
**Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention
on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,
Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel
Mines and on Their Destruction**

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Item 13 of the provisional agenda

Consideration of requests submitted under Article 5

**Request for an extension of the deadline for completing the
destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with
Article 5 of the Convention**

Executive summary

Submitted by Iraq

1. Iraq's landmine challenge is the result of landmines used against the Kurdish People in the north since 1961 and the conflict between the former regime and Peshmerga forces in 1972, which saw the widespread use of landmines along border areas in the Northern governorates, these areas are still afflicted by the presence of landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW). Landmines were also used during the eight year Iraq-Iran War, with the former Iraqi Army, establishing minefields along the Iraq-Iran border for a distance of about 1200 km, including the Governorates of Erbil, Slemani, Diyala, Wassit, Missan and Basrah and other minefield having been established Iranian forces inside Iraqi territory.

2. In 1991, after the withdrawal from Kuwait territories, the former Iraqi Military mined areas along the border with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to hamper the progress of the International Coalition's armed forces. Minefields were also planted inside Iraq. Contamination extends into the oil fields of North and South Rumailah, with approximately 17 kilometres of mines planted inside the oil field of South Rumailah.

3. In the process of overthrowing the former regime in 2003, numerous military operations were conducted throughout Iraq. As a result many areas are contaminated by different types of explosive remnants of war, especially cluster munitions, which cause great loss of civilian lives. From 2003 onwards Iraq suffered from semi-daily terrorist attacks using Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and vehicle-based IEDs (VBIED) targeted at civilians and military forces, in addition to large amounts of explosive materials left abandoned and unsecured.

4. From 2014 onwards, the invasion of ISIS terrorist groups in and their occupation of some governorates saw the spread of explosive hazard contamination in a wide swath across Iraq. This contamination became a serious challenge for demining programs due to the large size of the contaminated areas and the especially vicious ways utilised by the groups to mine the areas, with the types of contamination including booby-trapped houses belonging to internally displaced people (IDP), and IEDs placed in overlapping fashion for long distances. In addition, the use of non-conventional chemical weapons was detected by

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Technical teams. As a result large tracts of suspected area cannot be surveyed due to access restrictions arising from the current security situation.

5. The Iraqi Mine Action Programme is conducted by the Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) and Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA), accordingly. When the UN humanitarian mine action programme ended, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) took over the responsibility of Mine Action management and established an agency called the General Agency of Mine Action of Kurdistan Region in 2005. This agency supervised all the activities of the General Directorate of Mine Action in Erbil, which covered Erbil, Dohuk and the General Directorate of Mine Action of Slemani.

6. In July 2003, a national mine action authority was established under the name of the National Mine Action Agency (NMAA) by the Iraqi Ministry of Planning and Cooperative Development. In 2007 the NMAA, the responsibility for Mine Action was transferred to the Ministry of Environment and the National Board of Mine Action. In April 2008, NMAA changed its name to the Directorate for Mine Action (DMA). The DMA was set up with three regional centres, with responsibilities, allocated as follows:

(a) Regional Mine Action Centre-Northern Region (RMAC-N): the governorates of Anbar, Diyala, Salahaddin, Kirkuk and Ninewa;

(b) Regional Mine Action Centre-Middle Euphrates Region (RMAC-M EU): the governorates of Baghdad, Wasit, Babil, Diwannia, and the holy cities of Karbal and Najaf;

(c) Regional Mine Action Centre-Southern Region (RMAC-S): the governorates of Basrah, Missan, Dhiqar and Muthana.

7. A wealth of progress carried out by IKMAA can be recorded to date. During 2009-2011, the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action conducted numerous surveys under the label of Preliminary Technical Survey (PTS) to verify dangerous areas and reduce suspected contaminated areas in Erbil and Drhok governorates, identified from the first Landmine Impact Survey (LIS), (1992-1993). This resulted in the cancellation of 374,000,000 square metres and the identification of 97,000,000 square metres of confirmed hazardous areas, with a remaining 9,000,000 square metres to be surveyed. IKMAA continued the PTS in Slemani governorate cancelling 59,600,000 square metres and identified 86,700,000 square metres from the original suspected area of 146,300,000 square metres. However, the PTS was unable to be conducted in an estimated area of 25 square kilometres on the Iranian border due to security and political reasons. The remaining area for which PTS can be undertaken in the Slemani Governorate and Garmian Administration is estimated at 25 square kilometres and with current capabilities, the PTS may be completed by mid-2017, barring any unforeseen issues.

8. A wealth of progress has been recorded by the DMA. Based on LIS I and LIS II, DMA identified 178 new hazards covering 771,078,940 square metres. Some of the hazards were newly discovered while others were recorded as a result of NTS. This added a substantial amount of area to the baseline after the ratification of the treaty.

