



# TURKEY

**ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2022**  
(NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE)

## PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

	2017	2016
<b>Problem understood</b>	7	7
<b>Target date for completion of mine clearance</b>	3	3
<b>Targeted clearance</b>	6	5
<b>Efficient clearance</b>	6	5
<b>National funding of programme</b>	6	6
<b>Timely clearance</b>	4	3
<b>Land-release system in place</b>	6	6
<b>National mine action standards</b>	6	6
<b>Reporting on progress</b>	6	6
<b>Improving performance</b>	6	6
<b>PERFORMANCE SCORE: AVERAGE</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>5.3</b>

## PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Turkey continued to make progress in its national mine action performance in 2017, releasing significantly more mined area than in previous years. This included completing Phase 1 of the European Union (EU) Eastern Border Mine Clearance project, managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on its Eastern border with Iran, and survey and clearance by the armed forces demining personnel on the Syrian border, in support of the project to build a Border Security Surveillance System.

The Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC) made efforts to strengthen its structure and capacity during the year, through recruitment and training of personnel, enhanced coordination with other state institutions, and implementation of the recommendations of a capacity needs assessment, conducted by UNDP and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), both of which are providing support to TURMAC.

Military deminers received accreditation to conduct manual clearance in 2017, and TURMAC is in the process of significantly expanding its military demining capacity, with national funding.

Furthermore, an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database was created during 2017, and was in the process of becoming operational during 2018.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- TURMAC should approve and publish its national strategic mine action plan for 2019–21 as soon as possible.
- Turkey should endorse the draft National Mine Action Standards, which include its land release policy, without further delay.
- Turkey should mobilise the necessary resources for survey and clearance operations beyond the EU Eastern Border Mine Clearance project.
- Turkey should move forward, without delay, to expand demining of its non-border areas; begin large-scale systematic survey and clearance on the Syria border beyond demining required for construction of the Border Security Surveillance System and customs area; and start demining its south-eastern/Iraqi border.
- TURMAC should provide additional details of ongoing survey of eastern border areas, as well as confirming how and when it will address the huge contamination in this region that is not specified in the workplan it included in its Article 7 transparency report submitted in 2015.
- Turkey should minimise the turnover of personnel at senior management level within TURMAC, in order to enhance the effective operationalisation of its national mine action programme.
- Turkey should report on plans for clearance of mined areas under its control in Northern Cyprus, in order to meet all of its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 obligations.
- Turkey and Cyprus should heed the UN Security Council's renewed call for access to all remaining mined areas inside and outside the buffer zone on the islands of Cyprus.<sup>1</sup>

## CONTAMINATION

Turkey is contaminated with anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines, as well as improvised explosive devices (IEDs), with more than 164km<sup>2</sup> of confirmed mined area across 3,061 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs), as summarised in Table 1. A further 701 areas are suspected to be mined, but the area they cover and the number of mines that may lie within them remain to be qualified,<sup>2</sup> therefore the total contaminated area is likely to be significantly larger.

This is a reduction in baseline contamination compared to the end of 2016, when 177km<sup>2</sup> of mine contamination

was reported across 3,080 CHAs.<sup>3</sup> The suspected mined area at the end of 2017 was unchanged from a year earlier.

The great majority of anti-personnel mines in Turkey are found along its borders. The mines were laid in 1955–59 all along the border with Syria, as well as on some sections of the border with Armenia, Iran, and Iraq in 1992–95,<sup>4</sup> and with Azerbaijan.<sup>5</sup> According to Turkey, its western borders with Bulgaria and Greece, as well as the border with Georgia, are mine-free.<sup>6</sup> Mines were also laid around military installations.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 1: Contamination by region (at end-2017)<sup>8</sup>**

Region	CHAs	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	AP mines in CHAs	AV mines in CHAs	SHAs	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Syrian border	1,301	139,040,431	413,117	194,649	84	N/K
Iraqi border	596	2,862,835	79,017	0	373	N/K
Iranian border*	455	17,974,376	171,844	0	38	N/K
Armenian border	42	1,097,077	20,275	0	0	0
Non-border areas	667	3,107,849	34,410	0	206	N/K
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,061</b>	<b>164,082,568</b>	<b>718,663</b>	<b>194,649</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>N/K</b>

SHA = Suspected hazardous area AP = Anti-personnel AV = Anti-vehicle N/K = Not known

\* A section of mined area also intersects with the Azerbaijan border.

