



## **DENMARK ANNOUNCES \$4.4 MILLION CONTRIBUTION TO BOOST HUMANITARIAN MINE ACTION RESPONSE IN IRAQ AND SYRIA**

**New York. 7 March 2016.** Denmark has announced a contribution of USD 4.4 million (DKK 30 million) to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action. This contribution will support the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) humanitarian mine action response in Syria and Iraq, where landmines and other explosive hazards pose a deadly threat to civilians and inhibit access for other humanitarian actors.

Kristian Jensen, Minister for Foreign Affairs, said, “This contribution reflects our strong and consistent support for the United Nations in its delivery and coordination of mine action. Mine action is a vital component of humanitarian response in conflict and post-conflict settings for protection of civilians and safe access for other humanitarian actors. We call upon others to follow our lead and increase support to mine action to protect the civilians who are bearing the brunt of protracted armed conflict in many countries.”

In Syria, UNMAS is working from the United Nations humanitarian base in Gaziantep, southern Turkey to deliver life-saving mine action in extremely challenging circumstances. In Kobane, 14 tonnes of dangerous explosive remnants of war were destroyed by partners to enable the safe reconstruction of vital infrastructure, including three schools and a hospital. To date, six teams of Syrians have been trained in explosive ordnance disposal and a further six in explosive hazard risk education techniques. Risk education has been delivered to over 18,000 civilians across Syria and 166 humanitarian workers.

The UNMAS team is pioneering creative approaches such as training Syrian NGOs in non-explosive methods to destroy explosive remnants of war, including the use of pyro-technic torches.

Sarah Marshall, Programme Manager, UNMAS Syria Response, said: “We are extremely grateful for this contribution from Denmark. Despite the difficult circumstances, we can make a difference in Syria now. We can respect humanitarian principles and undertake quality life- saving interventions. We can also be the bridge between humanitarian and stabilisation activities. We should not wait for the conflict to be over before we act.”

In Iraq, UNMAS is implementing a comprehensive programme to enhance national capacities to address the vast number of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) that endanger civilians in urban areas. IEDs have been extensively used by Daesh while vacating cities, such as in the case of Ramadi.



These devices, which are hidden in people's homes and public spaces, as well as on main routes and roads, endanger returning internally displaced persons, hamper access for other humanitarian actors and inhibit efforts to stabilise areas.

Denmark has been an important partner of the United Nations in mine action for many years, providing funding and personnel in support of humanitarian mine action projects throughout the world. In line with Good Humanitarian Donorship and as requested in General Assembly resolution on Assistance in Mine Action, Denmark provides reliable, predictable and timely multi-annual contributions for humanitarian mine action.

**ENDS**

**For further information, please contact:**

Lee Woodyear,  
Public Information Officer, UNMAS  
Email: [Woodyear@un.org](mailto:Woodyear@un.org)