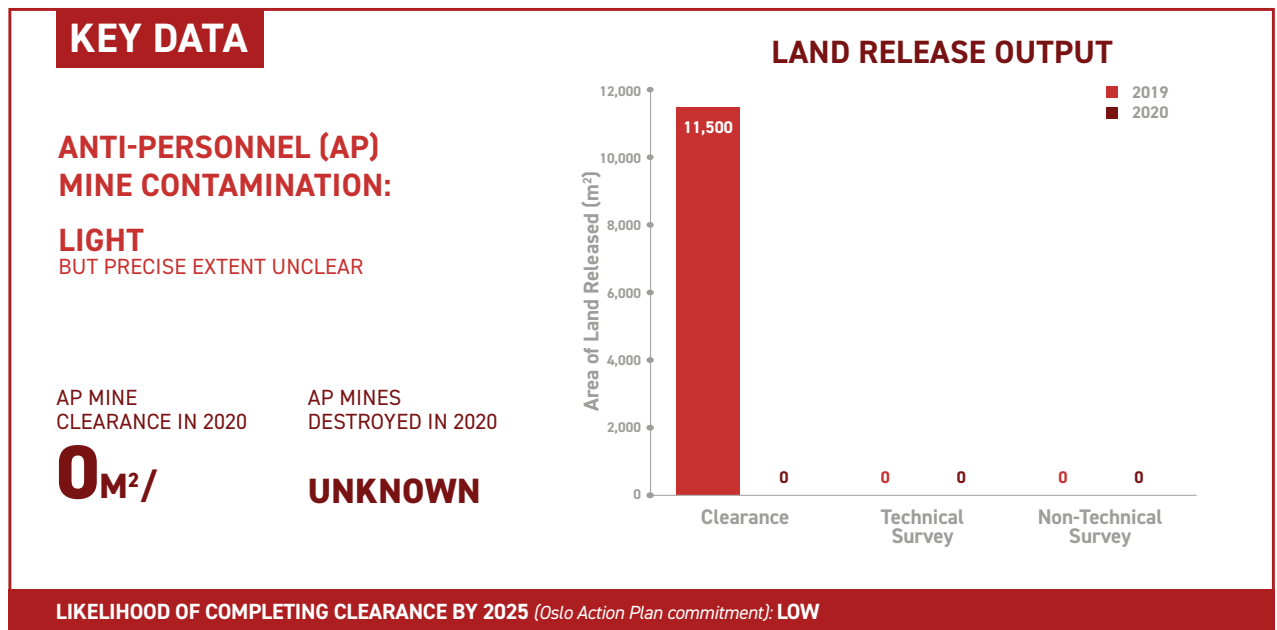


**ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2024**  
NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE



## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Niger requested, and was granted, a four-year extension to its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline until the end of 2024 but provided few details on plans for survey and clearance. Niger was specifically asked by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation to submit a detailed work plan that included annual targets. Niger continued to experience attacks by non-State armed groups employing mines and other explosive devices of an improvised nature. It provided no information about measures taken in 2020 to tackle this threat or the remaining mine contamination.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Niger should prepare and circulate a detailed work plan for meeting its international legal obligations under its extended APMBC Article 5 deadline.
- Niger should submit annual Article 7 reports detailing the progress of mine action as the APMBC requires.
- Niger should develop and implement a fundraising strategy to ensure it fulfils commitments made in its Article 5 deadline extension request.
- Niger should seek and facilitate engagement of international demining organisations.
- Niger should ensure its national mine action standards reflect international standards and that a quality management system is in place to ensure the quality of demining operations.

## ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2020)	Score (2019)	Performance Commentary
<b>UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION</b> (20% of overall score)	6	6	Niger has identified limited anti-personnel mine contamination in the Agadez region but it lacks clarity on the extent. It also now faces escalating attacks by non-State armed groups and new contamination from mines of an improvised nature.
<b>NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT</b> (10% of overall score)	5	5	Limited mine action in the past five years was funded by Niger's limited resources but while calling for international funding to make further progress it has not availed itself of support offered by humanitarian organisations.
<b>GENDER AND DIVERSITY</b> (10% of overall score)	2	3	Niger's limited statements on mine action make no reference to gender or diversity.
<b>INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING</b> (10% of overall score)	3	2	Inconsistent reporting on mine clearance points to weak information management. Niger has submitted only one Article 7 transparency report since 2012 (in 2018). Reporting is an obligation under the APMBC.
<b>PLANNING AND TASKING</b> (10% of overall score)	3	3	Niger lacks a strategic plan for mine action as well as detailed work plans. A request to extend its Article 5 deadline by four years submitted in May 2020 left out key details including proposed timelines for clearance and available demining capacity.
<b>LAND RELEASE SYSTEM</b> (20% of overall score)	4	4	Niger has reported that it has national standards that are compliant with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) but it is not known if they have been formally adopted.
<b>LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE</b> (20% of overall score)	3	4	Niger said it released a tiny amount of mined area in 2019, just ahead of submitting an Article 5 deadline extension request but it provided little information about clearance before making the request and has provided none since.
<b>Average Score</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>Overall Programme Performance: VERY POOR</b>

