

**Statement for
Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions**

Mr. Alexandre Zouev

**On occasion of
Security Council Thematic Debate on the Comprehensive Approach to Mine Action and
Explosive Hazards Mitigation
Tuesday, 13 June 2017 at 10:00am**

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Security Council deploys peace operations in increasingly complex and challenging environments; threats posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices exacerbate humanitarian crises and hinder emergency responses.

Explosive hazards injure and kill - civilians, peacekeepers, humanitarian workers - and their presence undermines the chances of long term sustainable peace.

Echoing the words of the United Nations Secretary-General, “peace without mine action is incomplete peace.”

Mine action achieves results in the most difficult operating environments.

As an integrated component of peacekeeping and special political missions, mine action is critical to the safety, security and mobility of mission personnel and to effective and efficient mandate implementation along with its critical importance for protection of civilian populations, especially children and women. I will present only a few impressive examples of how this challenge is addressed by the United Nations peacekeepers.

In **Mali**, training of peacekeepers enhances their capacity to mitigate the threat posed by improvised explosive devices and saves their lives.

In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, clearing explosive remnants of war and other explosive hazards enables the safe movement of conflict-affected communities.

In **South Sudan**, the use of explosive detection dogs ensures that Protection of Civilian sites are free from explosive hazards.

In **Iraq**, vast risk education campaigns and humanitarian clearance of improvised explosive devices allows the safe return of displaced populations and delivery of humanitarian assistance.

In **Colombia** mine action was one of the first items parties negotiating peace agreed and acted upon.

Today's debate is a reminder that mine action must be considered at the outset of mandate formulation and renewal.

Excellencies,

The Secretary-General has laid out a vision for the reform of the peace and security architecture, along a humanitarian – conflict prevention – and peace building continuum, with strong partnerships playing a central role.

Through partnerships with States, regional arrangements such as we have with the African Union and civil society, mine action is able to demonstrate operational effectiveness and efficient delivery across a wide spectrum of the Organization's priorities.

On conflict prevention, clearance and disposal of landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices denies access to explosive materials which can be 'harvested' and used to construct new and different improvised explosive devices.

Reintegration and employment of demobilized soldiers and individuals from affected communities in mine action work plays a role in generating conditions conducive to peace.

As we have witnessed in peace processes such as the one in Colombia, mine action has been an effective means, which allowed generating quick and early confidence building and peacebuilding gains in a very complex and politically sensitive environment.

The strong leadership and coordination role of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) underpins and advances these achievements, as recognised by Member States.

UNMAS role on the ground, coordinating the work of the mine action sector, including in challenging operating environments such as Iraq, ensures a coherent, targeted response, increasing efficiencies and cost-effective delivery.

Doctrine developed by UNMAS, through wide and inclusive consultation, includes guidelines on improvised threat mitigation for peacekeepers which provide direction for a coherent response across affected missions, and also includes International Mine Action Standards, used by all operators to ensure safe and effective operations globally.

Responding to the call by the Secretary-General in his Report on Countering the Threat Posed by Improvised Explosive Devices (A/71/187), UNMAS is also using its expertise to coordinate development of standards for the United Nations on the disposal of improvised explosive devices. These standards, expected to be completed by the 72nd session of the General Assembly, will ensure conformity in training, equipment and operations.

UNMAS is also taking steps to identify the building blocks for a ‘whole of United Nations’ response to improvised explosive device threat mitigation. This has been a key area of concern, especially for troop contributing countries.

The Security Council expects to be kept informed about threats and efforts to mitigate the threats posed by explosive hazards. I wish to assure you of UNMAS strong commitment to support the Secretary-General and the work of the Council in advancing the peace and security agenda.

I thank you.