

ARTICLE 4 DEADLINE: 1 AUGUST 2024
TWO-YEAR EXTENSION REQUESTED TO 1 AUGUST 2026

KEY DATA

CLUSTER MUNITION CONTAMINATION: MEDIUM

NATIONAL ESTIMATE

14.02 km²

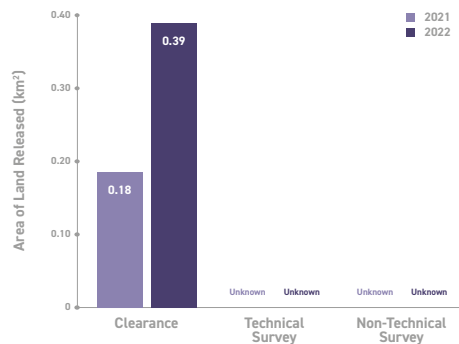
SUBMUNITION
CLEARANCE IN 2022

0.39 km²

SUBMUNITIONS
DESTROYED IN 2022

24

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Mauritania will not meet its Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Article 4 deadline of 1 August 2024 and has requested a further two-year extension. Mauritania completed clearance of two contaminated areas in 2021–22 using national funding, but has still to secure international funding and operational support to initiate large-scale clearance of the remaining cluster munition remnants (CMR) contamination, estimated to cover a total of more than 14km².

In 2022, Mines Advisory Group (MAG) secured Norwegian government funding to conduct capacity and needs assessments and to create a capacity development plan with the National Humanitarian Demining Programme for Development (Programme National de Déminage Humanitaire pour le Développement, PNDHD).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Mauritania should continue its efforts to mobilise the necessary international funds and operational support to enable it to fulfil its Article 4 obligations.
- Mauritania should report on its CMR contamination accurately, consistently, and in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), including through submission of timely Article 7 reports.
- The PNDHD should update its national mine action standards (NMAS) to ensure they are in accordance with the latest IMAS.
- PNDHD should conduct technical survey prior to commencing clearance at each task and conduct clearance only where there is confirmed evidence of contamination.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	7	7	Mauritania's new baseline of CMR contamination comes from survey by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and the PNDHD in February 2021. Since the February 2021 survey, the PNDHD discovered and cleared two further cluster munition-contaminated areas. Further technical survey is required to determine accurately the size and extent of the nine remaining confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs). CMR contamination may be discovered after completion, given the remote location and largely nomadic population in the contaminated region. It is therefore important that the PNDHD has sustainable national capacity in place to address residual risk.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	5	5	Mauritania contributes resources to support its mine action programme but the PNDHD needs greater operational, financial, and technical capacities to fulfil that role and is seeking international funding to fulfil its Article 4 obligations. Mauritania is seeking to establish a Country Coalition and has discussed the possibility of forming a coalition with France.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	3	3	Mauritania does not appear to have a gender and diversity policy for mine action. However, in its latest 2023 CCM Article 4 deadline extension request, to be considered at the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties, Mauritania has stated that ensuring inclusivity, gender sensitivity, and diversity are integral considerations. Mauritania said it will strive for diverse and gender-balanced teams, but that attaining complete gender balance within the seconded staff from the Corps of Engineers might present certain limitations. Mauritania intends to engage men, women, boys, and girls when designing and implementing activities.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	4	4	Mauritania uses Version 6 of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) software. In its 2023 Article 4 deadline extension request, Mauritania has classified cluster munition-contaminated areas as CHAs, in accordance with IMAS – something it had not done previously. Nonetheless, Mauritania's reporting under the CCM is often late and lacks accuracy and consistency, and the data it provides often vary across different reports. As at July 2023 Mauritania had yet to submit a CCM Article 7 report covering 2022.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	3	3	Mauritania's last mine action strategic plan expired in 2020. In 2023, Mauritania requested a second two-year extension to its clearance deadline, having failed to secure the international funding it needs to address CMR-contamination. The extension request will be considered at the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties in September 2023.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	6	6	In 2022, the PNDHD was the only entity to clear CMR in Mauritania. But the PNDHD has very limited capacity and has appealed for international funding for cluster munition clearance. Mauritania's NMAS were adopted in 2007 and revised in 2020 with support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and NPA. It is unclear to what extent the NMAS have been subsequently updated in line with IMAS updates and best practice.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	6	6	In October 2021, Mauritania was granted a two-year extension to its Article 4 deadline to complete clearance by August 2024. However, Mauritania was unable to secure the required international funding to implement the request, and has therefore requested a further two-year extension up to 1 August 2026, for consideration at the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties. The PNDHD cleared one CMR-contaminated area in 2022.
Average Score	5.3	5.3	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