## DEMINING CAPACITY

### MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Commission Nationale pour la Collecte et le Contrôle des Armes Illicites (CNCCAI)

### NATIONAL OPERATORS

- CNCCAI

### INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

### OTHER ACTORS

- None

## UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Niger is believed to have only a small amount of mine contamination but its varying statements about contamination and clearance in recent years have left uncertainty about the precise extent. In 2018, Niger reported that it had two mined areas totalling 235,557m<sup>2</sup> near Madama, a military base in the north-eastern Agadez region of the country, consisting of a confirmed hazardous area (CHA) of 39,304m<sup>2</sup> and a suspected hazardous area (SHA) of 196,253m<sup>2</sup> with mixed AP and anti-vehicle mines (see Table 1).<sup>1</sup> In 2019, its estimate of contamination had fallen to 187,172m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>2</sup> Six months later in May 2020, Niger requested an extension of its Article 5 deadline reporting that its remaining contamination amounted to 177,760m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>3</sup> It repeated that estimate in a statement to the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties in November 2020 although the reduction in the estimated size of its mined area far exceeded the amount of clearance reportedly conducted in this period (see Land Release below).<sup>4</sup>

Niger said the CHA in Agadez contained French M51 minimum-metal anti-personnel mines and the SHA had mixed AP and anti-vehicle mines.<sup>5</sup> Nigerien army engineers, conducting earlier clearance operations, had found the mines buried in sand at depths of up to one metre.<sup>6</sup> Niger had previously identified five additional SHAs in the Agadez region (in Achouloulouma, Blaka, Enneri, Orida, and Zouzoudinga) but said non-technical and technical survey in 2014 had determined they were not contaminated by anti-personnel mines and that communities in the area had reported accidents only involving anti-vehicle mines.<sup>7</sup> A PRB M3 anti-vehicle mine was also discovered in March 2019 near the town of Intikane, also in the Agadez region.<sup>8</sup> The areas are all located in a remote desert area, 450km from the rural community of Dirkou in Bilma department and reported to contain mines that date back to the French colonial era.<sup>9</sup>

**Table 1: Anti-personnel mine contamination by region (at 2016)<sup>10</sup>**

Region	CHAs	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	SHAs	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Total SHA/CHA	Total area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Agadez	1	39,304	1	196,253	2	235,557

### NEW CONTAMINATION

Since 2018, Niger has experienced a surge in attacks by groups affiliated with Islamic State or al-Qaida, adding a new challenge in the form of mines of an improvised nature. Attacks were concentrated in the western Tillabery and Tahoua regions bordering Mali and Burkina Faso, and the south-eastern Diffa region bordering Chad. A range of explosive devices were used, including anti-vehicle mines; artisanal victim-activated pressure plate devices that appear to meet the APMBC definition of anti-personnel mines; and command-detonated devices.<sup>11</sup>

A mine or improvised explosive device (IED) detonation in January 2019 injured four Niger soldiers near Titahoune (Tillabery region)<sup>12</sup> and an improvised device detonated under a convoy of vehicles in an ambush by insurgents in Tillabery in May 2019 during which 28 soldiers were killed.<sup>13</sup> A 12-ton armoured United States (US) Army vehicle was

disabled in June 2019 by an improvised mine on the outskirts of Ouallem town (Tillabery region). The device was activated by a pressure plate linked to an 81mm mortar. Its explosion detonated a main charge consisting of nearly a dozen 60mm mortar shells.<sup>14</sup> A car bomb attack on a Nigerien army base near the border with Mali in July started an assault in which insurgents killed 18 Nigerien soldiers.<sup>15</sup>

Improvised mines continued to inflict casualties in 2020 and 2021. The United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees called for greater action to tackle the threat in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions, reporting four civilians were killed in two separate explosions near the town of Bosso in the Diffa region in February and March 2021.<sup>16</sup> Seven election officials were killed when their vehicle detonated a mine or improvised device in the Tillabery region in February 2021.<sup>17</sup>

## NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The national mine action programme is managed by the National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons (Commission Nationale pour la Collecte et le Contrôle des Armes Illicites, CNCCAI), which reports directly to the President.

