



## **Belgium Provides an Additional EUR 1,500,000 for UNMAS Activities in Iraq**

**Baghdad, 23 January 2021** – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq welcomes an additional contribution of EUR 1.5 million (approximately USD 1.69 million) from the Government of Belgium to support the Government of Iraq in protecting civilians impacted by explosive ordnance and enabling humanitarian action, socio-economic development, and peacebuilding.

The legacy of successive conflicts – the recent conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in particular – continue to substantially impact health, housing, public services, and livelihoods of Iraqis, including the displacement of millions since 2014, of which a million are still displaced today.

The Government of Belgium, through its generous contribution to UNMAS Iraq, will support the Government of Iraq to develop its nationally-led response to explosive ordnance, as well as support UNMAS Iraq in providing the necessary technical support (both theoretical and practical) to the national authorities to further enhance their capacity to lead the mine action sector in the near future.

UNMAS Iraq continues to prioritise the development of institutional capacity in Iraq, including through partnerships with the Directorate of Mine Action (DMA) and the Ministry of Interior (MoI), as well as the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA), working to enhance their capabilities to implement and coordinate a targeted explosive ordnance response that responds to community needs, including the different needs for women, men, boys and girls.

Commenting on the contribution, Mr. Filip Vanden Bulcke, Ambassador of Belgium, stated: “Belgium is very happy to continue its longstanding partnership with UNMAS in support of Iraq’s national efforts on mine action as a part of Belgium’s lasting contribution to the stabilization efforts to ensure protection, safe return of IDPs and resilience for Iraqi conflict-affected communities. Much work remains to be done. The development of national capacity and ownership of this important sector is crucial, and we commend UNMAS’ and the Government of Iraq’s outstanding work in this regard”.

Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme, added: “Empowering Iraqi governmental institutions to lead the Iraqi mine action response will contribute to enhanced protection and human security and, in turn, boost the confidence of citizens in the government and enhance community trust.”

### **Contact**

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