



NEEDS
DRIVEN.
PEOPLE
CENTRED.

Australia increases contribution to explosive hazards management in liberated areas of Iraq

Baghdad, 18 February 2019 – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq welcomes an additional contribution of AUD 2 million (approximately USD 1.5 million) from the Government of Australia to further enable stabilization and humanitarian efforts through explosive hazards management in liberated areas of Iraq. This brings the current three-year contribution from Australia to a total of AUD 13 million (approximately USD 9 million).

The survey and clearance of explosive hazards are a crucial precursor to the commencement of humanitarian and stabilization initiatives, and the demand for assistance still exceeds the resources available. UNMAS in Iraq is working closely with the United Nations system and the Government of Iraq to enable humanitarian and stabilization efforts.

This contribution from the Government of Australia will further support UNMAS explosive hazards management activities to create safe conditions for the sustainable return of displaced people. It will also improve coordination, engagement and capacity enhancement of relevant government authorities, threat impact assessments as well as clearance and risk education initiatives. This will reduce the risk of explosive hazards in direct support of humanitarian and stabilization planning and delivery, while at the same time increase national capacities to manage the overall threat of newly identified explosive hazards in these areas.

The contribution comes in concert with a recent field visit organized for representatives of the Government of Australia to Fallujah in Anbar Governorate. During the visit, the delegation received a comprehensive briefing on UNMAS clearance activities inside the city's most damaged areas, with its scale of destruction and contamination continuing to be prime inhibitors for the safe, dignified and voluntary return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their homes.

Australia's Ambassador to Iraq, Dr Joanne Loundes, said *“Although much progress has already been made, the huge scale of explosive hazards contamination in Iraq means there is still much to be done. We are increasing Australia's contribution to UNMAS because we are committed to helping Iraq address these challenges and helping displaced families return to their homes.”*

“Through its continuous support and close collaboration with UNMAS, the Government of Australia is helping to reduce the threat posed by explosive hazards, including improvised explosive devices,” stated Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, Senior Programme Manager for UNMAS in Iraq, *“thereby enhancing community safety and facilitating the return of displaced people to their homes.”*

The Government of Australia is an essential contributor to UNMAS explosive hazards management activities in Iraq. This latest contribution brings to AUD 18 million (approximately USD 13 million) the total amount of funds donated since 2016.

Contact

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