

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 31 DECEMBER 2025
 NOT ON TRACK TO COMPLETE CLEARANCE (INTERIM DEADLINE)

KEY DATA

**ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP)
 MINE CONTAMINATION: HEAVY**

NATIONAL AUTHORITY ESTIMATE

133.4 km²

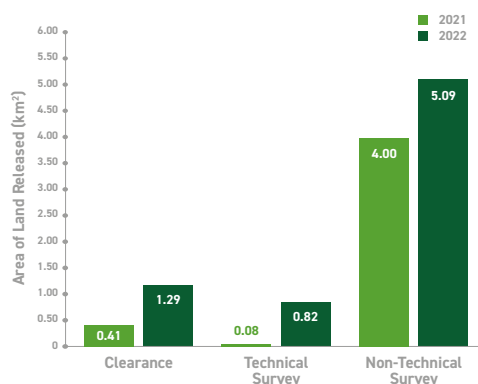
AP MINE
 CLEARANCE IN 2022

1.29 km²

AP MINES
 DESTROYED IN 2022

58,078

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **NONE**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Türkiye (formerly known as Turkey) published a strategic plan for 2020–25 setting out five broad goals, including clearance of all mined areas, but this was superseded in February 2021 by its request for a three-year and nine-month extension of its Article 5 deadline until the end of 2025. This interim extension, which was granted at the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties (19MSP) to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APBMC) in 2021, is for non-technical survey (NTS) of all mined areas. Türkiye expects this survey to result in cancellation of up to a quarter of estimated contamination as well as provide the basis for a final extension request in order to fulfil Türkiye’s Article 5 obligations.

In 2022, Türkiye was able to increase land release considerably compared to 2021. This was mainly due to progress under the Phase III of Türkiye’s Eastern Borders Mine Clearance Project (EBMCP), which began in June 2021, as well as improved security at the border with Syria. Release of areas along Türkiye’s border with Armenia was completed.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Alongside extensive planned NTS and expectations of substantial cancellation of hazardous areas, Türkiye should accelerate clearance, which is unacceptably low.
- Türkiye should provide details of plans to address the small amount of contamination reported in non-border areas.
- Türkiye’s obligations under the APBMC require it to implement and report on mine clearance in territory it controls in northern Cyprus and northern Syria. This is because Article 5 of the Convention obligates every State Party to survey and clear all areas under its jurisdiction “or control”.
- Türkiye should set out plans to promote gender and inclusion in mine action.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2022)	Score (2021)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	7	7	Türkiye has good knowledge of the extent of its mine contamination and has, in theory, confirmed all hazardous areas but now plans to refine that understanding by NTS of all mined areas by the end of 2023. It expects that this will reduce the area that needs full clearance by up to 40%.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	6	6	Türkiye's institutional framework for mine action is under the control of the military. Since 2018, there been a significant expansion of operational capacity, although management has suffered from high staff turnover.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	4	4	Türkiye makes no reference to gender and diversity in its 2020–25 strategic plan or the Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in early 2021. Military regulations prevent employment of women in military demining teams but the Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC) says women are included in survey and community liaison teams and in non-operational roles. It claims that it takes gender into account in all aspects of mine action.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	7	7	TURMAC operates an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database. Türkiye submits comprehensive and timely Article 7 reports and it met its requirement to submit an updated, detailed work plan by 30 April 2023.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	7	7	Türkiye's strategic plan for 2020–25 set out five main goals, including becoming mine free by 2025. It will not meet this target. Türkiye has stated it will produce a further updated strategic plan once NTS is complete at the end of 2023.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	7	7	Türkiye published 44 chapters of national mine action standards (NMAS) in 2019. It updated six areas of its NMAS in 2022 including chapters on animal detection systems and occupational health & safety.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	5	4	Türkiye's slow pace of land release saw a significant increase in 2022. The majority of land release in Türkiye was through survey in 2022, as it had also been in 2021, though clearance in 2022 was more than three times that of the previous year.
Average Score	6.2	6.0	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Ministry of National Defence (MoND)
- Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC)

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Turkish Armed Forces including: Land Forces Military Demining Units (ÖMAT), Gendarmerie Forces Military Demining Units (JÖMAT) and Military Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (IED)/Mine teams.

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- TDI Altay (a joint venture between The Development Initiative and national operator, Altay Software Defence and Industrial Inc)

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Türkiye reported it had 3,701 mined areas on its territory covering more than 133km² at the end of 2022.¹ All contamination is recorded in confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) (see Table 1). The total for end 2022 is a reduction on the 3,804 mined areas covering more than 140km² reported a year earlier.² Most contamination (86%) is along Türkiye's 909km-long border with Syria where land release accounted for 61% of the reduction in contamination in 2022.³ Estimated mined area on Türkiye's borders with Iraq and Iran as well as in non-border areas decreased somewhat compared to a year earlier.⁴ Türkiye's border with Armenia is now believed to be free of anti-personnel (AP) mines as a result of survey and clearance during 2022.⁵

Table 1: Mined area by region (at end 2022)⁶

Region	CHAs	Area (m ²)	AP mines	AV mines
Syrian border	1,517	114,597,746	409,815	193,156
Iraqi border	874	2,805,155	78,886	0
Iranian border	392	13,447,055	66,714	0
Armenian border	0	0	0	0
Non-border areas	918	2,540,802	33,765	0
Totals	3,701	133,390,758	589,180	193,156

AV = Anti-vehicle

Commercial contractor TDI Altay, which is a joint venture between The Development Initiative (TDI) and Altay under Türkiye's Eastern Borders Mine Clearance Project (EBMCP) has identified areas of previously unrecorded contamination⁷ but the details were not made public at the time of writing as they had not yet been approved and finalised by TURMAC. TURMAC has stated it will reflect all the outputs and results of ongoing projects in its Article 7 report, but not until 2024.⁸