CLUSTER MUNITION SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT

- National Humanitarian Demining Programme for Development (Programme National de Déminage Humanitaire pour le Développement, PNDHD)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Army Engineer Corps

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre of Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- HAMAP Humanitaire
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION

Having previously declared fulfilment of its Article 4 obligations in September 2014 at the Fifth Meeting of States Parties,¹ Mauritania reported newly discovered cluster munition-contaminated areas in its CCM Article 7 report covering 2019.² These areas are reported to be located in the "Tigert 2" region of Tiris Zemmour in the far north of Mauritania. This is a very remote area of desert bordering Western Sahara, but which is regularly crossed by nomads and miners.³

In 2020, Mauritania requested Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)'s support to survey the newly discovered contamination to better determine its scale. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the assessment, which took one month to complete, could only take place in February 2021.⁴ Based on direct evidence, NPA confirmed the presence of almost 14.02km² of CMR contamination across nine confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) in Tiris Zemmour region.⁵ However, NPA reported that the contamination lies in very remote and sparsely populated areas, and future residual contamination post completion is likely.⁶ Following the NPA assessment, ongoing surveys

by the PNDHD continued to discover previously unknown contamination in the same region, and the PNDHD cleared one additional cluster munition-contaminated area, "Guneive 2" (177,574m²), in 2021 and another, "Guneive 1" (392,998m²), in 2022.⁷

As at the end of 2022, nearly 14.02km² of CMR contamination now remains across nine hazardous areas (see Table 1).⁸ This is a reduction compared to the 14.41km² of CMR contamination across ten hazardous areas, as at the end of 2021,⁹ which is explained by the PNDHD having cleared the 'Guneive 1' mined area in 2022.¹⁰

According to Mauritania, the "presence of CM contamination has been visually confirmed through direct evidence of explosive ordnance", and the nine areas are categorised as confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs).¹¹ However, further technical survey work will be necessary in order to confirm the exact size of these areas (with the possibility for some reduction during the course of further survey followed by clearance work).¹²

Table 1: Cluster munition-contaminated area by location (at May 2023)¹³

Region	Location ID	Submunition Type	CHA	Area (m ²)
Tiris Zemmour	Boudheir	BLU-63	1	20,556
Tiris Zemmour	Boudheir 1	BLU-63	1	38,667
Tiris Zemmour	Boudheir 2	BLU-63	1	243,147
Tiris Zemmour	Dalet Tigert	MK118	1	345,703
Tiris Zemmour	Guneive	BLU-63	1	4,683,196
Tiris Zemmour	Lemreir	BLU-63	1	2,587,276
Tiris Zemmour	Motlani	BLU-63	1	120,365
Tiris Zemmour	Oudeyat Lekhyame	MK118	1	5,326,856
Tiris Zemmour	Tigert	MK118	1	651,830
Totals			9	14,017,596

Mauritania reported that all identified cluster munition-contaminated areas lie clearly within both its jurisdiction and control,¹⁴ bringing the duty to clear unequivocally within Mauritania's international legal obligations under the CCM. In the case of the most northerly hazardous areas located close to the border, it is possible

that CMR contamination extends into the territory of Western Sahara. Such contamination extending beyond the border, if it is found to exist, is outside Mauritania's jurisdiction and control and therefore any clearance would need to be agreed upon with the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic.

1 Declaration of Compliance with Art. 4(1)(a) of the CCM, submitted by Mauritania, 3 September 2014.

2 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form F.

3 Ibid., Mauritania (PNDHD presentation), Mine Action Support Group (MASG) Meeting, 27 April 2022 (online), available at: <https://bit.ly/3MlP1Pm>; and Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 4.

4 NPA, Mauritania Assessment Report, 12 April 2021, p. 2.

5 Ibid., p. 8.

6 Ibid., p. 3.

7 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, pp. 3 and 11.

8 Ibid., p. 6.

9 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F; and Mauritania (PNDHD presentation), MASG Meeting, 27 April 2022 (online), available at: <https://bit.ly/3MlP1Pm>.

10 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, pp. 3 and 11.

11 Ibid., p. 5.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., p. 6.

14 Email from Lt-Colonel Moustaphaould Cheikhna, PNDHD, 15 March 2022; and Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 2.

