

UNMAS Achievements by Outcomes

Case Studies

October 2017

Afghanistan: Mine action saves lives, enables stabilization and development

The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA), the world's largest mine action programme, was established in 1989 to make Afghanistan safe from the threat of mines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW). After the fall of the Taliban in 2002, the Government of Afghanistan entrusted interim responsibility for mine action to the United Nations. In 2008, the Government assigned the Directorate for Mine Action Coordination (DMAC) under the Afghan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) to work collaboratively with UNMAS.

The following snapshots from a 2016/17 (1395) project made possible with a contribution from Japan, illustrates just how important the clearance of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) is for the communities affected by contamination.¹

A resident of Jelawur Village in the Arghandab District of Kandahar Province, discussed the impact of demining on his community. Before demining, he explained, his village could not use the land due to contamination by mines and ERW. After clearance, he reported that the village's main source of income today is from agriculture on the decontaminated land, growing vegetables, wheat, corn, and other crops.



Deminer and Jelawur resident discuss the positive impact of demining on this community

The project increased the security and development capacity of Afghan civilians previously living in close proximity to mine and ERW hazards. All clearance targets were met, releasing over 2.7 million sq. m of land for productive use, directly benefiting over 6,000 people, with the effect extending to numerous indirect beneficiaries.

Outcomes achieved:

- Increased security and development capacity of Afghan civilians previously living in close proximity to mine and ERW hazards;**
- Over 2.7 million sq. m of land for productive use are released, directly benefiting over 6,000 people, with the effect extending to numerous indirect beneficiaries.**

¹ Photos and interviews gathered under this project by the Mine Clearance Planning Agency.

Sudan: New development opportunity following mine action interventions in Sudan Eastern States

Eastern Sudan, consisting of Red Sea, Gedaref and Kassala states, was a ground for coalition of major opposition group 'Eastern Front' during the Second Sudan Civil War that came to an end in 2006. Long-lasting armed conflict left already marginalized part of Sudan with physical destruction and crippled economy. Moreover, landmines and unexploded ordnances left behind the war continued to kill or maim vulnerable populations of the area even after the conflict ended. Moreover, due to access restrictions, they hampered the recovery of the region, limiting productive activities such as farming and grazing as well as building infrastructure for basic services such as school, water well and hospitals. Particularly, Kassala state was most vulnerable due to heaviest contamination as well as large number of refugee influx from neighbouring Eritrea.

Since 2005, UNMAS has mobilized its efforts and resources to help fast recovery of the conflict-ridden Eastern states through survey and clearance. To date, UNMAS supported clearance of 777,132 sqm in Gedaref and 12,783,985 sqm in Red Sea leading to the announcements of Gedaref and Red Sea states free of known landmines in 2016 and 2017 respectively. In Kassala, UNMAS cleared 43,340,468 sqm of contaminated land already, and expects to clear all the remaining hazards by the end of 2017, aiming to announce the entire Eastern Sudan free of known landmine contamination. Intensive work on the ground has catalysed the transition of the region from post-conflict area in need of humanitarian support to stabilized land for development. As a result of mine action in the Eastern states since the 2006 peace agreement, displaced people come back to their villages previously abandoned due to explosive hazards. Populations move now freely and safely without fear, and aid agencies can support the ones in need. Land became available for farming and grazing, supporting livelihood of local population. Roads reopened and now support economic activities, basic infrastructures such as hospitals and schools were built on previously contaminated area enabling better access for basic services to local populations.



A deminer is carefully probing the ground
Photo by Laura Salvinelli

Experience in the East is benchmarked by the government as an example to be replicated in other affected areas in Sudan such as South Kordofan and Blue Nile states.

