

## **Extension requests for mine clearance under Article 5 of the Mine Ban Convention**

### **ICRC comments on the request of the Democratic Republic of Congo**

**28 November 2011**

With regard to the extension request of the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, the ICRC would like to note the following.

The request filed by the Democratic Republic of Congo explains that it did not manage to clear all suspected mined areas within its original deadline because the first landmine impact survey overestimated the amount of mined areas and the various NGO's and demining operators, which carried out survey and clearance, did not use one centralized database to report the work done. From 2001 to 2010, the DRC cleared only 1.28 square km of suspected mined areas. Last year, important efforts were conducted to clean the database and create one centralized database. The work revealed that there are 82 mined areas left to clear, covering an area of 14.13 square km. Out of these 82 areas, 12 zones need to be cleared and the other 70 re-surveyed in order to clarify whether they really are suspected to contain mines. Recently, the DRC also started 2 general surveys, which it calls 'enquête générale de l'action contre les mines', which should allow the DRC to draw a more accurate and complete picture of the contamination suffered by the DRC by the end of 2012.

The ICRC very much welcomes the filing by the DRC of an amended extension request this last September. The DRC reduced the time requested from 4 years to 26 months and the new request presents more clearly the amount of work left to be done and how it will be carried out.

The period requested will provide the DRC with the time necessary to survey all remaining suspected hazardous areas with a view to determining with greater precision the extent of the remaining contamination and prepare a clear and viable clearance plan. We welcome the DRC's decision to request only the time strictly necessary to assess the relevant facts and develop a meaningful forward looking plan based on these results. In 2013, the DRC will therefore be in a position to prepare a new extension request which will include a detailed and financially viable plan of action to clear all mined areas under its jurisdiction or control and complete its obligations under article 5 of the Convention.

The ICRC notes with appreciation the commitment of the DRC to complete non technical and technical surveys in order to have a full picture of the contaminated areas but also in the next 2 years to continue with the clearance, by technical and non technical means, of the 72 suspected or confirmed mined areas. We look forward to hearing the progress made by the DRC at the next intersessional meetings on both of these fronts.

Finally, the ICRC notes that the amended request provides more clarity on estimated costs and a breakdown of the total budget for clearing AP and other explosive remnants of war. The budget has been estimated to amount to 30 million US dollars per year. We would suggest, in light of the comments also made by the analyzing group, that it would be beneficial if the DRC were to provide a detailed allocation of funds together with a more specific plan for resource mobilization.