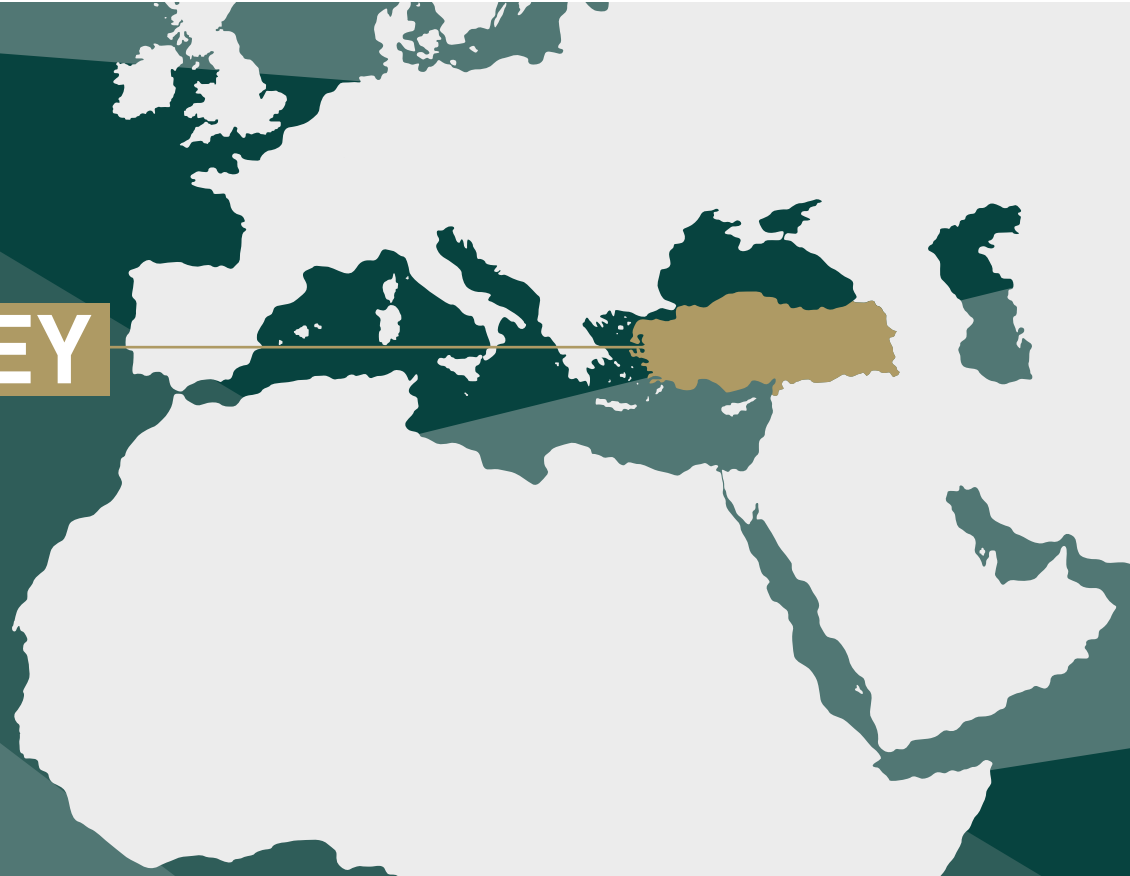


TURKEY



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

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE	For 2015	For 2014
Problem understood	7	7
Target date for completion of mine clearance	2	2
Targeted clearance	4	4
Efficient clearance	4	3
National funding of programme	6	6
Timely clearance	2	2
Land release system in place	6	6
National mine action standards	6	6
Reporting on progress	6	6
Improving performance	6	7
PERFORMANCE SCORE: POOR	4.9	4.9

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

In 2015, Turkey continued efforts towards operationalising the newly established Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC), and implementation of its March 2015 workplan for mine clearance. In June 2016, mine clearance operations, managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), commenced for Phase 1 of the European Union (EU) Eastern Border Mine Clearance project. However, despite these positive developments, Turkey is not on track to meet its extended Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 clearance deadline of March 2022, and it failed to conduct any clearance in 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Turkey should move forward, without delay, with the clearance of non-border areas.
- TURMAC should provide additional details of ongoing survey of eastern border areas, and also provide information on how and when it will address the huge contamination in this region that is not specified in its March 2015 workplan.
- TURMAC should re-consider its decision not to begin clearance on the Syrian border, where minefields under Turkish jurisdiction pose a risk to civilians fleeing fighting across the border.
- TURMAC should ensure application of best practice in land release, prioritising technical survey over full clearance, to accurately determine the actual contaminated area.
- Turkey should report on plans for clearance of mined areas under its control in northern Cyprus, in order to meet all of its APMBC Article 5 obligations.
- Turkey and Cyprus should both heed the UN Secretary-General's call to facilitate access to all mined areas inside and outside the Buffer Zone to achieve a mine-free Cyprus.¹

CONTAMINATION

Turkey has almost 173km² of confirmed mined area across 3,080 areas, 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 is unknown.² The baseline mine contamination was unchanged between the end of 2014 and the end of 2015, with the exception of the number of anti-personnel mines in confirmed mined areas. The number of these mines decreased by 1,532, which, according to Turkey, is the result of destruction of anti-personnel mines due to "explosions caused by various reasons" and "discoveries" in minefields located along the borders with Armenia, Iran, and Syria.³

1 UN Security Council Resolution 2300 (2016), §11; and Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2016/598, 8 July 2016, p. 8.