Prior to reporting discovery of new CMR contamination in 2019, Mauritania had submitted its declaration of compliance with Article 4 in 2014, having completed CMR clearance the previous year.¹⁵ Contamination resulted from use of MK118,

BLU-63, and M42 cluster munitions during the 1975–78 conflict over Western Sahara. Contamination was located in the northern border areas, around the village of Bir Moghrein in the region of Tiris Zemmour.¹⁶

OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR AND LANDMINES

Mauritania has also reported discovering anti-personnel mine contamination in 2019.¹⁷ Please see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Mauritania for more information.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The PNDHD, which was created in 2000, coordinates mine action operations in Mauritania.¹⁸ Since 2007, the programme has been the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior and Decentralisation, with oversight from an interministerial steering committee.¹⁹ The PNDHD has its headquarters in the capital, Nouakchott, with a regional mine action centre (RMAC) located at Nouadhibou. As at April 2021, PNDHD had one operational manager and six staff responsible for quality control (QC) and quality assurance (QA).²⁰

Mauritania delivered the US\$250,000 of national funding to which it had committed in its 2021 Article 4 deadline extension request, which enabled it to clear two cluster munition-contaminated areas (Guneive 1 and Guneive 2) and to carry out marking and risk education operations. However, Mauritania was not able to mobilise the international support it required to fulfil its Article 4 obligations.²¹ In its 2023 Article 4 deadline extension request, Mauritania provided an annual budget for 2023 to 2026, disaggregated per year and by human resources costs, operations costs, support and admin costs, and overhead costs. In total, Mauritania requires an estimated total budget of US\$1,950,000 to address the remaining CMR contamination, of which US\$1,765,000 million is planned to be mobilised from external sources and US\$200,000 will be covered from Mauritania's national budget.²²

According to its 2023 extension request, the Government of Mauritania will provide local staff to facilitate the expansion of the cluster munition project, the majority of whom will be drawn in kind from the Army Corps of Engineers and will only be paid a daily per diem. The Corps of Engineers will also support the deployment of the teams to remote areas by

providing trucking services for the fuel and water that will be needed in the far north of the country. The PNDHD will support and facilitate the project, including through liaison with national and local governmental and military officials and by providing office space.²³

In March 2022, two participants from the PNDHD participated in the Arab Regional Cooperation Programme (ARCP) Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) Core workshop organised by the Geneva International Centre of Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).²⁴

In late 2022, MAG secured Norwegian government funding for Mauritania, to conduct capacity and needs assessments and create a capacity development plan with PNDHD, review IMSMA (quality control of existing/historical data and update/upgrade of the database for future data inputs), provide equipment and training for information management, support the review of NMAS, and conduct a contamination baseline assessment, non-technical survey, and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE). The planned project will benefit the whole mine action programme, but MAG planned to prioritise CCM Article 4 compliance first.²⁵

Mauritania has said that it would like to form a Country Coalition with a willing donor government and an international mine action non-governmental organisation (NGO) to support its completion initiative.²⁶ France has expressed an interest and explored the possibility of establishing a Country Coalition with Mauritania.²⁷ However, as at April 2023, no known concrete steps had yet been taken to establish a coalition.

15 Declaration of Compliance with Art. 4(1)(a) of the CCM, submitted by Mauritania, 3 September 2014.

16 Ibid.; and Mauritania (PNDHD presentation), MASG Meeting, 27 April 2022 (online), available at: <https://bit.ly/3Mlp1Pm>.

17 Third Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline Extension Request, received June 2020.

18 Decree No. 1960/MDAT/MDN establishing the PNDHD, 14 August 2007; Third APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, received June 2020, p. 2; and Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 3.

19 Decree No. 001358/MDAT establishing the Steering Committee of the PNDHD, 3 September 2007; Third APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, received June 2020, p. 2; and Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 3.

20 Mauritania Assessment Report, NPA, 12 April 2021, p. 10.

21 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, pp. 11 and 12.

22 Ibid., p. 13.

23 Ibid.

24 Email from Lubna Allam, Programme Officer, GICHD, 10 June 2022.

25 Email from Roxana Bobolicu, International Policy Manager, MAG, 19 July 2022.

26 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 13.

27 CCM Implementation Support Unit (ISU), Quarterly Newsletter on the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), Q4 2022, 9 January 2023.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Mauritania does not have a policy on environmental management in mine action. While Mauritania's 2023 Article 4 deadline extension request includes a section on "Humanitarian, social, economic and environmental implications of the proposed extension", it makes no reference to environmental implications. This should include a description of how environmental considerations will be addressed during planning and tasking for CMR survey and clearance, in order to minimise potential harm from land release activities.