Government forces emplaced landmines during the 1984–99 conflict with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, PKK) in the south-east of the country. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, these mines have been progressively cleared since 1998.<sup>9</sup> In addition to mines laid by Turkish security forces, non-state armed groups have also emplaced mines and IEDs, rendering the clearance process more complex.<sup>10</sup>

The number of mined areas along the Iraqi border, as well as part of the Iranian border, is an estimate, as, according to Turkey, precise calculation is hampered by terrorist activities and the presence of unconfirmed mined areas. In addition, fewer mines are expected along the Syrian border than indicated because of detonations by smugglers and as a result of wildfires.<sup>11</sup>

In its APMBC Article 5 deadline extension request, submitted in March 2013, Turkey estimated that a total of 3,520 confirmed and suspected mined areas covered almost 215km<sup>2</sup>. This estimate was provisional as the size of the (then) 346 suspected mined areas had not even been estimated.<sup>12</sup>

In March 2015, Turkey included in its Article 7 transparency report an updated workplan for its mine clearance activities, in which it reported a total of 3,080 CHAs containing mines and 701 SHAs, of which the CHAs covered almost 173km<sup>2</sup> and the area of the SHAs was not quantified.<sup>13</sup> In Annex II of the workplan, Turkey provided a comparison between contamination reported

at the time of its 2013 Article 5 extension request and the revised contamination data reported in the workplan, and offered a range of explanations for these discrepancies, mostly related to information management problems.<sup>14</sup>

Mine contamination in Turkey has both a humanitarian and economic impact. Up to 80% of mined areas along the Syrian border are on arable land, which cannot be used. The risk to livestock is widespread, especially where fencing is damaged. Mined areas have also prevented access for development activities.<sup>15</sup>

In 2017, Turkey reported that seven boys were injured and two killed, in mine incidents. The casualty numbers reported exclude "the number of security forces who are affected from IEDs in anti-terrorism operations".<sup>16</sup>

### Northern Cyprus

Turkey's original Article 5 clearance deadline was 1 March 2014. In 2013, states parties granted Turkey an eight-year extension until 1 March 2022, for clearance of mines in Turkey, but Turkey did not request additional time for clearance of the areas it controls in northern Cyprus<sup>17</sup> (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing the Mines* report on Cyprus for further information).

## PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Previously, Turkey had reported that efforts were underway to centralise coordination of clearance activities through efforts by the Ministry of National Defence to establish a national mine action authority (NMAA) and a national mine action centre (NMAC). In its 2013 Article 5 deadline extension request, Turkey reported that a draft law on the establishment of an NMAA and an NMAC had been completed and was awaiting input from other ministries before delivery to the Prime Minister to submit to parliament.<sup>18</sup>

In January 2015, Law No. 6586 on the “Establishment of a National Mine Action Centre and Amendment of Some Other Laws” was adopted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly; the law entered into force on 3 February 2015. The law aims to define the modalities and identify the functions, jurisdictions, and responsibilities of NMAC, which will carry out clearance of mines and/or unexploded ordnance (UXO) to humanitarian standards in Turkey.<sup>19</sup> The law entitles the Turkish mine action centre, now known as TURMAC, which was established under the Ministry of National Defence, to elaborate policies for this clearance; to plan and steer related activities and monitor their implementation; and to carry out the necessary coordination and cooperation with domestic and foreign institutions.<sup>20</sup>

TURMAC was established on 3 February 2015,<sup>21</sup> and a director of the centre was appointed in August of the same year.<sup>22</sup> By February 2016, core staff had been recruited and the centre was in the initial stages of becoming operational.<sup>23</sup> However, there has been a high level of turnaround in senior level positions at TURMAC, including the directorship, which has the potential to negatively affect the management of the national mine action programme. Under Law 694 of 15 August 2017, TURMAC reports directly to the Undersecretary of the Ministry of National Defence.<sup>24</sup>

TURMAC’s capacity-development efforts are being implemented in partnership with UNDP and the GICHD, as well as other national partners.<sup>25</sup> A capacity needs assessment conducted by UNDP and the GICHD in October 2016 highlighted several capacity gaps for TURMAC.<sup>26</sup> Responding to the findings of the assessment, Turkey subsequently reported significant progress in improving the structure of TURMAC, taking steps to better coordinate with other state institutions, and conducting recruitment of qualified personnel and intensive training to strengthen capacity.<sup>27</sup> Development of standing operating procedures (SOPs) and “other organisational arrangements” are still underway.<sup>28</sup>

### Strategic Planning

Turkey has still to develop a national mine action strategy. In March 2015, Turkey reported that following the official inauguration of TURMAC, a national mine action strategy for 2016–22 would be prepared in 2015 and submitted to the Council of Ministers.<sup>29</sup> However, the strategy was delayed until after the general elections in Turkey, which took place in November 2015.<sup>30</sup> The attempted coup in July 2016 further delayed the strategy.

As at June 2017, a national strategic mine action plan for 2017–19 had been drafted and Turkey reported that the necessary coordination with ministerial bodies was ongoing and it expected the strategy to be adopted by the end of 2017.<sup>31</sup> In December 2017, Turkey reported that the draft national strategic mine action plan for 2018–20 was expected to be adopted by the Council of Ministers before the end of 2018.<sup>32</sup> Subsequently Turkey declared in its latest Article 7 transparency report that the national strategic mine action plan for 2019–2021 was drafted and was expected to be approved and published in the Official Gazette in 2018.<sup>33</sup> The three-year plan reportedly covers national capacity development, survey and clearance of mined areas, provision of mine risk education, and assistance to mine victims.<sup>34</sup>

