Mission Permanente du Liban
auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies
et des Organisations Internationales
Genève

بعثة لبنان الدائمة
لدى الأمم المتحدة والمنظمات الدولية
جنيف

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The Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and with reference to its email sent on 11 February 2025 regarding the extension request submitted by Lebanon on November 2024, has the honour to enclose herewith the reply of the Lebanese Ministry of Defense providing additional information on the extension of the deadline for the removal of cluster munitions.

The Permanent Mission of Lebanon avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), the assurances of its highest consideration.

Genève, 23 April 2025

PERMANENT MISSION OF LEBANON * GENEVA *

Implementation Support Unit
Convention of Cluster Munitions (CCM)
Chemin Eugène-Rigot 2C – PO Box 1300
1211 Geneva 1

2, Chemin du Pavillon – CH 1218 Le Grand-Saconnex – Tél +41 22 791 85 85 – email : lebanon@lebmissiongva.org

Introduction to New Contamination in Lebanon

Lebanon was committed to the timeline for submitting the second extension request, which was set for December 2024. Therefore, when these figures and studies were prepared, they did not include the new contamination resulting from the recent conflict, as the ceasefire on November 27. This means that the submitted figures did not account for the new contamination.

Details of the New Contamination

The new contamination from cluster munitions is the result of explosions at storage. **Until to date** there is no evidence of cluster strikes. As such, this ammunition requires immediate surface-level clearance. This ammunition is kicked out from **weapon & munitions depots belonging to non-state groups**, due to the bombing of those sites, rather than being used in the conventional sense.

It worth noting that these storage sites containing the ammunition were not known to the Lebanese authorities prior to the conflict.

1- **Newly contaminated areas**:

The assessment of newly contaminated areas is divided into three main points:

a. Surveying and Impact on the Baseline: We have been conducting surveys to determine the extent and level of contamination in these areas. At present, the baseline contamination has increased by approximately 650,000 square meters of newly contaminated areas. Most of this contamination results from ammunition storage explosions. The survey is planned to be completed in six months.

b. Challenges Faced by Survey Teams: During the conflict, it was impossible to access and directly survey these areas. Today NTS teams conduct surveys in coordination with LAF and local authorities. Therefore, teams must operate with prior approval, following a deliberate and careful approach to avoid any incidents. In addition, the huge level of destroyed building in vast regions, which represents areas with high priority, make the survey of opened areas slower.

c. Planning and Risk Education Efforts: Plans will be developed once all suspected areas have been surveyed. This is estimated to be completed a month after the end of the completion of the surveys. Meanwhile, risk education efforts have been ongoing since October 7, 2023, targeting both affected communities and displaced populations residing in new locations. The EORE campaigns resulted in a remarkable low number of victims as compared to after the 2006 war.

2- **The total area discovered since 2019 (after baseline correction):**

2,116,396 m².

(In addition, 652,806m² were newly discovered after the recent war).

3- **Area addressed since entry into force:**

Cleared	Reduced	Cancelled	Total Released
20,590,820	380,356	2,683,595	23,654,771

4- **Quantity and type of cluster munitions destroyed:**

	till 2019	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	TOTAL
M42	161,625	363	364	332	262	220	194	163,360
M43	5,141	18	146	483	174	55	48	6,065
M46	5,104	19	0	110	169	13	8	5,423
M77	207,674	2,645	992	1,124	1,231	424	3	214,093
M85	19,749	68	19	10	35	1	0	19,882
MZD 2	3,550	0	0	0	0	0	682	4,232
BLU18	5	1	0	0	0	2	0	8
BLU26	101	0	0	0	29	0	0	130
BLU61	40	17	0	0	8	13	11	89
BLU63	126,668	861	346	327	635	1,145	120	130,102
BLU 77	0	0	0	0	0	42	0	42
MK 118	3,964	32	226	19		32	145	4,418
AO 2.5 RT	12	13	5	13	13	0	5	61
A-09	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	35
1A-10	0	0	0	0	0	0	217	217
ZP39A	0	0	0	0	0	0	47	47
UNKNOWN	3,522	0	0	0	0	9	116	3,647
TOTAL	537,155	4,037	2,098	2,418	2,556	1,956	1,631	**551,851**

5- **Estimated area remaining to be addressed:**

Total remaining m^2, (as extracted from the database **end of 2024**)

	CHA	SHA	Total
Legacy contamination	4,362,933	309,970	4, 672,903
New contamination	652,806	-	652,806
Total remaining	5,015,739	309,970	**5,325,709**

Note: these figures are changing based on the results of on-going surveys.