Türkiye does not report any suspected hazardous areas (SHAs).⁹ In June 2022, the Committee on Article 5 Implementation stated that it would welcome further information from Türkiye on the remaining challenges, disaggregating by SHA and CHA and their relative size, as well as by type of contamination.¹⁰ As Türkiye noted in its most recent Article 5 deadline extension request in 2021, over the course of the last 70 years, some markings and fences along its borders have been replaced and extended to create a wider buffer to military zones. This has led to an

overestimation of the size of the mined areas in the national mine action database, particularly in border regions.¹¹ Türkiye reported in June 2022 that it planned to conduct NTS of all known remaining minefields across fourteen provinces during the new extension until the end of 2025.¹²

Türkiye reports mines were first laid along the Syrian border in the 1950s to prevent smuggling and later in south-eastern regions for military security.¹³ Mines inside the country were laid around military installations during the 1984–99 conflict with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, PKK) in the south-east of the country.¹⁴ These are mostly in the provinces of Ardahan, Batman, Bingöl, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Mardin, Şırnak, Siirt, and Tunceli.¹⁵ According to Türkiye, these mines, which were marked and fenced, have been progressively cleared since 1998.¹⁶ The mines on Türkiye's other borders were mostly laid in 1955–59 and on some sections of the border with Armenia, Iran, and Iraq in 1992–95.¹⁷ Türkiye reports that its western borders

1 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from the Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC), 18 April 2023.

2 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

3 Ibid.; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

4 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

5 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

6 Ibid.; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

7 Email from TDI, 15 May 2023.

8 Email from TURMAC, 17 August 2023.

9 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

10 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on the implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye", APMBC Intersessional Meetings, 19–21 June 2023.

11 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Analysis of Türkiye's Article 5 deadline extension request, Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties, The Hague, 15–19 November 2021, p. 2.

12 Presentation by TURMAC, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 22 June 2022.

13 Ministry of National Defence Mine Action Centre, Strategic Plan 2020–2025, undated but 2020, p. 1.

14 The PKK is designated as a terrorist organization by Türkiye and by a number of other States.

15 Email from TURMAC, 24 June 2020.

16 Email from TURMAC, 11 July 2019.

17 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form D; 2013 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. A-1 and A-5.

with Bulgaria and Greece, as well as the border with Georgia, are mine-free.¹⁸ Clearance along Türkiye's border with Armenia was completed in 2022.¹⁹

The number of mined areas along the Iraqi border, as well as part of the Iranian border, is an estimate, as, reporting in 2015, Türkiye noted that precise calculation had been hampered by the activities of armed groups and the suspected presence of mined areas. In addition, Türkiye stated that fewer mines are expected along the Syrian border than indicated because of detonations by smugglers and as a result of wildfires.²⁰

In its most recent Article 5 deadline extension request of 2021, Türkiye reported that, prior to the establishment of the Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC) in 2015, some demining activities conducted solely by military demining units were cleared with a 90% to 95% mine detection/destroy rate and there was no quality assurance (QA)/quality control (QC) process in place before handover of the cleared area.²¹ TURMAC must ensure that re-clearance/QC is conducted, to ensure that any AP mines missed previously are discovered and destroyed.

In addition to mines laid by its security forces, Türkiye also reports the presence of mines of an improvised nature that it says were emplaced by non-State armed groups, rendering clearance more challenging.²² Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are mostly remote controlled (which are not landmines) or victim-activated pressure plate (in which case they do fall within the definition of an AP mine under the APMBC). Explosive charges are mostly ammonium nitrate supported with plastic explosives.²³ Türkiye again acknowledged the presence of mines of an improvised nature in its most Article 7 Report covering 2022: of 32 mine/IED victims in 2022, 28 were caused by improvised AP mines.²⁴ TURMAC did not clarify if any of the AP mines destroyed by Türkiye's military demining units in 2022 were of an improvised nature.

NORTHERN CYPRUS

Türkiye's original Article 5 clearance deadline was 1 March 2014. In 2013, States Parties granted Türkiye an eight-year extension until 1 March 2022, for clearance of mines in Türkiye, and in 2021, States Parties granted a further extension of Türkiye's Article 5 deadline until 31 December 2025. Türkiye has not requested additional time for clearance of the areas it controls in northern Cyprus²⁵ and neither extension request made reference to northern Cyprus²⁶ (see the report on Cyprus for further information). This puts into serious question Türkiye's compliance with Article 5 of the APMBC. TURMAC does not appear to have any plans in place to meet its Article 5 obligations in areas under its control in northern Cyprus, claiming that "the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is a sovereign country recognized by the Republic of Türkiye" and that responsibility for mined areas does not sit with Türkiye.²⁷

NORTHERN SYRIA

Türkiye has an obligation under Article 5 of the APMBC to clear AP mines in areas currently under its control in northern Syria. The precise extent to which it is implementing this obligation is not clear. In its Article 7 report covering 2022, Türkiye stated that it found/neutralised 121 mines, 1,837 IEDs, and 26,770 other munitions in Syria, Iraq, and Libya,²⁸ but without specific reference to locations in northern Syria. TURMAC also states that Türkiye conducts counterterrorism military operations to ensure the security of its borders and that the Turkish Armed Forces have neutralised "thousands of mines and hand-made explosives" as part of cross-border military operations.²⁹ However, Türkiye refers only to the location of the "Syrian border" when providing land release data in its Article 7 reports³⁰, so it is not clear whether it is clearing AP mines on the Syrian side of the border in territory it controls. TURMAC asserts that as Syria is a sovereign country, "and Türkiye has no obligation to clear AP mines on another country's territory", responsibility for releasing mined areas does not sit with Türkiye.³¹ Mine Action Review believes this is an incorrect interpretation and application of Türkiye's obligations under Articles 1 and 5 of the APMBC.

