



**NEEDS
DRIVEN.
PEOPLE
CENTRED.**

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January 2019

IRAQ

Programme Highlights

UNMAS Continues to Use Innovative Tools to Provide Life-Saving Messages



Photo: Students using virtual reality goggles at the screening of "The Deminer" (@UNMAS)

UNMAS organized a screening of the documentary film "The Deminer" at the MLF Danielle Mitterrand French school in Erbil, Iraq. Directed by Hogir Hirori, the film documents the life of Colonel Fakhir, who lost his life while working as a deminer in the Kurdish Peshmerga.

The film was screened for more than 45 students, between the ages of 14 and 18, from the French and German schools. The students were then able to engage with UNMAS Iraq Senior Programme Manager, Pehr Lodhammar, in a debate on clearance activities in liberated areas. During the discussion, Mr. Lodhammar clarified the difference between UNMAS humanitarian clearance efforts and the clearance methods shown in the documentary.

"Humanitarian demining necessitates that the deminer engage with the explosive hazards in a much more careful manner, and requires the operator to wear protective gear to minimize risk of injury. While the colonel is certainly a hero, his methods exposed him to severe harm, which unfortunately later materialized when an improvised explosive devices (IED) took his life." Post discussion, students received the opportunity to experience first-hand explosive hazard-contaminated environments through virtual reality goggles.

Learn more about "The Deminer" [here](#).

UNMAS Coordination Prompts Extension of School "Safe Zone"

The Al Shihabi Secondary School for Boys, liberated by the Iraqi Security Forces in 2016, and reopened for students in 2017, is located in the Al Karma neighborhood nearby Fallujah. UNMAS Rapid Response Team had previously cleared a 10-meter "safe zone" around the school however, during a follow-up visit, the Community Liaison Officers were informed that children playing football beyond the safe zone were exposed to significant risk of accidental explosions due to the presence of explosive hazards, thus requiring the safe zone to be expanded.

UNMAS deployed a Rapid Response Team for the second time, extending the safe zone to 50 meters. In addition, CLO teams were also deployed nearby to provide risk education to the surrounding community.

During operations, the team rendered safe five viable IEDs, including one high-metal-content pressure plate and additional scrap metal from unexploded ordnance, ensuring that lives are saved and the land is released to the local community for productive use.



Photo: Al Shihabi Secondary School for Boys (@UNMAS)



UNMAS in Iraq is funded bilaterally through contributions to the UN Voluntary Trust Fund. In 2018, UNMAS secured USD 76 million in funds. UNMAS is making consistent efforts to raise additional funds to respond to the needs for survey and clearance, risk education and capacity enhancement of government entities, and also to support the Recovery and Resilience Programme and the Humanitarian Response Plan.



Thank you to all our donors for their generous support.

EHM Sub-Working Group Kicks Off First Meeting of 2019



Photo: EHM Sub-Working Group Meeting in Baghdad (@UNMAS)

The European Union in Iraq recently chaired a meeting of the Explosive Hazard Management (EHM) sub-working group of the Stabilization Task Force in Baghdad. The meeting adds to the continuing cooperation between UNMAS, the Directorate of Mine Action (DMA), the donor community, and other UN agencies.

In attendance was the Iraqi Minister of Health and Environment, HE Dr. Alaa Abdessaheb Al-Alwan, the Director-General of the Directorate of Mine Action, Mr. Essa al-Fayyadh, along with a delegation of government officials, representatives of the donor community, the EU Advisory Mission, the Coalition and UNMAS senior management.

The agenda included updates on EHM stabilization priorities in liberated areas, donor support and challenges for mine action organizations. The meeting is convened on a quarterly basis, to enable collaboration and dialogue between the UN and the diplomatic community to enhance EHM activities.

Mine Action Achievements



Clearance



Survey



Risk Education

UNMAS and Partner Achievements in January

31,944 m² of high priority areas surveyed, 164,704 m² cleared, and 296 explosive hazard items removed.

Six assessments and surveys completed in support of stabilization and humanitarian efforts.

2,892 risk education sessions delivered to 53,029 beneficiaries of which 43% were females and 50% were children.

Overall Mine Action sector since January 2016*

365 km² surveyed, 145 km² cleared and 149,933 hazardous items removed.

Risk education sessions delivered to 1,439,870 beneficiaries from at-risk communities.



*Figures for the Mine Action sector are provided by the Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) and the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA). Statistics obtained from the Government databases might not fully reflect the up-to-date numbers as reports are submitted on a rolling basis. For these reasons, the figures reported have to be considered as the absolute minimum and only reflect the achievements of humanitarian actors (not the Iraqi Security Forces)



Established in 1997, the **United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)** works to eliminate the threat posed by mines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices by coordinating United Nations mine action, leading operational responses at the country level, and supporting the development of standards, policies and norms. As a specialized service of the United Nations located within the Department of Peace Operations, UNMAS operates under UN legislative mandates of both the General Assembly and the Security Council. UNMAS also responds to specific requests for support from the UN Secretary-General or designated official. UN Security Council Resolution 2365 (2017) the first stand-alone text on mine action, *“Expresses grave concern over the threat that landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices pose to civilians, refugees returning to their homes, ...and stresses the need to undertake appropriate measures to mitigate this danger effectively.”*