Outcome achieved:

- **Displaced people returned to their villages previously abandoned due to explosive hazards, and new development opportunities are created following mine action interventions.**

Syria Response: The Value of Risk Education

Risk education (RE) is one of the five pillars of humanitarian mine action. RE is a life-saving activity that helps mitigate the risks and raises awareness of the threat of explosive hazards and provides people with the necessary knowledge to stay out of harm's way. Due to the shifting frontlines of the Syrian conflict, 8.2 million people are now living in communities reporting explosive hazard contamination, a significant increase from 6.3 million in 2016. **UNMAS contributed to UNFPA-led focus group discussions aimed at determining the impact of protection interventions, including the mitigation of explosive hazards risks.** The focus groups revealed a positive behavioural change in the presence of explosive hazards for people and communities that had received RE, in comparison to the communities that had not received any form of RE/risk awareness. This demonstrates the clear impact of mine action interventions to promote safe behaviour among communities at risk and prevent casualties from explosives hazards.



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Girls with UNMAS risk education materials in an IDP camp near



Shepherd receiving UNMAS risk education material in Idlib

With limited access for clearance of explosive hazards and ongoing fighting across the country, these hazards will continue to threaten the lives of men, women, and boys and girls on a daily basis. In this context, risk education delivered through informative, country specific material and awareness sessions by UNMAS Syria Response and the humanitarian partners under its coordination, contribute to making communities safer.

Under one UNMAS-funded project, field teams in Dar'a Governorate met with people like Mohammed, who had no idea about the dangers of explosive remnants of war. *“Before attending the risk education sessions, I used to collect strange objects I found. These objects were new and unknown to me, that is why I was carrying them and taking them home. Before attending that risk education session, I was reckless. After attending the risk education session, I knew that these objects were dangerous. It might explode and kill or leave bodies amputated”.*

Outcome achieved:

- **Promotion on safe behaviour among communities at risk and prevent casualties from explosives hazards. Positive behavioural change has been observed with beneficiaries when encountering explosive hazards.**

Iraq: The High court and the Al Khansa hospital cleared of explosive hazards

High court, West Mosul

Since the liberation of Mosul from Da'esh, UNMAS Iraq has been conducting explosive hazard threat assessment operations in West Mosul. During an assessment of "the High Court" UNMAS identified a large stockpile of explosive items, including unexploded ordnance, aerial-delivered improvised munitions, IEDs and their components, and over forty suicide belts and vests. After clearing the High Court of these threats, people regained access to vital land deeds. Now returning populations can use these land deeds to prove their legal ownership over their properties and homes.



Outcome achieved: Following UNMAS intervention, UNDP was able to rehabilitate the building. The High Court is now functioning, and is a powerful symbol of the return of justice to a city that only weeks earlier had been occupied by ISIL.

Al Khansa hospital, East Mosul

Al Khansa Hospital, one of Mosul's largest hospitals, had been damaged, burnt and looted. IEDs were suspected to be present in parts of the hospital. UNMAS explosive hazard assessment resulted in one IED component and six mortar rounds located and removed. In doing this, UNMAS has enabled UNDP rehabilitation and improved access to healthcare services. It is expected that an estimated 500,000 people will now be able to be served by the hospital, especially for the maternity and paediatric care it provides to the region.



Outcome achieved: Improved access to healthcare services and an estimated 500,000 people will be able to be served by the hospital, especially for the maternity and paediatric care it provides to the region.

Mali: IED threat mitigation response in Mali through predeployment training

At the request of MINUSMA, the Department of Field Support (DFS), and the DPKO, UNMAS developed a project aimed at mitigating the threat caused by IEDs by bridging the gaps in preparedness of the troop-contributing countries (TCCs) operating in this asymmetric environment.

The project designed an innovative approach to build the capacity of TCCs' infantry troops by conducting most of the specialized training in their home countries before deployment in order to minimize the training requirements once in Mali. This was achieved through the design and delivery of a comprehensive training package in IED threat mitigation tailored to the TTC's needs as well as through the provision of specialized equipment, hands-on training and mentoring of the troops once deployed in Mali. Furthermore, sustainability of the action is enhanced by providing training of national trainers on the IED awareness course.



