

UNITED NATIONS



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**THE GLOBAL ADVOCATE FOR THE ELIMINATION  
OF MINES AND EXPLOSIVE HAZARDS**

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**MESSAGE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR MINE AWARENESS AND  
ASSISTANCE IN MINE ACTION**

**New York, 4 April 2017**

An education can be the difference between life and death.

For 20 years, UNMAS, the United Nations Mine Action Service, has made education a priority.

In Syria, risk education protects refugees fleeing violence and enables people to stay safely in their communities.

By helping people recognize threats, UNMAS is empowering countries, like Afghanistan, to set up their own mine action programmes and train their own personnel to deploy bomb squads and deminers.

And in Somalia, UNMAS is training and employing men and women to clear minefields and prepare for the return to and reconstruction of the place they call home.

On the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, we are reminded that this work is not just about saving lives—it's about rebuilding them.

Today we honor two decades of service and heroism.

We honor the men and women who continue to teach us that in the face of extraordinary danger, education and awareness are our most critical allies.