



## **Mine Action Review Statement on Iraq's Article 4 extension request**

**(delivered by NPA on behalf of Mine Action Review)**

### **Item 9: Presentation of deadline extension requests under Articles 3 and 4 of the Convention and of the analysis of those requests**

#### **Eleventh Meeting of States Parties to the CCM, 11–14 September 2023**

Thank you, Mr. President. I am delivering this statement on behalf of Mine Action Review.

As this is the first time we are taking the floor, we would like to thank Iraq for its presidency of 11MSP, along Guyana and Norway as coordinators on clearance and risk education, other members of the CCM coordinating committee, and the ISU team for their collective hard work. We also warmly welcome Pamela Moraga in her new role heading the ISU.

In the interest of time, I will keep this statement brief, as Mine Action Review has participated and provided expert input in the Article 4 Analysis Group, whose comprehensive analysis of Iraq's request we have just heard.

We appreciate the complexity and extent of contamination in Iraq, and commend Iraq on including a detailed, annual, costed work plan for clearance in its extension request. This will assist Iraq's implementation of Article 4 and help monitor progress against the work plan. We encourage Iraq to also provide updates and details on how and when it will identify the 79km<sup>2</sup> of additional, previously unrecorded cluster munition contamination, which will enable it to establish a comprehensive baseline of contamination.

Finally, we welcome that Iraq's extension request makes reference to the environment. It notes that the Directorate of Mine Action is part of the Ministry of Environment and provides technical support to land conservation efforts and planning as part of the wider Ministry. The extension request also mentions that previous and ongoing wars have affected the environmental situation, and resulted in air, water, and soil pollution; and that climate changes, and natural and geographical factors have led to the spreading and expansion of the contaminated areas as a result of the migration of mines, cluster munitions and unexploded ordnance due to erosion factors such as rain and floods, which has resulted in an increase in the size of contaminated areas.

However, the extension request does not contain information on how environmental considerations will be addressed during planning and tasking for survey and clearance, in order to minimise potential harm from land release activities or how climate change may impact planned operations or Iraq's prioritisation for clearance.

The topic of the environment is rightly gaining increased prominence in the sector. We would like to use this opportunity to remind and encourage affected States Parties submitting extension requests



in future years, to set out and include environmental implications of their proposed extension, as per Article 4, paragraph 6h of the Convention.

Thank you.