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

It is believed that the PNDHD does not have policies in relation to gender and diversity in its mine action programme. However, in its 2023 CCM Article 4 deadline extension request, Mauritania has stated that ensuring inclusivity, gender sensitivity, and diversity are integral considerations. It also intends to engage all segments of the population, including men, women, boys, and girls, when designing and implementing activities. Mauritania has said that its objective is to strive for gender balance and diverse survey and BAC teams, while acknowledging that "attaining complete gender balance within the seconded staff from the Corps of Engineers might present certain limitations".²⁸

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

PNDHD hosts and manages the national mine action database (an old version of the Information Management System for Mine Action, IMSMA).²⁹ Unlike in previous reporting, in its 2023 Article 4 deadline extension request, Mauritania specified the cluster munition-contaminated areas as CHAs, in line with best practice and IMAS.³⁰ Mauritania often provides inconsistent and inaccurate contamination and clearance figures in its reports. As at July 2023, it had yet to submit its latest CCM Article 7 report (covering 2022).

In 2021–22, the PNDHD created an interactive platform that provides updated contamination data, including the locations of identified mined and cluster munition-contaminated areas, surface area, photos documenting the found items, in addition to a record of all technical survey (TS), non-technical survey (NTS), clearance, and victim data.³¹

PLANNING AND TASKING

Unable to secure the international funding it required to complete clearance of remaining CMR by its current clearance deadline of 1 August 2024, Mauritania has submitted a further second two-year deadline extension request for consideration at the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties in September 2023. Mauritania's latest extension request again envisages six months to mobilise resources, including identification of funding, staffing, equipment, and team deployment; approximately 375 demining days to conduct TS and clear CMR-contaminated areas; and another six months to address any additional contamination that might be found during clearance. The last six months will also be used to finalise reporting on the clearance prior to submitting a final completion report.³²

In its 2023 Article 4 deadline extension request, Mauritania has presented a timeframe and an action plan for its proposed extension period.³³ With respect to the amount of time the PNDHD estimates it will take to clear each of the nine remaining CHAs, Mauritania cautions that, "Given the diverse ground conditions characterized by sandy and rocky terrain, coupled with varying contamination levels, it is challenging to provide an exact duration for the clearance process. The timeframe for clearance operations will depend on multiple factors, including the size and complexity of the contaminated areas, the

28 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 16.

29 APMBC Article 7 Report (covering 2017), Form D.

30 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 6.

31 Statement of Mauritania, APMBC Intersessional meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

32 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 8.

33 *Ibid.*, pp. 8 and 17.

available resources, and the effectiveness of the demining teams. Consequently, the clearance duration cannot be accurately determined due to these site-specific conditions.”³⁴ The timeline for clearance is based on planned deployment of four teams, each with five members (four deminers and a team leader).³⁵ This is half the capacity Mauritania previously envisaged in its 2021 Article 4 extension request,³⁶ yet the estimated amount of time needed for survey and clearance has not changed.

According to Mauritania’s 2023 extension request, all deminers are affiliated with the PNDHD and have previous experience in the Army Engineer Corps. If the need arises for additional personnel and sufficient funds are available, the PNDHD has the capability to request extra deminers from the Engineer Corps, up to a maximum of seven clearance teams.³⁷

Mauritania’s timeline and work plan also assumes that current estimates of contamination remain the same and that no or only limited additional areas of CMR contamination are identified during survey and clearance.³⁸

Mauritania’s mine action strategy expired in 2020. According to a previous Article 7 report under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC), submitted in 2020, part of the international cooperation and assistance sought by Mauritania is to support its efforts to draft a new mine action strategy, to replace the strategy which was expiring that year.³⁹ Mauritania makes no reference to prioritisation of CMR tasks in its 2023 CCM Article 4 deadline extension request.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Survey and clearance operations are conducted in accordance with the Mauritanian NMAS (Les normes Mauritaniennes de l’action antimines, NMAM), which are said to reflect the IMAS, but which are adapted to Mauritanian realities in terms of geography and equipment.⁴⁰ The NMAS, which include standards on NTS, TS, mine clearance, and QC, were adopted in 2007. They were revised with the help of the GICHD in partnership with operators, especially NPA in 2010, and were translated into Arabic in 2011.⁴¹ According to Mauritania, the NMAS are updated regularly based on experiences in the field,⁴² however it is unclear to what extent the NMAS have been updated in recent years.

