

Convention on Cluster Munitions

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Item 9 of the provisional agenda

Presentation of deadline extension requests under Articles 3 and 4 of the Convention and of the analysis of these requests

Analysis of Mauritania's Deadline Extension Request under Article 4 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Submitted by the Analysis Group for Article 4 Extension Requests – Germany, Guyana, Lebanon and Norway

I. Background

1. The Islamic Republic of Mauritania submitted its first request to extend its Article 4 deadline of 1 August 2022 to the second part of the 2nd Review Conference (2RC) of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The 2RC granted Mauritania a two-year extension up to 1 August 2024.
2. On 6 December 2022, Mauritania notified the CCM Implementation Support Unit (ISU) about its intention to submit a second request for extension as it would be unable to comply with all its Article 4 obligations by the current deadline. In its extension request submitted on 17 June 2023, Mauritania reported to have a remaining cluster munition contamination area of 14,017,596 m² in the Tiris Zemmour region. Mauritania highlighted that limited international financial support was the main justification for a new extension and requested a two-year extension for its deadline up to August 2026.

II. Consideration of the request

3. Mauritania submitted its draft extension request to the CCM Implementation Support Unit (ISU) on 8 February 2023 for it to make an initial assessment to ensure the request comprised the critical components outlined in Article 4 paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Convention. Thereafter, Mauritania provided two further revised drafts on 20 February 2023 and 3 March 2023 on which the ISU provided additional feedback.
4. On 13 March 2023, the ISU held an informal virtual meeting with the Coordinator of the National Humanitarian Demining Program for Development (PNDHD) of Mauritania with the aim to further improve on the draft extension request. Based on the meeting, Mauritania submitted an updated draft request on 28 March 2023, which the ISU forwarded to the Analysis Group.
5. The Analysis Group invited representatives of the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHHD), the Mine Action Review, and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) to a meeting on 5 April 2023 to join them in considering the request. To ensure an equal and comprehensive approach to all requests, the Analysis Group used the Methodology for requests of deadline extensions under Articles 3 and 4 of the Convention on Cluster



Munitions (CCM/MSP/2019/12) adopted at the 9MSP to analyse Mauritania's draft extension request.

6. Following its initial assessment of the draft request, on 19 April 2023, the Analysis Group requested additional information from Mauritania to be included in an updated extension request by 8 May. Furthermore, on 28 April, the Analysis Group held an informal virtual meeting with Mauritania to discuss the additional information that was being requested. During the meeting, the Analysis Group agreed to extend the submission deadline of the updated extension request to 12 May.

7. On 15 May 2023, Mauritania requested an additional two weeks to submit the updated request. On 1 June, Mauritania submitted an updated draft request, which included some of the additional information required by the Analysis Group.

8. The Analysis Group met on 8 June 2023 to consider the updated draft extension request of Mauritania. Following that meeting, on 9 June, the Group called for Mauritania to include key information that was still missing in its updated request. In response, on 17 June, Mauritania submitted a new updated draft extension request that included most of the required information. The Analysis Group met informally with Mauritania on 22 June to discuss further clarifications and amendments in preparation of the official submission of its extension request.

9. On 5 July 2023, Mauritania officially submitted its extension request, which was circulated to all States Parties and uploaded to the Convention's website.

10. The request outlines that the current estimate of the remaining cluster munitions (CMs) contamination is 14,017,596 m² in the nine different areas of the far north of the country in the Tiris Zemmour region. All the CM contaminated areas are under Mauritania's jurisdiction and control.

11. The request clarifies that during the first extension period, the Government of Mauritania allocated USD 250,000 to the PNDHD to fulfil its responsibilities. With this funding, the PNDHD completed clearance of two areas (Guneivé I and Guneivé II) of a total of 570,572 m², conducted risk education and marking operations as well as initial survey work of the remaining contamination.

