

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Intersessional meetings 7 - 8 June 2018, Geneva



Statement - Interim Request for Extension to the Deadline for Fulfilling Obligations as per Article 5

Mr President

In accordance with Article 5, Para 1, Bosnia and Herzegovina requests a two (2) years Interim extension from 01 March 2019 to 01 March 2021, to carry out survey and clearance activities to better define the precise perimeter of mined areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the extension period, clearance operations will be carried out prior to these efforts. Following the better definition of the remaining challenge, Bosnia and Herzegovina will be in a better position to highlight the exact amount of time remaining to implement its obligations under Article 5. Bosnia and Herzegovina will submit a final request for extension for completion based on a more precise understanding of the remaining challenge by 31 March 2020.

Elimination of risk for population and social and economic development of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be resolved through integrated approach to mine action. Through the system of defining the mine suspect areas (MSA)¹ through non-technical survey operations conducted by Mine Action Centre BiH, the mine situation will be defined on a certain area, regardless of priority level and threat level in the community; the needs of local communities and municipalities/cities were first to consider, all in order to eliminate threat for population.

An area made up of SHAs and CHAs which encompasses one or more impacted communities and due to economic, cultural or geographical and other reasons is selected as a logical unit. The MSA is selected by BHMIC in close cooperation with the municipal authorities. These areas are then treated comprehensively through the land release procedure.

The Application of “land release”, with evidence-based decision making will allow reliable definition of areas where technical survey activities will be needed. Through the full application of land release suspected hazardous areas will be identified through the collection of indirect evidence and confirmed hazardous areas will be identified where direct evidence

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exists, likewise, activities will lead to significant cancellation of areas where no evidence exists and reduction through technical survey. Non-technical survey effort will provide for efficient tasking in technical survey, which will include both systematic and targeted investigation in order to confirm or refute the presence of mines and ensure that mine clearance capacities are deployed to confirmed hazardous areas only. In order to ensure the quality of the efforts carried out in the next year, the BHMIC has developed and adopted three chapters in its new standards on non-technical survey, technical survey and land release. All three have been developed in accordance with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS 07.11).

During the requested time period, Mine Action Centre Bosnia and Herzegovina, Armed Forces BiH and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) will carry out a project entitled "Country assessment of suspected hazardous areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina" which will be carried out from 1 April 2018 – 30 September 2019. This project is approved and will be financed through EC emergency grants. The aim of this project is to increase the efficiency in mine action in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the implementation of improved general assessment of mine threat with the aim of setting a new baseline through the application of non-technical survey and technical survey i.e. it will aim to establish a new foundation for realistic planning in mine action in order to plan for the realization of the Mine Action Strategy 2018-2025 and preparation of the final request for fulfilling the obligations under Article 5 of the Convention.

Parallel to this project, the BHMIC with support of the UNDP and financing from the European Union will create the new web orientated database to replace the existing system and increase accessibility and transparency of mine action data. Project Title is "Mine Action Governance and Management Project". This project will aim to influence policy and build the capacity to instil greater organisational openness and adaptability to new methodologies. This will contribute towards re-establishing donor confidence through the formulation of a credible, realistic and achievable completion plan, which will provide the strategic framework and work plan necessary to clear all known mined areas in the country and comply with the country's demining obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (hereafter referred to as the Ottawa Convention).

Land release operations will continue in line with the annual priorities presented by municipal authorities as well as in line with the financing available for implementation. As per the National Demining Law, these plans are developed on an annual basis, following the final procedures. It is expected that through these operations a total of 237.000.000 square meters including 179.000.000 square meters cancelled through non-technical survey and 30.000.000 square meters (BHMIC, AFBiH and NPA), 26.000.000 reduced through technical survey and 2.000.000 square meters cleared. In addition to this the BHMIC will prepare through non-technical survey a total of approximately 120 MSAs approximately 263.200.000 square kilometres. Parallel to these activities marking of suspected hazardous areas with 18.000 signs for emergency marking will take place.

At the moment, there are 26 accredited organizations for mine action in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Five of them are government organizations (Armed Forces, Fed. Administration of CP FBiH, Republic Administration of CP RS, Brčko District Civil Protection and Red Cross Society BiH), seven commercial organizations (all national) and fourteen non-government organizations (11 national and 3 international). Within accredited organizations, 1.200 persons are engaged, all accredited for the conduct of mine action and licensed for work, i.e. 900 deminers and 300 persons accredited for managerial and supervision tasks (team and site leaders, operational officers, quality assurance officers, EDD trainers, dog-handlers, operators etc.). Organizations accredited for mine actions have at their disposal 37 accredited machines (for vegetation removal, ground disturbance and removal of debris), 1.257 metal detectors and 63 accredited explosive detection dogs.

Mine risk education in the period 2019-2020 will be implemented through public information, education of affected population groups and through linking mine action with an affected community. Mine risk education will focus on the priority implementation of activities in communities that have a large suspected hazardous area of priority category III and the most affected target population groups.

In accordance with the Demining Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina, funds for the conduct of mine action in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be ensured via donors' sources, budgets of Bosnia and Herzegovina institutions, entity budgets and other sources. In order to fulfil the obligations under Article 5. of the Convention in requested timeframe (two years), the funds totalling 79.649.835 BAM are necessary. The finance plan according to the operational plan for 2019-2020 is prepared in accordance with the realistic financial frame of mine action, and in accordance with the analysis of financial plan for mine action in the period 2009-2016.