Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

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Consideration of requests submitted under Article 5

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Analysis of the request submitted by Mauritania 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

Algeria (Chair), Bulgaria, Burkina Faso and Norway

Background

1. Mauritania ratified the Convention on 21 July 2000. The Convention entered into force for Mauritania on 1 January 2001. In its initial transparency report submitted on 20 June 2001, Mauritania reported areas in which anti-personnel mines were known or suspected to be emplaced. Mauritania was obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 1 January 2011. Since this time, Mauritania submitted requests for extensions to the Tenth Meeting of the States Parties in 2010 and the Fourteenth Meeting of the States Parties in 2015. On each occasion, the Meetings of the States Parties unanimously agreed to grant Mauritania's requests for extensions. On 29 November 2018, at the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties, Mauritania announced that it had fulfilled its obligation under Article 5 of the Convention.

2. In its Article 7 report submitted on 23 June 2020, Mauritania reported the discovery of previously unknown mined areas and subsequently submitted requests for an extended deadline to the Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties in 2020, and a request for extension to the Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties (19MSP) in 2021. The request granted to Mauritania by the 19MSP was for a period of four years and eleven months, until 31 December 2026.

3. In granting Mauritania’s request, the 19MSP noted that by requesting a four years and eleven months extension, Mauritania was projecting that it would need approximately five years from the date of submission of its request to build the capacity of the National Humanitarian Demining Program for Development (PNHD), carry out survey efforts to further delimit the mined areas, ensure strengthening and maintenance of the national database, continue with its mine risk education and reduction efforts, mobilize national and international resources, carry out clearance of the remaining mined areas and establish a sustainable demining capacity.

* The present document was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent information.

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4. On 14 April 2026, Mauritania submitted to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation ("the Committee") a request for an extension of its deadline. On 26 June 2026, the Committee wrote to Mauritania to request additional information. On 11 August 2026, Mauritania provided a revised request for extension incorporating its responses. The Committee noted with satisfaction that Mauritania had submitted its request in a timely manner and had engaged in a cooperative dialogue with the Committee. Mauritania's extension request is for five years, until 31 December 2031.

5. The request indicates that at the time of the 2021 request, the remaining challenge was estimated at 20 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) measuring a total of 16,183,490 square metres. The request indicates that in 2021, a mission was deployed to Mayaateg which adjusted the size of the area, reducing it by 47,151 square metres. The request indicates that the total size of the 20 areas was adjusted to 16,136,339 square metres. The request further indicates that of the 20 areas, the size and type of contamination in one area (Guneiva) remained to be confirmed.

Progress in implementation

6. The request indicates that during the previous extension period Mauritania released 1,201,019 square metres of mined area, including 540,766 square metres reduced through technical survey, and 660,253 square metres cleared, resulting in the destruction of 346 anti-personnel mines (AP mines). The request provides a breakdown of progress made during the extension period including the following:

(a) In 2022: one mined area (Guemgoum) totalling 50,769 square metres was addressed and part of one mined area (PK 173) totalling 81,559 square metres was addressed destroying a total of 98 anti-personnel mines. Additionally, survey of one minefield (Guneive) revealed that it was contaminated by cluster munitions and was therefore reclassified.

(b) In 2023: six additional mined areas were discovered in the region of Dakhlet Nouadhibou measuring a total of 6,903,424 square metres. One mined area (Rbeit lachar 1) totalling 62,819 square metres (total cleared: 68,099 square metres) and part of one mined area (Bouchon 24) totalling 59,299 square metres was addressed with the support of HAMAP – Humanitaire. Furthermore, one mined area (Boukhzama) measuring 63,796 square metres was addressed and the area of one mined area (Mazaateg) was reduced through technical survey by 351,797 square metres. During 2023, a total of 170 anti-personnel mines were destroyed.

(c) In 2024: part of one mined area (Lewej2) totalling 57,678 square metres was addressed resulting in the destruction of a total of 17 anti-personnel mines.

(d) In 2025: one mined area (Eguedet El Ghamboul2) totalling 398,422 square metres was addressed and part of one mined area (Bouchon 24) totalling 69,600 square metres was addressed, resulting in the destruction of a total of 61 anti-personnel mines.

7. The Committee encourages Mauritania to continue providing information on progress made in a manner consistent with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) by disaggregating information by the land release methodology employed (i.e. cancelled through non-technical survey (NTS), reduced through technical survey (TS), or addressed through clearance) including information on the type of explosive ordnance (EO) located and destroyed. The Committee further noted the importance of Mauritania employing the full range of methods to permit the safe return of land to the population and encouraged Mauritania to continue seeking improved land release methodologies which could lead to Mauritania fulfilling its obligations in a shorter time frame.