6- **Amount of time requested or the timeline for the extension:**

- **New contamination:** As the survey will not be concluded until late this year, the needed time to complete the release of all contaminated in a detailed plan will not be possible until the end of 2025. This means that this extension request is going to be interim, and an additional will be submitted later. The detailed plan for new contamination will be submitted by end of this year as addendum to this extension request.

- **Operational challenges:** Immediate survey operations are required, whether through surface clearance or other methods. Given the extent of the new contamination, the clearance period may exceed the initially planned four years, necessitating an **extension of approximately five years**.
- **Productivity considerations:** The reported clearance rate of **200 square meters per team per day** is based on an **average productivity rate**, not a fixed rate for specific areas. This figure accounts for variations in terrain, contamination density, and operational conditions. Productivity differs between **surface clearance and sub-surface clearance**. The geographic characteristics of each area, and weather conditions are also included in the daily average.

  On the other hand, the urban nature of the areas affected by new contamination will impact the daily productivity average.
- **Impact of UXOs (Unexploded Ordnance):** While the primary long-term focus remains on cluster munitions, the presence of other UXOs affects clearance operations. Given the urgent need for displaced populations to **return to their homes**, most of clearance teams must first operate in a **rapid response task** to ensure safe resettlement. Afterward, systematic clearance efforts will proceed based on **prioritized plans** and a structured timeline.

Thus, considering these evolving challenges, there is a **new and urgent need for a four-year extension**, recognizing that additional time might be needed later on.

7- Land Release Methodology and Standards

Lebanon applies a comprehensive land release approach that prioritizes Non-Technical Survey (NTS) and Technical Survey (TS) alongside clearance operations. This methodology has proven effective, as evidenced in previously released areas, where around 30% of the released land was cleared through NTS and TS.

The land release process in Lebanon does not rely solely on clearance but incorporates all available methodologies, ensuring efficiency and adherence to international best practices. The Lebanese Mine Action Center (LMAC) is also working on integrating rubble removal techniques into national standards, making them part of the broader land release strategy.

Regarding innovation and new techniques mentioned in the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), LMAC is actively reviewing these advancements. The Center will assess their feasibility for integration into national standards and, where applicable, adopt them to accelerate land release efforts.

8- Circumstances which impeded Lebanon's ability to fulfill its Article 4 obligations:

Lebanon has had to redefine its priorities in response to recent challenges. The top priority is the removal of explosive remnants of war (ERW) from homes, villages, and residential areas to enable displaced individuals to return safely to their homes. This includes various types of ordnance, not just cluster munitions, making it an urgent humanitarian concern.

The second priority is addressing newly contaminated areas resulting from recent hostilities. These areas have significant humanitarian implications, necessitating their inclusion in the highest priority category.

To ensure effective prioritization, the Lebanese Mine Action Center (LMAC) employs a priority-setting system that integrates survey data collected during Non-Technical Survey (NTS) operations. This system helps determine the urgency of tasks based on various criteria established by LMAC.

Meanwhile, heavily contaminated areas that are not immediately impacting residential communities remain important but fall into a secondary priority category. Similarly, areas with difficult terrain are assigned a lower priority, unless they pose a direct threat to civilians.

The ongoing conflict has shifted priorities significantly, with the primary focus now on facilitating the safe return of displaced populations before addressing other contaminated areas.

9- Annual Projections

Once Non-Technical Survey (NTS) operations are completed and areas released through survey methods are identified, a clear implementation plan will be developed. This will include Technical Survey (TS) operations and clearance activities. Currently, clearance teams are conducting NTS in parallel with regular clearance operations, but the extent to which NTS or clearance methods will be applied cannot be fully determined until the survey process is complete and initial contamination levels are assessed.

At present, Lebanese Army teams are engaged in battle area clearance (BAC) operations, with a primary focus on enabling displaced populations to return home safely. During these operations, additional cluster munition remnants (CMR) contamination may be discovered. Mechanical teams are also supporting clearance efforts, but their role differs from standard demining/clearance operations due to the nature of the contamination and terrain.

Years of clearance work have led to modifications in the initial contamination maps, as some areas previously declared as fully cleared may now require reassessment. As a result, an updated contamination map will be developed to reflect the most accurate situation.

The allocation of NTS teams will be determined based on priority needs and available resources. The requested budget of $25.6 million was initially calculated to cover all land release activities, including NTS, TS, and clearance, but it was based on pre-war contamination estimates. The newly identified contamination resulting from the recent conflict will likely require additional funding and resources to be addressed effectively.

