

**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**

5 September 2022

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**Twentieth Meeting**

**Geneva, 21-25 November 2022**

Item 12 of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of request 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 Thailand**

**I. Introduction**

1. Mined areas in Thailand resulted predominantly from two main causes: (1) Cambodia's internal conflicts, which spilled over the borders to Thailand in the 1970s to early 1990s, and (2) the Communist Insurgency Conflicts (1965 – 1981), which resulted in landmines contamination along the Thai – Malaysian and Thai – Myanmar borders. Although the conflicts ceased several decades ago, landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) remain.

2. After ratifying the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction in 1998, Thailand established the Thailand Mine Action Centre (TMAC) to spearhead mine action in the country. Thailand's efforts to fulfil the obligations under the Convention have been carried out jointly by TMAC and other relevant agencies. Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), including the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), the Thai Civilian Deminers Association (TDA), and the Golden West Humanitarian Foundation (GWHF) also operate in Thailand under the supervision of TMAC.

3. Even though Thailand's mine clearance efforts have been relatively successful during the second extension period (2018 – present) with only 36,968,469 square metres (or 1.45 per cent of the total initial estimated landmine contaminated areas) left to be cleared at the time of writing (1 March 2022), Thailand has been facing greater challenges during the final phase that have impeded its mine action operations. Therefore, Thailand has to request a third extension of deadline for mine clearance under Article 5 for a period of 3 years and 2 months, until 31 December 2026.

**II. Progress made during the second extension (2018-Present)**

4. At the beginning of Thailand's mine action efforts the total estimated landmine contaminated areas covered 2,556,700,000 square metres in 27 provinces. At the time of writing (1 March 2022), Thailand has successfully released 2,519,731,531 square metres. Thailand is left with 36,968,469 square metres of mined areas, comprising 2,988,878 square metres of Suspected Hazardous Areas (SHAs), 19,665,722 square metres of Confirmed



Hazardous Areas (CHAs) and 14,313,869 square metres of Areas to be Demarcated (ADs). The ADs include SHAs measuring 10,598,192 square metres and CHAs measuring 3,715,677 square metres.

### III. Execution of the five-year plan

5. After Thailand was granted its second extension, Thailand developed a Five-Year Work Plan as a roadmap to meet its clearance obligations. The Updated Work Plan submitted to the Committee on Article 5 on 30 April 2019 comprised two phases. Phase 1 (2019 to 2020) focused on conducting the non-technical survey (NTS) to obtain precise information on mine contaminated areas which would enable Thailand to effectively release contaminated areas. Phase 2 (2021 to 2023) focused on Technical Survey (TS) and Clearance.

6. At the end of Phase 1, Thailand was able to release 299,202,605 square metres of mine contaminated areas, (111% of the planned goal), in the process destroying 14,707 anti-personnel mines, 168 anti-vehicle mines, and 683 UXO. Consequently, Chiang Mai, Mae Hong Son, Chumphon, and Chanthaburi Provinces have become mine-free.

7. During Phase 2, the focus shifted towards TS and Clearance in CHAs identified in Phase 1. During March - April 2020, together with Cambodia, Thailand carried out the "Pilot Project on Demining Cooperation along the Border of Thailand and Cambodia". The project was a cooperation between TMAC and the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC). As a result, Thailand was able to release additional 95,000 square metres of mine contaminated areas in Sa Kaeo Province.

8. As of 1 March 2022, Thailand had released 323,032,899 square metres during the second extension, and had a remaining Article 5 challenge of 36,968,469 square metres.

