

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The work of UNMAS makes a difference in the lives of people. In its role as United Nations mine action coordinator, UNMAS enables and accelerates many of the core activities of the United Nations – from humanitarian action and peacekeeping to sustainable development and peacebuilding. In 2019, the clearance of landmines, explosive remnants of war (ERW) and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) paved the way for food distribution centres, playing fields and schools. Roads were made safe, ensuring that people could travel to markets, humanitarian workers could deliver assistance, and peacekeepers could go on patrol. UNMAS, guided by the United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2019–2023, placed a strong focus on victim assistance by providing direct services to survivors and their families, and by coordinating with national institutions to strengthen referral pathways. In light of the urbanization of conflict and the growing threat posed by IEDs, risk education was scaled up, with outreach to 2.9 million people in 2019, marking an increase of almost 40 per cent from 2018.

This annual report outlines the work of UNMAS in 2019. Highlights include:

- ▶ Finalizing the framework for a United Nations inter-agency taskforce on IED threat mitigation, with the first meeting scheduled for January 2020 – part of the ongoing work of UNMAS to respond to the Secretary-General's call for the development of a "whole-of-system" response to IEDs.
- ▶ Focusing on strengthening links between humanitarian planning and mine action through UNMAS coordination of the Mine Action Area of Responsibility, as part of the UNHCR-led Global Protection Cluster.
- ▶ Leading the update of the Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes, aimed at increasing gender mainstreaming across mine action programming, which coincided with United Nations-wide preparations for the 20th anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in 2020.
- ▶ Contributing concretely to the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative, most notably by training uniformed personnel and troop-contributing countries in IED threat mitigation, which improved the safety and security of the Blue Helmets.
- ▶ Supporting the United Nations system as a whole by expanding, at the request of United Nations senior leadership, UNMAS operations in Burkina Faso and deploying expertise to the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement, in Yemen.

75 years on from its creation, the United Nations continues to be driven by the needs of people. Mine action not only saves lives, it allows States, communities, families and individuals to chart their own future in safety and with dignity. I want to thank those who support UNMAS, in particular Member States and the wider mine action sector. Moreover, I want to acknowledge all those who work for, or engage with, UNMAS on the ground. This report is testimony to their commitment.



UN Photo / Evan Schneider

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