

# NIGER



**ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2016**  
 (EXTENSION REQUESTED UNTIL 31 DECEMBER 2020)

<b>PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE</b>	For 2015	For 2014
Problem understood	8	7
Target date for completion of mine clearance	4	5
Targeted clearance	8	8
Efficient clearance	6	6
National funding of programme	6	6
Timely clearance	5	3
Land release system in place	6	6
National mine action standards	6	6
Reporting on progress	5	7
Improving performance	8	8
<b>PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>6.2</b>

## PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Niger initiated clearance in 2015 and took steps to better understand the extent of its anti-personnel mine threat. It submitted its second Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline extension request extremely late, without a detailed workplan or sufficient information to justify its request for a further period of five years to clear relatively small contamination.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Niger should provide a detailed workplan to accompany its revised second Article 5 extension request, with benchmarks against which progress can be assessed.
- Niger should provide regular updates on progress in clearance and the extent of contamination remaining. It should also inform APMBC states parties of the discovery of any new contamination from anti-personnel mines, victim-activated improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and report on the location of all suspected or confirmed mined areas under its jurisdiction or control.
- Niger should accept offers of assistance in a timely manner, which would improve the speed and efficiency of clearance and enable completion far earlier than 2020.
- Niger should develop a resource mobilisation plan to meet funding needs beyond expected national contributions.

## CONTAMINATION

As at the end of 2015, Niger had confirmed approximately 22,300m<sup>2</sup> of anti-personnel mine contamination remaining from a mined area with a total size of just over 39,000m<sup>2</sup> identified in 2014. It also had one suspected hazardous area (SHA) containing both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines, with an estimated size of almost 0.2km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>1</sup>

One of Niger's seven regions, Agadez, in the north, contains the two mined areas. The confirmed mined area, located at Madama military post, was identified during an assessment mission in June 2011 and initially estimated to cover 2,400m<sup>2</sup>. The minefield is in a remote desert area, 450km from the rural community of Dirkou in Bilma department.<sup>2</sup> The minefield is reported to contain French MI AP ID 51 mines, which date back to the French colonial era.<sup>3</sup>

Technical survey in 2014 concluded that the extent of contamination at Madama was considerably larger than the earlier estimate, covering 39,304m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>4</sup> Niger stated that the area had been divided into 12 sectors and that the perimeter had been fenced and placed under military surveillance.<sup>5</sup> It deployed a team of 60 deminers to the

area around the Madama military post in November 2014, and reported that, as of November 2015, a total of more than 17,000m<sup>2</sup> had been cleared and 750 mines destroyed.<sup>6</sup> The 2014 survey also identified the other SHA nearby with an estimated size of 196,253m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>7</sup>

Niger's contamination includes other areas that contain only anti-vehicle mines, which are the result of rebellion in 1990–2000 as well as fighting in 2007 between the Nigerien army and a non-state armed group, the Nigerien Justice Movement (Mouvement des Nigériens pour la Justice), and some splinter factions.

In 2015–16, there were a number of reports of casualties and incidents involving the use of "landmines" and victim-activated IEDs by Boko Haram, primarily in the south-eastern Diffa region along the border with Nigeria, as Niger increased its participation in joint military offensives against Boko Haram as part of a Multi-National Joint Task Force launched in 2015.<sup>8</sup> Most reports appear to describe the use of victim-activated IEDs made by Boko Haram, which functioned as either anti-personnel mines or anti-vehicle mines.<sup>9</sup>

1 Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 6 November 2015, pp. 6 and 8.

2 Executive Summary of Niger's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 27 November 2015.

3 Statement of Niger, Third APMBC Review Conference, Maputo, 24 June 2014.

4 Statement of Niger, APMBC Intersessional Meetings (Committee on Article 5 Implementation), Geneva, 25 June 2015; and interview with Youssef Maïga, Chair, National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons (Commission Nationale pour la Collecte et le Contrôle des Armes Illicites, CNCCAI), in Geneva, 25 June 2015.

5 Executive Summary of Niger's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 27 November 2015, p. 2.

6 Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 6 November 2015, p. 8; and Executive Summary of Niger's Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 27 November 2015, p. 2. Niger's extension

request stated that 17,000m<sup>2</sup> had been cleared and 628 mines destroyed. Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 6 November 2015, p. 9.

7 Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 6 November 2015, pp. 6 and 8. The request (p. 4) also lists the total size of the SHA as 196,243m<sup>2</sup>. See also Statement of Niger, APMBC Intersessional Meetings (Committee on Article 5 Implementation), Geneva, 25 June 2015; and interview with Youssef Maïga, CNCCAI, in Geneva, 25 June 2015.