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*Total Progress made since the initial land impact survey*

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Period/Year	Remaining mine contaminated areas in Thailand (sqm)
Initial Landmine Impact Survey	2,556,700,000
End of the initial operational period (2008)	528,350,000
End of the first extension (2018)	360,001,368
Present (1 March 2022)	36,968,469

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*Mines and UXO recovered during the second extension*

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Year	Anti-personnel mines	Anti-vehicle mines	UXO
2019	5,352	25	329
2020	9,355	143	354
2021	19,002	3	878
Jan-Feb 2022	6,305	114	128
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,014</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>1,689</b>

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9. Provided that access to all mine contaminated areas is not an obstacle, TMAC expects to release all mine contaminated areas by the end of the second extension (31 October 2023). However, since the issues of access to the ADs are still ongoing, TMAC has assessed and concluded that a third extension request is therefore necessary to fulfil Article 5 obligations.

#### **IV. Commitment towards the improvement of information management**

10. During the second extension, Thailand has strengthened its efforts towards improving Information Management (IM) in order to allow demining operations to become more efficient in terms of time and resources. This includes enhancing the capacity of TMAC's IM team, the IM systems and standardisation of the processes for obtaining information, in order to enable TMAC policy-makers to take fact-based, accurate, and timely decisions based on accurate information and the operational teams to function based on promptly available and precise information for their survey and clearance operations.

#### **V. Commitment towards funding by the Royal Thai Government**

11. During the second extension, albeit amid the COVID-19 pandemic and economic slowdown, Thailand has continued to provide the primary source of funding for the humanitarian mine operations in Thailand. The overall spending for the cost of mine action operations from 2018 to the current fiscal year (2022) is Thai Baht (THB) 1,247,434,210 (approximately US dollars (USD) \$38,251,946<sup>1</sup>). During this period, Thailand has invested in necessary equipment for the successful operations at the total cost of THB 2,969,952 (approx. USD \$91,072).

#### **VI. Strengthening international cooperation at all levels**

12. Since early 2000s, Thailand has been working closely with governmental and NGOs. Although the majority of funds for humanitarian mine action operations in Thailand are provided by the Royal Thai Government, Thailand continues to collaborate with the Governments of Japan, Norway, and the United States, which have supported Thailand's humanitarian mine action operations through funding, equipment, and training during the second extension.

13. Thailand's remaining areas of mine clearance are primarily located along the border. During the second extension, Thailand has successfully released all mine contaminated areas along the Thailand – Myanmar border. While some mine contaminated areas along Thailand – Lao PDR border remain (as of 1 March 2022), Thailand believes that the release will be completed by the end of the second extension.

14. The areas along the border between Thailand and Cambodia, which cover the majority of the mine-contaminated areas, have posed a great challenge during the final stage. Thailand has been cooperating with Cambodia through bilateral mechanisms including the Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation (JC) and Thailand – Cambodia General Border Committee (GBC), as well as the "Pilot Project".

#### **VII. Strengthening community engagement**

15. During the second extension, Thailand also worked towards building strong relations with the primary land users in affected areas, the local population, and the local authorities from the provincial level to the sub-district level. Such efforts towards community engagement help support the operations at all stages, as they allow TMAC to gather more precise information from the local authorities and population.

<sup>1</sup> USD = THB 32.611 (Bank of Thailand's exchange rate as of 1 March 2022).

## **VIII. Strong Commitment towards mine risk education and victim assistance**

16. Thailand has a strong commitment towards Mine Risk Education (MRE) and Victim Assistance (VA) and believes that these activities play an important role in reducing the humanitarian impact of landmines on the people.

17. During the second extension, 422 MRE activities were conducted in Thailand with 69,938 participants. The number has declined during the last two years as a result of the COVID – 19 pandemic restrictions, although necessary MRE activities are still carried out in the seriously affected areas.

## **IX. Gender Mainstreaming**

18. As Thailand fully supports Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality, the promotion of gender mainstreaming is included in mine-action.

19. Unlike many countries, the demining operation in Thailand is run by TMAC, a government agency under The Royal Thai Armed Forces Headquarters. Thus, the majority of the TMAC personnel are male, in tandem with the number of the Armed Forces Personnel at The Royal Thai Armed Forces. Although the majority of the personnel working in demining fields are male, more than 20 percent of TMAC personnel are female working on policy and planning as well as on coordination duties. Therefore, women also have played an important role in facilitating the overall mine operations.