2 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form C, and Annex 1.

3 APMBC Article 7 Reports (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities"; and (for 2015), Form G.

Table 1: Mine contamination as at end 2015⁴

Contamination	SHAs	CHAs	Total mined areas	Area of CHA (km ²)
AP mines	617	1,772	2,389	28.40
AP and AV mines	84	1,308	1,392	144.29
Totals	701	3,080	3,781	172.69

AP = Anti-personnel AV = Anti-vehicle SHA = Suspected hazardous area

Turkey is contaminated with anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines, as well as improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The great majority of anti-personnel mines in Turkey are found along its borders, and were laid in 1955–59 all along the border with Syria, as well as on some sections of the border with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran, and Iraq. According to Turkey, its western borders with Bulgaria and Greece, as well as the border with Georgia, are mine-free.⁵ Mines were also laid around military installations.⁶

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 1998.⁷ 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.⁸

Eighteen of the 81 provinces in Turkey still contain mined areas, as set out in Table 2. The reported contamination includes 157,251m² of mined area cleared in 2014, but not yet deducted from the total because mine clearance units of the Turkish Armed Forces had not yet been accredited by the newly established TURMAC.⁹

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 suspected mined areas. Furthermore, fewer mines are expected along the Syrian border than indicated because of detonations by smugglers and as a result of wildfires.¹⁰

4 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2015), Forms C and F, and Annex 1.

5 Statement of Turkey, APMBC Intersessional Meetings (Standing Committee on Mine Action), Geneva, 23 May 2012; and Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-1.

6 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, pp. A-1 and A-5.

7 Response to Landmine Monitor questionnaire by Elif Comoglu Ulgen, Head, Disarmament and Arms Control Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 14 July 2008.

8 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-5.

9 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2014), Form F.

10 Ibid. (for 2015), Form C.

Table 2: Contamination by province as at end 2015¹¹

Region	Province	SHAs	CHAs	Area of CHA (m ²)	AP mines in CHAs	AV mines in CHAs
Non-border areas	Siirt	8	28	722,000	1,246	0
	Ardahan	0	4	169,800	418	0
	Hakkari	97	84	187,168	3,353	0
	Sirnak	82	210	930,022	18,595	0
	Van	6	5	24,500	110	0
	Diyarbakir	0	21	133,824	851	0
	Batman	0	15	516,350	99	0
	Mardin	1	19	38,483	352	0
	Tunceli	5	153	351,277	8,651	0
	Bingol	2	58	19,175	275	0
	Bitlis	5	70	15,250	460	0
Armenian border	Ardahan	0	15	425,707	9,685	0
	Kars	0	22	641,200	10,574	0
	Igdir	0	5	30,170	16	0
Iranian border*	Igdir	0	15	3,540,540	44,353	0
	Agri	0	116	5,556,400	105,484	0
	Van	30	109	12,180,500	41,704	0
	Hakkari	8	227	52,371	15,657	0
Iraqi border	Hakkari	310	304	425,313	18,607	0
	Sirnak	63	292	2,437,522	60,410	0
Syrian border	Hatay	18	170	13,466,902	21,041	21,112
	Gaziantep	0	397	15,549,945	74,054	22,009
	Kilis	0	366	30,846,427	102,546	33,417
	Sanlururfa	50	123	17,250,597	114,245	74,204
	Mardin	0	230	58,072,000	94,062	42,227
	Sirnak	16	22	9,104,560	8,041	1,709
Totals		701	3,080	172,688,003	754,889	194,678

* Some mined areas also intersect with Turkey's border with Azerbaijan.¹²

In its Article 5 deadline extension request, submitted in March 2013, Turkey estimated that a total of 3,520 confirmed and suspected mined areas covered almost 215km². This estimate was provisional as the size of the (then) 346 suspected mined areas was unknown.¹³

In March 2015, Turkey submitted 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 cover almost 173km².¹⁴ The area of contamination and the number of emplaced mines are not known for the 701 SHAs; therefore the total estimated contaminated area is likely to be significantly larger. The greatest mined area is on the border with Syria (144.29km²), with smaller areas on the borders with Iran (21.33km²), Iraq (2.86km²), and Armenia (1.10km²). A further 873 mined areas covering a total of 3.11km² have been identified in "areas other than borders".¹⁵

11 APMB Article 7 Report (for 2015), Forms C and F, and Annex 1.

12 Ibid.

13 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, pp. A-2, and A-5.

