



**NEEDS  
DRIVEN.  
PEOPLE  
CENTRED.**

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**October 2018**

**IRAQ**

# Programme Highlights

## The Armenian Church in Mosul



Photo: The Armenian Church post-liberation from Da'esh, bearing a pile of rubble and debris (© UNMAS)

Under the acrimonious rule of the militant organization widely known as Da'esh, no religious, cultural, or historical icons were safe from harm.

Completed in 1857, the Armenian church in Mosul served, for more than a century, as a bastion for beleaguered Armenian Christians fleeing political persecution and violence. A year after the establishment of Da'esh's self-declared quasi-state, the church was deliberately attacked by the terrorist group as a political statement.

Throughout the Da'esh occupation, the church site was used as a prison, with its access blocked by rubble. As such, the church itself weathered the conflict better than the rest of the neighborhood, with the foundation of its infrastructure remaining mostly intact. However, the area was still deemed as "high threat" due to the fact that numerous

explosive hazards were reported during the initial inspection of the area. Mechanical assets were used to remove debris in some area, which was then distributed in a marked area and searched manually to check for explosive hazards.

UNMAS, through its implementing partner, completed the clearance of the church in September 2018. Now that the area has been deemed safe, the church is ready for rehabilitation.

## Risk Education Saves Lives

During a routine risk education (RE) session, UNMAS implementing partner, the Danish Demining Group (DDG), met Hussein. Originally hailing from the area of Felfel, Hussein is currently living alongside his family in Talkif.

This was Hussein's second time attending an RE session. His first time had been when he was still living in Felfel, and he credited that the first session may have saved the lives of his loved ones later on.

Hussein claims that after leaving Felfel, he, together with his cousins, joined the herd of sheep as they grazed from the land. In the distance, they saw an unidentified metal object shining underneath the sun. According to him, due to the RE session he attended in Felfel, he was able to recognize it as an unexploded ordnance, and convinced his cousins to avoid venturing near the area. Collectively, they went back to their families, informing their parents about the suspicious metal object, who were then able to contact the relevant authorities.



Photo: Hussein sharing his story (© DDG)

That particular area has now been cleared, saving the lives of individuals and wildlife.



UNMAS has \$55M in secured and pledged funds in 2018 and **is seeking an additional \$161M** to support survey and clearance, risk education, capacity enhancement of the Government as well as the Recovery and Resilience Programme and Humanitarian Response Plan. UNMAS Iraq mainstreams gender in Mine Action projects.



**Thank you to all our donors for their generous support.**

## Screening of 'The Deminer'



Photo: Screening of 'The Deminer' in Erbil (©UNMAS)

UNMAS, in collaboration with the French Consulate, organized a screening of "The Deminer" in Erbil to raise awareness of the extensive and complex contamination from explosive hazards in Iraq, as well as the dangers these items pose to human lives and their negative impact on stability and development.

This screening was also an occasion to learn more about the story of Fakhir, a well-known person who served in the Iraqi army and Kurdish Peshmerga and who disarmed thousands of explosive hazards.

The French General Consulate, as well as representatives from the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA), HAMAP-Humanitaire, and UNMAS shared a few words with the audience. At the end of the screening, all participants were given a chance to ask questions to the speakers. Approximately 100 people participated and expressed their interest in this issue. The French Consulate as well as IKMAA will be duplicating this initiative in the coming months.

# Mine Action Achievements



**Clearance**



**Survey**



**Risk Education**

## UNMAS and Partner Achievements in October

14,274 m<sup>2</sup> of high priority areas surveyed, 37,869 m<sup>2</sup> cleared, and 94 explosive hazard items removed.

7 assessments and surveys completed in support of stabilization and humanitarian efforts.

3,056 risk education sessions delivered to 55,223 beneficiaries of which 20% were females and 60% were children.

## Overall Mine Action sector since January 2016\*

365 km<sup>2</sup> surveyed, 145 km<sup>2</sup> cleared and 149,933 hazardous items removed.

Risk education sessions delivered to 1,439,870 beneficiaries from at-risk communities.



\*Figures for the Mine Action sector are provided by the Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) and the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA). Statistics obtained from the Government databases might not fully reflect the up-to-date numbers as reports are submitted on a rolling basis. For these reasons, the figures reported have to be considered as the absolute minimum and only reflect the achievements of humanitarian actors (not the Iraqi Security Forces)



Established in 1997, the **United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)** works to eliminate the threat posed by mines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices by coordinating United Nations mine action, leading operational responses at the country level, and supporting the development of standards, policies and norms. As a specialized service of the United Nations located within the Department of Peace Operations, UNMAS operates under UN legislative mandates of both the General Assembly and the Security Council. UNMAS also responds to specific requests for support from the UN Secretary-General or designated official. UN Security Council Resolution 2365 (2017) the first stand-alone text on mine action, "Expresses grave concern over the threat that landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices pose to civilians, refugees returning to their homes, ...and stresses the need to undertake appropriate measures to mitigate this danger effectively."