

Mine Action Review Statement on Bosnia and Herzegovina's Article 4 update

Item 3(c): Clearance and destruction of cluster munitions remnants and risk education
CCM Intersessional Meetings, 16-17 May 2022

Thank you, Mr. President.

As this is the first time Mine Action Review is taking the floor, we would like to congratulate the United Kingdom (UK) on its presidency and thank the UK, the ISU, and the coordinators on clearance and risk reduction education, Sweden and Guyana, for their work to support implementation of the Convention.

Mine Action Review welcomes the update from Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding its progress in Article 4 implementation. We had hoped that it would still be possible for BiH to complete cluster munition clearance by its deadline of 1 September 2022, and that this achievement could have been celebrated at the Tenth Meeting of States Parties. However, in order to ensure that it remains in compliance with Article 4, it is important that BiH submits a formal request for an extension if it believes for whatever reason that it might not make its current deadline. We encourage BiH to submit the extension ASAP, to enable States Parties and the Article 4 Analysis Group to consider it and provide feedback, well ahead of 10MSP. It is important that any extension requested is for the minimum amount of time required to complete clearance and that BiH ensures that this is the last extension necessary for it to fulfill its clearance obligations under the Convention.

While we welcome the strengthened coordination efforts and Article 4 completion planning that have taken place this year, and which are yielding results to address remaining CMR contamination, we regret that this enhanced level of coordination and planning wasn't undertaken earlier.

Mine Action Review is also surprised to learn of the possibility of six new, previously unreported, cluster munition-contaminated areas which are only now being reported during this final stage of Article 4 implementation. We would welcome clarity from BiH on how these areas have been identified and why they were not already included in the existing baseline of cluster munition-contaminated area. We welcome BiH's announcement that it plans to conduct survey to obtain more information on these areas, with which to inform its completion planning.

This issue highlights the importance of affected States establishing evidence-based and accurate baselines of contamination (as per Action 18 of the Lausanne Action Plan), asap in order to be able to concretely and successfully plan for completion. It also highlights the importance of affected states having an accurate national information management system.

Mine Action Review would like to hear more from BiH on efforts to mainstream gender and diversity within its mine action programme.

Lastly, we encourage BiH to also provide details on what sustainable national capacity is in place to address previously unknown cluster munition remnants discovered post-completion (i.e., residual contamination).