14 APMB Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities".

15 Ibid.

In Annex II to its updated workplan, Turkey offered a comparison between contamination reported at the time of its 2013 Article 5 extension request and the revised contamination data reported in its 2015 workplan.¹⁶ The comparison showed that in border areas the number of SHAs rose by 216, while the number of CHAs went down by 118, corresponding to a 41.39km² reduction in CHA between the 2013 extension request and the 2015 workplan. In non-border areas the number of CHAs increased by 30, with the area of CHA increasing by 0.49km² between the two datasets. In addition, the number of SHAs in non-border areas increased by 139.

Turkey's explanations for these differences included the following:

- Mis-registration of some explosions, as revealed by detailed analysis and comparison of mine clearance and incident reports;
- Re-registration of minefields which were initially cleared and de-registered from records, but not duly certified;
- Correction of minefield registers where some of the minefields were found to be registered more than once; improper completion of registration forms, including minefield coordinates;
- Relocation of mines over time due to natural resources; inability to thoroughly check some area for mines due to continuing terrorist activity; and
- Re-registration of some minefields along the borders from "minefields in areas other than borders" to "minefields for the eastern, south-eastern (Iraqi border)", and vice versa, following transfer of responsibility of border areas from the Gendarmerie General Command to the Turkish Land Forces.¹⁷

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.¹⁸

According to Turkey's 2013 Article 5 deadline extension request, in the nine years preceding Turkey's adherence to the APMBC, 316 people were killed and 734 injured by anti-personnel mine blasts. Of this, military personnel accounted for 260 of the dead and 622 of the injured.¹⁹ Turkey further reported 26 new casualties, including 1 fatality, from anti-personnel mines in 2014.²⁰ In 2015, Turkey reported 215 casualties, including 29 fatalities from anti-personnel mines.²¹ It is likely, however, that casualties are under-reported.

Northern Cyprus

Cyprus is also contaminated with anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines in areas under the control of Turkish forces. The extent of this contamination is not known. Cyprus reported in its latest APMBC Article 7 transparency report (for 2015) that at least 20 minefields laid and maintained in the occupied areas by Turkish forces are still to be cleared of anti-personnel mines, one of which is situated within the UN-managed Buffer Zone that separates the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.²² According to the UN, some military mine clearance appears to have been conducted over most locations still recorded as minefields.²³

Twenty-eight known minefields laid by the Cypriot National Guard prior to the 1974 Turkish invasion, north of Nicosia towards the Pentadaktylos mountain range, are today located in the Turkish-occupied areas. The minefields reportedly contain 1,006 anti-personnel mines, but the Republic of Cyprus was not aware of the condition of these minefields and whether they have been cleared by the Turkish armed forces.²⁴ The President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades, provided the northern Cyprus president, Mustafa Akinci, with coordinates of the 28 minefields during a meeting on 15 May 2015.²⁵

On 4 June 2015, the northern Cyprus president asked for assistance to address the 28 minefields. In response, and with the view to facilitating future demining, the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and UNMAS worked to refine the data and map out the minefields, which are suspected to contain both anti-vehicle and anti-personnel mines.²⁶ NTS to assess the scope of the contamination and requirements for subsequent clearance started on 18 June²⁷ and was completed on 7 July 2015.²⁸ The survey was conducted by UNMAS, supported by Turkish Engineering Forces, in conjunction with UNFICYP.²⁹

16 Ibid., Form F, and Annex II to the "Workplan for mine clearance activities".

17 Ibid.

18 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, pp. A-4 and A-7.

19 Ibid.

20 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2014), Form J.

21 Ibid.

22 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form C.

23 Email from Julie Myers, Programme Officer, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS Chief of Operations, and Major Mike Holgate, UNFICYP Mine Action Officer), 6 October 2016.

24 APMBC Article 7 Reports (for 2014 and 2015), Form C.

25 Report of the Secretary-General on the UN Operation in Cyprus, 2 July 2015, p. 1.

26 Ibid., pp. 1 and 7.

27 Ibid., p. 3.

28 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Timothy Roberts, UNMAS Lebanon), 4 October 2015.