Certified trainers from Burkina Faso delivering training on IED threat mitigation measures. Photo credit: UNMAS

In less than three years, over 14,000 troops have benefited from the IED threat mitigation training package, which includes IED awareness, training on the search and detection of IEDs, and emergency first aid. In order to gradually increase the capacity and preparedness of the TCCs, the project has built and trained a pool of more than 258 national instructors on IED threat mitigation while providing specialized equipment - such as metal detectors, detectors with ground-penetrating technology, mine-protected and recovery vehicles - and technical advice.

Building on the successes and lessons learned during the initial phase of this project, the predeployment training approach is now also being applied to the training of MINUSMA's Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams including components for the training of national trainers. Although the predeployment project requires extensive coordination of a broad range of actors, and ownership of IED mitigation measures is necessary by TCCs, the project has been successful. TCCs and mission leadership are increasingly acknowledging that the predeployment approach is a powerful and integral part of IED threat mitigation measures enabling MINUSMA operations.

Outcomes achieved:

- **MINUSMA has the capability to gather information on 100 per cent of accessible IED incidents. Despite nearly double the number of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) since 2013, MINUSMA casualty rates have not followed suit, with currently a 45% decrease in the number of MINUSMA casualties between January and September 2017, compared to the same period in 2016.**
- **MINUSMA victims of a typical roadside IED placed in its path have been reduced by one half since 2014. These roadside devices are three times less likely to kill a MINUSMA soldier than in 2014.**

Palestine

Reconstruction workers were unable to safely clear the collapsed remains of the three-story property belonging to Mr. Ibrahim Mafouz Al Farra (see pictures below), leaving the three families who had lived there internally displaced. UNMAS determined that multiple bombs had landed on the property; after weeks of careful rubble removal an UNMAS EOD Technician working on the site reached the rear of an unexploded 227 Kg aerial bomb, 11 vertical metres underground. He found the fuse unit “armed” and solidly jammed in the body of the bomb, due to its deformation upon impact. Following the clearance of this bomb and another bomb found at the same location, the rubble removal could be completed and Mr. Al Farra and his neighbours were able to begin rebuilding their homes.



Site of Mr. Ibrahim Mafouz Al Farra's property being surveyed by UNMAS EOD experts. Photo credit: UNMAS

This dangerous and necessary work led the Secretary-General to honour UNMAS Gaza bomb disposal experts with the SG Courage Award in November 2016.

Since the 2014 conflict in Gaza, UNMAS has cleared 149 aerial bombs and destroyed 29 tonnes of contained explosive materials, enabling hundreds of families like that of Mr. Al Farra rebuild their homes.

Outcome achieved: Thousands of families have been able to safely rebuild their homes after the clearance of explosive hazards in Khan Younis, Gaza.

Somalia: Impact of mine action activities in Southern Somalia

Communities in rural Somalia live in constant fear, in the midst of danger that results from a range of explosive hazards scattered in the country following years of successive conflicts and continued insurgency. Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) limit livelihoods opportunities, blocking access to resources and infrastructure and hampering progress. Basic routine matters like walking to school, fetching water or firewood or herding cattle can be dangerous especially for curious children who are tempted to play with suspicious objects.

With a view to mitigate the threat of such explosive hazards, UNMAS carries out village assessments, mine clearance and mine risk education activities, also by employing local Somalis as Community Liaison Officers or part of the Multi-Tasking Teams (MTT).

Striving to improve food security and diversify livelihoods options for the local communities in Qooqane in Southern Somalia, UNMAS cleared and released land, which was subsequently used for irrigation for inlands farms. In addition, UNMAS trained community members in Basic Life Support Skills, providing long-term skills for men and women working as medics to treat major trauma injuries from minefield accidents or other common ailments.



Woman attending medic training to support deminers



Excavated explosive hazards ready

During focussed group discussions in September 2017 with the local population, the latter reported a change in attitude once the demining has been completed.

Moreover, by employing local community members, UNMAS² reduced likelihood for young men to engage in negative vices including recruitment into militias or violent extremism.

