

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2025

NOT ON TRACK TO COMPLETE CLEARANCE (INTERIM DEADLINE FOR SURVEY)

KEY DATA

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

NATIONAL AUTHORITY ESTIMATE

225.4 km²

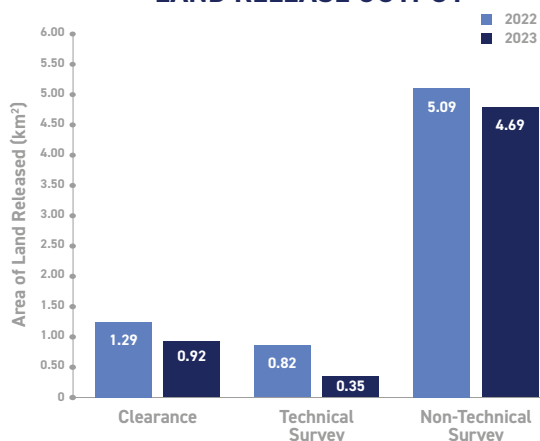
AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2023

0.92 km²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2023

33,443

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



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

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Türkiye completed Phase III of the Eastern Borders Mine Clearance Project (EBMCP) as planned in November 2023, which began in June 2021 and included non-technical survey (NTS) to identify all mined areas. Türkiye's estimate of contamination thus increased significantly from 133km² at the end of 2022 to 225km² at the end of 2023. Türkiye met its requirement to submit an updated, detailed work plan by 30 April 2023, covering the period up to the end of its current Article 5 deadline extension. Türkiye expects its now comprehensive understanding of contamination to provide the basis for a final extension request in order to fulfil Türkiye's Article 5 obligations.

FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW

Türkiye was granted a three-year and nine-month extension of its Article 5 deadline until the end of 2025 at the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties (19MSP) to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APBMC) in 2021. The extension was to allow NTS of all mined areas, which it duly completed by November 2023. With a full understanding of contamination, Türkiye is now in a better position to articulate a realistic plan for completion. Considerable effort has already been made to augment national demining capacity from 32 teams in 2020, following two years of rapid expansion, to 50 teams at the end of 2023, as well as to introduce nationally produced demining machines especially suited to the terrain along the Syrian border. Clearance more than tripled between 2021 and 2022, a departure from the slower pace of preceding years. Completion of clearance on Türkiye's border with Armenia in 2022, while a relatively small proportion of total contamination, was a significant milestone. Türkiye has not yet set out plans to address contamination reported in non-border areas nor to implement and report on mine clearance in territory it controls in northern Cyprus or in any areas currently under its control in northern Syria, claiming that it does not have responsibility to do so.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Alongside extensive NTS and expectations of substantial cancellation of hazardous areas, Türkiye should build on efforts already made to increase capacity and further accelerate clearance, which, though improved in the last two years, remains low.
- Türkiye should provide details of plans to address contamination reported in non-border areas.
- Türkiye's obligations under the APMB require it to implement and report on mine clearance in territory it controls in northern Cyprus and in any areas currently under its control in northern Syria. This is because Article 5 of the Convention obligates every State Party to survey and clear all areas under its jurisdiction "or control".
- Türkiye should set out plans to promote gender and inclusion in mine action.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2023)	Score (2022)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	8	7	Completion of an extensive NTS project in November 2023 means that Türkiye now has a comprehensive understanding of the extent of its mine contamination, with all mined areas reported by Türkiye as confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs).
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	6	6	Türkiye's institutional framework for mine action is under the control of the military. Since 2018, there has been a significant and steady expansion of operational capacity.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	4	4	Türkiye makes no reference to gender and diversity in its 2020–25 strategic plan or the Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in 2021. No women have been employed in military demining teams but the Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC) says women are included in survey and community liaison teams and in non-operational roles. It claims that it takes gender into account in all aspects of mine action.
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION* (10% of overall score)	4	Not Scored	Türkiye has a National Mine action standard (NMA) on environmental management, which was issued in 2019. It is not known if Türkiye has an environmental management policy or plans to develop one; whether environmental assessments are conducted to support the planning and delivery of survey and clearance tasks; or what measures are implemented to minimise environmental harm.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	7	7	TURMAC operates an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database. Türkiye submits detailed and timely Article 7 reports and met its requirement to submit an updated, detailed work plan by 30 April 2023.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	7	7	Türkiye's strategic plan for 2020–25 set out five main goals, including becoming mine free by 2025. It will not meet this target.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM** (10% of overall score)	7	7	Türkiye published 44 chapters of NMA in 2019. Having updated six chapters of its NMA in 2022, Türkiye did not make any updates made to the NMA and/or standard operating procedures (SOPs) relating to survey and clearance in 2023. Türkiye says it updates the NMA regularly.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	5	5	Türkiye's slow pace of land release saw a significant increase in 2022, followed by a slight decrease in 2023. The majority of land release in Türkiye was through survey in 2023, as it had been for the two previous years. Clearance in 2023 remained at a similar level to 2022.
Average Score	6.1	6.2	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.

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Ministry of National Defence (MoND)
- Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Turkish Armed Forces including: Land Forces Military Demining Units (ÖMAT), Gendarmerie Forces Military Demining Units (JÖMAT) and Military Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (IED)/Mine teams.

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- TDI Altay (a joint venture between The Development Initiative and national operator, Altay Software Defence and Industrial Inc. The joint venture concluded in 2023.)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Türkiye reported it had 3,659 mined areas on its territory at the end of 2023: 1,980 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and 1,679 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs). Together, they covered more than 225km² (see Table 1).¹ This represents a 92km² increase on the total reported a year earlier when contamination was in 3,701 CHAs (with no SHAs).² The increase in mined area is due to the completion of Türkiye's major NTS project in November 2023 (as planned), which Türkiye declares has resulted in identification of the "precise perimeter of all mined areas in Türkiye."³ As requested by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation in June 2022,⁴ Türkiye has now provided detailed information on the remaining challenges, disaggregated by SHA and CHA and their relative sizes, as well as by type of contamination.⁵

Almost half (45%) of Türkiye's contamination is along its 909km-long border with Syria where land release accounted for a little over 70% of the reduction in contamination in 2023. Türkiye also has contamination along its borders with Iraq (accounting for 21% of contaminated area), and Iran

