

**Eighth Conference of the High Contracting Parties  
to Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War to  
the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions  
on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons  
Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively  
Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects**

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**Report  
Clearance, Removal or Destruction of Explosive Remnants of  
War, pursuant to Article 3 and Article 4**

**Submitted by the Coordinator<sup>1</sup> on Clearance, Removal or Destruction  
of Explosive Remnants of War, pursuant to Articles 3 and 4 of  
Protocol V**

**Introduction**

1. According to the decisions of the Seventh Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) (CCW/P.V/CONF/2013/11), the 2014 Meeting of Experts were mandated:

(a) To continue the consideration of clearance, removal or destruction of ERW in the context of meetings of experts and the conferences of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V and in particular to encourage affected High Contracting Parties to report on their authorities responsible for ERW, awareness raising and educational campaigns for the public, both progress towards and challenges in surveying and clearing and destroying ERW.

(b) To encourage donor and affected High Contracting Parties to further support capacity building for the surveillance, clearance and destruction of ERW at the community and national levels, as a means of ensuring that such programmes are strengthened and sustainable.

(c) To continue to further address all aspects of the obligations of Article 4 in conjunction with Article 11 in a session of the Meeting of Experts to support all High Contracting Parties to implement appropriate operating procedures and instructions and provide training to their military personnel.

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the decision of the Seventh Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War, as contained in paragraph 27 of its final document (CCW/P.V/CONF/2013/11), the discussions on clearance, removal or destruction of ERW, pursuant to Article 3 and 4 of the Protocol, were led by the Coordinator, Mr. Ivan Grinevich of Belarus.



(d) To emphasize that the obligations of Article 4 are a national responsibility even when participating in coalitions or alliances and continue sharing of experience in this regard.

2. Additionally, in the letter sent by Ambassador Katerina Sequensova, the President-designate of the Eighth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V, devoted to the preparations for the Protocol V Meeting of Experts of 2014, there was a set of questions on the surveillance and clearance of ERW aimed to help delegations to prepare and respond to the key issues in this area. In particular, ERW affected countries were encouraged to respond to the following questions:

- Who is the national authority responsible for ERW?
- What has been done to implement ERW awareness raising and educational programmes?
- What progress has been made on the surveillance, clearance and destruction of ERW?
- Are there any further updates on capacity building in the areas of surveillance, clearance and destruction of ERW?

### **Exchange of information on clearance, removal or destruction of ERW and capacity building**

3. The following States participated in the discussions and provided updated information on the status of their clearance programmes, national measures on capacity building and their approaches to resolving the problems associated with existing ERW: Albania, Burundi, Cambodia, China, Finland, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mali, Mozambique, Russian Federation, Ukraine and Zambia.

4. From an analysis of the aforementioned States presentations the following was found:

(a) All of these States created the necessary national authorities responsible for the surveillance, clearance and destruction of ERW at the local and national levels. Moreover, some of the States created coordinated national systems targeted at clearing all unexploded ordinances (UXO) on their national territories.

(b) Practically all presentations established that awareness raising and relevant educational programmes are part of the national strategies related to the elimination of the threats posed by ERW.

(c) Albania, Burundi, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mali, Mozambique, Russian Federation, Ukraine and Zambia provided detailed information on their priorities and plans for the clearance programmes on their national territories and capacity building in this area. These updates demonstrated that the implementation of Article 3 continues to be an important priority for ERW affected countries.

(d) At the same time Albania, Burundi, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mali, Mozambique, Ukraine and Zambia clearly indicated that they are relying on further assistance and support from the international donor community to continue their respective ERW clearance programmes.

5. On this last point, it should be stressed that cooperation and assistance remains critical to achieving Protocol V's objectives.

6. Mr. Justin Smith, Advisor for Underwater Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Operations, Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), made a presentation on underwater ERW. GICHD can provide the following resources and services to address underwater ERW: conducting assessments of States impacted by underwater ordnance; undertaking missions to advise authorities and strengthen national capacities; facilitating links between nations and clearance organisations; and drafting international standards and 'best practices' for underwater EOD clearance. Albania and Ukraine had indicated that they have national programmes on underwater ERW clearance.

7. Following the presentation on underwater ERW clearance the Coordinator made an initial proposal to allocate part of time during the 2015 Meeting of Experts for consideration of other difficult cases of EOD clearance operations, such as:

- (a) ERW clearance in sand desert areas;
- (b) clearance of the areas where intensive battles took place; and
- (c) clearance of the areas used as shooting ranges.

