

**Comments on Mauritania's Article 4 Extension Request  
Delivered by NPA on behalf of Mine Action Review  
Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (Part 2)  
20-21 September 2021**

Thank you, Mr President.

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the Mine Action Review project.

We commend Mauritania for reporting the cluster munition remnant contamination discovered in areas under its jurisdiction or control since it declared fulfillment of its Article 4 obligations in 2014, and for requesting an extension to its Article 4 deadline to address this newly discovered contamination, ensuring it remains in compliance with the Convention. We also commend Mauritania for having promptly commissioned a survey to assess the nature and scale of the contamination.

Mauritania affirmed in its Article 4 deadline extension request that all the newly identified contamination lies within its jurisdiction and control, bringing the duty to clear within Mauritania's international legal obligations under the Convention. It is, however, possible that cluster munition contamination in the most northerly hazardous areas located close to the border, may extend into the territory of Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara) and beyond Mauritania's jurisdiction or control. If this is found to be the case then Mauritania should consider discussing with Western Sahara the potential for cross-border cooperation to jointly address cluster munition remnants close to the border.

Mauritania is actively seeking to secure the resources necessary to reinvigorate its mine action programme and commence and complete clearance within the requested two-year extension. We commend Mauritania for expressing its wish to form a Country Coalition to support its Article 4 implementation and hope that its efforts to find a donor State Party with which to partner in a coalition are successful.

Mauritania's newly discovered contamination lies in very remote and sparsely populated desert areas. It is therefore likely that Mauritania will discover additional contamination during the extension period and post-completion. Mauritania should ensure that it establishes a sustainable national capacity to address any residual contamination discovered following fulfilment of Article 4.

Mauritania, with the support of international operators, may wish to consider exploring the potential use of drones with thermal imaging as a potential way to raise operational efficiency.

Lastly, we encourage Mauritania to update its National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), prior to commencing further survey and clearance. We also encourage Mauritania to take concrete steps to mainstream gender and diversity in its mine action programme.

Thank you.