8 See M. P. Moore, "This Month in Mines, February 2015", Landmines in Africa blog, 12 March 2015, at: <https://landminesinfrica.wordpress.com/2015/03/12/the-month-in-mines-february-2015/>; and "Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)", *GlobalSecurity.org*, at: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/int/mnjtf.htm>.

9 M. P. Moore, "This Month in Mines, February 2015", Landmines in Africa blog.

It is not clear to which extent civilians have been casualties of Boko Haram's use of these devices in 2015–16; a number of reports cite Nigerien soldiers killed or injured by mines. In one incident in February 2015, two soldiers were reported to have been killed and four injured by a landmine laid by Boko Haram near to the town of Bosso. According to Niger's Ministry of Defence, it was the first time that insurgents had planted a mine in the recent fighting around Diffa town.<sup>10</sup> In another incident, in January 2016, at least six Nigerien soldiers were reported to have been killed by an explosion when an army vehicle detonated a mine 10km from Kabalewa, on the banks of the Yobe River along the Nigerian border, in Diffa region.<sup>11</sup>

## 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.

Niger's 2013 extension request included a workplan for 2014–15 requiring clearance of the Madama mined area, technical survey in the northern Kawar (Kaouar) department (Agadez region), and verification of other suspected mined areas. Niger's revised second extension request submitted in 2016 contains a vague workplan for 2016–20, but does not contain details of annual clearance outputs or milestones.<sup>12</sup>

Niger reported that, as at November 2015, it had drafted national mine action standards in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and was in the process of training deminers and eight community liaison officers for deployment in Kawar. It later stated that in addition to the 60 deminers active at Madama since November 2014, 40 were trained in February 2015, 30 of whom were said to have been deployed by April 2015.<sup>13</sup> Niger reported in June 2015, however, that due to lack of adequate equipment, it was not possible for all deminers to work at the same time.<sup>14</sup>

In May 2015, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) conducted an evaluation mission in Niger and subsequently offered to provide assistance to national demining efforts through the donation of equipment to enable the deployment of more deminers and short-term technical support to improve Niger's clearance productivity.<sup>15</sup> Niger has not accepted the support NPA offered.

## LAND RELEASE

### Survey in 2015

As noted above, the May 2014 technical survey revised the estimated size of the minefield up to 39,304m<sup>2</sup>, and identified an additional SHA suspected to contain both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines with an estimated size of 196,253m<sup>2</sup>. The survey also found five additional SHAs in Agadez region (in the Achouloulouma, Blaka, Enneri, Orida, and Zouzoudinga) but they were believed to contain not anti-personnel mines but only anti-vehicle mines.<sup>16</sup>

### Clearance in 2015

According to Niger, from the initiation of operations at Madama in November 2014 to November 2015, a total of 17,000m<sup>2</sup> was cleared and 750 mines were destroyed.<sup>17</sup> Niger had previously reported that in November–December 2014, 634m<sup>2</sup> had been cleared with the destruction of 42 anti-personnel mines.<sup>18</sup>

In its revised second extension request, Niger gave new, but conflicting reports that as of March 2016, "more than 39,304m<sup>2</sup> had been demined and close to 1,075 mines removed"; but then also stated that "93,042m<sup>2</sup>" had been demined, and a total of 1,075 mines destroyed.<sup>19</sup>

## ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

At the Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC in December 2015, Niger was granted a one-year extension, until 31 December 2016, to its APMBC Article 5 deadline to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control.

Niger's previous Article 5 clearance deadline under its first extension request expired on 31 December 2015. Due to greater than expected contamination at Madama and the identification of another area of suspected mine contamination, it was not on track to meet this deadline. On 12 November 2015, just weeks before the Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties, Niger submitted a second request for an extension of a period of five years until 31 December 2020.

10 "Boko Haram mines kills two soldiers in southeast Niger: ministry", *Reuters*, 24 February 2015, at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigeria-violence-niger-idUSKBN0LS1E020150224>.

11 "Landmine Explosion Kills 6 Soldiers at Niger-Nigerian Border", *Africa News*, 18 January 2016, at: <http://www.africanews.com/2016/01/18/landmine-explosion-kills-6-soldiers-at-niger-nigerian-border/>.

12 Revised Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 15 March 2016.

13 Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 6 November 2015, pp. 8–9; and Statement of Niger, APMBC Intersessional Meetings (Committee on Article 5 Implementation), Geneva, 19–20 May 2016.

14 Statement of Niger, APMBC Intersessional Meetings (Committee on Article 5 Implementation), Geneva, 25 June 2015; and interview with Chris Natale, Mine Action Advisor, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), in Geneva, 26 June 2015.

