

Statement on Implementing Article 5: States with 2009 and 2010 Deadlines

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10th Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty

1 December 2010

Mr President, States Parties,

Of the 15 States Parties that were granted an extension to their deadline, only **Nicaragua** has so far reported full compliance with Article 5. We congratulate Nicaragua again for this great achievement. We have already commented on three of the other 14 with 2009 deadlines that needed to request additional extension periods.

Among the other 11 States Parties that have requested an extension the picture is mixed, with some states making good progress, but more than half at serious risk of not meeting their extended deadlines. Most problematic had been the case of **Venezuela**, which had not initiated clearance operations for 11 years after joining the treaty. We were pleased to hear today that Venezuela has finally begun clearance and that it reduced the planned time for completion to four years. We welcome this news, but still encourage Venezuela to reduce the time even further given the small amount of contaminated areas. Other States Parties of special concern are Bosnia and Herzegovina, Senegal, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and Yemen.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has so far failed to meet the targets set in its Mine Action Strategy 2009-2019, which provides for completing clearance within its extended Article 5 deadline. Demining organizations manually cleared less than 2km² in 2009, barely one-fifth of planned clearance for the year. We appreciate that Bosnia has made solid efforts in seeking to gain a better assessment of contaminated areas. Bosnia reduced their suspected hazardous areas by more than 126km² in 2009, resulting in 1,555km² still suspected to be mined in 2010. This is still, however, much less than the planned level of contamination according to Bosnia's extension request, the target of which was 1,377km² for the end of 2009. We are therefore concerned about the speed on Bosnia's implementation of Article 5 and we urge Bosnia to keep the focus and energy in implementing its national strategy.

Senegal has an extended deadline of 2017, and it has stated its intention not to seek a second extension period, except for "truly exceptional circumstances." In the past five years, however, demining has cleared only a very small extent of mine contamination, and the total estimate for mined areas to be released has almost doubled, leading to major concerns that Senegal will not even meet its revised Article 5 deadline. In the second half of 2009, the UNDP put out a request for tender for €3.35million funds from the European Commission, which had been allocated three years ago, in 2007. We were pleased to hear that a contractor has finally been selected so large scale clearance can begin. We hope to hear about rapid progress in demining and encourage Senegal to provide clearer information on the size of the estimated contaminated areas and to release land quickly and efficiently.

Thailand has not provided the finances and other support needed to enable the Thai Mine Action Center to implement an extremely ambitious extension plan and is therefore already falling far behind its targets. Thailand's extension request said it would increase the area cleared in a single year to 43km² in 2009, but it actually cleared only 2.54km². This performance calls into question the relevance of Thailand's Article 5 extension request as a blueprint for fulfilling its treaty obligations. We therefore suggest that Thailand present a revised and realistic plan for the remainder of its extension period. We also encourage the Thai government to provide significantly more support to TMAC so it can carry out this plan.

The **United Kingdom** is not fulfilling part of the terms of its 10-year extension request, which was granted in 2008. The UK had committed to providing "as soon as possible, but not later than 30 June 2010 a detailed explanation of ... the implications for future demining" in order to meet the UK's obligations under Article 5 of the treaty. The UK has still to announce specific clearance plans for the 113 remaining mined areas, which is highly disappointing. In regards to the UK's statement today, we would like to recall that States Parties called upon the UK in the decision on its request in 2008 to pursue demining without further delay and to try to

complete the demining in less than the 10 years granted. We call on the UK to respect that decision as well as their treaty obligation to clear all mined areas as soon as possible.

The extent of **Yemen's** remaining threat remains unclear with differing reports being offered of its remaining challenge. Yemen is only one of many States Parties that do not report clearly and in detail on clearance and release of suspected land by other means. In a troubling development, Yemen's most recent Article 7 report describes clearance work in more than 61km² as being "suspended" due to technical problems. The report further notes that recent fighting led to new use by insurgents of landmines in the Sada'a governorate that YEMAC has been clearing since March 2010.

Ecuador is another state that has made little demining progress since receiving its extension, and it stated at the Cartagena Summit that it had fallen behind on objectives set out in its extension request. We are pleased to see, however, that Ecuador has conducted the impact survey of Coangos, which represents a major portion of the remaining suspected areas and we look forward to receiving details of the survey. This should help them to determine more accurately the remaining problem and possibly reduce the time needed to meet its Article 5 obligations.

In 2009, four other States Parties were granted an extension to their deadline. Two of these states-**Cambodia** and **Tajikistan**-were unable to identify the extent of contamination in the extension requests but sought and received a 10-year extension. Since then, Cambodia has completed the first phase of a baseline survey that will provide clarity on the extent of residual mine contamination and is now proceeding with the second phase. We are also pleased to see that Tajikistan has added international NGO capacity and expertise and we hope that they will be able to meet their obligations long in advance of the very long extension it was granted last year.

The ICBL urges the States Parties that receive extensions to fully implement Action #13 of the Cartagena Action Plan, which calls on them to work towards rapid implementation of Article 5 "in accordance with the commitments made in their extension requests and the decisions taken on their requests," plus to report regularly on such progress. The ICBL also calls on all States Parties that have received an extension to keep the time planned for completion under regular review with an aim to finishing as soon as possible. We urge the international community to support their efforts by providing the necessary financial, technical and other support in a timely manner.

Thank you.