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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Item 8 and 12 of the provisional agenda
Informal presentation of requests for extension of deadlines submitted under Article 5 and of the analysis of these requests
Consideration of requests submitted under Article 5

Request for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with article 5 of the convention

Executive Summary

Submitted by Tajikistan

1. Based on the Decree of the President of the country dated September 23, 1999 No. 1360, and the humanitarian policy of the Government, since April 1, 2000, the Republic of Tajikistan is a party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (hereinafter referred to as the Convention).

2. As the result and the consequence of the three different conflicts across three regions of the country, Tajikistan has a legacy of contamination by landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) in the following three regions:

(a) **Central Region:** as the result of civil war (1992-1997), the Central Region has a legacy of contamination by landmines (AP mines), submunitions and other ERW, in two provinces and seven districts: Lakhsh, Tojikobod, Vahdat, Rudaki, Darvoz (Saghirdasht community), Rasht and Sangvor. Three of these districts - Rudaki, Lakhsh and Tojikobod - have been cleared from the landmine contamination and declared “mine-free”.

(b) **Tajik-Afghan border:** during the civil war (1992 – 1997), in order to protect the Tajik-Afghan Border from border intruders and from different types of armed groups from Afghanistan, landmines, submunitions and other ERW (unexploded ordnance) were laid along the Tajik- Afghan Border on the side of Tajikistan by Russian forces. Since that time ten districts of the Khatlon province and four districts in Viloyati Mukhtori Kuhistoni Badakhshon (VMKB) have been contaminated by landmines and other types of ERW. Five districts - Nosiri Khusrav, Shahritus, Dusti, Khovaling and Rushon districts - were released and declared “mine-free”. Two districts - Shahritus and Khovaling - were released and declared “mine-free” during the second extension request period. In six districts - Shamsiddin Shohin, Hamadoni, Qubodiyon, Farkhor, Panj and Jaykhun - land release operations are ongoing. The Tajik-Afghan Border is considered the most landmine and ERW contaminated region in Tajikistan. Since the very beginning of land release operations, a significant amount of anti-personnel mines and other types of ERW have been identified and destroyed and a significant number of square metres of land have been released and handed over for the safe use to the local authorities and local communities.

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(c) **Tajik-Uzbek border:** in the period of 2000-2001, the Uzbekistan forces laid mines on the Uzbek side of the Tajik-Uzbek Border (TUB) in order to prevent violation and illegal crossing of the border during the civil war in Tajikistan. As a result, populations living near contaminated areas faced a threat from landmines.

3. In 2019, on the date of submission of Tajikistan's second extension request, the remaining challenge totalled 195 confirmed and suspected hazardous areas with an estimated size of 8,848,210 square metres.

4. As a result of non-technical survey (NTS)/technical survey (TS), the remaining challenge of 8,848,210 square metres was adjusted taking into account additional areas identified while addressing existing confirmed hazardous areas (CHA) (expanded boundaries of 55 CHAs) and 47 newly identified CHAs measuring a total of 5,862,980 square metres. With the newly identified areas, the total remaining challenge increased to 14,711,190 square metres.

5. During the second extension request period, the Republic of Tajikistan has achieved the following results:

(a) As of 31 December 2025, 2 districts, Shahritus and Khovaling were declared "mine free".

(b) A total of 8,900,742 square metres were released (100,45 % against the target), identifying and destroying 20,174 anti-personnel mines. 63.3% of all land release resulted from cancellation/ reduction.

(c) 8,105 ERW, 2,4 kilos of explosive charges were also found and destroyed. In addition, with the efforts of the Weapons and Ammunition Disposal (WAD) project in Tajikistan providing bulk demolitions (mainly spot tasks), 201 anti-personnel mines, 337.486 kilos of TNT, 14,312 UXO and cluster munitions, and 114,872 small ammunitions have been destroyed.

(d) In 2020, the National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on Humanitarian Mine Action for 2021-2030 was developed and approved by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan on 28 November 2020. The Strategy aims to eliminate the risk of anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance for the period of 2021-2030 and defines the priority areas of humanitarian mine action in Tajikistan.

6. During the last six years, focus has been placed on the reduction and cancellation of contaminated areas. Since 2017, Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre (TNMAC) has been using the NTS approach with inclusion of technical interventions into suspected areas. This approach was successfully used and helped to collect more reliable information on the extent of contamination.

(a) TNMAC has developed sophisticated methods and standards for humanitarian demining, technical survey and non-technical survey and quality control. These methods and standards are in line with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), modified based on Tajikistan's country context.

