

IRAQ PROGRAMME REPORT 2024





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GLOSSARY

ADL Advanced Life Support

APMBC Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

CCM Convention on Cluster Munitions

CMMAI Coordination Meeting for Mine Action in Iraq

DMA Directorate for Mine Action

EHM Explosive Hazard Management

EO Explosive Ordnance

EOD Explosive Ordnance Disposal

EORE Explosive Ordnance Risk Education

ETB Emergency Trauma Bag

GIS Geographic Information System

GPS Global Positioning System

IDP Internally Displaced Person

IED Improvised Explosive Device

IEDD Improvised Explosive Device Disposal

IHSCO Health and Social Care Organization in Iraq

IKMAA Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency

INGO International Non-Governmental Organizations

ISIL Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

MoI Ministry of Interior

NMAA National Mine Action Authority

NMAS National Mine Action Standards

NNGO National Non-Governmental Organizations

NTS Non-Technical Survey

PAIA Post Activity Impact Assessment

SHO Shareteah Humanitarian Organization

T3 Train-the-Trainer

TS Technical Support

UAV Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

UN United Nations

UNAMI United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq

UNMAS United Nations Mine Action Service



A Message From the UNMAS Iraq Chief Mine Action Programme Pehr Lodhammar

“As I write this message for the 2024 Annual Report, I reflect on the immense efforts UNMAS Iraq has made to alleviate the impact of war on civilians, particularly those affected by the conflict with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). UNMAS Iraq has remained at the forefront of promoting safety and stability, offering hope for restoring lives in areas threatened by explosive ordnance (EO).”

Over the years, Iraq's national capacity to lead effective and sustainable mine action responses has made remarkable progress. Throughout my time with UNMAS Iraq, strengthening national ownership has always been a priority. UNMAS has provided technical and advisory support to the National Mine Action Authorities (NMAAs) – namely, the Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) and the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA). In parallel, we worked closely with the Ministry of Interior (MoI) to deliver specialized training for MoI officers, equipping them with the skills necessary to carry out their duties, protect civilians, and prevent accidents.

As a State Party to key international treaties, including the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), Iraq must ensure adequate funding for mine action through its federal budget. After years of

conflict, the Government of Iraq has made significant strides in clearing explosive remnants of war to save lives, restore stability, and rebuild critical infrastructure. However, given the scale of EO contamination, international donor support remains vital. To this end, I have actively engaged with the donor community in Iraq, encouraging continued support for mine action. I am hopeful that our collaborative efforts will grow even stronger.

One of UNMAS Iraq's key achievements has been expanding national leadership of mine action while leveraging global expertise through the Partnership Model. Through this model, international mine action organizations partner with national counterparts to transfer skills and knowledge to enable local actors to autonomously manage survey, clearance, and explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) activities.

In early 2024, as a result of the success of this approach, UNMAS partnered with national organizations to lead and implement operations, including the highly challenging task of clearing improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Ninewa Governorate. The dedication of Iraqi men and women – especially in Mosul and Sinjar – has brought tangible progress in addressing the needs of local communities.

Another notable achievement stemming from our collaboration with national organizations is that more than 40% of the team staff are now women. This is not just a milestone in gender representation; it's about ensuring women play a leading role in decision-making and operational leadership. In fact, this year, one of our female deminers was promoted to a supervisory role – an inspiring testament to what inclusive leadership can achieve.

At UNMAS, we are committed to measuring the impact of our work. After each clearance task is completed and land is declared safe, teams move to new hazardous areas. Months later, the UNMAS team returns to the previously cleared areas to meet with local communities and assess the longer-term impacts. In 2024, we witnessed the revival of livelihood activities such as farming, and the launch of development projects that were made possible through clearance efforts. Beneficiaries reported

a reduction in EO-related accidents and a noticeable increase in community safety and confidence in reusing land. Witnessing these positive changes firsthand reinforces our resolve to continue this vital work and to take on new responsibilities in the year ahead.

I present the UNMAS Iraq Annual Report and invite you to go through it to know more about the ongoing progress of UNMAS initiatives in Iraq, linking our current achievements with the strong foundation laid over the years. It highlights our ongoing commitment to reduce the risk of EO contamination and build a sustainable national capacity of mine action response. Our success this year is a direct result of the dedication, perseverance, and collaboration of national teams, along with the trust and support of our donors and implementing partners.

I would like to extend my deep gratitude to our donors, whose support is invaluable to our mission. I look forward to continuing our work together, with renewed commitment and determination, to make a lasting difference in the lives of EO-affected populations.