18 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 7.

19 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

20 Article 7 Report (covering 2015), Form C.

21 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 11.

22 2013 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. A-5.

23 Email from TURMAC, 24 June 2020.

24 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form H.

25 See the reference to Türkiye's jurisdiction in northern Cyprus under the European Convention on Human Rights in European Court of Human Rights, *Güzelyurtlu and others v. Cyprus and Turkey*, Judgment (Grand Chamber), 29 January 2019, para. 193.

26 2013 and 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Requests.

27 Email from TURMAC, 17 August 2023.

28 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

29 Email from TURMAC, 17 August 2023.

30 See, e.g., Article 7 Reports (covering 2022), Form D; and (covering 2021), Form D.

31 Email from TURMAC, 17 August 2023.

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Türkiye adopted Law No. 6586 establishing a national mine action centre under the Ministry of National Defence (MoND) in February 2015.³² Its director reports directly to the Undersecretary of the MoND.³³ The law gave the centre, now known as TURMAC, responsibility for the clearance to humanitarian standards of mines and/or unexploded ordnance (UXO).³⁴ TURMAC's activities are regulated by two presidential decrees.³⁵ TURMAC is responsible for elaborating policies for clearance; planning and steering related activities and monitoring their implementation; and coordination and cooperation with domestic and foreign institutions.³⁶

Türkiye claims that the formation of TURMAC has led to significantly increased mine clearance,³⁷ but a high turnover of senior staff, including the director, has certainly had a negative effect on the national mine action programme.³⁸ Brigadier-General Mehmet Zeki Eren³⁹ was appointed director of TURMAC on 24 August 2021; he is the first TURMAC Director to hold the rank of General.⁴⁰

Mine action in Türkiye is mostly financed by the state. TURMAC and the Turkish Armed Forces demining units are financed entirely by the government.⁴¹ In 2022, Türkiye contributed TRY30 million (approx. €1 million) to capacity development of military demining units. It has pledged to also allocate €2.12 million to fund the fourth component of the Eastern Borders Mine Clearance Project, while the European Union (EU) is expected to contribute €18.5 million.⁴² In its latest Article 7 Report, covering 2022, Türkiye stated that the EU had contributed to the EBMCP, but did not state how much it had contributed.⁴³

In the past, a number of operators have told Mine Action Review that customs processes to import goods have been slow and bureaucratic and that the administration of immigration and tax has been somewhat challenging.⁴⁴

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Türkiye has an NMAS on environmental management, which was issued in 2019. TURMAC did not clarify whether there is also a related policy document. TDI Altay, though, does have a policy on environmental management and an environmental management system. It states that the environment is always taken into account during operations, particularly if there is a need to burn vegetation. All clearance by TDI Altay in 2022 was manual, with no use of mechanical assets. Manual clearance and cutting of vegetation were conducted only where necessary to access and clear mine rows.⁴⁵

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Türkiye did not address gender and diversity in its 2021–25 strategy or in the Article 5 deadline extension request submitted in February 2021. In 2022, the APMBC Committee on Article 5 Implementation observed that Türkiye had not reported updated information on any such efforts.⁴⁶ In 2023, the Committee noted that Türkiye had reported on having established their baseline through "inclusive consultations, including information on the percentage of women as a total of TURMAC's personnel (29%), the employment of a gender focal point and female deminers."⁴⁷

32 Article 7 Report (covering 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", Annex 1; and Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II Article 13 Report, Form A, 2015.

33 Presidency Decree No. 1 of 10 July 2018; Article 7 Report (for 2018), Form A; and Statement of Turkey on Clearance, Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 29 November 2018.

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

35 Presidential Decree dated 18 April 2019; and Presidential Decree No. 32, amending the Presidential Decree on General Staff and Procedure. MoND, "Turkish Mine Action Center", accessed 7 March 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/44hgNDN>.

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

37 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form A.

38 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Analysis of Türkiye's Article 5 deadline extension request, 19MSP, The Hague, 15–19 November 2021, p. 2.

39 "Demining improves security along Turkey's eastern border", *ReliefWeb*, 2 October 2021, at: <https://bit.ly/3S3FY6W>.

40 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

41 Email from TURMAC, 21 June 2017.

42 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

43 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form I.

44 Email from TDI, 15 May 2023.

45 Ibid.

46 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Preliminary Observations on the Implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

47 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on the Implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

Table 2: Gender composition of mine action operators in 2022⁴⁸

Organisation	Total staff	Total women employed	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Total women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total staff in operational positions	Total women in operational positions
TURMAC	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K
Military demining units	N/K	0	N/K	0	N/K	0
TDI Altay	328	14	25	1	250	10

N/K = Not Known

Türkiye claims that gender and diversity are taken into consideration in all mine action activities.⁴⁹ TURMAC states that, as at the end of 2022, 29% of its own personnel were female. This included a head of department and two branch chiefs.⁵⁰ This is a decrease compared to 2021, when 45% of TURMAC's personnel were women.⁵¹ Although Turkish military demining units do not employ any women, civilian contractors are advised to hire female personnel.⁵²

In 2022, 14 personnel under the demining contractor TDI Altay, contracted for Phase III of the EBMCP, were female. This included ten medical personnel, four office-based staff, and two NTS personnel; one of whom was employed as a gender focal point.⁵³ TDI Altay says that it offers equal access to employment for qualified women and men in TDI Altay's survey and clearance teams in Türkiye, including for managerial /supervisory positions. The company has a gender and diversity policy and implementation plan.⁵⁴

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

TURMAC installed the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) with support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) in 2017, and personnel from TURMAC and the armed forces have been trained in its use.⁵⁵ TDI Altay uses differential GPS (D-GPS) to collect data.⁵⁶