(b) Almost 4,000 mine warning billboards have been installed near CHAs by demining teams under TNMAC coordination, but most required to be replaced and located closer to the actual mined areas.

(c) During the previous extension period (2019-2025), an amount of about US $24.2 million has been invested in humanitarian demining activities in Tajikistan. From this amount, Tajikistan has received more than US dollars 20.4 million from international donors.

7. Tajikistan's work plan for the extension period had an estimated budget of US dollars 42,000,000. The capacity of the Tajikistan Mine Action Program at the start of the second extension period was about US dollars 3,000,000 per year and had projected to release the remaining challenge by the end of 2025 by doubling funding and capacity, that is US dollars 6,000,000 annually or US dollars 42,000,000 for the seven-year period (2019-2025).

8. Unfortunately, funding remained at the level of the current capacity, except for the year 2025 which saw a slight increase to US dollars 4,534,614. However, the funded budget during the extension period was US dollars 24,299,247. This included an annual allocation

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from the Tajikistan state budget of US dollars 500,000. Thanks to the strong support from the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, the U.S. Department of State, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Norway, Switzerland, and other parties, the Tajikistan mine action programme achieved significant results in humanitarian mine action.

9. The Tajik-Uzbek border has been a specific area of concern as for many years it was unclear whether Uzbek forces had laid landmines on the Tajik territory as well or only on the Uzbek side. During the second extension period, in 2024, TNMAC carried out joint monitoring with other relevant Tajik Government entities, local authorities, and implementing partners to identify the level of threat from the contamination on the Tajik-Uzbek Border. As a result, it has been clarified, that the contaminated areas are located on the Uzbek side of the border.

10. Nevertheless, another assessment on the Tajik-Uzbek border has to be carried out at a later stage in some extremely high and hard-to-reach mountainous areas on the Tajik-Uzbek border after the final delimitation and demarcation of the border. TNMAC's role is limited to the mine action component: organising non-technical survey of the border districts in coordination with the National Guard Forces and implementing partners (Fondation Suisse de Déminage / Swiss Demining Foundation (FSD's NTS in Ayni in September 2025), and standing ready to assess and, where necessary, release those sites that are attributed to the Republic of Tajikistan following demarcation.

11. Despite the relatively good performance of the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme (TMAP) in 2019-2025, there were circumstances that impeded compliance during that period. This includes the identification of 47 confirmed hazard areas (minefields) for which no minefield records are available.

12. Moreover, Tajikistan also has the challenge caused by the change of the initial location of the minefields due to the impact of several factors as described below:

(a) Natural phenomena which caused migration of landmines, thus the initial size of the remaining mined areas from the second extension request period changed with 2,637,304 square metres of additional square metres addressed;

(b) Inaccuracy in the minefield records had also led to uncertainty on the location and actual size of mined areas often leading to additional areas being cleared.

13. Since most of the minefields are in the border area of the Tajik-Afghan border taking into account, the unstable situation near the Afghan border, especially after the change of government in Afghanistan in 2021, it should be highlighted, that in some cases the demining operations in the border area had to be suspended and the demining teams relocated to perform operations in safer areas.

14. Although there are some flat areas where mechanical demining can be carried out, it is currently impossible to use the mechanical demining machines, which are available in Tajikistan, as they require funding for the purchase of spare parts and technical maintenance.

15. During the previous extension period the TNMAC experienced additional obstacles, which are closely related to demining operations:

(a) Mountainous and hard-to-reach areas;

(b) Periodical short term border access limitations due to the security situation in Tajik-Afghan border;

(c) Weather impacts;

(d) Terrain peculiarity constraints such as high vegetation;

(e) Natural phenomena such as floods, mudflows, fires, rockfalls, landslides;

(f) Ferromagnetic rock content, which slows demining operations;

(g) Nonstandard installed camouflage traps and booby-traps with tripwires on combat mines;

(h) Wrongly installed landmines in deep ground starting from deeper than 15 centimetres, up to 60-80 centimetre-deep;

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(i) Shortage of funding resulted in an insufficient number of demining operations being conducted.

16. The main impact of humanitarian mine action operations is the reduction of the risks of AP mines and UXO affecting the civilian population, who safely use the road infrastructure and cleared areas for income generation. During the previous extension period, rural population got access to cleared land and used it for their farming and household development. According to statistics and post-clearance assessment, the local population is using cleared land for road reconstruction, disaster mitigation activities, water supply, fishery, construction of transmission/communication lines, coal/gold mining activities, and maintenance of dams along the rivers. Almost half of the cleared area is used as pasture (41 %) and for agriculture (16 %). The seasonal availability of pasture might lead to improvement in livestock productivity and better food consumption patterns for some households possessing livestock. Despite significant achievements, the remaining hazards present a humanitarian, economic, social and environmental impact.

