

ICRC statement
"Other States Parties in the process of implementing Article 5"

**Standing Committee on Mine Clearance,
Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies**
21 - 23 May 2012

The ICRC would like to thank all States Parties that have provided detailed reports under this topic. We remain concerned, however, by the number of States that are falling behind in meeting their original or extended clearance deadlines.

It is disappointing to hear that both **Serbia** and **Sudan** might not be able to meet their 2014 clearance deadlines. We urge both States to make every effort to meet those deadlines, so we will not have more extension requests submitted next year. We hope they will receive the international support they require in their efforts.

The ICRC is pleased that **Turkey** has put in place mechanisms to commence clearance of the Syrian border, although it was not clear when clearance will actually begin. Turkey's lack of clearance, 8 years after entry into force of the Convention for it, does not set a positive precedent of implementation of Article 5 obligations. We would also encourage Turkey to make detailed plans to clear the entire country, which will be required at least by the now inevitable submission of an extension request next year.

We turn now to the three countries that have announced potential mined areas after the expiry of their Article 5 deadlines. It is one year since **Germany** first announced the possibility of mined areas in the former military training ground in Wittstock. While we acknowledge the update provided today, Germany did not report on the timeframe for the commencement or completion of the survey, nor when it will be able to confirm if it has a suspected mined area.

The ICRC thanks **Hungary** for the detailed update it has provided today regarding the joint clearance project on the Croatian-Hungarian border. It would be useful if Hungary could clarify if, almost nine months into the survey, any anti-personnel mines have actually been discovered.

We welcome **Niger's** transparency in reporting on a confirmed mined area, and are pleased that it has a plan of action to clear the mined area as soon as possible.

The ICRC takes the opportunity to remind all States Parties of the importance of Article 5(2), which obliges all States Parties to "make every effort to identify all areas under their jurisdiction or control in which anti-personnel mines are known or suspected to be emplaced". The discovery or reporting of mined areas after the expiry of a State Party's Article 5 deadline should remain exceptional. On the other hand, the fact that we already have three States Parties in this situation underscores the importance of adopting a process to guide the response to such exceptional situations, as proposed by the co-Chairs.