



Newsletter

United Nations Mine Action Service

Colombia

December 2020

United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Colombia newsletter informs about the main technical assistance activities carried out through the projects implemented in the country to strengthen the mine action sector, in conjunction with the *Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP, in Spanish) - Descontamina Colombia*.

2020, the year a pandemic did not stop efforts for a Colombia free of mines



2020 undoubtedly was a challenging year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, forcing the world and us to adapt and to change priorities. Yet, mines continued to threaten and impact at-risk civilians, whilst organizations in the mine action sector were in temporary lockdown due to Covid-19 contingency measures. However, it is the sector's remarkable resilience and capability for adaptation that allowed activities to still continue through the pandemic, mitigating the humanitarian and socio-economic impact of explosive ordnance.

UNMAS as well was able to provide continued technical assistance, adhering to Covid-19 safety protocols and adjusting for example when feasible activities to the digital work environment. Key results are:

- Deploy regional experts to strengthen the work of the national mine action authority (OACP/ Descontamina Colombia) in the affected provinces.
- Support the revision of the National Standards of the Mine Action sector that provide a normative framework to all organizations and that will soon become Technical Norms; and finally
- Support to HUMANICEMOS DH, a mine action organization founded and led by former combatants, that emerged from the Peace Accord, for the certification of the personnel. The certification issued by the national authority allowed HUMANICEMOS DH to deploy mine action operations to assist communities of La Montañita, Caquetá.

These and other contributions from UNMAS were possible thanks to the leadership of the Government of Colombia and the support of our donors: **the European Union, through the European Trust Fund for Peace; and the Governments of Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Sweden**, which even in the midst of an unprecedented global health emergency, helped the sector to continue advancing in its goal of having a Colombia free of mines. Because the pandemic will pass, but the mines will remain until cleared.

In 2021 our main objective will be to continue strengthening the mine action sector to contribute with this important work to the peacebuilding and development in Colombia, supporting achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and leaving no one behind.

Jan Philip Klever
Programme Manager UNMAS Colombia



Photo: Mauricio Morillo/UNMAS Colombia

Survivors of anti-personnel mines receive accompaniment after new accidents registered in Tumaco, Nariño

Three survivors of anti-personnel mines, victims of new accidents with explosive ordnance in the municipality of Tumaco, Nariño in November, received support from the local coordinator deployed by UNMAS on behalf of the OACP. The accompaniment included the taking of statements of the survivors, the processing of emergency humanitarian aid, the delivery of personal hygiene kits and basic elements for the victims who are hospitalized in the city of Pasto, elements that are provided by the Mayor's Office of the city. Between January and November 2020, 40 new victims of anti-personnel mines have been registered in this department.



Photo: Mauricio Morillo/UNMAS Colombia

Social leaders of Nariño most affected municipalities by anti-personnel mines attend workshops in EORE

15 social leaders from the municipalities Roberto Payán, Barbacoas and rural sectors of Tumaco, Nariño, received intensive Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) workshops from 1 to 3 of December, an action promoted to prevent more accidents with anti-personnel mines in these three municipalities. 25 of the 40 new victims of explosive ordnance registered in the department of Nariño until November 2020 are from these municipalities. This workshop, given by the local coordinator in Nariño, was carried out in coordination with the OACP, the Pastoral Social and the Peace and Democracy Corporation, with the support of Colombia Transforma (a project financed by USAID).



Foto: Mauricio Morillo/UNMAS Colombia

Teachers in Nariño of at-risk communities receive training in Explosive Ordnance Risk Education

On November 12, teachers from the municipalities of Policarpa, Leiva and Ricaurte in Nariño, received training about the process to report the presence of explosive ordnance and the Victims Assistance Route. This workshop was given after the teachers informed the local authorities of the presence of explosive ordnance near the schools where they teach, which represents a risk to the students and the community. In this region is ongoing conflict. The training was given by a local coordinator in partnership with UNICEF and the Peace and Democracy Corporation.