12. The request indicates that in all the nine identified areas, the presence of CMs had been visually confirmed through direct evidence and these areas have been categorized as confirmed hazardous areas (CHA). However, to determine the precise size of these areas, further technical survey work will be required.

13. The request informs that an initial period of six months will be needed to complete the necessary preparations. These preparations involve securing funding, assembling a skilled workforce, acquiring essential equipment, and allocating other required resources for the deployment of four Battlefield Area Clearance (BAC) teams of five qualified members to address the remaining contamination. The request indicates that the PNDHD has the capability to request extra deminers from the military engineer corps, up to seven clearance teams, should the need arise. The request specifies that the total working days per year is 265 and that it will be possible to complete additional technical survey and clearance of identified contamination areas in approximately 18 months (375 working days). The request clarifies that an extra six-month period will be allocated to address any additional contamination and to finalize the reporting and documentation prior to the submission of the completion report.

14. The request highlights several challenges that could affect the implementation of its work plan, including difficult terrain, the size and complexity of the contaminated areas, the available resources, and the effectiveness of the demining teams. The request points out that the main determining factor of Mauritania's ability to implement its work plan is the availability of funding.

15. The request underlines that the total budget for the planned activities is estimated at USD 1,965,000. This includes the USD 200,000 to be provided by Mauritania's national budget over the three-year period from September 2023-August 2026. The remaining USD 1,765,000 will need to be secured through external resources. Mauritania indicates that it is aiming to establish a country coalition to mobilize the requisite resources needed to address

its CCM obligations. The request also acknowledges the need for alternative solutions should support from the international community and foreign donors fall short for Mauritania to progress towards completion of its obligations under the CCM.

III. Conclusions

16. The Analysis Group acknowledges the efforts of Mauritania, including the allocation of national funds, since the submission of its first extension request in 2021 and recognizes that the main obstacle in the implementation of Mauritania's work plan was the lack of securing the international funding it needed to fulfil its Article 4 obligations.

17. The Analysis Group notes with regret that Mauritania submitted its extension request much later than the required minimum of nine months prior to the Meeting of States Parties or Review Conference at which it is to be considered. However, the Group appreciates Mauritania's high level of engagement with the ISU and the Analysis Group throughout the extension request process.

18. The Analysis Group notes that Mauritania's projected clearance duration corresponds with past capacities and clearance rates. While Mauritania has provided a work plan for the duration of the extension period, the Group notes that the work plan lacks certain clarity and detail. In line with Action 20 of the Lausanne Action Plan Action, the Group recommends Mauritania to submit a detailed, costed work plan for survey, clearance and risk education.

19. The Analysis Group notes that the implementation of Mauritania's work plan is highly dependent upon international support, that has currently not been secured. This is particularly concerning in light of the trend of diminishing international funding to mine action. The Group notes the importance of maintaining international support to the implementation of article 4 of the Convention.

IV. Draft Decision on the Article 4 Extension Request submitted by Mauritania

20. The Meeting assessed the request submitted by Mauritania for an extension of its deadline for completing the clearance and destruction of cluster munition remnants in accordance with Article 4.1 of the Convention and agrees to grant the request for an extension until 1 August 2026.

21. In granting the request, the Meeting noted that the provision of a more detailed and costed work plan for survey, clearance and risk education would make the plan easier to monitor, particularly considering the dependence of its implementation on international cooperation and assistance.

22. In this regard, the Meeting noted that the Convention would benefit from Mauritania reporting annually through Article 7 reports and at Meetings of States Parties or Review Conferences on the following:

- (a) Progress made relative to the clearance, technical survey and risk education to be undertaken as indicated in its extension request;
- (b) Updated information on remaining cluster munition contamination based on the findings of the technical survey;
- (c) Updated information on resource mobilization efforts including international cooperation and assistance received, and resources made available by the Government of Mauritania to support implementation efforts;
- (d) Other relevant information.

23. In addition to reporting as requested above, the Meeting noted the importance of Mauritania keeping the States Parties regularly apprised of other pertinent developments as necessary.