(accounting for 15% of contaminated areas), as well as in unspecified non-border areas (accounting for almost 19% of contaminated area). While the estimated size of mined area on the border with Syria decreased slightly, mined areas on the borders with Iraq and Iran as well as in non-border areas increased significantly compared to a year earlier, as the result of extensive NTS.⁶

Türkiye added almost 98km² of contaminated area to its database in 2023 (see Table 4).⁷ Newly identified areas were concentrated along the border with Iraq. Türkiye did not specify how many new hazardous areas in total were added to the database, nor how many were recorded as SHAs and how many as CHAs.⁸ Some of the progress in identifying mined areas through NTS in 2022 was only reported in Türkiye's Article 7 report for 2023.⁹ This is because the quality management (QM) process for all mined areas had not been completed and not all data had been uploaded to the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database at the time of reporting.¹⁰

Table 1: Mined area by region (at end 2023)¹¹

Region	CHAs	Area (m ²)	AP mines*	SHAs	Area (m ²)	AP mines*	Total area (m ²)
Syrian border	1,077	57,321,542	346,887	355	44,114,210	56,466	101,439,752
Iraqi border	422	20,232,325	63,682	401	27,179,189	12,448	47,411,514
Iranian border	223	7,703,334	32,048	340	27,080,552	12,073	34,783,886
Non-border areas	258	7,552,688	25,816	583	34,182,465	20,202	41,735,153
Totals	1,980	92,809,889	468,433	1,679	132,560,416	101,189	225,370,305

* In its Article 7 report for 2023, Türkiye also reports the presence of 125,336 anti-vehicle (AV) mines in CHAs along the Syrian border and 36,143 AV mines in SHAs along the Syrian border and 20 AV mines in CHAs along the Iraqi border.

1 Email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the United Nations (UN) Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.
 2 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from the Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC), 18 April 2023.
 3 Statement of Türkiye on Clearance, Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties (21MSP) to the APBMC, 20–24 November 2023, Geneva, p. 2.
 4 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on the implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye", APBMC Intersessional Meetings, 19–21 June 2023.
 5 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.
 6 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.
 7 Email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.
 8 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.
 9 Ibid.
 10 Ibid.
 11 Ibid.; and email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

Türkiye reports that mines were first laid along the Syrian border in the 1950s to prevent smuggling and later in the south-east for security.¹² According to Türkiye's 2021 Extension Request, anti-personnel (AP) mines were laid "along the borders and certain areas outside borders from 1955 until 1998", in order to reinforce security of the borders during the Cold War era. After the 1990s, AP mines were emplaced to "reinforce military bases in the fight against separatist terror organization".¹³

This refers to the 1984–99 armed conflict with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, PKK) in the south-east.¹⁴ These are mostly in the provinces of Ardahan, Batman, Bingöl, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Hakkari, Mardin, Şırnak, Siirt, and Tunceli.¹⁵ According to Türkiye, these mines, which were marked and fenced, have been progressively cleared since 1998.¹⁶ The mines on Türkiye's other borders were mostly laid in 1955–59 and on some sections of the border with Armenia, Iran, and Iraq in 1992–95.¹⁷ Türkiye says its western borders with Bulgaria and Greece as well as the border with Georgia are all mine-free.¹⁸ Clearance along the border with Armenia was completed in 2022.¹⁹

Türkiye had previously stated that the number of mined areas along the Iraqi border, as well as part of the Iranian border, were an estimate, as, reporting in 2015, Türkiye noted that precise calculation had been hampered by the activities of armed groups.²⁰ Türkiye quantified contamination along the Iranian border as covering an area of 13.4km² in 392 CHAs at the end of 2022,²¹ which increased to 223 CHAs covering 7.7km² and 340 SHAs over 27.1km² at the end of 2023.²² Türkiye has also refined its understanding of contamination along the Iraqi border from 874 CHAs over 2.8km² at the end of 2022²³ to 422 CHAs covering 20.2km² and 401 SHAs covering 27.2km² at the end of 2023.²⁴ Türkiye had also stated in 2015 that fewer mines were expected along the Syrian border than earlier thought because of detonations by smugglers and wildfires.²⁵ As a result of extensive NTS, the total mined area along the Syrian border did indeed decrease

from more than 114km² as at the end of 2022²⁶ to just over 101km² at the end of 2023.²⁷ In its most recent Article 5 deadline extension request of 2021, Türkiye reported that, prior to the establishment of TURMAC in 2015, demining conducted solely by military units only cleared areas with a 90–95% reliability rate and without quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC).²⁸ For this reason, the minefields in question are included in the TURMAC database as hazardous areas. In addition, NTS of these minefields was carried out within the NTS Project as a part of EBMCP.²⁹

In its Article 7 report for 2023, Türkiye stated that ten of the eleven mine victims in Türkiye during the year were injured by improvised AP mines (victim-activated IEDs).³⁰ Türkiye explains that no IEDs were used by military units during or after the creation of minefields, but that they are used by non-State armed groups—designated by Türkiye as terrorist organisations—to target military personnel. Such IEDs are not found in any particular area, but are generally found in military operational zones in border areas. When detected, IEDs are neutralised by military C-IED teams.³¹

NORTHERN CYPRUS

Türkiye's original Article 5 clearance deadline was 1 March 2014. In 2013, States Parties granted Türkiye an eight-year extension until 1 March 2022, for clearance of mines in Türkiye, and in 2021, States Parties granted a further extension of Türkiye's Article 5 deadline until 31 December 2025. Türkiye has not requested additional time for clearance of the areas it controls in northern Cyprus³² and neither extension request made reference to northern Cyprus³³ (see the report on Cyprus for further information). This puts into question Türkiye's compliance with Article 5 of the APMB.

Türkiye does not have any plans in place to meet its Article 5 obligations in areas under its control in northern Cyprus, stating that "the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is a sovereign country recognized by the Republic of Türkiye" and not under Türkiye's control, and that responsibility

12 Ministry of National Defence (MoND) Mine Action Centre, Strategic Plan 2020–2025, undated but 2020, p. 1.

13 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 3.

14 The PKK is designated as a terrorist organization by Türkiye, the EU, and by a number of other States.

15 Email from TURMAC, 24 June 2020.

16 Email from TURMAC, 11 July 2019.

17 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D; 2013 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. A-1 and A-5.

18 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7.

19 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

20 Article 7 Report (covering 2015), Form C.

21 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

22 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

23 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

24 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

25 Article 7 Report (covering 2015), Form C.

26 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

27 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

28 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 11.

29 Information provided by TURMAC, 4 September 2024.

30 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form H.