Türkiye has submitted Article 7 transparency reports annually on time and which provide a detailed review of plans and activities. As required under the granting of its latest extension request in 2021, Türkiye submitted an updated work plan by 30 April 2023.⁵⁷

PLANNING AND TASKING

In 2020, TURMAC issued a strategic mine action plan through to the end of 2025 setting out a vision of Türkiye completing mine clearance by 2025. It estimated the cost at about US\$332 million, to be financed by the national budget and international sources. The plan identified five goals: to clear all emplaced AP mines in Türkiye; to strengthen national capacity and ensure its sustainability; to reduce the number of mines held in depots for training; to provide risk education and support mine victims; and to develop co-operation with national and international organisations related to mine action.⁵⁸

48 Emails from TURMAC, 18 April 2023; and TDI, 15 May 2023.

49 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form I; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

50 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form I.

51 Statement of Türkiye, Intersessional Meetings, 22–24 June 2021.

52 Ibid.

53 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form I; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

54 Email from TDI, 15 May 2023.

55 Statements of Türkiye, Standing Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Geneva, 22 May 2019; and on Clearance, Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 29 November 2018; email from TURMAC, 11 July 2019; and Article 7 Report (covering 2018), Form A.

56 Email from TDI, 15 May 2023.

57 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on the Implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

58 Ministry of National Defence Mine Action Centre, Strategic Plan 2020–2025, undated but 2020, pp. 7–8, 10.

In February 2021, however, Türkiye requested an interim extension of its Article 5 deadline for three years and nine months until the end of 2025, by when it no longer expected to complete clearance. The request foresaw three main projects in 2021–23: demining; NTS covering 3,834 mined areas with a view to producing baseline data from which to prepare plans for completion; and a clearance project to address 27 mined areas measuring approximately 1km² in Mardin province.⁵⁹ Türkiye expected NTS during the extension period to result in cancellation of around 40km² of mined area.⁶⁰ The Mardin project has so far been stymied by security challenges along the Syrian border.⁶¹

By 30 April 2023, Türkiye was expected to produce an updated detailed work plan for the remaining period covered by its extension.⁶² It duly submitted an updated work plan which provides for release of mined areas covering 13km² in Iğdır and Ağrı provinces by the end of 2023 and NTS on 448 areas. In 2024–25, Türkiye plans to address mined areas covering 22.3km².⁶³

TURMAC has prioritised its mine clearance activities according to four levels as follows:

- Level 1: Lands with minefields along the southern and eastern borders of Türkiye, which prevent the establishment of new border surveillance technology and infrastructure (e.g. watchtowers, patrol roads).
- Level 2: Interior lands with minefields, posing a danger to inhabitants.
- Level 3: Lands requested to be cleared by governmental organisations.
- Level 4: Disputed lands along the borders and interior parts of Türkiye, belonging to private owners.⁶⁴

TDI Altay declares that task dossiers are issued by the national authority in a timely and effective manner.⁶⁵ TDI Altay has been tasked with releasing 94 minefields in various regions of Türkiye.⁶⁶

EASTERN BORDERS

Türkiye's EBMCP, which started on the Armenian border, is continuing southwards to the borders with Azerbaijan, Iran, and Iraq.⁶⁷ The project is supervised by Turkish authorities and implemented in a joint project with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),⁶⁸ which is managing and quality assuring the demining.⁶⁹ Denel MECHEM (MECHEM) was initially awarded a contract to conduct demining as part of a consortium in which national operators would be subcontracted by the company.⁷⁰

Phase 2, which was completed in December 2019,⁷¹ resulted in release of close to 1.7km² of land, bringing the total area released in the first two phases to 4.8km².⁷² Türkiye issued contracts for the third phase of the project in December 2020 and started work in June 2021. Clearance and NTS are being conducted by a joint venture between TDI and national operator Altay. Türkiye's extension request stipulates that manual clearance is followed by two levels of verification, including an extended search for missing mines and sampling checks conducted using mine detection dogs (MDDs).⁷³

Phase III, to take place in 2021–23, has four components: clearing 4.24km² in the provinces of Ağrı, Ardahan, Kars, and Iğdır;⁷⁴ building TURMAC's capacities, mine risk education to build public awareness, and NTS of 3,502 minefields. The first three components have been funded by the EU and the Turkish government.⁷⁵ Türkiye has allocated €2.12 million to fund the fourth component, which involves NTS,⁷⁶ and has requested additional funding from the EU.⁷⁷ Phase III extends from Ardahan province to Doğubayazıt in Ağrı province, along the borders with Armenia and Iran, covering almost 170km in length. It comprises 96 separate minefields believed to contain more than 80,000 landmines. The operating conditions are challenging. Many of the minefields are at high altitude, sometimes 3,000m or more above sea level. Clearance activities are often impeded by wind, rain, and snow.⁷⁸

59 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Analysis of Türkiye's Article 5 deadline extension request, 19MSP, The Hague, 15–19 November 2021, p. 4.

60 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 19; and email from Mark Frankish, UNDP, 24 May 2021.

61 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

62 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on the Implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 20–22 June 2022.

63 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on the Implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye", Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023.

64 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

65 Email from TDI, 15 May 2023.

66 Ibid.

67 2013 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. A-14.

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

69 Email from Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, 3 October 2016.

70 Interview with TURMAC, in Geneva, 18 February 2016.

71 Statement of Türkiye on clearance, Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 29 November 2018; Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A.

72 Email from TURMAC, 24 June 2020.

73 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 20; email from Mark Frankish, UNDP, 24 May 2021.

74 MoND, "Turkish Mine Action Center", accessed 7 March 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/44hgNDN>.

75 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form I.

