



Australia Provides Additional Funding to Support UNMAS New Partnership Model and Gender Mainstreaming Activities in Iraq

Baghdad, 21 June 2021 – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq welcomes an additional contribution of AUD 3,000,000 million (approximately USD 2,295,333 million) from the Government of Australia to further enable stabilization and humanitarian efforts through mine action in retaken areas of Iraq. This brings the current five-year contribution from Australia to a total of AUD 21 million (approximately USD 11,574,143 million).

More than three years after the Government of Iraq declared victory over the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), their presence continues to linger – particularly through the thousands of explosive ordnance left behind in the wake of their loss. These explosive devices were intended to heavily injure, maim, and kill civilians as a way of destabilizing the country.

In this regard, UNMAS has adapted its strategy to ensure optimum and sustainable support to the Government of Iraq, particularly through the focus of its assistance to sustainable national capacity inclusive of national authorities and national operators. As part of this strategy, UNMAS rolled out a new partnership model bringing together international mine action organizations with local NGOs, paving the way for national ownership and localization of the mine action response in Iraq.

In addition, UNMAS is also advocating for gender mainstreaming and equal opportunity across all its activities and within the overall mine action sector in Iraq. This means that UNMAS encourages the hiring and training of capable women and men from impacted communities to deliver explosive hazard management and explosive ordnance risk education and through this providing critical livelihood opportunities to vulnerable communities.

“Explosive ordnance and remnants of war pose ongoing protection risks to Iraqi communities and hamper the conflict recovery efforts” said Ms Paula Ganly, the Australian Ambassador to Iraq. *“Australia is pleased to continue our long-standing partnership with UNMAS in supporting the national authorities and their important efforts in helping conflict-affected communities recover and build resilience in a safe and stable environment.”*

“Ever since UNMAS commenced its activities in Iraq, Australia has remained a steadfast supporter of mine action, playing a pivotal role in the continuation of this life-saving work in-country. This work not only enables rehabilitation and reconstruction activities, but also provides employment opportunities for vulnerable communities, thereby contributing to the reinvigoration of the local economy as well as saving lives in the process.” said Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Senior Programme Manager in Iraq.

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