Pehr Lodhammar
Chief Mine Action Programme, UNMAS Iraq



Support for UNMAS Iraq in 2024 comes from voluntary contributions from the following countries:





VISION

The Government of Iraq manages an efficient mine action sector that protects civilians from the threat of EO and enables stabilization and development efforts to proceed unimpeded by EO.

MISSION

UNMAS Iraq supports the development of a sustainable, well-coordinated national mine action sector and reduces the threat of EO to civilians.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The UNMAS Iraq programme was established in 2015 at the request of the Iraqi government and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) with the task of starting the comprehensive and complex process of clearing EO, mainly IEDs, left after the conflict with ISIL.

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Initially, UNMAS Iraq was supporting stabilization and the restoration of basic infrastructure to enable the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to the areas liberated from ISIL. Following transition from the emergency humanitarian response to the development phase, UNMAS Iraq continued to support the recovery process and humanitarian efforts to assist the Government of Iraq in resolving conflict internal displacement and achieving durable solutions for IDPs.

The following activities were prioritized in 2024:

- » Technical Support to the Government of Iraq mine action entities;
- » Capacity enhancement of national operators; and
- » Explosive hazard management (EHM), including EORE.

In 2024, UNMAS Iraq focused on providing technical and advisory support to assist the NMAAs to implement the National Mine Action Strategy with the other mine action entities, such as the MoI and the Ministry of Defense. UNMAS Iraq works closely with the DMA and IKMAA to apply the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the two authorities in May 2024 and enhance systems and methods to ensure safe and efficient mine action practices. UNMAS Iraq also conducts technical training sessions for the MoI officials, who are often the first responders to address the EO risks and ensure civilians' safety.

In parallel, UNMAS Iraq has developed the capacity of national Non-Governmental Organization (NNGOs) partners. In December 2023, after three years, the partnership grants between International NGOs (INGOs) and NNGOs came to an end. Building on these grants, UNMAS Iraq issued direct grants to national organizations previously funded under partnership grants. In 2024, UNMAS Iraq implemented two EHM projects in the Mosul and Sinjar areas of Ninewa

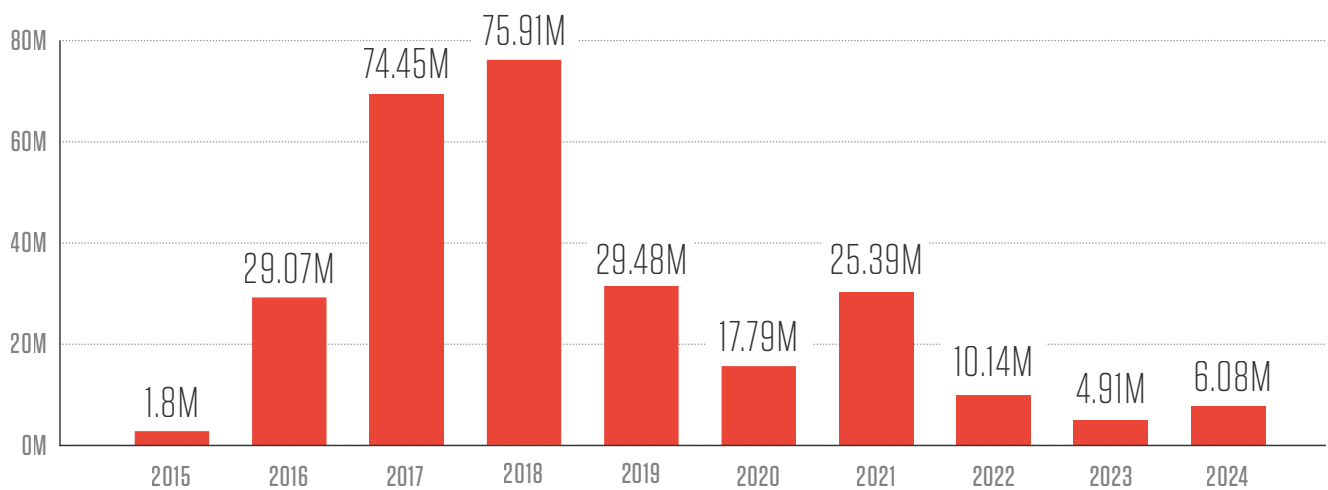
Governorate. The development of sustainable NNGOs in Iraq can effectively and independently engage in needs-based explosive hazard management responses aligned with the priorities of the national authorities.