Prioritisation of clearance appears to be influenced more by where permission is granted for operations and where funding can be secured than by humanitarian impact. For example, areas currently being cleared as part of the EU Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project will remain as restricted areas (due to their location) even after completion of mine clearance. TURMAC reported that for the EU Eastern Border Project, survey and clearance is conducted geographically from north to south in order to improve cost, time, and labour efficiency; but that clearance of other areas was prioritised according to impact.<sup>35</sup>

Turkey’s workplan is divided into planned survey and clearance per region and will be finalised after TURMAC has adopted its national mine action strategic plan. Further revisions were probable due to ongoing investigation and survey of mined areas in the border regions.<sup>36</sup>

### Syrian border

In its 2013 Article 5 deadline extension request, Turkey accorded priority to clearing the Syrian border, which is estimated to account for two-thirds of the mines and close to 90% of the remaining mined area in the country. Officials observed it is also the easiest border to clear because the terrain is flat and there has been minimal displacement of mines as a result of factors such as land erosion.<sup>37</sup> Minefields in this region are clearly mapped, marked, fenced, and reported to be well known to the local population.<sup>38</sup> Turkey originally expected to complete clearance of mines along the Syria border by the end of 2019.<sup>39</sup>

A bidding process for clearance operations on the Syrian border, initiated in February 2012, was officially cancelled in June 2013 due to armed conflict in Syria.<sup>40</sup> However, construction of the Border Security Surveillance System began along Turkey’s border with Syria, began in 2015.<sup>41</sup> Once completed, the Border Security Surveillance System will reportedly allow for planned demining of the Syrian border to commence.<sup>42</sup> According to online media sources, the three-metre-high wall is being built behind minefields and deep ditches, and is reinforced with barbed wire and steel fences, and there are also watch towers and around the clock military patrols.<sup>43</sup>

To enable safe construction of the Border Security Surveillance System, which consists of a 730km-long modular concrete wall and impoundment (supported by a fence), roads, and surveillance system, military demining teams have been deployed along the Syria border.<sup>44</sup> Demining efforts in support of the construction of the surveillance system also include survey and clearance of areas suspected or confirmed to contain mines of an improvised nature and other explosive devices deployed by non-state armed groups.<sup>45</sup> As at December 2017, TURMAC expected that the Border Security Surveillance System would be completed in May 2018 and that humanitarian demining could start.<sup>46</sup>

### Eastern borders

Turkey's 2013 Article 5 extension request sets out plans for clearance of its eastern borders, beginning with the Armenian border and continuing southwards to the borders with Azerbaijan, Iran, and Iraq.<sup>47</sup> It was forecast that 13.5km<sup>2</sup> would be cleared in Phase 1 of the project and 2.4km<sup>2</sup> in Phase 2 (see below), as part of an EU project envisaged to start by the end of 2014.<sup>48</sup>

In 2015, Turkey confirmed that mine clearance along the eastern borders would be carried out as part of a two-phase EU Integrated Border Management Project, under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior in a joint project with UNDP.<sup>49</sup> The project, which is funded by the EU, Turkey, and the UN, was launched in May 2015 to address the humanitarian and border management challenges posed by mine contamination, aims to contribute to social and economic development through demining and more secure borders in Eastern Turkey.<sup>50</sup>

Phase 1, scheduled for 2015–17, was expected to result in the clearance of 223 mined areas over an area of just less than 11.67km<sup>2</sup> and the destruction of 189,863 anti-personnel mines.<sup>51</sup> Phase 2 of the project was scheduled for 2017–19, but the number of mined areas and total area to be cleared is yet to be determined, and is subject to continuing survey.<sup>52</sup> A budget of €26.4 million was allocated for the first phase and €13.4 million for the second.<sup>53</sup> With the establishment of TURMAC, the mine action centre became the main government partner to UNDP in the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project. Under the project, UNDP is managing the demining operations and quality assurance along the eastern border and supporting capacity development of TURMAC.<sup>54</sup> It also reported encouraging TURMAC to apply efficient land release practice and make use of evidence-based survey (instead of full clearance) to confirm the presence or absence of mines in areas between marked minefields.<sup>55</sup>

The demining tender for the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project was awarded to Denel MECHEM (MECHEM), as part of a consortium in which national operators would be sub-contracted by MECHEM.<sup>56</sup> Clearance operations for Phase 1 of the project began in June 2016, and were completed by the end of 2017.<sup>57</sup> A total of almost 3.3km<sup>2</sup> of mined area was released (637,685m<sup>2</sup> cleared, 75,445m<sup>2</sup> reduced, and 2,583,100m<sup>2</sup> cancelled) and more than 24,000 mines were destroyed in 2016 and 2017, indicating the adoption of an effective land release approach by Turkey, with efficient use of survey to confirm contaminated areas for clearance, and to cancel areas found not to be contaminated.