31 Information provided by TURMAC, 4 September 2024.

32 See the reference to Türkiye's jurisdiction in northern Cyprus under the European Convention on Human Rights in European Court of Human Rights, *Güzelyurtlu and others v. Cyprus and Turkey*, Judgment (Grand Chamber), 29 January 2019, para. 193.

33 2013 and 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Requests.

for mined areas does not sit with Türkiye.³⁴ This is not an accurate interpretation and application of Türkiye's obligations under Articles 1 and 5 of the APMBC, which has no territorial limitations. Article 5 obligates a State Party to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction "or control". Consonant with international law, Article 5 applies to any mined areas containing AP mines in territory over which a State Party exercises effective control outside its sovereign jurisdiction for a period of several months or more.

NORTHERN SYRIA

While the situation continues to be fluid, Türkiye also has an obligation under Article 5 of the APMBC to clear AP mines in any areas currently under its control in northern Syria. Consonant with international law, Article 5 applies to any mined areas containing AP mines in territory over which a State Party exercises effective control outside its sovereign jurisdiction for a period of several months or more. Türkiye, however, states that Syria is a sovereign

country, not under the control of Türkiye, and that as "Türkiye has no obligation to clear AP mines on another country's territory", responsibility for releasing mined areas does not sit with Türkiye.³⁵

The precise extent to which Türkiye is implementing its obligations under Article 5 in northern Syria is not clear. In its Article 7 report covering 2022, Türkiye stated that it found/neutralised 121 mines, 1,837 IEDs, and 26,770 other munitions in Syria, Iraq, and Libya,³⁶ but without specific reference to locations in northern Syria. TURMAC also states that Türkiye conducts counterterrorism operations to ensure the security of its borders and that the Turkish Armed Forces have neutralised "thousands of mines and hand-made explosives" as part of cross-border military operations.³⁷ However, Türkiye refers only to the location of the "Syrian border" when providing land release data in its Article 7 reports³⁸, so it is not clear whether it is clearing AP mines on the Syrian side of the border in territory it controls.

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

In addition to landmines, Türkiye may also have limited contamination from unexploded ordnance (UXO) on its territory.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Türkiye adopted Law No. 6586 establishing a national mine action centre under the Ministry of National Defence (MoND) in February 2015.³⁹ Its director reports directly to the Undersecretary of the MoND.⁴⁰ The law gave the centre, now known as TURMAC, responsibility for clearing to humanitarian standards mines and UXO.⁴¹ TURMAC's activities are regulated by two presidential decrees.⁴² TURMAC is responsible for elaborating policies for clearance; planning and steering related activities and monitoring their implementation; and coordinating and cooperating with domestic and foreign institutions.⁴³

Mine action in Türkiye is mostly financed by the State. TURMAC and the Turkish Armed Forces demining units are financed entirely by the government.⁴⁴ Türkiye has committed

TRY80 million (approx. €2.28 million) to humanitarian mine action between 2023 and 2025, including TRY5 million (approx. €0.14 million) for capacity building of military demining units and TRY75 million (approx. €2.14 million) for demining.⁴⁵ Türkiye stated in November 2023 that the MoND has earmarked a budget of €10.71 million for mine clearance over the next ten years and that the government had allocated €1.7 million to Phase IV of the EBMCP project, as well as requesting an estimated €15 million to be funded by external sources.⁴⁶

For 2023, the MoND allocated TRY4.3 million from the national budget for capacity development military demining units and procurement of materials for these units.⁴⁷ This is a significant decrease on the TRY30 million (approx. €1 million)

34 Emails from TURMAC, 17 August 2023; and Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

35 Ibid.

36 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

37 Email from TURMAC, 17 August 2023.

38 See, e.g., Article 7 Reports (covering 2023), Form D; and (covering 2022), Form D.

39 Article 7 Report (covering 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", Annex 1; and Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report, Form A, 2015.

40 Presidency Decree No. 1 of 10 July 2018; Article 7 Report (for 2018), Form A; and Statement of Turkey on Clearance, Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties (17MSP), Geneva, 29 November 2018.

41 Article 7 Report (covering 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", Annex 1; and CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report, Form A, 2015.

42 Presidential Decree dated 18 April 2019; and Presidential Decree No. 32, amending the Presidential Decree on General Staff and Procedure. MoND, "Turkish Mine Action Center", accessed 7 March 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/44hgNDN>.

43 Article 7 Report (covering 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", Annex 1; and CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report, Form A, 2015.

44 Email from TURMAC, 21 June 2017.

45 Article 5 implementation Work Plan, 30 April 2023, p. 9.

46 "Türkiye Mine Action Programme: Project for Completion, Wednesday, 22 November 2023", pp. 3–4.

47 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D; and email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

allocated to capacity development of military demining units in 2022.⁴⁸ TURMAC said that the economic burden of emergency response and recovery from the February 2023 earthquake in the east of the country required a significant proportion of the national budget in 2023–24, impacting the funds available for mine action.⁴⁹ For 2024, the significantly higher sum of approximately TRY500 million (approx. €14.3 million) has been allocated from the national budget for humanitarian mine action. Türkiye states this is in line with the Convention's additional request for information on resource mobilisation efforts, external financing received, and resources made available by the Government of Türkiye to support implementation efforts.⁵⁰

Türkiye is seeking to further engage donors, in particular to fund the coming Phase IV of the EBMP, which aims to clear an area of approximately 4km² in Van province, which borders Iran. Such efforts included an Individualised Approach event in the margins of the Twenty-First Meeting of States Parties (21MSP) in November 2023.⁵¹ As at the end

of 2023, Phase IV was yet to be supported by any donor.⁵² However, under the Article 6 of the APBMC, TURMAC initiated contact with the Delegation of the EU, the Japanese Embassy, and the Kuwaiti Embassy in 2023.⁵³

Türkiye regards clearance of mined areas as an "indispensable part of the modern integrated border management (IBM) of Türkiye" as well as a humanitarian matter. As such, mine action has been included in the strategic planning of other governmental and non-governmental institutions and partners nationally.⁵⁴ Türkiye states that meetings are held twice a year with relevant ministries to plan mine action activities. In line with the decisions taken in these meetings and the mine clearance requests of relevant ministries, institutions and other organisations, annual mine clearance plans and the National Mine Action Plan are prepared and updated. In addition, mine clearance in Türkiye is directly aligned with 12th National Development Plan, which attributes importance to improving the technical and physical infrastructure of border security.⁵⁵

