

**ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2009**  
 NEW EXTENDED DEADLINE NEEDED TO RETURN TO COMPLIANCE

## KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: NOT REPORTED**

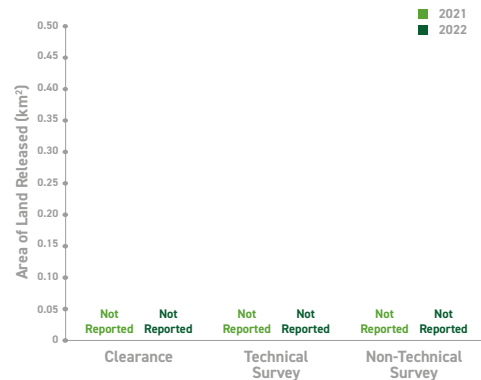
AP MINE CLEARANCE IN 2022

**NOT REPORTED**

AP MINES DESTROYED IN 2022

**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 and provide other States Parties with an updated assessment of anti-personnel (AP) mine contamination (including mines of an improvised nature) and action to address it.
- Mali should set up a national mine action centre (NMAC) to coordinate a systematic humanitarian response to explosive hazards. In October 2023, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) claimed that progress was being made towards the establishment of an NMAC.
- When circumstances allow, Mali should develop a civilian mine clearance capacity in addition to the military counter-improvised explosive device (IED) operations.
- Mali's mine action sector should apply the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) relating to survey and distinguish between non-technical survey (NTS) and community visits.

## DEMINING CAPACITY

### MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- No functioning 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)
- DanChurchAid (DCA)
- Danish Refugee Council (DRC)

- Association Malienne pour La Survie au Sahel (AMSS)
- TASSAGHT
- Association pour l'Appui aux Populations Rurales (AAPPOR)

- Association de Soutien au Développement des Activités des Populations (ASDAP)
- Association Jeunesse et Développement du Mali (AJDM)

## 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, particularly mines of an improvised nature. The upsurge in conflict since 2012 resulted in use of anti-vehicle (AV) mines by armed groups and later in targeted use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including many that are victim activated and qualify as AP mines under the APMBC.

There is no estimate of mined area. Contamination is believed to be scattered and sparse, consisting of conventional and improvised mines and other IEDs. NTS and community liaison activities, although limited in scale, have not identified any minefields.<sup>1</sup> UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) military engineers, who conduct clearance and technical assessment of explosive devices, have provided basic details of device types.

The explosive threat is concentrated in the central region of Mopti and the south-central region of Segou, which saw a doubling of improvised mine incidents from 2021 to 2022. Taken together these two regions account for more than half

the improvised mine incidents recorded by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in 2022 (see Table 1). In 2022, UNMAS recorded the first mine/improvised mine incident in the southern Sikasso region. The violence of armed groups against security forces is increasing and militants target rural areas to capitalise on local conflicts and the absence of the State to secure safe havens and new recruits.<sup>2</sup>

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) database indicated that in 2022 to date in 2023 the vast majority of devices were improvised AV mines planted by the Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims – JNIM) targeting MINUSMA peacekeepers, the Malian armed forces and civilians causing both injuries and fatalities.<sup>3</sup> Since 2013, the number of attacks on peacekeepers in Mali has increased significantly, from two IED-related incidents in October 2013 to 12 in 2022 (with 19 incidents in 2014 and 15 in 2021). In total, 162 peacekeepers have been killed due to landmine explosions and other targeted attacks.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 1: Incidents involving AP mines, including improvised mines (2017–22)<sup>5</sup>**

Region	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Gao (includes Menaka)	19	19	10	11	32	6
Kidal	33	32	27	29	51	16
Timbuktu	10	4	6	9	15	7
Mopti	17	38	72	33	33	35
Segou	1	8	6	2	12	21
Koulikouro	0	0	1	1	11	7
Kayes	0	0	0	0	1	0
Sikasso	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>94</b>

## NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Mali does not have a national mine action authority or programme. The Secrétariat Permanent de la Commission Nationale de Lutte Contre la Prolifération des Armes Légères et de Petits Calibres (SP-CNLP) has a mandate to act as a focal point for mine action. However, the full mandate of the Secretariat is still evolving in the context of a transition government.<sup>6</sup> Mine action

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

<sup>2</sup> "Mali", International Crisis Group, at: <https://bit.ly/30Y70xi>.

<sup>3</sup> ACLED, "Filters: 01/01/2022-12/08/2023, Remote explosive/landmine/IED, Mali", accessed 12 August 2023, at: [www.acleddata.com](http://www.acleddata.com).

