

Analysis of the request submitted by Guinea-Bissau for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention

**Submitted by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation
(Belgium, Norway, Sri Lanka and Zambia)**

1. Guinea-Bissau ratified the Convention on 22 May 2001. The Convention entered into force for Guinea-Bissau on 1 November 2001. In its initial transparency report submitted on 19 June 2002, Guinea-Bissau reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. Guinea-Bissau is obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 1 November 2011. Guinea-Bissau, believing that ongoing survey work may produce new information that may suggest that compliance by that date would not be possible, submitted, on 8 September 2010, to the President of the Second Review Conference, a request for an extension of its deadline. The Tenth Meeting of the States Parties (10MSP) agreed unanimously to grant the request for a period of two months, until 1 January 2012.
2. On 5 December 2012, Guinea-Bissau reported to the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties (12MSP) that it had fulfilled its obligation under Article 5 of the Convention before its 1 January 2012 deadline. Subsequently, on 11 August 2021 Guinea-Bissau submitted a request for an extended deadline to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation. The request highlights that Guinea-Bissau has discovered previously unknown mined areas. Guinea-Bissau's request is for an extended deadline until 31 December 2022.
3. The Committee noted that Guinea-Bissau had not adhered to the extension request process established by the States Parties in 2007. The Committee further noted that in addition to this, Guinea-Bissau had submitted its request later than the established 31 March 2021 deadline for States Parties submitting requests in 2021. The Committee, however, noted with satisfaction that Guinea-Bissau has submitted its request and has engaged in a cooperative dialogue with the Committee, including by meeting with the Committee to discuss the situation in Guinea-Bissau.
4. The Committee noted that, while it is unfortunate that Guinea-Bissau has discovered previously unknown mined areas, it is positive that Guinea-Bissau has acted in accordance with the decision of the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties for situations in which a State Party, after its original or extended deadline to implement Article 5 has expired, as an exceptional circumstance, discovers a mined area (as defined by Article 2.5 of the Convention), including a newly mined area, under its jurisdiction or control that is known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines. The Committee noted that it is also positive that Guinea-Bissau is requesting only the period of time necessary to gather and assess data on landmine contamination and other relevant information with a view to develop a meaningful forward-looking plan based on this information and then submitting a new request for extension containing plans based on a clearer understanding of the extent of the challenge, and which project with greater certainty the amount of time that will be required to complete Article 5 implementation. The request indicates that Guinea-Bissau will keep the States Parties informed through the submission of Article 7 Reports.
5. The request indicates that since 2012, more than 40 people, mostly children and women have fallen victims to mines and other explosive devices. The request indicates that, on 28 January 2021, an explosion was reported in Buruntuma, east of the country in the Gabu region in which 8 boys, ages 8-13 were injured (6) and killed (2). The Committee noted that Article 5 implementation as soon as possible had the potential of making a significant contribution to improving human safety and

socio-economic conditions in Guinea-Bissau. The Committee welcomes Guinea-Bissau providing information on mine victims disaggregated by gender and age and encourages Guinea-Bissau to continue collecting and reporting information in this manner.

6. The request indicates that as a result of investigations carried out by HUMAID, a national non-governmental organisation (NGO), 9 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) were discovered measuring 1'093'840 square metres. The request further indicates that 43 additional suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) were discovered through population reports and require further survey. The Committee welcomes Guinea-Bissau reporting on its remaining challenge in a manner consistent with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and notes the importance of Guinea-Bissau continuing to provide information on its remaining challenge in a manner disaggregated by 'suspected hazardous areas' and 'confirmed hazardous areas' and their relative size, as well as by the type of contamination.
7. As noted, Guinea-Bissau is requesting an extended deadline until 31 December 2022. The request indicates that the objective of the extension request period is to carry out the necessary survey activities to gather and assess data on landmine contamination and other relevant information with a view to develop a meaningful forward looking plan based on this information, and then submit a subsequent request containing plans based on a clear understanding of the extent of the challenge and which project with greater certainty the amount of time that will be required to complete Article 5 implementation. The request further indicates that Guinea-Bissau will submit a subsequent request for extension by 31 March 2022. The Committee noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau ensuring that survey activities are undertaken taking into account best practices and an evidence based approach as per the IMAS.
8. The request indicates that the government of Guinea-Bissau established in early 2001 a National Humanitarian Mine Action Programme (PAAMI) and the National Mine Action Coordination Centre (CAAMI) which is mandated to plan and coordinate all mine action and mobilise resources for the implementation of the national mine action programme. The request further indicates that CAAMI faces a number of challenges, particularly lack of funding, which affects all areas of implementation. Th request further indicates that CAAMI does, however, have the necessary personnel.
9. The Committee noted the importance of Guinea-Bissau submitting a request by 31 March 2022, the importance of developing the request through an inclusive process, taking into consideration the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities, and including the following, amongst other information:
 - a. detailed , costed and multi-year work plans for the extension period, containing information on progress made, the result of assessment efforts, an updated list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines using terminology consistent with the IMAS and disaggregated by the type of explosive ordnance, annual projections of which areas and what area would be dealt with during the requested extension period and by which organisation, matched to a detailed budget;
 - b. the survey and clearance methodologies to be employed, including the standards to be employed;
 - c. detailed, costed and multi-year plans for context-specific mine risk education and reduction in affected communities that are sensitive to gender, age, disability and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account;

- d. plans to address the challenges faced by CAAMI and to ensure the establishment of a sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas discovered following completion;
- e. the humanitarian, social, economic, and environmental implications of the extension with information on victims disaggregated by gender and age;
- f. resource mobilisation efforts and external financing received, as well as resources made available by the government of Guinea-Bissau to support implementation efforts, including through efforts to facilitate operations of international demining organisations and indigenous capacities, and the results of these efforts.

10. The Committee noted the importance, in addition to Guinea-Bissau reporting to the States Parties as noted above, of keeping the States Parties regularly apprised of other pertinent developments regarding the implementation of Article 5 during the period covered by the request and other commitments made in the request at intersessional meetings and Meetings of the States Parties, as well as through its Article 7 reports using the Guide to Reporting.