



Statement by Turkey

INTERSESSIONAL MEETING ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION MATTERS RELATED TO THE MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION 7 JUNE 2018

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chairman, let me thank the Committee on Article 5 Implementation for the preliminary observations and for the informative report presented. Our preliminary opinion on the preliminary observations is positive.

I would like to reiterate that Turkey is determined to fulfil its Article V commitments.

In this regard, mine clearance operations and mine action activities have intensified and clearance output has increased significantly.

Establishment of new demining companies have been approved by the Ministry of National Defence.

The MoD has granted licenced new/additional demining companies. The new teams will be operational by the end of 2018.

As per Law No: 694 of 15th August 2017, 'National Mine Action Centre (TURMAC) reports directly to the Undersecretary of the Ministry of National Defence.

National Mine Action Standards including land release policy have been prepared and sent to the National Standards Institute of Turkey on April 2017. They are expected to be endorsed in this year. First meeting of the National Standard Review Board will be held in this year and subsequently it will meet twice a year regularly with the attendance of relevant agencies.

The first-ever National Strategic Mine Action Plan for 2019-2021 was drafted and is expected to be approved and published in the Official Gazette in this year. The three-year plan covers national capacity development, survey and clearance of mined areas and areas containing unexploded ordnance within the borders of the Republic of Turkey, provision of mine risk education and assistance to mine victims.

In accordance with the findings of the UNDP and GICHD in October 2017 to assess needs related to capacity, and with the assistance of UNDP, Turkey made significant progress in capacity development.

Structural changes have taken place at TURMAC and the Centre has been strengthened with additional personnel. Development of standard operating procedures and other organizational arrangements are still underway.

The Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) system has been established and will be fully operational in 2018. Significant amount of personnel both from TURMAC and military demining troops have been trained. In addition to military demining troops, IMSMA will also be used in the second phase of Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project (EBMCP).

TURMAC organized various trainings to improve individual capacity of not only its own personnel, but also personnel of other related organisations in Turkey. Close cooperation was maintained with organisations such as UNDP and GICHD.

TURMAC Personnel was given ISO 9001: 2015 Quality Management System trainings as well as Quality Management in Mine Action Training from GICHD in 2017. The quality management of military demining troops will be conducted by TURMAC personnel.

Military demining troops have been accredited for their manual demining capacity in 2017. The procurement of equipment including demining equipment for the five new companies are underway and will be finalized in this year. Three of those teams are planned to be operational by the end of 2018 and rest in 2019.

Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project is funded by the EU, Turkey and the UN; managed and overseen by the UNDP and implemented through commercial contracts with Denel MECHEM and RPS Engineering Company. Phase I of the project has been completed with a total output of more than three millions square meters (3.296.240 m²) released land and over twenty five thousand (25.667) mines destroyed (2016 and 2017). More than six hundred thousand square meters (637.685 m²) of cleared land, more than seventy five thousand square meters (75.445 m²) of reduced land and over two and a half millions square meters (2.583.110 m²) of cancelled land indicates that an efficient land release policy was implemented.

Phase 2 of the project will commence in the coming months and at least 1.2 million square meters of minefield expected to be released. The same land release policy will be applied.

Additionally Military Demining Troops of Gendarmarie have cleared over fifty nine thousand square meters (59.195 m²) of land which accounts for approximately 1 million square meters of suspected hazardous area in Iğdır and Doğubeyazıt provinces. The land will be released in this year after verification. Additional minefields which accounts for more than six hundred thousand square meters (603.710 m²) of contaminated area will also be released. During these operations, IMSMA has been used and quality control is assured.

To enable safe construction of the Border Security Surveillance System which covers 730 km along the Syrian Border in 2017, military demining teams were also deployed.

Four demining teams conducted demining operations in Karkamış and Elbeyli regions on Syrian Border. During these operations, approximately two hundred fifty thousand (250.000 m2) land was cleared (64 mines found/destroyed) and delivered to relevant authorities to be used as customs areas.

Non-technical Survey has been conducted in Hatay Region. It was found out that the areas registered as suspected had been used as agricultural land for many decades and the area has been mine free. Consequently, approximately five million square meters of land has been cancelled.

On survey and Demining Operations in Non-border Areas, Non-technical survey has been conducted at the previously used military range (2.513.000 m2) in Eskişehir province, where the Trans-Anatolia Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) project will be built. The area has been determined as safe and delivered to the relevant authorities.

Due to ongoing capacity development efforts and priority for wall and customs area construction, survey could be conducted only in the minefields to be cleared along the Syrian Border. Non-technical survey for non-border areas is planned for this year.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to reiterate that Turkey is taking its commitment to the convention very seriously and we will continue to share information on the progress regarding implementation of all aspects of the convention.

Thank you.