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Türkiye did not address gender and diversity in its 2021–25 strategy or in the Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in February 2021. In 2022, the APBMC Committee on Article 5 Implementation observed that Türkiye had not reported updated information on any such efforts.⁵⁶ In 2023, the Committee noted that Türkiye had reported on having established their baseline through "inclusive consultations, including information on the percentage of women as a total of TURMAC's personnel (29%), the employment of a gender focal point and female deminers."⁵⁷ Türkiye disaggregates mine incident data by age and sex.⁵⁸

Türkiye claims that gender and diversity are taken into consideration in all mine action activities. It also says that gender-sensitive recruitment procedures help provide equal employment opportunities to women and men from diverse groups.⁵⁹ TURMAC states that employment contracts signed under Phase III of the EPBMC ensure that women and men are paid equally for equal work and that TURMAC and UN Development Programme (UNDP) have encouraged employment of women in "various positions, such as trainer

and administrative jobs". During Phase III, 14 women were employed by implementing partners, including the UNDP and clearance and NTS contractors.⁶⁰ Türkiye's first two female demining dog handlers were also trained and certified during that phase.⁶¹ Within the scope of the EBMP, Gender Awareness Training was provided to 25 TURMAC personnel in 2023.⁶²

TURMAC reported that, as at the end of 2023, 22% of TURMAC's personnel were female, including a head of department and two branch chiefs.⁶³ While three such managerial positions were also occupied by women in 2022, the overall proportion of TURMAC staff who are female fell slightly from 29% in 2022.⁶⁴ Mine Action Review requested information from TURMAC in 2023 and April 2024 on the total number of male and female staff and the proportions of supervisory or managerial and operational positions occupied by women in TURMAC in 2023 but this information was not provided. There was also no response to the enquiry as to whether Türkiye's military demining units still did not include any women.

48 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

49 Email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

50 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D; and Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Analysis of Türkiye's Article 5 deadline extension request, 19MSP, The Hague, 15–19 November 2021, p. 6.

51 CCW Amended Protocol II Report (covering 2023), Form B.

52 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D; and email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

53 Information received from TURMAC, 4 September 2024.

54 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

55 Information provided by TURMAC, 4 September 2024.

56 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

57 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

58 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Forms E and H.

59 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form I; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

60 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form I; and email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

61 Ibid.; and UNDP, "UNDP and EU conclude three-year demining project to improve security along Türkiye's eastern frontier" 12 December 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/4emIGQ8>.

62 Information provided by TURMAC, 4 September 2024.

63 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form I; and email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

64 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form I.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Türkiye is said to have a national mine action standard (NMAS) on environmental management, reportedly issued in 2019, but no details were available. No information was provided as to whether Türkiye has an environmental management policy in place and what measures, if any, are taken to minimise environmental harm during demining.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

TURMAC installed IMSMA with support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) in 2017.⁶⁵ Use of digital GPS allows the daily progress of each deminer to be catalogued.⁶⁶ Field reports are collected on a daily basis and transferred to the IMSMA system.⁶⁷ In May 2024, TURMAC reported that discussions were underway with the GICHD regarding the possible use of IMSMA Core.⁶⁸

Survey and clearance data reported by Türkiye are accurate and disaggregated by type of contamination (i.e. AP mines from AV mines and items of UXO) and by method of land release. Türkiye has submitted Article 7 transparency reports annually on time, which provide a detailed review of plans and activities. As required under the granting of its latest extension request in 2021, Türkiye submitted an updated work plan by 30 April 2023.⁶⁹

PLANNING AND TASKING

In 2020, TURMAC issued a strategic mine action plan through to the end of 2025 setting out a vision of Türkiye completing mine clearance by 2025. It estimated the cost at about US\$332 million, which would be financed by the national budget and international sources. The plan identified five goals: to clear all emplaced AP mines in the country; to strengthen national capacity and ensure its sustainability; to reduce the number of mines held in depots for training; to provide risk education⁷⁰ and support mine victims; and to co-operate with national and international organisations on mine action.⁷¹

In February 2021, however, Türkiye requested an interim extension of its Article 5 deadline for three years and nine months until the end of 2025, by when it no longer expected to complete clearance. The request foresaw three main projects in 2021–23: demining; NTS covering 3,834 mined areas with a view to producing baseline data from which to prepare plans for completion; and a clearance project to address 27 mined areas measuring approximately 1km² in Mardin province.⁷² In its 2021 request, Türkiye expected NTS during its extension period to eventually result in cancellation of around 40km² of mined area.⁷³

By 30 April 2023, Türkiye was expected to produce an updated detailed work plan for the remaining period covered by its extension,⁷⁴ which it duly submitted. Türkiye has stated that, over the course of 2023–25 it aims to deploy its military demining units to address approximately 17.5km² of hazardous area.⁷⁵ Detailed annual targets for land release by area, size, and province are set out in the updated work plan.⁷⁶

In April 2024, Mine Action Review asked TURMAC if Türkiye is yet in a position to estimate when it will complete AP mine clearance, based on existing capacity and funding levels. No response was given. Türkiye has stated, though, that TURMAC wishes to collaborate with the Committee on Article 5 Implementation and the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) in order to exchange views on a further extension request and says that this request will be based on “actual contamination” following NTS and clearance up to the end of 2025.⁷⁷

65 Statements of Türkiye, Standing Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Geneva, 22 May 2019; and on Clearance, 17MSP, Geneva, 29 November 2018; email from TURMAC, 11 July 2019; and Article 7 Report (covering 2018), Form A.

66 Türkiye Mine Action Programme: Project for Completion, Wednesday, 22 November 2023', p. 3.

67 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

68 Ibid; and email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

69 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, “Preliminary Observations on the Implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye”, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

70 As part of its Strategic Mine Action Plan (2020–2025) Türkiye has prepared and is implementing an extensive “National Explosive Ordnance Risk Education Plan” (NEOREP). Information provided by TURMAC, 4 September 2024.

71 MoND Mine Action Centre, Strategic Plan 2020–2025, undated but 2020, pp. 7–8, 10.

72 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Analysis of Türkiye’s Article 5 deadline extension request, 19MSP, The Hague, 15–19 November 2021, p. 4.

73 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 19; and email from Mark Frankish, UNDP, 24 May 2021.

