

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

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
MINE CONTAMINATION: LIGHT**
PRECISE EXTENT UNCLEAR

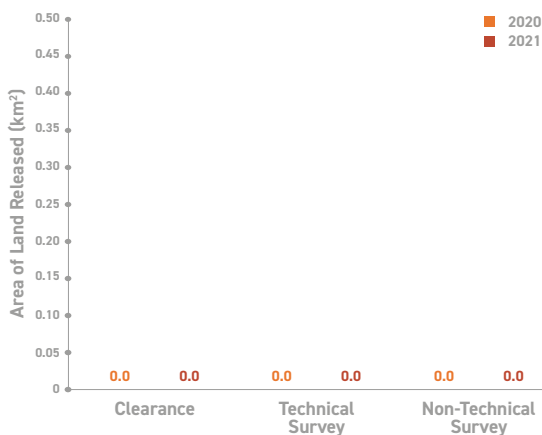
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2021

0 M²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2021

0

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



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

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Half-way through the latest four-year extension to its Article 5 deadline, Niger has indicated it will not be able to complete clearance within the allotted time. No clearance appears to have taken place in 2021 or 2020, putting in serious doubt Niger's compliance with Article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Niger should present a revised Article 5 deadline extension request giving details of any release of mined areas and providing realistic targets of what it can achieve in the time remaining under the present extension.
- The National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons should draw up a strategic plan for mine action providing details of the human and financial resources that Niger is able to commit to survey and clearance of hazardous areas for the remainder of its current Article 5 deadline and subsequently.
- Niger should put in place monitoring capacity and a database to support systematic collection of data and reporting on explosive ordnance incidents and casualties.
- Niger should submit comprehensive, annual Article 7 transparency reports and include details regarding anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature.
- Niger should provide details of its resource mobilisation strategy and what engagement it has had or proposes with international donors and international organisations.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2021)	Score (2020)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	6	6	Niger has identified a small amount of anti-personnel mine contamination in the Agadez region but it also now faces escalating attacks by non-State armed groups employing mines of an improvised nature.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	5	5	Niger has conducted limited mine action in the past five years but while calling for international funding to make further progress it has not availed itself of support offered by humanitarian organisations.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	2	2	Niger's limited statements and Article 7 reporting on mine action make no reference to gender or diversity.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	4	3	Inconsistent reporting on mine clearance points to weak information management. Niger has submitted Article 7 reports only intermittently since 2012, each covering multiple years. The next, in 2018, covered almost five years from 2013. The latest report, submitted in May 2022, covered three years 2019–21. Annual reporting is an obligation under the APMBC.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	3	3	Niger lacks a strategic plan for mine action as well as detailed work plans. Its Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in May 2020 and seeking four years left out key details, including proposed timelines for clearance and available demining capacity. In 2022, it said it would not fulfil its obligations under this request and would submit a revised work plan for 2022–24.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (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.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	2	3	In its latest Article 7 report covering 2019–21 Niger reported having cleared 18,483m ² . Based on earlier information contained in its Article 5 deadline extension request, this clearance took place between July 2019 and March 2020. This suggests that no clearance took place in 2021.
Average Score	3.8	3.9	Overall Programme Performance: VERY POOR

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. An Article 7 report submitted by Niger in May 2022 said its remaining contamination amounted to 177,760m²,¹ a figure consistent with the level of contamination identified in its 2020 request for an extension of its Article 5 deadline and its statement to the Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties in November 2020.²

¹ Article 7 Report (covering 2019, 2020, and 2021), p. 9.

² Statement of Niger, 18th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 16–20 November 2020.

The outstanding contamination appears to consist of a suspected hazardous area (SHA) near Madama, a military base in the north-eastern Agadez region of the country. In 2018, Niger reported that it had two mined areas totalling 235,557m² near Madama, including a confirmed hazardous area (CHA) of 39,304m² and an SHA of 196,253m² containing both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines.³ Its latest Article 7 report (covering 2019–21) said the entire CHA and 18,483m² of the SHA had been cleared.⁴ Based on earlier information contained in Niger's last Article 5 deadline extension request in 2020, the CHA had been cleared previously, and clearance of the 18,483m² of SHA had taken place between July 2019 and March 2020.⁵ It does not appear that any clearance was conducted in 2021.

Niger has faced sporadic but increasing attacks by groups affiliated with Islamic State or al-Qaida, adding a new challenge in the form of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), some of them victim activated and therefore constituting mines of an improvised nature covered by the APMB. Five Nigerien soldiers were killed in an IED explosion in February

2022 in the Gotheye district of the Tillabery region where the borders of Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali intersect. Seven election officials were killed in the Tillabery region when their vehicle detonated a mine or improvised device in February 2021.⁶ The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that four people had died in two separate incidents in the Bosso region of Niger in February and March 2020.⁷

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.⁸ A PRB M3 anti-vehicle mine was also discovered in March 2019 near the town of Intikane, also in the Agadez region.⁹ 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.¹⁰

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 is thought to have been carried out by the Nigerien army. However, Niger's latest Article 7 report said it had created a humanitarian demining cell with the support of security forces and "civilians involved in the clearance of mines".¹¹ In 2015, Niger said it had 60 deminers but lacked sufficient equipment for them to be able to work at the same time.¹² It has not provided further information since.

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.¹³

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Niger does not have a national mine action standard for the environment or a policy on mitigating the environmental impact of mine action.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Niger's last two Article 5 deadline extension requests, submitted in 2016 and 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.¹⁴

3 Article 7 Report (covering 2013 to April 2018), Annex I, p. 19.

4 Article 7 Report (covering 2019, 2020 and 2021), p. 9.

5 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.