76 Email from TURMAC, 4 May 2021.

77 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

78 TDI, "Clearing the Eastern Border of Türkiye", accessed 8 March 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/3D35mnh>.

In June 2023, Türkiye stated that, so far, field visits had taken place at 3,430 mined areas and that approximately 500 NTS reports had been made, along with internal and external quality management (QM), in coordination between TDI Altay, TURMAC, and UNDP.⁷⁹ As at November 2022, 3,054 NTS reports had been approved and transferred to TURMAC's database. TURMAC also reports that, as at April 2023, an area of 2.3km² has been addressed across the provinces of Ağrı, Ardahan, Iğdır and Kars. A total of 49,040 mines have been found and destroyed, across 72 of the 94 minefields within the project's scope.⁸⁰ Within the scope of Phase III, field visits, reporting, and QM at a further 448 areas in the provinces of Batman, Diyarbakır, and Şırnak will be completed.⁸¹ All survey will be undertaken by commercial contractors under the management and coordination of UNDP, with TURMAC's NTS teams providing QC and advisory support.⁸²

Having begun in 2016, the EBMCP is now in its seventh year. In 2018 the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) stated: "most partners understand that this project will potentially run for 10-12 years, although this must be determined by non-technical survey options which will verify the correct planning period."⁸³ At the end of Phase III the project, due to be completed by the end of 2023, Türkiye aims to have a reliable estimate of SHAs and CHAs, allowing for effective planning of mine clearance activities for upcoming years.⁸⁴ TURMAC has prepared a project document for EBMCP Phase IV to be financed by the EU, in order to carry out demining in Van province, on the Iranian border. Through this project, Türkiye plans to clear an area of approximately 3.5km² between 2024 and 2025.⁸⁵

BORDERS WITH IRAQ AND SYRIA

Türkiye's 2013 Article 5 deadline extension request had projected completing clearance of the Syrian border by the end of 2019.⁸⁶ Turkish officials have described the Syria border as Türkiye's easiest clearance task because the terrain is flat and has experienced minimal mine displacement due to environmental factors. Furthermore,

the minefields are mostly marked and fenced and well-known to local populations. Türkiye was, however, held back by the Syria conflict⁸⁷ and so far, has made little progress clearing the border.

Clearance operations underway since 2018 have focused on Hatay and Kilis provinces.⁸⁸ The Strategic Plan for 2020–25 said Turkish demining assets would clear a total of around 3.4km² in Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Mardin, Şanlıurfa, and Şırnak provinces on the Syrian border at a cost of TRY55 million (US\$8 million) funded from the national budget.⁸⁹ In Mardin province, the MoND planned to clear 27 areas covering nearly 1.06km² between 2021 and 2023.⁹⁰

The Mardin project was the first mine clearance project to be tendered by the Turkish Government since the establishment of TURMAC in 2015. It encompasses 45 minefields containing 27,614 mines across 1.7km² along the Syrian border.⁹¹ Türkiye had planned that it would be managed by TURMAC and implemented by a private contractor⁹² and, in 2020, the MoND pledged an additional TRY25 million for 2022 to 2023 to conduct mine clearance in Mardin province.⁹³ However, in its most recent Article 7 Report covering 2022, Türkiye explained that the Mardin Project has not been able to proceed due to instability and consequent security risks posed to demining personnel.⁹⁴

NON-BORDER AREAS

Türkiye had planned to clear all 873 identified mined areas inside the country by 2021, involving release of 3.1km² and destruction of 34,410 mines. However, little progress has been made in recent years, with clearance of only 0.3km² at a former military range in 2018,⁹⁵ a further 9,584m² cleared in 2021,⁹⁶ and only 2,727m² cleared in 2022. Türkiye estimated at the end of 2022 that 2.5km² remained.⁹⁷ The mined areas are scattered and TURMAC has previously stated that it considers it practical for clearance to be conducted by military units even though their capacity to do so has so far been limited.⁹⁸

79 Statement of Türkiye on Article 5, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19 June 2023.

80 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

81 Ibid.

82 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

83 "Final Evaluation for Clearance of Landmines in the Eastern Border Regions of Turkey (Demining Project - Phase I)", UNDP Independent Evaluation Office, accessed 9 July 2023 at: <https://bit.ly/3XMIZ3M>, p. 24.

84 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

85 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

86 2013 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. A-2, A-13, and A-14.

87 Article 7 Report (covering 2014), "Workplan for mine clearance activities", pp. 3 and 8; and Statement of Turkey, Fifteenth Meeting of States Parties, Santiago, 29 November 2016.

88 Email from TURMAC, 11 July 2019; Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A.

89 MoND Mine Action Centre, Strategic Plan 2020–2025, undated but 2020, p. 8.

90 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 6.

91 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

92 Presentation by TURMAC, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 22 June 2022.

93 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form A.

94 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

95 Email from TURMAC, 21 June 2017; Article 7 Report (for 2017), Form A; Article 7 Report (for 2018), Form D; Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A.

96 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

97 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

98 Email from TURMAC, 24 June 2020.

Türkiye's Article 5 deadline extension request does not set out a timeline for tackling non-border areas. TURMAC reported that in 2021 a Gendarmerie demining company would be assigned to clearance of non-border tasks in the south-eastern provinces of Diyarbakir and Siirt and the north-eastern province of Ardahan.⁹⁹ As noted above, some limited clearance in unspecified non-border areas in both 2021 and 2022 was reported. However, TURMAC did not clarify any further plans to clear mined areas in non-border areas.