Since inception, UNMAS Iraq has surveyed almost **132 million** square metres and cleared over **25 million** square metres of contaminated land. Through UNMAS Iraq operations, over **700,000** explosive items have been detected and removed, including a total of **2,697** IEDs. UNMAS provided vulnerable communities with crucial life-saving messages to close to **1.5 million** Iraqis through over **74,000** EORE sessions across Iraq. Two-thirds of the beneficiaries are Iraqi girls and boys who are the most vulnerable to the risks posed by explosive hazards. UNMAS Iraq has also provided mine action-related technical training for **2,352** Iraqi police officers, including **472** female police officers, and technical support and numerous training courses and workshops for Iraqi NMAAs.

Our Donors:



FUNDS SECURED PER YEAR SINCE INCEPTION (IN US DOLLARS)¹



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¹ This chart illustrates the evolution of funding over the years, with each contribution attributed to the year in which the donor signed the Contribution Agreement.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT (TS)

UNMAS Iraq continued to provide technical and advisory support to the NMAAs to lead the mine action response. This included, but was not limited to, enhancing coordination of the mine action sector, advocating to the donor community to support the sector and advancing systems and approaches to managing the operations.

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In May 2024, UNMAS Iraq organized the third Local Mine Action Support Group (LMASG) meeting hosted at the German Embassy in Baghdad. The LMASG enhances mine action coordination among donors and serves as a platform for donors to discuss mine action activities in Iraq; highlighting critical funding gaps and needs, and coordinating funding efforts among donor countries, as necessary. The meeting was attended by Government of Iraq senior officials, including the Deputy Minister of Environment, the DMA Director General, senior representatives from IKMAA, and 16 diplomats from 12 countries.

Furthermore, in September 2024, the DMA, with support from UNMAS Iraq convened the Coordination Meeting for Mine Action in Iraq (CMMAI) in Baghdad. The meeting allows the Iraqi mine action sector to present progress made, ongoing activities, and challenges facing the sector, and also to discuss practical solutions implemented. The representatives of the relevant governmental bodies, national and international mine action NGOs, as well as representatives of seven embassies in Baghdad attended the meeting.

In 2024 the two NMAAs signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance sector management and collaboration to meet international treaty obligations. UNMAS Iraq has supported the MoU's implementation by facilitating discussions on how to best harmonize the National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) and quality management systems. In 2024, UNMAS Iraq organized a total of four round table discussions to review and update 17 NMAS, of which two standards were officially approved and released. This enabled the mine action implementers in Iraq to improve the quality of their services and align with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).

The standards enhance safety, efficiency, and effectiveness in mine action operations, promoting a harmonized approach tailored to the specific local context, operating environment, and EO threats. As part of the efforts to enhance the application of the NMAS and improve the process of mine action operations, in December 2024, UNMAS Iraq also organized a Quality Management (QM) workshop. The workshop included the application of the Quality Assurance/ Quality Control (QA/QC) procedures, reflecting the relevant laws, policies and procedures in Federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).

Support to the Iraqi Ministry of Interior

UNMAS works closely with the Iraqi Mol to train police officers on the methods and techniques needed to identify potential explosive threats, coordinate appropriate response, warn the public, establish initial command and control, and render safe the explosive devices. UNMAS Iraq supports the Mol in delivering training courses within the Mol's training facilities in Baghdad, with training support provided by UNMAS Iraq national trainers.

The courses covered during 2024 are:

UAV/Drone Course to 11 students	Explosive Awareness Training Course - Female to 11 students
GPS&Map Reading Course to 14 students	EOD-IEDD Course to 22 students
UAV/Drone Course to 16 students	GPS and Map Reading Course to 11 students
Explosive Awareness Training Course - Female to 9 students	Explosive Awareness Training Course - Male to 12 students
Explosive Awareness Training Course - Male to 10 students	T3 - EOD3 – IEDD Course to 12 students
Ammunition Classification and Destruction Course to 15 students	T3 - GPS Course to 12 students
T3 - Awareness of the Dangers of Explosives Course to 14 students	UAV/Drone Course No.9 to 11 students
Detectors Course to 14 students	T3 - Awareness Course No.2 to 10 students
UAV/Drone Course to 14 students	TOTAL: to 218 students (30 ♀)

Recently, an evaluation was conducted to assess the impact of the UNMAS Iraq training initiatives delivered for the Mol. The evaluation team, through interviews and group discussions, concluded that the training significantly improved the national personnel's skills. Participants highlighted the value of hands-on training and the integration of new technologies in strengthening operational capabilities of the Mol personnel.

