

Building ‘New’ Basra City: Mine Action as Enabler

Shatt Al-Arab district is located to east of the Basra city. It is situated along the Shatt Al-Arab river, where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers meet and flow into the Gulf. This district is known for its fertile agricultural lands and historical significance. This area has long been a cornerstone of Iraq's cultural and economic identity.

Tragically, Shatt Al-Arab area became a battlefield during the Iraq-Iran War which lasted for eight devastating years. The war left behind a damaged lands contaminated with ERW and legacy mines.

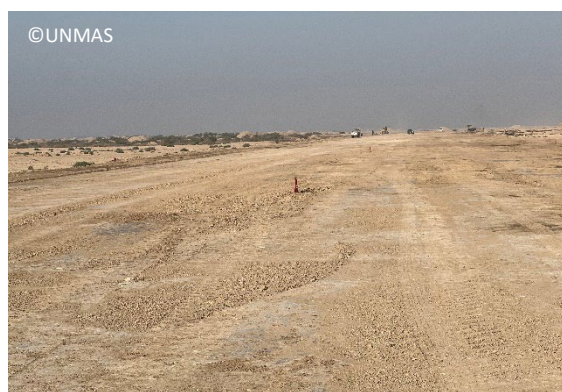
Yet, life continued, UNMAS Iraq in collaboration with the DMA, the Government of Iraq National Mine Action Authority accepted the challenge of addressing these long-standing hazards and implemented the humanitarian mine action response in this area between 2022 and 2023.

Substantial mine action operations including explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) activities were carried out by Al-Khebra Al-Faniya (AKAF), UNMAS Iraq national implementing partner, in Basra. The EORE shares essential messages to the communities on the EO threats and demonstrate the safe practices and behavior in the occasion of encountering any explosive threat.



Meeting with the workers of the highway construction company, Shatt Al-Arab district, Basra, December 2024

“Shatt Al-Arab district is known as the New Basra these days! Yes, we are delighted to share that the area cleared by UNMAS Iraq is now a site of significant development, a new highway is under construction to connect two major parts of Basra all the way to the port. Additionally, the clearance operations encouraged the construction of new infrastructure including housing projects around the area of Shatt Al-Arab” said Mr. Nibras Fakhir, the Head of the DMA Regional Mine Action Centre (RMAC) South.



Highway under construction, Shatt Al-Arab district, Basra, December 2024

Despite all the cheerful news and all the construction activities in the area, large areas in Basra governorate is still affected by landmines and ERW, posing ongoing risks to civilians and hindering rehabilitation efforts.

Shatt Al-Arab's story highlights the pivotal role of mine action in restoring communities and fostering growth. With continued efforts, this district is transforming from a symbol of conflict into one of hope and renewal.