10- Financial, technical, materiel, personnel needs per year:

In the first extension request, a daily average productivity rate of 495 square meters was adopted. However, as we have now reached tasks in low-priority areas and difficult terrain, the revised productivity rate is approximately 200 square meters per day, which is less than half of the previous estimate. This figure includes clearance, technical survey (TS), and non-technical survey (NTS).

Currently, there are 21 operational teams, but this number is not fixed. For instance, five teams from the Norwegian organization (NPA) operate at 60% capacity, and the suspension of U.S. funding led to the halt of 10 teams. To ensure consistent operations, secured and predictable funding is essential.

Regarding the Emergency Fund, it refers to the Contingency Fund, which is crucial for maintaining operational stability. As for state-of-the-art equipment, it primarily concerns detection and clearance tools.

Most teams operate as multi-task teams, handling cluster munition remnants (CMR), landmines, and unexploded ordnance (UXO), rather than focusing solely on cluster munition clearance.

11- National Strategy for the Extension Period (2026-2030)

A new strategic plan will be developed. We have already conducted an evaluation of the 2020-2025 strategy, which was previously established. Given that the extension request covers the period from 2026 to 2030, it is natural that a new strategy will be formulated.

Regardless of the extension request, it is already an established practice at the Lebanese Mine Action Center (LMAC) to develop a new strategy every five years. This ensures that previous unmet objectives are reassessed, while new challenges and priorities are integrated into the framework.

As with all previous strategies, the new plan will outline clear objectives, necessary resources, and methods for achieving them, ensuring that Lebanon's mine action efforts remain effective and responsive to evolving needs.

12- National financial resources

The Lebanese government provides indirect financial support of approximately $7 to $7.5 million annually. This funding covers the salaries of personnel at LMAC, fuel, maintenance of equipment, and spare parts, as the center operates within the Lebanese Army.

Before the economic crisis, there was a plan for the government to allocate around $30 million for clearance operations. However, due to the severe devaluation of the Lebanese pound (by approximately 60 times its former value), this amount has lost much of its purchasing power. Currently, there is no specific figure allocated by the government for clearance operations and land release.

The Engineering Regiment of the Lebanese Army is actively involved in survey and clearance operations, particularly addressing the new contamination caused by recent hostilities. However, the center prioritizes operations based on available resources.

LMAC organizes an annual mine action forum and workshops and has implemented an emergency plan during the war. It continues its efforts to engage with donors, advocating for sufficient funding to mitigate the threat of cluster munitions.

However, global funding priorities are highly competitive, with regions such as Gaza and Ukraine also in urgent need of humanitarian mine action support. Additionally, within Lebanon, reconstruction and refugee return efforts may take precedence in donor allocations.

To address this challenge, LMAC plays a critical role in emphasizing that clearance operations are essential for community stabilization and that removing explosive hazards is a fundamental step in enabling displaced populations to safely return to their homes.

13- Assistance needs incl. financial resources:

For **the first two years** of implementation, the requirement is for 25 teams**, including** the two Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) teams, meaning **funding is needed for 23 teams**. At a cost of $300,000 per team, the

total required amount is $6.9 million per year. Adding the $250,000 allocated for difficult terrain clearance, the total annual requirement for the first two years is $7.15 million.

For **the third and fourth years**, the number of required teams decreases to 20 teams, with the two LAF teams already secured, meaning **funding is needed for 18 teams**. At a cost of $300,000 per team, this results in a total of $5.4 million per year. Adding the $250,000 for difficult terrain clearance, the total annual requirement for the third and fourth years is $5.65 million.

Regarding the additional **$250,000**, this comes from distributing the **$1 million allocated for difficult terrain clearance** over four years. This **$1 million is an additional cost specifically for difficult terrain**.

Regarding the need for additional funding, it is natural that further resources are required. The amount stated in the request covers only the existing cluster munition contamination. Therefore, additional funding is needed to address the new contamination, which in turn requires an increase in the number of teams to handle both the new and existing contamination.

14- Environmental Implications

Yes, the new strategy for 2026-2030 will incorporate the environmental impact of cluster munition clearance operations. It is also anticipated that there will be a request for an increase in the budget allocated for new contamination, as the previous requested amount was only intended for areas that were previously identified before the war.

15- Difficult terrain

The **19 identified difficult terrain sites** can be categorized as follows:

- **5 sites** can be released based on the **current Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)**.
- **5 sites** require the **current SOP** plus an **increase in command-and-control measures**.
- **7 sites** require **special measures** due to their complexity.
- **2 sites** need **further assessment through Non-Technical Survey (NTS)** and have the **potential for cancellation**.