29 Ibid.

During the survey, a total of 321,363m² was cancelled while 92,963m² was confirmed as mined. This covered the 28 minefields referred to above (one of which was sub-divided into three minefields), of which 25 were cancelled, totalling 321,363m², and the remaining 5 areas, totalling 6,163m², were confirmed as mined. An additional 13 minefields were cancelled (area not verified), while 9 other suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) were confirmed as mined, totalling 86,800m².³⁰

UNFICYP reported that the Cambodian CAMBCOY team that conducted clearance in the Mammari area of the Buffer Zone in 2015 subsequently surveyed and cleared an additional 1,847m² around Lefka-Aplici in northern Cyprus later in 2015, destroying 31 anti-vehicle mines and 1 trip-flare in the process.³¹ In addition, a technical survey of Dherynia was conducted as part of confidence-building measures to open up new crossing points, as agreed by the leaders on 28 May 2015. During the survey, 240,914m² was cancelled in the western portion of the SHA.³²

The UN Secretary-General reported in July 2016 that, "following on from demining conducted in 2015, UNFICYP planned for clearance of the five dangerous areas in the north identified during the survey of the 28 minefield locations released by Mr. Anastasiades to Mr. Akinci in May 2015 as part of leader-to-leader confidence-building measures. With funding included in the UNFICYP 2016/17 budget, technical expertise from UNMAS will be embedded in the mission and the clearance work contracted to a civilian demining organization."³³ It was subsequently confirmed that technical survey and clearance of these five areas was in progress and, as at 15 September 2016, one of the five locations, MF#30 in Yedidalda/Potamos tou Kampou village, had been surveyed and 994m² cancelled.³⁴

Work on the remaining areas was forecast to be completed by December 2016, subject to the time required to address mines/explosive remnants of war (ERW) in each site; weather conditions; and further task prioritisation that may take place to address potential urgent requirements and ad hoc tasks during this period.³⁵ All sites will be technically surveyed to determine whether a mine threat exists before either releasing uncontaminated land or conducting clearance on areas confirmed as contaminated.³⁶

Furthermore, UNMAS clearance assets, in support of UNFICYP and the Committee on Missing Persons, completed a survey task on 25 August 2016 in Beykeuy Beykoy, northern Cyprus. The teams undertook survey and ERW clearance to permit safe access for the work of the Committee on Missing Persons at the site, and cancelled 3,100m².³⁷ (For further details see the separate report on Cyprus.)

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.³⁸

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 provide the basis regarding functions, jurisdictions, and responsibilities of NMAC, which will carry out humanitarian clearance of mines and/or unexploded ordnance (UXO) in Turkey.³⁹ The law entitles the NMAC, now known as TURMAC, which was established under the Ministry of National Defence, to elaborate policies for this clearance; plan and steer related activities; monitor their implementation; and carry out the necessary coordination and cooperation with domestic and foreign institutions.⁴⁰

TURMAC was reportedly established on 3 February 2015,⁴¹ and a director of the centre was appointed in August 2015.⁴² As at February 2016, core staff had been recruited and the centre was in the initial stages of becoming operational.⁴³ However, the attempted coup in Turkey in July 2016 resulted in the dismissal of TURMAC's director. In late August 2016, Colonel Aydin Imren was appointed as the new head of TURMAC.⁴⁴

30 Ibid.

31 UNFICYP, "Factsheet: towards a Mine-free Cyprus", April 2016; and email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Major Mike Holgate, UNFICYP), 6 October 2016.

32 Ibid.

33 Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, 8 July 2016, pp. 2 and 3.

34 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Major Mike Holgate, UNFICYP), 6 October 2016.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. 3.

39 APMB 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, 2015.40 APMB Article 7 Reports (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", Annex 1; and (for 2015), Form A; and CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report, Form A, 2015.

41 APMB Article 7 Report (for 2014), Form F.

42 Interview with Gen. Celalettin Coban, Director, TURMAC, and Col. Ali Güngör, Mine Action Officer, Strategic Planning Branch, TURMAC, Geneva, 18 February 2016.

43 Interview with Gen. Celalettin Coban and Col. Ali Güngör, TURMAC, Geneva, 18 February 2016.

44 Interview with Hans Risser, Regional Specialist, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, Geneva, 7 September 2016.

Until TURMAC becomes fully functional, mine action activities appear to remain largely decentralised and divided between various national authorities in Turkey. The Turkish armed forces currently conduct clearance activities in non-border areas and around military installations. Mine clearance along the eastern borders is managed by UNDP as part of the EU Integrated Border Management Project, in coordination with TURMAC, the Ministry of Interior, and the Turkish Land Forces.⁴⁵

Clearance along the south-eastern/Iraqi border is not scheduled to commence until 2019, and clearance along the Syrian border, which formerly fell under the Ministry of Defence, is not expected to take place until after the end of armed conflict in Syria. When it occurs, clearance in both the south-eastern/Iraqi borders and the Syrian border will come under the responsibility of TURMAC.⁴⁶

