



The European Union Provides an Additional USD Eight Million for UNMAS Activities in Iraq

Baghdad, 30 July 2021 – The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Iraq welcomes an additional contribution of EUR 7,000,000 (approximately USD 8,059,000) from the European Union (EU), which will support the Government of Iraq in protecting vulnerable civilians from the threat posed by explosive ordnance left behind by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Implementation of the project has already commenced, and is scheduled to last until mid-2022.

As part of the project initiation, UNMAS recently hosted a project launch meeting and the first steering committee meeting chaired by the Directorate of Mine Action (DMA) and the EU. The annual work plan was discussed, along with challenges, opportunities and the sustainability of the project activities.

Legacy mines and explosive remnants of war are currently threatening the lives of communities in southern Iraq and the EU is the first donor providing UNMAS with a financial contribution in support of clearance of explosive ordnance in the area. The project will pave the way for much-needed development through increased agricultural activities and housing development. The clearance will also enable tourism activities and reinvigorate the economy of Basra.

The contribution will further support clearance and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) efforts in the retaken areas and thereby enabling the safe return of internally displaced persons as well as reconstruction efforts. Furthermore, the contribution will assist UNMAS in supporting a nationally led and implemented response. Building on existing capacities, UNMAS provides training and technical advice to the Government of Iraq and its various ministries, mine action authorities and other stakeholders to support the effective management, regulation and coordination of the explosive ordnance response.

EU Head of Delegation, Ambassador Martin Huth, said, *“The EU has been a steadfast supporter of Iraq’s demining efforts for many years. This additional support illustrates our continued commitment to address the problem of explosive ordnance in Iraq and to thereby enable economic development. At the same time, I would like to stress that demining efforts must ultimately be led by the Government of Iraq. I am therefore pleased that UNMAS will work closely with Government authorities in order to institutionalise a nationally-led approach to demining which is urgently needed in Iraq.”*

Mr. Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Iraq Senior Programme Manager, added: *“As the impact of the coronavirus pandemic continues to reverberate across the country, the additional support from the EU will also provide much-needed economic relief to struggling communities by providing*

access to lands previously contaminated by explosive ordnance that can be utilized for farming, grazing of cattle and other livelihood activities.”

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