

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2009
IN VIOLATION: A NEW EXTENDED DEADLINE IS NEEDED

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: NOT REPORTED

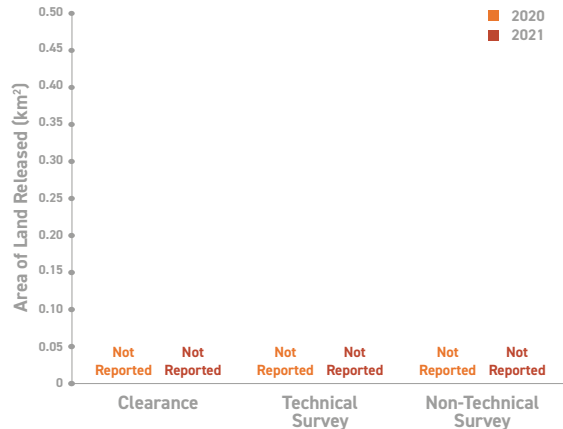
AP MINE CLEARANCE IN 2021

NOT REPORTED

AP MINES DESTROYED IN 2021

NOT REPORTED

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

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 (including anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature) 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 should be 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)
- Association Malienne pour La Survie au Sahel (AMSS)
- TASSAGHT

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

A decade of conflict between multiple armed actors and deepening political turmoil marked by a coup in May 2021 have left Mali facing a rising threat from explosive devices, including mines and 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 improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including many that are victim activated and qualify as anti-personnel mines under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (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.¹ The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) recorded a fivefold increase in mine and improvised mine incidents in the five years to 2021. In that year alone the number of incidents jumped by more than half (see Table 1). 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: Incidents involving anti-personnel mine, including improvised mines (2017–21)²

Region	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Gao	8	12	7	15	35
Kidal	19	29	27	33	52
Timbuktu	4	3	6	7	17
Mopti	2	27	53	47	36
Segou	0	5	5	4	16
Koulikouro	0	0	0	1	11
Kayes	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	33	76	98	107	168

The explosive threat is concentrated in the central regions of Mopti and Kidal, which together accounted for more than half the improvised mine incidents recorded by UNMAS in 2021.³ In 2021, the UN recorded the first mine/improvised mine incident in the western Kayes region. Increased insecurity in 2021 cut off access to parts of Kidal, Gao, and Menaka, an area bordering Niger that was particularly affected by clashes between armed groups.⁴ The level of violence appears to have deepened in 2022. Two MINUSMA peacekeepers were killed in June 2022 when their vehicle struck an improvised device in the Mopti region in what the UN reported was the sixth attack on a MINUSMA convoy in two weeks.⁵ Two weeks later, another UN peacekeeper was killed when an improvised device detonated during a mine clearance operation in the Kidal region.⁵

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

It is not known how, if at all, the environment is taken into consideration during planning and tasking of survey and clearance of mines in Mali in order to minimise potential harm from clearance.

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 has said “it is supporting this endeavour.”⁷ Successive coups d’état in August 2020 and March 2021 have delayed discussions on further action.⁸

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

2 UNMAS data, received by email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 27 April 2022.

3 Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 27 April 2022. Data for incidents recorded in 2020 have been revised upwards from 103 reported last year to 107.

4 Email from Gérard Kerrien, Regional Programme Manager, MAG, 7 April 2022.

5 United Nations, “Mali: UN condemns second ‘cowardly’ attack in three days against peacekeepers”, 3 June 2022.

6 United Nations, “Mali: Latest attack against UN peacekeepers leaves Guinean ‘blue helmet’ dead”, 19 June 2022.

7 Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 12 May 2021.

8 Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 27 April 2022.

Mine action observers note that the government's agreement was verbal and have questioned whether the Permanent Secretariat has sufficient seniority within the government to provide an effective platform. They also note that the authority views its role in the context of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which does not address landmines, and that its suggested mandate would not include mine clearance.⁹

Mali has no programme of systematic mine survey and clearance. UNMAS has commented that "strategic planning will be linked to the establishment of a national authority".¹⁰

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,¹¹ acting as the focal point for mine action pending the creation of a national authority. UNMAS said it had seven staff, including three internationals, engaged in mine action in 2021, coordinating the provision of humanitarian mine action services. These included non-technical surveys in suspected and confirmed hazardous areas, providing risk education, and assisting victims. It expected to add two additional staff in the course of 2022.¹²

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) operated with 20 staff in 2021. They included eight internationals, consisting of four working on management, finance, logistics, and project monitoring, and four on project implementation, including survey and weapons and ammunition destruction. MAG has offices in Bamako and Gao and a small office in Timbuktu to facilitate support to partner organisations. MAG mentored two Malian non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Gao-based TASSAGHT and the Timbuktu-based Association Malienne pour La Survie au Sahel (AMSS), which provided two seven-person survey teams.¹³

UNMAS co-chairs the Humanitarian Mine Action Working Group (Groupe de travail sur la lutte antimines humanitaire – GT-LAMH) with another organisation elected by members for a term of one year. Attendance included 17 members and 9 observers in 2021, among them a representative of the Permanent Secretariat. 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.¹⁴ In 2021, the working group met 11 times at a national level and 3 times at regional level.¹⁵

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

UNMAS operates an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database for Mali (IMSMA New Generation). In 2022, the system was reportedly being upgraded to IMSMA Core.¹⁶ 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 does not provide operators access to the database but said it shares technical data with all mine partners engaged in explosive threat mitigation.¹⁷ 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.¹⁸

As at September 2022, Mali had yet to submit an APMBC Article 7 transparency report covering the previous calendar year or for previous years. Its last Article 7 report was submitted in 2005. The failure to submit annual Article 7 reports is a violation of the Convention.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2021

Malian and international security forces serving with MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane, led by French forces, are the only organisations clearing mines and IEDs.¹⁹ Clearance is limited to counter-IED operations and largely restricted to areas where they have security.²⁰ Operators do not employ any mechanical assets or mine detection dogs.²¹

9 Emails from UNMAS Mali Programme, 12 May 2021 and 27 April 2022.

10 Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 12 May 2021.

11 UN Security Council Resolution 2100, 25 April 2013

12 Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 27 April 2022.

13 Email from Gérard Kerrien, MAG, 7 April 2022.

14 Emails from UNMAS Mali Programme, 12 May 2021 and 27 April 2022.

15 Ibid.

16 Email from Gérard Kerrien, MAG, 7 April 2022.

17 Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 12 May 2021.

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

19 Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 26 May 2020.

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

21 Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 26 May 2020.

MAG conducts limited non-technical survey, sending out teams in response to information on possible threats provided by communities and marking the location of any explosive items.²² In 2021, MAG conducted 11 non-technical survey operations. These included six in the towns of Innegar and Ménaka (Ménaka region), two in Tessalit (Kidal), two in Dire (Timbuktu), and one in Bourem (Gao).²³

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE

APMBC ENTRY INTO FORCE FOR MALI: 1 MARCH 1999



ORIGINAL ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2009

**IN VIOLATION: NEW ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE NEEDED
LIKELIHOOD OF COMPLETING CLEARANCE BY 2025 (OSLO ACTION PLAN COMMITMENT): LOW**

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. In its last Article 7 transparency report, submitted in June 2005, Mali said it had no mined areas containing anti-personnel mines.²⁴ Since the expiry of its Article 5 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 2005.

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.²⁵

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

Mali does not have plans in place to address residual contamination once its Article 5 obligations have been fulfilled.

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

23 Email from Gérard Kerrien, MAG, 7 April 2022.

24 Article 7 Report (covering 1 May 2004 to 1 May 2005), Form C.

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