

# UNMAS IRAQ Insight



Local Mine Action Support Group Meeting in Baghdad, 12 September 2023 (left) / Donor Briefing session in Amman, 24 September 2023 (right)

## Programme Update

As part of the UNMAS Iraq technical support to the Government of Iraq mine action entities, UNMAS Iraq conducted three training sessions for the Government of Iraq (GoI) Ministry of Interior (MoI) during the third quarter of 2023. This included the start of a 13-week Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Level-3 operators course, which continued into the fourth quarter of 2023, a all-women Explosive Hazard First Responders (EHFR) course, and a UAV/Drone course.

UNMAS Iraq has consistently integrated gender mainstreaming into all mine action operations and activities. Subsequently, 32 women were employed by UNMAS Iraq partner organizations in field based roles. As a result of raising the gender mainstreaming awareness among local authorities, a higher number of women participated in technical support training provided by UNMAS Iraq. Two training sessions for seven women officers from the MoI were conducted during the quarter, including UAV/drone and EHFR training courses.

In terms of clearance operations, and as part of UNMAS Iraq capacity development of national operators, the two 'Partnership Grants' continued with DanChurchAid (DCA) partnered with Health and Social Care Organization in Iraq (IHSCO); and the Fondation Suisse de Déminage (FSD) partnered with Shareteah Humanitarian Organisation (SHO). Under the two partnership grants, a total of 283,468 square meters of land was released through technical survey, and 272,712 square meters of land were cleared.

In southern Iraq, clearance operations to clear legacy contamination left by the previous conflict continued in the outskirts of Basra city. UNMAS Iraq implementing partner, Al Khebra Al Fania (AKAF), had been successfully delivering clearance operations since 2021 and completed clearance operations in July 2023 after achieving significant results. During the project period, a total of 2,016,156 square meters was cleared and 13,437 explosive ordnance items were rendered safe and removed.

In September 2023, the second Local Mine Action Support Group (LMASG) meeting was held in Baghdad. The meeting was attended by 15 diplomats from 13 countries, with the presence of the GoI Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) represented through the DMA Director General. DMA presented to the donor community and provided an overview of the current situation, achievements, and priorities of the mine action programme in support of the government. The third LMASG is scheduled for early 2024 in Baghdad.

The same month, UNMAS Iraq also organized a donor briefing session in Amman. Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme (CMAP), presented an overview of UNMAS Iraq's activities and discussed mine action operations in Iraq. A total of eight diplomats representing seven countries were in attendance.

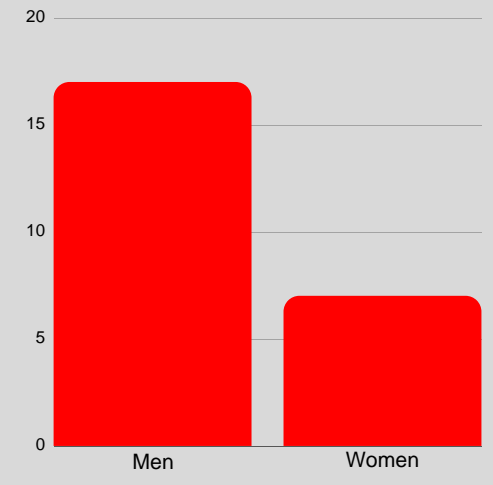
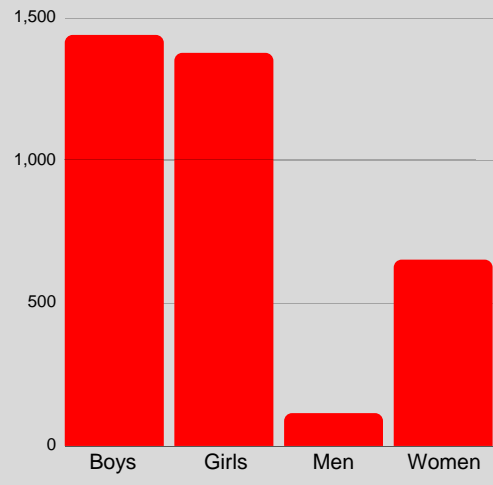
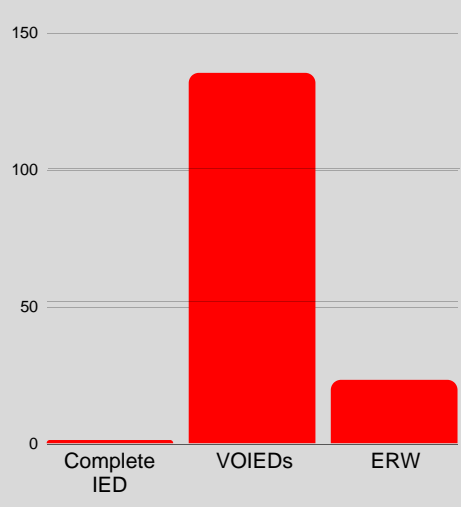
## Achievements

**272,712 sqm cleared**

**160 EO items rendered safe**

**416 direct Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) sessions**

**Two training sessions for the MoI**



## A story from Iraq

The sun was rising over Qarach village. A new day was starting, but this day was special for the residents of Qarach, as their land had finally been freed of explosive ordnance and ready for a new, and safe, season of farming. Qarach is a small village in the southeast of the Makhmur district, known for its countryside lifestyle. The people of Qarach earn their living by farming wheat and barley crops alongside herding livestock.

In 2014, the residents of Qarach village were forced to leave their properties behind and flee to survive from Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) attacks. Later, in 2017, the town was liberated following extensive military operations.

After the conflict had ended, there were many items of explosive ordnance in, and in the surroundings of the village. The majority of civilian casualties after liberation were attributable to explosive ordnance items, including explosive remnants of war. These events were yet another reminder that civilians are the ones suffering the consequences of conflict.

UNMAS Iraq implementing partners, Fondation Suisse de Déminage (FSD), in partnership with Shareteah Humanitarian Organization (SHO), have cleared vast areas from explosive ordnance in Makhmur. The clearance operations have contributed to the safe and dignified returns of those displaced and has enabled resilience initiatives in rebuilding the village and farming the lands.



## Funding

Since the inception of the programme in Iraq, UNMAS Iraq has been solely funded through UN Voluntary Trust Fund contributions.



For more information:

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