UNMAS also observed that, following risk education and sensitization, community members are voluntarily handing-over explosive hazards to the demining teams in many locations.

Traditionally, Somalis harvest explosive hazards and use them for various activities like digging water wells or query mining and are quite reluctant to report and hand them over.

Outcomes achieved:

- **Improved food security and diversify livelihoods options for the local communities in Qooqane in Southern Somalia;**
- **Men and women gained skills to work as medics to treat major trauma injuries from minefield accidents or other common ailments.**

² In total, UNMAS created much-needed employment opportunities for over 300 people in various capacities across Somalia. In recent surveys, about 89% of local mine action employees reported that their salaries enabled them to have dietary diversity. Over 79% reported that their income from mine action represented their primary source of household income.

Lebanon: MRE in Lebanon

At a football match involving participants from the Lebanese Welfare Association for the Handicapped (LWAH), UNMAS Lebanon Programme Manager, Henri-Francois Morand explains, “*the UNIFIL Area of Operations [in South Lebanon] is contaminated with explosive remnants of war, cluster bombs and mines. Therefore, we need to create a safer environment for the local population. You see many children around today; we need to raise their awareness by speaking about this threat. Today, we bring them to the football pitch where people enjoy playing sports with those who have been injured by mines. This shows them that first of all, you need to be aware, but at the same time, you need to be strong in your life.*” A legacy of conflict in Lebanon has resulted in landmine and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination, which continues to endanger the lives of local populations along with UN and NGO personnel throughout the country.

In response to this threat, UNMAS Lebanon has begun to expand the scope of its MRE interventions by working in partnership with the Lebanon Mine Action Center (LMAC) and the UNIFIL Military and Civilian Components in order to teach local populations about the dangers of landmines and other ERW, and on how to stay safe in such environments. By drawing on the skills and expertise of the LMAC and its implementing partners, along with various sections at UNIFIL including Civil Affairs, Combat Engineers and CIMIC, UNMAS Lebanon is better able to create a greater impact and reach more beneficiaries. MRE interventions, which often include a series of interactive games, presentations and demining demonstrations, also comprise a core aspect of UNIFIL’s mandate, “Protection of Civilians”.



Due in large part to the strong collaboration between UNMAS Lebanon, the LMAC and UNIFIL, over 1,500 children have benefitted from MRE interventions in 2017 alone. However, these efforts must continue. UNMAS Lebanon will therefore continue to support the LMAC, forge partnerships with mine action stakeholders, and identify innovative approaches to serving the people of Lebanon through MRE initiatives. While participating at an MRE event at a local primary school earlier this year, UNIFIL

Sector West Commander, Brigadier General Francesco Olla remarked, “*This is an important activity we have to perform as peacekeepers, to provide the right information and support to the local population.... We are very proud of what we have done and hope to [continue] to do the same with the cooperation of UNMAS and the LMAC.*”

Outcomes achieved:

- **Over 1,500 children have benefitted from MRE interventions in 2017;**
- **Increased awareness and preparedness of the local populations on the dangers of landmines and other ERW.**

Libya: Gender-based Small Arms and Light Weapons Awareness Raising for Safer and More Resilient Communities

UNMAS Libya launched Phase 1 of the project in 2015, engaging a group of 12 female members of civil society from different areas of Libya. Between 2015 and 2016, the group was engaged in three educational workshops, receiving training in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) risk and control measures in Tunis and Geneva from UNMAS Libya, UNIDIR, Small Arms Survey as well as guest lecturers.

Participants were empowered to become agents of change in their communities by developing their skills to deliver SALW risk education with different methods, ranging from one-on-one sessions to classroom presentations. With support from subject matter experts, the 12 trainees jointly developed risk awareness messages suitable to the Libyan context, which they have been enabled to share in their home communities.



During Phase 1, participants collected data on SALW-related risks and behaviours from 112 individuals in their communities. This information guided the development of Libyan messages on SALW safe handling and storage practices, which participants created and disseminated on a voluntary basis. UNMAS Libya continues to monitor participants' activities, which as of June 2017 directly reached over 800 individuals and an estimated 2000 listeners via radio.