UNMAS is keen to build a sustainable mine action response. To this end, train-the-trainers (T3) courses support several training courses to provide the Mol trainees with the skills and abilities required to provide the same training for their colleagues at their various duty stations.

The Role of Women in Mine Action

In 2024, as part of its continued advocacy to enhance the role of women in mine action, UNMAS Iraq conducted three workshops with participants from DMA, IKMAA, and humanitarian partners. The aim was to equip mine action personnel with skills to promote inclusivity, strengthen community engagement, and inspire participation, especially amongst women, through success stories.

UNMAS Iraq promoted the participation of the Mol women police officers in the training courses to increase their role in EO response and protecting civilians. In 2024, a total of 30 female police officers participated in training courses delivered by UNMAS at the Mol Women's Training Institute in Baghdad.

CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT

During the period 2021 and 2023, UNMAS Iraq supported the capacity enhancement of national operators in Iraq through the “partnership model”. Under this model, INGOs partnered with NNGOs to provide training and transfer skills over three years.

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By the end of 2023, two NNGOs, Shareteah Humanitarian Organization (SHO) and Health and Social Care Organization in Iraq (IHSCO) were fully accredited to conduct EO clearance operations autonomously.

In January 2024 direct grants were issued to each of the NNGOs; one grant was for clearance in Sinjar and the other for work in Mosul. The grants enabled national teams to operate independently, building on the knowledge and experience gained from the partnership model. Each grant required the NNGO to field three manual teams and a mechanical team with supporting EORE and Non-Technical Survey (NTS) personnel.

In parallel, UNMAS Iraq continued to build the capabilities of national operator staff by providing training courses and workshops. In late June 2024, UNMAS Iraq conducted a three-day “Contracting and Proposal Writing” training workshop for UNMAS Iraq national implementing partners. At the workshop, attended by seven senior-level staff from the NNGOs, contracting processes, rules and regulations were discussed. UNMAS Iraq also provided proposal writing training, which covered proposals written for national and international donors.

On 30 April 2024, a tragic accident occurred at the IHSCO clearance site near Mosul, resulting in the death of an IHSCO national operator. Following the accident, UNMAS Iraq provided additional training to the national teams to prevent recurrence. The EHM team reviewed this training curriculum and oversaw the implementation to ensure the training complied with the national standards. UNMAS Iraq Medical Coordinator delivered Advanced Life Support (ALS), and Emergency Trauma Bag (ETB) training to medical staff, including four women and seven men, of the two national implementing partners. The training covered the principles of on-site medical support to demining operations and pre-hospital care in case of accidents.

After the accident, IHSCO operations suspended for more than six months. Subsequently and as a mitigation measure to avoid further delay, the Mosul grant was subsequently re-awarded to SHO in October 2024 to resume operations in one of the heavily EO-contaminated areas of Tel Kaif.



UNMAS Iraq EHM teams conducted periodic monitoring visits and ensured that the grants were progressing as planned. Despite the administrative and operational challenges, particularly regarding the complex contamination of some sites, UNMAS Iraq collaborated closely with the national partner to address issues arising swiftly and comprehensively. National teams remained proactive and responsive to advice and assistance in overcoming any issues through close collaboration and communication with the UNMAS Iraq EHM team.

EXPLOSIVE HAZARD MANAGEMENT (EHM)

During 2024, UNMAS Iraq conducted EHM through direct grants to two NGOs to conduct clearance work in their respective areas.

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The Mosul grant started clearance around the village of Batnaya in Tel Kaif district. However, the Mosul grant was suspended from all humanitarian mine action work following a worksite accident in April, whilst an investigation was conducted. When it became clear that the NGO was not able to return to operations, the grant was re-awarded.



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These operations focused on extensive belts of IEDs planted by ISIL in the area northeast of Mosul towards Tel Kaif district. The clearance of the hazards around Batnaya village was made more difficult by a particularly abundant growing season in the spring, making crop/vegetation clearance difficult. Amid prolonged delays, some local farmers began cultivating land that had not yet been cleared, creating further challenges when clearance activities resumed. Understandably, community members were concerned about the potential destruction of planted crops and grazing vegetation, which added to operational complexities. All work was suspended following the accident in April and did not restart until the re-award of the grant in October. Operations resumed in October with the deployment of manual clearance teams to the heavily contaminated areas. In winter 2024, the local farmers were informed that clearance would continue into 2025, and that access to the land would remain restricted during this period.