Mauritania recognises that an update to its NMAS to bring them in line with IMAS updates is due and previously advised the CCM Article 4 Analysis Group in 2021 that the programme will work on updating its national standards before any further survey and clearance activities are implemented.⁴³ The PNDHD informed Mine Action Review that it had revised and adapted the NMAS to the “new ways of working”,⁴⁴ but it is unclear what this means in practice. As noted above, MAG, with the support of the GICHD, intends to support Mauritania to review its NMAS as part of its capacity-development plan.⁴⁵

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

At the end of 2021, the PNDHD had four demining teams, five cars, and one ambulance, all of which were equipped with demining equipment. The total number of personnel was not reported.⁴⁶ The current capacity of the PNDHD had not been reported, as at time of writing.

MAG has been working in Mauritania since November 2017, supporting the safe storage of state-held arms and ammunition depots, and providing training to local security and defence force personnel on the same topic.⁴⁷ As previously mentioned, in 2022 MAG secured Norwegian funding for capacity development support to PNDHD and to conduct a contamination baseline assessment, NTS, and EORE.⁴⁸

In February 2021, NPA conducted a one-month assessment mission of the CMR and mined areas discovered or reported since Mauritania’s respective declarations of APMBC Article 5 completion in November 2018 and CCM Article 4 declaration of compliance in September 2014.⁴⁹ NPA is not operational in Mauritania.

34 Ibid., p. 9.

35 Ibid., p. 7.

36 Response of Mauritania to the CCM Article 4 Analysis Group, 28 July 2021, p. 3.

37 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 7.

38 Ibid., p. 2.

39 APMBC Article 7 Report (covering 2019), pp. 13–14.

40 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 8.

41 Email from Alioune O. Mohamed El Hacen, PNDHD, 17 April 2011; and Third APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, received June 2020, pp. 5 and 8.

42 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 8.

43 Mauritania’s answers to the CCM Article 4 Analysis Group, 29 July 2021, p. 2.

44 Email from Lt-Colonel Moustaphaould Cheikhna, PNDHD, 15 March 2022.

45 Emails from Roxana Bobolicu, International Policy Manager, MAG, 19 July 2022; and François Fall, HMA advisory – West Africa, MAG, 28 June 2023.

46 Email from Lt-Colonel Moustaphaould Cheikhna, PNDHD, 15 March 2022.

47 MAG website, accessed on 28 May 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3NFVEKD>.

48 Email from Roxana Bobolicu, MAG, 19 July 2022.

49 Interview with Hans Risser, Head Office Management Team, and Melissa Andersson, NPA, 19 April 2021.

HAMAP Humanitaire, an international NGO, has been present in Mauritania since October 2022 and received a clearance task order and became operational in the field since April 2023, but is focused on addressing anti-personnel mine contamination rather than CMR. HAMAP also conducts risk education in Mauritania, as well as capacity building of the PNDHD. On the technical side, HAMAP proposed renewed SOPs to the PNDHD, trained four demining teams, and provided support to buy equipment. On the organisational side, HAMAP worked with the PNDHD on project management, and is preparing GIS and mapping support. HAMAP hopes to include NTS in the next steps of its programme in Mauritania.⁵⁰

According to its 2023 Article 4 deadline extension request, Mauritania requires a clearance capacity of four BAC teams to technically survey and clear the cluster munition-contaminated areas. Each team will consist of four deminers who possess a minimum explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) level 1 capacity, and one team leader who holds either an EOD 2 or EOD 3 qualification. All deminers are affiliated with the PNDHD and have previous experience in the Engineer Corps. As previously mentioned, if required, and with sufficient funding, capacity can be increased to a maximum of seven BAC teams.⁵¹ In its 2023 Article 4 extension request, Mauritania said that "Operators can implement all humanitarian demining activities but priority will be given to the PNDHD and national deminers."⁵²

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

Since the February 2021 survey conducted by NPA and the PNDHD, and submission of its 2021 Article 4 deadline extension request, PNDHD discovered and cleared two additional, previously unknown, cluster munition-contaminated areas, one in 2021 and one in 2022.

In 2022, Mauritania released 392,998m² of cluster munition-contaminated area through clearance, with the destruction of 24 submunitions.⁵³

SURVEY IN 2022

It is not known whether Mauritania conducted any survey in 2022.

CLEARANCE IN 2022

Mauritania has reported clearance of two cluster munition-contaminated areas ("Guneive 1" and "Guneive 2") with national funding since the submission of its 2021 Article 4 deadline extension request.⁵⁴ The Guneive 1 task was released by the PNDHD in 2022, with clearance of 392,998m² of cluster munition-contaminated area and destruction of 24 BLU-63 submunitions (see Table 2).