Phase 2 of the project (ongoing) led to the development of risk education brochures, posters and billboards based on participants' inputs. Such context-sensitive material will be distributed in Libya to support the continuation of SALW risk education activities. Moreover, it will increase the visibility of a national SALW awareness day, which participants decided to organize on 16 December 2017 through several coordinated regional events. UNMAS Libya is seeking high-level endorsements for the initiative among Libyan authorities and the international community.

Notable outcomes, in addition to transferring knowledge about SALW-related risks and best practices, include trainees reporting overcoming resistance of local authorities towards their role, and eventually receiving invitations by the same local authorities to deliver risk education sessions in public fora.

Outcomes achieved:

- **Women from across Libya empowered to make their communities safer and more resilient by educating family and community members of both sexes on the dangers of SALW and safe SALW practices;**
- **Strengthened the voice of women in the community and to overcome resistance from local authorities who, after initial resistance, have invited women to deliver risk education in public;**
- **Libyan risk education messaging, brochures, posters and billboards on SALW safe handling and storage practices, developed.**

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC): Starting a new school year in safety: Raising children's awareness on the risks posed by mines and explosive remnants of war in the Kasai region

Since the beginning of the conflict in the Kasai region opposing the DRC Armed Forces (FARDC) and Kamuina Nsapu (KN) militia, an estimated 400 schools and 170 health centres were hit by items of explosive ordnance.

Because the majority of Explosive Remnants of war (ERW) victims are children (82% since 2015), UNICEF requested UNMAS and the National Mine Action Center's (CCLAM) support in conducting an assessment of the suspected contaminated schools and raise awareness on the dangers posed by mines/ERW before the beginning of the school year through mine risk education trainings.



Staff members of MDK and MDI after receiving the risk education training delivered by UNMAS/CCLAM

In August 2017, UNMAS in collaboration with CCLAM trained 111 members (24 women and 87 men) from the Child Protection Working Group, the Education Cluster as well as two national NGOs (MDI and MDK) in Mbuji-Mayi and Kananga with a view to raising awareness on the dangers posed by mines/ERW, promoting a safer behaviour and mitigating the risks of accidents.

They now have the capacity to sensitize the communities in their areas of responsibility and ensure that children have the tools and knowledge to identify potential safety threats on their way to or at school. This initiative complements and strengthens other activities already implemented in the region such as the broadcast of risk education radio messages as well as the distribution of leaflets to affected communities.

Outcome achieved: UNMAS training has improved the capacity of the Child Protection Working Group, the Education Cluster as well as two national NGOs to sensitize the communities in their areas of responsibility and ensure that children have the tools and knowledge to identify potential safety threats on their way to or at school.

South Sudan: Farmers return to cultivate their land in South Sudan

Rajaf is an area situated some 20 kilometres south of Juba, the capital of South Sudan. Conflicts across the country have led to heavy contamination of landmines and unexploded ordnance since the early 1990s and the communities living there have been unable to use this fertile land without taking high risks of being injured or killed by explosive hazards. Hendrick Barea recalls when in 2000, he was so desperate to farm his land in order to feed himself he would use his machete to remove what he thought may have been landmines and threw them into the nearby river.

Mine action operators have been present in Rajaf since 2006. Operations are still ongoing and so far 178 antipersonnel mines, 7 anti-tank mines and 3,778 unexploded ordnance have been removed from the ground and a total of over 4 million square metres of land released. As well as clearance operations, UNMAS ensures that the population is aware of the risks posed by explosive hazards. Communities are taught about the presence of landmines and unexploded ordnance in their respective areas and how to report their presence should they find any. Since 2006, over 34,000 people in Rajaf have benefited from Risk Education sessions. The combination of clearance operations and risk education has contributed to the reduction of accidents in the area. Since 2012, the year when most landmines and UXOs were found and destroyed, only one victim of an accident was recorded.



