



**NEEDS
DRIVEN.
PEOPLE
CENTRED.**

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April 2019

IRAQ

Programme Highlights

Celebrations of Mine Action Day in Baghdad and Erbil



Photo: UNMAS Iraq Senior Programme Manager delivering a speech in Erbil to commemorate Mine Action Day (© UNMAS).

The International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action celebrated annually on 4 April was this year commemorated in both Erbil and Baghdad.

The Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA), in cooperation with UNMAS, hosted an event in Erbil attended by Mr. Siraj Barzani, Director-General of IKMAA, Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Senior Programme Manager, in addition to internal and external stakeholders.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Lodhammar said: "Explosive hazards slow down stabilization efforts, obstruct rehabilitation and reconstruction projects, delay return of refugees and internally displaced people and block the use of potentially productive land. It makes it difficult to put the memories of war behind, serving as a constant reminder that nobody is completely safe until explosive contamination has been identified and safely removed. Only then can normal life resume, the memory of armed conflict be allowed to fade."

In Baghdad, the Day was commemorated on 8 April through an event organized by the Directorate of Mine Action (DMA), with support from UNMAS. A risk education play, the screening of risk education videos, exhibition booths from mine action operators as well as speeches from the Deputy Minister of Health and Environment (MoHE), the Director-General of NGOs from the General Secretariat of Minister Council and UNMAS Iraq Senior Programme Manager were part of the programme.

"During the past two decades, Iraq suffered many wars that led to the displacement of a substantial number of residents, thereby affecting the overall demography of the country," said Dr. Kameran Ali Hasan, Deputy MoHE. *"The challenges facing the mine action sector are tremendous due to the usage of explosive material in the manufacturing of improvised explosive devices, affecting Iraq considerably,"* added Dr. Kameran.



Photo: Participants of the event trying the UNMAS virtual reality goggles in Baghdad (© UNMAS).

On the Day, Saif Al-Tatooz, UNMAS Liaison Officer was also interviewed by Al-Hurra, an international Arabic language news channel to explain UNMAS clearance efforts in the retaken areas of Iraq. *"Clearance is extremely complicated. That is the major issue with landmines or other explosive hazards. According to our estimates, it will take years and millions of dollars to clear Iraq of explosive hazards completely. Although they [explosive hazards] are very cheap to manufacture and distribute in large numbers, it costs millions to remove them [...] No rehabilitation and reconstruction tasks can be undertaken, no international or humanitarian aid can be done without the area being first cleared of explosive hazards."*

Watch the full interview [here](#).



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.

UNMAS Risk Education Specialists Delivering Life Saving Radio Messages



برنامج من المسؤول ياتيكم كل أحد الساعة 12:30 ظهرا /// برنامج سناب يأتيكم

Photo: Noor and Ismat talking about risk education initiatives conducted in retaken areas of Iraq to mitigate the incidents caused by explosive hazards (© UNMAS).

Ms. Noor Al Jaziary and Mr. Ismat Selevany, UNMAS Risk Education Specialists, were recently interviewed on explosive hazard management and risk education activities in retaken areas of Iraq.

“We also use games to attract [the children]. This is at the very core of what we do, finding creative ways to enhance the way people learn and process risk awareness information effectively,” said Noor.

This show, the third one of its kind, was broadcast on Radio One FM, the first independent radio based in Mosul. The Radio station counts thousands of listeners and has been delivering risk education messages five times a day for six months. Watch the video for highlights of the interview [here](#).

Mine Action Achievements



Clearance



Survey



Risk Education

UNMAS and Partner Achievements in April

1,339,379 m² of high priority areas surveyed.

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

1,792 risk education sessions delivered to 40,006 beneficiaries of which 10% were females and 79% were children.

Overall Mine Action sector since January 2016*

490 km² surveyed, 56 km² cleared and 115,906 hazardous items removed.

Risk education sessions delivered to 2,073,005 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.”*