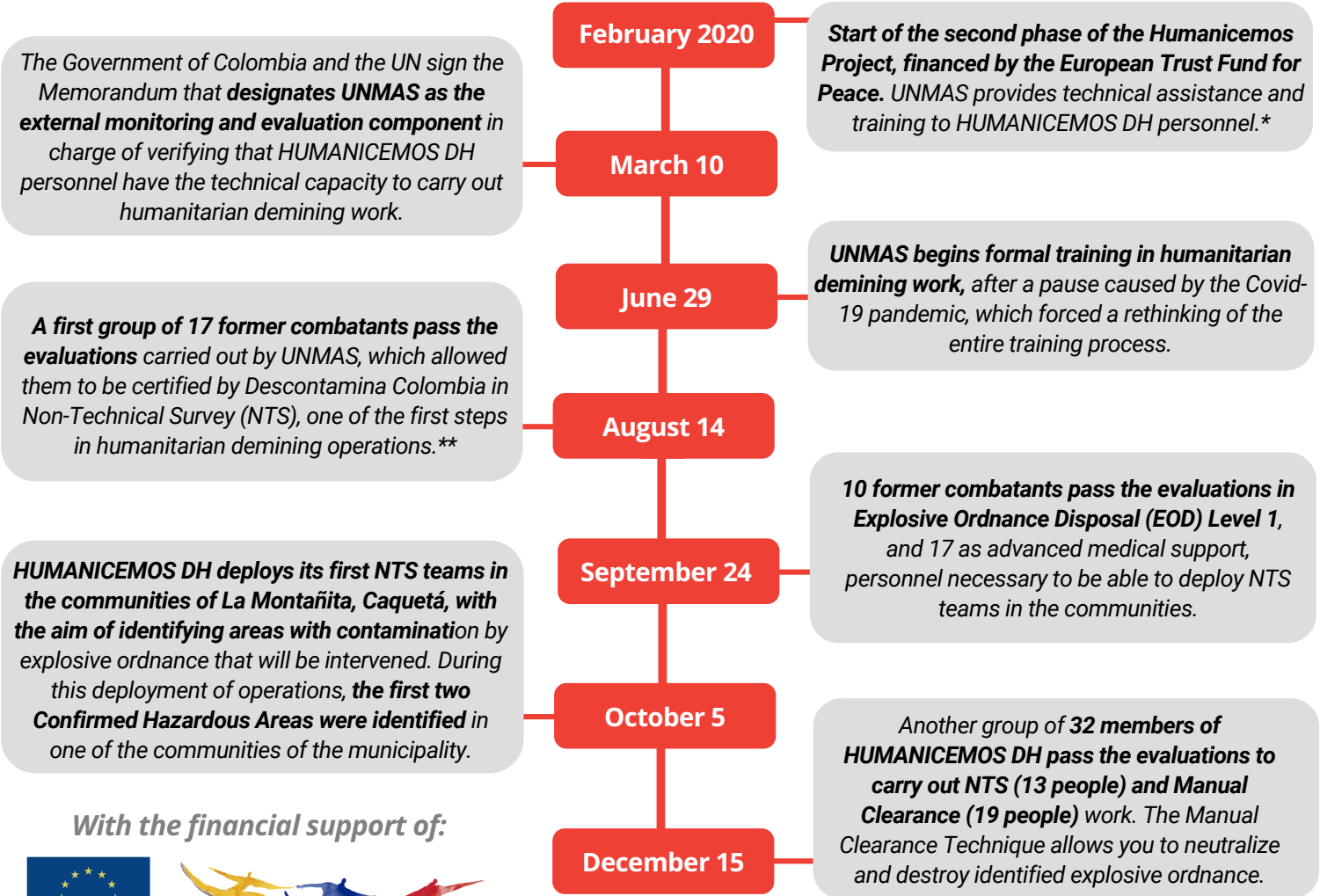
Photo: Mauricio Morillo/UNMAS Colombia

Indigenous communities in Narino seeking to establish a new "Indigenous Reservation" attend EORE workshops

On 19 and 20 November, an EORE session was held, focusing on emergency care for accidents with explosive ordnance, and a social mapping exercise with the communities of the Indigenous Council of La Montaña, in the municipality of Samaniego, Nariño. These communities are part of the indigenous people of Los Pastos and the sessions aim at supporting the official constitution of the territory that they inhabit in an "Indigenous Reservation", a process that has been pending before the National Land Agency since 2012.

The advance of the Humanicemos Project

During 2020, UNMAS Colombia started the second phase of the **Humanicemos Project** to strengthen the capacities of HUMANICEMOS DH, a civil humanitarian demining organization formed and led by former combatants in the process of social and economic reintegration. Here are some milestones achieved during the year:



With the financial support of:



*The first phase, between March 2018 and January 2020, was funded by the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UN MPTF). ** In support of the government, UNMAS only performs evaluations to HUMANICEMOS DH personnel. The entity in charge of certifying the personnel is Descontamina Colombia.

About UNMAS Colombia

Since 2010, UNMAS has supported the National Mine Action Center of Colombia, under the direction of the OACP, humanitarian demining, victim assistance and explosive ordnance risk education organizations, to increase the capacity of the mine action sector and strengthen its coordination and regulatory frameworks, considering best global practices. UNMAS works in Colombia with the support of the **European Union, through the European Trust Fund for Peace; and the Governments of Germany, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland**, whom we thank for their contributions in 2020.