To address the humanitarian and border management challenges posed by mine contamination, the EU, UNDP, and the Turkish Government launched a project in May 2015, entitled "Technical assistance for socioeconomic development through demining and increasing the border surveillance capacity at the Eastern borders of Turkey". The project aims to contribute to social and economic development through demining and more secure borders in Eastern Turkey.⁴⁷ UNDP provides technical assistance and capacity building to TURMAC, the Ministry of Interior, and the Turkish General Staff for efficient and effective implementation of the project, and for the implementation of Turkey's demining programme.⁴⁸ UNDP is also responsible for managing the contractors for mine clearance and QA and quality control (QC) within the scope of the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project, and ensuring certification and standards verification.⁴⁹

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.⁵⁰ However, the strategy was delayed until after the general elections in Turkey, which

took place in November 2015.⁵¹ The attempted coup in July 2016 has further delayed the strategy. Turkey's most recent APMBC Article 7 report (for 2015) stated that preparation of a national mine action strategy by TURMAC was underway, and that the plan would be submitted to the Council of Ministers by the end of 2016.⁵²

Turkey's workplan as it stood at March 2015⁵³ is reflected in the following summaries of planned clearance by region. Turkey reported that the workplan will be finalised after TURMAC develops a national mine action plan, and that further revisions were possible due to ongoing investigation and survey of mined areas in the border regions.⁵⁴ 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 Borders Project will remain as restricted areas even after completion of mine clearance. While these minefields pose humanitarian risk (particularly to refugees crossing the borders), the greater humanitarian impact arguably results from minefields in the interior of the country, which Turkey is not addressing.⁵⁵

Syrian border

In its Article 5 deadline extension request, Turkey accorded priority to clearing the Syrian border, which is 911km long and on average 350 metres wide, and 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. Turkey expected to complete clearance of mines along the Syria border by the end of 2019.⁵⁶ However, the ongoing Syrian conflict has disrupted clearance plans and Turkey has subsequently stated that clearance will not begin along the Syrian border until after the conflict ends.⁵⁷ When clearance does begin, it will be coordinated by TURMAC as part of the strategic mine action plan which is being developed.⁵⁸

45 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", p. 3.

46 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-8; and APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", p. 3.

47 UNDP, "Mine Action Programming: Turkey", February 2016, at: <http://www.mineaction.org/sites/default/files/documents/UNDP%20Turkey%20One-Page%20revised%20FEB2016.pdf>.

48 UNDP, "Mine Action Programming: Turkey", February 2016; and "Turkey, UNDP begin clearing landmines along eastern borders", 4 April 2016, at: <http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2016/04/04/turkey-undp-begin-clearing-landmines-along-eastern-borders.html>.

49 UNDP, "Turkey, UNDP begin clearing landmines along eastern borders", 4 April 2016.

50 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities"; and CCW Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report, Form A, 2015.

51 Interview with Gönenç Ağacıkoğlu, Head of Section, Deputy Directorate General for the OSCE, Arms Control and Disarmament, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dubrovnik, 11 September 2015.

52 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form A.

53 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities".

54 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form F.

55 ICBL, "Spotlight on Turkey", 19 February 2014, at: <http://www.icbl.org/en-gb/news-and-events/news/2014/spotlight-on-turkey.aspx>.

56 ICBL interview with Ömer Burhan Tüzel, Serhan Yig'it, and Ramazan Ercan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Abdullah Özbek, Ministry of Interior, Ankara, 5 May 2011; and Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, pp. A-2, A-13, and A-14.

57 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", pp. 3 and 8.

58 Ibid., p. 8.

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.⁵⁹ It was forecast that 13.5km² would be cleared in phase one of the project and 2.4km² in phase two (see below). Demining for both phases was envisaged to start by the end of 2014, after completion of the tender process with demining companies.⁶⁰ Two-thirds of the total cost of the three-phase project, amounting to €30 million, was expected to be financed as part of an EU "Pre-accession Financial Assistance Scheme".⁶¹

In 2015, Turkey confirmed that mine clearance along the eastern borders would be carried out as part of the EU Integrated Border Management Project in two phases, under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior in a joint project with UNDP.⁶² Phase 1 of the project, scheduled for 2015–17, was expected to result in the clearance of 223 mined areas over an area of just less than 11.67km² and the destruction of 189,863 anti-personnel mines.⁶³ Phase 2 of the project is scheduled for 2017–19, but the number of mined areas and total area to be cleared is yet to be determined, subject to continuing surveys.⁶⁴ A budget of €26.4 million has been allocated for the first phase and €13.4 million for the second.⁶⁵ 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.⁶⁶

In December 2015, Turkey reported it was working with UNDP on the tender process, and that a clearance contractor had been identified, with the contract due to be signed imminently as part of the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project. In February 2016, Turkey reported that the demining tender had been awarded to DENEL-MECHEM (MECHEM), as part of a consortium in which national operators would be sub-contracted by MECHEM.⁶⁷ Phase 1 of the project was officially announced in April 2016, with clearance operations beginning in June. It was scheduled to be completed by December 2017.⁶⁸