All demining has been carried out by the Nigerien army. In 2015, Niger said it had 60 deminers but lacked sufficient equipment for them to be able to work at the same time.<sup>18</sup> In 2020, it again reported this capacity, noting that the demining contingent included eight women.<sup>19</sup>

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) conducted evaluation missions to Niger in May 2015 and December 2017 to assess the possibility of assisting Niger to meet its Article 5 deadline. Contacts continued in 2019, exploring the possibility of NPA setting up a programme to support CNCCAI clearance operations, but in the end the authorities did not proceed.<sup>20</sup>

## GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Niger's latest (fourth) Article 5 deadline extension request, submitted in 2020, made no reference to gender or diversity. Niger reported that women made up eight of the forty deminers deployed in June 2019 in the resumption of clearance operations.<sup>21</sup>

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## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Niger submitted its last Article 7 report in 2018. That was its first report since 2012. It delivered statements to the Fourth Review Conference in Oslo in 2019 and the Meeting of States Parties in 2020.

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## PLANNING AND TASKING

Niger does not have a strategic plan for mine action. Niger submitted its fourth Article 5 deadline extension request in May 2020 calling for four additional years to complete clearance of 177,760m<sup>2</sup>, but it did not include set annual clearance targets or provide a detailed work plan for the extension period. The plan includes a graphic which indicates CNCCAI will deploy teams for clearance between 2020 and 2024,<sup>22</sup> but does not identify what operating capacity is available for survey and clearance. It projects the costs of completion at US\$1,143,750, of which US\$400,000 is to come from national sources.<sup>23</sup>

Niger's last Article 7 Report for 2013–18 set out a rudimentary operational timeline providing for clearance of 196,253m<sup>2</sup> by 2020: 56,000m<sup>2</sup> in 2018, 100,253m<sup>2</sup> in 2019, and 40,000m<sup>2</sup> in 2020.<sup>24</sup> It did not meet any of these targets.

The APMBBC committee on Article 5 implementation called on Niger to submit a detailed work plan with annual clearance targets and to submit annual reports detailing adjustments to milestones, criteria for clearance priorities, and the extent to which security was affecting access, survey and clearance. It also requested information on how implementation efforts take into consideration the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities.<sup>25</sup>

Niger's security forces announced in April 2021 that they were undertaking an explosive ordnance risk education programme distributing 50,000 brochures provided by the United States military.<sup>26</sup>

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## LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

### STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

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In its Third Article 5 Extension Request, Niger reported that it had drafted national mine action standards (NMAS) in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and standard operating procedures.<sup>27</sup> No information has been provided on whether Niger's NMAS have been finalised and adopted.

An NPA team's visit to Madama in December 2017 noted that manual clearance was the main tool of demining by Niger's army engineers but highlighted the operational challenges. The M-51 anti-vehicle mines mostly found in the area were largely undetectable by conventional detectors and sufficiently small as to make detection by GPR-based detectors unreliable. This means that full manual excavation may be the only effective methodology.

The process is slow and the sandy environment, prone to subsidence and back-filling, makes it difficult to maintain consistent excavation depths. Mechanical excavation using sifting and screening equipment would dramatically improve the speed of technical survey and clearance but faced severe logistical challenges because of the long distances, absence of roads, limited provisions for maintenance and cost. Mine detection dogs have also been deemed unsuitable because of the extreme climate and the potential for deep-buried mines.<sup>28</sup>

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## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Niger has not reported any release of mined area through survey or clearance in 2020. In a statement to the UN Security Council in April 2021 Niger said it had intensified mine clearance in response to the growing threat in the Lake Chad basin region but it has provided no information on any mine action interventions.<sup>29</sup>