74 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, “Preliminary Observations”, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

75 The statement of Türkiye on clearance at the 21MSP, 20–24 November 2023, Geneva, p. 2, states a timeframe of 2024–2025 for this. However, TURMAC provided information to Mine Action Review on 4 September 2024, correcting this to 2023–2025.

76 Article 5 Implementation Work Plan, 30 April 2023, pp. 12–14.

77 Ibid., p. 19.

TURMAC has prioritised its mine clearance activities according to four levels as follows:

- Lands with minefields along the southern and eastern borders, which prevent the establishment of new border surveillance technology and infrastructure (e.g. watchtowers, patrol roads).
- Interior lands with minefields, posing a danger to inhabitants.
- Lands requested to be cleared by governmental organisations.
- Disputed lands along the borders and interior which are owned privately.⁷⁸

A demining contractor, previously engaged under the EPBMC project, confirmed that task dossiers are issued by the national authority in a timely and effective manner.⁷⁹

THE EASTERN BORDERS MINE CLEARANCE PROJECT (EBMCP)

Türkiye's EBMCP started on the Armenian border and continued south to the borders with Azerbaijan, Iran, and Iraq.⁸⁰ The project has been supervised by the Turkish authorities and implemented jointly with UNDP,⁸¹ which is responsible for managing and quality assuring the demining.⁸² Denel MECHEM (MECHEM) was initially awarded a contract to conduct demining as part of a consortium in which national operators would be subcontracted by the company.⁸³ A joint venture between TDI and national organisation Altay (TDI Altay) won the contract for Phase III of the EBMCP, which took place in 2021–23. This concerned clearance in the provinces of Ağrı, Ardahan, Iğdır, and Kars. RPS Energy, also part of the UK-based RPS Group, won the contract for QM in Phase III.⁸⁴ The contract also concerned NTS in the twelve provinces of; Batman, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Hakkari, Hatay, Kilis, Siirt, Şanlıurfa, Şırnak, Tunceli, and Van, in the south-east and east of the country.⁸⁵

During Phase I of the EBMCP (2016–17), 10 mined areas were cleared and 23,724 AP mines destroyed. During Phase II (2018–19), 39 mined areas were cleared and 23,277 AP mines destroyed.⁸⁶ Phase II, which was completed in December 2019, resulted in release of almost 1.7km², bringing the total area released in the first two phases to 4.8km².⁸⁷

Türkiye issued contracts for the third phase of the project in December 2020 and started work in June 2021.⁸⁸ Phase III extended from Ardahan province to Doğubayazıt in Ağrı province, along the borders with Armenia and Iran, covering almost 170km in length. It comprised 96 separate mined areas believed to contain more than 80,000 landmines.⁸⁹ Phase III had four components: clearing 4.24km² in the provinces of Ağrı, Ardahan, Kars, and Iğdır;⁹⁰ building TURMAC's capacities, risk education to build public awareness, and NTS of 3,502 minefields.⁹¹

Phase III, which was completed on time in November 2023,⁹² saw the release of 94 mined areas.⁹³ TURMAC reported that, as result of Phase III, a total area of 3.62km² had been "addressed" in Ağrı, Ardahan, Iğdır and Kars provinces (a little less than the 4.24km² predicted), and 49,336 mines destroyed (significantly less than the 80,000 thought to be present). Mine clearance was completed in Ardahan and Kars provinces, as was demining along the Armenian border in Iğdır.⁹⁴ The NTS Project under Phase III resulted in 3,451 minefields being surveyed by commercial contractors.⁹⁵

TURMAC has prepared a project document for EBMCP Phase IV, which it expects will be financed by the European Union, in order to carry out demining in Van province along the Iranian border.⁹⁶ Through this project, Türkiye plans to clear

78 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D; and email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

79 Email from The Development Initiative (TDI), 15 May 2023.

80 2013 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. A-14.

81 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", p. 6.

82 Email from Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, 3 October 2016.

83 Interview with TURMAC, in Geneva, 18 February 2016.

84 Email from Mark Frankish, UNDP, 2 July 2021; and information provided by TURMAC, 4 September 2024.

85 Information provided by TURMAC, 4 September 2024.

86 "Türkiye Mine Action Programme: Project for Completion, Wednesday, 22 November 2023", p. 2; and information provided by TURMAC, 4 September 2024.

87 Email from TURMAC, 24 June 2020.

88 Email from Mark Frankish, UNDP, 24 May 2021.

89 TDI, "Clearing the Eastern Border of Türkiye", accessed 8 March 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/3D35mnh>.

90 MoND, "Turkish Mine Action Center", accessed 7 March 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/44hgNDN>.

91 TDI, "Clearing the Eastern Border of Türkiye", accessed 8 March 2023.

92 Presentation by TURMAC, 21MSP, Geneva, 20-24 November 2023.

93 "Türkiye Mine Action Programme: Project for Completion, Wednesday, 22 November 2023", p. 2.

94 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D; and email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

95 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

96 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

85 mined areas covering 4km² between 2024 and 2027, as well as undertake TS of 30 SHAs.⁹⁷ TURMAC foresees land release in Phase IV will be comparable to that of previous phases as the 85 mined areas to be addressed have records and the mines are laid in a pattern.⁹⁸ As at May 2024, Türkiye had not yet secured donor support to fund Phase IV but believes implementation will take place between 2025 and 2027.⁹⁹ While many of the mined areas identified by NTS are likely to be reduced by TS, Phase IV will include full clearance of CHAs.¹⁰⁰

Having begun in 2016, the EBMCP is now in its eighth year. In 2018 the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) stated: "most partners understand that this project will potentially run for 10–12 years, although this must be determined by non-technical survey options which will verify the correct planning period."¹⁰¹ Whether this 12-year time frame can be realised will be largely dependent on Türkiye securing the external funding needed for Phase IV to proceed.

THE MARDIN PROJECT

The Mardin project in Mardin province encompasses 45 minefields containing 27,614 mines across 1.7km² along the border with Syria.¹⁰² Türkiye had planned that it would be managed by TURMAC and implemented by a private contractor¹⁰³ and, in 2020, the MoND pledged an additional TRY25 million for 2022 to 2023 to conduct mine clearance in the province.¹⁰⁴ seeking to clear 27 areas covering nearly 1.06km² between 2021 and 2023.¹⁰⁵ As explained in Türkiye's Article 7 report covering 2022, however, the Mardin project could not be realized "due to the activities of the terrorist organizations and the instability on the border area. It is

considered that sniper and mortar shots that could be carried out by terrorist organizations from across the Syrian border may pose a risk to personnel who will carry out mine clearance in the area in question".¹⁰⁶ Türkiye's latest Article 7 report (covering 2023) states that "field visits, reporting, quality management and assessment activities of the remaining 250 areas in the province of Mardin will be carried out by TURMAC Survey Teams until the end of 2025".¹⁰⁷ No progress had been reported on the project at the time of writing.