Once the land has been released and handed back to the communities, other organisations are moving in to support the farmers. FAO already provided seeds, while NGOs provided packages to help restart cultivating the land. The farmers are now growing crops such as tomatoes, cucumber, watermelon, carrot and cabbage and sell them in the local markets in Juba. Some of them are even exploring opportunities to export their production abroad.

Outcomes achieved:

- Humanitarian partners activities are enabled and the preconditions for development activities are created.**

Western Sahara: Landmine/ERW Victim Assistance through socio-economic reintegration projects: Meet Maghlaha Mohamed

Maghlaha, born in 1986, was playing with her friends in Tifariti on the eastern side of the berm in the Territory of Western Sahara, when she was hit by fragmentations of a bomb explosion.

The injuries she sustained led to a semi-paralysis, confining her to a wheelchair. Maghlaha is unmarried, and a member of a family of eight living in the Laayoune Refugee Camp.

UNMAS, together with its local partner, the Sahrawi Association for Mine Victims (ASAVIM), visited Maghlaha in September 2017 to check on her and the flock of sheep she had received in April 2017 as part of an income generating, self-sustainable, socio-economic reintegration livestock project for survivors of landmine/ERW related incidents.

This initiative enabled Maghlaha to care for and raise her flock, located right around her house for easy access with her wheelchair. She has been able to witness the growth of her flock with the recent birth of her two lambs, increasing her flock from seven to nine. Moreover, Maghlaha and her family have been able to consume and sell the dairy products produced by her flock. On monthly basis, Maghlaha receives food and water rations for her flock, as well as veterinary visits to check on the overall health of the flock by providing vaccinations, medical advice and guidance related to the livestock well-being.

In the future, with the growth of her flock, Maghlaha may opt to sell individual sheep or their products at the local market in order to generate an income for herself and her family.

With funding from the **Government of Spain**, this project enables the purchase and distribution of livestock to 11 survivors of landmine/ERW related incidents, directly benefiting them and their 104 family members. Each of the 11 selected survivors received six to nine heads of sheep, together with the necessary information and support to care for and grow their flock. Like Maghlaha, they will eventually be able to sell their dairy products or the sheep themselves for income generation.

Outcome achieved: Livelihood of survivors of landmine/ERW related incidents are increased through the purchase and distribution of livestock, directly benefiting them and their family members.



Photo Credit: UNMAS - Maghlaha Mohamed, Laayoune Refugee Camp, February 2017

Abyei / United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA): Weapons and ammunition Management (WAM) capacity building to Ethiopian Troops

Following a pilot training programme completed in June 2017, in the week of 20-24 August UNMAS held its first ever Weapons and Ammunition Management (WAM) training in Abyei. Nineteen (19) participants, comprising twelve Ethiopian Light Field Engineers and seven UNISFA staff officers successfully completed the training programme. UNMAS had two main objectives: 1) Developing the capacity of Ethiopian troops to plan, safely manage and operationally conduct Weapons and Ammunition Management activities according to international standards and UNISFA mandate; and 2) Establishing training capacity of the Ethiopian troops to conduct WAM training for their members independently (train the trainers).

To curb armed violence within the Abyei Area by controlling the circulation of illicit arms, Security Council Resolution 2205 (2015) mandated the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) to confiscate and destroy weapons found within the Abyei Area. Ethiopian troops are the points of first contact to retrieve these weapons and hand them over to UNMAS for safe storage and destruction.



UNMAS was the lead of the multi-disciplinary team set up by UNISFA in 2015 to implement SC resolution 2205. In addition to designing and equipping the WAM facility established at Dukra, a short distance away from the UNISFA HQ in Abyei, UNMAS has created a mission specific WAM Manual and Standard Operating Procedures according to international standards.

The continued confiscation of illegally owned weapons and surges in movements of armed individuals have been some of the threats and challenges faced by UNISFA, humanitarian actors and communities in the Abyei Administrative Area (AAA). As communities settle in and the joint market develops into a tool for economic development and peaceful coexistence, the misuse of small arms and light weapons has become a grave concern, which hinders the safe return of displaced people as well as peaceful migration of nomads and their cattle.