<sup>4</sup> MINUSMA, "Action for peacekeeping: An all-women police unit from Egypt breaks new ground in mine action in central Mali", 16 January 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/44a0JTt>.

<sup>5</sup> Email from Nora Achkar, Project Manager – POCMA, UNMAS, 10 August 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

observers 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 as falling within the context of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons.<sup>7</sup>

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”.<sup>8</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>9</sup> acting as the focal point for mine action pending the creation of a national authority. On 30 June 2023, the UN Security Council, following the Transitional Government of Mali’s request for the immediate withdrawal of MINUSMA, decided to terminate MINUSMA’s mandate. MINUSMA, as of 1 July 2023, was winding down its operations, preparing the transfer of its tasks, and withdrawing personnel, with the aim of completing the disengagement process by the end of 2023.<sup>10</sup> At the time of writing, UNMAS was in discussion for its potential continued presence in Mali following the withdrawal of MINUSMA.<sup>11</sup>

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 14 members and 8 observers in 2022–23, among them a representative of the Permanent Secretariat. A total of 23 meetings were held in 2022 in Bamako, Gao, Mopti, and Timbuktu.<sup>12</sup>

## 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.

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) reports that there is a global environmental policy in place that recognises the impact of its activities on the environment, and the need to constantly examine ways of saving energy and minimising waste.<sup>13</sup>

DanChurchAid (DCA) reports that an environmental policy applies to all programme countries including Mali but that at the programme level the environmental plans and standard operating procedures (SOPs) related to mine action are not applicable because the programme does not deal directly with explosives, stockpiling, or clearance.<sup>14</sup>

## GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Mali, lacking a mine action programme, has not taken up gender in the context of mine action.

The MINUSMA Egyptian Formed Police Unit, deployed in Douentza since 2017, has set up three Search and Detect teams trained to identify explosive ordnance which are then removed by an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team. One of these teams is composed of female police officers and is the first all-women Search and Detect team deployed in a UN peace operation.<sup>15</sup>

**Table 2: Gender composition of mine action operators in 2022<sup>16</sup>**

Operator	Total staff	Women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Women in operational positions
UNMAS	8	5	1	1	1	1
MAG	20	6	8	4	12	5
DCA	35	9	12	3	23	6

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

8 Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 12 May 2021.

9 UN Security Council Resolution 2100, 25 April 2013

10 UN Security Council Resolution 2690, 30 June 2023.

11 Email from Nora Achkar, UNMAS, 10 August 2023.

12 Ibid.

13 Emails from Milena Vara Ruiz, MAG, 9 August and 1 September 2023.

14 Email from Tristan Pasco, Country Director, DCA, 7 August 2023.

15 MINUSMA, “Action for peacekeeping: An all-women police unit from Egypt breaks new ground in mine action in central Mali”, 16 January 2023, at: <https://bit.ly/44a0JTt>.

16 Email from Tristan Pasco, DCA, 7 August 2023.

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

UNMAS operates an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database for Mali which was upgraded to IMSMA Core in 2022 with new workflows added.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</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>19</sup>

MAG reported improvements in data sharing among stakeholders, and that data collection forms are consistent. However, the shift to IMSMA Core was hindered in 2022 due to connectivity problems in the north of the country. This was addressed by UNMAS, following discussions with operators, who used Google Sheets to facilitate the collection and sharing of data.<sup>20</sup> DCA noted that while IMSMA Core is thorough, it can be challenging to use, particularly with login credentials and that triangulating the information also remains difficult.<sup>21</sup>

As at August 2023, Mali had yet to submit an APMB 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 SYSTEM

### STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

UNMAS reported that the National Technical Standards and Guidelines (NTSGs) for Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE), victim assistance, quality management (QM), and NTS were reviewed and endorsed by the members of the GT-LAMH in May 2023. Following MINUSMA's withdrawal, it is expected that some aspects including the accreditation process and the casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) protocols will have to be reviewed in the context of a post-MINUSMA mine action presence.<sup>22</sup>

### OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Malian and international security forces serving with MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane, led by French forces, were the only organisations clearing mines and IEDs. In February 2022, a decision was taken by France to withdraw all 2,400 Operation Barkhane troops from Mali with the last of the soldiers leaving the country in August 2022.<sup>23</sup> Two international mine action NGOs, MAG and DCA, conduct NTS, with DCA working in partnership with national NGO, Association de Soutien au Développement des Activités des Populations (ASDAP). UNMAS has been working with MAG and DCA to build the mine action capacity of national NGOs. In 2022, two national NGOs, Tassaght and Association Malienne pour la survie au Sahel (AMSS), received accreditation to conduct mine action activities in Mali.<sup>24</sup>

