



HUMANICEMOS DH, MINE ACTION ORGANIZATION FORMED BY EX COMBATANTS, DETECTS ITS FIRST ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE IN CAQUETÁ, COLOMBIA

- ***The first mine action organization in the world formed and led by former combatants , which emerged after the 2016 peace accord, found its first anti-personnel mine in the Unión Cordillera community of the municipality La Montañita, Caquetá.***

A week after its manual clearance operations began, a certified team from the civil humanitarian demining organization HUMANICEMOS DH found an anti-personnel mine with a pressure activation system in the Unión Cordillera community of La Montañita, Caquetá. This is the first explosive ordnance detected by former members of the FARC-EP guerilla group undergoing their reintegration process, which in turn is a new milestone for sustaining peace in Colombia.

The clearing of hazardous areas aims to identify and later eliminate explosive ordnance that pose a risk to people's lives. "As reintegrated persons, we are happy to start contributing with our work to the process of reconciliation with the communities, which as a result will soon be able to move freely through their territories," says Elver Monroy, HUMANICEMOS DH deminer who detected this first explosive ordnance. The finding is the result of the meticulous work carried out since last October by the Non-Technical Survey (NTS) teams, which aimed to identify areas with possible contamination.

"This first finding made by the HUMANICEMOS DH Manual Clearance teams is a small step, even a routine one, for a civil humanitarian demining organization, but it is a substantial advance for the peace process in Colombia", highlights Jan Philip Klever, Programme Manager of United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Colombia, an entity that since 2018 has trained reintegrated personnel in humanitarian demining tasks, and which by mandate of the Colombian Government is also in charge of monitoring the quality of these operations.

"With this milestone reached, we show that we are ready to meet our goal of rebuilding the territories affected by the presence of explosive ordnance. Each mine identified and destroyed is a victim less", says Angela Orrego, Director of HUMANICEMOS DH, the first mine action organization in the world composed and led by former combatants, which emerged after a peace accord.

This achievement is the result of the coordinated work between the National Government, UNMAS, HUMANICEMOS DH and the European Union, which through the European Trust Fund for Peace has since February 2020 financed the second phase of the ***Humanicemos***



UNMAS

Project. The project is implemented by UNMAS Colombia with the objective of strengthening the organizational and operational capacities of HUMANICEMOS DH, as well as promoting reintegration and reconciliation.

HUMANICEMOS DH projects that this hazardous area of the Unión Cordillera community will be cleared completely in the month of June. The elimination of the threats and the subsequent return of these lands to the communities, to be again used in productive work, is the final stage of humanitarian demining operations in Colombia and constitutes the beginning of restituting violated rights of communities affected by the presence of explosive ordnance.

As a sign of confidence in the capacities acquired by HUMANICEMOS DH, in December 2020, the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP, in Spanish) notified the allocation of a second municipality to the organization to expand its humanitarian demining work: Solita, Caquetá. The first municipality assigned in 2017 by the OACP to HUMANICEMOS DH was La Montañita, also in Caquetá, where the organization's regional training and operations base is located.