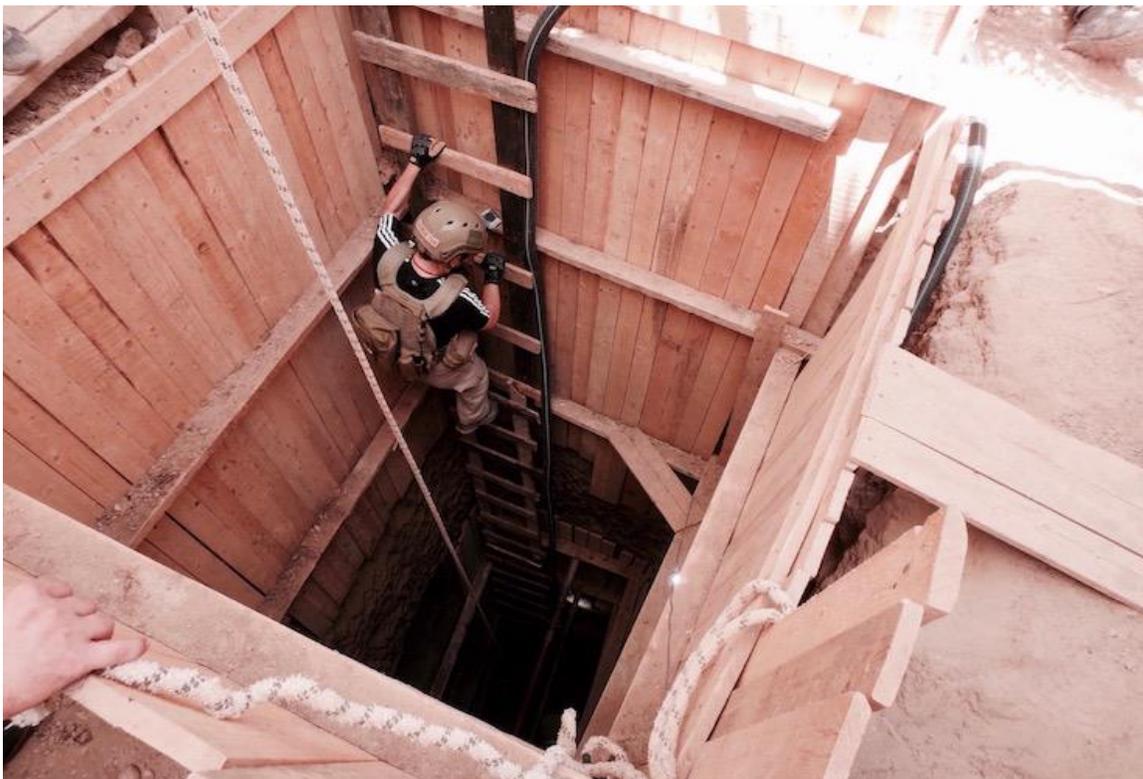




UNMAS conducts ERW Assessment in Gaza

Two years since the end of the 2014 conflict in Gaza, much of the explosive remnants of war (ERW) surface contamination has been removed. However, many items of unexploded ordnance (UXO), including aerial bombs and artillery shells, remain buried underground or hidden among debris of destroyed structures. These hazards continue to impede reconstruction and development efforts.

Since 2014, UNMAS has assessed 130 locations as hazardous, with a high likelihood of containing buried aerial bombs. As of July 2016, UNMAS has cleared 39 sites while a further 87 sites remain to be cleared. Each site requires painstaking excavation work followed by technically challenging neutralization of complex bomb systems before the danger can be eliminated.



On 18 July 2016, an UNMAS technician lowers himself down an excavation shaft during a clearance operation for a deep buried unexploded aerial bomb

Because the concentration of buried ERW remains impossible to quantify, UNMAS has developed and implemented a systematic investigative process that identifies hazards, predicts possible incidents, and determines the impact of hazards and mitigation measures that can be implemented or planned. This ERW risk assessment and mitigation process ensures that reconstruction and rubble removal are conducted safely and without delay. As a result, UNDP, UNICEF, UNRWA, JICA, USAID, and other stakeholders, have requested UNMAS to undertake on-site risk assessments, ERW risk mitigation training sessions, quality assurance on implementation of these risk mitigation measures, and 24/7 explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) support to their rubble removal and infrastructure projects. These measures are further complemented through delivery of ERW risk education to the community at large.

Thanks to its clearance and risk mitigation efforts, UNMAS has enabled partners to clear over one million tons of rubble in 2014-16 and begin reconstruction on 404,000 square meters of land, including 41 kilometres of roadways without a single ERW casualty among reconstruction teams.

For more information, please contact Donor Relations Officer Kurt Chesko at chesko@un.org.

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