The Mosul Grant Mechanical Team has worked within the Al Shifa Hospital Complex in Mosul city at the request of the DMA. This area received surface clearance immediately after liberation from ISIL but now required complex sub-surface clearance prior to rehabilitation and rebuilding of the complex. The site is crisscrossed with tunnels that originally held water and heating pipes. Following liberation, these tunnels were filled with contaminated rubble, which now needs to be removed and searched. The operation is ongoing and is expected to continue until Spring 2025.

In total, **242,669** square metres were cleared with **2,994** items of EO removed by Mosul grant personnel, **24 (38.70 %)** of whom were female.

The Sinjar grant started with clearance being conducted around the village of Mal Weran. This was a large hazard area incorporating the extensively destroyed and abandoned village and surrounding farmland. This hazard adjoined one around the village of Ain Talawi, previously cleared by UNMAS Iraq in 2023. Throughout the year, the teams progressed through the neighbouring villages, undertaking both mechanical and manual clearance.

The manual clearance operations started in the village Mal Weran. This hazard enabled the grant to mobilise with all manual teams working on a single hazard. The mechanical team started on a destroyed chicken farm south of the village of Ain Talawi. This commercial farm consisted of numerous concrete chicken sheds, which had been taken over by ISIL for storage and accommodation. A fierce battle had been waged across the area during liberation operations that had caused widespread EO contamination and the collapse of the buildings. The owner had previously refused clearance assistance as the damage to the building was pending assessment by the relevant authorities and he was concerned that if the clearance were undertaken, he would not receive compensation for the damage. The NGO consulted with the Iraqi court to arrange an inspection of his property, and after receiving their report, clearance started. Following these hazards, all teams moved through a series of hazards, moving slightly west until they finished the year conducting manual clearance in Um Shababait village and mechanical clearance in Al Fadilya. In total, **1,200,141** square metres were cleared with **598** items of EO removed by Sinjar grant personnel, **25 (41.66 %)** of whom were women.



Area cleared



Area survey (NTS)



EO discovered



Ninewa

1,442,810 m²1,216,703 m²

3,592

In summary, during 2024, UNMAS Iraq teams continued clearance activities in Ninewa Governorate and, in doing so, cleared **1,442,810** million square metres of land and rendered safe over **3,592** items of EO in agricultural and residential areas. The mine action activities were entirely implemented by a total of **122** national staff comprising **49** women, which represent approximately **40** percent of the total number of workers.



Post Activity Impact Assessment

UNMAS Iraq conducts Post Activity Impact Assessments (PAIA) on an annual basis to evaluate if safe access to land previously contaminated with EO was restored by clearance operations. PAIA activity is usually conducted at least six months after the completion of the clearance operation. In 2024, the UNMAS Iraq teams visited the sites of five projects and met with the beneficiaries to seek their feedback on access, use of **2,606,987** m² of cleared areas, and the impact the clearance has had on the lives of the communities in Mahkmour, Sinjar, and Tal Kaif districts in Ninewa and Basra.

UNMAS Iraq Team visits showed that clearance operations enabled communities to reclaim land for housing, agriculture, and infrastructure after years of EO contamination. Farmland in these areas was utilised in the first growing season following clearance, assisting households to rebuild their homes and improve their living conditions. Most of the beneficiaries are farmers who primarily depend on agriculture for their income. The beneficiaries perceived their villages as safe, which has contributed to an improved sense of well-being, particularly for children, who can now attend school safely without the dangers posed by explosive remnants of war. However, in some areas, the evaluation Team observed that the families are only slowly returning to their areas of origin as their villages are still in need of basic services, security, and livelihood opportunities. The Government of Iraq has stressed its intention to close the displacement file in the liberated areas. The UN closely coordinates with the government officials to continue these efforts, including by

supporting mine action activities, which are considered the first step before any development efforts can take place. In Basra, the clearance of legacy contamination from the Iran-Iraq War has enabled the expansion of the road network around the city and has allowed for new housing in the Shatt Al-Arab area to be constructed close to the cleared areas.

Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE)

UNMAS Iraq delivered EORE sessions for **16,112** beneficiaries (**5,198** girls, **4,319** women, **4,846** boys, **1,749** men) in the Ninewa governorate. These sessions were predominantly delivered in the communities surrounding the areas where the clearance teams were working.