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

Türkiye issued 44 national mine action standards, including on land release, in February 2019. The standards were prepared with support from UNDP and the GICHD.¹⁰⁰ A separate set of standards specific to the EBMCP were also reviewed in 2019, including regulations and medical standards for private companies.¹⁰¹

In 2022 Türkiye published NMAS 07.30 Accreditation of Mine Action Organisations and NMAS 12.10 Explosive Ordnance Risk Organization (EORE)¹⁰², following updates made to these in 2021.¹⁰³ This was done according to the latest published IMAS. In 2022, Türkiye also updated the following NMAS: Animal Detection Systems, Principles, Requirements and Guidelines; Accreditation and Operational Test of Animal Detection Systems and Users; Occupational Health and Safety – General Requirements; Occupational Health and Safety – Demining Worksite Safety; Occupational Health and Safety – Personal Protective Equipment; and Occupational Health and Safety – Medical Support to Demining Operations.¹⁰⁴ A meeting to review the NMAS was held in March 2023. While no changes have yet been made, some amendments are expected.¹⁰⁵

Accreditation and QM of the Turkish Land Forces and the Gendarmerie units is carried out by TURMAC.¹⁰⁶

Prior to 2022, the rate of progress towards completion in Türkiye has been unacceptably slow, indicating a lack of effective national capacity. However, clearance more than tripled between 2021 and 2022 (see Table 8 below) and Türkiye has reported on its efforts in 2022 to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance, including by promoting the research, application, and sharing of innovative technological means to this effect, including a new mine clearance equipment certification process; the deployment of demining machines; and use of MDDs.¹⁰⁷ Once all NTS due to take place by the end of 2023 is complete, Türkiye will be in a better position to plan for its capacity and land release system requirements for the years ahead.

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Türkiye's main demining capacity is provided by the military and has been steadily increasing in recent years. By 2020, after two years of rapid expansion, total military capacity amounted to 32 teams: 26 Land Forces demining teams with 420 personnel and 6 Gendarmerie teams with 120 personnel. In 2022, the number of Gendarmerie demining teams increased from 6 to 18.¹⁰⁸ In Türkiye's latest Article 7 report, covering 2022, it states that the number of Gendarmerie demining teams were increased by ten in 2022, bringing capacity to a total of 42 teams: 24 Land Forces teams and 18 Gendarmerie teams. Türkiye did not specify the total number of personnel across these teams.¹⁰⁹ Türkiye planned to increase the number of military demining teams to 50 during 2023.¹¹⁰

Türkiye's defence industries developed the Mechanical Mine Clearing Equipment (MEMATT), a light-medium, unmanned demining machine with a tiller attachment, particularly suitable for demining on the flat terrain along the Syrian border. The MoND had planned to take delivery of two machines in 2020 and four in 2021, but cautioned that plans could be set back by the COVID-19 pandemic and later reported that it aimed to deploy all six machines in 2021.¹¹¹ However, in 2021, Türkiye sent six demining machines (MEMATT-I), to Azerbaijan to support mine clearance¹¹² and reported that it planned to complete the

99 Email from TURMAC, 4 May 2021.

100 Email from Hans Risser, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, 3 October 2016; and Article 7 Report (covering 2015), Form F; Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A.

101 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form A; email from TURMAC, 24 June 2020.

102 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

103 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

104 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023 and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

105 Email from TDI, 15 May 2023.

106 CCW Protocol II 10 Report (covering 2021), Form B.

107 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Preliminary Observations on the Implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye", Intersessional Meetings, 19–21 June 2023.

108 Email from TURMAC, 5 September 2022.

109 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2022.

110 Statement of Türkiye on Article 5, APMBC 20MSP, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

111 MoND Mine Action Centre, Strategic Plan 2020–2025, undated but 2020, p. 7; Article 7 Reports (covering 2019 and 2020), Form A.

112 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form I; and "Azerbaijan receives new MEMATT mine clearing robots from Turkey", *Global Defense and Security News*, 8 February 2021.

deployment of 20 MEMATT-II machines to Turkish military demining units “in the upcoming years”.¹¹³ In 2022, Türkiye’s military demining units were finally augmented with six MEMATT-II demining machines. These were domestically manufactured for the first time, funded by national resources, and accredited and certificated by TURMAC, according to international standards (CWA 15044 – Test and Evaluation of Demining Machines). In total, Türkiye now has eight demining machines operational within its national capacity. A further 20 mechanical demining machines (MEMATT-I and MEMATT-II), again manufactured in Türkiye, were sent to Azerbaijan to support mine clearance activities.¹¹⁴

Following MDD training and accreditation in 2020,¹¹⁵ Turkish Land Forces planned to deploy MDDs for verification following clearance and technical survey (TS) with mechanical assets.¹¹⁶ In 2021, three MDDs were introduced into Gendarmerie demining units and used for verification, with plans to introduce more MDDs in 2022.¹¹⁷ In 2022, Türkiye had ten mine detection dogs operational within its national capacity,¹¹⁸ with plans to add a further four dogs in 2023.¹¹⁹

In 2022, Türkiye deployed its military demining units for clearance (see Table 4) and TURMAC’s NTS teams provided QC and advisory support to the EBMCP.¹²⁰ TURMAC did not clarify if military demining units also undertook any NTS or TS. TDI Altay deployed teams for NTS, TS, and clearance¹²¹ (see Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3: Operational survey capacities deployed in 2022¹²²

Operator	Survey teams	Total personnel	Mechanical assets	Comments
TDI Altay	*10	20	0	Deployed for NTS. No TS teams deployed. Increase from 6 teams of 12 personnel in 2021.
Totals	10	20	0	

* This represents TDI Altay’s peak NTS capacity in November–December 2022. In January–July 2022, the joint venture deployed 6 NTS teams totalling 12 personnel. In July–November 2022, it deployed 9 NTS teams totalling 18 personnel.

