

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

### **ICRC comments on the Republic of Congo's Request**

**28 November 2011**

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

The Republic of Congo is affected by anti-personnel mines and other explosive remnants of war in the south-east of the country in the district of Kimongo. The AP Mine Ban Convention entered into force for the Republic of Congo on 1 November 2001 and the deadline for the clearance of all mined areas was 1 November 2011. The Republic of Congo was not able to complete the clearance of all mined areas before that date and did not request an extension of its deadline at the last meeting of States Parties.

The ICRC regrets this situation of non-compliance with article 5 of the Convention but would like to welcome the efforts of the Republic of Congo, which has filed an extension request just before the beginning of our meeting here in Cambodia.

The request explains that some non-technical surveys have been carried out in the last 10 years; they have identified six villages that are situated in the suspected mined areas. There are no details provided in the request however as to the time these surveys were carried out, their exact results or the size of the suspected mined areas. Furthermore, the ICRC is concerned that the Republic of Congo has not marked the suspected mined areas and ensured that civilians are excluded from entering such areas, in accordance with article 5.2 of the Convention.

Moreover, the request contains neither a detailed explanation of the measures the Republic of Congo intends to take to determine with more precision the extent of the remaining contamination, nor a precise and viable clearance plan once the extent of the contamination is known.

We would therefore suggest that the Republic of Congo be given an extension of time of 14 months, in order for it to be able to submit in a few months time a detailed request. This new request should set out a detailed and financially viable plan of action to first precisely define the amount of the contamination and then to clear all mined areas under its jurisdiction or control and complete its obligations under article 5 of the Convention. The 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of States Parties would as a result be in a position to grant the Republic of Congo the minimum extension period necessary based on the remained existing work.