



After 15 months of hostilities, UNMAS welcomes the implementation of a six-week ceasefire in Gaza, allowing a much-anticipated surge in humanitarian assistance and offering the people of Gaza an opportunity to move more freely and more safely.

However, as areas that have undergone months of kinetic activity become newly accessible by humanitarians and civilians, it is likely they will become more exposed to the threat posed by explosive ordnance (EO). Already, UNMAS EOD Officers in North Gaza, where fighting has most recently been extremely intense, have heard from returning populations that they are regularly encountering suspicious objects which could be EO.

UNMAS had been developing ceasefire response planning over the last year and is now rolling out these actions and helping to coordinate other actors in the sector.

Coordination of lifesaving risk education activities

A vital component of the ceasefire response is the strategic expansion of emergency explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) messaging to reach broader audiences and ensure lifesaving information is accessible to those in need. Within the first week of the response UNMAS distributed over 22,000 leaflets and posters to organizations operating in prioritized areas to reach the most vulnerable populations in camps and informal settlements in Gaza City and North Gaza.

As the designated lead for humanitarian mine action (HMA) coordination, UNMAS provides technical expertise, co-coordinates the Mine Action Area of responsibility (MA AoR) and co-chairs Technical Working Groups in Gaza and the West Bank. Through this, UNMAS ensures risk education is aligned, targeted, and integrated into broader humanitarian programming. In week one of the response, UNMAS developed and disseminated a comprehensive EORE Ceasefire Package which includes digital, print and telecom resources along with standardized messaging, implementation guidance and referral framework documentation.

To support adoption, UNMAS will train 200 humanitarian staff on "Integrated EORE in Humanitarian Programming and Response" (scheduled for 27 January). A Training of Trainers was completed for 30 UNMAS implementing partner staff, enabling the delivery of up to 25 EORE training sessions per week across five teams.

Currently, UNMAS maintains an ongoing contract with an implementing partner until 7 February, conducting community EORE/conflict preparedness and protection sessions. Plans are in place to establish new agreements with partners to expand and enhance the funded response.



UNMAS poster about explosive threats in Gaza

Surging EO response capacity for humanitarian response

UNMAS will continue to task Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Officers to join on the **humanitarian convoys passing** the highest risk routes to help them to navigate explosive threats. UNMAS will also continue to coordinate **explosive hazard assessments** (EHAs) of sites intended for humanitarian use.



UNMAS conducts Hazardous Environment Training for UN Security Officers in Rafah, Gaza, January 2024.

While new EOD Officers will be surged into Gaza by UNMAS, both in the form of in kinds from NGOs and UN staff, other HMA actors are also rapidly expanding their logistical capacity in Gaza and their ability to respond. UNMAS will coordinate the deployment of all EOD Officers in Gaza to respond to the prioritized needs. However, to further support response particularly to convoys, UNMAS will again roll out its **Hazardous Environment Training** for security officers and convoy commanders, so that they know how to recognize EO and what to do if they come across an item. This will reduce the demand for EOD Officers to be on all convoys and limit their presence to only the highest risk ones.

Support to debris management efforts

Since September 2024, UNMAS has been working with UNDP on a pilot debris management project; this forms the basis and template for how HMA actors will collaborate with debris management stakeholders and support early recovery safely. To date, UNMAS has helped to coordinate the completion of **121 EHAs** in support of debris management and provided tailored risk education sessions to **34 construction workers** involved in initial clearance efforts. A second phase of this pilot project has now commenced and will focus on areas to support ceasefire response, including clearance of debris from routes.



UNMAS EOD Officer conducts an EHA of a damaged mosque as part of UNDP Debris Management efforts. Deir al Balah, Gaza, 6 January 2025.

Challenges

Currently, HMA actors are not able to conduct disposal operations; if EO is found, it is marked with warning messages. UNMAS is engaging with relevant authorities to advocate for **approval to conduct disposal operations** on behalf of the sector.

To request mine action support, including EHAs, EORE, or to report an incident, you can submit requests [here](#)

If you or your organization would like to request EORE materials, email Alexis Stergakis at alexiss@unops.org

To see where the mine action sector is currently operating, check out our [public mapping tool](#)