

#### Newsletter Colombia March 2021

United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Colombia newsletter informs about the main technical assistance activities carried out through the projects implemented in the country to strengthen the mine action sector, in conjunction with the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace (OACP, in Spanish) -Descontamina Colombia.

#### In February Colombia surpassed 12,000 victims of anti-personnel mines



Colombia ended February with a total of 12,014 victims of anti-personnel mines registered by the national authorities. This figure ranges from January 1990 (the year in which official records began) until February 28 of this year. Colombia continues to be the second country in the world with the most registered victims of anti-personnel mines, only surpassed by Afghanistan whose records began in 1998. In February, 19 new victims of explosive ordnance were registered with Tumaco, in the department of Nariño, currently the most affected municipality with six new victims. "All accidents in Colombia occur with improvised mines, and it is the second country with the highest number of accidents with this type of mines, behind Afghanistan", said Jan Philip Klever, UNMAS Colombia Programme Manager, in a recent webinar organized in collaboration with the Global Compact Colombia.



Photo: Alejandra Padilla / RC Project

## Victim assistance: three municipalities of Caquetá build their VA referral pathways

Officials of the municipal mayors' offices of Curillo, San José del Fragua and Solita, in Caquetá, participated in a training session on safe behaviors and Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) given by the Regional Coordinator in Caquetá. The meeting helped these municipalities to build their anti-personnel mines Victims Assistance (VA) referral pathway for the first time. The next step will be for municipal authorities to train the communities with the highest risk of accidents about these routes. The meeting held on February 19 in Florencia, Caquetá, was in response to an "Early Warning" from the Ombudsman's Office in which it requested to train communities affected by the conflict in the Caquetá, Cauca and Putumayo departments for the prevention of accidents and the protection of their rights.



Photo: Courtesy CCCM / Juan Arredondo

#### UNMAS and Global Compact held a webinar: successful partnerships between companies and mine action organizations

Better access to territories, better relations with communities, and reconstruction of the social fabric are some of the contributions generated by partnerships between private companies and mine action organizations. These are some of the conclusions shared in a recent webinar organized by UNMAS and Global Compact Colombia, in which representatives of the companies Gran Tierra Energy and Grupo Energía Bogotá, highlighted their successful alliances with The HALO Trust and the Colombian Campaign to Ban Landmines, to the implementation of humanitarian demining projects in areas where these companies operate and that present contamination with explosive ordnance.

Watch here the webinar: Territories of Opportunities

Reference photo/ Courtesy ERM UNICEF

## Progress in the tripartite mechanism for the provision of information about explosive ordnance by ex-combatants

The tripartite mechanism, created to promote the provision of information about the location of explosive ordnance installed by the FARC-EP before the signing of the Peace Accord, approved an important technical note. This note forms a methodological basis that will allow the collection of all available information among the ex-combatants of the extinct guerrilla. This mechanism is made up of the Government of Colombia (represented by the OACP), the FARC component and the United Nations. The information collection methodology was developed by UNMAS. Following the approval of the technical note, the members of the mechanism will raise funds to implement a large-scale project and, at the same time, the first information collection activities will begin.



Photo: Regional Coordination Project /UNMAS

## UN officials working in Colombian territories received Explosive Ordnance Risk Education workshop

Fifteen United Nations (UN) officials in Colombia received EORE training to strengthen their knowledge of safe behaviors, taking into account that **these officials carry out work missions in different regions of the country** and some of these areas are contaminated with explosive ordnance. The training was given by the Local Coordinator of Meta to personnel working with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the UN Verification Mission in Colombia. The meeting was held in Villavicencio on February 22 in coordination with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS).

