



# UNMAS

## United Nations Mine Action Service

### Occupied Palestinian Territory

September 2024 Newsletter



UNMAS EOD Officer conducting an EHA of craters located in a humanitarian area in Gaza, oPt. Photo Credit: UNMAS EOD Team.

### September Achievements

#### 48 Explosive Hazard

Assessment (EHA) requests responded to:

- **24** humanitarian sites (IDP shelters, medical facilities, humanitarian staff accommodation, etc.) assessed
- **10** completed routes in support of interagency missions which assessed humanitarian sites, supported movement of humanitarian personnel, etc.
- **14** route EHAs canceled, aborted or denied

**47,368** boys, girls, women and men received EORE-CPP

**18** UN and humanitarian workers received EORE TOT

**47** UN and humanitarian workers received EORE

#### For more information:

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### In Focus - Support to Debris Management Efforts

A primary challenge facing humanitarian delivery and early recovery efforts in Gaza is the extensive presence of damaged buildings and debris, which is likely to be highly contaminated with explosive ordnance (EO). Therefore, in September 2024 UNMAS supported UNEP and UNDP to plan their Debris Management Pilot Project which would begin to safely



UNDP Debris Management Pilot Project, where UNMAS EOD Team conducted EHAs on the rubble. Photo Credit: UNMAS EOD Team.

remove debris from roads and sites in support of priority humanitarian activities. This planning is an important part of early recovery efforts in Gaza and will set the stage for longer-term reconstruction efforts.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Officers from UNMAS assessed some initial sites in September which had extensive rubble contamination. They gave recommendations for the debris removal efforts, such as providing explosive hazard awareness training for all worksite personnel and taking a 'layer-by-layer' approach to excavation. Collaboration on pilot debris management and explosive hazard assessment work is expected to increase in the coming months, with UNMAS ready to support the work of UNDP and other actors.

### Explosive Hazard Assessments

To ensure the continuity of humanitarian operations and enhance safety at UN project sites and along routes, UNMAS EOD Officers continue to conduct EHAs on request of the humanitarian community.

UNMAS EOD Officers conducted **24 successful** EHAs in September 2024 at humanitarian sites across the Gaza Strip, including at schools, health centres, UN facilities and IDP shelters. The EOD team also supported **10** interagency missions in September by conducting route EHAs along roads that help actors deliver humanitarian assistance. In September, eight EHAs had to be aborted or canceled due to security concerns or challenges related to movement and access, and six were denied.



UNMAS EOD team accompanying an interagency mission to Gaza City providing humanitarian support to communities in Gaza City. Photo Credit: UNMAS EOD Team.

**Delivery of Risk Education for the Local Community**

In September, UNMAS continued to support the delivery of EORE to the local community in Gaza, as well as awareness sessions to the humanitarian community. UNMAS implementing partners provided **2,124** EORE sessions to **47,368** at-risk civilians.



Nidal Youssef Mahmoud Al-Jirani, one of the IDPs participating in an EORE Session on 18 Sep 2024, Khan Younis, Gaza, Palestine. Photo Credit: the POD team.

Nidal, a 15-year-old boy displaced from Rafah, attended an EORE session in Gaza, funded from UNMAS project funds. He told his story to the session facilitators: *"I was walking in my neighborhood going back home in Tal Al-Sultan [when] I accidentally stepped on a suspicious item and my foot was seriously injured with a fracture. After this horrible accident, I am unable to walk or run normally like other kids which makes me feel very embarrassed to practice my life or socialise with other children as I used to."*

Nidal's mother added that as Nidal is her eldest child, she counts on him to help the family meet their needs during these difficult times, such as fetching water and bringing food from distribution points.

Nidal commented on the session: *"It was enjoyable and joyful and I learned many new things about the explosive ordnance. I believe that I need to play in safe areas staying away from dangerous or suspicious places".*

To ensure that people like Nidal and his family get access to the support they need, in September UNMAS initiated information gathering efforts focusing on victims of EO in Gaza. UNMAS will continue to work with mine action partners to encourage reporting of information on EO victims and facilitate data collection and sharing. This allows UNMAS and the mine action sector to develop effective referral pathways for direct and indirect victims of EO to get the assistance they need.

**UNMAS oPt** appeals to donors to continue supporting our work as UNMAS reaches a critical stage in emergency response and preparedness for ceasefire and postwar recovery efforts. On 13 September 2024, UNMAS organised a Donor Forum which provided an overview of UNMAS work in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, milestones and support needs. Invitations to provide further information about UNMAS work and needs in the form of concept notes or proposals to donors are welcome.

