



### Highlights **FEBRUARY 2022**



**2** landmine accidents



Manual mine clearance in Makir



**3,021 m<sup>2</sup>**  
of land assessed as safe  
from explosive hazards



Accreditation in progress



**7** assault weapons confiscated  
by UNISFA and destroyed by  
UNMAS



Destruction of confiscated weapons in Dukra



**2** explosive remnants of  
war destroyed



**109** explosive  
ordnance risk  
education  
sessions



Ground monitoring mission at TS-21



**5** ground monitoring  
missions supported

# UNMAS PROMOTES SAFE GROUND, SAFE STEPS AND SAFE HOME IN THE ABYEI AREA

UNMAS operates in a context where there are many differences and inequalities between women, men, girls and boys in terms of the assigned cultural gender roles, responsibilities, opportunities, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision making in the communities. Abyei area is no different from other areas in the world and as a result these groups are affected differently by the impacts of the unexploded ordnance contamination which continues to kill, injure, and hamper free mobility within the communities.

In keeping with the 2022 theme “Safe Ground, Safe Steps, Safe Home” UNMAS has considered a gender and diversity analysis which has been essential in identifying and developing an understanding of the differences between women, men, girls and boys in terms of risk taking behaviors by community members within the Abyei area. To capture and share this information among the communities, local Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) have been recruited geographically and stationed in the different areas of Mekenis, Diffra, Amiet North, Amiet South, Abyei town and Agok.

Women in Abyei take charge of most household responsibilities such as taking care of the children, collecting food, fetching water, cutting grass, to mention but a few. These activities put women at risk because they involve a lot of mobility into unknown areas which are likely to contain explosive hazards putting them at risk of becoming victims of these items. Girls who look up to their mothers, join and support them in these household chores. To this end women are encouraged to remain safe since they have the responsibility of keeping their family and children safe as well as teaching them safe behaviours.

Men are also at risk since most of their time is spent in the bush grazing cattle, making charcoal, cutting grass, clearing the bush and hut construction. They are also the sole decision makers in the community. The men are advised to try as much as possible to remain safe for the sake of their families by avoiding unknown areas than risking their lives because their families depend on them; and the best way they can protect and provide for their families is by staying safe and practicing safe behaviour.

Women and men are given a general outline of the key messages in relation to how these items look like, where they might be found, the warning marking signs, and the effects. They are encouraged to practice safe behavior by staying away from these items, marking them in case they find them and think it is safe to do so and then report to the local authorities in the community. These messages are further enhanced through leaflets and community posters which are given out to the participants after each briefing session.

The boys do a lot of venturing and taking the cattle to graze in the bush, but they are also very playful, mobile and curious which results in touching, carrying and playing with unknown items that they come across which may be dangerous or even fatal. Due to child curiosity and their ability to learn through experience and practice, UNMAS teams have tailor-made interactive and child friendly skits, games and comic books that tell stories and portray pictures of various explosive hazards for them to be able to identify these items thus encouraging them to report and stay safe.

The community appreciates UNMAS efforts because it has encouraged gender diversity despite the gender inequalities that exist within the communities especially in the Northern part. Everyone is equally benefiting from the programme activities being carried out.

One of UNMAS local CLO members, Ms Arafa Yousif Mohamed in her own words had this to say, **“I feel so much excited for having been given this rare opportunity to work with the UNMAS team in raising awareness about the explosive hazards which continue to be a deadly silent danger to the lives of the people in my community.”**



Risk education with children through sports activities



Interactive risk education with children



Lifesaving risk education messages to a group of women



Ms. Arafa Yousif at work

**IF YOU SEE AN ITEM OF CONCERN, DO NOT TOUCH IT!**

**CONTACT UNMAS-UNISFA IMMEDIATELY!**

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