In Ninewa, UNMAS Iraq continued to deliver direct and indirect EORE activities in the prioritized areas in Mosul, Sinjar, and Tel Afar districts, as well as the Ninewa plains. Indirect activities included distributing EORE materials with tailored messages for children and adults by installing billboards at strategic points with messages adapted to the age and local context and culture and in relevant languages. UNMAS Iraq implementing partners consolidated the adaptation of EORE messaging into the school curriculum in 2023, working closely with both individual schools and the governorate education department and in coordination with the DMA.



Towards the end of the year there was a noted increase in reporting of accidents in areas south of Tel Afar and west of Mosul. In response to the DMA request, UNMAS Iraq implementing partner, SHO, Community Liaison and EORE personnel delivered emergency EORE sessions within the villages and collected data on the survey status of the areas in close collaboration with the DMA.

Outside of the EHM grants, UNMAS Iraq also provided EORE sessions for 47 cash-for-work workers (15 of whom were women) employed by various UN agencies in Iraq, as well as employees of NGOs, engaging in high-risk activities. These sessions are given either online or in person and are normally arranged through the UN regional coordination platforms.

By targeting these individuals, UNMAS Iraq enabled a multiplier effect, reducing risk to the workers themselves and enabling them to safely contribute to the recovery of the communities in the most need of assistance.



VISIBILITY

Throughout 2024, UNMAS Iraq continued to highlight and advocate for the generous contributions of its multiple donors and partners. The importance of mine action in Iraq was mainstreamed through briefing notes, reports and presentations to the Government of Iraq, other UN entities, and the international community, as well as through social media.

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Highlights of 2024

- » [Al-Sabah Newspaper Interview with Pehr Lodhammar UNMAS Chief Mine Action Programme in Iraq](#)
- » [Pehr Lodhammar, UNMAS Chief Mine Action Programme in Iraq gave a speech on the World Humanitarian Day](#)

UNMAS Factsheet

- » [UNMAS Iraq Factsheet January-December 2024](#)

Press Release

- » [The Contribution from the Republic of Korea Enables UNMAS Iraq to Continue Supporting the Government and the National Mine Action Operators](#)
- » [The Government of Sweden extends its support to explosive hazard management and national mine action capability enhancement activities in Iraq](#)
- » [Explosive ordnance incident at Tal Kaif near Mosul kills one](#)
- » [The Government of Denmark Provides Additional Contribution to UNMAS in Support of the Mine Action Sector in Iraq](#)
- » [The Government of Belgium Provides Additional Contribution to UNMAS in Support of the Mine Action Sector in Iraq](#)
- » [UNMAS in Iraq Statement on World Humanitarian Day 2024](#)
- » [The Government of Italy Provides Additional Contribution to UNMAS in support of Mine Action in Iraq](#)



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A Story from UNMAS Iraq

Clearing the Way Home: Mine Action and Recovery in Sinjar

The ISIL occupation and subsequent battles caused severe damage to infrastructure and private property in Iraq. Residences, local shops, factories and agricultural areas were significantly damaged, leaving a devastating impact on the lives of the local population.

In January 2024, UNMAS Iraq implemented mine action activities to clear explosive hazards in Sinjar, including a destroyed poultry farm in the Ain Talawi area located between Sinjar and Mosul. The farm was largely destroyed and was contaminated with EO items.

Though clearance was urgent due to heavy EO contamination, the farm's owner refused access until he was assured of government compensation for the damage caused during the fighting, which requires proof of damage. In Iraq, the Government provides compensation to the owners of houses, shops and factories that were destroyed during the conflict, but such governmental compensation may not be provided without acceptable proof of the damage.

Although national legislation permits clearance without formal owner consent, UNMAS Iraq

and its partners prioritize community engagement and voluntary cooperation. In this case, the implementing partner supported the landowner in obtaining official damage verification to ensure consent was fully informed. SHO requested the compensation court to send an investigation team to the site to document the damage. After receiving the inspection documentation and official confirmation regarding the compensation, the owner felt sufficiently reassured and agreed to sign the written consent, enabling the commencement of SHO mechanical clearance operations. The teams immediately began clearance operations at the farm.

The national teams' legal knowledge and local networks enabled this solution, showing the value of national organizations in mine action. The farm will be rebuilt using compensation, aiming to resume operations within a year, helping restore livelihoods and support returning IDPs.

It is worth noting that SHO has been trained through UNMAS Iraq's partnership grant over the last three years and is now conducting operations autonomously. UNMAS Iraq will continue to support national NGOs for sustainable mine action responses in Iraq.



UNMAS in Iraq would like to thank all of its donors who contributed to explosive hazard management, explosive ordnance risk education, and technical support activities in 2024.



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