8. The request indicates that during the period 2024–2025 Mauritania, in partnership with the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) conducted a non-technical survey discovering 18 suspected hazardous areas (SHA) measuring 18,382,394 square metres. The request indicates that these areas are pending technical survey (TS), to confirm the presence of anti-personnel mines and, if necessary, prepare for subsequent clearance operations.

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9. The request indicates that, during the previous extension period, Mauritania drafted a National Mine Action Standard (NMAS) on environmental protection in accordance with IMAS 07.13. The standard is currently awaiting adoption. The Committee noted the importance of Mauritania providing updates on the timeline and process for adopting the standard. The request further indicates that Mauritania initiated updates to the national information management database to improve operational planning and in support of decision making. The Committee noted the importance of Mauritania ensuring that it ensures that its NMAS remain up to date in accordance with IMAS to ensure efficient, effective, and safe operations.

10. The request indicates that during the previous extension period, Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) activities reached 1,293,000 people. The request indicates that risk education was implemented through community outreach, door-to-door information sessions, in schools, and targeted activities for high-risk groups, such as gold miners, sand excavators, scrap metal workers and nomads living near contaminated areas. The Committee welcomes Mauritania reporting on the methodologies used, challenges faced, and results achieved and the inclusion of information disaggregated by gender and age. The Committee noted the importance of Mauritania continuing to report on the implementation of mine risk education programmes, including information on how priorities were established, methodologies used, challenges faced, and results achieved and to include information disaggregated by gender, age, disability, and other diverse needs and experiences of affected communities.

Circumstances which impede the ability of the State Party to destroy all the anti-personnel mines in mined areas

11. The request indicates the following factors which, in Mauritania's view, acted as impeding circumstances during the extension period: (a) lack of sustainable international funding; (b) seasonal weather and climate changes; (c) hard-to-detect mines and lack of minefield records, and; (d) newly discovered contamination.

12. The request indicates that a lack of financing has been the main challenge in implementation, with the national government providing USD 285,000 on an annual basis to cover expenses related to the functioning of the program, including expert personnel and offices in the different regions and coordinating the different mine action actors and the national capacity. The request indicates that the amount of resources is insufficient to address all the operational needs but, despite this, Mauritania carried out essential activities including the marking of mined areas, mine risk education, and emergency spot clearance. The request further indicates that progress remains limited in the absence of resources, in particular for clearance operations.

13. The request indicates that in the last five years only two contributions have been received (1,666,958 euros in 2023, and 613,516 euros in 2024) that funded the work of Mauritania's Humanitarian Demining Program for Development (PNDHD) and its partners to conduct demining activities, purchase equipment and support team operations.

Remaining challenge

14. The request indicates that the remaining challenge totals 39 hazardous areas measuring 40,226,418 square metres located in the regions of Adrar and Dakhlet Nouadhibou, including 21 CHAs measuring 21,844,024 square metres and 18 suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) measuring 18,382,394 square metres.

15. The request indicates that addressing the remaining challenge is made difficult due to the fact that (a) the mined areas are located in sand dunes which renders their detection difficult due to their possible depth as well as their possible movement; (b) the extremely hot weather which complicates the work of deminers and shortens the period of work of deminers; (c) the fact that certain mines, in particular the APID51 mines are not detected by metal detectors making operations more difficult as well as delaying progress, and; (d) the

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wind often obstructs visibility which also leads to suspension of mine clearance operations to ensure the safety of deminers.

The humanitarian, social, economic, and environmental implications of the extension

16. The request indicates that PNDHD recorded 23 victims of mine and explosive device accidents during the period 2022–2026, including 17 injuries and 6 deaths (21 men, 2 women) in the regions of Dakhlet Nouadhibou, Tires Zemmour, and Adrar. The request indicates that contamination in Mauritania restricts access to productive land and natural resources, negatively affecting agriculture, livestock farming, artisanal gold mining, trade, and tourism, restricts movement and access to essential services, and poses environmental challenges by restricting access to land, disrupting ecosystems, and contributing to land degradation and unsustainable use of natural resources.

17. The request indicates that progress in implementation has allowed the population to resume agricultural, pastoral and commercial activities in a safe manner, led to the reduction in the number of accidents, supported the building of infrastructure and the overall development of affected regions, and through mine risk education campaigns has strengthened the security and resilience of the population. The Committee welcomes Mauritania providing information on landmine casualties disaggregated by gender and age. The Committee noted that progress under Article 5 during the extension period could significantly enhance human safety and socioeconomic conditions in Mauritania.

The duration of the proposed extension and justification

18. As noted, Mauritania's request is for five years, until 31 December 2031. During the requested extension period, Mauritania plans to address all remaining mined areas as well as any newly identified mined areas, protect civilians and the environment, return land to safe and productive use, contribute to the socioeconomic development of the region and strengthen its national capacities.