To enhance the capacity of UNISFA in responding to these challenges, the UNMAS WAM training was conceptualized and endorsed by the UNISFA Force Commander and UNMAS Abyei Management. Participants deemed the course extremely useful and commended the right combination of theoretical and practical methodologies. During the training, participants destroyed 12 weapons, 108 rounds of ammunition and 13 magazines and they are now able to independently conduct destructions of confiscated weapons and ammunition, during their service with UNISFA and at any future deployment.

Outcome achieved: The participants of the WAM training programme are now able to independently conduct destructions of confiscated weapons and ammunition, during their service with UNISFA and at any future deployment.

Central African Republic (CAR): The Value of Risk Education

In the Central African Republic, UNMAS implements a risk education campaign on the dangers of explosive hazards and Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). Large quantities of weapons, ammunition, Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and Small Arms Ammunition (SAA), as well as other Unexploded Ordnance (UXO), have reportedly been dispersed to civilians as well as abandoned throughout the country. RE is a life-saving activity that helps mitigate the risks and raises awareness of the threat of explosive hazards and provides people with the necessary knowledge to stay out of harm's way.

Across the country, UNMAS, through its implementing partner, deploys teams to engage with communities on the issue of contamination of ERW and SALW while implementing learning activities around the theme of risk education. Mine action partners conduct focus groups discussions and interviews with individuals at risk who have witnessed the conflict. An impact assessment has proven that beneficiaries' knowledge of ERW and SALW have improved and retained for a long period after benefitting from awareness sessions. The completion of Knowledge, Attitude and Practices surveys have demonstrated that the knowledge of beneficiaries receiving risk education has increased from 53% to 92% on the risks posed by ERW/SALW. Such proves a positive change in behaviour within beneficiary communities who can encounter hazards.



Risk education session in Assana school - Bangui

Frederick, a moto-taxi driver from Kaga Bandoro, has participated in a campaign where vests with risk education messages were distributed by UNMAS implementing partner, DanChurcAid (DCA), to moto-taxi drivers across town, raising awareness among both drivers and riders: *“The entire population has appreciated [the distribution of security vests to the motorcycle-taxi drivers], as this strategy will allow for the community to make a difference between the real and fake motorcycle-taxi drivers, ensuring the security of the population”.*

In Bangui, Narcisse is the chief of the Yongoro area in the 7th district, where risk education messages were offered to schools, orphanages and IDP camps in other districts by UNMAS implementing partner, DCA: *“I wish to thank the DCA team on behalf of the population. My population and I are very pleased with the sensitization, I think the messages are very interesting for the people of Yongoro. The area is one of the closest from Camp Kassai and still exposed to ERW. Recently, there were three cases of depollution of ERW by the UNMAS team. For all this, I ask DCA to go on with the sensitization for all the population in Yongoro, so that the community is aware of the risks linked with ERW.”*

So far, a total of 16,734 risk education sessions were conducted, reaching 538,292 beneficiaries in ten towns. All risk education activities contribute to create a safer environment in CAR.

Outcome achieved: A total of 16,734 risk education sessions were conducted, reaching 538,292 beneficiaries in ten towns. Surveys of beneficiaries have demonstrated that the knowledge of beneficiaries receiving risk education has increased from 53% to 92% on the risks posed by ERW/SALW.

Cyprus: UNMAS Collaboration with the Committee on Missing Persons

“The issue of missing persons is one of the most painful chapters in the history of Cyprus. Healing this open wound at the earliest is important in terms of easing the pain of the missing persons’ relatives.”

Since its inception in 1981, the bi-communal Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) has worked tirelessly to fulfil its mandate to recover, identify, and return to their families, the remains of an agreed list of persons who went missing during inter-communal fighting from 1963 to 1964 and the events of 1974. The work of the CMP is recognised as an important confidence building measure and contributes to the vital process of reconciliation between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.