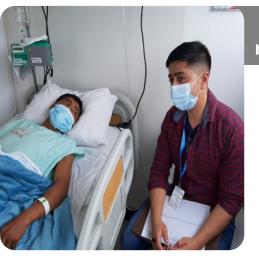


Photo: Mauriciio Morillo / RC Project

## Five new survivors of anti-personnel mines in Nariño received accompaniment during the month of February

Five new survivors of anti-personnel mines received support from the Nariño Local Coordinator in February in order to access the institutional Victim Assistance Referral pathway of the Government of Colombia. These people are among the most recent victims of accidents with explosive ordnance in this department, which already accounts for 12 of the 27 victims registered in Colombia in the first two months of 2021. The work of the Local Coordinator includes the management of emergency humanitarian aid and complementary support with non-governmental organizations that work with the affected population. The UNMAS *Regional Coordination Project* seeks to strengthen the presence of the OACP in the territories affected by explosive ordnance.



Photo: Mauriciio Morillo / RC Project

## Health personnel and indigenous leaders of Nariño are sensitized about anti-personnel mines Victims Assistance

How to respond to an emergency and what is the anti-personnel mines Victims Assistance (VA) referral pathway, were some of the issues on which public officials, health personnel and indigenous leaders from the municipality of Cumbal, Nariño, were sensitized. The Local Coordinator conducted this EORE workshop aimed for delegates from municipality's medical centers, Local Health Director, officials responsible for victims and other functionaries of the municipality. Representatives of the Mayasquer and San Martín Reservations, which are part of the Indigenous People of *Los Pastos*, also participated in the workshop, complying with a request from the Ombudsman's Office. This meeting, held on February 17, was supported by the Regional Government of Nariño.

## The progress of the Humanicemos Project

The <u>Humanicemos Project</u>, implemented by UNMAS to strengthen the capacities of the first mine action organization in the world composed and led by ex-combatants in the reintegration process (<u>HUMANICEMOS DH</u>), made important progress in recent weeks.

With the support of:

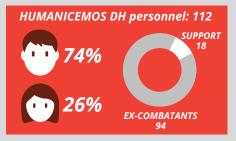


# HUMANICEMOS DH strengthens its capacity to destroy explosive ordnance



10 ex-combatants passed the second course about Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Level 1, a task that aims to destroy explosive ordnance. The trainings were given by UNMAS Colombia personnel at the regional base of La Montañita, Caquetá.

# 29 ex-combatants in the process of reintegration join HUMANICEMOS DH



These new personnel hired on March 3 will begin their training in the coming weeks so that they are certified and can carry out humanitarian demining tasks. This will be the last group of ex-combatants that UNMAS will train.

# Ex-combatants identified their first anti-personnel mine in Caquetá



A week after the start of operations, a Manual Clearance team identified its first antipersonnel mine on March 3 in the community Unión Cordillera of La Montañita, Caquetá, which in turn is a milestone for peace in Colombia.

### The UNMAS Colombia team



Gina Bernal
Associate
Programme Officer

Gina joined the UNMAS Colombia team in August 2018. She has 14 years of experience working with academic and international development organizations such as the European Commission and the UN, in France, Belgium, Morocco, Panama and Colombia. She has specialized in international development projects, strategic partnerships and resource mobilization. Since November 2020, she has led the UNMAS Colombia Programme team, which is in charge of supporting the search for funds, preparing proposals to donors, managing grants, participating in the strategic planning of the programme and preparing reports that show the impact of our activities in the country. In her role at UNMAS, Gina has led humanitarian coordination and advocacy processes with other actors in the sector to contribute to reducing the impact of explosive ordnance in the territories.

## **About UNMAS Colombia**

Since 2010, UNMAS has supported the National Mine Action Center of Colombia, under the direction of the OACP, humanitarian demining, victim assistance and explosive ordnance risk education organizations, to increase the capacity of the mine action sector and strengthen its coordination and regulatory frameworks, considering best global practices. UNMAS works in Colombia with the support of the **European Union**, through the **European Trust Fund for Peace**; and the Governments of **Germany**, **Italy and Republic of Korea**, whom we thank for their contributions in 2021.







