20. In MRE, there has been a huge involvement from female village health volunteers and female teachers. For example, the MRE activities in May 2022 involved 21 village health volunteers of this number, 15 are female. The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MDHS) also sent four personnel to train the villagers on mine victim assistance, all of the instructors were female.

## **X. Challenges towards the completion of mine clearance operations**

21. Thailand has made significant progress despite the challenges faced by its deminers, including; a) challenging geographical landscape making access to mined areas difficult, and a high level of contamination, b) the COVID-19 pandemic, and c) access to mined areas along the border.

### **A. High level of contamination and challenging geographical landscape**

22. TMAC is facing areas with a high density of landmine contamination. On average, between 2020 – 2021, TMAC found 1 mine per 3.8 square metres. The location of mines buried under the ground has been altered e.g. some mines are now covered by tree roots. Such conditions mean that additional time and resources are required for demining operations.

23. Access to mined areas remains a challenge. Rough terrain and dense forest together with extreme weather create a condition that could take the deminers days to access the mine contaminated areas on foot with necessary equipment to carry out the clearance operations. Therefore, TMAC initiated the use of air transportation to access these areas.

### **B. The COVID-19 Pandemic**

24. From the beginning of 2020, the second year of the second extension period, to the time of writing, Thailand has been facing different waves of the COVID – 19 pandemic. The pandemic has negatively affected Thailand's demining operations in various aspects, from travel and physical contact restrictions to the limitation of human resources, as well as

the reduction in financial support from international partners and NGOs. It also imposed significant challenge to the efforts to strengthen cooperation between Thailand and Cambodia. As the pandemic resulted in travel restrictions, TMAC and CMAC found it difficult to pursue agendas on demining cooperation. This is due to the fact that the preparation for the cooperation primarily requires physical presence.

### **C. Access to the mine contaminated areas along the borders**

25. Most of Thailand's SHAs and CHAs yet to be released are situated along the Thai – Cambodian border which are currently in the process of conducting survey and demarcation of land boundary in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand and the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia on the Survey and Demarcation of Land Boundary, dated 16 June 2000 ("the MOU"). The process of survey and demarcation is a complicated and technical issue that may take several years to complete.

26. As Thailand's demining operations move onward, the operations have become increasingly closer to the ADs under the MOU. Since November 2020, Thai humanitarian mine action operators were on several occasions requested, including in writing, by the local Cambodian military garrisons to stop the demining operations, citing Article V of the MOU, which stipulates that both sides "*shall not carry out any work resulting in changes of environment of the frontier zone, except that which is carried out by the Joint Technical Sub-Commission in the interest of the survey and demarcation*". TMAC was requested to cease its operations until the required process has been concluded in accordance with the MOU.

27. The Agreed Minutes of the 13th and 14th Meeting of GBC state that "All demining operations along the border areas between Thailand and Cambodia shall be without prejudice to the rights of Thailand and Cambodia with regard to the land boundary under international law."

28. As of 1 March 2022, TMAC's deminers have been requested to stop the operations in 34 operational areas covering 14,313,869 square metres, which account for 38.72 percent of all the remaining areas of 36,968,469 square metres to be cleared in order to fulfil Thailand's obligations under Article 5 of the Convention.

29. After several unsuccessful attempts to access the areas, the TMAC decided to suspend the demining operations in the above-mentioned areas in order to avoid unnecessary misunderstanding.

## **XI. Workplan towards completion of Article 5 obligations**

30. Thailand remains fully committed to completing its obligations under Article 5 and intends to continue its efforts under the following work plan:

## **XII. Workplan during the remaining period of the second extension (2022-2023)**

31. Thailand plans to expedite the process in the remaining areas left to be released, which cover 36,968,469 square metres of land (as of 1 March 2022). In 2022, Thailand plans to release 17,386,841 square metres of land, through Technical Survey (TS) and Clearance method. Thailand still expects to be able to perform mine clearance operations in some ADs by continuing its efforts to seek cooperation from its neighbouring country. In 2023, TMAC will mobilise all available resources to deal with the remaining 8,598,192 square metres of CHAs and 14,313,869 square metres of ADs. TMAC believes that the remaining 8,598,192 square metres of CHAs can be released before the end of the second extension. However, access to the 14,313,869 square metres of ADs will remain a challenge, which has led Thailand to decide to request for the third extension.