CLEARANCE OF NON-BORDER AREAS

Türkiye had planned to clear all 873 identified mined areas inside the country by 2021, involving release of 3.1km² and destruction of 34,410 mines. Little progress has been made in recent years, with clearance of only 0.3km² at a former military range in 2018,¹⁰⁸ a further 9,584m² cleared in 2021,¹⁰⁹ 2,727m² cleared in 2022,¹¹⁰ and 58,040m² cleared in 2023.¹¹¹ Türkiye estimated at the end of 2022 that 2.5km² remained.¹¹² However, completion of NTS in 2023 means this estimate for non-border areas has now increased significantly to 41.7km²: SHAs covering 34.2km² and CHAs covering 7.6km² (see Table 1 above). The mined areas are scattered and TURMAC has previously considered it practical for clearance to be

conducted by the military even though their capacity to do so has been limited.¹¹³

Türkiye's Article 5 deadline extension request does not set out a timeline for tackling non-border areas. In its updated work plan, Türkiye does specify that its military demining units will clear 3.3km² in the non-border province of Tunceli in 2025.¹¹⁴ As a significant amount of previously unrecorded contamination has now been identified in non-border areas (see Table 4), it remains to be seen what plans to clear non-border areas Türkiye will set out when its existing national work plan expires in 2025.

97 Presentation by TURMAC, "Turkish Mine Action Centre Individualised Approach (Remaining Contamination along Türkiye's Eastern Border) Province of Van", 21MSP, Geneva, 20–24 November 2023.

98 "Türkiye Mine Action Programme: Project for Completion, Wednesday, 22 November 2023", p. 3.

99 Email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

100 "Türkiye Mine Action Programme: Project for Completion, Wednesday, 22 November 2023", p. 5.

101 "Final Evaluation for Clearance of Landmines in the Eastern Border Regions of Turkey (Demining Project - Phase I)", UNDP Independent Evaluation Office, accessed 9 July 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/3XMiZ3M>, p. 24.

102 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

103 Presentation by TURMAC, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 22 June 2022.

104 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form A.

105 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 6.

106 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

107 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

108 Email from TURMAC, 21 June 2017; and Article 7 Report (for 2017, 2018, and 2019), Form A.

109 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

110 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

111 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

112 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

113 Email from TURMAC, 24 June 2020.

114 Article 5 Implementation Work Plan, 30 April 2023, p. 13.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Türkiye issued 44 national mine action standards (NMAS), including on land release, in 2019. The standards were prepared with support from UNDP and the GICHD.¹¹⁵ Türkiye also has specific clearance standards for its Eastern border and Southern border.¹¹⁶ Standards specific to the EBMCP were reviewed in 2019.¹¹⁷

Following updates to several chapters in 2022,¹¹⁸ a meeting to review the NMAS was held in March 2023.¹¹⁹ Türkiye did not make any updates made to the NMAS and/or standard operating procedures (SOPs) relating to survey and clearance of AP mines in 2023, but confirms that the process of updating the NMAS "continues on a regular basis".¹²⁰ In December 2023, a coordination meeting was held on mine detection dog (MDD) training principles and requirements, according to International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) 07.31, and MDD accreditation training was provided to military demining units.¹²¹

Accreditation and QM of the Turkish Land Forces (TLF) and the Gendarmerie units is carried out by TURMAC.¹²²

Türkiye describes how all data is quality checked by a quality management contractor and then checked by UNDP before being transmitted to TURMAC.¹²³ All areas cleared by Türkiye in 2023 proved to contain AP mines.¹²⁴

Prior to 2022, the rate of progress towards completion in Türkiye had been unacceptably slow, indicating a lack of effective national capacity. However, clearance more than tripled between 2021 and 2022¹²⁵ and Türkiye reported on its efforts in 2022 to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance, including by promoting the research, application, and sharing of innovative technological means to this effect. This included a new mine clearance equipment certification process, deployment of machines, and use of MDDs.¹²⁶ Now that all NTS due to take place by the end of 2023 is complete, Türkiye is in a better position to plan for its capacity and land release system requirements for the years ahead.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2023, Türkiye deployed its military demining units for clearance (see Table 2) and NTS operations were carried out by TURMAC Survey Branch and "EBMCP Phase-III NTS and demining teams".¹²⁷ Mine Clearance Units of the TLF were deployed at Türkiye's southern borders, with Syria and Iraq, and Gendarmerie units carried out "demining operations" at Türkiye's eastern borders, with Iran.¹²⁸ TDI-Altay has deployed teams for NTS, TS, and clearance since 2021¹²⁹ under Phase III of the EPBMC, completed in November 2023.¹³⁰

Türkiye's main demining capacity is provided by the military and has been steadily increasing in recent years. By 2020, after two years of rapid expansion, total military capacity amounted to 32 teams: 26 Land Forces demining teams with 420 personnel and 6 Gendarmerie teams with 120 personnel.¹³¹ In 2022, a further ten Gendarmerie demining teams were added.¹³² As it had planned, Türkiye increased the number of nationally operated demining teams by eight to a total of fifty in 2023. Türkiye also plans to further augment the clearance capacity of its military demining units though no specific time frame for this has been given.¹³³ Türkiye's defence industries developed the Mechanical Mine Clearing Equipment (MEMATT), a light-medium, unmanned demining machine with a tiller attachment, particularly suitable for demining on the flat terrain along the Syrian border.¹³⁴ In 2022, Türkiye's military demining units were augmented with six MEMATT-II demining machines (see Table 2).¹³⁵

115 Email from Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, 3 October 2016; and Article 7 Report (covering 2015), Form F; Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A.

116 CCW Amended Protocol II Report (covering 2023), Form B.

117 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A; email from TURMAC, 24 June 2020.

118 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

119 Email from TDI, 15 May 2023.

120 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

121 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

122 CCW Amended Protocol II Report (covering 2023), Form B.

123 "Türkiye Mine Action Programme: Project for Completion, Wednesday, 22 November 2023", p. 3.