## CLEARANCE IN 2020

It appears from data incorporated in Niger's 2020 Article 5 deadline extension request that 11,500m<sup>2</sup> of land was cleared between July and end 2019 with the destruction of 199 anti-personnel mines.<sup>30</sup> CNCCA reported to the Oslo Review Conference that it had deployed 40 deminers in mid-June 2019 to conduct mine clearance in Madama and that by the time of the conference in November it had cleared 9,080m<sup>2</sup>, destroying 183 anti-personnel mines. It said the operation was continuing and that it was funded by Niger from national resources.<sup>31</sup>

In its Article 5 deadline extension request, it reported total clearance between July 2019 and March 2020 of 18,483m<sup>2</sup> with the destruction of 323 mines.<sup>32</sup> Niger's statement to the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties in November 2020, however, attributed these results to the period between 2016 and the end of 2020.<sup>33</sup>

## ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the four-year extension request granted by States Parties in 2020), Niger is required to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 31 December 2024.

In May 2020, Niger requested an Article 5 deadline extension of four years until 31 December 2024. The request cited a number of difficulties confronting mine action in Niger, including environmental factors, (extremes of heat and cold, sandstorms, the remoteness of affected areas), insecurity in border areas, and competing priorities for funding (including counter-terrorist activities and measures to check the proliferation of illegal weapons). It stated, however, that the only issue hindering clearance is the lack of funding. It estimates the total cost of completion at US\$1,143,750 and says Niger will provide US\$400,000, appealing to international donors for the balance of US\$743,750. It also declared that it cannot guarantee clearance without support from donors.<sup>34</sup>

The amount of time looks more than sufficient for the modest amount of contamination of contamination remaining but Niger has demonstrated only very modest effort and progress to comply with the APMBC and the request does little to build confidence in prospects for completion. The request does not provide detailed annual targets for clearance despite repeated requests for such planning by the other States Parties and vaguely asserts clearance will be conducted between 2020 and 2024.<sup>35</sup> The request also does not address the emerging threat of IEDs, including mines of an improvised nature, and does not identify what preparation it is making for sustainable capacity to tackle contamination emplaced or found after completion.

The Committee on Article 5 implementation, commenting on the request, noted it did not set out annual milestones for clearance of the remaining contamination and asked Niger to submit them by the end of April 2021. The committee also requested that the work plan should contain an updated list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, using terminology consistent with the IMAS, annual projections of which areas and what area would be dealt with during the remaining period covered by the request and by which organisation, matched to a revised detailed budget based on new funding levels.<sup>36</sup> As of May 2021, Niger had not complied with these requests.

The extent of Niger's progress since the Maputo Review Conference is uncertain because the results it reported for 2014 to 2016 varied from 17,000m<sup>2</sup> and 750 mines to 39,304m<sup>2</sup> and 1,075 mines.<sup>37</sup> The Article 7 report Niger submitted in 2018—the first in six years—set annual targets for achieving completion by the end of 2020 but it came nowhere near achieving them. Niger did not conduct any clearance in 2018, attributing the inaction to a lack of financial resources, the higher priority given to counterterrorism activities, and the "failure" of unspecified international organisations to respect their commitments.<sup>38</sup>

Niger submitted a second request for an extension to its Article 5 deadline on 12 November 2015, less than two months before the expiry of its first extended deadline. States Parties observed this did not conform to procedure and left insufficient time for analysis and discussion. The decision also observed that the plan presented by Niger in the request was "workable but lacks ambition". States Parties agreed to give Niger a one-year extension and requested that it provide, in its revised submission, information on the areas

already released disaggregated by the method of release and an updated work plan listing all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines and annual clearance projections during the period covered by the request.<sup>39</sup> The third extension request Niger submitted in 2016 did not include such a work plan and a request from the Committee on Article 5 Implementation for additional information received no reply.<sup>40</sup>

Niger has made repeated appeals for international assistance for mine action and claimed receiving no external support for its activities, save for assistance from France for medical evacuation in the case of demining accidents.<sup>41</sup> In fact, NPA and Danish Demining Group (DDG) have made offers of assistance to Niger but received no reply.<sup>42</sup>

**Table 2: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance**

Year	Area cleared (verified)(km <sup>2</sup> )
2020	0
2019	0.01
2018	0
2017	0
2016	0.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.02</b>

1 Article 7 Report (for 2013 to April 2018), Annex I, p. 19.

2 Statement by Niger to the Oslo Review Conference, 27 November 2019.

3 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 28 May 2020, pp. 5–6. The document says demining operations had cleared 18,483m<sup>2</sup> out of contamination of 196,304m<sup>2</sup>, which would leave an area of 177,821m<sup>2</sup>.