South-eastern/Iraqi border

Clearance along the south-eastern/Iraqi border is not scheduled to commence until 2019, after completion of Phases 1 and 2 of the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project.⁶⁹ Clearance of the 969 mined areas, totalling just over 2.86km², is 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 will be determined by TURMAC.⁷⁰

Non-border areas

In its 2013 Article 5 deadline extension request, Turkey reported partial clearance in non-border areas would be conducted by the Turkish armed forces, until the establishment of an operational mine action authority and centre and a subsequent tendering process. It was expected that clearance would be conducted in 2015–22. No dedicated budget had been allocated for clearance in these interior regions. To date, mine clearance in non-border areas has been conducted only on a very limited scale, for instance to clear paths in case of urgent need.⁷¹ At the time of its 2015 updated workplan, Turkey estimated that all 873 mined areas in non-border areas would be cleared in 2015–21, totalling 3.1km², with the destruction of 34,410 anti-personnel mines. This represents all known mine contamination in the region.⁷²

Of the total interior contaminated area, the Turkish armed forces are forecast to clear 280 mined areas over 1.51km² 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,⁷³ which has now been established. The remaining 593 mined areas, over 1.59km², including destruction of 15,852 anti-personnel mines, will be cleared in accordance with the mine action plan, once it has been prepared. A budget for clearance of Turkish Lira 84.3 million (approx. \$29 million) will be elaborated in detail by TURMAC.⁷⁴ 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.⁷⁵

59 APMBC Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-14.

60 Ibid., pp. A-14 and A-15.

61 Ibid., pp. A-3 and A-15.

62 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", p. 6.

63 Ibid., p. 7.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.

66 Email from Hans Rissler, UNDP, 3 October 2016.

67 Interview with Gen. Celalettin Coban and Col. Ali Güngör, TURMAC, in Geneva, 18 February 2016.

68 Ibid.; UNDP, "Turkey, UNDP begin clearing landmine along eastern borders", 4 April 2016; and interview with Hans Rissler, UNDP, Geneva, 7 September 2016.

69 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", p. 7.

70 Ibid., pp. 7 and 8.

71 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-4.

72 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", pp. 5 and 6.

73 Ibid., pp. 4 and 5.

74 Ibid., p. 6.

75 Ibid., p. 4.

Legislation and Standards

In March 2013, Turkey reported that an “Interministerial Coordination Board”, which in practice functioned as an NMAA, had been working to develop Turkish Mine Action Standards (TMAS), using the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) as a template.⁷⁶ Previously, all land-release activities were based on the standards and principles outlined in the Syrian Border Mine Clearance Standards (SBMCS), which were prepared by the Ministry of National Defence and which are based on IMAS. According to Turkey, although these standards were developed exclusively for the Syrian border, they are also relevant for other areas.⁷⁷

As part of Phase 2 of the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project, UNDP and the Ministry of Interior developed the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Standards (EBMCS) based upon IMAS and the SBMCS. The EBMCS form the basis of all clearance operations (demining) carried out as part of the project. They have been elaborated on the basis of experience gained during a number of demining operations around the world and adapted to the operational conditions and requirements of demining in Turkey.

UNDP and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) are assisting TURMAC to formulate new national mine action standards based upon IMAS, the SBMCS, and the EBMCS.⁷⁸

Quality Management

Cleared areas are re-checked with mechanical demining systems following the completion of clearance operations. Additionally, a few days later, final controls are executed with mine detectors and mine detection dog (MDD) teams.⁷⁹

As part of its mandate under the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project in Turkey, UNDP is responsible for managing mine clearance services, QA/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.⁸⁰ According to UNDP, following an international competitive tender process, a contract for QA/QC services was awarded to RPS-Explosive Engineering

Services by UNDP in March 2016. In April 2016, UNDP and TURMAC completed the accreditation of RPS-Explosive Engineering Services, and the company then began the accreditation process for the mine clearance contractor under the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project.⁸¹

Information Management

UNDP and the GICHD are supporting TURMAC for information management (IM), and as at February 2016, Turkey was reportedly assessing its IM needs.⁸² Plans to have an IMSMA database operational by the end of 2016 were delayed following the attempted coup, and at present, UNDP is maintaining a project database to record all operational data related to the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project until the national database can be established in TURMAC.⁸³ Due to national security concerns, much of the minefield data remains classified, presenting a challenge to mine action information management in Turkey.⁸⁴

Operators

Syrian border

A bidding process for clearance operations on the Syrian border, initiated on 2 February 2012, was officially cancelled on 20 June 2013 due to armed conflict in Syria. Mine clearance activities along the border are on hold and will begin once the conflict ends. The tender process and clearance operations will be coordinated by TURMAC.⁸⁵

Eastern borders

In December 2015, UNDP awarded the tender for mine clearance under Phase I of the EU project to MECHEM, a South African company,⁸⁶ partnering with national sub-contractor Altay.⁸⁷ As noted above, RPS, a UK company, has been contracted for QA and QC.⁸⁸

76 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2014), “Workplan for mine clearance activities”.