17. As of 31 December 2025, Tajikistan faces a remaining challenge of 100 CHAs measuring 5,810,448 square metres. It is projected that by the end of 2026, 1,147,095 square metres will be addressed. In this regard, the anticipated remaining challenge to be addressed during the extension period (2027-2032) totals 82 CHAs measuring 4,663,353 square metres.

18. In line with Article 5, the Republic of Tajikistan requests a third extension of six years for the implementation of the Convention by 31 December 2032. During the extension period, Tajikistan aims to achieve the following:

(a) Complete re-survey 32 CHAs in the Central Region and in the Tajik-Afghan Border by the end of 2027;

(b) Conduct detailed survey and assessment of the minefields and battle areas, as some of them are contaminated with both landmines and UXOs;

(c) Establish multi-task teams in order to increase the operational efficiency;

(d) Complete the land release of the remaining hazard areas measuring 5,810,448 square metres by the end of 2032.

19. In conjunction with the Government of Tajikistan and Border Forces, TNMAC will prioritise land release activities using a district-by-district approach based on the following criteria:

(a) Clearance tasks: districts that have less contamination will be addressed first;

(b) Mined areas with high socio-economic and infrastructure impacts (i.e. agriculture lands, pastures, reconstruction and strengthening of riverbanks and etc.);

(c) Survey tasks: clarify the type and categories of contamination for the hazard areas contaminated both with landmines and UXOs, adjust the borders and the real size of the hazard areas;

(d) Establish multitask teams to increase the operational efficiency and save time and resources for the clearance of the hazard areas (minefields).

20. Preliminary calculations suggest that the implementation of this plan will require US dollars 42 million according to the option 3, where it is projected scenario of increased almost double funding with plan to be able to complete addressing the remaining challenge by the end of 2030. This amount is based on assumptions that the average price is estimated around US dollars 7,44 for demining operation per square meter of manual clearance, also taking into account further expected decrease of clearance outputs because minefields located at high altitudes in mountainous terrain.

21. Tajikistan outlines three work plan “options” (scenarios) within its 2026 extension request;

(a) Option 1: Based on current capacity and budget of US dollars 27,052,968 - release 5.81 square kilometres, 2026-2032.

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(b) Option 2: Based on existing capacity and budget of US dollars 27,052,968 – release 8.54 square kilometres, 2026-2032. This option assumes, based on previous field experience, the discovery of an estimated 2.73 square kilometres of previously unknown mined areas. Option 2 aims to achieve completion through the deployment of teams to hazardous areas where land release can be completed quickly. In this way, the programme can achieve higher outputs without a proportional increase in personnel, equipment or funding.

(c) Option 3: Release 100 CHAs totalling 5.81 square kilometres by the end of 2030 based on the doubling of funding and no previously unknown mined areas are added to the baseline.

22. In the current implementation plan Tajikistan has determined 5,810,448 square metres to be released. The majority of the remaining hazard areas are in difficult to access territories, thus it will be more expensive than the demining carried out in flat areas. Efficient survey, quality management and move to multi-task teams aims to produce significant land release results through cancellation and reduction of hazardous areas, rather than clearance.

23. The TNMAC has signed agreement with ITF Enhancing Human Security for the period of 2026-2028 and with the expectation that this agreement will extend until 2029. TNMAC has also signed an agreement with the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for the period of 2026-2031. Furthermore, international partners are working to secure funding with FSD having secured funding for 2026-2027 by the PATRIP Foundation, Switzerland, and from other stakeholders. Norwegian People's Aid has also secured funds for 2026 with funding beyond this date being uncertain.

24. The TNMAC through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan, has sent a letter of request for funding support and cooperation to donor countries, international and donor organisations, as well as inviting additional demining organisations to Tajikistan. At the time of writing, this procedure is ongoing.

25. The targets as given in the work plan are based on several assumptions:

(a) Projected clearance ratio;

(b) Projected clearance rates;

(c) Prioritisation of tasks;

(d) Establishment of multitask teams;

(e) Increase of Tajikistan's capacity to meet its projected 2032 deadline from the current 159 deminers to 261;

(f) Deployment of mechanical assets, and;

(g) Increase of operational efficiency through survey activities.

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