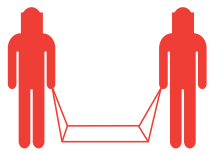




Highlights **DECEMBER 2020**

UNMAS continues to deliver remote safety videos conveying life-saving messages to new rotation of TCC arrivals.

UNMAS continues to implement and comply with all UNISFA measures for mitigating the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure the wellbeing of staff and implementing partner personnel.



11,510 m²
of land assessed by
clearance teams as safe
from explosive hazards



177 km
of routes assessed as
safe from explosive
hazards



3 Anti-tank mines
destroyed



9 Explosive
Remnants of War
destroyed



475
men, women, girls and boys
in Abyei area received
Explosive Ordnance Risk
Education (EORE)



127
UNISFA military
and civilian staff
received safety
training

With the onset of the dry season and commencement of the nomadic pastoralists' migration, the security incidents are known to increase within the Abyei area. The presence of roving militias, criminal gangs and armed civilians are infuriating the normalcy in the region. To control such incidents, the UNISFA peacekeeping troops redeploy to earmarked hotspot locations to enhance regional security at the start of each dry season. Through its activities, UNMAS reduces the threat of explosive ordnances and enables the freedom of movement for UNISFA, the JBVMM, civilians, and humanitarian aid agencies within its area of responsibility. In support of the UNISFA dry season deployment plan, UNMAS teams deploy to earmarked routes and temporary operating bases (TOBs) and conduct survey and clearance activities to ensure the safe redeployment of UN peacekeeping forces.



Each task begins with a threat assessment, for which the teams are required to collect information from various sources about the presence of explosive hazards within the tasking area. Such information is analyzed carefully, and evidence is justified and documented. Once approved, the team then implements the additional clearance methodologies accordingly. To ensure the safety of demining operations, critical confirmation should be in place for any worksite including adequate supervision, medical backup, communication, correct use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and the appropriate marking system. All reasonable efforts are implemented in accordance with international mine action standards.

During the month of December, UNMAS prioritized its activities in support of the dry season deployment plan to ensure safer force mobility of UNISFA personnel, while observing the COVID-19 protocols. The following highlights represent the achievement in December:

- 178 kilometers of patrol routes were assessed and released.
- 37,023 square meters of hazardous areas were cleared to the depth of 13cm, approximately equal to the sizes of five football (soccer) fields.
- 9 x Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) were recovered and destroyed.
- 3 x Anti-Tank mines (TM46) were located and destroyed in Koledit (Noong).

UNMAS operators have also deployed with heavy machinery on the earmarked routes and TOBs and conducted further post-clearance activities in support of UNISFA force mobility:

- 44 kilometers of patrol roads were extended to the width of 8 meters.
- 61,200 square meters of the area within the TOBs were repaired and levelled.
- 101 cubic meters of soils were excavated within the earmarked TOBs.

The UNMAS efforts for keeping the Mission moving and ensuring the safety of its peacekeepers are often commended by UNISFA civilian and military staff. "This year's deployment has been the quickest in UNISFA history, we have managed to complete the dry season deployment plan and get boots on the ground six weeks earlier than anticipated thanks to UNMAS," stated UNISFA Chief of Mission Support Robert Kirkwood. Military officers and peacekeepers often approach UNMAS in the field to express their gratitude for ensuring their safety on the ground. "I appreciate the continuous efforts made by UNMAS to enhance the safety of the UN peacekeepers in the Abyei area. Since the presence of UNMAS, there was no landmine, and Explosive Remnants of War-related incident which occurred in this mission. This is a remarkable achievement, and thanks to UNMAS teams for building this high level of confidence for the peacekeepers. I could see the UNMAS teams are verifying the routes connecting the temporary operating bases and ensuring the safer environment to facilitate the deployment of UNISFA personnel. UNMAS also provides multi-skilled personnel who not only conduct clearance, but also provide an integrated solution for the extension of the earmarked routes and the TOBs to facilitate the troops' safer deployment. I am impressed with the way these activities were integrated to achieve the goal of a safer Abyei," stated UNISFA military staff officer Major Yirgo Gebregergs from the U4 office at UNISFA Force Headquarters in Abyei. Major Yirgo visited UNISFA TOB in Alal while UNMAS conducted clearance operations and subsequently supported UNISFA in preparing the TOB with heavy machinery operators. He was highly impressed by the UNMAS initiatives in support of the UNISFA dry-season deployment. Through its clearance and enhancement of force mobility activities, UNMAS continues to build confidence for the peacekeeping forces and the local population in the Abyei area.