In 2022, UNMAS operated with eight staff, including three internationals, who were engaged in humanitarian mine action. Their activities included advocating for and advising on the development of the national mine action framework;

co-chairing the Humanitarian Mine Action Working Group; provision of EORE and victim assistance; and provision of mine action training and mentoring for civil society organisations.<sup>25</sup>

MAG operated with 30 staff in 2022, 18 of whom were employed by partner organisations with MAG providing technical support and mentoring. MAG direct hires included 12 community liaison personnel, six support staff, and a project officer and regional program manager. Community liaison teams carried out activities including EORE, non-technical survey and the identification and referral of victims. MAG received funding through UNMAS as part of its national capacity building and has been working since 2018 to strengthen the organisational and technical capacities of two national organisations, Tassaght and AMSS, in Community Liaison, EORE, NTS and the identification and referral of victims.<sup>26</sup> In 2023, MAG was planning to focus on securing funding to strengthen partnerships in the north and expand

<sup>17</sup> Email from Nora Achkar, UNMAS, 10 August 2023.

<sup>18</sup> Emails from Tristan Pasco, DCA, 7 August 2023; Milena Vara Ruiz, MAG, 1 September 2023; and Marta Farres Rodriguez, UNMAS, 6 September 2023.

<sup>19</sup> Email from Benoit Poirier, MAG, 11 March 2020.

<sup>20</sup> Email from Milena Vara Ruiz, MAG, 1 September 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Email from Tristan Pasco, DCA, 7 August 2023.

<sup>22</sup> Email from Nora Achkar, UNMAS, 10 August 2023.

<sup>23</sup> Reuters, "Ahead of Mali withdraw, France prepares future Sahel strategy", 13 July 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/447inqS>; Associated Press, "French military: Last group of soldiers has left Mali", 15 August 2022, at: <https://bit.ly/45u701Z>.

<sup>24</sup> Email from Milena Vara Ruiz, MAG, 9 August 2023.

<sup>25</sup> Email from Nora Achkar, UNMAS, 10 August 2023.

<sup>26</sup> Email from Milena Vara Ruiz, MAG, 9 August 2023.

activities implemented by partners; implement “digital” risk education and conduct risk education sessions for humanitarian workers; and carry out NTS provided funding can be secured following the announcement of MINUSMA’s departure from Mali.<sup>27</sup>

In 2022, DCA had 35 staff, including 5 internationals. DCA provided technical and institutional training to

national partners ASDAP and Association pour l’Appui aux Populations Rurales (AAPPOR). ASDAP conducted NTS in Mopti and Segou regions in 2022, while AAPPOR planned to start NTS in Mopti in 2023. DCA’s 2023 focus included risk education, NTS, and victim assistance, but funding was in question as UNOPS/UNMAS cancelled contracts following the announcement of MINUSMA’s departure from Mali.<sup>28</sup>

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

### LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

MAG conducts NTS, sending out teams in response to information on possible threats provided by communities and taking GPS coordinates to mark the location of any explosive items.<sup>29</sup> In 2022, MAG visited 148 villages to conduct NTS operations.<sup>30</sup> In 2022, DCA and its partner ASDAP conducted 97 NTS “operations” through 10 ASDAP Community Liaison Officers.<sup>31</sup>

Clearance is limited to counter-IED operations and largely restricted to areas where Malian and international security forces serving with MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane, led by French forces, have security.<sup>32</sup> Operators do not employ any mechanical assets or mine detection dogs.<sup>33</sup>

### ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC, Mali was required to destroy all AP 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 AP mines.<sup>34</sup> Since the expiry of its Article 5 deadline Mali has encountered new AP 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 AP mines as soon as possible.

Mali should request a new extended Article 5 deadline, which should be no more than two years, affording it the opportunity to conduct any necessary survey and provide an assessment of the extent of AP mine contamination. It must also fulfil its reporting obligations under the APMBC, including by reporting as soon as possible 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 AP mines therein.<sup>35</sup>

UNMAS, under the mandate of MINUSMA, has been acting as the focal point for mine action in Mali in the absence of a national authority. Following the announcement of MINUSMA’s withdrawal and with UNMAS’s future position in the country uncertain, there is an opportunity for the Malian authorities to assume greater ownership over the mine action activities.

### 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.

27 Ibid.

28 Email from Tristan Pasco, DCA, 7 August 2023.

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

30 Email from Milena Vara Ruiz, MAG, 9 August 2023.

31 Email from Tristan Pasco, DCA, 7 August 2023.

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

33 Email from UNMAS Mali Programme, 26 May 2020.

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

35 Final Report of the APMBC Twelfth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 21 January 2013, p. 10.