9. The DMA launched the Non-Technical Survey (NTS) project in 2010. The NTS project focuses on updating the database of hazard areas for the six governorates of Basrah, Thiqr, Missan, Diwaniyah, the Holy City of Najaf, Wassit and Baghdad, in addition to other surveys for parts of other cities, with the contribution of various other institutions in some of these survey, such as the Ministry of Defence, Directorate of Military Engineering, Ministry of the Interior, Directorate of Civil Defence, NGOs and licensed commercial companies.

10. In June 2014, the ISIS (Daesh) terrorist group's invasion and occupation of Iraqi areas resulted in the contamination of a huge area by mines and IED, including booby trapped houses and the mining of infrastructure, agricultural and residential areas. ISIS was also found to have used internally banned non-conventional weapons such as chemical weapons, which led to the contamination of areas such as the Kirkuk Governorate / Taza District with a population of 35 000 people excluding the Internally Displaced Person (IDP) from Basheer, Talafar and Amerli, where they faced bombardments by ISIS using locally made bombs. As a result of Non-Technical Survey activities conducted from 2010 onward, a total of 2,875,422,859 square metres was identified as contaminated and an area of

6,276,796,205 square metres was cancelled by non-technical survey throughout 14 governorates of the country.

11. In total Iraq has addressed a total of 1,466,306,865 square metres, including 914,948,963 square metres reduced and cancelled, as well as 551,358,178 square metres cleared. In the process, Iraq destroyed a total of 124,072 anti-personnel mines, 2,722 anti-tank mines, 37,491 cluster munitions and 480,510 ERW. These achievements are summarised by region within the request. Since 2008, Iraq has allotted a total of US\$ 249,973,551 to its mine action activities (DMA (US\$94'704'996) and IKMAA (US\$155,268,555)).

12. There are many different factors that hindered the implementation of the Convention and the requirement to clear all the antipersonnel mines in the allocated years including lack of financial and human resources compared to the size of the challenge, the security situation in the country, newly discovered minefields, climate and topography, lack of technical expertise and equipment, lack of information on the mined areas, lack of international support, and large numbers of internal displaced persons.

13. Currently there are still 3,554 hazards located within 1,195,565,732 square metres of hazardous area throughout Iraq. This number is expected to change after completion of the outstanding reports. Also, no CHA is registered in the RMAC-N centre due to the current security situation and fight against the Daesh terrorist groups. It should be noted that three CHAs have been added following technical survey operations in Basra Governorate totalling 26,583,410 square metres. The three areas are within the oil fields and upon the recommendation by the Supervisory committee the area will be cleared by mechanical demining operations.

14. In order to address the remaining challenge, Iraq is requesting a 10-year extension request, until 1 February 2028, based on the following factors:

- (a) The extent of the remaining contamination;
- (b) Careful and considered development of the work plan; and
- (c) An estimation of anticipated funding for the duration of the extension request

15. In drafting the extension request, a committee consisting of representatives from IKMAA and DMA was established to work together to develop a detailed operational work plan for the Ottawa Extension Request, with support for IKMAA and DMA provided by UNMAS and iMMAP. The general action plan will be reviewed after two years and will be updated based on available capacities and capabilities and the support available from government and international organizations.

16. The request includes a two-year work plan for IKMAA and the DMA, (2018 and 2019), and its supporting organisations, based on current capacity. (The period of manual clearance in one year (200 working days) and mechanical clearance is (140 working days).

17. In 2018 and 2019, IKMAA aims to address on an annual basis a total of 3,105,000 square metres in the 3 Governorates employing manual, mechanical, MDD methodologies. IKMAA estimates the cost of operations on an annual basis is estimated to total US\$ 24,780,000. The work will be carried out with the current capacity of 75 manual teams, 13 mechanical teams and 2 MDD teams. The request includes a breakdown of the calculation by methodology and by governorate.

18. In 2018 and 2019, DMA aims to address on an annual basis a total of 31,530,000 square metres in the 3 Governorates employing manual, mechanical, MDD methodologies. DMA estimates the cost of operations on an annual basis is estimated to total US\$ 30,577,500. The work will be carried out with the current capacity of 60 manual teams, 19 mechanical teams and 15 technical survey teams. The request includes a breakdown of the calculation by methodology and by governorate.

19. An IKMAA and DMA ten-year work plan is also included which will be updated after the first two years of the extension request to adjust future planning to changes in capacity and capabilities. In case of addition international funding productivity will be increased. The milestones specified in the ten-year plan, based on the current capacities and

capability of the national Mine Action Programme, will only be sufficient to address 15% of the total contaminated area remaining in Iraq.