In 2016-17, UNMAS has forged a strong partnership with the CMP and provides technical advice, training, and field support to its teams to help ensure they are able to implement their activities safely and efficiently. In this regard, UNMAS provides information and analysis regarding potential threats from explosive weapons in areas the CMP undertakes activities; conducts explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) to remove hazards at CMP sites; assists with non-explosive ordnance related surveys to refine search areas at burial sites to expedite operations; and provides training to CMP staff on the use of metal detection equipment to increase efficiency during field operations.

“As time goes by, the prospects of finding the missing persons is becoming more and more difficult.”



The work of the CMP has become increasingly more urgent with the passage of time and the advanced age of relatives and witnesses. The leaders of the two communities have noted that it is critical for resources and information to be made available to assist the CMP and the Security Council has highlighted the need to intensify its work. UNMAS support and expertise is helping respond to these urgent needs. In 2016-17, UNMAS, working as part of the United Nations

Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, assisted the CMP teams at burial sites in Galateia/Mehmetçik, Aya Irini/Akdeniz, and Beikioi/Beyköy to expedite the teams’ work and help ensure their safety. UNMAS and its implementing partner, Mines Advisory Group, have already scheduled further assistance to the CMP including survey and EOD support (as needed) at a planned excavation site, as well as additional training of staff. The UNMAS-CMP partnership has created a positive model that is helping promote essential reconciliation and confidence building activities for communities. The partnership is also a positive example of UNMAS’ diversity and mine action’s lasting contribution to helping promote peace in Cyprus.

Outcome achieved: Through the provisions of technical advice, training, and field support to the CMP, UNMAS contributed to the implementation of an important confidence building measure in Cyprus.

Darfur Ordnance Disposal Office (ODO): The First Locality Declared Free of Known Explosive Remnants of War (ERW)

On April 24, 2017, in Foro Baranga locality (district) in West Darfur State, a celebration was held to mark a rare sign of peace in Darfur when the locality was declared free of known ERW. This was the first locality to achieve this distinction and the significance was heightened by a presidential directive for all sixty-four localities in Darfur to be confirmed free of ERW. The achievement was the result of the coordinated work of the UNMAS ODO



programme, the National Mine Action Centre of Sudan (NMAC), UNAMID and the people of Foro Baranga. For ODO, the verification of known ERW free status was carried out through a pilot survey of communities in accordance with international procedures and standards for general hazard assessment and clearance. The experience in this first locality is being used in planning a region-wide project to undertake similar surveys and clearances in other localities especially where there has been little or no conflict in recent years or current conditions point towards low risk of further contamination.

UNMAS has been operating in Darfur since 2004. In the past thirteen years, over **35,435** of ERW have been located and safely destroyed across Darfur. Landmines have not been used in the conflict and are not an element in ODO's clearance operations. The safe disposal of the unexploded ordnance (UXO) has freed up land for agricultural use and allowed for the safe delivery of humanitarian aid. Access to some areas suspected to be contaminated by ERW has posed a significant challenge towards a complete survey, marking and clearance of UXO contamination. In the last three years, however, there has been a decrease in armed conflict in some areas of Darfur. The peace mediation efforts led by UNAMID have also resulted in a reduction of inter-communal violence among some warring tribes in Darfur. It has been reported that some localities of Darfur have not witnessed any armed hostilities in the past four years and no known ERW accidents have been reported in these localities.

While ODO focuses on UNAMID's Protection of Civilians priorities for the urgent survey and clearance of reported ERW which present an imminent risk in areas such as Jebel Marra and communities where IDPs are returning, there is a need for supplementary funding to support the aim of a Darfur free of ERW by surveying and clearing localities on a systematic basis, especially where conflict has been assessed as unlikely to resume. For the people of localities such as Foro Baranga, real peace is not realized until the consequences and risks of war - such as ERW - are finally and permanently removed from their communities.

Outcome achieved: Population can move freely and conduct livelihood activities without the danger of explosive hazards.