



## IMPACT

 Since 1989, about 41,686 Afghan civilians—averaging down to over 108 per month, were recorded to have been killed or injured by landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW), the latter of which consist of munitions which failed to detonate when fired. Improvised mines (IM) and ERW from more recent armed clashes caused over 98 percent of the casualties recorded in 2021. In the same year, more than 79 percent of the ERW casualties were children.

 Humanitarian mine action partners in Afghanistan have cleared more than 18.9 million items of ERW, some 750,518 anti-personnel (AP) mines, and some 32,401 anti-vehicle (AV) mines since 1989. Newer contamination, such as IM and ERW from recent fighting, poses a challenge to the national mine action programme as traditional humanitarian mine action advocacy, risk education and clearance approaches originally developed to deal with legacy landmine and ERW contamination from the Soviet-Afghan War (1980-1988) and the subsequent civil war period are less effective when facing the IM threat which first emerged in 2010.

 A total of **33,020** hazardous areas - have been cleared or otherwise cancelled since 1989. This represents over **3,282** square kilometers of land released for productive use to **3,179** communities.

 Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) was delivered to **over 8.4 million** individuals since the start of the program which includes people who attended for the first time and additional sessions. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNMAS Afghanistan integrated messages on COVID-19 preventative measures into its EORE sessions. Since January 2021, UNMAS Afghanistan has reached more than **272,243 people** with these messages.

Some 4,109 identified hazards remain, threatening about 1,529 communities, impeding development by delaying the construction of new road networks, airports, transmission lines, and returnee settlement. Due to evolving conflict dynamics, Afghanistan's humanitarian mine action needs are now as great as they have ever been

## ABOUT

The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) was established in 1989. In 2012, the Afghan Directorate for Mine Action Coordination (DMAC) began to execute aspects of the programme management of the MAPA in direct collaboration with UNMAS. Progressively, UNMAS transferred the ownership of mine action coordination to DMAC and the transition was completed on 1 June 2018, when DMAC absorbed all Afghan technical mine action personnel previously employed by UNMAS. At the request of the Afghan Government, UNMAS stayed to provide

continued technical support beyond 2018, in areas such as strategic planning and advocacy, resource mobilization, and funds management and contracting, until 14 August 2021.

Since the de facto authorities assumed control on 15 August 2021, the international community including UN entities suspended their support to governmental institutes. Without international financial support, DMAC could no longer carry out day-to-day mine action coordination functions and MAPA activities were at risk of falling

uncoordinated. Considering the coordination gap, at the request of MAPA stakeholders and approval of the United Nations senior leadership in Afghanistan, UNMAS proposed to establish a UN-led mine action coordination mechanism that is independent from the de facto authority. The formation of such a coordination mechanism is still under discussion. At a minimum, UNMAS will ensure key

coordination functions such as prioritization and tasking, quality management, and information management sustain to service mine action activities funded through the United Nations via various channels, and such service can be extended to other humanitarian operations upon partners' requests.

## ACTIVITIES



### **Nationwide Explosive Survey to Update Contamination Status and Capture Other Humanitarian Needs:**

Due to access constraints, approximately 25% of the country's total area had been inaccessible for the past 20 years and is suspected to be contaminated by explosive hazards, in particular IM and ERW. The political change brought new access opportunities. UNMAS launched the survey initiative from the beginning of 2022, which aims to identify and record new contamination, and to release land that is confirmed to be safe to allow civilians, including humanitarian workers to move around and work with greater confidence and safety. Teams

will identify 'forgotten' communities—an estimated 44,000 communities nationwide have not been gazetted, and they are expected to be recorded in IMSMA as sub-communities tied to gazetted ones. This process will allow mine action, together with other humanitarian services to be delivered to these populations. Acute humanitarian needs in these communities will be captured and shared with relevant humanitarian partners to inform necessary follow-up, thereby contributing to the delivery of Afghanistan's Humanitarian Response Plan.



### **Building the National Capacity to Clear Abandoned Improvised Mines (AIM):**

Since 2020, UNMAS has launched the initiative to train and mentor national mine action NGOs' capacity to survey and clear AIM, in order to tackle the threat that has been the leading cause of civilian casualties in relation to explosive contamination accidents in recent years. The clearance of improvised mines involves technical know-how and specialized equipment that goes with it. As of February 2022, 843 deminers from eight humanitarian mine action organizations were trained with this skill-set, preparing the national capacity to scale up its activities for the clearance of AIM. Concurrently, mine action continues to conduct survey

and clearance of other types of explosive hazards including landmines, cluster munition, and ERW, as well as providing quick response to emergency requests, explosive ordnance disposal, EORE, and victim assistance.



### **Technical Assistance to Access Negotiation:**

Access negotiation in adherence to humanitarian principles is fundamental to the successful implementation of humanitarian mine action (HMA) projects, as it helps to obtain safe and unconditional access to project areas. UNMAS supports its partners and the wider MAPA in access negotiations by providing technical training to partner personnel, as well as direct support in such engagements. In addition, UNMAS deployed trained access negotiation specialists to five national MAPA implementing partners. These experts advise the NGOs' senior management, project teams and community liaison officers and work with them

directly on engaging with local actors under the United Nations guidelines on humanitarian principles and Afghanistan Joint Operating Principles (JOPs) which reflects humanitarian policies and established practices for interaction with parties to the conflict and other stakeholders.



### **Support on Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming in Mine Action:**

Since 2020, UNMAS has supported equality and diversity mainstreaming efforts in mine action by deploying Equality and Diversity Mainstreaming Officers (EDMOs) to national humanitarian mine action organizations. These EDMOs worked closely with their mine action technical colleagues to ensure that both women's and men's opinions, perspectives and needs are considered throughout the different stages of mine action projects, including planning, implementation and monitoring. To make sure that gender-responsive approaches are adopted in mine action implementation, they also visited affected communities and collect beneficiaries' feedback. While these EDMOs received regular support from UNMAS,

they played key roles in delivering gender awareness training within each organization, ensuring organizational policies, procedures, and guidelines are gender-sensitive.

# FUNDING

Since 2011, funding for mine action has steadily dropped in the past 10 years. In 2021, the total funding for mine action in the country is less than 20 per cent of that in 2011, while the country is descending into the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. While the number of security incidents in relation to armed conflict fell significantly after the political change, civilian casualties resulting from improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and ERW persist. In order to protect civilians and support other humanitarian efforts, **Afghanistan is requesting US \$200 million for mine action operations in 2022-2023.** UNMAS thanks the following donors for their generous support through the United

Nations Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF) for Assistance in Mine Action this Afghan year 1400 (April 2021 - March 2022): **Australia, Denmark, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, South Korea, and the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).** UNMAS also thanks the following donors for continued bilateral support to the MAPA: **The United States of America, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), Japan, Finland, Denmark, Norway, New Zealand, Afghanistan, PATRIP, Ireland, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and Slovenia.**

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