Nonetheless, the land release output from Phase 1 of the project, totalling just less than 11.67km<sup>2</sup>, was significantly less than the 223 mined areas, which Turkey envisaged in the workplan included in its Article 7 transparency report submitted in 2015.<sup>58</sup>

Phase 2 of the project, which was expected to start in May 2018, was planned to result in the release at least 1.2km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>59</sup>

### South-eastern/Iraqi border

As at June 2017, Turkey reportedly planned for survey of suspected mined area in Sirnak Province (in parts of the province bordering Iraq) in 2018 and of confirmed mined area in this province in 2019; and of suspected mined area in Hakkari Province in 2019.<sup>60</sup> Clearance along the south-eastern/Iraqi border was not scheduled to commence until 2019, after completion of Phase 2 of the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project,<sup>61</sup> and because of the conflict in Syria.<sup>62</sup> Clearance of the 969 mined areas, totalling just over 2.86km<sup>2</sup>, was scheduled to take place in 2019–21, with the destruction of 79,017 anti-personnel mines. This represents all known mine contamination in this region. The resources for the clearance were to be determined by TURMAC.<sup>63</sup>

However, no mention of any survey or clearance having been conducted in this region, or future plans to do so, was made in Turkey's latest Article 7 transparency report (for 2017).<sup>64</sup>

### Non-border areas

In its 2013 Article 5 deadline extension request, Turkey reported that partial clearance in non-border areas would be conducted by the Turkish armed forces until the establishment of an operational NMAA and mine action centre and a subsequent tendering process. It was expected that clearance would be conducted in 2015–22. No dedicated budget was allocated for clearance in these interior regions, and as at 2013, mine clearance in non-border areas to-date had been conducted only on a very limited scale, for instance to clear paths in case of urgent need.<sup>65</sup> At the time of its updated workplan, submitted in 2015, Turkey estimated that all 873 mined areas in non-border areas would be cleared by 2021, amounting to total clearance of 3.1km<sup>2</sup>, with the destruction of 34,410 anti-personnel mines. This represents all known mine contamination in the region.<sup>66</sup>

Of the total interior contaminated area, the Turkish armed forces were forecast to clear 280 mined areas over 1.51km<sup>2</sup> with the destruction of 18,558 anti-personnel mines. Cleared areas were planned to be certified and opened for humanitarian use following the establishment of the NMAC,<sup>67</sup> which has now been established. The remaining 593 mined areas, over 1.59km<sup>2</sup>, including destruction of 15,852 anti-personnel mines, were forecast to be cleared in accordance with the mine action plan, once it has been finalised and adopted. A budget for clearance of Turkish Lira 84.3 million (approx. \$29 million) was due to be elaborated in detail by TURMAC.<sup>68</sup> In this region, Turkey prioritises mine clearance activities based on areas used for military operations; areas with low or no risk of terrorist threat; and areas where the local population may benefit from agriculture and livestock.<sup>69</sup>

No mine clearance took place in non-border areas in 2016<sup>70</sup> or 2017. This was reportedly due to ongoing capacity development efforts and prioritisation of clearance for the construction of the wall and customs area on the Syrian border.<sup>71</sup>

Turkey has reported that demining activities will soon commence in the non-border areas, which account for less than 2% of all contaminated areas in Turkey, and that non-technical survey is planned for 2018.<sup>72</sup>

## Legislation and Standards

As noted above, national mine action legislation was adopted in January 2015.

To date, demining has proceeded on the basis of provisional standards, using the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) as a template.<sup>73</sup>

UNDP and the GICHD are assisting TURMAC to formulate new national mine action standards based upon IMAS and the provisional standards elaborated for the EU eastern border clearance projects.<sup>74</sup> Turkey reported that it had developed a land release policy relating to the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project, which will allow for efficient land release.

In April 2017, a set of National Mine Action Standards, including a land release policy, were sent to the National Standards Institute of Turkey for approval; this was expected to occur in the course of 2018.<sup>75</sup> The first meeting of the National Standard Review Board was due to be held in the first half of 2018 and thereafter twice a year, attended by the relevant agencies.<sup>76</sup>

In its latest Article 7 transparency report, Turkey reported that development of SOPs was still underway.<sup>77</sup>

## Quality Management

As part of its mandate under the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project in Turkey, UNDP is responsible for managing mine clearance services, quality assurance (QA)/quality control (QC) services and post-clearance certification to provide confidence that clearance and quality requirements defined in the standards have been met and that cleared land is safe for use.<sup>78</sup> UNDP has reported that, following an international competitive tender process, it awarded a contract for QA/QC services to RPS-Explosive Engineering Services in March 2016. In April 2016, UNDP and TURMAC completed the accreditation of RPS-Explosive Engineering Services, and the company began the accreditation process for the mine clearance contractor under the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project.<sup>79</sup> In addition, TURMAC oversees on-site operations and regularly attends operational working group meetings in the field.<sup>80</sup>

In 2017, TURMAC personnel were given training in ISO 9001 quality management system (a total of 12 courses), as well as mine action quality management training by GICHD. The quality management of military demining troops will be conducted by TURMAC personnel.<sup>81</sup>

