

## **Improvised Explosive Devices Threat Mitigation: Looking Back to Move Forward**

### **Side Event at the CCW Sixth Review Conference**

**16 December 2021**

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#### **Political, technical, and financial support provided by States Parties to the UN IED threat mitigation approach and to the UN Mine Action Strategy**

Thank you Christelle and allow me to thank UNMAS for the invitation to participate in this event. We are very pleased to be here today with a double hat, as Pascal mentioned before, one as part of the Colombian delegation to this Sixth Review Conference and other as co-Coordinator of the IED discussions under the Group of Experts of the Amended Protocol II to CCW.

With that in mind, I would like to divide my statement on a brief reflection of the importance of the multilateral efforts to mitigate the threat of the Improvised Explosive Devices and then on the direct relation of Colombia with these multilateral efforts, emphasizing the special relation we have with UNMAS and how are we working on the field.

All these efforts are increasingly relevant taking into account that the impact of improvised explosive devices on civilians remains a serious concern to the international community and the growing numbers of these attacks are a permanent threat to our societies. We consider more relevant than ever the coordination of responses in the national, regional and international levels.

Allow me to start with the role of co-Coordinator of the IED discussions under the Group of Experts, where I just want to continue what Pascal have expressed and how we achieve that mandate. Our work every year is to reach the experts working on the field and for that we usually depend on the same actors participating today in this side event. We are interested in bringing those experiences from the field to the diplomatic discussions with two main purposes:

1. To raise awareness on the magnitude of the threat and the different trends and dimensions that we need to take into consideration and how these can impact our national capacities.
2. To create bridges between practitioners and also among practitioners and diplomats. I think this is a very important space as we combine the field experience that present us the challenges we face, with the diplomatic power that might provide platforms to find those “coherent and coordinated national, sub-regional and regional responses to counter the threat posed by IED” mentioned in our mandate.

And building over the “bridges” idea I want to move to the second part of my statement and talk a little bit about the Colombian experience and how we work closely with UNMAS on mine action and in mitigating the threat imposed by the improvised explosive devices.

As you know, for internal circumstances, Colombia has to deal with contamination stemming from the use of improvised anti-personnel mines installed by organized armed groups. And at this point allow me to make a brief remark with one of the challenges that we need to address together, which is the fact that despite the efforts of national authorities and international organizations, if armed non-state actors continue the use of these artefacts, it would be impossible to control the threat.

With this in mind, it is more relevant than ever to continue promoting the observance of the norms of the international instruments on this matter, as well as condemning the violations of these norms by any actor.

Going back to the relation between UNMAS and Colombia, I have to say that UNMAS has been working on the country for over ten years, committed with the development of the sector and the strengthening of the national capacities.

There are several areas that we are working together but taking into account the time I want to highlight the contributions to the implementation of the Peace agreement, especially the support provided to the development of Humanicemos, a humanitarian mine action organization established by former FARC combatants.

UNMAS has provided technical assistance to Humanicemos, allowing them to strengthen their capacities, as well as promoting the reintegration of former combatants. With their work, Humanicemos is clearing the territory from the presence of anti-personnel mines, as well as allowing to prove the strong links of mine action with the humanitarian, the peace building and the sustainable development processes. This kind of projects generate a profound impact on the construction of new dynamics on the territory and can become good practices to be shared with other actors in similar situations.

Other important role of UNMAS in Colombia is the coordination and advocacy role. UNMAS provides a fundamental support in helping the coordination between the national and local authorities and the United Nations system. This is extremely helpful in the current context of limited resources, which is other of the challenges that we must face in the future. With the scarcity of human, technical and financial resources, avoiding duplication of efforts is of the utmost importance. Having a direct line with the whole system of the United Nations through UNMAS helps us to find better solutions, faster and optimizing the tools available.

To conclude, I just want to highlight the importance of permanent communication between the authorities and the organizations working on the field. This aspect has been key for the good relations between the Colombian government and UNMAS, as the trust that we have developed is the foundation of our good relation and we have to work every day to maintain it and to continue working together following the same long-term objectives of clearing our territory and developing a strong national capacity that can face the upcoming threats. We look forward to keep working with UNMAS on this purpose.

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