

**ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2009**

NEW EXTENDED DEADLINE NEEDED TO RETURN TO COMPLIANCE

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION**

- Mali should seek a new Article 5 deadline in order to return to compliance with the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC).
- Mali should submit an Article 7 transparency report as a matter of urgency and provide other States Parties with an updated assessment of anti-personnel mine contamination and action to address it.
- Mali should set up a national mine action centre with United Nations (UN) support to coordinate a systematic humanitarian response to explosive hazards.
- Mali should develop capacity for mine clearance outside the context of military counter-improvised explosive device (IED) operations and responsive to humanitarian imperatives.
- Mali's mine action sector should apply International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) relating to survey and distinguish between non-technical survey and community visits.

**DEMINING CAPACITY****MANAGEMENT CAPACITY**

- No national mine action authority or mine action centre

**NATIONAL OPERATORS**

- Army, police

**INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS**

- United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)
- Operation Barkhane

**OTHER ACTORS**

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

**UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION**

A decade of conflict between multiple armed actors and deepening political turmoil in the past year have left Mali facing a rising threat from improvised explosive devices, including mines of an improvised nature. The upsurge in conflict since 2012 resulted in use of anti-vehicle mines by armed groups and later in targeted use of IEDs including many that are victim activated and qualify as anti-personnel mines under the APMBC.

There is no estimate of the area affected by mines or improvised mines. Contamination is believed to be scattered and sparse, consisting of conventional and improvised mines placed on roads. Non-technical survey and community liaison activities, although limited in scale, have not identified any minefields.<sup>1</sup> The number of improvised mine incidents recorded by UNMAS has nearly tripled in the past five years, reaching 103 incidents in 2020, compared with 98 the previous year. The explosive threat is concentrated in the central regions of Mopti and Kidal which together accounted for three-quarters of improvised mine incidents recorded by the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in 2020 (see Table 1).<sup>2</sup> UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) military engineers, who conduct clearance and technical assessment of explosive devices, have not disclosed details of device types.

Table 1: Improvised mine incidents 2016-2020<sup>3</sup>

Region	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Gao	9	8	12	7	15
Kidal	25	19	29	27	33
Timbuktu	2	4	3	6	6
Mopti	0	2	27	53	44
Segou	0	0	5	5	4
Koulikouro	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>103</b>

## NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Mali does not have a national mine action authority or programme. The government has agreed in principle to establish an authority within the Secrétariat permanent de la Lutte contre la prolifération des Armes Légères et Petits Calibres (ALPC). UNMAS said "it is supporting this endeavour."<sup>4</sup> Mine action observers note the agreement was verbal, that the authority's mandate would not include clearance, and have questioned whether the ALPC has sufficient seniority within the government to provide an effective platform. UNMAS reported that, after delays resulting from the August 2020 *coup d'état*, discussions had continued on how to "cement the capacity on mine action coordination".<sup>5</sup>

Mali has no programme of systematic mine survey and clearance. UNMAS comments that "strategic planning will be linked to the establishment of a national authority."<sup>6</sup>

UNMAS first deployed to Mali in January 2013 to conduct an emergency assessment of explosive threats. Since April 2013, UNMAS has been referred to in UN Security Council resolutions that define the mandate for MINUSMA,<sup>7</sup> acting as the focal point for mine action pending the creation of a national authority. UNMAS said it had seven staff, including two internationals, working on humanitarian mine action in 2020. It expected to maintain the same staffing level in 2021,

coordinating humanitarian mine action services, providing risk education, and assisting victims.<sup>8</sup>

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) operated with 36 staff in 2020: 9 internationals and 27 national staff. Operational capacity includes one team comprising an expatriate and six national staff that focuses on capacity building of two national non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Another team of three expatriates and three national staff, conduct weapons and ammunition destruction. MAG has offices in Bamako and Gao, where its partner organisations are based, and a small office in Timbuktu.<sup>9</sup>

UNMAS and MAG co-chair the Humanitarian Mine Action Working Group (Groupe de travail sur la lutte antimines humanitaire – GT-LAMH) said to involve around 20 participants, including a representative of the Permanent Secretariat, international organisations, and national mine action NGOs. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) participates as an observer. UNMAS reported the group usually convenes once a month in Bamako. Sub-national working groups are also convened when needed, for instance in Mopti region, Timbuktu or Gao involving actors working in the area.<sup>10</sup> In 2020, the working group convened ten times at the national level and three times at the regional level.<sup>11</sup>

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

UNMAS operates an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database for Mali (IMSMA New Generation). Since July 2013, UNMAS has recorded all known explosions and verified mine or IED incidents, providing data for maps that detail the explosive hazard threat and facilitate planning in affected areas. UNMAS said it shares technical data with all mine partners engaged in explosive threat mitigation,<sup>12</sup> other stakeholders say the range of information shared is extremely limited. The Mine Action Working Group agreed in early 2020 that it would classify and report victim-activated devices as landmines.<sup>13</sup>

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

### LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2020

Malian and international security forces serving with MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane, led by French forces, are the only organisations clearing mines and IEDs.<sup>14</sup> Clearance is limited to counter-IED operations and largely restricted to areas where they have security.<sup>15</sup> Operators do not employ any mechanical assets or mine detection dogs.<sup>16</sup>

MAG conducts limited non-technical survey, sending out teams in response to information of possible threats provided by communities and marking the location of any explosive items.<sup>17</sup>

## ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC, Mali was required to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control not later than 1 March 2009. Since the expiry of this deadline Mali has encountered new anti-personnel mine contamination, in particular of an improvised nature, laid by non-State armed groups.

Under the Convention's agreed framework, in the event mined areas are discovered after the expiry of a State Party's Article 5 clearance deadline, it should immediately inform all other States Parties of this discovery and undertake to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines as soon as possible. Mali has not submitted an Article 7 transparency report since 2012.

Mali should request a new extended Article 5 deadline, which should be no more than two years, affording it the opportunity to assess and, if necessary, survey. It must also fulfil its reporting obligations under the APMBC, including by reporting on the location of all suspected or confirmed mined areas under its jurisdiction or control and on the status of programmes for the destruction of all anti-personnel mines therein.<sup>18</sup>

1 Email from Benoit Poirier, Country Director, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), 30 July 2021.

2 Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 12 May 2021.

3 UNMAS data, received by email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 12 May 2021.

4 Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 12 May 2021.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 UN Security Council Resolution 2100, 25 April 2013

8 Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 12 May 2021.

9 Email from Benoit Poirier, MAG, 3 June 2020.

10 Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 12 May 2021.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Email from Benoit Poirier, MAG, 11 March 2020.

14 Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 26 May 2020.

15 Skype interview with Sebastian Kasack, Senior Community Liaison Adviser, MAG, Bamako, 27 May 2020.

16 Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 26 May 2020.

17 Email from Benoit Poirier, MAG, 3 June 2020.

18 Final Report of the APMBC 12th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 21 January 2013, p. 10.