Table 4: Operational clearance capacities deployed in 2022¹²³

Operator	Manual clearance teams	Total deminers	MDD teams	Mechanical assets	Comments
Gendarmerie	24	N/K	10 dogs across all military units. Number of teams N/K.	8 machines across all military units, including six MEMATT-II demining machines.	Deployed 18 manual clearance teams of 120 deminers in 2021.** 3 MDDs used by Gendarmerie for verification in 2021. Increase on zero mechanical assets deployed in 2021.
Land Forces	18	N/K			Deployed 26 manual clearance teams of 420 deminers in 2021 No MDD teams in 2021. Increase on zero mechanical assets deployed in 2021.
TDI Altay	20	192	8 teams/16 dogs/ 8 handlers	0	Includes 2 technical survey teams totalling 12 deminers who conducted mainly clearance and support for completion of tasks. Assisted by MDD teams as needed.
Totals	62	N/K	18 MDDs (no. of MDD teams N/K)	*8	

* TURMAC reported that Türkiye deployed eight mechanical assets across its military demining units in 2022, including six MEMATT-II demining machines, but did not specify how many were deployed by the Gendarmerie and Land Forces.

** In 2022, TURMAC confirmed that the number of Gendarmerie manual clearance teams increased from 6 to 18 in 2021 but did not update the number of deminers. That number is, though, believed to be higher than the 120 stated here, which is the number reported for 2020.

113 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

114 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

115 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form C.

116 Email from TURMAC, 4 May 2021.

117 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D; and CCW Protocol II 10 Report (covering 2021), Form G.

118 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

119 Statement of Türkiye on Article 5, 20MSP, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

120 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

121 Email from TDI, 15 May 2023.

122 Ibid.

123 Emails from TURMAC, 4 May 2021, 5 September 2022, and 18 April 2023; and TURMAC; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

A joint venture between TDI and national organisation Altay (TDI Altay) won the contract for Phase III of the EBMCP, including NTS and clearance in the provinces of Ağrı, Ardahan, Iğdır, and Kars. RPS Energy, also part of the UK-based RPS Group, won the contract for QM.¹²⁴ A need to increase NTS capacity was recognised during operations so TDI Altay increased the number of NTS teams from six to ten during the course of 2022.

DEMINER SAFETY

TURMAC did not clarify if any accidents involving military demining personnel took place during survey or clearance of AP mines in 2022. In its most recent Article 7 Report covering 2022, however, Türkiye notes that, of 32 mine/IED mine victims identified in 2022, 9 were military personnel.¹²⁵ However, it is not clear if any of these accidents occurred during survey or clearance or during other military activities.

TDI Altay reports that three deminers were injured in three separate accidents involving M-14 and DM-11 AP mines during clearance in 2022. An investigation was conducted in line with the NMAS, with full involvement from the EBMCP's QA provider and UNDP. Lessons were said to have been identified and training was provided to all staff following the accidents.¹²⁶

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

Türkiye released 103 hazardous areas covering almost 7.2km² in 2022,¹²⁷ 2.7km² more than the previous year.¹²⁸ During clearance, Türkiye destroyed 58,078 AP mines as well as 30 AV mines and 4 items of UXO.¹²⁹ As in previous years, the overwhelming majority of the area released (82% in 2022), was through survey. Of the 7.2km² released, 1.29km² was released through clearance, 0.82km² was reduced through TS, and almost 5.1km² was cancelled through NTS.¹³⁰ Clearance along Türkiye's border with Armenia was completed, following demining in 2022.¹³¹

Türkiye did not report any previously unrecorded AP mined areas as added to Türkiye's information management database in 2022. Türkiye noted in its most recent Article 7 Report covering 2022, that, as the QM process for all minefields had not yet been completed and not all data had been uploaded to the IMSMA database at the time of reporting, not all progress made within the scope of the EBMCP had been included in the land release figures for 2022. TURMAC has said it will reflect the outputs and results of ongoing projects in its Article 7 report covering 2023, to be submitted in 2024.¹³² Türkiye did not report on land release in 2022 in areas under its control in northern Cyprus or northern Syria, referring only to clearance at the "Syrian border".¹³³

SURVEY IN 2022

Türkiye released a total of just over 5.9km² through survey in 2022,¹³⁴ an increase on the almost 4.08km² released through survey in 2021.¹³⁵ Of this, almost 5.09km² was cancelled through NTS and 816,042m² was reduced through TS.¹³⁶ As in 2021, the majority of land released through survey (74%), was along the borders with Syria. Survey took place in all areas of operation across Türkiye in 2022;¹³⁷ in 2021, it took place on the Syrian and Iranian borders only.¹³⁸ The significant increase in the amount of mined area cancelled and reduced in 2022, compared to 2021, can mainly be attributed to the implementation of Phase III of the EBMCP, which includes NTS of many mined areas.

124 Email from Mark Frankish, UNDP, 2 July 2021.

125 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form H.

126 Emails from TDI, 15 May and 8 August 2023.

127 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

128 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

129 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

130 Ibid.

131 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

132 Email from TURMAC, 17 August 2023.

133 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

134 Emails from TDI, 15 May and 8 August 2023; and TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

135 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

136 Ibid.; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

137 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

138 Ibid.

Table 5: Release of mined area through NTS in 2022¹³⁹

Operator	Region	Area cancelled (m ²)
N/R	Syrian border	4,379,693
N/R	Iranian border	353,038
N/R	Armenian border	356,653
Total		5,089,384

N/R = Not Reported

Türkiye reported that 816,042m² was reduced through technical survey in 2022, distributed across all areas of operation and including 365,049m² at Türkiye's border with Armenia¹⁴⁰ (see Table 6).

