

## Comments and Expectations Mine Clearance Deadline Extension Request



13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty  
December 2013

### TURKEY

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**Extension requested: until 1 March 2022 (8 years)**

*Key comments on the request:*

- Turkey's extension request presents for the first time a detailed overview of most of the remaining mine contamination and notable national contributions to future clearance.
- Nine years after joining the Mine Ban Treaty, however, Turkey has made only marginal progress in addressing its mine contamination, and has not adequately explained why.
- It is of particular concern that Turkey has not begun clearance of areas with the greatest impact on local communities, as well as militarily strategic areas.

*Expectations for the extension period:*

The Landmine Monitor's information shows that areas other than borders are where the most casualties occurred in past years, so clearance in these areas should be a priority. Instead, Turkey does not plan to begin clearance of such areas until 2015, in part due to the apparent need to wait for the creation of the National Mine Action Center and Authority. *Turkey should push forward the structural and administrative processes needed to make faster progress in the interior mined areas. Survey and clearance should begin without further delay, starting with the areas with the greatest impact on local communities. It should also report to States Parties on its funding plan for these areas, which is not in the request.*

Turkey should also provide more detail about its plans for clearing its long mined borders. The request does not indicate precisely when clearance will begin on the Syrian border, and the cancellation of the tender in July will only cause further delays. For other border areas, the scope of clearance is not broken down on an annual basis, and work is only planned to begin in 2015 after another long tender process. There are no details about plans to survey and clear the Iraqi border, where the exact location and size of the mined areas is not known, except to say it will begin in 2018. *Turkey should provide States Parties with a clear plan for clearing all border areas, broken down on an annual basis. Turkey should regularly report on its efforts to begin as quickly as possible, and on its efforts to use land release techniques so that the work is carried out as efficiently.*

Overall, Turkey notes that the eight-year timeframe in the request is only "initially estimated" and "subject to revision pending progress with tenders and clearance activities on the ground."<sup>1</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> Turkey's Article 5 Extension Request, p. A-4 and A-13.

eight-year deadline therefore does not appear to be a firm commitment. *Turkey should, as it commits to do in the request, keep States Parties regularly informed about any changes to its plans, keeping in mind that eight years is the maximum time permitted under this request. Given the length of time already passed since joining the treaty, it should make all necessary efforts to ensure it meets this extended deadline.*

The request does not address the mined areas in northern Cyprus, since Turkey claims neither jurisdiction nor control over this area. *States Parties should address this vacuum of responsibility in order to ensure the area is cleared.*

At the 12MSP, States Parties endorsed a recommendation from the President of the 11MSP whereby “States Parties should consider taking decisions on requests that call for both mid-term assessments (...) and revised plans to be submitted three to five years after requests have been granted.”<sup>2</sup> *The ICBL recommends that the decision on Turkey’s request calls for both a mid-term assessment and the submission of a revised plan in 2015, as recommended by the Analyzing Group. We would also support the ICRC’s call for another plan to be submitted in 2018.*

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<sup>2</sup> Reflections on the Article 5 Extension Process, 27 September 2012, APLC/MSP.12/2012/4