## Information Management

UNDP and the GICHD are supporting TURMAC for the establishment of a functioning information management (IM) system.<sup>82</sup> UNDP maintained a project database to record all operational data related to Phase 1 of the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project, until a national mine action database could be established in TURMAC.<sup>83</sup>

In its Article 7 transparency report for 2016, Turkey reported that it planned to establish IMSMA and provide training to TURMAC personnel in 2017.<sup>84</sup> As at December 2017, the IMSMA system had been established<sup>85</sup> and was expected to become fully operational in 2018.<sup>86</sup> A significant number of personnel both from TURMAC and military demining troops have been trained on IMSMA. In addition to military demining troops, IMSMA will also be used in Phase 2 of the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project.<sup>87</sup>

Due to national security concerns, much of the minefield data remains classified, presenting a challenge to mine action information management in Turkey.<sup>88</sup>

## Operators

In 2017, mine clearance operations in Turkey were conducted by MECHEM, under the Eastern Border Mine Clearance project, and by the Turkish Armed Forces along the Syria border, to support construction of the Border Security Surveillance System.<sup>89</sup>

MECHEM, a South African company, which is partnering with national sub-contractor Altay, was awarded the tender for mine clearance under Phase 1 of the EU Eastern Border Mine Clearance project by UNDP in December 2015.<sup>90</sup> MECHEM was subsequently accredited in Turkey, and as at June 2017, was employing 140 deminers, although it was planning to increase capacity to 200 in July of the same year. Accreditation for mine detection dogs (MDDs) was granted in 2017, and as at June 2017, 30 MDDs were being deployed by MECHEM, along with one MineWolf machine.<sup>91</sup> As noted above, RPS, a United Kingdom-based company, was contracted for QA and QC.<sup>92</sup>

Military demining troops were accredited for their manual demining capacity in 2017.<sup>93</sup> As at June 2017, demining units of the Turkish Armed Forces had a total operational capacity of 85 deminers, 6 MDDs, and 4 machines.<sup>94</sup> In December 2017, Turkey reported that it planned to triple the number of military demining units in 2018,<sup>95</sup> and in its latest Article 7 report, Turkey reported that the establishment of five new demining companies had been approved by the Ministry of National Defence. The procurement of equipment, including demining equipment, for the new demining companies was reported to be underway and was planned to be finalised before the end of 2018. Three of the five new teams were planned to be operational by the end of 2018 and the remaining two teams in 2019.<sup>96</sup>

## LAND RELEASE

In 2017, Turkey reported a total of more than 0.82km<sup>2</sup> of clearance, during which 26,381 anti-personnel mines and 29 anti-vehicle mines were destroyed.<sup>97</sup> In addition, Turkey released a further 0.07km<sup>2</sup> through technical survey and cancelled more than 7.5km<sup>2</sup> through non-technical survey.

However, survey and clearance data reported by Turkey in its Article 7 report for 2017 includes the amount of land (in square metres) released by Turkish armed forces for both 2016 and 2017, which was not formally reported previously. The survey output (in m<sup>2</sup>) reported for MECHEM for 2017, also includes 2016 output.<sup>98</sup>

### Survey in 2017

In 2016 and 2017, Turkey cancelled more than 7.5km<sup>2</sup> of mined area (2.58km<sup>2</sup> on the Iran border and 5km<sup>2</sup> on the Syria border) and reduced over 75,000m<sup>2</sup> through technical survey (see Table 2).<sup>99</sup> Results of a comprehensive desk assessment of minefield records of the Eastern and Syrian Borders conducted in 2016 were not reported in Turkey's transparency report for 2016,<sup>100</sup> and were instead included in the latest reporting for 2017.<sup>101</sup>

**Table 2: Anti-personnel mine survey in 2017<sup>102</sup>**

Province	Operator	Area cancelled by NTS (m <sup>2</sup> )	Area reduced by TS (m <sup>2</sup> )
Iran border	MECHEM	2,583,110	75,445
Syria border	Turkish Army Demining Units	5,000,000	0
<b>Totals</b>		<b>7,583,110</b>	<b>75,445</b>

NTS = Non-technical survey TS = Technical survey

On the Syrian Border, non-technical survey was conducted in Hatay Region, where it was found that the areas registered as suspected had been used as agricultural land for many decades and the area has been mine free. Consequently, approximately 5km<sup>2</sup> of suspect area has been cancelled.<sup>103</sup>

In addition, with respect to non-border areas, Turkey reported that non-technical survey had been conducted at a previously used military range (2.5km<sup>2</sup>) in Eskişehir province, where the Trans-Anatolia Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) project will be built. The area "was determined

as safe and delivered to the relevant authorities".<sup>104</sup> This area was not included in Turkey's cancellation figures for 2017, and it is unclear whether or not this area was recorded as a suspected mined area in the first instance.

### Clearance in 2017

In its Article 7 transparency report for 2017, more than 0.82km<sup>2</sup> was reported as cleared: over 0.57km<sup>2</sup> on the eastern border with Iran and 0.25km<sup>2</sup> on the Syrian border (see Table 3). The area of land cleared on the Syrian border, however, relates to clearance in both 2016 and 2017.