Table 6: Release of mined area through TS in 2022¹⁴¹

Operator	Region	Area reduced through TS (m ²)
N/R	Syrian border	3,124
N/R	Iraqi border	125
N/R	Iranian border	446,362
N/R	Armenian border	365,049
N/R	Non-border areas	1,382
Total		816,042

CLEARANCE IN 2022

In 2022, Türkiye reported clearance of 1.29km² with 103 CHAs cleared and 58,078 AP mines destroyed (see Table 7).¹⁴² This is a considerable increase on the 413,851m² cleared and the 14,176 AP mines destroyed in 2021.¹⁴³

Türkiye has stated that clearance on its southern borders was able to increase during 2022 due to an improved security situation on the Syrian side of the border and the reduced presence of the militant group known as the People's Defence Units or People's Protection Units (the YPG).¹⁴⁴

TURMAC did not clarify which operators were responsible for each of the areas cleared. However, Türkiye gives some specific details of operations by its military demining units in its latest Article 7 Report covering 2022, in which it states that eight Gendarmerie teams addressed 182,665m² of land across 28 areas in Van (a province at the Iranian border) and Şırnak (a province spanning the Iraqi and Syrian borders) in 2022, destroying 8,938 mines. It also states that 20 Land Forces teams conducted demining operations in Hatay (a province along the Syrian border); Kilis (a province also along the Syrian border); Şırnak; and Hakkari (a province spanning the Iraq and Iran borders). During these operations, 262,414m² of land across 19 areas was addressed, with 130 mines destroyed.¹⁴⁵

TURMAC did not clarify how many of the total number of AP mines destroyed in 2022 (as per Table 7), were of an improvised nature. TURMAC stated that no mines or UXO were destroyed in 2022 as a result of spot tasks.¹⁴⁶

Table 7: Mine clearance in 2022¹⁴⁷

Region	Operator	CHAs cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Syrian border	N/K	2	221,510	69	30	1
Iraqi border	N/K	0	37,655	31	0	1
Iranian border	N/K	57	653,438	37,556	0	0
Armenian border	N/K	43	375,375	20,389	0	1
Non-border areas	N/K	1	2,727	33	0	1
Totals		103	1,290,705	58,078	30	4

139 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from Ömer Burga Gönen, TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

140 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

141 Ibid.; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

142 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

143 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D; and email from TURMAC, 8 August 2022.

144 Statement of Türkiye on Article 5, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19 June 2023. Türkiye considers the YPG to be a terrorist organisation and offspring of the PKK, which it also considers a terrorist organisation.

145 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

146 Email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

147 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D and email from TURMAC, 18 April 2023.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBBC (and in accordance with the eight-year extension granted by states parties in 2013), Türkiye was required to destroy all AP mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than its extended deadline of 1 March 2022. Türkiye did not meet this deadline and in 2021 it was granted an interim extension until the end of 2025.

In its latest Article 7 report covering 2022, Türkiye, notes that, since its first extension request, approximately 39km² of mined area has been addressed and almost 193,000 AP mines destroyed, with the total mined area remaining reduced from 172km² to 133km² between 2014 and 2022.¹⁴⁸ As at the end of 2022, mine clearance in the provinces of Kars and Ardahan had been completed and there are no areas remaining to be addressed at Türkiye's border with Armenia.¹⁴⁹ Over half of this 39km² addressed since 2014 has been released since the launch of Phase III of the EBMCP, for which the demining contract was signed on 23 March 2021. Türkiye expects full completion of Phase III of the EBMCP by the end of 2023.¹⁵⁰

Türkiye plans to clear 10km² by the new deadline of 31 December 2025 but the main focus of the extension request is on completing NTS of all 3,843 mined areas. Türkiye expects that this extensive survey will result in cancellation of up to 40km², or more than a quarter of Türkiye's estimate of AP mined area. Türkiye plans to use the resulting estimate of contamination as the basis for another extension request setting out plans to complete clearance.¹⁵¹ Türkiye noted that the security situation on the Syrian side of Türkiye's border with Syria improved in 2022, allowing for increased clearance activity.¹⁵²

Türkiye's 2022 extension request had a number of gaps. It did not address Türkiye's Article 5 obligations in areas under its control in northern Cyprus and northern Syria. In 2021, TURMAC said Turkish Armed Forces units conducting

cross-border operations in Syria had not encountered any minefields but were clearing IEDs, some of which were AP mines. In August 2023, TURMAC stated that Turkish Armed Forces have neutralised "thousands of mines and hand-made explosives as part of cross-border military operations", including along the Syrian border. However, TURMAC also stated that it believes responsibility for clearing mined areas in northern Cyprus and northern Syria does not sit with Türkiye.¹⁵³ This failure to implement Articles 1 and 5 of the Convention engages Türkiye's responsibility as a State for a violation of international law.

The request also provided no details of plans for clearance of the 90 identified mined areas remaining in non-border areas. TURMAC said it gives higher priority to clearing border minefields and installing border management facilities such as watch towers and patrol roads¹⁵⁴ with the aim of providing "a more secure and technologically advanced humanitarian border management system."¹⁵⁵ Türkiye made little progress on land release in non-border areas in 2022 and, as at April 2023, TURMAC had not provided further clarity on plans to accelerate clearance in non-border areas.

Türkiye's total land release of 7.2km² in 2022 is 2.7km² more than the previous year, and the completion of clearance on Türkiye's border with Armenia, while a relatively small proportion of total contamination, is a milestone towards eventual completion. Survey and clearance activities under Phase III of the EBMCP, due to be completed by the end of 2023, appeared to be on track at the time of writing. Once completed, the outcomes of Phase III will be the basis upon which Türkiye's mine action programme can move forward with a further updated plan.

148 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

149 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Preliminary Observations on the Implementation of Article 5 by Türkiye, Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 19–21 June 2023, p. 1.

150 Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form D.

151 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 5 and 19.

152 Statement of Türkiye on Article 5, 20MSP, Geneva, 21–25 November 2022.

153 Email from TURMAC, 17 August 2023.

154 Email from TURMAC, 12 August 2021; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.

155 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form D.