6 "Seven Niger election officials killed by landmine on poll day", BBC, 21 February 2021, at: <https://bbc.in/3DB0eaS>.

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

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

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

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

11 Article 7 Report (covering 2019, 2020 and 2021), p. 3.

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

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

14 Statement of Niger, Fourth APMB Review Conference, 27 November 2019.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Niger submitted Article 7 transparency reports every year between 2002 and 2006 but has only provided five in the 16 years since. The report submitted in 2018 was its first since 2012 and covered five years from 2013 to 2017. The last report submitted in May 2022 covered three years from 2019 to 2021. Niger delivered statements to the Fourth Review Conference in Oslo in 2019 and the Meeting of States Parties in 2020.

The APMBC Committee on Article 5 Implementation noted that Niger's Article 7 reports were not compliant with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and lacked details on a range of issues including an updated work plan with adjusted milestones, financial commitments to implementation of Article 5 extension request or its information management system.¹⁵

PLANNING AND TASKING

Niger does not have a strategic plan for mine action. Its Article 7 Report for 2013–18 set out a rudimentary operational timeline providing for clearance of 196,253m² by 2020: 56,000m² in 2018, 100,253m² in 2019, and 40,000m² in 2020.¹⁶ It did not meet any of these targets.

Niger's fourth Article 5 deadline extension request, submitted in May 2020, called for four additional years to complete clearance of 177,760m², but did not provide annual clearance targets or a detailed work plan or identify what operating capacity was available for survey and clearance. It projected the costs of completion at US\$1,143,750, of which US\$400,000 is to come from national sources.¹⁷

The 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.¹⁸ In May 2022, however, Niger said it could not fulfil its obligations in the time available and it would submit a new plan for 2022–24.¹⁹

Niger's security forces announced in April 2021 that they were undertaking an explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) programme distributing 50,000 brochures provided by the United States military.²⁰

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

In its third Article 5 deadline extension request, Niger reported that it had drafted national mine action standards (NMAS) in accordance with the IMAS and standard operating procedures (SOPs).²¹ No information has been provided on whether Niger's NMAS have been finalised and adopted.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

CNCCA reports that it has created a humanitarian demining cell supported by Niger's security forces and civilians in the sector but gave no details of available capacity.²² Niger's army engineers are the only capacity that has been identified as conducting clearance. No international operators are active in Niger.

Niger's 2020 Article 5 extension request gave no details of active demining capacity but said it planned to conduct refresher training for deminers and establish a "reserve pool" of 60 deminers available as needed for demining operations but has not provided further information on follow-up actions.²³

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 mines mostly found in the area contained no metal components and were largely undetectable by conventional detectors and sufficiently small as to make detection by ground penetrating radar (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.

15 Preliminary Observations, Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Intersessional Meetings, 20-22 June 2022.

16 Article 7 Report (covering 2013 to April 2018), Annex 1, p. 23.

17 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 12–14.

18 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.

19 Article 7 Report (covering 2019, 2020 and 2021), p. 9.

20 I. 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.

21 2016 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 8–9.

22 Article 7 Report (covering 2019, 2020, and 2021), p. 3.

23 2020 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.

Mechanical excavation using sifting and screening equipment would dramatically improve the speed of technical survey and clearance but faces 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 deeply-buried mines.²⁴

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

CLEARANCE IN 2021

In its latest Article 7 report covering 2019–21 Niger reported having cleared 18,483m², but did not provide additional details.²⁵ Based on previous information contained in its Article 5 deadline extension request, this clearance took place between July 2019 and March 2020.²⁶ Niger reported that no clearance took place in 2021 due to lack of resources and international donor support.²⁷

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.

Niger said it had made no progress implementing the plans submitted in support of its fourth Article 5 deadline extension request and stated that it would soon submit a revised plan that would “take into account” the amount of time remaining in its current extension. It could not guarantee clearance of its mine contamination by the end of 2024.²⁸ Niger has cleared less than 0.02km² of mined area in the last five years (see Table 1), with clearance only occurring between July 2019 and March 2020. This puts into doubt its compliance with Article 5.

Table 1: Five-year summary of anti-personnel mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2021	0
2020	*0.01
2019	*0.01
2018	0
2017	0
Total	0.02

* 9,080.8m² was cleared between July and November 2019 and 9,402.6m² between December 2019 and February 2020.²⁹

Niger attributed the lack of progress to its scant national resources and the absence of external donor support. It cited a range of other factors hampering progress: sandstorms, intense heat and cold, and a lack of security necessitating a military escort for the 2,000km-long journey from the capital Niamey to Madama. Niger also said a proliferation of terrorist attacks and illegal weapons constituted new priorities for the government.³⁰

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Niger does not have plans in place to address residual contamination once its Article 5 obligations have been fulfilled.

24 NPA, “End of Mission Report: CTA-HMA Inputs”, undated but 2018.

25 Article 7 Report (covering 2019, 2020, and 2021), p. 9.

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

27 Article 7 Report (covering 2019, 2020, and 2021), p. 9; and Preliminary Observations, Committee on Article 5 Implementation, APMBC Intersessional Meeting, Geneva 20-22 June 2022.

28 Article 7 Report (covering 2019, 2020 and 2021), p. 9.

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

30 Article 7 Report (covering 2019, 2020, and 2021), p. 9.