15 Interview with Chris Natale, NPA, in Geneva, 26 June 2015.

16 Observations on the extension request submitted by Niger by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation, 27 November 2015, p. 4; and Statement of Niger, APMBC Intersessional Meetings (Standing Committee on Mine Action), Geneva, 11 April 2014.

17 Observations on the extension request submitted by Niger by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation, 27 November 2015, p. 4.

18 Progress Report on Humanitarian Demining Operations in Madama, annexed to the Statement of Niger, APMBC Intersessional Meetings (Committee on Article 5 Implementation), Geneva, 25 June 2015; and interview with Youssef Maïga, CNCCAI, in Geneva, 25 June 2015.

19 Revised Second APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 15 March 2016, pp. 8–9. The request also reports (p. 4) that "50%" of the 39,304m<sup>2</sup> had been demined, but it appears this has been copied and pasted from the previous request submitted in November 2015.

Instead, states parties decided to grant Niger a one-year extension only, noting that Niger had failed to submit its request within the agreed timeline prior to the meeting and thus had not permitted time for sufficient analysis or discussion. The decision “noted that Niger and the Convention as a whole would benefit from a full extension process taking place” and requested that, as such, Niger “submit a request, in accordance with the established process, by 31 March 2016”.<sup>20</sup>

The decision also observed that the plan presented by Niger in the request was “workable but lacks ambition” and requested that Niger provide, in its revised submission, an updated workplan with an up-to-date list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines and annual clearance projections during the period covered by the request.<sup>21</sup>

In April 2016, Niger re-submitted its extension request for a period of five years from the end of 2015 (its earlier deadline) until 31 December 2020.<sup>22</sup> The revised submission includes geo-coordinates for the Madama mined area, but fails to include a detailed annual workplan or any specific annual projections for the clearance of the remaining mined areas, despite this being an essential part of any extension request, and it having been explicitly requested to do so by the meeting of states parties.

In 2002–06, Niger consistently reported the existence of mined areas in the country.<sup>23</sup> However, at the APMBC Intersessional Meetings in 2008, Niger declared that no areas on its territory were suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, stating it had evidence only of the presence of anti-vehicle mines.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, in May 2012, more than two years after the expiry of its Article 5 clearance deadline, Niger reported to states parties that it was contaminated with anti-personnel mines in at least one area.<sup>25</sup> Finally, in July 2013, more than four years after its original deadline expired, Niger submitted its first extension request, following the discovery of one known and five suspected mined areas in the Agadez

region in June 2011. In granting the request, states parties regretted the delay between the discovery of contamination and the beginning of demining.<sup>26</sup>

In its extension requests, Niger has noted desert environment, insecurity, and lack of funding as challenges for the implementation of its clearance obligations, along with the remote location of contamination and the need for a weekly military escort to carry out demining activities.<sup>27</sup>

Niger funded all mine action activities in 2014–15.<sup>28</sup> Under its latest extension request, Niger has said that more than US\$3.2 million in funding is needed to fulfil its remaining Article 5 obligations, including \$1 million for the CNCCAI from the national budget over the five-year period, and \$2.2 million to be mobilised from external donors.<sup>29</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>30</sup> However, as noted above, following an assessment mission to Niger in May 2015, NPA submitted an offer to provide Niger with assistance, including the provision of personal protective equipment so that more deminers could work simultaneously, as well as a technical advisor to evaluate current methodology and trial equipment. NPA believed the support could significantly increase speed and productivity, allowing Niger to complete clearance of all known anti-personnel mines well before the end of 2020. As of July 2016, Niger had not responded to NPA’s offers, despite being asked to do so on numerous occasions.<sup>31</sup>

20 “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”, APMBC Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 4 December 2015.

21 Ibid.

22 Revised Second APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 15 March 2016 (received 15 April 2016).

23 APMBC Article 7 Reports for 2002–06.

24 Statement of Niger, APMBC Intersessional Meetings (Standing Committee on Mine Action), Geneva, 5 June 2008.

25 Ibid., 28 May 2012.

26 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Decision, 5 December 2013.

27 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 1 July 2013; Executive summary of Niger’s Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 27 November 2015, p. 2; and Revised Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 15 March 2016, p. 14.

28 Interview with Youssouf Maïga, CNCCAI, Geneva, 25 June 2015.

29 Revised Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 15 March 2016, pp. 11–13; and Executive Summary of Niger’s Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 27 November 2015, p. 3.

30 Statement of Niger, APMBC Intersessional Meetings (Committee on Article 5 Implementation), Geneva, 19–20 May 2016; Statement of Niger, APMBC Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015; Revised Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 15 March 2016, p. 13; and Executive Summary of Niger’s Second Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 27 November 2015, p. 3.

31 Email from Chris Natale, NPA, 29 July 2016.