77 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-9.

78 Email from Hans Risser, UNDP, 3 October 2016; and APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form F.

79 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-49; and APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2014), “Workplan for mine clearance activities”, p. 4.

80 UNDP, “Mine Action Programming: Turkey”, February 2016, at: <http://www.mineaction.org/sites/default/files/documents/UNDP%20Turkey%20One-Page%20revised%20FEB2016.pdf>.

81 Email from Hans Risser, UNDP, 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.

82 Interview with General Celalettin Coban and Colonel Ali Güngör, TURMAC, Geneva, 18 February 2016.

83 Interview with Hans Risser, UNDP, Geneva, 7 September 2016.

84 Ibid.

85 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2014), “Workplan for mine clearance activities”, p. 4; and interview with General Celalettin Coban and Colonel Ali Güngör, TURMAC, in Geneva, 18 February 2016.

86 UNDP, “Turkey, UNDP begin clearing landmine along eastern borders”, 4 April 2016.

87 Altay, “Mine/UXO Clearance”, at: http://www.altay.com.tr/pages/2/573/531/f/en-US/MineUXO_Clearance.

88 UNDP, “Turkey, UNDP begin clearing landmine along eastern borders”, 4 April 2016.

South-eastern/Iraqi border

Mine clearance in the south-eastern/Iraqi border areas is not due to begin until 2019, after completion of Phases 1 and 2 of the EU Integrated Border Management Project along the eastern border. Clearance in the south-eastern/Iraqi border areas will be conducted in accordance with the national mine action strategy.⁸⁹

Non-border areas

In its Article 5 deadline extension request, Turkey reported that until TURMAC became operational, and clearance operations were tendered out, mine clearance in non-border areas would continue to be carried out by clearance units of the Turkish armed forces.⁹⁰ However, in its March 2015 workplan, TURMAC reported that the armed forces would conduct the first phase of clearance in the non-border areas.⁹¹ Assets used include, in addition to manual deminers, MDD teams and mechanical assets.⁹²

LAND RELEASE

No land was released by survey or clearance in 2015, but 1,531 anti-personnel mines were destroyed “due to explosions caused by various reasons” in the minefields along the borders with Armenia, Iran, and Syria.⁹³ The corresponding area of land released/cleared was not reported, and some clearance operations, for example along the Syrian border, are to meet military objectives only and to allow safe movement of troops, but not to release a contaminated area. The lack of any land release in 2015 compares unfavourably to 2014 when 157,251m² of land was cleared by the Turkish Armed Forces on the Iranian border and in non-border areas.⁹⁴

Progress in 2016

In its APMB Article 7 report (for 2015) Turkey stated that contracts with a demining company and a QA/QC company had been signed under the EU Eastern Borders project, and that demining activities in the field were expected to start in the following months.⁹⁵ In April 2016, UNDP officially announced the launch of the two-year programme which aims to clear 551 minefields covering more than 15km², and destroy a total of 222,000 landmines along the border with Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Iran.⁹⁶

MECHEM, with sub-contracting partner Altay, was subsequently accredited for manual demining, and Phase 1 clearance operations began in June 2016.⁹⁷ As at September 2016, manual clearance operations were taking place along the Armenian border, in mapped and fenced minefields on flat terrain.⁹⁸ Capacity as at September was 120 deminers and 30 Mechem Handlers and MDDs, as well as a MineWolf 330, as part of the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project. However, the MDDs had not yet been accredited because landmine targets had not yet been allocated by TURMAC for the accreditation test sites.⁹⁹ UNDP is 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.¹⁰⁰

Task dossiers received by clearance operators as part of the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project are classified, which has implications for QA and security clearance.

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Under Article 5 of the APMB (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 is not on track to meet this deadline.

Turkey's original Article 5 deadline was 1 March 2014. At the Eleventh Meeting of States Parties in December 2011, Turkey disclosed that clearance of its border with Syria would not be completed until 2016. In 2012, it acknowledged to the Twelfth Meeting of States Parties that it would seek an extension to its deadline.¹⁰¹

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.¹⁰²

89 APMB Article 7 Report (for 2014), “Workplan for mine clearance activities”, p. 7.

90 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-17; and APMB Article 7 Report (for 2014), “Workplan for mine clearance activities”, p. 4.

91 APMB Article 7 Report (for 2014), “Workplan for mine clearance activities”.

92 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-17; and APMB Article 7 Report (for 2014), “Workplan for mine clearance activities”, p. 4.