### **Discussion on implementation of Article 4 – recording, retaining and transmission of information**

8. The following States participated in the discussions and provided updated information on their implementation of Article 4: Finland, Russian Federation and Sweden.

9. Sweden informed the Meeting that it is in the process of developing recording procedures in accordance with Article 4. In particular, trials have been conducted on the manual recording of information under Protocol V. This year Sweden intends to conduct further research trials within artillery and air force units in the framework of developing a national system. Sweden intends to provide a further update on its work to implement Article 4 to the Eighth Conference of Protocol V.

10. Finland made a presentation on the Article 4 procedures carried out by its defence forces. The Finnish Defence Forces evaluated the Article 4 provisions as early as 2005 to 2006. This evaluation revealed that practically all existing regulations of the Finnish defence forces were in conformity with the requirements of Article 4. Only some adjustments were required for procedures related to the direct fire weapons, especially those belonging to the infantry. The necessary steps were made to upgrade these procedures. In 2007 and 2008, live field exercises took place in order to test these new procedures. In 2009, new standard operating instructions and procedures for the army, navy and air force were approved. Primary data about ERW is stored in the Finnish army command control information system, which is mostly automated. The national data system on ERW is based on the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) software developed by GICHD. The IMSMA software is also used for the international exchange of information. There are also special catalogues and software, which contained information about the technical details of the munitions and the EOD disposal clearance operations techniques. Training on Article 4 provisions is included in the basic military training for officers and conscripts. The Finnish defence forces coordinate their activities related to ERW with the civilian authorities and media.

11. Mr. Alan Macdonald, UNMAS, made a presentation on Article 4. Mr. Macdonald reminded the Meeting that in accordance with Article 4 the High Contracting Parties and parties to an armed conflict shall to the maximum extent possible and as far as practicable record and retain information on the use of explosive ordnance or abandonment of explosive ordnance and to transfer this information to facilitate the rapid clearance of ERW. Over the past ten years, UNMAS has been the recipient of information on the use and

abandonment of UXO in Afghanistan, Libya and Mali. In the case of Afghanistan, such information helped UNMAS to plan active and immediate response actions to protect people. According to the evaluation of UNMAS now in Afghanistan there is a very large amount of UXO that has been generated on the training grounds. UNMAS believes that this problem may be up to five times greater than the existing landmine problem. UNMAS would welcome the submission of additional information from interested States on this matter in order to plan future clearance operations. In the case of Libya, UNMAS is working with the States that participated in the military operations under the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1970 and 1973. UNMAS received information on the airstrikes associated with explosive ordnance "that had not gone off". However, this information was incomplete. For example, UNMAS did not receive information about the strikes on targets such as the Libyan bunkers, which themselves created further ERW.

12. UNMAS supports the continued exchange of views on the implementation of Article 4 during the meetings of experts, especially on the issues of accurate recording and transfer of information on the use of explosive ordnance in future military conflicts. Issues identified by UNMAS were: (1) there is a gap concerning how certain regional arrangements transfer information; (2) the practice of some States to classify Article 4 information; and (3) that there are inconsistencies concerning the quality of the information that is received. Moreover, UNMAS believes that the mechanism for receiving information is insufficient. Therefore it would be useful to further develop and discuss common understandings on why the information under Article 4 is necessary and why it is important for future clearance operations to receive good quality information to make them more effective. UNMAS also believes that it would be useful to reflect and act on codifying further mechanisms for the transfer of information under Article 4.

## **Recommendations**

13. In light of the above, it is recommended that the Eighth Conference of the High Contracting Parties decide as follows:

- To continue the consideration of clearance, removal or destruction of ERW and capacity building in these areas in the context of the meetings of experts and conferences of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V.
- To encourage donor and affected High Contracting Parties to provide updates on their implementation of ongoing national programmes in the fields of surveillance, clearance and destruction of ERW.
- To address existing challenges in carrying out the most difficult explosive ordnance disposal clearance operations, such as clearance in sand desert areas; the areas where intensive battles took place; and clearance of areas used as shooting ranges;
- To continue the exchange of information on the implementation of Article 4 in the context of meetings of experts and the conferences of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V.
- To continue the consideration of all aspects of the obligations of Article 4 in conjunction with Article 11 with the expert support of the appropriate international governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.
- To consider possible measures on how to improve existing mechanisms for the transmission of information under Article 4 and how to further improve the quality of the information which is subject for submission under Article 4.