



November 2015 News

UNMAS Deploys to Iraq

Years of armed violence in Iraq have resulted in widespread contamination of explosive hazards, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs). These threats obstruct the recovery and stabilization process, and threaten socio-economic, civic and humanitarian activities. Responding to an appeal by the Prime Minister of Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) requested UNMAS undertake an assessment mission to identify how the United Nations may provide assistance to mitigate the threats posed by explosive hazards in Iraq. UNMAS carried out this assessment under the framework of humanitarian assistance on mines, explosive remnants of war (ERW) and IEDs, in order to enable the safe return of the internally displaced. UNMAS verified the need to provide technical assistance to UNAMI and mine action authorities and recommended that UNMAS establish a liaison function within UNAMI.



An Iraqi girl receives a mine risk education session in Ashawa, Iraq. UN Photo//Bikem Ekberzade

In mid-June, UNMAS embedded a small team within UNAMI in Baghdad. In October, UNMAS initiated a humanitarian impact assessment on the threat posed by IEDs and explosive hazards in newly recovered areas. UNMAS works in partnership with national authorities to determine existing abilities to respond to threats, with the aim of providing training and mentoring to Iraqi explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and IED clearance teams;

provision of support to national authorities' technical and coordination capacities; education of civilians about the risk of explosive hazards; and clearance where required.

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