4 Statement of Niger, 18th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 16–20 November 2020.

5 Article 7 Report (for 2013 to April 2018), Annex I, p. 19.

6 NPA, "End of Mission Report: CTA-HMA Inputs", undated but 2018.

7 2016 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 6–8.

8 "Explosive developments: The growing threat of IEDs in Western Niger", The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) Project, 19 June 2019, p. 3.

9 Executive Summary of Niger's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 27 November 2015; and Statement of Niger, Third APMBBC Review Conference, Maputo, 24 June 2014.

10 2016 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 6.

11 "Explosive Developments: The Growing Threat of IEDs in Western Niger", ACLED Project, 19 June 2019, pp. 2–5.

12 "Niger: military convoy hit by IED attack in Tillaberi region Jan. 31", *GardaWorld*, 1 February 2019, at: <http://bit.ly/32Ib5Lw>.

13 "Niger: Attaque meurtrière contre l'armée à la frontière malienne", *Jeune Afrique*, 16 May 2019, at: <http://bit.ly/32EZSvq>.

14 T. Gibbons-Neff, "Roadside blast in Niger that hit Americans shows growing threat", *New York Times*, 14 June 2019, at: <http://nyti.ms/2M2mZKA>.

15 "Niger: 18 soldiers killed in attack on military outpost near Inates", *The Defense Post*, 2 July 2019, at: <http://bit.ly/2M4lETt>.

16 "Landmines, improvised explosive devices pose deadly risks for displaced in Sahel and Lake Chad", Statement by Babar Baloch, UNHCR spokesman, 28 July 2020.

17 "Seven Niger election officials killed by landmine on poll day", *BBC*, 21 February 2021.

18 Statement of Niger, Intersessional Meetings (Committee on Article 5 Implementation), Geneva, 25 June 2015.

19 Statement of Niger, 18th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 16–20 November 2020.

20 Emails from Jean-Denis Larsen, DRC Country Director, NPA, 19 July 2017, 3 October 2018, and 15 August 2019.

21 Statement of Niger, Oslo Review Conference, 27 November 2019.

22 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 12.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 12–14.

24 Article 7 Report (for 2013 to April 2018), Annex I, p. 23.

25 Statement to the 18th Meeting of States Parties by the Chair of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation on the Analysis of the Request for extension submitted by Niger, 16–20 November 2020.

26 Ismaël Chékaré, « Lancement de la sensibilisation sur les engins explosifs improvisés (EEI) : Fournir à la population civile des informations sur la manière de reconnaître et signaler les objets dangereux », *Le Sahel*, 15 April 2021 ; « L'armée américaine fournit au Niger 50.000 brochures de sensibilisation sur le danger des engins explosifs improvisés », *TamTamInfo.com*, 15 April 2021.

27 2016 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 8–9.

28 NPA, "End of Mission Report: CTA-HMA Inputs", undated but 2018.

29 "At Security Council debate, speakers call for end to indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices", United Nations, 8 April 2021.

30 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 28 May 2020, pp. 22–24.

31 Statement of Niger, Oslo Review Conference, 27 November 2019.

32 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 28 May 2020, p. 8.

33 Statement of Niger, 18th Meeting of States Parties, 16–20 November 2020.

34 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 28 May 2020, pp. 12–14.

35 *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.

36 Statement to the 18th Meeting of States Parties by the Chair of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation on the Analysis of the Request for extension submitted by Niger, 16–20 November 2020.

37 Analysis of Niger's 2016 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 3; and Article 7 Report (for 2013 to April 2018).

38 Statements of Niger, Intersessional Meetings (Committee on Article 5 Implementation), 7 June 2018; and 17th Meeting of States Parties, 27 November 2018.

39 "Decision on the request submitted by Niger for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention", APMBBC 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 4 December 2015.

40 Analysis of Niger's 2016 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 2.

41 Statements of Niger, Intersessional Meetings (Committee on Article 5 Implementation), Geneva, 19–20 May 2016; and 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015; 2016 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 13; and Executive Summary of Niger's 2015 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 3.

42 Email from Chris Natale, Mine Action Advisor, NPA, 29 July 2016; Statement of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, 15th Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 28 November 2016.