



Support from the Government of Germany Proves Crucial in Continuing UNMAS Life-Saving Activities in Iraq

Baghdad, 11 June 2019 – With a total contribution of EUR 51.2 million (USD 58 million) to date, the Government of Germany is the largest contributor to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq and supports explosive hazard management and capacity enhancement initiatives to mitigate the threat posed by explosive hazards, thus enabling the provision and facilitation of humanitarian and stabilization activities.

“Removing explosive hazards is a key precondition for a safe return of IDPs and is therefore rightly at the heart of the stabilisation efforts in Iraq”, said Dr. Cyrill Nunn, the German Ambassador in Iraq. *“UNMAS and its implementing partners do crucial work in that regard, and we appreciate their close coordination with the Iraqi authorities. Germany is proud to support these efforts.”*

“It’s been more than a year since the Iraqi Security Forces retook all areas from Da’esh control, and yet their presence continues to linger through the many explosive hazards that continue to permeate Iraq today. They are both unconventional and unexpected, evoking fear of return within IDPs,” said Pehr Lodhammar, Senior Programme Manager of UNMAS in Iraq. *“It is crucial to note that prior to any rehabilitation or reconstruction tasks can take place, survey and clearance is the essential ‘first step.’ The continuous support we receive from Germany will go a long way in facilitating explosive hazard management, capacity enhancement, and risk education activities in Iraq, thereby enabling the safe and dignified return of IDPs to their homes.”* added Pehr Lodhammar.

Approximately 1.7 million people are still estimated to be internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Iraq, equating to 18 per cent of the Iraqis who live in conflict-affected areas, and more than five percent of the overall population. According to an assessment carried out in early 2019, on average and across affected areas, 37% of IDP households who reported having concerns about safety in their area of origin cited the fear of explosive hazard contamination. This makes explosive hazard contamination a key inhibitor of the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of IDPs in Iraq. (*National Intention Survey lead by the CCCM Cluster and facilitated by REACH, February 2019*).

Since the beginning of the year, UNMAS, operating through its implementing partners and through coordination with local and federal government authorities, has surveyed approximately 12,000,000 m² of high-priority areas, cleared about 600,000 m², and removed more than 300 explosive hazards in Iraq. UNMAS has also delivered approximately 8,500 risk education sessions to more than 158,000 beneficiaries in key areas in the country.

In addition to explosive hazard management activities, UNMAS in Iraq, with support from the Government of Germany and the European Union is also providing Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) training courses to the Iraqi Police. The trainings are administered to cross-unit police officers representing the Anbar, Kirkuk, and Ninewa Governorates. Amongst the participants, 16 police officers recently graduated. It is crucial to train police officers from the most affected and contaminated areas post-Da’esh, and allow them to correctly identify and undertake proper procedures when in contact with explosive hazards. A new medical element with simple yet life-

saving measures was added to the last training, as this is an important skill to have especially when police officers are at the front lines of contact with civilians.

Contact

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