The estimated additional cost to address these **difficult terrain sites** is **$1 million**, which represents an **extra funding requirement** beyond the standard clearance budget.

The total area is 536,364 sqm

During the preparation of the extension request, a comprehensive study had not yet been fully completed. Currently, we have a more detailed study, but it is based on data collected before the recent war. Therefore, some aspects may require reassessment, particularly for areas affected by the recent hostilities.

Nonetheless, the additional estimated cost to complete clearance operations in these difficult terrain sites was set at approximately **$1 million**. It is important to clarify that this amount represents the **additional cost**, not the total cost. The **$1 million** was distributed over four years at an estimated **$250,000 per year**.

This means that if we were to complete all **19 sites** in a single year, the additional cost would appear as **$1 million** on top of the standard clearance costs. However, these **19 sites are already part of the overall**

contaminated area mentioned in the extension request. The additional cost arises due to the challenging terrain, which requires specialized resources and methods.

Therefore, the standard clearance costs remain unchanged, with an additional $1 million allocated specifically for these difficult terrain areas. The clearance of these sites is planned to be spread over four years, rather than completed within a single year. However, given the recent developments, a reassessment may be necessary to update the strategy accordingly.

It is important to note that we cannot focus solely on difficult terrain clearance while neglecting other priority tasks. Therefore, **dividing this amount over four years** achieves two key objectives:

1. Eases the financial burden by spreading the cost over time.
2. Aligns with operational feasibility, as it is not practical to dedicate all resources to difficult terrain alone while other clearance tasks remain.

16- Operational challenges:

The recent conflict and security situation had a significant impact on Lebanon's resource mobilization strategy. On one hand, Lebanon faces priority challenges in comparison to other regions like Gaza or Ukraine in securing international funding. On the other hand, a key challenge is the priority for the return of displaced persons, which, as mentioned earlier, is a top priority for the Lebanese government and its people. This return requires efforts to clean areas damaged by the war from the effects of cluster munitions and other unexploded ordnance. Therefore, the focus is not only on clearing cluster bombs but also on addressing the wider remnants of war to facilitate the return of displaced populations.

17- Risk education:

The table below shows the amounts of fund for the last four years:

year	Amount USD
2021	664,249
2022	258,173
2023	180,448
2024	682,471

- The estimated amount to required EORE should not be less than 600,000 USD, for the implementation of different kind of activities and type of interventions: Mass Media, Billboard, leaflets, Videos... and for sure the use of social media platform, to target different target audience of the communities and spatially the most at risk group. According to our experience last year the investment in the EORE project decrease the number of causalities instead of the huge number of ERW and new contamination areas.
- in response to the recent hostilities, Lebanon has intensified its efforts in Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) to safeguard affected communities. Key initiatives include:
- Distribution of Risk Education Materials: Organizations like UNICEF have proactively disseminated educational materials to inform communities about the dangers of explosive ordnance.
- Community Engagement and Awareness: Humanitarian organization have conducted extensive community-based risk education sessions to raise awareness about the hazards of unexploded ordnance (UXO).
- Collaboration with International Mine Action Organizations

- These concerted efforts reflect Lebanon's commitment to enhancing explosive ordnance risk education, aiming to protect its citizens, especially vulnerable populations like children, in the aftermath of conflict.

18- <u>Any other information:</u>

The LMAC experience in establishing the Mine Action Forum serves as a strong example of the importance of cooperation, coordination, and transparency among donors, implementing agencies, and stakeholders in the mine action sector. The forum concept, introduced with the support of the Norwegian and Dutch governments, successfully brought together key players in the field, including national authorities, international NGOs, donors, and UN agencies. By fostering regular, transparent dialogues, the Mine Action Forum created a platform for open discussion on challenges and improvements, enabling stakeholders to align their efforts and maximize the impact of available resources.

Through this approach, Lebanon achieved significant improvements, including the revision of National Mine Action Standards (NMAS), the introduction of Technical Survey in cluster munition clearance, and innovations like the use of explosive detection dogs. The forum also led to operational efficiency gains, such as reducing buffer zones and clearance depths, which saved valuable time and resources. Moreover, the collaboration between donors and operators resulted in increased donor engagement and a collective responsibility for improving the sector.

The success of the Lebanese MAF exemplifies how a committed national authority, transparent coordination, and donor collaboration can greatly enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of mine action operations, making it a model for other countries facing similar challenges.