19. The request indicates that the time period is based on: (a) the extent and nature of remaining contamination; (b) available operational capacities; (c) the projected productivity of the teams, and; (d) the financial resources that can be mobilised. The request also indicates that Mauritania aims to reinforce its information management capacities through the migration of its information management system from the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) New Generation to IMSMA Core. The request further indicates that with the support of the international community, Mauritania will be in a position to honour its obligations under the Convention and that in the absence of international funding, progress in this regard will remain limited.

Implementation plan and milestones

20. The request indicates that to ensure a coherent, progressive, and effective implementation of the national demining plan during the 2027–2031 extension period, a detailed provisional timeline has been developed which outlines the main phases of implementation, from resource mobilisation and technical preparation of operations to the execution of demining activities, while integrating follow-up actions, quality assurance, EORE, and residual risk management. The schedule presented provides a structured overview of planned activities, organised by area of intervention, year, and month, in order to facilitate planning, progress monitoring, and coordination among all stakeholders.

21. The request indicates that the following prioritisation criteria will be used to address mined areas:

(a) The humanitarian impact of SHAs and CHAs on the affected communities;

(b) The history of accidents and incidents involving mines, explosive remnants of war (ERW) and other explosive devices;

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(c) The level of exposure of the population, particularly vulnerable groups such as women, children, nomadic communities and herders;

(d) The socio-economic significance of contaminated areas, particularly their role in pastoral activities, infrastructure, transport routes, resource extraction and development projects, and;

(e) The priorities identified by national and local authorities, in coordination with the communities concerned and other stakeholders involved in mine action.

22. The request indicates that the areas identified as priorities for the extension period were selected on the basis of the criteria mentioned above and present a high or very high level of risk due to their proximity to inhabited areas, transportation routes, economic activities, or spaces regularly used by the population. The request includes a table highlighting the main priority intervention areas, their location, their surface area, their level of impact, the populations exposed, as well as the elements justifying their prioritisation. The Committee welcomes Mauritania's efforts to ensure that activities are prioritised based on clear nationally driven humanitarian and sustainable development criteria with consideration for gender, age, disability, the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities including mine survivors, and the environment.

23. The request indicates that Mauritania will deploy eight demining teams exclusively dedicated to addressing areas contaminated by anti-personnel mines located in Adrar and Dakhlet Nouadhibou regions and that areas affected by cluster munitions present in these areas are not considered in this request for extension. The request indicates that each of these teams includes four deminers and one team leader. The request also indicates that staff are seconded military personnel and qualified civilians with significant experience in the field of mine clearance and that the programme also draws on the services of specialist former military personnel with expertise in mine clearance. The Committee noted the importance of Mauritania providing updates on the secondment of armed military personnel in support of the programme, as well as the timeline and process of the recruitment, training and deployment of the demining teams.

24. The Committee noted the importance of Mauritania having in place evidence-based, costed, context-specific, and time-bound national work plans for survey, clearance, and mine risk education, including projections of the number of mined areas, size, and amount to be addressed annually, ensuring consideration for gender, age, disability, the diverse needs and experiences of people in mine-affected communities including mine survivors, climate, and the environment to achieve completion as soon as possible, updated annually based on new evidence.

Mine risk education and risk reduction

25. The request indicates that the presented budget will allow the continuation of EORE activities throughout the extension period, complementing clearance operations in order to reduce population exposure and strengthen residual risk management. The request also indicates that to protect the population from the danger posed by mines before contaminated areas can be cleared, the PNDHD relies primarily on marking of contaminated areas and risk-awareness activities. The request further indicates that the PNDHD deploys teams to carry out conventional marking of minefields through the installation of warning signs, in order to alert and protect communities from danger.

26. The Committee noted the importance of Mauritania having in place detailed, evidence-based, costed, context-specific and multi-year work plans for survey, clearance, and mine risk education for the extension period in line with the decisions of States Parties concerning the extension request process and ensure consideration for gender, age, disability, the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities including mine survivors, as well as climate and the environment.

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Gender and environment

27. The request indicates that the composition of the PNDHD includes 26 employees, of whom 10 are women (four in management in supervision positions and six in operational positions). The request indicates that, in accordance with the 2023–2026 National Anti-Mine Action Plan, the PNDHD is continuing the development of a dedicated national policy on gender and diversity. The request also indicates that during the extension period, gender and diversity considerations will be systematically integrated into the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of mine action activities based particularly on: (a) the collection and analysis of sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data, where relevant; (b) inclusive consultation of women, men, girls, boys, and persons with disabilities within affected communities; (c) consideration of the specific needs of different groups in the planning of operations and risk-education activities, and (d) the promotion of equitable participation of women and men in mine action activities, in line with international standards and national commitments.