93 APMB Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form G.

94 Ibid. (for 2014), “Workplan for mine clearance activities”, p. 1 and Form F.

95 APMB Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form F.

96 UNDP, “Turkey, UNDP begin clearing landmines along eastern borders”, 4 April 2016.

97 Interview with Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, Geneva, 7

September 2016; and Altay, “Mine/UXO Clearance”, at: http://www.altay.com.tr/pages/2/573/531/f/en-US/MineUXO_Clearance.

98 Interview with Hans Risser, UNDP, Geneva, 7 September 2016.

99 Ibid.; and “Canine Sleuths Contribute to Success of Anti-Poaching Operations in Kruger”, at: <http://www.denel.co.za/press-article/Canine-Sleuths-Contribute-To-Success-Of-Anti-Poaching-Operations-In-Kruger-National-Park/129>; and “Mechem dogs doing their bit to counter rhino and other wildlife poaching”, at: http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=43635:mechem-dogs-doing-their-bit-to-counter-rhino-and-other-wildlife-poaching&catid=87:border-security&Itemid=188.

100 Interview with Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, Geneva, 7 September 2016.

101 Statements of Turkey, APMB Eleventh Meeting of States Parties, Phnom Penh, 1 December 2011; and Twelfth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 5 December 2012.

102 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-13.

In its 2013 request, Turkey cited a number of circumstances that had impeded it from carrying out mine clearance activities, 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 residues 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.¹⁰³

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 2015 updated workplan.¹⁰⁴

In granting the 2013 APMB Article 5 deadline Extension Request, the Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties recalled the number of efforts to be carried out during 2013–14, crucial to the success of the implementation of Turkey's plan, and requested that Turkey report to the Third Review Conference in June 2014 on: the tendering processes for clearance along Turkey's border with Syria, and the results of any related demining efforts and annual milestones of expected progress; the tendering processes for the clearance of areas along Turkey's eastern borders; developments in the establishment of NMAA and NMAC; and process in clearance of mined areas in non-border areas.¹⁰⁵ Turkey did not provide an update on clearance progress at the Third Review Conference, but did subsequently submit a workplan in March 2015.¹⁰⁶

Turkey revealed in its 2013 extension request that since 1998 it had only cleared a total of 1.15km² 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.¹⁰⁷

Turkey's total mine clearance to date only amounts to a tiny fraction (less than 1%) of its overall mine contamination, and more than eleven years after

becoming a state party to the APMB, Turkey has only made very marginal progress in addressing mine contamination.

Table 3: Mine clearance in 2011–15¹⁰⁸

Year	Area cleared (m ²)
2015	0
2014	157,251
2013	Unknown
2012	0
2011	827,522
Totals	984,773

The 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), is a welcome development. However, implementation of Phase 2 of the project, scheduled for 2017–19 in the provinces of Van and Hakkari, is expected to face significant security challenges if fighting continues between Turkey and the PKK.

In granting Turkey's Article 5 deadline extension, the Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties noted that "any additional delays in the establishment of an NMAA and NMAC should not further delay clearance efforts from proceeding".¹⁰⁹ Unfortunately, clearance efforts do appear to have suffered unnecessary delays partly due to the lack of an NMAA and NMAC. The adoption in January 2015 of a mine action law has resulted in the establishment of TURMAC, which is in the early stages of becoming operational. TURMAC is reported to be entirely funded by national funding.¹¹⁰

While Turkey's submission of an updated workplan for APMB Article 5 implementation in March 2015 and the establishment of TURMAC can be viewed as positive developments, the workplan itself only includes plans to address a small portion (10%) of overall mine contamination, and it is unclear how and when the remaining contamination will be addressed. This is of great concern, as highlighted in the preliminary observations of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation, produced for the Intersessional Meetings in June 2015.¹¹¹ The Committee observed "that Turkey's plan at present suggests that it will not be able to complete implementation of APMB Article 5 by its deadline in 2022".¹¹²

103 Ibid., pp. A-11, A-12.

104 APMB Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities".

105 Decision on Turkey's Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 13MSP, 5 December 2013.

106 APMB Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities".

107 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, pp. A-8 and A-9.

108 See Landmine Monitor and Mine Action Review reports on clearance in Turkey covering 2011–13; and Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 29 March 2013, p. A-9.

109 Decision on Turkey's Article 5 Extension Request, APMB Thirteenth Meeting of States Parties, 2–5 December 2013.

110 Interview with Gen. Celalettin Coban and Col. Ali Güngör, TURMAC, Geneva, 18 February 2016.

111 APMB "Preliminary observations of the committee on Article 5 implementation – observations on the implementation of Article 5 by Turkey", 23 June 2015.

112 APMB Article 7 Report (for 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", 2015.