



NEEDS
DRIVEN.
PEOPLE
CENTRED.

The European Union continues to support explosive hazard management and capacity enhancement activities in liberated areas of Iraq

Baghdad, 18 December 2018 – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) thanks the European Union for its continuous support to explosive hazard management and capacity enhancement activities in liberated areas of Iraq, which contributes to the safe, orderly and dignified return of displaced communities and enables humanitarian and stabilization efforts.

Across liberated areas, explosive hazard contamination prevents access for humanitarian actors and delivery of assistance to people in need; hinders safe and sustainable returns of internally displaced persons (IDPs), often resulting in secondary displacement and occupation of others' properties; impedes resumption of livelihoods and access to agricultural and grazing lands and irrigation systems; and obstructs access to community infrastructure and basic services including schools, water facilities, hospitals, electrical stations, and roads.

According to an assessment carried out in 2018, on average across affected areas, 22% of IDPs in camps cite explosive hazards as a top reason for not intending to return to their areas of origin, however this is up to 52% in some governorates; on average 12% of out-of-camp IDPs cite the same.

Through its contribution to UNMAS, the European Union continues to fund explosive hazard management (EHM) activities including surveys, assessments and clearance in liberated areas. This support from the European Union will also continue to target capacity enhancement activities at national, regional and local level through Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)/ Improvised Explosive Disposal (IEDD) training to the Iraqi police as well as through the coordination and strategic engagement of relevant mine action government entities and authorities.

In line with the European Union's interest in the rehabilitation of cultural heritage sites, the project also includes provisions for collaboration with other United Nations entities such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to enable the rehabilitation of cultural heritage sites through explosive hazard management.

European Union, Head of Unit, Middle East/Gulf, Central Asia and South Asia, Raffaella Iodice said: *"This highlights once again our commitment to mine action. This is more so important in the current "post-Mosul" settings, as stabilization is ongoing and whereby clearance remains a pre-condition, as the presence of such hazards will continue to impede security and stability efforts if not properly addressed. As chair of the Coalition's Explosive Hazard Management Sub-Group, the EU is determined to tackle this scourge head-on and continues to support Iraq in strengthening the government's strategic coordination mechanisms. Implementing this project is fundamental for peace, stabilization and economic recovery, and it is also a gesture to future generations. It is our*

responsibility to preserve and strengthen. All these efforts will contribute to facilitating the safe returns of the Iraqi people, who have suffered long enough".

"The Government of Iraq just celebrated the one-year anniversary of the defeat of ISIL but roads, bridges, power and water plants, hospitals, schools, parks and residential areas are still contaminated by explosive hazards. This threat not only prevents displaced communities to safely return home but also, severely hampers stabilization and reconstruction efforts." stated Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Senior Programme Manager. "Through explosive hazard management and capacity enhancement activities, UNMAS Iraq supports those displaced by conflict so that they can return to their homes and return to work, to educate their children, to contribute to society, to live a normal life. This would not be possible without the contributions provided by our generous donor community and notably the European Union." added Pehr Lodhammar.

UNMAS Iraq, with support from the European Union as part of a broader programme response, continues to facilitate the safe, orderly and dignified return of families to Mosul and other liberated areas. To date, clearance teams removed approximately 48,000 explosive hazards, including 2,895 IEDs, from roads, bridges, schools, universities, hospitals, clinics, water treatment plants and municipal buildings in Mosul; and 870 suicide belts, many from human remains.

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