124 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

125 Article 7 Reports (covering 2021 and 2022), Form D.

126 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on the Implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye", Intersessional Meetings, 19–21 June 2023.

127 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

128 CCW Amended Protocol II Report (covering 2023), Form B.

129 Email from TDI, 15 May 2023; and CCW Amended Protocol II Report (covering 2023), Form B.

130 Presentation by TURMAC, 21MSP, Geneva, 20–24 November 2023.

131 Email from TURMAC, 5 September 2022.

132 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2022.

133 Article 7 Report (covering 2023); and email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

134 MoND Mine Action Centre, Strategic Plan 2020–2025, undated but 2020, p. 7; Article 7 Reports (covering 2019 and 2020), Form A.

135 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

Türkiye's extension request stipulates that manual clearance is followed by two levels of verification, including an extended search for missing mines and sampling checks conducted using MDDs.¹³⁶ Gendarmerie demining units were augmented with three MDDs in 2020 and a further three in 2021.¹³⁷ Military demining units received four additional MDDs in 2022.¹³⁸ According to Türkiye's Article 7 report, covering 2023, a total of fourteen MDDs were operational during the year, with plans to introduce six further MDDs during 2024.¹³⁹ In fact, seven MDDs had been added by August 2024; which Türkiye says is an example of the importance it attaches to increasing its mine clearance capacity.¹⁴⁰

Table 2: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2023¹⁴¹

Operator	Manual clearance teams	Total deminers	MDD teams	Mechanical assets	Comments
Gendarmerie	18	N/K	17 dogs across all military units. No. of teams unknown.	8 machines across all military units, including six MEMATT-II demining machines.	No. of deminers unknown. Deployed 18 manual clearance teams of 120 deminers in 2021.*
Land Forces	32	N/K			No. of deminers unknown. Deployed 26 manual clearance teams of 420 deminers in 2021.*
Totals	50	N/K	17 MDDs	8	

* In April 2024, TURMAC confirmed the number of manual clearance teams and MDDs for 2023 but did not confirm the number of deminers deployed. For comparison, Mine Action Review has provided the most recent known figures from 2021.¹⁴²

DEMINER SAFETY

In its latest Article 7 Report (covering 2023) Türkiye reports that there was one demining accident in 2023. No details were provided. In total, there were eleven mine victims identified in 2023, seven of whom were military personnel, including one fatality. Ten of the eleven incidents were caused by improvised AP mines.¹⁴³

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2023

Türkiye released 5.96km² of land in 2023, of which 4.69km² was released through NTS, 0.35km² was released through TS, and 0.92km² was cleared. A total of 33,443 AP mines were destroyed during clearance along with 12 AV mines and 10 items of UXO.¹⁴⁴ Türkiye reported that almost 107km² of previously unrecorded AP mined area was added to the IMSMA database in 2023,¹⁴⁵ which was subsequently revised down to 98km² based on information reported provided to Mine Action Review (see Table 4).

Türkiye notes that mine clearance along Türkiye's southern borders was negatively impacted in 2023 by the earthquake that struck in February of that year, with military demining teams assigned to early response and search and rescue operations.¹⁴⁶

Türkiye did not report on land release in 2023 in areas under its control in northern Cyprus or any areas currently under its control in northern Syria, referring only to clearance at the "Syrian border".¹⁴⁷

136 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 20; email from Mark Frankish, UNDP, 24 May 2021.

137 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D; CCW Protocol II 10 Report (covering 2021), Form G; and information provided by TURMAC, 4 September 2024.

138 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

139 Article 7 Report (covering 2023); and email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

140 Information provided by TURMAC, 4 September 2024.

141 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D; CCW Amended Protocol II Report (covering 2023), Form G; email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024; and information provided by TURMAC, 4 September 2024.

142 Email from TURMAC, 5 September 2022.

143 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form H.

144 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

145 Email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

146 Statement of Türkiye on Clearance, 21MSP.

147 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

SURVEY IN 2023

Türkiye released a total of 5.04km² through survey in 2023, of which 4.69km² was cancelled through NTS and 0.35km² reduced through TS. Most of this release, just over 4km², was through NTS along the Syrian border (see Table 3).¹⁴⁸ Land release through survey in 2023 represents a slight decrease on that of 2022, when just over 5.09km² was released through survey, again with almost all of this being cancellation through NTS along the Syrian border as part of Phase III of the EBMCP,¹⁴⁹ concluded in November 2023.¹⁵⁰ It is not known which operators were responsible for land release by NTS or TS in each location, though Türkiye did state that NTS operations were carried out by TURMAC Survey Branch and "EBMCP Phase-III NTS and demining teams".¹⁵¹

Türkiye reported that almost 98km² of previously unrecorded AP mined areas were added to the database in 2023 (see Table 4). These areas were primarily along the Iraqi border, as part of the major NTS project under Phase III of the EBMCP.¹⁵²

Table 3: Release of mined area through NTS in 2023¹⁵³

Operator*	Region	Area cancelled (m ²)
N/K	Syrian border	4,013,100
N/K	Iranian border	674,569
N/K	Non-border areas	3,588
Total		4,691,257

* In its latest Article 7 report (covering 2023), Türkiye does not specify which operators were responsible for cancellation of specific locations but does state that NTS operations were carried out by TURMAC Survey Branch and "EBMCP Phase-III NTS and demining teams", resulting in the total area cancelled as shown in Table 3.

Table 4: Contamination newly recorded in Türkiye in 2023¹⁵⁴

Operator	Region	Area recorded (m ²)
TURMAC	Iranian border	23,025,884
TURMAC	Iraqi border	44,635,914
TURMAC	Non-border areas	39,256,491
TURMAC	Syrian border	*-8,978,720
Total		97,939,569

* In September 2024, TURMAC told Mine Action Review that: "Because it has been determined that some minefields recorded at the Syrian border are actually located at the Iraqi border and the interior regions, the related values have been reported as an increase in the Iraqi border and interior regions."