**Table 3: Anti-personnel mine clearance in 2017<sup>105</sup>**

Province	Operator	Area cleared (m <sup>2</sup> )	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed
Iran border*	MECHEM	514,921	15,667	0
	Turkish Army Demining Units	59,195	10,679	0
Syria border	Turkish Army Demining Units	250,000	35	29
<b>Totals</b>		<b>824,116</b>	<b>26,381</b>	<b>29</b>

\* A section of mined area also intersects with the Azerbaijan border. Demining operations in this area were initiated in 2017. The work along the Azerbaijani border segment is planned to be completed in 2018.

On the eastern border with Iran, MECHEM, with sub-contracting partner Altay, cleared 514,921m<sup>2</sup> in 2017, under Phase 1 of the EU Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project. In addition, military Demining Troops cleared a further 59,195m<sup>2</sup> of land on the Iran border, which "accounts for approximately 1 million m<sup>2</sup> of suspected hazardous area in Iğdır province and Doğubeyazıt district of Agri province." Turkey also reported that "The land will be released in 2018 after verification. Additional minefields which accounts for 603,710m<sup>2</sup> of contaminated area will also be released." During these operations, "IMSMA has been used and quality control is assured".<sup>106</sup>

Turkey also reported clearance of 250,000m<sup>2</sup> by military demining units in Karkamış and Elbeyli regions on the Syrian border, with the destruction of 25 anti-personnel mines and 29 anti-vehicle mines.<sup>107</sup> However, this relates to land released through clearance for both 2016 and 2017.

Clearance on the Syrian border was conducted as part of demining efforts in support of the construction of the Border Security Surveillance System, with the released land delivered to the relevant authorities to be used as customs areas.<sup>108</sup> While Turkey did report destruction of 414 anti-personnel mines in its Article 7 report for 2016, as part of this Syria border project, it did not formally report the corresponding area cleared (in m<sup>2</sup>), as QA/QC procedures had not yet been completed, and the Turkish armed forces demining units were not yet

accredited operationally at that time.<sup>109</sup> It did, however, report to Mine Action Review that more than 3.3km<sup>2</sup> had been cleared long the Syria border in 2016.<sup>110</sup> Based on the 250,000m<sup>2</sup> clearance subsequently reported by Turkey in its most recent Article 7 report, it appears that the 3.3km<sup>2</sup> reported previously to Mine Action Review was inaccurate and included a significant proportion of cancelled area, not just clearance output.

No mine clearance was conducted in 2016 or 2017 along the South-eastern/Iraqi border or in non-border areas.<sup>111</sup>

## ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Under Article 5 of the APMBBC (and in accordance with the eight-year extension granted by states parties in 2013), Turkey is required to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 March 2022. Turkey will not meet this deadline.

Turkey's original Article 5 deadline was 1 March 2014. In 2012, Turkey acknowledged to the Twelfth Meeting of States Parties that it would seek an extension to its deadline.<sup>112</sup> In March 2013, Turkey submitted a request for an eight-year extension to its deadline until 2022 to complete clearance of all mined areas. Turkey stated that the envisaged timeframe was subject to revision pending progress with tenders and clearance activities on the ground.<sup>113</sup>

In its 2013 extension request, Turkey cited a number of circumstances that had impeded it from carrying out mine clearance, including: delays in the establishment of an NMAA and NMAC which will supervise clearance activities; adverse weather conditions allowing clearance to be conducted for only five or six months a year; security problems posed by the continuation of the terrorist threat; mined territory contaminated with metal residue resulting from the fight against terrorism; uncertainties about the mine-free status of some areas due to the irregular completion of registration forms; and topographical challenges. According to Turkey, the eastern and south-eastern borders and non-border areas are the most complicated to address due to topographical difficulties.<sup>114</sup>

The 2013 extension request provided more detail on Turkey's mine contamination and its plans to tackle them than had previously been the case, but shed no light on some key issues, creating uncertainty over the prospects of it fulfilling its clearance obligations. No budget had at that time been allocated for clearance of mined areas in the interior of the country, which have caused most of Turkey's mine casualties. A budget was subsequently allocated in Turkey's updated workplan, submitted in March 2015.<sup>115</sup>

Turkey revealed in its 2013 extension request that since 1998 it had only cleared a total of 1.15km<sup>2</sup> of mined area, close to three-quarters of which took place in one year (2011), with destruction of 760 anti-personnel mines and 974 anti-vehicle mines. In addition, military teams had cleared 24,287 mines, but only to allow safe movement of troops, not to release a contaminated area.<sup>116</sup>

Turkey's total mine clearance to date only amounts to a tiny fraction of its overall mine contamination, and more than 14 years after becoming a state party to the APMBBC, Turkey has only made marginal progress in addressing mine contamination. While mine clearance has subsequently also taken place in 2014, 2016, and 2017, little more than 1.1km<sup>2</sup> of mined area has been cleared in total over the last five years (see Table 4).

