



UNMAS

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**mine action
is humanitarian action**



“ UNMAS is a precious resource inside the United Nations. It works professionally, quickly and efficiently. Its actions are driven by humanitarian needs. UNMAS is an essential component in achieving peace, security and stabilization, and as an enabler of UN peace missions. I call on Governments, corporations and individuals to provide the maximum support for UNMAS, as its staff go about their work saving lives and making conflict zones safe for all. ”

Ban Ki-moon
United Nations Secretary-General



UNMAS

UNMAS (United Nations Mine Action Service) was established by the UN General Assembly in 1997 and is the coordinator for mine action in the United Nations system. Mine action comprises five pillars: clearance, risk education, victim assistance, advocacy and stockpile destruction.

Mine action is humanitarian action

Landmines and other explosive hazards block the delivery of humanitarian assistance, prevent children from going to school, stop farmers from working the land, render water points and places of worship inaccessible, hamper reconstruction efforts and effectively rob people of their livelihoods.

Locating, removing and destroying explosive hazards saves lives and is a prerequisite for humanitarian actions.

Mine action also includes sensitizing affected populations, especially children, to the risks posed by landmines and explosive hazards and ensuring that assistance is provided to victims, their families and communities.



The Impact of Explosive Hazards

In most post-conflict settings there are explosive hazards.

They are equal opportunity killers. Whether landmines, remnant improvised explosive devices, artillery shells or cluster bombs, when triggered they kill indiscriminately; soldier or civilian, male or female, old or young.

They are patient. Explosive hazards can sit and wait for decades to be detonated by a farmer digging in a field or a tractor grading a new road. Often they become more unstable and dangerous with the passage of time. Switches wear down and fuses corrode. What once needed a tank to be detonated can be triggered by a child jumping rope.

They move. In landslides, floods, earthquakes and sandstorms, explosives hazards travel, below and above the ground and far from where they were initially placed. An area that is safe today could be dangerous tomorrow.

And they wreck lives. When they kill and maim, families and communities are economically and emotionally devastated. Their presence, real or perceived, curtails freedom; freedom to travel for work, freedom to access basic services and schools, freedom to collect food and water, to farm, to vote, to rebuild a market, freedom to live in security.



UN Photo/Central African Republic

“Initially focused on landmines and unexploded ordnance, the scope of Mine Action has expanded to mitigate the threats posed by cluster munitions, unsecured and poorly managed stockpiles of weapons and ammunition, and improvised explosive devices (or IEDs).”

Hervé Ladsous,
Under-Secretary-General
for Peacekeeping Operations



Making it Possible for the United Nations to Deliver

The United Nations goes where no one else goes. Each year the United Nations mobilizes an average of 20 billion United States dollars for humanitarian aid to help people affected by emergencies. It provides food to 90 million people in 80 countries, vaccinates 58 per cent of the world's children, assists over 38 million refugees and people fleeing war, famine or persecution and deploys 120,000 peacekeepers in 16 operations on four continents. All this work comes to a standstill when explosive hazards block the way.

UNMAS leads in surveying and clearing explosive hazards from airports, roads, bridges and borders. UNMAS reacts rapidly, capable of deploying technical experts and equipment within days. UNMAS coordinates emergency mine action activities to increase the impact of the international response and ensure coherent allocation of resources.



UNMAS Photo/Gaza

When the Going Gets Tough, the UN Calls UNMAS

While heavy fighting was still underway in Gaza, the UN Secretary-General called on UNMAS to “immediately deploy personnel with expertise” to “develop and implement an effective security plan for the safe and secure handling of any weapons discovered in UN premises.” Four days later UNMAS personnel arrived in Gaza. UNMAS technical experts cleared more than 200 sites, removed explosive hazards from humanitarian corridors, surveyed and cleared schools before they reopened and developed an emergency explosive-threat mitigation plan that was implemented when the conflict ended.

FROM THE

Managing Unsafe and Unsecure Weapons and Ammunition

In conflict-affected countries, unsafe and unsecure weapons and ammunition pose a serious threat to those living nearby and can feed renewed violence. Permanently destroying surplus or obsolete weapons contributes to peacebuilding and stabilization. UNMAS small arms and light weapons projects develop the capacity of national authorities and often assist demobilization, disarmament and reintegration processes.



UN Photo/JC Melville/South Sudan

“ The United Nations response is dynamic, innovative and inclusive. UNMAS and its partners from the UN system, the private sector as well as civil society keep introducing new mechanical tools, mobile apps, training material, digital equipment, satellite imagery, etc. to improve mine action effectiveness in a variety of areas of work, whether related to oversight and management, mechanical clearance or effective advance planning through ‘strikes database’ like in the case of Syria. ”

Dmitry Titov,
Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions,
Department of Peacekeeping Operations



UNMAS Field Operations

UNMAS removes the immediate threat and trains, develops and passes on, in compliance with international safety and clearance standards, expertise to people from affected countries or regions so that they can continue the work themselves. Decades after wars, landmines and other explosive hazards remain. Security services, police and military, must be equipped and trained to protect civilians. Safely removing live ammunition from bombed-out buildings, searching for unexploded shells in forests and fields, delivering risk education to affected communities, addressing the needs of explosive hazard survivors, clearing mines and disposing of stockpiles are labour-intensive and time-consuming tasks. These are important jobs for local communities.



UN Photo/Catamine /Tijerina/ Central African Republic



UNMAS Coordinates

From the United Nations Headquarters in New York, its Office in Geneva, and through its field operations, UNMAS coordinates assistance, training, advocacy, fundraising and mine action programmes, as well as policy and project development. UNMAS promotes universal adherence to international treaties supporting governments to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law, including the Anti–Personnel Mine Ban Convention; the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons; the Convention on Cluster Munitions; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

UNMAS organizes the annual global mine action meeting for affected countries, UN advisers, donors, and relevant organizations. UNMAS advocates for the elimination of explosive hazards through publications, digital media, international fora and the press. UNMAS promotes the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action on 4th of April each year and oversees exhibits, films, panel discussions and public debates.

Funding

UNMAS is mandated to manage the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action, the UN mechanism to direct funding to United Nations partners, national mine action entities and non-governmental organizations. UNMAS works in close partnership with donors and affected countries and forges innovative partnerships with civil society and the private sector to maximize resource mobilization for mine action around the globe.



UNITED NATIONS
VOLUNTARY TRUST FUND
FOR ASSISTANCE IN MINE ACTION



UNMAS 2015 SNAP SHOT



In April 2015 United Nations Secretary-General designated the actor Daniel Craig as the first United Nations Global Advocate for the Elimination of Mines and Explosive Hazards. Mr. Craig visited the United Nations mine action programme in Cyprus to assess first-hand how mines and explosive hazards impede the return to normal life after conflict and impacts on prospects for a peaceful future. Mr. Craig participated in the daily briefings of the UN mission, walked through an active minefield, and interacted with UNMAS experts and a demining contingent from Cambodia.



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