

# 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 11 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 the Niger**

1. The Convention was ratified by the Republic of the Niger on 23 March 1999 and entered into force for the Niger on 1 September 1999. Under article 5 of the Convention, the Niger had until 1 September 2009 to confirm whether anti-personnel mines were present in the areas indicated and, if so, to destroy all such mines detected there.
2. Since February 2007, the Niger has faced a situation of insecurity due to a campaign of violence waged by an armed group, in the course of which mines have been laid, making access and movement difficult for the local population and development partners. This conflict is also at the root of multiple accidents caused by anti-vehicle mines. Recently, it has become difficult for humanitarian agencies to operate in the Diffa region for fear of mines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, whose presence is due to the activities of the Boko Haram sect, also known as Islamic State in West Africa.
3. At the end of the first armed conflict (1991–1995) between government forces and non-State armed groups, and with the aim of safeguarding peace, the Niger, following the example of other countries in the Economic Community of West African States, set up the National Commission for the Collection and Control of Illicit Weapons (CNCCAI) by Decree No. 94-185/PRN of 28 November 1994. CNCCAI serves as the focal point for the implementation of the regional and international arms conventions, agreements and treaties that have been signed and ratified by the Niger. It is an interministerial institution attached to the Civil Cabinet of the President of the Republic and composed of about forty members, who are appointed by decree and include the representatives of ministries concerned with security issues and of defence and security forces, traditional chiefs and civil society actors (peace and development non-governmental organizations and associations).
4. CNCCAI has set up a humanitarian demining unit with the support of the defence and security forces and civilians involved in clearance and demining.
5. In 2011, following the change in the security situation after the conflict in the north of the country and the Libyan crisis, the Niger carried out an assessment mission. In May 2014, non-technical and technical surveys confirmed the presence of a minefield containing



ID51 anti-personnel mines at the Madama forward military base near Dirkou, in the department of Bilma, in the northern part of the Agadez region.

6. In view of this situation, Niger requested and obtained a two-year extension, until 31 December 2015, to clear the area of mines. This request was for the demining of a surface area of 2,400 m<sup>2</sup>. However, the technical survey carried out by specialists from the Niger in 2014 revealed that 39,304 m<sup>2</sup> had been contaminated, while both anti-personnel and anti-tank mines were discovered in an adjacent area measuring 196,243 m<sup>2</sup>.

7. In 2015, the Niger requested a further five-year extension, until 31 December 2020, with a view to demining the two areas, measuring 39,304 m<sup>2</sup> and 196,243 m<sup>2</sup> respectively, at the Madama military camp.

8. In November 2014, the Government, at its own expense, deployed a demining team of more than 60 persons, which completely cleared the area measuring 39,304 m<sup>2</sup> during the extension period. CNCCAI has released this area to the Ministry of Defence, thus allowing for the enlargement of the Madama military camp to accommodate a battalion (the 84th Combined Arms Battalion of Madama). Of the adjacent 196,243 m<sup>2</sup> area, 18,483 m<sup>2</sup> have been demined. During operations conducted from June 2019 to March 2020, 323 mines were excavated and destroyed.

9. Regarding land release following demining and clearing, the Niger has drawn from the experience of other countries through cooperation activities and information exchange but, above all, from international and national regulations on mine action.

10. In view of unpredictable weather such as sandstorms, extreme heat and cold; the nature of the journey from Niamey to Madama, which can only be made under a weekly military escort; and the lack of substantial resources available to CNCCAI, the demining operations have become considerably less productive. Moreover, the Government's partners have provided no aid or assistance whatsoever for these operations.

11. Given the current extent of the contamination, the Niger will be unable to fulfil its commitments by 31 December 2020. That is why it has prepared a request for a further extension – of four years, until 31 December 2024 – in order to clear the anti-personnel mines.

12. The remaining mined area measures 177,760 m<sup>2</sup>. It is located at the Madama Combined Arms Battalion facility near Dirkou, in the department of Bilma, in the northern part of the Agadez region. The area is ringed with barbed wire and is under the surveillance of sentries from the Battalion.

13. In preparation for the completion of the remaining work, the Niger has adopted the following measures: (a) training and refresher training of deminers, (b) establishment and mobilization of an operational demining team of more than 60 persons, (c) contribution of State resources to CNCCAI, (d) provision by the State (through CNCCAI) of vehicles for demining operations, and (e) provision of State funding for demining equipment.

14. A workplan for the demining of the Madama zone in 2020–2024 has been drawn up. The expected results are as follows: (i) the mined or contaminated areas of the Madama military camp will be demined and other suspect areas identified, and (ii) the capacity of CNCCAI will be strengthened and its actions monitored and evaluated. The plan provides for the acquisition by CNCCAI in 2020, using its own resources, of probing and marking equipment for deminers and for the training of 50 additional deminers before their field deployment in 2020–2024.

15. Budgetary expenditure for the planned activities totals US\$ 1,143,750, of which US\$ 400,000 corresponds to a four-year national budgetary contribution through CNCCAI, while US\$ 743,750 is still to be mobilized. Despite its modest means, the Niger has the political will to cover some 50 per cent of the cost of the programme, financially and in kind. The State's contribution through CNCCAI since the start of the demining operations in November 2014 has been as follows: provision of demining teams and their expertise, care of deminers, installation of the necessary equipment, deployment of a team to protect the deminers in view of the security problems in the country, provision of support vehicles, and logistical support subject to available capacity.

16. The support of bilateral and multilateral partners will be invaluable to the Niger in guaranteeing the implementation of article 5 of the Convention. Bearing in mind the difficulties of the area, there will also be a need for cutting-edge technological material, protective gear, mine detection equipment and vehicles.

17. CNCCAI is still seeking funding to finalize the workplan for the demining of Madama. Without support from partners, the Niger can provide no assurances that Madama will be cleared of mines. Moreover, the project will be implemented in the border areas of the Niger, a hostile region both in terms of geography and the security situation.

18. Although the main risk factor hindering the smooth conduct of these activities is lack of funding, there is a potential risk of insecurity due to terrorist threats within the Niger and cross-border incursions from some neighbouring countries. CNCCAI has taken appropriate steps to mitigate the sometimes unpredictable security problems by deploying a particularly strong team to provide security during the humanitarian demining process and by seeking the cooperation of the local population.

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