Commencement of clearance operations in June 2016, for Phase 1 of the EU Eastern Borders Project (in the provinces of Ardahan, Kars, Igdir, and Agri), was a welcome development. Phase 1 of the project was completed by the end of 2017 and Phase 2 began in 2018. Funding for first two Phases of this project is provided by the EU (75% of funding), Turkey (24%), and the UN (1%).<sup>117</sup> As at June 2017, Turkey was in the process of determining how to fund Phase 3 of the project.<sup>118</sup> Implementation of the project in the provinces of Van and Hakkari risked facing significant security challenges if fighting continues between Turkey and the PKK.

**Table 4: Mine clearance in 2013–17<sup>119</sup>**

Year	Area cleared (m <sup>2</sup> )
2017	824,116
2016	122,764
2015	0
2014	157,251
2013	N/K
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,104,131</b>

N/K = Not known

The adoption in January 2015 of a mine action law, and the subsequent establishment of TURMAC was also a very positive development and is central to Turkey's national ownership of its mine action programme. With capacity development support from UNDP and the GICHD, TURMAC has made steady process towards becoming operational and assuming management and coordination of mine action in Turkey.

However, Turkey's updated workplan for Article 5 implementation, submitted in March 2015 only included plans to address a small portion (10%) of overall mine contamination, and it is unclear how and when the remaining contamination will be addressed.



TURMAC's draft national strategic mine action plan for 2019–2021, which has yet to be formally approved or published, also reportedly includes plans for survey of SHA and CHA in the south-eastern/Iraqi border, the Syrian border, and non-border areas.<sup>120</sup>

Based on the current rate of clearance, Turkey will not complete implementation of Article 5 by its deadline in 2022. While TURMAC is planning to meet its Article 5 deadline it also recognises potential obstacles, including: the possibility that the demining contractor for the EU Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project will not meet its deadline for Phase 1; potential delays to the EU Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project for Phase 2; the fact that political uncertainties in Syria and Iraq may hinder survey and clearance activities on these borders, in addition to non-state armed groups hindering demining operations in other areas; and weather conditions limiting clearance to no more than seven months a year.<sup>121</sup>

TURMAC is entirely funded by national funding,<sup>122</sup> as are Turkish Armed Forces demining units.<sup>123</sup> In its latest Article 7 report, Turkey reported that it invests approximately US\$13 million for the procurement of new equipment to establish new demining companies, but it did not specify over what period.<sup>124</sup>

In addition, Turkey reported that it provided approximately €10 million (approx. 11.6 million US\$) to the Eastern Borders mine clearance project, which is implemented by UNDP and funded by the EU and the UN.<sup>125</sup>