Table 2: CMR clearance in 2022⁵⁵

Province	Name of Area	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	Submunitions destroyed
Tiris Zemmour	Guneive 1	PNDHD	392,998	24
Totals			392,998	24

The Guneive 2 task was released by the PNDHD in 2021, which involved clearance of 177,574m² of cluster munition-contaminated area.⁵⁶ Mauritania had previously reported destruction of seven submunitions at this task in 2021,⁵⁷ but Mauritania's 2023 Article 4 deadline extension request said that the number of submunitions destroyed at this location was 16.⁵⁸

50 Email from François Ropars, Mine Action Project Manager, HAMAP, 3 July 2023; and HAMAP Humanitaire, "Mauritania", accessed 14 April 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/3oedfC9>.

51 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 7.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid., pp. 3 and 11.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid; and CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F; and Mauritania (PNDHD presentation), MASG Meeting, 27 April 2022 (online), available at: <https://bit.ly/3Mlp1Pm>.

57 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form F.

58 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, submitted 5 July 2023, p. 3.

ARTICLE 4 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 4 of the CCM (and on the basis of the extension granted by States Parties in 2021), Mauritania is required to destroy all CMR in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than its extended deadline of 1 August 2024. Unfortunately, Mauritania has not been able to secure the international funding it requires to conduct the planned clearance of CMR and fulfil its Article 4 obligations, and is therefore not on track to achieve completion by the extended deadline. Mauritania has requested a further two-year deadline extension to 1 August 2026, for consideration at the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties in September 2023.

The 2023 Article 4 deadline extension request is largely based on Mauritania's previous 2021 extension request. It plans for six months to mobilise resources, approximately 375 demining days spread across several years to technically survey and clear the cluster munitions, and six months to address any additional contamination that might be found in the process and finalise reporting.⁵⁹ In its 2023 extension request, Mauritania highlighted that it "despite limited resources, Mauritania is committed to contributing financially and in-kind to its mine action program, displaying strong political will."⁶⁰

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

As the newly discovered CMR contamination is located in very remote and sparsely populated areas of desert, it is possible that Mauritania will discover additional previously unknown contamination after completion. Previously, PNDHD had reported that one of the main aims of Mauritania's work plan for 2017–20 was to establish a strategy for residual contamination.⁶¹ The PNDHD subsequently confirmed its commitment to building national capacity to address any residual contamination,⁶⁴ and in its 2023 Article 4 deadline extension request Mauritania said that it aims to develop a sustainable plan that can be implemented after the completion of clearance operations.⁶⁵

According to Mauritania, discussions on how residual risk from cluster munitions will be managed and conducted with relevant authorities and stakeholders during the extension

As previously mentioned, Mauritania is seeking to form a Country Coalition,⁶¹ potentially with France.⁶² If used to bring together relevant stakeholders in country: the PNDHD, donors, international operators (HAMAP and MAG), and other actors, a Country Coalition could help strengthen coordination and improve programme performance.

Since discovering previously unknown CMR contamination in 2019, Mauritania has cleared two areas totalling just over half a square kilometre.

Table 3: Five-year summary of CMR clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2022	0.39
2021	0.12
2020	0.00
2019	0.00
2018	0.00
Total	0.51

period.⁶⁶ The Corps of Engineers will handle future residual risks, and the PNDHD will continue to enhance the capacity of this national entity to address any further contamination that may arise after completing the current CMR tasks.⁶⁷

If previously unidentified cluster munition-contaminated areas are identified after the proposed deadline, Mauritania has committed to take prompt action to accurately assess the extent of contamination and safely dispose of all discovered CMR in line with international and national standards. Additionally, Mauritania has said it will fulfil its obligations under Article 7 of the Convention by reporting any newly identified contaminated areas and sharing relevant information with stakeholders and States parties through formal and informal channels.⁶⁸

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 8 and 17.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 13.

⁶² CCM ISU, Quarterly Newsletter on the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), Q4 2022, 9 January 2023.

⁶³ Email from Aliouneould Menane, PNDHD, 23 July 2018.

⁶⁴ Email from Lt-Colonel Moustaphaould Cheikhna, PNDHD, 15 March 2022.

⁶⁵ 2023 Article 4 deadline Extension Request, p. 15.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 8.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 15.

⁶⁸ Ibid.