



Italy extends support to explosive hazard management activities in Iraq

Baghdad, 19 December 2018 – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq welcomes an additional contribution of EUR 585,000 from the Government of Italy to mitigate the threat posed by explosive hazards and enable stabilization efforts in liberated areas of Iraq.

Extensive conflict involving Iraqi Security Forces, Kurdish Security Forces, and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has had a profound impact on human security in Iraq. The large scale, scope, and complexity of explosive hazard contamination in liberated areas is substantial, and far exceeds existing national resources to clear them,

This contribution from the Government of Italy will significantly further UNMAS explosive hazard management activities in Iraq. UNMAS, in coordination with implementing partners, has strategized a comprehensive response to mitigate the risks posed by explosive hazards through three primary areas: explosive hazard management, capacity enhancement, and risk education. This range of activities allows for a dynamic response covering clearance, enhancement of existing government resources, and engagement with communities to ensure a unified response to explosive hazards.

The continued threat of destabilization is significantly heightened through the presence of explosive hazards, particularly in residential and rural communities. This ensures that a continued “de facto battle” exists, resulting in lives lost with no enemy in sight. The legacy of ISIL will continue to live on as long as explosive hazards are scattered in houses, neighbourhoods, and across communities, posing a threat to citizens set on rebuilding their lives post-ISIL occupation.

“Among the activities testifying the commitment of the Government of Italy to stabilization, explosive hazard management and demining are deemed crucial for both the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the protection of civilians, as a precondition for a safe reconstruction.” said H.E. Bruno Pasquino, Ambassador of Italy to Iraq. *“Italy is supporting these activities in a wide range of countries, for sheer decontamination and for capacity enhancement. In Iraq, our qualified support on demining will also be devoted to the protection of cultural heritage – a trademark of our development cooperation policy.”*

“The presence of explosive hazards significantly impedes the safe, sustainable, voluntary, and dignified return of internally displaced persons to their areas of origin in Iraq” said Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Senior Programme Manager. *“Italy is a critical cooperative partner for UNMAS humanitarian and stabilization efforts to ensure the return of livelihoods and a sense of normalcy to affected communities.”*

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