**Detailed information on the Area to be Demarcated (ADs)**

<i>Province</i>	<i>SHA (sq.m.)</i>	<i>CHA (sq.m.)</i>	<i>SHA &amp; CHA (sq.m.)</i>
Sa Kaeo	5,534,862	343,382	5,878,244
Trat	2,197,477	629,901	2,827,378
Buri Ram		267,275	267,275
Surin	1,072,000	1,384,417	2,456,417
Sri Sa Ket	1,793,853	503,581	2,297,434
Ubon Ratchathani	-	578,121	578,121
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,598,192</b>	<b>3,715,677</b>	<b>14,313,869</b>

**XIII. Three-year work plan for the requested extension period (2023-2026)**

32. The Three-Year Work Plan will focus on the 14,313,869 square metres of ADs left to be cleared along the border and the issues of access to these areas that need to be resolved. Thailand's Three-Year Work Plan will primarily focus on five areas:

- i. Mine Action operations in the ADs: the Mine Action Operations in the ADs will be divided into three phases based on the difficulty in gaining access to the areas. Since the areas are yet to be demarcated under the MOU, consultations with its neighbouring country will be a pre-condition for Thailand prior to accessing these areas. Since these areas are subject to land boundary survey and demarcation under the MOU between Thailand and Cambodia, access to the border areas may pose security as well as political concerns to the concerned neighbouring country. Thailand will continue to hold consultations with its neighbour under available channels in order to seek mutually agreed solutions for the remaining demining operations. In this regard, Thailand reaffirms that its humanitarian mine action operations will be carried out solely for humanitarian purposes in accordance with its obligations under Article 5, and that such operations shall be without prejudice to the rights of both parties with regard to the land boundary under international law.

*Three-Year Workplan : Thailand's Annual Land Milestones Towards Completion*

Outputs	Phase 1 (Nov 2023-Oct 2024)	Phase 2 (Nov 2024-Oct 2025)	Phase 3 (Nov 2025-Oct 2026)
Size (sq.m.)	5,328,050	5,149,998	3,563,339

- i. Strengthening bilateral cooperation with the neighbouring countries on mine operations
- ii. Pilot Project on Demining Cooperation along the Border of Thailand and Cambodia
- iii. Regional & Multilateral framework
- iv. Strengthening community engagement

33. Thai mine action is mainly funded by the Royal Thai government and is committed to the continued support of the TMAC's humanitarian operation from 2024-2026. In addition to the budget provided by the Royal Thai government, funding has also been given by Thailand's international partners, namely the United States, Japan and Norway. The United States has supported demining operations through the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) as mentioned in the extension request. Besides the Project to Assist Thailand in fulfilling its clearance obligations under the Mine Ban Treaty mentioned in the extension request, from 2016 to 2021. Japan has given USD 2,247,084.9

through JAPAN- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Integration Fund (JAIF) to the Thai Civilian Deminer Association (TDA). From 2018-2021, Norway has granted around Norwegian krone (NOK) 20.4 million through Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). In 2022, it is estimated that NOK 5.5 million will be given to the NPA to support the mine operations in Thailand. Looking ahead, the NPA is confirmed to receive an annual budget from the Norwegian Government of approximately NOK 5.5 million during the 3rd extension request to assist the mine operations in Thailand.

#### **XIV. Contingency plans for the uncleared areas**

34. Thailand is endeavoured towards completing its Three-Year Work Plan by releasing all mine contaminated areas by the end of the requested period. While these areas are yet to be cleared, Contingency Plan for the Uncleared Areas will be put in place.

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