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| <p>1 UN Security Council Resolution 2430 (2018), para. 15.</p> <p>2 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form D.</p> <p>3 Ibid.; and email from Lt. Col Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.</p> <p>4 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, pp. A-1 and A-5.</p> <p>5 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form D.</p> <p>6 Statement of Turkey, Standing Committee on Mine Action, Geneva, 23 May 2012; and Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-1.</p> <p>7 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, pp. A-1 and A-5.</p> <p>8 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form D.</p> <p>9 Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by Elif Comoglu Ulgen, Head, Disarmament and Arms Control Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 14 July 2008.</p> <p>10 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-5.</p> <p>11 Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form C.</p> <p>12 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, pp. A-2, and A-5.</p> <p>13 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities".</p> <p>14 Article 7 Report (for 2014), Form F, and Annex II.</p> <p>15 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, pp. A-4 and A-7.</p> <p>16 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form H.</p> <p>17 Turkey's Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013.</p> <p>18 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. 3.</p> <p>19 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", Annex 1; and Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report, Form A, 2015.</p> <p>20 Ibid.</p> <p>21 Article 7 Report (for 2014), Form F.</p> <p>22 Interview with Gen. Celalettin Coban, Director, TURMAC, and Col. Ali Güngör, Mine Action Officer, Strategic Planning Branch, TURMAC, in Geneva, 18 February 2016.</p> <p>23 Ibid.</p> <p>24 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A.</p> <p>25 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form H; Statement of Turkey, Standing Committee on Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance, Geneva, 8 June 2017; and Statement of Turkey on International Cooperation and Assistance, 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 21 December 2017.</p> <p>26 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Form A; and Statement of Turkey, Standing Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Geneva, 8 June 2017.</p> | <p>27 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A; and Statement of Turkey, 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.</p> <p>28 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A.</p> <p>29 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities"; and CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report, Form A, 2015.</p> <p>30 Interview with Gönenç Ağâ cikoğlu, Head of Section, Deputy Directorate General for the OSCE, Arms Control and Disarmament, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Dubrovnik, 11 September 2015.</p> <p>31 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.</p> <p>32 Statement of Turkey, 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.</p> <p>33 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A.</p> <p>34 Ibid.</p> <p>35 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.</p> <p>36 Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form F; and email from Lt. Col Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.</p> <p>37 ICBL interview with Ömer Burhan Tüzel, Serhan Yiğit, and Ramazan Ercan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Abdullah Özbek, Ministry of Interior, Ankara, 5 May 2011.</p> <p>38 Statement of Turkey, 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 29 November 2016.</p> <p>39 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, pp. A-2, A-13, and A-14.</p> <p>40 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", pp. 3 and 8; and statement of Turkey, 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 29 November 2016.</p> <p>41 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.</p> <p>42 Interview with Col. Zaki Eren, Director of Operations Department and Acting Director of TURMAC, and Maj. Can Ceylan, head of QM Section, 20 December 2018, Vienna.</p> <p>43 "Walls, drones and mines: Turkey tightens border as Syria incursion deepens", <i>Reuters</i>, 3 March 2017; and "Amid terror threats, Turkey extends its 'Great Wall' on Syrian border", <i>Daily Sabah Turkey</i>, 3 January 2017.</p> <p>44 Article 7 Reports (for 2016 and 2017), Form A.</p> <p>45 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.</p> <p>46 Interview with Col. Zaki Eren and Maj. Can Ceylan, TURMAC, in Vienna, 20 December 2017.</p> <p>47 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-14.</p> <p>48 Ibid., pp. A-3, A-14, and A-15.</p> |
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- 49 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", p. 6.
- 50 UNDP, "Mine Action Programming: Turkey", February 2016, at: <http://www.mineaction.org/sites/default/files/documents/UNDP%20Turkey%20One-Pager%20revised%20FEB2016.pdf>.
- 51 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", p. 7; UNDP subsequently announced slightly revised figures for Phase 1, reporting a plan to clear 551 minefields covering more than 15km<sup>2</sup>, and to destroy a total of 222,000 landmines along the border with Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Iran. UNDP, "Turkey, UNDP begin clearing landmines along eastern borders", 4 April 2016.
- 52 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", p. 7.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Email from Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, 3 October 2016.
- 55 Interview with Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, Geneva, 7 September 2016.
- 56 Interview with Gen. Celalettin Coban and Col. Ali Güngör, TURMAC, in Geneva, 18 February 2016.
- 57 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017; Interview with Col. Zaki Eren and Maj. Can Ceylan, TURMAC, 20 December 2018, Vienna; and Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A.
- 58 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities".
- 59 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A.
- 60 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 61 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", p. 7.
- 62 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 63 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", pp. 7 and 8.
- 64 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A.
- 65 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-4.
- 66 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", pp. 5 and 6.
- 67 Ibid., pp. 4 and 5.
- 68 Ibid., p. 6.
- 69 Ibid., p. 4.
- 70 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 71 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A.
- 72 Statement of Turkey, 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017; and Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A.
- 73 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities".
- 74 Email from Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, 3 October 2016; and Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form F.
- 75 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A; and Statement of Turkey, 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
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- 79 Email from Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, 3 October 2016; and UNDP, "Preparatory work for demining", undated, accessed 26 July 2016, at: [http://www.tr.undp.org/content/turkey/en/home/operations/projects/democratic\\_governance/preparatory-work-for-demining.html](http://www.tr.undp.org/content/turkey/en/home/operations/projects/democratic_governance/preparatory-work-for-demining.html).
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- 85 Statement of Turkey, 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
- 86 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A.
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 Interview with Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, Geneva, 7 September 2016.
- 89 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017; and interview with Col. Zaki Eren and Maj. Can Ceylan, TURMAC, 20 December 2018, Vienna; and Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A.
- 90 UNDP, "Turkey, UNDP begin clearing landmine along eastern borders", 4 April 2016.
- 91 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 92 UNDP, "Turkey, UNDP begin clearing landmine along eastern borders", 4 April 2016.
- 93 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A; and Statement of Turkey, 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties, Vienna, 20 December 2017.
- 94 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
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- 97 Ibid., Form D.
- 98 Article 7 Report (for 2016), Forms A and D; Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form D; and email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 99 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A.
- 100 Ibid.; and Statement of Turkey, Standing Committee on Victim Assistance, Geneva, 8 June 2017.
- 101 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A.
- 102 Ibid.
- 103 Ibid.
- 104 Ibid.
- 105 Ibid., Form D.
- 106 Ibid., Form A.
- 107 Ibid., Form D.
- 108 Ibid., Forms A and D.
- 109 Interview with Col. Aydın İmren and Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, in Geneva, 7 February 2017.
- 110 Emails from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017, and Cpt. Ahmet Gun, TURMAC, 16 November 2017.
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- 112 Statements of Turkey, 11th Meeting of States Parties, Phnom Penh, 1 December 2011; and 12th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 5 December 2012.
- 113 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-13.
- 114 Ibid., pp. A-11, A-12.
- 115 Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities".
- 116 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, pp. A-8 and A-9.
- 117 Emails from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017, and Cpt. Ahmet Gun, TURMAC, 16 November 2017.
- 118 Ibid.
- 119 See Landmine Monitor and Mine Action Review reports on clearance in Turkey covering 2012-16; and Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-9.
- 120 Email from Lt.-Col. Halil Şen, TURMAC, 21 June 2017.
- 121 Ibid.
- 122 Ibid.
- 123 Ibid.
- 124 Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form H.
- 125 Ibid.