

Comments on Eritrea's Extension Request

Third Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty, 23 June 2014

Extension requested by Eritrea: Five years, until 1 February 2020

Key comments on the request:

- While it is not specified in the request, Eritrea confirmed earlier this year¹ that the period sought is an interim one aimed at conducting survey and only partial clearance. According to the request, the area requiring clearance or resurvey is about 33.5 km², the current clearance capacity working at full pace could clear 15.4 km² in five years. There are no plans yet to address the rest of the contamination.
- The request does not provide information on how funds will be raised, or assurances that the proposed funding has already been committed by the government.

Expectations for the Review Conference and for the extension period:

Eritrea proposes to use existing capacity to resurvey and partially clear the remaining contamination, but does not propose a timeline for operations. Priority areas for resurvey are identified but there is no evident differentiation between areas earmarked for clearance and those for resurvey (aside from the resurvey of the 49 mined areas). Eritrea has informed the ICBL that demining units may be re-tasked toward infrastructure building such as construction of roads and dams at any point. **Recommendation:** *If the request is granted despite the lack of a detailed timeline of proposed activities, Eritrea should be requested to share its timeline with States Parties in writing no later than the 2015 Intersessional Meetings -- listing who will undertake what type of work where, and when. Eritrea should ensure that its demining units are not reoriented to other tasks but focus on survey and clearance operations.*

In its analysis of Eritrea's 2011 request for an interim extension period, the Analyzing Group noted that "the conditions related to the departure of demining organisations from Eritrea remain unclear and that involving non-governmental organizations and international operators may increase Eritrea's efficiency in mine clearance operations in the country." **Recommendation:** *Eritrea should reconsider its policy of excluding international technical assistance from the country. This could support more efficient land release and re-open international funding paths.*

Eritrea projects that costs for the extension period will amount to \$7,166,800, all to be raised nationally. For the last two years, Eritrea managed to raise \$250,000 annually. The request does not provide information on how funds will be raised, or assurances that the proposed funding has already been committed by the government. **Recommendation:** *Eritrea should clarify the financial situation related to mine clearance, in order for States Parties to be able to better assess whether the request is realistic.*

¹ Statement by Eritrea, Intersessional Standing Committee Meetings, Geneva, 9 April 2014