28. The request indicates that the PNDHD systematically integrates environmental protection into all demining activities, in line with national and international standards. The request indicates that operational sites are managed to prevent soil and vegetation degradation, teams follow SOPs and national regulations designed to minimise environmental impact, and personnel receive regular guidance on good environmental practices. The request further indicates that a new National Mine Action Standard on environmental protection, aligned with IMAS 07.13 and addressing climate-related risks such as flooding and the potential re-exposure of contaminated areas, is now finalised and undergoing validation and that these measures ensure safe operations for affected communities while safeguarding ecosystems and natural resources.

29. The Committee welcomed Mauritania's efforts to ensure consideration for gender, age, disability, the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities including mine survivors, and the environment in its implementation efforts.

Budget and requirements for assistance

30. The total estimated budget required for the implementation of the work plan during the extension 2027–2031 period amounts to 7,525,000 euros, including an annual national contribution of 285,000 euros to cover the operating expenses, support the strengthening of coordination and institutional support and an annual international contribution of 1,220,000 euros to cover operational activities, human resources, equipment, logistics, capacity-building and EORE activities.

31. The request indicates that this amount excludes staff salaries as well as the purchase of vehicles, equipment, and other material assets. The request indicates that the international contribution will cover the operational requirements necessary to carry out demining activities, including operational human resources, specialised equipment, logistics, capacity-building, quality assurance, and EORE and related activities.

32. The request indicates that Mauritania will undertake steps to mobilise resources during the period of the extension request, including through participation in the individualised approach; continuing to engage with international partners and States Parties to support demining objectives; conducting an information session on Mauritania's mine action programme; and continuing to provide updates at formal and informal meetings of the Convention. The request further indicates that Mauritania will continue to strengthen the coordination with partners including the European Union and the United Nations and remain in regular dialogue with partners.

Residual contamination

33. The request indicates that Mauritania will develop a national strategy for managing residual contamination, and that by the end of the extension period Mauritania will have established a permanent national system to ensure the management of residual mine and

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ERW contamination. The Committee noted the commitment made by Mauritania and the importance of Mauritania providing a detailed timeline and process for establishing its national capacities.

Interim commitment

34. In noting that Mauritania has provided an objective-based work plan, projected to deploy eight demining teams, the need to maintain national financial contributions and that sustainable international funding will have an impact on the timeline presented for implementation, the Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from Mauritania submitting to the Committee by 30 April 2028 an updated detailed work plan for the remaining period covered by the extension. The Committee emphasised that this work plan should contain an updated list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, annual projections of which areas remain to be addressed by which organisations during the remaining period covered by the request, and a detailed updated budget. The Committee further emphasised that the request should contain an updated context-specific mine risk education and reduction plan.

Annual reporting commitment

35. The Committee noted that the request includes other relevant information that may be of use to the States Parties in considering the request, including further detail on risks to implementation, humanitarian and socio-economic implications of remaining contamination, amongst other.

36. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the information provided in the request and subsequently in response to the Committee's questions is comprehensive and clear. The Committee noted that the plan presented by Mauritania is ambitious and contingent upon sustainable national financial contributions, international resources, and partnerships with international stakeholders. The Committee, nonetheless, noted that the plan presented by Mauritania is workable, lends itself well to monitoring, and states clearly which factors could affect progress in implementation. In this regard, the Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from Mauritania reporting annually, by 30 April, to the States Parties on the following:

(a) progress made relative to the commitments contained in Mauritania's work plan with progress in survey and clearance presented in a manner consistent with IMAS, and progress in accordance with the land release methodology employed (i.e. cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey, or cleared through clearance);

(b) impact of survey and clearance outcomes and how additional clarity obtained may change Mauritania's assessment of the remaining implementation challenge and timeframe for implementation, including adjusted annual milestones with information on the number of areas and amount of mined area to be addressed annually and how priorities have been established;

(c) the remaining challenge in a manner consistent with IMAS, by disaggregating by 'suspected hazardous areas' and 'confirmed hazardous areas' and their relative size including by disaggregating between the type of contamination to ensure increased clarity on the remaining challenges;

(d) Updates on Mauritania's efforts to approve updates to its NMAS, in accordance with the latest IMAS including on environmental protection;

(e) implementation of mine risk education and reduction efforts in affected communities, including information on how priorities were established, methodologies used, challenges faced, and results achieved and to include information disaggregated by gender, age, disability, and other diverse needs and experiences of affected communities;

(f) efforts to ensure consideration for the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys, and men and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected

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communities, as well as climate and environmental considerations in the implementation of the Convention;

(g) updates on efforts to maintain a national information management system containing accurate and up-to-date data at the national level on the status of implementation;

(h) resource mobilisation efforts, external financing received and resources made available by the Government of Mauritania to support implementation, including to facilitate operations of international demining organisations and national capacities; and

(i) updates on a residual contamination strategy to ensure the establishment of a sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas, discovered following completion.

37. The Committee noted the importance, in addition to Mauritania 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.

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