



EOD trainees reporting for duty. These officers were selected by the Baidoa Police and the Police Commissioner (UN Photo/T Bunbury)

threats in capital city Mogadishu, as well as in Baidoa and Beletweyne. These teams are now deployed on a daily basis in response to emergency callouts and explosive hazard reports. In Mogadishu during 2014 alone, EOD teams received over 130 IED callouts. Until recently, however, the Somali Police did not have the advanced training and equipment necessary to manage IEDs independently. Ultimately, they requested UNMAS to provide technical assistance and support to manage these more complex explosive hazards.

As a first step, UNMAS mobilized funds from the Governments of Japan and the United Kingdom to begin training two teams identified as the Specialized IED Unit within the Federal Police. Although these teams are now operational, qualified and equipped to respond to IEDs in Mogadishu, with the increased use of IEDs by insurgent groups across rural routes in South and Central Somalia, two teams remain insufficient, and as such, significant additional investment is needed in order for UNMAS to extend national IED defeat capabilities in the regions.

At the request of the Somali Police Force, UNMAS is now working to secure the funding and resources required to implement this expansion during 2015.

To address the dramatic evolution in the use of IEDs and the advanced skill-set required for their disposal and investigation, UNMAS trainers spend months working with the SPF Specialized Unit to cover both theoretical and practical lessons. The teams are trained to deal with the evolving use of IEDs in the country. For example, Somalia has recently seen an increase in the use of vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, and UNMAS trainers have incorporated this into their curricula. UNMAS-led training has also led to the creation of a Somali Police Force Explosive Detection Dog Team, which secures critical infrastructures such as airports, seaports, and Government buildings by checking for explosives.



Zaynab Mohamed Hashi, a regional Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Medical Team Leader. Mother, grandmother and one of three female police officers currently serving as part of the Somaliland Police EOD team in Hargeisa. Zaynab joined the police EOD unit in 2010 and hopes to lead the country's first female EOD team. (UN Photo/Hodo Dahir)

As a result of these interventions, for the first time in years, local communities in south and central Somalia can call on the police for assistance. The highly professional Police EOD Unit has enhanced the credibility of the security sector, while providing a sense of order and normalcy, crucial for enhancing the community's confidence in the Government.

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