Table 5: Release of mined area through TS in 2023¹⁵⁵

Operator	Region	Area reduced through TS (m ²)
N/K	Syrian border	833
N/K	Iranian border	351,737
N/K	Non-border areas	512
Total		353,082

148 Ibid.

149 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

150 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

151 Ibid.

152 Ibid.

153 Ibid.; and email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

154 Email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024; and information provided by TURMAC, 4 September 2024.

155 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D; and email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

CLEARANCE IN 2023

In 2023, Türkiye reported clearance of almost 0.92km² with 33,443 AP mines destroyed during clearance, as well as 12 AV mines and 10 items of UXO (see Table 7).¹⁵⁶ This represents a slight decrease on the 1.29km² cleared and 58,078 AP mines destroyed in 2022.¹⁵⁷

Table 6: Mine clearance in 2023¹⁵⁸

Region	Operator	CHAs and SHAs cleared*	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AT mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Syrian border	N/K	13	165,341	14	12	1
Iraqi border	N/K	2	29,555	5	0	4
Iranian border	N/K	15	662,747	33,117	0	5
Non-border areas	N/K	1	58,040	307	0	0
Totals		31	915,683	33,443	12	10

* TURMAC explains that categorisation of the relevant minefields into SHAs and CHAs was made after completion of the NTS project and that, going forward, data will be provided with an SHA/CHA categorisation.

In its latest Article 7 report (covering 2023), Türkiye did not specify which operators were responsible for clearance at specific locations. However, it did state that 18 military demining teams of the Gendarmerie “addressed” 289,056m² of land across 13 areas (destroying 20,072 mines) in Siirt (a non-border province) and Van (a province bordering Iran); and that 28 military demining teams of the TLF “addressed” 331,214m² of land across 18 areas (destroying 432 mines) in the provinces of Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Şanlıurfa, (provinces bordering Syria), Şırnak (a province bordering Syria and Iraq), and Van.¹⁵⁹

TURMAC did not clarify how many, if any, of the total number of AP mines destroyed in 2023 (as per Table 6), were of an improvised nature. In November 2023, however, Türkiye noted that Turkish Armed Forces Counter-IED (C-IED) teams had “contributed to the safety of civilians by finding/neutralizing more than 150 mines, 2000 IEDs and 30,000 munitions laid by terrorist organizations in 2023”, though no location information is provided.¹⁶⁰ Türkiye’s Article 7 report (covering 2023) also notes that “military C-IED/Mine teams contributed to the safety of civilians by finding/neutralizing mines and munitions laid in Libya”.¹⁶¹

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the 3 years and 9 months interim extension granted by States Parties in 2021), Türkiye was 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 2022. The main focus of the interim extension was to allow completion of NTS of all 3,843 mined areas, with

the resulting estimate of contamination to form the basis for another extension request setting out plans to complete clearance.¹⁶² Türkiye has identified the “precise perimeter of all mined areas”¹⁶³ and plans to submit an extension request based on “actual contamination” following NTS and clearance in 2024 and early 2025.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁶ Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

¹⁵⁷ Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

¹⁵⁸ Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D; email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024; and information provided by TURMAC, 4 September 2024.

¹⁵⁹ Statement of Türkiye on Clearance, 21MSP; and CCW Amended Protocol II Report (covering 2023), Form B.

¹⁶⁰ Statement of Türkiye on Clearance, 21MSP.

¹⁶¹ Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.

¹⁶² 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 5 and 19.

¹⁶³ Statement of Türkiye on Clearance, 21MSP, p. 2.

¹⁶⁴ Article 5 implementation Work Plan, 30 April 2023, p. 19.

Türkiye's 2021 extension request had a number of gaps. It did not address Türkiye's Article 5 obligations in areas under its control in northern Cyprus or any areas currently under its control in northern Syria. In 2021, TURMAC said Turkish Armed Forces units conducting cross-border operations in Syria had not encountered any minefields but were clearing IEDs, some of which were AP mines. In August 2023, TURMAC stated that Turkish Armed Forces have neutralised "thousands of mines and hand-made explosives as part of cross-border military operations", including along the Syrian border. However, TURMAC also stated that it believes responsibility for clearing mined areas in northern Cyprus and northern Syria does not sit with Türkiye.¹⁶⁵ This is not an accurate interpretation and application of Türkiye's obligations under Articles 1 and 5 of the APMBC, which has no territorial limitations. Article 5 obligates a State Party to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction "or control". Consonant with international law, Article 5 applies to any mined areas containing AP mines in territory over which a State Party exercises effective control outside its sovereign jurisdiction for a period of several months or more.

The request also provided no details of plans for clearance of the 90 identified mined areas which, at the time, remained in non-border areas. TURMAC said it gives higher priority to clearing border minefields and installing border management facilities such as watch towers and patrol roads¹⁶⁶ with the aim of providing "a more secure and technologically advanced humanitarian border management system."¹⁶⁷ Türkiye made only limited progress on land release in non-border areas in 2022 and 2023.¹⁶⁸ While Türkiye's updated work plan does specify that an area of 3.3km² will be cleared in a non-border province in 2024–25,¹⁶⁹ TURMAC had

not provided further clarity on plans to accelerate clearance in non-border areas.

Türkiye noted in 2022 that the security situation on the Syrian side of Türkiye's border with Syria had improved, allowing for increased clearance activity.¹⁷⁰ However, Türkiye notes potential risk factors, which could hinder progress towards completion, such as instability along the Syrian or Iraqi borders, "terrorist threats" to activities or personnel, delays in the tendering process or in the activities of contractors, adverse weather that may shorten the demining window to five or six months each year, and the potential impact of disasters such as earthquakes, fires, or floods.¹⁷¹

In its latest Article 7 report covering 2023, Türkiye notes that, since its first extension request, approximately 45km² of mined area has been addressed and almost 226,433 AP mines destroyed.¹⁷² The timely completion of Türkiye's NTS project under Phase III of the EPMBC is a major milestone in Türkiye's national mine action programme and will be the basis upon which it can move forward with a further updated plan once the current one expires at the end of 2025.

Table 7: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2023	0.92
2022	1.29
2021	0.41
2020	0.14
2019	0.67
Total	3.43

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

In April 2024, Mine Action Review requested information from TURMAC on whether Türkiye's national strategies or completion plans include provisions for addressing previously unknown mined areas following completion (i.e. residual contamination). No response was given.

¹⁶⁵ Email from TURMAC, 17 August 2023; and email from Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva, 20 May 2024.

¹⁶⁶ Email from TURMAC, 12 August 2021; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

¹⁶⁷ Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

¹⁶⁸ Article 7 Reports (covering 2022 and 2023), Form D.

¹⁶⁹ Article 5 Implementation Work Plan, 30 April 2023, p. 13.

¹⁷⁰ Statement of Türkiye on Article 5, 21MSP, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

¹⁷¹ Article 5 Implementation Work Plan, 30 April 2023, p. 17.

¹⁷² Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form D.